

Coalition For Prisoners' Rights Newsletter

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WHO IS IN BONDAGE?

Rural southwest Georgia currently has nearly 50,000 human beings in bondage--either in a jail or prison cell or on felony probation or parole. Three of every four of them are African Americans. There are often no white people in the courtrooms and jails there who are not employed by the court or the sheriff. And it is the African American defendant who is guaranteed a harsher prison sentence upon conviction in those courtrooms. Nearly 30% of Black males in Georgia can expect to serve prison time at some point.

Racism is still the problem that undergirds all others in this part of the Deep South. We must acknowledge that many African Americans remain victims of an economic-legal-police-prison industrial-caste system.

This racism is backed up by power--the power to enforce one's

prejudice. The greatest damage to people of color occurs when racism has been institutionally empowered. Perhaps more than any other institution, the police, court and penal system functions to subordinate, exploit, disenfranchise and control people of color.

Yes, it is true that there are many white people in prison. And that many white people are treated terribly there. But the numbers just aren't the same.

Those of us working for justice must argue, protest and organize to challenge the many unjust practices and policies of those who determine who is arrested and jailed and those who reap huge political and financial windfalls from African Americans' downfall. ***Adapted with kind permission from *Freedomways* #74, newsletter of the Prison & Jail Project, PO Box 6749, Americus GA 31709.

FOUNDATIONS OF HOPE

We learn the measure of our resolve at the hand of injustice. Yeah, right. Hey, how about if I just take a correspondence course instead? Why does indignity remain such a prevalent element within our cultures? On a recent visit to Palestine I discovered that the worst oppression can galvanize the spirit in a way that justice does not. Human beings can choose to suffer, not as victims, but as powerful witnesses to an egalitarian nightmare: the system of moral accountability run amok; the bearers of the standards of equality in reckless abandon of their duty to guard the sanctity of the human spirit.

The children of Palestine endure the injustice of collective punishment daily at the more than 700 Israeli military checkpoints and roadblocks that are part of Israel's illegal occupation of the Palestinian Territories. Restrictions on movement from town to town within Palestine, based solely on ethnic identity, prevent tens of thousands of innocent civilians from working, visiting relatives, farming their own land, or attending school.

The now infamous Apartheid Wall (built by the Israeli government), which has been condemned by the International Court of Justice and by nations around the world, steals huge additional areas of land from the Palestinians and starves their communities economically, socially and spiritually. The Wall already isolates 97 primary health clinics and 11 hospitals from the populations they serve. This is not security; it is quiet genocide. Ethnic hatreds have a startling way of recycling themselves. The

by a traveling correspondent

oppressed become the oppressor. One can't help but make a comparison to the wall imprisoning Polish Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto some 65 years ago.

Within the prison created by the Wall, an astonishing level of dignity and strength combine to embrace peaceful opposition. Degradation is borne with towering heroism. Humiliation is confronted by patient endurance. Who among us could passively accept the machinations of occupation: the seizure of our land; the daily vilification and humiliation of our children and families; the restriction of movement; the destruction and demonization of our heritage; the random demolition of homes and schools within our communities? Yet, the vast majority of the population of Palestine persists in peaceful resistance to the occupation. Where violence could be an expected response, nonviolence is a powerful force. The whole world can learn a lesson of tolerance and steadfastness from the Palestinian people.

Our planet is on the brink. Fear and hatred appear to be winning the day. The powerful have forgotten that justice and human rights are not optional. Either we begin to treat one another as equals in peril in this time of crises, or we perish together, in spirit and in flesh. Personal accountability is key. Each of us must be responsible for the truth of our own actions. In Palestine, I met individuals with no future left to lose, literally. But their honor and self esteem remain intact. For them, integrity is the foundation of hope. Without it, there would be no reason to continue to struggle.

IN MEMORIAM -- REST IN PEACE

Fifty-eight people were officially murdered by state governments in the United States in 2004. By the end of 2004, 944 people had been executed since the US moratorium on state killings ended in 1976.

1/06	Ynobe Matthews	TX	6/17	Steven Oken	MD
1/06	Charles Singleton	AR	6/30	David Ray Harris	TX
1/09	Ramond DayleRowsey	NC	7/01	Robert Karl Hicks	GA
1/13	Tyrone Peter Darks	OK	7/14	Stephen Vrabel	OH
1/14	Lewis Williams	OH	7/19	Eddie Albert Crawford	GA
1/14	Kenneth Eugene Bruce	TX	7/20	Scott Mink	OH
1/21	Kevin Zimmerman	TX	7/22	Mark Bailey	VA
1/28	Billy Vickers	TX	8/05	James Hubbard	AL
2/03	John Glenn Roe	OH	8/12	Terry Jess Dennis	NV
2/04	Johnny L. Robinson	FL	8/18	James Hudson	VA
2/11	Edward Lagrone	TX	8/25	Jasen Shane Busby	TX
2/12	Bobby Ray Hopkins	TX	8/26	Windel Ray Workman	OK
2/17	Norman R. Cleary	OK	8/26	James Allridge	TX
2/17	Cameron Willingham	TX	9/09	James Reid	VA
3/03	Marcus Cotton	TX	9/21	Andrew Flores	TX
3/09	David Jay Brown	OK	9/30	David Kevin Hocker	AL
3/18	Brian Lee Cherrix	VA	10/05	Edward Green III	TX
3/19	David Clayton Hill	SC	10/06	Peter Miniel	TX
3/23	Hung Thanh Le	OK	10/08	Sammy Perkins	NC
3/26	Lawrence Colwell, Jr.	NV	10/12	Donald Aldrich	TX
3/30	William Wickline	OH	10/13	Adremy Dennis	OH
3/31	Dennis Orbe	VA	10/20	Ricky Morrow	TX
4/16	Jerry McWee	SC	10/22	Charles Roache	NC
4/23	Jason Byram	SC	10/26	Dominique Green	TX
5/18	Kelsey Patterson	TX	11/02	Lorenzo Morris	TX
5/26	John Blackwelder	FL	11/04	Robert Morrow	TX
5/28	James Neil Tucker	SC	11/09	Demarco McCullum	TX
6/08	William Zuern	OH	11/12	Frank Chandler	NC
6/08	Robert Bryan	OK	11/17	Anthony Fuentes	TX

Nineteen of those killed, almost 33% of the total, were African-American. African-Americans make up approximately 12% of the population of the United States. A total of almost 40% of those killed were people of color.

 The Center for Constitutional Rights (correct address: 666 Broadway, New York NY 10012) apologizes for delays in responding to requests for the Jailhouse Lawyers' Handbook. It has been swamped. The Center will honor all requests received and will hopefully be caught up on the backlog of orders by March. From now on, CCR's goal will be a turnaround time of two months on Handbook requests. Thank you for your patience.

Coalition for Prisoners' Rights Newsletter

VOICES
FROM
INSIDE

since 1976



DISRESPECT

Hobbs NM

September 1, 2004

People do not know cruel and unusual punishment til they do time in the USA, especially the disrespect and discrimination here...

A CLASS PROJECT

Wrightsville GA

October 4, 2004

To collect information for a study of correctional institutions: please and include: 1) type of institution and number of inmates, 2) security level, 3) are you paid for working, if so, how much?, 4) are there co-payments for health care?, 5) how many meals per day and what do they consist of?, 6) is there a bookkeeping charge for keeping your accounts?, 7) is there a fee when you receive a disciplinary report? Send to Ronald Elrod, 24355, JSP H-2, PO Box 344, Wrightsville GA 31096

ENDURANCE

Ely NV

October 13, 2004

I am a Hispanic Muslim, born and bred in this country. Since I've been in prison here, I've had to endure numerous discriminations and humiliations against me, my religious property and my ability to attend Muslim services when I finally established them after trying for over 2 years. I expect them to recognize my right to practice my religion. When I have attempted to use grievances, I've been met with adversity and reprisal. There are officers here who served tours of duty in Iraq and some even staffed the prison in Abu Ghraib...

NO POSTAGE STAMPS

Raiford FL

November 12, 2004

As of October 2004, the FDOC will not allow postage stamps to order any magazines. This is so sad, because not only have they taken our education programs from us, but now they are taking away reading materials. Please notify all people about this.

ANALYSIS

Stanley WI

November 21, 2004

Recent analysis by the WIDOC reveals that the cost of "Truth in Sentencing" (enacted 1/1/2000) will be an additional \$1.8 billion over the next 20 years if revisions are not made. This "tough on crime" agenda occurred despite reductions in crime of 14.3% in the 5 years previous to its enactment. Several wardens report a rise in conduct problems and inmate despair as parole has been effectively abolished for all convictions after 2000.

Mailing list additions and address changes should go into effect within two months from their postmarked date. Our goal is to answer requests for referrals and other correspondence within six weeks. Letters intended for publication must say "Do Print." If requesting responses, state if you can receive mail directly from those imprisoned. The Coalition makes information available on resources and services for prisoners. We strongly urge readers to 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.

CHRISTMAS TREE

Walla Walla WA

November 29, 2004

Between the clothing room and weight room is the spot where the administration puts up our Christmas tree. The location was chosen because it's the best vantage point for all to see. The tree is, by any standard and every year, very attractive, with lots of colored lights and glowing ornaments...The tree is incongruously surrounded by a 12' high barbed-wire fence. It's the fence, not the tree, that is the most conspicuous symbol of what Christmas behind bars is all about...

WITNESS

Cumberland MD

December 5, 2004

An article about an incident that occurred at this prison states "An inmate's suspicious death at the Western Correctional Institution is raising troubling questions about practices there and whether the prison's staff violated regulations in a deliberate attempt to cover up what went wrong." (*The Sun*, July 11, 2004) I am a witness to this homicide. This clearly shows that there are people above the law.... There are 2 kinds of justice: one for the rich and one for the poor....

COMPLAINTS

Oglethorpe GA

December 13, 2004

We are working on medical complaints for those housed in the three women's prisons in Georgia. Write: Melvin E. Jones, 401754, Macon State Prison, K-2, PO Box 426, Oglethorpe GA 30168.

KEYS

Calipatria CA

December 21, 2004

On December 18, 2 inmates attempted to escape from here with keys from the staff. This has resulted in retaliatory searches and confiscation of property. The public's assistance is urgently needed. Write: Jeanne Woodford, Director of Corrections, PO Box 942883, Sacramento CA 94283 with your complaints against warden Stuart Ryan, chief deputy warden Ochoa, and associate warden Janda.

TECHNICAL PAROLE

Huntsville TX

December 21, 2004

Contact state legislators re technical parole violations, especially the Senate Criminal Justice Committee and Ellis and Hodge of the House.



RISING COSTS

Florence Az

December 24, 2004

The rising cost of incarceration (71% of the AZ state budget) is raising interest in reform of sentencing, parole and good time. Rep. Bill Konopnicki (R-Safford) is supposed to take the lead. Encourage all to write him, governor Napolitano, Sen. Jake Flake and your own legislators to support them in working for these positive changes.

STANDARDS

Iowa Park TX

December 24, 2004

A 42 USC 1983 Class Action has been filed against TDCJ-ID in the Northern District of Texas, Wichita Falls Division of the US District Court, based on *Sandin v. Conners*, due to the long term placement in this section and treatment there. Those similarly affected may file a Motion to Intervene. For more information, contact: Elilberto Reyna, 322163, Allred Unit, HSF 129, 2101 FM 369 North, Iowa Park TX 76367.

DRUG LAWS

Napanoch NY

December 25, 2004

New York State has had the toughest drug laws in the country. Lawmakers used the drug laws to fill up and to build prisons to line their pockets and give jobs to their friends and families. This week, under pressure from the public, the "15 to life" sentence was reduced to "8 to 20" years for drug convictions with A-I and A-II felonies. The 12 1/2 to 25 year sentence for drug convictions with B felonies, considered mules or addicts was left in place. (We need to) vote lawmakers out of office who are against changing these harsh laws.

THE SAME TECHNIQUES

Draper UT

December 25, 2004

There are 2 former directors of institutional operations at the Utah state prison who are under congressional investigation for the criminal acts at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq: Gary Deland and O. Lane McCotter. They were here (as well as in TX and NM among others) in the 1990s, and took a viable prison and changed it to a warehouse of flesh. One inmate died in the "corrective" chair after being strapped in it for 18 hours, causing McCotter, along with additional "monetary reasons," to quit. The 2 were involved with the prison administration of the Iraqi prisons and used the same techniques that were, and to some extent still are, being used here in Utah.

01/05



VOICES IN SOLIDARITY

ALTERNATIVES TO VIOLENCE

Alternatives to Violence Project of Northern New Mexico offers free workshops for NM prison(er)s that can lead to improved personal interactions, especially through better communication and peaceful resolution of conflict. Workshops use interactive exercises and role-play to build trust and community, enhance self-esteem, and reduce violence. Write to: Audrey Miller, PO Box 29472, Santa Fe NM 87592.

CITIZEN SOLDIER

Is committed to: counselling and defending war resisters, supporting protests within the GI rank and file, challenging a future draft, documenting injuries to Gulf War I vets, sharing information with the world community to fight terrorism. Its director, Tod Ensign, has just published *America's Military Today*, 430 pp., \$27.95 retail. Contact: Citizen Soldier, 267 Fifth Ave, Suite 901, NY NY 10016, (212) 679-2250.

ANNUAL REVIEW OF CRIMINAL PROCEDURE

This is no longer part of the annual subscription to the *Georgetown Law Journal*; it must be purchased separately. Contact: Continuing Legal Education, Attn: Monica Phillips, Suite 5000 Hotung Building, 600 New Jersey Ave NW, Washington DC 20001, (202) 662-9890. Price: \$55 (special price of \$10 applies for current inmates).

"INTERNET ACCESS THRU MAIL"

Inmates in states other than Texas can request the service; however, it is not for personals, pen pals or pornography. The more detailed the order, the greater the chance of it being filled as desired. \$10 membership fee for 30 days, 30 page max, 3 requests per order max. For indigent offenders, 11 postal stamps, plus most recent trust fund account, 2 requests max. 2201 Willow Creek Dr, #122, Austin TX 78741.

MEXICO: 8 DE CADA 10 MUJERES QUE TIENEN EL VIRUS DEL SIDA

fueron infectadas por sus maridos, reveló el Programa VIH-SIDA de la ciudad de Mexico. Atribuye estas alarmantes cifras a la falta de uso de condón por la confianza que las mujeres tienen en sus maridos....

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Crime of the Month

aka Crimetoppers

Halliburton/Kellogg, Brown & Root (KBR), is a large company to which Dick Cheney, currently vice-president and CEO of the Corporate States of America, has been closely tied for years. In the first Bush administration (1989-1993), when Cheney was Secretary of Defense, he hired Halliburton/KBR for \$9 million to design a plan to privatize the US military. Cheney then went to work directly for Halliburton/KBR.

Subsequently, the military hired Halliburton/KBR to do some of the privatizing that it had designed. It was paid \$62 million for army work in Somalia, \$133 million for military work in Haiti and over \$2 billion in the Balkans. It also made \$16 million building the 408 person prison at Guantanamo Bay, presumably for captured

Taliban fighters from Afghanistan.

Apparently this wasn't enough. Halliburton/KBR has been fined \$2 million for defrauding the government by inflating the costs on some of their projects.

Now we have the invasion and occupation of Iraq, where 10% of the US military forces are corporate mercenaries, employees of corporations. And Halliburton is the largest employer of mercenary soldiers there. These soldiers are accountable directly to their employers, not to the army. To date, Halliburton has made a total of over \$10 billion in Iraq.

Armed robbery by Halliburton/KBR is the crime of this month, aided and abetted by some of the present and former employees of the company.



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 CAROL L COUCH



11/05

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