

Coalition For Prisoners' Rights Newsletter

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WAR IS CRIME IS WAR

It is the quality as well as the content of the thinking and discussion reflected in the acts of the US government and reports in the corporate media that is a most disturbing aspect of events since September 11.

What gets called terrorism in fact are violent acts by small groups from poor countries which, when done by those working for government agencies (of large, rich countries), goes by other names. The current situation blurs the line between "violent crime" (conducted by individuals/groups for private gains) and "war" (conducted by government-sponsored individuals/groups for supposedly more general, public benefits).

Crimes have a history of being dealt with, with more or less justice, more or less pain, by courts, including international courts, and by truth commissions.

From loving New York City parents comes:

"Our son Greg is among the many missing from the World Trade Center attack ... Our government is heading in the direction of violent revenge, with the prospect of sons, daughters, parents, friends in distant lands dying, suffering, and nursing further grievances against us. It is not the way to go. It will not avenge our son's death. Not in our son's name.

"Our son died a victim of an inhuman ideology. Our actions should not serve the same purpose. Let us grieve. Let us reflect and pray. Let us think about a rational response that brings real peace and justice to our world. But let us not as a nation add to the inhumanity of our times.

"President Bush: Your response to this attack does not make us feel better about our son's death. It makes us feel worse. It makes

(cont. on next page)

WAR IS CRIME cont.

us feel that our government is using our son's memory as a justification to cause suffering for other sons and parents in other lands."

We ask: Why bomb Afganistan? Is this the infinite justice of the new century? A poor country with its civilians starving to death while they're waiting to be killed? If killing more people were the answer, there would have been peace in Ireland and Israel years ago. President Bush can no more "rid the world of evil doers" than he can stock it with saints.

The history of the US role in the Middle East exists even though we don't know it. In 1996, when Madeleine Albright was asked on CBS if it was worth it that (then) half a million children in Irag (now a million) had died as the result of US sanctions after the Gulf War - more than had died in Hiroshima - she replied: "I think this is a very hard choice, but we think the price is worth it." That is a small part of where September 11 came from.

Another important piece of the aftermath of September 11 has to do with the further loss of constitutional rights in the US through new laws, regulations and practices. This will harm us all. In addition, much of it seems arbitrary, inconsistent, useless and foolish.

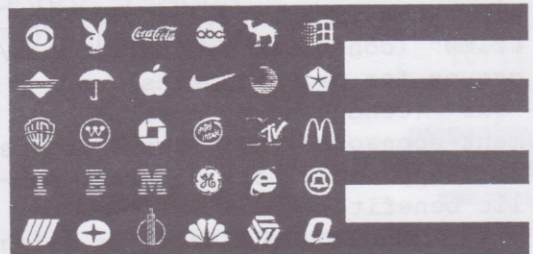
A student organization at the University of Pittsburgh in its list of the top lies about the war:

--That oil is not part of this. But the Caspian Sea region has potentially the world's largest oil reserves - the problem is piping it out. Afganistan is strategically located between these reserves and the markets of east Asia, including India.

--That the US is "liberating" the people of Afganistan from Taliban tyranny by aiding the so called Northern Alliance. In fact, this effort would merely replace one group of human rights violators with another.

--That the US is "coming together." However, many thousands have already been laid off without severance benefits in the airline industry alone, as well as in the tourist industry, among others.

Those who don't learn from their history are bound to repeat it. US history has hurt a lot of people, while enriching a few. Justice and equality are the most sustainable strategies against violence, oppression and poverty.



DEATH PENALTY UPDATE

We always hope to bring you information that you would not otherwise hear about. This month we have noticed that the number of state killings is down, more death sentences are being overturned and more questions being raised. We hope that these are trends that will continue.

The number of executions seems to be down this year. In 1999, 98 people were killed by the State for killing. In 2000, the number was down to 85 people. So far this year, "only" 49 people have been killed to teach people that killing people is wrong. If things continue at this rate, only 65 people will be killed by the government this year. That is, of course, still 65 too many.

In addition, several death row inmates have had their sentences overturned or their cases reopened. The federal court of appeals for Arizona recently ruled that Warren Summerlin, who has spent nearly 20 years on death row in Arizona, is entitled to have his sentence reconsidered because the judge who sentenced him to death was "addicted to marijuana" at the time, according to the court. A different federal appeals court commuted the death sentence of Charles Singleton in Arkansas to life in prison. Singleton is mentally ill. The State had wanted to force Singleton to

take anti-psychotic drugs so that it could kill Singleton. The federal appeals court, however, decided that the State could not kill Singleton.

In Mississippi, the case of Kenneth Brewer has been reopened. Brewer has been on death row since 1995, when he was convicted and sentenced to death for the rape and murder of a three-year-old girl. However, recent tests on semen from the child's body showed that the DNA in the semen did not match the DNA in Brewer's semen. In Maryland, a federal district judge overturned the murder conviction and death sentence of Kevin Wiggins. The judge determined that there was not enough evidence for a rational person to believe that Wiggins was guilty.

The Georgia Supreme Court recently held that use of the electric chair to execute people is cruel and unusual punishment. Alabama and Nebraska are the only states that still use the electric chair to kill.

On the other hand, the news is not all good. If all goes as feared, New Mexico will kill Terry Clark on November 6th in the first state-sponsored killing in New Mexico in 41 years. The drugs to kill Clark have been supplied by New Mexico's health agency whose mission is "to promote health and prevent disease and disability."

**VOICES
FROM
INSIDE**

since 1976



NO WINDOWS

Woodville TX September 17, 2001

I am in Ad Seg on this unit. We have NO windows in our cells and no way to tell night from day. I find this very weird. It makes you feel like you are in a dungeon...

BEAUTIFUL LIVING WORLD

Carbondale CO September 21, 2001

Those surviving who were involved in the WTC and Pentagon attacks should be placed at abandoned military bases where they shall establish farms to help feed the world. The time is now to "beat our spears into plowshares and learn war no more." When we erect a memorial, it should read: "To Those Who Died or Served Here - In Your Honor We Shall Establish World Peace."

LET THERE BE LIGHT

Thomaston ME September 22, 2001

Maine is in the process of building a new prison, in which about half of the state prison population will be housed. The prisoncrats have told us that there are going to be night lights in the cells "for our protection." I am exploring the legalities of such treatment. The warden informed us that the ACA "approved" this lighting..What makes them experts on the psychological effects of 24 hour illumination?

BULLET PROOF LOVE

Waynesburg PA September 24, 2001

Anyone interested in learning more about the Red Heart Warriors, a clan of the Eastern Lenape Nation, should write to Tom Big Warrior (PO Box 4362, Allentown PA 18105). Our objective is to promote awareness of the Native American holocaust and to motivate our members to think in a rational fashion to seek solutions to our problems so that we may eradicate them.



THE ALLIANCE FOR CITIZEN RIGHT PROGRAM

Huntsville TX September 30, 2001

The Alliance for Citizen Right Program is an organization of Americans against criminal injustice (formerly known as the United States Offenders Litigation Program). It is offering free brochures, "Before You Hire a Lawyer" and "Collaborative Law - A Better Way." Write:

Mailing list additions and address changes should go into effect within two months from their post-marked date. We don't have the resources to acknowledge these requests by letter. Requests for referrals and other correspondence will be answered within four to six weeks. Letters intended for publication must say "Do Print."

The Coalition makes information available on resources and services for prisoners. We strongly urge that readers keep copies of all papers, especially legal papers, sent to those offering assistance, and be careful about sending money. **In most cases we do not have direct experience with the quality or reliability of the services provided by the groups mentioned. NONE OF US ARE LAWYERS.**

Stacie S. Branham, membership coordinator at HALT, 1612 K Street NW - Suite 510, Washington DC 20006. We also offer a free newsletter to women in prison entitled "Mothers Love."

If you have over 20 years, I can prepare briefs for time cuts and commutations, with assistance from your family and information about your case. Write: Sylvester G. McGee II, 801907, Estelle Unit, 264 FM 3478, Huntsville TX 77320.

SYSTEM

Santa Fe NM October 1, 2001

On the issue of their so-called level system: it's used as a threatening device. Their so-called level system is reaching its boiling point. There is general disrespect from staff provoking inmates. They've got the attitude that the level system gives them the right to treat inmates as low lifes.

CENTRAL COOLING

Tennessee Colony TX October 9, 2001

As autumn has arrived on the Michael Unit, we in Ad Seg endure punishing, freezing temperatures. Our Unit contains central heating and cooling, which are not helping us this cool season. Our bosses purposely make this punishment worse by showering us shortly after morning chow, when the wind is extremely cold and we are hidden head to toe under a shivering blanket.

What makes this punishment harder to endure is the fact that our bosses are standing at our doors in nice, thick warm coats. So we must shower and come back into our cells that are blowing mind-boggling cold air through our vents. Stomach cramps are the norm and pneumonia is waiting to catch us.

DOG CAGES

Menard IL October 10, 2001

In Pontiac CC they have designated the whole prison as segregation, except Death Row. They have welded up dog cages in the yard, where inmates are put for recreation for up to 5 hours a day, without water, urinals or toilets. They do this in the hot summer or in the bitter cold of winter. If you want recreation, they give it to you with a vengeance.





SEPTEMBER 11: What is the meaning of this?

Blythe CA October 11, 2001

No amount of c/o's wearing little American flags on their uniforms or the jingoism displayed by the general population is going to change the unconditional support of Israel by the United States. How many of these patriots voted in the last 20 years? Sad, sad indeed.

NO ROOM

Los Lunas NM October 13, 2001

The parole board in Santa Fe is sitting on their hands instead of processing people out of here. I am being housed in the hospital section. They have people sleeping on the floor all over the gym. They also have people housed sleeping 5 men to a cell on the floor behind the infirmary with no shower or toilet...

"ISLAMIC AWARENESS COMMITTEE"

Beaumont TX October 14, 2001

This Islamic study group offers information on the basic teachings of Al-Islam defined by the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet. Prince Lakeem-Abdur Raheem-Shabazz-Abdush Shakur, s/n Michael Wayne Campbell, 640069, Stiles Unit, 3060 FM 3514, Beaumont TX 77705.

CERTAIN RIGHTS

Tucson AZ October 20, 2001

We, myself and many inmates, came to prison with various disabilities and are and continue to be classified as disabled. This affords us protections under the American's with Disabilities Act of 1990. Do you believe that is humane to treat people with severe spinal cord injuries, severe circulatory problems, amputations, diabetes, heart conditons and kidney/liver failure to living conditions that fall far below the standards of a kennel? Well - that is what we are subjected to as inmates. We are forced to live in tents without adequate heat or air, forced to live in unsanitary and non-handicapped restroom facilities, forced to climb steps to obtain meals and medications and so on...The state of Arizona and the Arizona Department of Corrections must be held accountable for the law, are not above the law and must be held accountable.



VOICES IN SOLIDARITY

COLUMBIA LAW REVIEW

Publishes an updated version of A Jailhouse Lawyer's Manual and a recent supplement. \$20 to prisoners. Columbia School of Law, Box B-25, B435 West 116 Street, New York NY 10027.

FREE BOOK OFFER

Available from St. Anthony Mary Claret Program, 4 sets of books, on separate requests. Ask for further information from Tan Books & Publishers, PO Box 424, Rockford IL 61105.

INCARCERATED PARENTS MANUAL

A updated version of the "Incarcerated Parents Manual, Your Legal Rights and Responsibilities," is now available, free to prisoners. To obtain a copy, contact: Legal Services for Prisoners with Children, 100 McAllister Street, San Francisco 94101, (415) 255-7036.

THE ISKCON PRISON MINISTRY

Writes to prisoners who are interested in yoga, mantra meditation, and a spiritual lifestyle. For free literature and books on devotional yoga, mantra meditation and spiritual pen-pals, write: ISKCON Prison Ministry, PO Box 2693, Toledo OH 43606.

PEN PAL

Christine Hewitt, 18 Heath Street, Burnley, Lancashire BB10 3A4, ENGLAND is active in international human rights affairs and has a particular interest in Native Americans particularly in Dakota and Arizona (Airmail is 80 cents per ounce).

GRATERFRIENDS INC.

Every year in November, GRATERFRIENDS raises funds through the sale of its calendars, "The Inside" illustrated by Matt Matteo. This is GRATERFRIENDS major fundraiser for the year and allows them to publish their newsletter providing advocacy for prisoners and their families. To order a calendar, please send \$10 to GRATERFRIENDS, INC., 541 Swede Street, Norristown PA, 19401.

The Coalition for Prisoners' Rights Newsletter is published monthly by the Prison Project of Santa Fe, Inc., P.O. Box 1911, Santa Fe NM, 87504-1911. Subscription rates are: free to prisoners, their family members, and ex-prisoners who request it themselves; \$12/year for other individuals; \$25/year for government agencies and for-profit institutions. Please do not send names of other people; order only for yourself. We appreciate those who help us by sharing their newsletter and by sending stamps.

Crime of the Month

aka Crimetoppers

While the U.S. is contemplating increasing the amount of energy produced by nuclear power to reduce its dependence on oil from Middle East sources, scientists are grappling with public health and safety concerns. Lauded by the industry as safe, cheap, clean, efficient and reliable, permanent disposal of the waste generated by nuclear energy remains a hotly contested issue.

As to cost, the last available data collected in 1999 indicated that in the 19 states without nuclear power, electricity cost 5.52 cents a kilowatt hour compared to 6.8 cents in the 31 states using nuclear power.

Even setting aside the disasters at Chernobyl and Three Mile Island,

the long term effects of both nuclear production and storage have yet to be thoroughly investigated.

A recent study of strontium 90, a radioactive substance that can cause cancer, found that the teeth of children born close to nuclear reactors had strontium 90 levels twice as high as those born elsewhere.

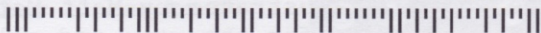
Further, in some regions, radiation levels and death rates from childhood cancers grew at an almost identical rate. More research is needed before the results can be considered conclusive but the odds for such study are slim. The United States hasn't funded research to measure radiation in humans since 1982.

This is our Crime of the Month.



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11/01

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