



paper match

true tales of resistance from denver and beyond



winter 2009-2010

Greetings and solidarity from Denver Anarchist Black Cross!

Thanks for taking the time to pick up and read Issue #2 of Paper Match. Paper Match acts as the quarterly voice of the Denver Anarchist Black Cross, a local collective of anti-authoritarians that work to provide defense for social movements actively engaged in work towards self-determination for all peoples.

Things have been pretty busy for the Denver chapter of the Anarchist Black Cross Federation, a formation of ABC chapters active across North America. Since the release of Issue #1 of Paper Match, we've seen a lot of changes to our collective and have seen our projects and work grow.

Our collective has doubled in size since its inception, and so has our workload. Currently, DABC maintains many key projects that we see as pivotal for defending and maintaining strong and healthy social movements capable of making war on state, capitalist, and reactionary forces.

Through the Anarchist Babysitters Club, we work to ensure that children and families engaged in social movements are provided with direct support. We work to provide childcare and kids' events at meetings and events across Denver. So far, we've provided childcare at several meetings for various organizations, and hope to expand this project as we get more volunteers. Please contact us if this project sounds like it is of interest to you.

The Denver Mutual Aid Fund exists to provide emergency monetary relief to members of social movements that fall on hard economic times. We have collected over \$400 for the fund thus far, and have been hosting monthly fundraisers to grow that amount. Our goal is to have a pool of \$5,000 at the ready to provide support for folks within our movements that need it. We are currently searching for regular donors to this fund.

The Emergency Response Network is a quick email and cell phone based alert system that provides updates on repression against social movements and prisoners of war to those that sign up to receive these updates. This system has been used multiple times, most recently to help mobilize support for Ojore Lutalo (see article in this issue of Paper Match).

For the last 7 months we have hosted monthly letter writing nights for political prisoners and prisoners of war that have brought dozens of people together to send letters and send words of support and solidarity to our imprisoned comrades. Starting with our most recent letter writing night, we have moved toward having themed letter writing nights, focused on a different set of prisoners each month. In February, we turned our focus to organizers and radicals from the migrant community that have been arrested by ICE and face deportation for their efforts. In March, we will focus on Animal and Earth Liberation prisoners. In April, we will be focusing on Indigenous Prisoners of War in the United States.

Denver ABCF has hosted a number of armed defense skillshares in the Denver area to provide local radicals with a working understanding of tactical armed defense.

Other projects that are in the works and will be implemented soon include a literature program for Colorado prisoners, with an aim to provide free radical and anti-authoritarian literature to any prisoner in Colorado who requests it. We also are working on a prisoner art show that will highlight revolutionary and radical art from our comrades being held in cages across the country. The art show is slated to open in May at a new anarchist social center in Denver. More details to be announced soon.

Over the last months, several comrades from Denver or with ties to Denver have come under attack from the state, resulting in three comrades from the area facing felony charges. In response, Denver ABCF has assisted in the creation of a new organization called Denver Got Yo' Back, a working group focused on generating legal funds to support these comrades. If you are interested in getting involved, contact us, and we'll put you in touch with this crew.

At the end of January, our skills and resources were tested as yet another comrade was arrested in Colorado. Denver ABCF helped collect bail for former BLA POW Ojore Lutalo and transported, housed, and fed Ojore over the next week as we waited to hear what would happen with his case. (Again, see article in this issue about Ojore's case.)

In November, Denver ABCF filed a Freedom of Information Act Request for FBI files on various projects, organizations, and individuals active within anti-authoritarian movements across Colorado. So far, we've received several responses regarding various individuals and projects. We are still waiting for the actual files to arrive.

Our work with other local organizations has grown rapidly in the last several months. Late last year we were invited to join a loose coalition of migrant led organizations working toward a platform of liberation for migrants, and not just assimilation and legal protection in the colonized United States. The organization is spearheaded by undocumented revolutionaries, and thus far the work has been slow to develop, but exciting. Among upcoming projects of the network, a Census Boycott and Mayday celebrations are planned, as well as growing resistance to the ICE Detention Center in nearby Aurora. DABCF has had a strong presence at the monthly demonstrations against the detention facility. These demonstrations continue to grow, and become more confrontational.

We have also been involved with a separate but related organization that is focusing on building a jail visitation program for ICE detainees at the Aurora facility as well as nearby county jails.

It's been a busy and effective three months since the last Issue of Paper Match. We look forward to an even more effective three months between now and the release of Issue #3.

Be sure to check our blog for news and updates, as well as announcements of events and projects: denverabc.wordpress.org

And never hesitate to contact us to get involved or show support at denverabc@rocketmail.com

In love, and unending solidarity,
Your comrades at Denver ABCF
Winter 2009-2010



Reflections of a Radical with a Mental Disorder



"One day the sun will shine for us all" - Portuguese guerrilla slogan

"In the contradiction lies hope"- Bertold Brecht

Even though I have been constructing this piece of writing in my head for almost five years now, the difficulty of spilling these thoughts onto paper is paralyzing. I can get great joy from dense political analysis, but my ability to communicate quickly shuts down the second conversation turns to my personal history with a mental disorder.

A large graveyard exists of terms that have been used to categorize my experience and the intersecting experience of others. These include "addiction," "alcoholism," "social anxiety," "manic depressive," "bipolar," "neurosis," etc. While each one is unique, I see them all falling underneath a general experience of "mental disorder."

Mental disorder and its various synonyms (mental disease or mental illness) are extremely problematic and pathologizing terms, period. However the purpose of this pieces is not to establish new frameworks for Psychology, its purpose is to deconstruct my own personal experience with the hopes that it will be relevant to our work of building revolutionary movements. So for a lack of a better term, I will use "mental disorder" to name my personal experience, albeit an inaccurate name.

The approach used in this piece is not based on institutional Psychology, nor is it based on the frameworks put forward by the most anti-institutional Psychology sectors that largely come from anti-authoritarian subcultures. Instead my methodology is based on subjectivity and dialogue in the spirit of Freirian radical pedagogy. 1 Thus the structure of the essay reflects the methodology, it is a continuous process of peeling back layers in an attempt to reach a deeper understanding of the issue. I hope my attempt at putting these experiences into a written narrative performs at least a crumb of justice to the transformative process it put me through.

Mental Disorder as a Radicalizing Experience

Since the terms we have to work with tend to be dangerously clumsy, it might be best to describe my experience as opposed to labeling it. It began much earlier than high school but this is where I am going to start.

High school for me was defined by drinking alone on weekend nights while listening to music, spending my free period and lunch in the library by myself listening to music, driving aimlessly late at night by myself literally hoping to be hit by a drunk driver that would kill me, and occasionally sitting silently at a party until my anxiety got too uncomfortable and it was time for me to escape to solitariness.

My first two years of college was more of the same but a bit more intense. I spent my first year walking around Boulder by myself during the day and doing the same route at night. This strong anti-social behavior is why I left my first year in college with out creating a single friendship, even though I lived in a large residential hall. 2 My second year was spent in a one-person dorm room. I did this because I honestly had no friends or even loose acquaintances to live with and I also had pressing legal issues after a night of getting black out drunk and waking up in jail. I spent four months in this single room, occassionally leaving for class, therapy, and AA meetings. That particularly hard Fall semester culminated one night when I was alone in my room, decided I wanted to die, and preceded to swallow a handful of Paxil that was chased down with cheap whisky. Instead of successfully completing this suicide attempt, I ended up walking all the way across Boulder to my AA sponsor's house in Gunbarrell at 4am. It should be noted that I did this in an extremely belligerent state that caused me to zig zag through Boulder, adding even more miles to my endeavour.

It is shortly after this moment where I became an "activist," although my political identity as a radical had been developing for several years prior. My mental instability has flared up since and I still have a long way to go, thankfully the development of my organizing work and intellectual understanding of our society has served an invaluable role in sustaining my mental health. I want though to explore the dialectical relationship that exists between my psychological condition and my radical praxis.

When you are broken internally, you will do anything that gives you even a moment of escape from yourself. This often manifests in addiction to drugs, alcohol, relationships, and sex. One way it took shape for me was relentless amounts of reading. I often characterize my mental condition as a pack of hungry wolves that I need to keep satisfied so they do not turn on me and my fragile self-esteem. Reading dense analysis worked exceedingly well at keeping these wolves occupied, plus having no social life gave me plenty of time to fill with books. The result was a reasonably solid intellectual framework to support my anger with society, a necessity of every revolutionary.

In a deeper sense, this experience taught me the limitations of radical intellectuallizing. No matter how hard I tried to study, I could not study my problems away. Nor could I drink my problems away, fuck my problems away, and pray my problems away. There was no instant, comprehensive answer but only hard, day-in day-out struggle. What I needed to do was start where I was at, accept the things I could not change, and then attack with the utmost ferociousness the things I could change. I cannot express how invaluable this lesson has been to my radical praxis, not to mention my well-being.

There is another way that my condition has propelled my radical praxis. I believe that I missed out on important moments of socialization that led to a lack of connection with and investment in dominant society. In other words, my self-isolation through high school and the first half of college constructed an identity that sees myself as separate from, not apart of, society. Am I saying that I completely missed out on the socialization of capitalism, hetero-patriarchy, and white supremacy? Absolutely not, I have internalized large amounts of all those forms of oppression while basking in the all the privilege and comfort these institutions have acquired for me. What I am saying is that I lived with a voice in my head that relentlessly told me that I don't belong, am worthless, don't have anything valuable to contribute, and that everyone dislikes me. Despite my material and social privileges, I believed the voices in my head and that led to a strong affinity with the margins. It was the experiences of those forgotten, excluded, and marginalized that I empathized with and their liberatory praxes⁴ that I strived to model. It wasn't long before this intuitive allegiance inevitably put me in square opposition with social institutions and forces of domination.

Living in an escalated state of longing and loneliness helped expose the enormous social contradictions that people of privilege like me are deliberately kept from seeing. This might be explained better through an example. Pearl street, a popular night life area for college students, was a stretch I would often walk on weekend nights. I would watch all the rich white students and yuppies foolishly staggering around and yelling after a night of overpriced food and drinks. My walks along Pearl street would then take me to the alleyways that paralleled the outdoor mall. Although I was only a few yards from the vibrant scenery of Pearl street, it was a much different reality. I saw all the food and trash being thrown out behind the fancy restrants, homeless men digging through those dumpsters looking for a meal, drunk college students pissing and throwing up, police harrassing groups of homeless people. The facade of Pearl Street was exposed, it was a luxurious space for a privileged few that came at a great expense for the world around it. I shared a common characteristic with Pearl St., a squeaky clean shell covering a rotten inside.

There are plenty examples of how observing from an outsider perspective, instead of socially participating, unraveled dominant society's facade for me. I learned about how class and race play into city planning and urban landscape, rape culture, the shallowness of consumerism, and the tragedy of loosing open space to the development monster. I also learned about solidarity at Alcoholics Anonymous meetings on Friday nights in the basement of a rehab center. At this point I hope I am not making these experiences sound romantic, because they have consistently sabotaged my organizing work. I'd rather not dwell on these countless moments so to put it simply: people who hate themselves are assholes, and assholes are the antithesis to the kind of people our movements need. Once again though, the darkside of my condition has presented a valuable learning moment.

Participating in social movements means being a social being, something that comes naturally to some but happens to be one of the most difficult things imaginable for me.

If I could have my way, I would probably lay in bed most of the day, reading and watching movies, and maybe occasionally go for a walk. I would rather stay in on Friday nights because going out for me is not fun, it is extremely uncomfortable. Unfortunately for me, this type of behavior will never build the successful social movements that I am dedicated to seeing come into fruition. As someone committed to radical social change, each day requires me to go to meetings, talk on the phone, build relationships with new people, and put myself out in the public in a visible, confrontational way. I believe this process of experiencing a contradiction deep within me that transforms my consciousness, only to take a couple steps forward and run into another seemingly soul-splitting contradiction has taught me an immense amount about the revolutionary process.

A topic that informs this dialectical process is that of psychotropic medication (drugs prescribed for mental disorders). When first approached with the idea of taking the anti-depressant Zoloft, the knee-jerk radical inside me immediately came screaming out. I knew about the billion dollar drug industry and I sure as hell wasn't going to sedate myself to better conform into the consumer robot that society wanted me to be. At the same time, I was so broken that I was willing to do anything to rebuild myself, even if it meant compromising my ideology. This was a huge contradiction to overcome, in fact it still is for me. Often this problem surfaces in radical organizing when we constantly have to negotiate the tension between our ideals and our reality.

I began taking anti-depressants and they simply helped me a lot. Since I made the choice to take anti-depressants I have heard from countless people, including a lover, that taking the pills made me less of myself. Ironically, taking the pills made me more of myself than I ever felt before. It honestly infuriated me hearing this while thinking about how being too scared to speak in class, too depressed to leave my room, and too cynical to ever be loved was the kind of person I really should be. I don't think I would ever have had lovers, friends, fun, and self-confidence without the help of those pills. To be clear, my progress in self-transformation is by no means fully attributed to prescription pills. I put in years of serious hard work in therapy, support groups, and personally pushing myself. It is similar to anesthetics during surgery, I was able to numb myself enough to do an extraordinary amount of painful internal work. As radicals, it is of urgent importance that we are flexible and take into consideration everyone's subjective conditions as oppose to imposing a rigid ideology that does not fit into other people's realities. I am not talking just about medication anymore, this is about a multitude of other real life issues we come across everyday.

Conclusion

Ultimately I think that mental disorders can be used to illustrate the metaphysics of what our movements are and what they need to be. Like the process of transcending a psychological complex, our revolutionary process needs to be founded in embracing contradiction instead of absolving ourselves from it. A second way to put this is: our theories need to be constantly altered around our realities instead of trying to conform our realities to our theories. This will be required of us as we are forced to navigate our radical liberatory praxes through immense questions around topics like porn and sex work, hip hop, political ideology, and technology to name a few. If we are going to see a brighter tomorrow, it will be because we accept the dirty hypocritical work that is necessary instead of keeping our hands clean in the purity of ideology. ✨

State Repression News

Stay up to date with us on our blog at denverabc.wordpress.com

RNC 8 Trial set for October

The RNC 8 have had their trial date set for October 25, 2010. Mark your calendars, as we need to pack the courtrooms in St Paul for the trial. There will also be a number of new motions heard in May, so mark these dates as well: May 3-6, 13, and 14. During these days, the lawyers for the 8 will argue motions such as ones to suppress evidence seized during the preemptive raids prior to the RNC, and the probable cause motion as a part of evidentiary hearings that will include testimony from witnesses. More information will be available as the dates approach, but court support will be needed as always.

Army resister facing prison for refusal to leave son for deployment

Alexis Hutchinson, a single mother from Oakland, CA. is facing up to a year in military prison for refusing to leave her son in Georgia Foster care, while being deployed to Afghanistan. In a shocking disappointment, Fort Stewart, GA Army officials announced four separate court martial charges against Specialist Alexis Hutchinson, the single mother of a one-year son who missed deployment in early November 2009 when her childcare plan fell through.

BJ Viehl sentenced to 2 years in prison for ALF action

William Viehl has been sentenced to 2 years after admitting his role in an ALF raid on a fur farm.

Please send letters of support to:

William James Viehl
Inmate #2009-05735
Davis County Jail
800 West State St.
Farmington, UT 84025

Puerto Rican Independentista POW pleads guilty to bank expropriation

A key figure in the armed expropriation of \$7.1 million nearly three decades ago from a West Hartford Wells Fargo depot by a Puerto Rico pro-independence group abruptly pleaded guilty this past month to charges that include smuggling the money out of the country.

Avelino Gonzalez-Claudio, 67, was a leader and strategist of Los Macheteros, a clandestine organization that advocates the use of violence to win Puerto Rico's independence from the United States. In the 1970s and '80s, the group claimed responsibility for armed attacks on federal interests in Puerto Rico.

Third person subpoenaed for Davenport Grand Jury

Leana Stormont, currently a lawyer in Virginia, was subpoenaed to appear before the grand jury last Wednesday. Her lawyers are fighting the subpoena and there is no indication that she is cooperating with the state.

An outspoken animal rights activist when she was a law student at the University of Iowa, Leana experi-

enced overt harassment by the FBI after the ALF action in 2004. She chronicles her experiences in a 2006 article entitled "Caring About Animals is Not a Crime" (available at <http://www.americanchronicle.com/articles/view/5425>).

Supreme Court grants prosecutors appeal against Mumia

Mumia Abu-Jamal, whose death sentence for killing a Philadelphia police officer in 1981 has become an international cause célèbre for opponents of capital punishment, has suffered a significant setback at the US Supreme Court.

In a summary order issued on Tuesday, the high court reversed a 2008 federal appeals court ruling that had required a new sentencing hearing for Mr. Abu-Jamal.

The Supreme Court action sends the case back to the Third US Circuit Court of Appeals in Philadelphia to reconsider the issue in light of a similar decision handed down last week by the high court. In that case, with similar facts, the justices voted 9 to 0 to reverse an order that struck down the death sentence. ✨

Further Attacks on Former BLA Prisoner of War, Ojore Lutalo



On Tuesday January 26, Ojore Lutalo, a recently released Black Liberation Army POW was arrested at gunpoint on an Amtrak train in La Junta, Colorado. Ojore was pulled from the train by Colorado State Police after an Amtrak employee alleged that passengers on the train had heard Lutalo talking about Al Qaeda and making threats against the train.

Ojore was booked into the La Junta City Jail and charged with "Endangering Public Transportation," a felony punishable by up to 16 years in prison and a \$750,000 fine. His bail was not set immediately, and he would wait until Thursday morning to see a judge.

Ojore was released from prison in New Jersey in August after serving nearly three decades behind bars as a prisoner of war. Along with Kuwasi Balagoon and other members of a Black Liberation Army formation, Ojore had been active in the war for liberation of Black and New Afrikan peoples in the colonized United States.

Ojore was initially imprisoned in 1977 for an armed bank expropriation and shootout with police in New Jersey. He was released on parole in 1980 and was re-arrested in 1982 for allegedly assaulting and robbing a drug dealer to also fund revolutionary activities. He was widely recognized as a political prisoner and prisoner of war by people across the world. Ojore had been invited to speak at the Los Angeles Anarchist Bookfair. It was on his way home from the event that he was arrested on the Amtrak train.

During his bail hearing on January 28th, the local judge set Ojore's bail at \$30,000, citing his previous record and his out of state residence. Denver ABCF members were present at the bail hearing, and acted quickly to coordinate raising Ojore's bail with other members of the ABCF from around the country.

Within hours, a bondsman was secured as were the funds for his release. By Thursday night, Ojore was out of jail and amongst comrades in Denver, where he would stay for the next week until his next hearing date.

A week later, after repeated media assaults on Ojore and his history that painted him as nothing more than a terrorist influenced by Islam (Ojore is not now and has never even been a Muslim, despite his support for his Muslim comrades fighting for self determination), Ojore's charges were formally dismissed. Upon further investigation, no passenger could provide evidence that Ojore said anything suspicious or acted in anyway that was alarming.

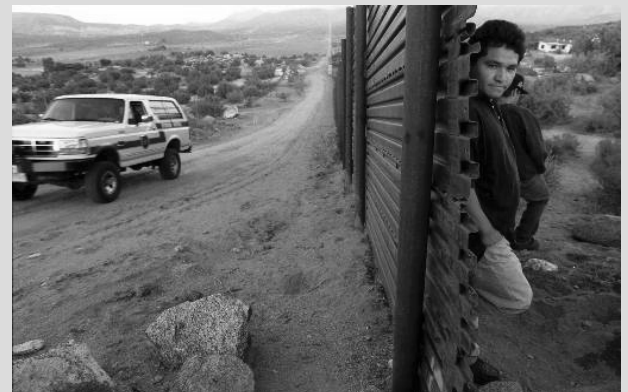
Ojore finally made it home to New Jersey on Friday, February 5th.

The ABCF is still collecting money to recoup the expenses paid out to the bondsmen to have Ojore released. If you can help donate funds, please contact Tim with the Philadelphia ABCF at TimABCF@aol.com ✉

take part in paper match!

now accepting submissions for our spring 2010 issue.

Paper Match needs your input! We are now seeking open submissions for our Spring 2010 issue. The subject will be Migrant Liberation & Border Struggle. The deadline is April 7th, and the word limit is 2000. Please email your submissions to: denverabc@rocketmail.com



Remembering Howard Zinn, 1922-2010

by Mumia Abu Jamal

It should surprise no one when a man, nearly 90, dies. It is as natural as moonlight, as regular as a rainbow after a summer shower.

And yet, the passing of Howard Zinn surprises. He was a few months shy of 90, true, but he was still a bright eyed and brilliant lecturer, whose sense of humor gave a wondrous sparkle to his speeches and humanized his writing.

He is perhaps best known for his masterwork, *A People's History of the United States; 1492 - Present*, (Harper Collins, 1980/2003. which sold millions of copies. Zinn was an adherent of the 'history from below' school of history, and wrote from the perspective of the bottoms of societies, not the top. He wrote about Black slaves fighting for freedom, Native folks fighting for sovereignty, poor white workers fighting for the right to unionize, women fighting for the right to work and vote, soldiers, gay folks, prisoners, and students struggling to learn about the history of their country.

And while Zinn was indeed a brilliant, ground-breaking historian, he didn't write about the poor from a scholars distance; he grew up desperately poor in New York, joined the Air Force during World War II, and became a bombardier. Like many young service members, he read incessantly. When he left the service, he used the G. I. Bill to study at Columbia where he earned his Ph.D.

And while he earned an advanced degree, he learned things he hadn't planned on when he taught at Spelman College in Atlanta, GA, for his teaching took place during the eruption of the Civil Rights movement, and student protests against the U.S. apartheid system of segregation. Spelman, a Black women's college, had its share of activists, who, when they tried to leaflet, were stopped, threatened and prevented from leafleting by the cops.

Zinn, teaching legal history and constitutional law to many of these students, learned that what the law books and cases said meant nothing in the real-life world of Georgian apartheid. In his 1990 book, *Declarations of Independence*, Zinn wrote:

The law was plain. A series of Supreme Court decisions made the right to distribute leaflets on a public street absolute. It would be hard to find some thing in the Bill of Rights that was more clear cut than this. I told my students this. But I knew immediately that I must tell them something else; that the law didn't much matter. If they began handing out leaflets on Peachtree street and a white policeman (all police were white in Atlanta at the time), came along and said "Move!" what could they do? Cite the relevant Supreme Court cases to the police man. {p.198}

This was Atlanta: 1961, and the Movement taught Zinn many realities about America.

Howard Zinn. Historian. Activist. Playwright. Prodigious writer. Father of the People's History movement. Friend. ✪

Take your mark, get re

There are no political prisoners, only prisoners of war.

"I am not a crook." -- Richard M. Nixon

Between the realm of criminality and that of the political there is a wide chasm. Politicians make the law, criminals break it. In this context, the idea of the political prisoner emerges as a contradiction in terms. In fact, the contradiction is so fundamental that it forms the basis for many appeals for the liberation of political prisoners. The argument is made that political prisoners are a special class of prisoner who are not criminals at all, but people who engaged in legal political action.

This is one understanding of a political class of prisoners—they have not infringed upon the law, but rather the law has been wielded against them in order to prevent their political activity. The reason political prisoners exist is because revolutionaries are a threat to the law as it exists, and the law imprisons them out of its own self-interest. This understanding is most applicable prisoners who are clearly innocent—Leonard Peltier, Mumia Abu Jamal; in the United States, the list is not long.

But while the image of innocence is appealing to those who love the law, and although the air of innocence is routinely deployed in campaigns to defend comrades who have committed crime, this notion of innocence makes no stab at the law which decides innocence and guilt. The law not only acts in its own defense, it also ensures that revolutionaries commit crime. So revolutionaries outline a theory of illegal morality—in order to change the law, one must break the law. Criminality, then, is not an inherent desire of the revolutionary, but a condition placed upon her by the state. Political prisoners are not only composed of the innocent, but also of people who broke the law for the "right" reasons. They are prisoners of war. Defined in this way, the list of prisoners of war remains small—one hundred prisoners in the United States, give or take. One half of one hundredth of one percent of the incarcerated population.

The categorization of political prisoners as revolutionaries who have committed moral crimes does not appeal to those who love the law, but it resonates with individuals who take sides in a war to change the law. The demand for the release of a prisoner of war cannot be based on innocence, and so it is based on amnesty. Amnesty is the process of releasing of prisoners who have been taken hostage during a war between states, after the war has ended. It is remarkable how easily the practice of amnesty can be translated to prisoners of a war within a state, particularly when the prisoners considered themselves a different nation or sought through revolution to establish a new government. Although the revolutionary war is a civil war, it is fought between two states—one established, and the other in attempted uprising.

Political conflict is always fought between states that are either existent or revolutionary. A conflict in which the insurgents are not a government-in-ising themselves—if we can imagine such a conflict—would not be called political conflict, but social war. Social war is the expanded form of class war; class no longer marks the limits of social struggle, if it ever did.

Amnesty is an inherently defeatist position to take, one that is contingent upon surrender. In order for prisoners of war to be released, the war must be over, the prisoners no longer combatants, and they must be released into a climate of social peace, a peace their comrades will maintain.

The approaches of innocence and amnesty shouldn't draw a knee-jerk criticism, but rather should be placed in the context of the politics from which they are derived—a politics that appeals to those who love the law, and a politics of war between different forms of government. Without passing judgment on the former approaches, let us say that they fit their positions, and then consider our own position. Specifically, we should look again at the distinction between political conflict and social war.

"Al Sharpton... You're... a little more political, and that just means you're a little more unhuman, than us humans. Ha!" -- Lil Wayne

Lil Wayne said it best—to be political is to be a little unhuman. That is nothing to be particularly ashamed of, for it is a pervasive condition in society. Capitalism makes us all unhuman, to be a man is to be a little unhuman, to be a woman is to be a little unhuman, to be white, to be a worker, to be a homosexual. The social order is constructed so that we each have our place, our roles, identities. These are political formations. It is a political formation that the anarchist exists as an identity and, therefore, as a tiny segment of society.

Politics is the discourse of power. Perspectives and tactics vary widely, but it is the same discourse that contains them. The political individual, then, is a person with a plan for society. Plans and programmes may threaten the existing power form, but they are not a serious threat to power itself. In the event of social upheaval, the politics can be counted upon for a platform, leadership, and ultimately the restoration or maintenance of state and capital. When the existing politicians are unpopular, different ones are on hand, and if the social upheaval is radical enough, there will be some radical politicians who become well-positioned for a grasp at power as the vanguard or representative of the people. From the perspective of the social order—which is to say, not the specific forms of power that come in and out of dominance, but of power itself—the revolutionary politician is a last line of defense, a fail-safe in upheavals that would otherwise be most devastating.

Discourse. A bomb is placed at a building of the Federal Bureau of Investigations, but its blast does not speak for itself, because its engineers also crafted a message and sent it to the media outlets, denouncing the evils of the agency and making demands. As an action, one might say, nothing could be more radical than a bombing; yet the action remains within the context of a negotiation with power. Indeed, the political dialogue between parties that makes up the social order could hardly exist without some fringe groups planting bombs, so close are negotiation and violence to its heart. The fringe group does not have access to the political spectacle enough to proliferate its messages that way, and so it makes a spectacle of itself. It is unable to stand within the halls where formal negotiation takes place and routine violence is deployed, so it deploys spectacular violence as informal negotiation. Its demands may be wildly improbable and far too radical for the platforms of government, and yet it has "made its voice heard." The tactics we employ, from discussion to bombing, are irrelevant compared to a question of what they aim towards—the restructuring of power or its dissolution?

On the one hand, there is the question of power and how it ought to be structured and maintained, and on the other there is the question of whether it ought to be structured and maintained at all. Political individuals engage in the former question—the discourse of power and political struggle. Everyone is involved in the latter question—the discourse of biopower and social war.

Biopower is the intersection of power with our bodies, resulting in their subjugation, management, and control. Its discourse, then, is not of the kind heard in the halls of Congress, but that between ourselves and police, politicians, activists, managers, lawyers, judges. Also in the spaces between our bodies, our bodies and machines, our bodies and the school, hospital, prison and workplace.

"All prisoners are political." - various

There exists a third definition of political prisoners. As the movement for prison abolition has grown on the Left, there has been a tendency to radically expand the bounds of who are designated as political prisoners. And a radical new phrasing has been inscribed in the pages of the Leftist Bible: "All prisoners are political." It is a kind gesture, but only because it is made by people for whom the label 'political' is a compliment. Perhaps we should have first asked the prisoners if they wanted to be political. What, and stop saying 'bitch'? What word could be more degrading than 'political' to apply to people without their consent?

This tendency seems to overlook that the original reason for describing some prisoners as political was to illuminate our bonds of affinity—to identify prisoners of a war that we are fighting on the same side of. There are Nazis behind those walls. Let them free, certainly—the better to crack their skulls—but surely we can express our desires without expressing solidarity with our enemies.

"Any movement that does not support their political internees ... is a sham movement!" -- Ojore N. Lutalo, anarchist and former prisoner

And now we come to the crux of it. The recognition that prison is bad for our care about, is the grounding for any desire to do away with prisons entirely. is human and natural—the urge to support our imprisoned comrades, as well because of their position in war. We have no shit to sling at solidarity, only a had, and at the idea that this practice is inherently radical.

In fact, solidarity has nothing to do with what side one is on, and everything anyone who comes to life as in a state of war, there is nothing more natural regrettably devoid of a practice of solidarity with their imprisoned comrades, as friendship. Either they witness no war, or they do not seem themselves in

There are many prisoners of war, and their nations have their backs as a ma across this nation, to the revolutionary solidarity with prisoners of the Irish R networks of the Nazis and the mafia, everyone supports their family, their na

Some of us, however, are fighting a different kind of war. One in which we a to destroy all of those. A war that is qualitatively distinct. The only war that

In the war against all that, we do not perceive criminality as the infringement anti-political desire, our engagement in rediscovering our bodies and living e is the criminal activity of becoming human.

There is no prison, only impris

"Disneyland is there to conceal the fact that it is the 'real' country, all of 'real' that it is the social in its entirety, in its banal omnipresence, which is carcera

"Is it surprising that prisons resemble factories, schools, barracks, hospitals,

Prison is not a discrete place; its force and logic are distributed across the m a tendency, a way of managing life, that is prison. The place and the tender they were separate from the rest of society is to equivocate. What we call metropolis functions as a whole, and without which the rest could not functio shift positions within.

One's position in society corresponds to vastly different degrees of freedom. in probation and parole status, differences in citizenship and documentation relationships between inmates, guards and other authorities, there are hiera confinement, the hole.

No matter where one is located in free society, with some rare exceptions m Judgement Day which, like the trumpet of the archangel, could be sounded the existence of prisons because we are not in them. With the threat of inca invoke the desire to carpe diem. And so the escaped convict lives wildly in life sentence feels he has nothing left to lose. But the majority occupy a spa condemned, but a pale grey limbo in which the desire for somebody to do so incarceration of the population.

The mechanisms of prison creep across the metropolis. Through architectu movement, the management of time, the neutralization of threats, the univer breaking up of life into a series of functions deemed essential—sleep, consum become familiar to 'free' individuals. We do not need to rely on experts and

After a recent prison riot, the experts published a study declaring the prison prison riots.

There are other names for the pervasive condition of incarceration. Capitali deadness, or non-life. On the physical level it produces commodities from li labor" - Karl Marx); on the level of relationship it creates the spectacle from t and, as such, the autonomous movement of non-life." - Guy Debord). Politic

Politics, prison, and capital: all are agents in the production of deadness. A being convincingly argued, the overlap will remain a premise.

Prison cannot be abolished, o

"Burn, baby, burn" -- rioters in Warkworth Canada shouting as their former p

Without resorting to delusions of prophecy, it is arguable that the state could restore its health.

Let it not be said that what follows is a critique of abolition as reformist; the t dichotomy between reform and revolution. In place of the claim that reform normality, and then there are cracks that appear across its surface. In each contain, police, squash, or seek to lead the insurrection as any reformist. Th of insurrection, but that in the process, we must confront 'revolutionaries' alo

Shit happens, and so does reform. Let us be clear: if the state offers the ab to lock himself back up in his cell. To do so would be stupid. We'll take wha food. Lovely. Only a fool would reject reforms.

But we would reject prisons. We do not intend to spend our lives asking for interest of our jailers, it is not even in their power to give us what we want, b would accept reformism.

ready, ablate!

Three Positions Against Prison by Tiara Tackle

friends, the disgust and anger we feel at the incarceration of people we
Underlying the various classifications of "political" prisoners is an urge that
as the recognition that they are often treated more harshly by the state
at the hordes who have wrung that word dry of every drop of meaning it once

to do with the understanding that one is on a side—that is, at war. For
than to support their comrades in prison. While some anarchists are
that serves as a reasonable indication of their position toward war as well
in it, or they do not see prisoners as their comrades. So it goes.

matter of course. From the POW/MIA flags one sees flying at veterans' posts
Republican Army, to the Cuban Five freedom campaign, to the prison support
tion, their army.

are not fighting for a nation, an ideology, or political power, but in a struggle
could not only free our own prisoners of war, but destroy the prisons.

of just law, nor as a necessary and just means to revolution. Crime is
energy. Insurrection will never be the political activity of revolutionaries, for it

sonment.

'America', which is Disneyland (just as prisons are there to conceal the fact
)." - Jean Baudrillard

which all resemble prisons?" - Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*

metropolis. Put another way, there is a place that is prison, and then there is
city are not two, but one. Macrocosm, microcosm. To speak of prisons as if
prisons are a node in the prison-metropolis that are indicative of how the
in. Prison is a totality—something that one cannot escape from, but only

There is the difference between being in prison or being free. Differences
social class, gender, race. Meanwhile inside the prison there are power
archies of every sort, and there is the "prison within the prison"—solitary

made for the powerful, one exists under the threat of prison. Prison is a
at any time, but feels nearest during acts of sin. We are controlled through
incarceration comes a sense of the precarity of one's freedom, which can
freedom while her risk of imprisonment is highest; and so the prisoner with a
vice that is neither the heaven of being on the lam nor the hell of being
something is constantly felt and constantly deferred. This is the total

re, psychology, and technological force, prison has perfected the control of
salization of surveillance, the separation of public and private space, the
omption of food, physical exercise, work, religious practice. These have
research, for we know prison all too well.

food was the cause. We know that it is not food, but hunger that causes

ism: a system of social relationships through which life is reproduced into
iving beings and the earth; temporally, it turns life into labor ("Capital is dead
the unity of life ("The spectacle in its generality is a concrete inversion of life;
s: the discourse of power that makes us less than human.

comprehensive analysis of these bonds could fill pages, and instead of

nly destroyed.

prison went up in flames

abolish prisons in a way that would not only continue its existence but

trust is something altogether different. Here is what can be said of the old
prevents revolution, it would be more accurate to propose that there is
insurrection we know of, the so-called revolutionaries did as much to
that is not to say that individuals who desire insurrection cannot open spaces
ng with 'reformists'.

abolition of prisons, or the release of a few thousand prisoners, no one is going
t we can get. Shorter sentences, longer chains, food that almost resembles

things from the ones who took everything from us. It is not only against the
because we want our lives back. We will get what we can take. Only a fool

The social order changes things as it sees fit. Free a few thousand prisoners to reduce the overcrowding that can lead to riots. Build a new jail. The budget is tight, though, and it is expensive to maintain prisons. There will be a focus on rehabilitation and restoration more than punishment; meanwhile, prisoners will be transferred to privately-owned facilities, because the government can pay a corporation less per head than they do to run their own prisons, while the prison owners still turn a profit. Certain substances will be decriminalized. The sentencing for ghetto drugs will remain harsher than for their white suburban forms. These are games to them. They are playing with our lives, moving us around like pieces on a chess board. They carefully consider every move, not because they care, but because they want to win the game.

One and a half centuries ago, slavery was abolished by the United States government. This followed an enormous social struggle over abolition—wars were fought between pro-slavery elements and abolitionist elements. There were slave revolts and armed uprisings. The government intervened. And the Thirteenth Amendment ever-so-neatly includes a loophole allowing for the enslavement of prisoners ("except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted"). Moreover, the economic system of chattel slavery was replaced with indentured servitude and industrial wage labor—which the Northern capitalists were struggling to proliferate. So today, we have slavery, although slavery has been abolished. The structures of society that required slaves have remained intact. And in one hundred years, prisons may be abolished, but we will still have prisons as long as capitalism remains intact.

So if we learn a lesson from this, we should not struggle for another Emancipation Proclamation, for abolition granted by the state. Many abolitionists would deny that that is what their struggle aims for; others would openly admit it is—they say, I am not an anarchist, but an abolitionist. The repetition of old gestures is executed with precision.

"Even if the prisoners were transformed from human storerooms into luxury hotels, even if the prisoners of all prisons are satisfied with 'reduced sentences,' even if the everyday beatings of prisoners are replaced by sly agreements and assimilated by correctional policies in accordance with the 'human rights' model, even if the 'white cells' turn 'pink,' and heroine gives way to methadone we will remain forever enemies of any structure that denies us our freedom." - anonymous

The argument has been made that prison cannot be abolished without the abolition of the entire system of law, production, control, and so forth. If we define prison in its totality, the argument stands not only as true but as a truism, since prison includes all of those. But the abolition movement defines the prison as if it was a blot on the perfect society, a cancerous tumor that could be cut away. We seem to come together on the common urge to do away with prisons, but in actuality the foundation is being laid for a betrayal. If to abolitionists prison is only a place, then prisons can indeed be abolished separately from the rest, like slavery, at least in name.

If the abolition movement succeeds we may see a world without prisons, in which we are yet locked up. Imprisonment will have changed form, changed name; like slavery, we will say that it does not exist anymore, but control must be established nevertheless. How could this be managed? Social control would be deployed through advancements in surveillance, policing and architecture—essentially, the mechanisms of the prison diffused through all sectors of the metropolis—while the prison population would be drastically reduced by decriminalizing certain crimes and instituting alternative sentencing. People who had spent the last ten or twenty years behind bars would be released into the streets, only to find that the world outside appears and feels more like prison than it used to. Eerily, George Orwell's 1984 describes a society without prisons—that is to say, a society existing as a single large prison.

And yet, even the subjugated population has its outliers. The main character of Orwell's narrative is arrested, and instead of imprisonment he faces a process of politicization. So it must be with the 'abolition' of prison. As the general population comes under greater control and decriminalization, overseen by nicer police and friendlier government bodies that facilitate a restorative justice process between parties, there will still be a sector of humanity who make war on society and refuse to participate in systems of social control. When populations of sex workers, people of color, and drug users are decriminalized, with assault and property crimes managed through restorative justice, the true criminals would come out in starker contrast—the outlaws, the rebels, the pirates. They must be dealt with. So prison can be abolished in such a way that the troublemakers are still locked away in an institution that isn't called prison, or undergo 'treatment' and are reintegrated into society, while the rest of us live in a different kind of prison.

The "prison abolition movement" that is viewed as a radical social movement today, is set to become the establishment of tomorrow, to the extent that the Left is able to mobilize its forces more effectively than the Right and if such changes are in the interest of maintaining or increasing production and social control. The project is already under way, from the house arrest and ankle GPS monitor to the Breathalyzer in the automobile, to the decriminalization of marijuana in some states and that drug's establishment in legitimate markets, to the reductions in prison populations under the stress of budget shortfalls and prison riots. The abolitionist argument, "look how the prison population has grown in the past thirty or forty years" has already become obsolete as states begin to cut back their prison populations to balance their budgets. It is one thing to resist the growth of prisons; it is another to desire their destruction even while they are shrinking.

Abolition is framed, like all social movements, by quantitative goals—capacity building, prison reduction campaigns, and the abolition of prison as achievable in so many years. Campaign goals include decreased sentences, early release programs, decriminalization, alternative justice models. Steps in the right direction. Small changes that reduce total prison populations. The logic is that we can numerically reduce prisons out of existence, or on the flip side, that we can numerically build a movement that is large and efficient enough to abolish them.

The same quantity-driven movement would claim that the destruction of a prison by fire is not effective. The prisoners will be transferred, the dormitories rebuilt, there will still be prisons. Instead of creating concrete solidarity through outside revolt, activists would willingly use the prisoners' riots as a means to an end. They say, see, this riot shows that the prisons are overcrowded and we demand some inmates be released early. It is unfortunate that such a thing had to happen, they reason, but it is worth getting our message into the media, because that will get us closer to our goals, which we know are in the prisoners' and society's best interests.

They are right that there will still be prisons. But for what reasons do prisons persist? Is it because prisoners set fire to them, or because insurrection is not sufficiently generalized?

The prisons are being destroyed, right now. Prisoners around the world are taking every available opportunity to make holes and set fires, to sabotage cameras and take guards hostage. Of course there is also stillness, inertia, falling-into-line, but beneath the sound of feet falling in rhythm are the odd sounds of scratching of a knife, the turning of pages, and the tinkering of wire against an electrical socket; following that, the distinct sound of an electrical spark is heard, and the scent of something burning wafts through the air...

It is not enough—and what's more, it is not a joyful approach—to gradually empty the prisons of the prisoners through new social programs and campaigns, letting their shells stand hollow. The silhouettes of empty prisons would stand as reminders of a grave mistake, but we would never be free. Let us seek the feeling of a prisoner taking a sledgehammer to her cell.

There is a story that comes from the occupation of the abandoned Alcatraz prison island by the Indians of All Tribes between 1969 and 1971. We do not know where this story came from or if it 'really' happened, only that it has taken root in our minds. According to the legend, one of the people involved in the occupation had been imprisoned at Alcatraz in his earlier years. When he arrived on the island, he searched through the prison for some time and eventually came to the cell in which he'd been locked up. Taking up a sledgehammer, the man destroyed the walls of the cell, block by cement block. It was hard work, and he was many years in age, and by the time he was done he was exhausted. He put down the sledgehammer and sank to the ground, with the ruins of the old cage around him.



this is where we belong.
building multi-generational movements
by clayton dewey

My biggest fear is to mention a meeting to my kids and hear them groan, "Oh, not again Ba." It seems that I've repeatedly read, seen and heard interviews with the children of high profile activists who were ultimately turned off to the work their parents did because of the lack of attention that was given to them, at the expense of their parents' political work. Tupac Shakur summed it up eloquently when he said, "I felt like my mother cared more for 'The People' more than she did for me."

It's a tension that a lot of anarchist and radical parents feel, I think. Do I attend a meeting and find a babysitter? If I can't find a sitter do I attend a meeting with my kid and try and entertain them? Oftentimes when we bring our kids to meetings we run the risk of annoying the people around us or leaving our children bored and anxious to get home. Even if childcare is provided, the kids might still much rather be doing something else. The same goes for events such as conferences. If there's no childcare, it's usually easier to just stay home and enjoy the family than take a trip to something made just for the adults. As a result, parents are often forced into the decision of spending time with their kids or spending time with the movement. And of course, when it ultimately comes down to a choice between our kids and something else, even something as important as "the movement" or "the rev" or whatever, we choose our kids.

Fighting to Stay Relevant as a Parent

When I organized for the 2008 protests of the Democratic National Convention (DNC), that work was completely detached from my kids. I didn't talk about the work I did with them, and with some rare exceptions, they didn't meet the people I worked with or really know what I was working on. The same held true for the members of the collective. I didn't talk about my kids with them, and they didn't know my kids. I was living a double life. It was because of my wife's support for me and her willingness to stay home with the kids while I went out to meetings that I was able to pursue that work. And even then, when others would go out for drinks after the meeting I would go home because I wanted to be with my family and I knew my activism was already a strain on our relationship. As the DNC approached, the strain was greater and greater, especially as it came closer and closer to my daughter's birth. I stepped back quite a bit from the organizing to focus on my family and our new baby. I did get calls from some of the folks in Unconventional Denver when Cambria was born and a couple members even came by after she was born to help clean the house and bring us food. That was great. But in the end, the double life persisted. I brought the kids to one anti-war march, but we ended up leaving early because they were hot and tired. Overall, the work against the DNC did not intersect with fathering my kids.

Working in a Collective that is Parent and Kid-Friendly

Even before the DNC my partner had sworn off most anarchist organizing, focusing instead on her doula work and birth activism—a space where children and parents are welcomed and part of the work. I was feeling divided about my role in the anarchist community. The work around the DNC was really draining on me because of that feeling of leaving my family to do this work and also the fact that I didn't have close relationships with many of the people involved in the work I was passionate about. Our lifestyles just didn't match up enough. Not being a part of the activist circles that I shared interests with left me feeling frustrated and ineffective. Whitney and I were definitely starting to move on. I decided to put more energy towards my own neighborhood politics and union work.

Then we were invited to be a part of the Denver Anarchist Black Cross (DABC). If it had simply been announced that an ABC chapter was starting, I probably would have attended—I would have felt conflicted, knowing I couldn't be involved in the way I wanted. I think Whitney would have never really entertained the idea of joining herself. But we were invited. What a difference that alone made. Someone told us, "We respect you and think you have a lot to offer, would you join?" So we did.

Working with ABC has been great. Everyone has been so eager to know how to accommodate us as parents. Meeting times and places have been decided around what works for us and the kids. Members have never been shy to watch the kids during meetings, or ask how to change a diaper, or continue to learn how to become comfortable and helpful with our kids. Our kids all know the collective members on a first-name basis and they don't groan when we say we're having a meeting. Well, sometimes they still do, but not as often as they used to.

What a Multi-Generational Movement Would Look Like

While working with DABC has reawakened our passion for anarchism and radical change, there is still a lot to be done. Right now I see the collective as being at a place of accommodation. That is, it's a question of what to do with the kids so Whitney and Clayton can be involved. In this model, the kids are treated more as a liability than an asset to the movement. Of course, it's not that cut and dry, but I would like to see us reach a point where kids are at events and meetings because they are valued and wanted in those spaces, not simply contained or there so the parents can be struggling for liberation.

Rather than having meetings where the kids go upstairs and watch a movie while we meet, I want to be figuring out ways that they too


can be learning and growing from the work we do. There will always be work that is for the adults, but how can we break down the paradigm of families leading double lives? How can we go about resisting in ways that benefit the kids just as much as the parents who are in the struggle?

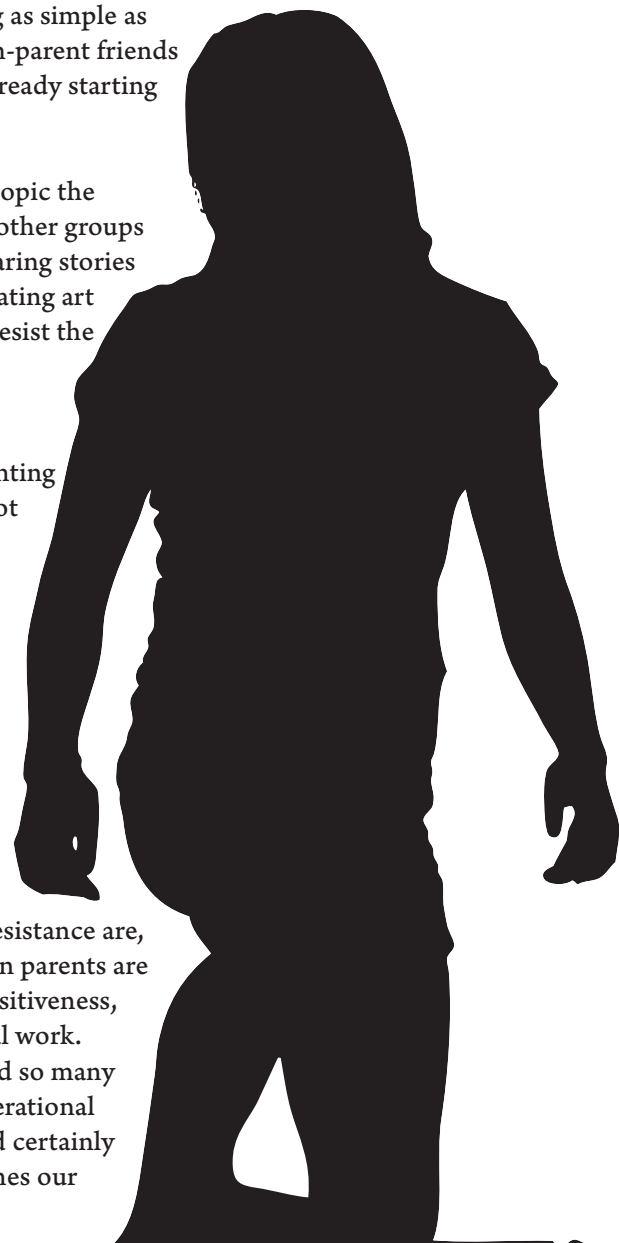
Whitney and I still have to almost always choose to either find a babysitter or decide who will stay home and who will go out to activist functions. It's hard because those are the things that brought us together in the first place. Because of lack of resources and money, it's easier to simply have someone stay home than to find or pay a babysitter for the kids. Again we get back to leading double lives. Rarely are we seen at activist events together. It would be great to be sharing in that more. And to go further, it would be nice if more social gatherings and political events were ones where kids are included. This means childcare, but it also means multi-age activities and spaces, and if there is something separate for the kids, that it be something related to what the adults are working on—something they can share with the adults.

I envision us getting together not just at parties or film screenings, but over a picnic in the park, a matinee screening of Robin Hood, a parade of kites, or a field day of cooperative games. It could even be something as simple as people going out to kid-friendly restaurants together and having some of the non-parent friends sitting next to and engaging in conversation with the kiddos (something we're already starting to do more of in Denver!).

When we hold meetings I see the kids doing meaningful work around the same topic the parents are engaged in. For instance, DABC has been working in coalition with other groups and individuals in fighting the detention center in Aurora. The kids could be hearing stories of migrant children and the excitement and fear of moving to a new place, or creating art around the ways families are torn apart by ICE and how families overcome and resist the inhumane immigration system.

Possibly the most important aspect of creating movements that span the age spectrum is something a bit less tangible, which is a principle of communal parenting in which people see children as belonging to the world and to the community, not just to their parents. This means people intentionally learning how to relate to children. At meetings, it's great to have the kids be comfortable going up to others to ask for a glass of water, or hanging out and have them run up and give our friends bear hugs. It also means people being close enough to parents and kids to be able to handle more difficult situations, like tell them when they've crossed a boundary or need to be redirected in some way. This takes nothing more than taking an active interest in the kids in our community and working with parents to know how to deal with various issues that come up. The more that families are present, visible and actively welcomed into movements, the more that child-rearing and mentoring is done beyond the nuclear family.

In closing, it's important to recognize that the more diverse our movements of resistance are, the stronger they are. When children are part of our circles, we all benefit. When parents are active organizers, we all benefit. Children bring with them joy, inquisitiveness, creativity, passion and so many other things to events and to political work. Parents bring experience, nurturing skills, patience, commitment and so many other things to our movements as well. When we build a multigenerational movement we do that with this understanding. Denver and beyond certainly has far to go before that is a feeling and a commitment that defines our movements, but I am excited about the path we are on. 



Parenting from Behind Prison Walls

One Father's Thoughts

by Jaan Laaman

I have been in captivity for the past quarter century in both Massachusetts state and federal custody. All my time has been in max security prisons and penitentiaries, often with very restrictive and punitive conditions (long terms segregation, etc.).

I can quickly and unequivocally state, that the toughest single hardship I have continually had to deal with, has been my inability to be a real father to my son for all these years. More broadly, bringing hardship on all my relatives and not being able to be there for the holidays, weddings, births and deaths of my extended family, has also been a sad and negative reality. What is significant of course, is not my feelings of hardship or sadness, but the real loss of care, protection, guidance, love and daily interaction that my son was deprived of. The true loss and damage is to the little child who must live and grow, learn and develop without the father or mother or both, to protect, guide and nurture them.

When I was an anti-imperialist activist and revolutionary on the streets, I was under no illusion about receiving justice or civil and human rights from the U.S. government. I knew that prison was a possibility. Dealing with the FBI, courts, cops, prison guards and walls has never been that difficult. Not being able to care for your son when he is sick, or sending him off to his first day of school, or high school for that matter, and the million other things that a parent does for and with his child, that is very difficult, and especially for the child.

So what to do? First you have to realize that there is no good or adequate or even acceptable way to guide and raise a child from behind a prison wall. Still, there are many important things you should try to do.

First of all your child needs a home, food and shelter with someone who can take care of him or her, and hopefully someone (family usually) who actually cares for and loves him/her. Whatever you can do to make that happen, do it. If your child's care givers (the other parent is best whenever possible) have at least a halfway positive feeling towards you the imprisoned parent, that is a big plus. How the locked up parent is seen and spoken about around the child by the caregivers, is important. Just as significant is what type of contact they allow and facilitate you to have with your son or daughter. Visits and phone contact is so crucial. Often, if not usually (especially for political prisoners), you are imprisoned far away from your family and home, so visits are extremely costly and hard to arrange. It is very important that you try to set up visits with your child as often as possible. For over a decade I was only able to arrange one week long yearly visit with my son, so when you are together, make you time as positive and pleasant as possible. For political prisoners with young children (up to late teens), the Rosenberg Fund For Children is an extremely helpful and unique resource for helping political prisoners pay for visits with their children.

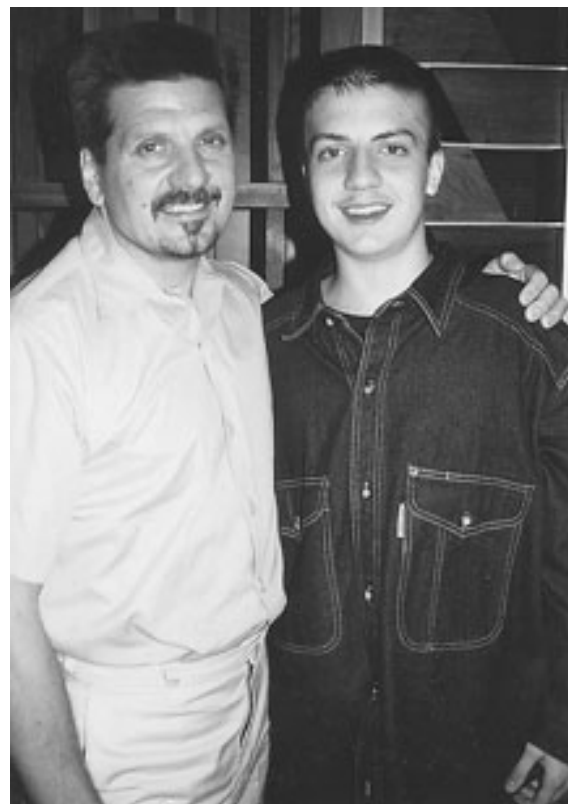
In addition to visits, regular phone calls, even if only for 10 minutes or so, are really necessary. Calling at least weekly and more if possible, is so important to maintain a real living connection. Likewise letters and cards, little notes, pictures, photos also are a must. Writing at least once a week is necessary and important and something that should be done all through your son or daughter's childhood - all their school years.

There will be innumerable incidents, issues and problems that will come up. As hard as you try, you'll never be able to really do enough, but you should keep trying.

I don't think you should try to do much disciplining (you can't really anyway) or yelling at your child during visits or on the phone. You should listen to what they say and explain your reasons for the advice and guidance you give them. Even little kids can understand your reasons if told in an age appropriate way. I would also recommend that you read a book on child psychology and development. The more you understand what your child is going through, what cognitive and emotional level he/she is on, the better you'll be able to listen and communicate. If there is some way you can take a child psychology course, then do it.

Finally here is the one main thing you can and always should do for your child. You must let them know that they are loved, that they are a great wonderful worthy little person, who has a real father (or mother) who loves them, likes them, always cares about them and will keep loving them even though they are separated. Give them hope and love and then more love. Good luck. None of this will be easy or work very well, but you can't EVER give up on loving and helping your child. 🐦

Jaan Laaman is a long held political prisoner (anti-Imperialist, socialist, anti-war activist) who has been in captivity over 25 years. Rick Laaman, his son, was barely 3 years old when FBI led forces assaulted their home in Cleveland, Ohio and arrested both his mother (she was also a political prisoner for 7 years) and father. Rick himself was held in a youth detention jail for almost 2 months before his family was finally able to get him released to his grandparents.



Denver Anarchist Black Cross

Events Calendar Feb-April 2010

Saturday February 13, noon: Valentine's Pancake Brunch benefit and card writing for political prisoners and prisoners of war @ 6th Ave UCC (6th and Adams)

Sunday February 14, 3pm: Denver ABCF general meeting @ P&L Printing (23rd and Clay)

Sunday February 21, 3pm: Denver ABCF general meeting @ P&L Printing (23rd and Clay)

Sunday February 28, 3pm: Denver ABCF general meeting @ P&L Printing (23rd and Clay)

Wednesday March 3, 6:30pm: Monthly Political Prisoner and POW letter writing night: Animal and Earth Liberation Prisoners @ 6th Ave UCC (6th and Adams)

Sunday March 7, 3pm: Denver ABCF general meeting @ P&L Printing (23rd and Clay)

Sunday March 14, 3pm: Denver ABCF general meeting @ P&L Printing (23rd and Clay)

Thursday March 18, 8:30pm: Poker Night Fundraiser for Denver ABCF @ P&L Printing (23rd and Clay)

Sunday March 21, 3pm: Denver ABCF general meeting @ P&L Printing (23rd and Clay)

Sunday March 28, 3pm: Denver ABCF general meeting @ P&L Printing (23rd and Clay)

Sunday April 4, 3pm: Denver ABCF general meeting @ P&L Printing (23rd and Clay)

Wednesday April 7, 6:30pm: Monthly Political Prisoner and POW letter writing night: Indigenous Resistance Prisoners @ 6th Ave UCC (6th and Adams)

Sunday April 11, 3pm: Denver ABCF general meeting @ P&L Printing (23rd and Clay)

Sunday April 18, 3pm: Denver ABCF general meeting @ P&L Printing (23rd and Clay)

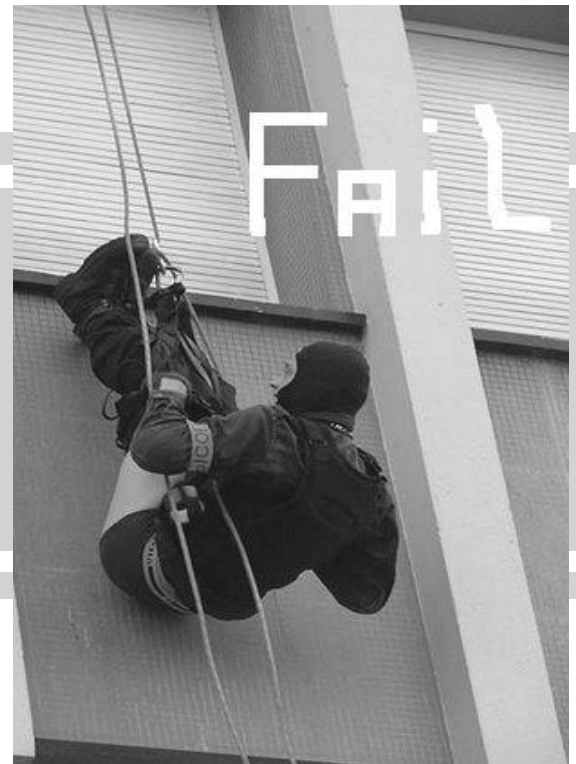
Sunday April 25, 3pm: Denver ABCF general meeting @ P&L Printing (23rd and Clay)

For updated event and meeting information: denverabc.wordpress.com

Feel free to drop in!

(Just don't show up like this guy)

Open meetings every Sunday, 3pm at 23rd & Clay St.



Prisoner Letter Writing Focus Calendar

March-April 2010

Political Prisoner and POW letter writing nights every first Wednesday of the month at 6:30pm at the 6th Avenue United Church of Christ (6th and Adams)

Wednesday March 3: Animal and Earth Liberation Prisoners



Alex Jason Hall
2009-06304
Davis County Jail
800 West State Street
Farmington, UT 84025



Daniel McGowan
#63794-053
USP Marion
P.O. Box 1000
Marion, IL 62959



Nathan Block
#36359-086
FCI Lompoc
3600 Guard Road,
Lompoc, CA United States
93436



Briana Waters
#36432-086
FCI Danbury
Route 37
Danbury, CT 06811



Eric McDavid
#16209-097
FCI Victorville, Medium II
Federal Correctional
Institution
PO Box 5300
Adelanto, CA 92301



Lauren Gazzola
#93497-011
FCI Danbury
Route #37 22 1/2 Pembroke
Road
Danbury, CT 06811



Joyanna Zacher
#36360-086
FCI Dublin
5701 8th St – Camp Parks-
Unit E,
Dublin, CA 94568



Kevin Kjonaas
#93502-011
Unit I, FCI Sandstone
Unit 1 PO Box 1000
Sandstone, MN 55072



Jonathan Paul
#07167-085
FCI Phoenix
37910 N 45th Ave.
Phoenix, AZ 85086



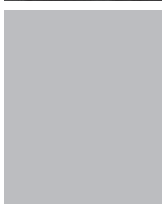
William James Viehl
2009-05735
Davis County Jail
800 West State Street
Farmington, UT 84025



Steve James Murphy
#0910300841
Central Detention Center
630 East Rialto Ave
San Bernardino, CA 92408



Grant Barnes
#137563
San Carlos Correctional
Facility
PO Box 3 Pueblo, CO 81002

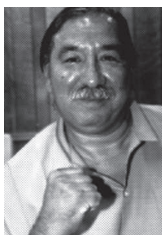


Helen Woodson
#03231-045
FMC Carswell
PO Box 27137
Admin Max Unit
Fort Worth, TX 76127



Michael Sykes
#696693
Richard A. Handlon Correctional Facility
1728 Bluewater Highway
Ionia, MI 48846

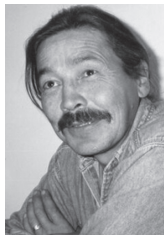
Wednesday April 7: Indigenous Resistance Prisoners



Leonard Peltier
#89637-132
USP Lewisburg
P.O. Box 1000
Lewisburg, PA 17837



Luis V. Rodriguez
C – 33000
P.O. Box 409000
IONE, CA 95640



John Graham
Pennington County Jail
307 St. Joseph Street
Rapid City, SD 57701



Byron Shane "Oso Blanco" Chubbuck
#07909-051
USP Lewisburg
P.O. Box 1000
Lewisburg, PA 17837

Join us for a night of food, conversation, and support for our imprisoned comrades.



together, our wildest dreams become reality.

