

## THOUGHT OF THE MONTH

APRIL 2017

*"Who but family and friends (community) can we depend on to experience life with us at its worst or its greatest"*

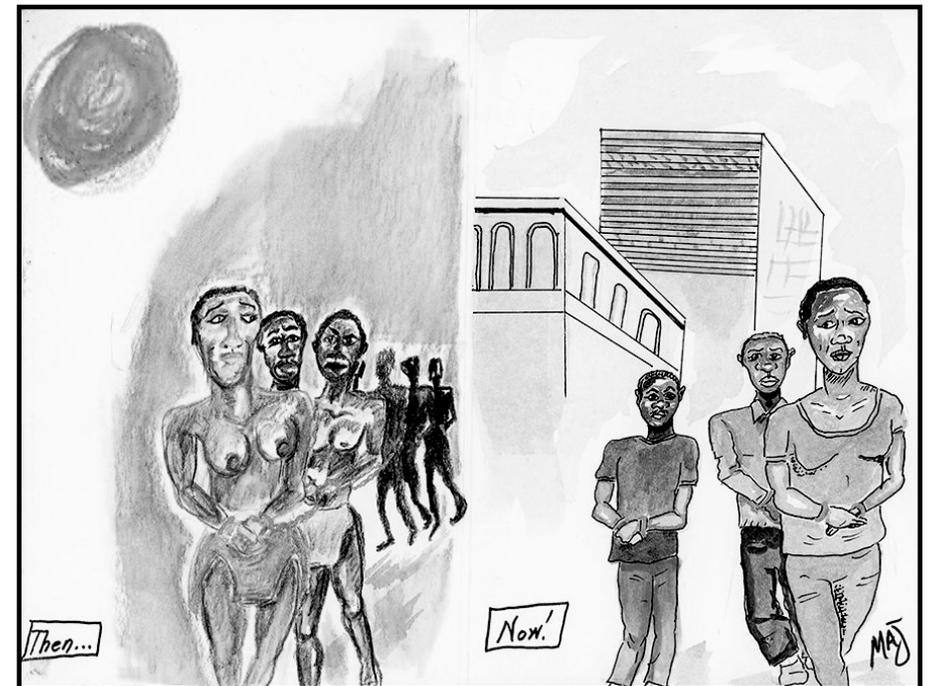
— Quote of the month by J.Simmons

The cultural way of harmony is being forgotten on a global scale, not all humans are in this category. When we turn on the TV there's always some type of tragedy going on, not only in other parts of the world, but in our communities as well. It's sad, because as a society we seem to care less and less, because: bills, school, food, fashion, video games, cost of living, etc. I'm not saying to remove those things from everyday life, I'm just pointing out how these things have such a hold on us that we're desensitizing and detaching to the point not even our neighbors are mattering anymore. Families are isolating from each other and teaching our future leaders that community isn't important and teaching them that total control is oppressive but necessary because survival of the fittest means others must submit. Our youth are being taught that this is what it takes to reach a better place. Those ideals are what's wrong with us now. Selfish minds and hearts. We can grow as individuals, but we can also grow and thrive together. So remember, enjoy life and those around you, because we're meant to not only be alive but to live. There's only one type of love, and that universal, regardless of language, color, sex, race, beliefs, etc.

— 1 <3

COVER PAINTING BY MUMIA ABU-JAMAL

# PRISON SLAVERY'S DEMISE



# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Comrade,

Welcome to our third issue of Kite: A Newsletter for Liberation. Kite is a publication of the New York City Incarcerated Workers Organizing Committee and contains content from members, friends and family both behind the enemy lines of the prison plantations and in the open-air prisons that make up this nation state.

Our theme for this issue is “Prison Slavery’s Demise”. Within, we explore the continuation of one of the fundamental projects and pillars of this country: Slavery. As such, slavery continues to flow through the veins of the system while sanctioned by the highest of its courts.

*“Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction”*

**- 13th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, 1865.**

Today, the word “criminal” exists in mass to target and commodify people from oppressed communities into state property to be exploited within the prison plantations. Many labeled “criminals” have since continued a strong legacy of abolitionist work and resistance against the ever transforming fascism that persists out of the foundation of this nation state. A high thirst and desire for liberation is specially punished by the state, making criminalization a primordial legal tool for protecting this oppressive machine. Still, it is this unquenchable thirst that enables comrades from across all enemy lines to risk their lives and that will one day lead us towards “Prison Slavery’s Demise”.

Inside this issue we cover some recent organizing updates from within prison plantations. From the work against the new package policies in NYS, a prison labor strike PUSHed in Florida, a nationwide boycott led from behind the walls and a recent timeline of prison resistance in the so-called United States. Our contributors allow us to explore some of the conditions inside, an observation post-release and artistic expression of the material reality.

We would love to receive contributions from you. We are looking for content that speaks to the nature of life and exploitation in prison as well as prison resistance. We are still picking a theme for our next issue, and would love your suggestions on that as well.

We know that our work is being surveilled, so please keep that in mind when submitting. We publish all writing under pseudonyms unless an author requests otherwise. We are also looking for art, poetry, and stories. We do not yet have a theme for the next issue, but are open to suggestions!

## 2017

OCTOBER 21

In the face of threats against his life and targeted abuse by the DOC, spurred by his leadership in the nationwide strike, Robert Earl Council, also known as Kinetic Justice, begins a hunger strike at Limestone Correctional Facility in Alabama. Other inmates join the strike, demanding Justice is relocated.

FEBRUARY 1

After numerous non-violent protests were met with no change in conditions, inmates at the James T. Vaughn Correctional Center in Delaware took control of their unit and held staff hostage over an 18 hour period. One prison guard was killed, and 16 inmates were charged with first degree murder.

APRIL 10

Over 750 inmates at the privately-run Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma partake in a hunger strike in response to poor food quality, denial of medical care, lack of recreation, and exorbitant commissary prices, and demand a \$1 a day raise.

AUGUST 19

A Millions for Prisoners Human Rights March was called by prisoners to give voice to their demand: Get rid of the slavery clause in the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Amend the 13th! People marched in Washington DC and at least 16 other cities demanding the abolition of legal slavery, and calling on people to organize against mass incarceration and abuse in U.S. prisons.

OCTOBER 14

More than a third of the inmates at Glenn Dyer Jail in Oakland, California —125 out of the 412 — begin a five day hunger strike against the jail’s practice of single-cell confinement for up to 23 hours a day.

OCTOBER 27

Prisoners at Pennsylvania’s SCI-Frackville demand clean drinking water and get it. Their complaints result in a shutting down of the facility’s water system and leads to gallons of spring water being distributed to inmates.

JANUARY 15

Operation PUSH begins with incarcerated workers across Florida beginning a month-long work stoppage

FEBRUARY 1

The Campaign to Redistribute the Pain led by the Free Alabama Movement (FAM) kicks off and aims to keep incarcerated people and their families’ money out of the Prison Industrial complex.

MARCH 2

Activists leading the No Youth Jail campaign block multiple busy intersections in downtown Seattle, Washington demanding King County Executive Dow Constantine to halt the construction of a new youth detention center

# TIMELINE OF PRISON RESISTANCE

## HIGHLIGHTING EVENTS OF THE RESISTANCE SINCE THE 2016 NATIONWIDE STRIKE

1971

SEPTEMBER 9 -13

**Attica Uprising:** Following the murder of activist George Jackson, over 1,200 inmates rioted and took control of Attica Correctional Facility in New York, resulting in 43 deaths - 39 men were shot on the orders of Governor Rockefeller. Prisoners were denied their demand for amnesty, but exposed their unjust conditions to the public.

2016

SEPTEMBER 9TH

**Nationwide prison strike:** On the 45th anniversary of the Attica Uprising, over 24,000 prisoners across 24 states partake in a work stoppage with the ultimatum of amending the 13th amendment and ending prison slavery. It was the largest prison strike ever recorded in the U.S.

APRIL 21

21 inmates go on an 17 day hunger strike at Riverside County Robert Presley Jail in California. Led by Rigoberto Villanueva, the prisoners demand revisions to policies regarding solitary confinement, recreational time, clothing provisions, jail profiteering, and religious and rehabilitation programs.

MAY 25

Prisoners begin hunger strike at Old Folsom in California demanding access to legal assistance, education and rehabilitation programs, televisions, exercise equipment, proper clothing, adequate sleep, proper packaging of canteen items, and non-disciplinary status for qualifying prisoners. A rally took place outside the prison on June 4th in solidarity.

JUNE

Several hunger strikes take place throughout the month at Adelanto Detention Facility in California against high bond rates and inadequate living conditions. 9 men involved in the strike are brutally maced and beaten by ICE, and then denied medical care. Rallies take place outside of the Adelanto jail and outside of the Los Angeles ICE office in their defense.

2018

DECEMBER 15

Nearly 40 prisoners in solitary confinement at the Allred Unit in Texas begin a 10 day hunger strike, their main focus on insufficient recreational time and food portions.

JANUARY 2

NYS buckles under pressure from civil society groups and announces that it will begin closing Rikers Island in NYC over the summer. Abolitionist groups remain staunchly committed to resisting the replacement of Rikers with newer, smaller facilities throughout the boroughs.

JANUARY 12

Responding to an outpouring of contempt from organized prisoners and civil rights groups, in New York state, Gov. Cuomo announces that DOCCS will halt its plan to implement an egregiously exploitative package program for state inmates

We look forward to hearing from you. Please pass this paper along. If you wish to learn more about IWOC and how to get involved, write us at our **PO BOX 721/1132 SOUTHERN BLVD/BRONX NY 10459**. If you would like us to get in touch with your family so that they can be involved, let us know. We work throughout the NYC metro area.

In Struggle,

— IWOC STUDY GROUP

## PACKAGES POLICY UPDATE

A lot has happened since our last issue regarding directive 4911A, DOCCS' attempt to get rid of visitation packages for incarcerated people. As you probably heard, the governor put a hold on the directive for now, but we have to remain vigilant! In December of last year you all inside got your friends and loved ones to sign our online petition. The petition, written by people inside the women's prisons in NYS, has received over 6100 signatures, along with a lot of meaningful comments from family members and formerly incarcerated people. In addition, some non profits and family organizations stepped up to send post cards and write articles about the restrictions. We also heard that folks inside organized directly against the package restrictions, including engaging in work stoppages. Others organized inside by sending the word out to people outside to take action, for example to their religious communities, neighbors, families, and political networks. We never would have known about the restrictions without people inside fighting for your rights. While outside organizations worked hard, it is people like you all, living behind bars but fighting for your rights and liberation who stopped DOCCS in its tracks, and have kept visitation packages available. Of course, we know not everyone has family with means to send packages, and that prisons pay slave wages making getting supplements from commissary without outside help nearly impossible. Continuing to allow packages is a crucial battle that IWOC will continue to support, while we also continue to abolish the modern day slave system called "prison."

While we were working on supporting the fight against package restrictions, we asked you all to send feedback. Here is a touching letter we received from a woman, telling how important the package program is (edited for anonymity and length):

## TESTIMONY FROM A WOMEN'S FACILITY

I'm a quadriplegic in the long term care unit at women's facility. I can't use pens to write because I can't press the pen hard enough to write. I don't have a grip so it slides right through my fingers. I have to use markers.

My mom is sick, poor, and on a fixed income. She pays \$1 for a pack of markers from the dollar store and pays 1 or 2 dollars to send it to me.

Walkenhorst's, one of the approved vendors, sells each pack of markers for \$14 plus 8% tax plus \$7 for shipping. That's \$22 for a pack of markers.

Once this new package vendor system is in place it will cripple the disabled even more than we already are. These vendors are very expensive. Who in their right mind would spend \$5.50 on 5 strips of bacon or \$5 on a hot pocket? That's "crazy" and very unaffordable.

Also books have to be new yet none of the approved vendors sell books. I'm not talking about religious books. I want fiction books...

Long Term care is already limited as to what we can and can't have or buy through commissary. We depend on packages because we can't buy the same things that General Population can buy through commissary. Such as chicken in a pouch or cranberry juice. You'll never understand just how deprived we are in Long Term. Food will now be impossible to purchase through your current approved vendors due to cost... New books are expensive. Not everyone is rich or has successful working families.

Thank you for your time.

## ***OPEN LETTER TO THE COMMUNITY***

FROM BROTHER JALIL A. MUNTAQIM

### **THE NEW DIRECTIVE #4911-A IS ANTI-FAMILY SUPPORT**

The principal problem with DOCCS new Directive #4911-A is that it is pro-business and anti-family. It will increase revenue for those businesses DOCCS has designated as approved vendors, with alleged kick-backs in the contract. Also, it will be more expensive for families to support their incarcerated loved ones. Directive #4911-A restricts the ability of the incarcerated to maintain any semblance of societal normalcy; rather it serves to dehumanize the incarcerated into a collective of uniformity, and denies any sense of individuality.

DOCCS has been incrementally taking away all of the gains won by those who sacrificed their lives during the Attica insurrection. It is time for family, friends and the community to resist and prohibit the implementation of Directive #4911-A.

Here I am listing the most noticeable changes in comparison with the January 1, 2014 issue of Directive #4911.

never wanted to abolish slavery because slavery generates the most money and this is a capitalist state [...] So in order for them to keep us at the bottom they had to find a way to keep slavery legal. Slavery is here, it is just now in the prison system or in the Walmart, for those who are outside. It affects me personally because I am black, that's number one, and now I have to speak to people about what's going on. I have a felony, so I'm stuck in the system for 15-20 years to perhaps erase my felony. I am being categorized as a former slave or slave on the street.

IWOC

**What words would you like to leave with those inside who will be reading this and recognizing your transition to the outside?**

KS

My brothers and I were having a conversation about coming home. They said the fight is out here. That's true also, but for us the fight starts in there. You develop a different love and compassion for the people in there. That's where the fight begins. It's a marathon not a race. In this marathon, you have to learn as much as possible with all the free time you have inside. There are so many distractions outside, inside all you have is time to study and you have to gain as much as possible. This fight starts in there and then we have to bring it out here.

"They will never count me among the broken men." I love this quote by George Jackson. I want everyone to always remember that. Don't let them break you. Don't be carried among the broken. Always stay strong. We must fight for true justice even though it may cause you to do more time. I was willing to do that to fight for the people. In George Jackson's case, it led him to lose his life but only in flesh and bones. George Jackson is immortal. He died in 1971 and in 2018 we still speak his name, and they'll be speaking his name in 2028. We are just flesh and bones out here, so don't be carried among the broken men. Stay strong and continue to fight.

# **INTERVIEW WITH KEVIN STEELE**

**MARCH 17, 2018**

**IWOC** It's been some weeks since thankfully and finally you've been back out here with us from being upstate; what are some of the most prominent facets of life back here that you have noticed?

**KS** To start, I was away for a long minute, so I forgot how rude New York really was. Basically, I actually get to see injustice first hand. From our perspective being incarcerated we read about it and we hear it on TV, on the news. Within the first four days I came home, me and my friends were driving and got pulled over for no apparent reason, but my friend has a nice car and we are young. And that's another thing that's actually hard, how to deal with it. Being in prison we know how to go about it because we are in different trenches, we know who's in charge and how to go about the situation. Until you are actually in the ring with your opponent, it is different than when you are standing on the sideline coaching. I have to readjust to the game, adjust your strategy.

**IWOC** What are some of the alterations in tactics that you've found helpful in your transition?

**KS** Outside you have a little more of so-called freedom. Your voice carries differently than when you are incarcerated. In there, you are a slave, you have no rights but out here you can actually stand up more. I did voice my opinion inside but now I actually have more of a backing, there's more support out here. I can also show my anger more. In there you have to conceal it; it gets compacted. Our people in prison have a lot on compacted anger so it's harder for them to actually branch out a resolution. Out here you have different access and liberties. With the little rights that you do have outside, certain things that are not allowed in prison or without the consequences that are imposed on the inside can be done.

**IWOC** This issue of Kite touches on the 13th amendment. Can you talk about this amendment and how you came to be exposed to the its exception clause?

**KS** The 13th speaks to the abolition of slavery except if you commit a crime. I didn't know this; most people don't know this to this day. I didn't become aware of it until I read Michelle Alexander's "The New Jim Crow" in 2011 when I was 17 while i was in prison [...] This state

- 1** The Directive #4911-A totally eliminates any food or any packages being brought to the facility by family or friends during visiting hours.
- 2** The weight of packages ordered from DOCCS-approved vendors has been reduced to 30 pounds from 35 pounds per month. However, families/ friends may order up to three times per month to accumulate the amount of 30 pounds. A 35-pound package of food has been severely restricted to only 8 pounds of food per package. The resulting effect is a family member or friend would have to spend additional shipping and handling for the equivalent of 24 pounds of food for the month.
- 3** The purchase of Bread(s), Canned Foods, Fresh or Dried Fruit and Fresh Vegetables is PROHIBITED!
- 4** No item with a logo will be permitted, including clothing, plastic containers, etc. Prior to the new Directive, clothing could have a logo no larger than 1 inch.
- 5** Clothing: The maximum cost of clothes has increased from \$50 to \$80 an item. The colors of clothing have been severely restricted to WHITE, PINK, TAN and GREEN solid colors. Previously, the only restricted colors were Blue, Black, Gray and Orange. The restrictions now include: Yellow, Gold, Brown, Burgundy, Purple, Maroon, Red—essentially every color that is not white, pink, tan or green. All briefs and underwear must be white, with the exception of the waistband. The same for thermals—no more underwear with colors, all must be white. Furthermore, all footwear must now be a solid color; no more multi-colored sneakers or shoes, which restricts the selection of footwear of any kind.
- 6** Belts of any size are no longer permitted.
- 7** Sweatshirts and Sweatpants: No more hooded sweatshirts, no more sweats with a stripe down the side, no sweats with a logo or with a zipper, and only in the colors of white, pink, tan or green.
- 8** No longer able to receive carbon paper, a clip board, scotch or masking tape.
- 9** Women are no longer permitted to order a hair/blow dryer. All Incarcerated Persons are no longer able to have key chains, extension cords, floor rugs (with the exception of a prayer rug), no linens (sheets, pillow cases, blankets, towels, washcloths).
- 10** All religious items permitted in Directive #4911 have been removed, with the exception of a prayer rug, religious chain w/pendant.

Because of the limited vendors, there is no indication from where or how incarcerated persons can obtain books, magazines, newspapers and other reading materials. Furthermore, there is no indication that clothing, footwear and other items currently possessed by the incarcerated person will be permitted to be kept or must either be sent home, donated or destroyed or if, upon transfer to another facility, they will be confiscated as contraband.

The issue of DOCCS eliminating many of the hard fought and won possessions of incarcerated persons serves to negate the extent to which formerly incarcerated persons fought to achieve the humanization of the prison system. It also further establishes DOCCS intends to develop business relationships which will prove exploitative to the family and friends of the incarcerated person(s).

This issue is not insignificant or minor in NYS DOCCS, rather it points to efforts to further undermine incarcerated families' ties, and generally create a system in which the majority of interactions will be business transactions. Similar to how DOCCS sought to restrict visiting to weekends only, and having already removed hooded sweatshirts from the population, this is another DOCCS conservative attempt to isolate, alienate and eventually eliminate all family and community relationships between incarcerated persons and the outside community.

This nefarious effort by DOCCS must be vehemently opposed by every segment of the community, and to further demand any future proposed changes **MUST** be based on advice and consent by the community.

Keep in mind, it is the community that will have to deal with the end product of DOCCS' alleged mandate to rehabilitate the incarcerated person. Therefore, it is the community that must be engaged in this process to ensure the rehabilitation process is successful.

I ask that this open letter to the community be widely distributed and given serious consideration in opposition to the implementation of DOCCS Directive #4911-A.

— BROTHER JALIL A. MUNTAQIM, DECEMBER 8, 2017

## **LETTER FROM JEWELRY**

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Hi, My name is Jewelry and I'm 26 years old, I'm currently being detained in Metropolitan Detention Center located in Brooklyn, New York which is a federal jail for pre-trial inmates and ones in transit.

I'm being accused of being a part of RICO enterprise which I have no ties to whatsoever. I haven't sold one drug or hurt anybody in my community but the D.A. makes the judge believe. So, now my freedom is in jeopardy.

I've been locked up for almost a year fighting this case and so far all my lawyer has done was try and pressure me to take 5 years, telling me that it is the best deal I can get because the charges I'm being charged I could get life in prison if convicted. Right now, I'm in the process of firing my lawyer as I feel he's not on my side.

He hasn't filed one motion or did anything to attack my indictment but has the

## **THE NCAA SAYS STUDENT-ATHLETES SHOULDN'T BE PAID BECAUSE THE 13TH AMENDMENT ALLOWS UNPAID PRISON LABOR**

EXCERPTS FROM SHAUN KING, THE INTERCEPT, FEB. 22, 2018

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In the United States, college athletes — particularly those who compete at some of the largest football and basketball programs — generate not millions but billions of dollars for universities, brands, and television networks [...]

That very obvious dynamic undergirds a lawsuit filed by former NCAA athlete Lawrence “Poppy” Livers asserting that scholarship students who play sports are employees and deserve pay. The Livers case argues that student-athletes who get scholarships should at least be paid as work-study students for the time they put in.

[...] At the root of its legal argument, the NCAA is relying on one particular case for why NCAA athletes should not be paid. That case is *Vanskike v. Peters*.

Only there's an important detail: Daniel Vanskike was a prisoner at Stateville Correctional Center in Joliet, Illinois [...] In 1992, Vanskike and his attorneys argued that as a prisoner, he should be paid a federal minimum wage for his work. The court, in its decision, cited the 13th Amendment and rejected the claim.

The 13th Amendment is commonly hailed as the law that finally ended slavery in America. But the amendment has an important carve-out: It kept involuntary service legal for those who have been convicted of a crime. [...] It's that phrase — “except as a punishment for crime” — that allows American prisons to force inmates to do whatever work they want or need them to do.

[...]

Yet the NCAA wants to rely on this case and call on the 13th Amendment. The body that runs college sports wants to use a justification for the slave labor of convicted criminals to justify its outrageous greed.

This is not just bad optics. It gets to the heart of what the multibillion-dollar enterprise that is the NCAA thinks not just of its athletes, but of its core business model. It is, in essence, admitting that student-athletes are working as slave laborers and, as such, do not deserve fair compensation.

Bigotry has a way of revealing itself. And that is exactly what the NCAA — by leaning on the case of a prisoner demanding that he be paid as its justification for denying their athletes a wage of any kind — has done here. It has revealed itself to us.

Campaign 2RTP is designed for us to be able to bypass those negative elements and engage these family members directly. Getting our app created will only make this process that much easier [...]

Those of us on the inside know that prisons have an economy too, as well as a culture set up to exploit those just entering the system... Those of us who recruit [the youth] for education and self-development are targeted by the system. When we try to build our movement and open the eyes of the youth and the people to what is really going on with mass incarceration and prison slavery, we become subject to “hits” like our ancestor Hugo Pinell and so many other warriors [...]

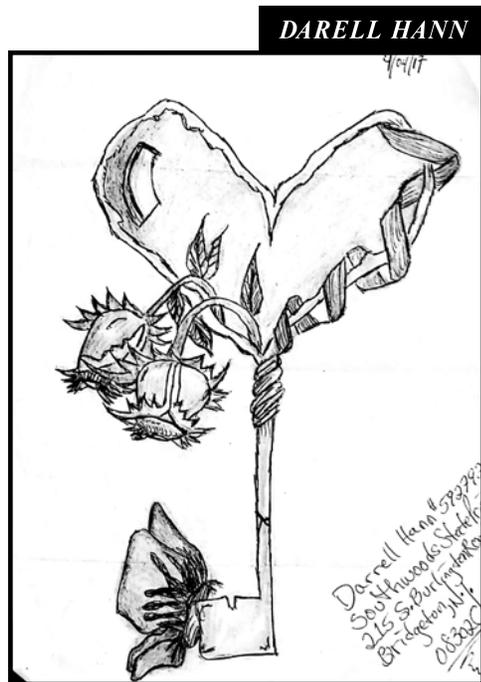
I strongly recommend that as many of you as possible reach out to

**QUEEN TAHIYRAH OF SIGN O’ THE TIMES** blogtalk radio and connect your/ our families to her. Queen T hosts shows where incarcerated brothers and sisters call in from prison along with family... Call her at **513-913-2691** or reach out to F.A.M. and Bro Dhati at **P.O. BOX 186, NEW MARKET, AL 35761** and let’s all get connected [...]

Family support in prison requires devotion of a tremendous amount of time, money, sacrifice and other resources. Those of us on the inside have a duty and obligation to make sure that their sacrifices are worth it and appreciated [...]

We have talked about the problem ad nauseum. We have cried enough tears to fill up many rivers. Our complaints have been noted and ruled on, and we have held on and endured for many seasons. As my Aunt Mary in Mississippi DOC would say, “Enough is enough.” Now is the time to Redistribute the Pain in 2018.

[freealabamamovement.wordpress.com/category/campaign-to-redistribute-the-pain-2018/](http://freealabamamovement.wordpress.com/category/campaign-to-redistribute-the-pain-2018/)



nerve to tell me he looked over the evidence and that it’s enough for the government to get a conviction and the least he could get is 5 years.

As I’m writing this letter, I’m currently in the box or SHU (Special Housing Unit) which is used to discipline inmates by confining them in a small cell 24 hours a day if you violate any of the rules and regulations of B.O.P. I been in the box for sixty days for having an attempt fight which really was just an argument. No punches were thrown! I’ve seen inmates sent to the box for having a argument with a C.O. The way the C.O.’s abuse they power in here you wouldn’t believe it.

Throughout the whole January I had to sleep in a cell that was freezing because they so call couldn’t get the heat to work. Also, I had to deal with the ceiling fan dripping on me every night while I sleep. The ceiling will get so wet every time I would take a shower. I’m not sure if I’m breathing in fungus or not but majority of the ceiling is covered in mold.

No human being should be trapped in cage, because that’s what this cell is and be forced to live under these conditions. I’m literally living in a bathroom, with a sink and shower inside my cell. If it wasn’t for my radio, mail and books I read, I probably would have lost my mind by now. At times I feel like giving up but then I refuse to because my loved ones need me.

Since I been in M.D.C. I seen at least four stabbings and heard about ten more throughout the buildings. Everyday in population I would wonder if today would be the day I get stabbed over something petty and end up paralyzed or even worse dead. Everyday ain’t promised in jail.

I hope whoever reads this feels what I am going through and help support IWOC and end mass incarceration. We need all the support we can get. Thank you for your time.

Yours Truly,

— JEWELRY, FEBRUARY 16, 2018

## **SONNET #972: PRICE TAG**

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I am a number, cloaked in dollar green  
To symbolize what they say that i am...  
Naught but an asset to this fascist fiend  
I mean nothing to them, a slave that's damned;  
For an eternity, chattel to trade  
This be THEIR vision as i am forced to march  
To concentration camps for pennies paid  
Raiding our communities for slaves, our lands left parched  
Backs arched under psychological whips  
Oh, the tales that would tumble forth if words  
Could fall from confines of scar's puckered lips  
Wrists kissed by blood soaked steel grating 'gainst nerves  
It's ABSURD!!! They think my worths a dollar?!?!  
I guess, that's the price of their own honor...  
I am priceless.

— J. KAYNE

## **STRONGER THAN YOUR CAGE**

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These iron bars & steel walls, containing the man within  
harboring a fugitive, living with illusions  
I have to ask, is this reality?  
Verily, maintaining as this concrete  
beats, mauls, & assaults my spirit  
My cries...does God hear it?  
I know not answers; to countless inquiries.  
Refusing to fear the truth  
their lies are like the handman's noose.  
Fighting; tooth & nail...I can't fail  
Skin pale, weak but never broken  
hoping, that souls may be saved  
while I slave away days & wage

The distinctively unique feature about these prison monopolies, as I've stated before, is that as incarcerated and enslaved people, we are their only customers. This makes it clear, without any doubt, that as much as organizations and groups grapple and fight with the FCC and the phone companies over prices, the POWER to effect change, immediate change, lies exclusively in our hands alone [...]

One other request that I would like to put out there personally is the need of assistance in developing an app that helps us to better analyze and break down each state's prison system, each individual prison, and each prison's industry and labor force, just to name a few [...] For the most part, all of this is public information that is available to us through Freedom of Information Act and Open Records Act requests. In addition, we can use survey questionnaires, civil litigation, and other methods to start culling information out of these prisons and start painting a picture of what the business of prisons is really all about.

Wherever there is unity, there is power. So, let's utilize 2018 as the year to continue to strengthen our unity, so that we can make 2018 a very powerful year for our movement, while also making it a very painful year for prison profiteers, human traffickers and the institution of slavery."

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### **SEEING THE PROBLEM, BEING THE SOLUTION, MAKING THE SACRIFICE (PT VII)**

FEBRUARY 2, 2018

I [propose] that we utilize this year-long bi-monthly February-April-June-Black August-October-December boycott to develop a national organization and put forth a national agenda and plan of action; create a digital storefront so that we can generate revenue from our talents, skill and abilities (think eBay, Amazon-type store); and most importantly, we need to get us an app created so that we can collect, organize and disseminate all of the information that is critical to us building awareness to our struggle and what people can do to join, support and share information about our movement [...]

Our Campaign to Redistribute the Pain 2018 focuses all of our energy and effort on the solution to the problems that we perpetuate from the way that we are spending our money while in prison [...] The norm usually reveals signs of the 'savior complex,' where we are calling for the politicians to fix it. But Brother Amen also said: 'Politics will not solve our problems. Black economics will.' That's why the most important aspect or feature of the Campaign 2RTP is the incorporation of our family members and others who make financial contributions to us in prison.

A lot of people in prison simply don't want to make any sacrifices whatsoever, and have no problem exploiting the people who love them for funds. They don't dare educate their people about this movement, our boycotts or otherwise. This

# UPDATES FROM CAMPAIGN TO REDISTRIBUTE THE PAIN

BY BENNU HANNIBAL RA-SUN, FREE ALABAMA MOVEMENT

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## **BOYCOTT, DEFUND, BANKRUPT – SAY NO TO CANTEEN, INCENTIVE PACKAGES, COLLECT PHONE CALLS AND VISITATION DURING FEBRUARY, APRIL, JUNE, BLACK AUGUST, OCTOBER AND DECEMBER IN 2018 (PT VI)**

DECEMBER 30TH, 2017

Many of us know about completing our sentence as a way to freedom, or an appeal, post-conviction petition or parole. We have to amend this paradigm to include the collective actions that we can take as a unified body to bring about freedom as well.

There is no escaping the fact that we, as a body, constitute a significant sector of the economic pie chart that funds and fuels mass incarceration and prison slavery. For purposes of this call for a nationwide boycott campaign, we have identified four sectors of the Prison Industrialized Complex that serve as some of the main economic drivers for prison budgets, which generate billions of dollars annually to fund prison operations:

- *Collect phone calls*
- *Canteen / store / snack line*
- *Incentive package purchases*
- *Visitation vending and electronic visitation*

The collect phone call industry is, by far, the most exploitive monopoly of the four enterprises... The prison system charges the phone company a cut (kickback) for being able to set up shop inside of the prison. The prison system's cut or kickback percentage becomes part of the overall operations budget used to pay salaries, buy equipment, pay for water, electricity etc [...]

So, not only our slave labor, but also our financial contributions are helping to keep this empire running. Therefore, we have to boycott these ventures to help defund prison operations budgets. Just as easily as a habeas corpus or appeal can free you, so, too, can you gain your freedom if a DOC has to close down prisons due to insufficient funds in their budgets to fund operations [...]

For those of us on the inside, when we stop picking up those phones, we send the message that we are ready to talk to our families at home in the living room and on the porch. These conversations are free and priceless.

WAR against the unjust oppressor  
I am an inventor, successor to soldiers  
Moving mountains, boulder by boulder  
on my shoulders...I bear there burdens  
& do not allow these cages to contain.  
Chains they use to bind me  
can never restrain my aim  
I'm not the same as others, my brothers  
are the army of the people  
igniting battles & skirmishes against this evil.  
While the corrupted oppress my kin  
I begin to stand, not in vain, but with purpose  
For I am certain of my values, morals  
that may be shattered or ruined  
on the rocks of despotism  
repressive prisons, used to enslave  
& enrage my people to their grave.  
Some falter, fumble & fall  
To Siren calls whispered from heathen lips  
I'm coming to grips with this  
as I kiss fallen angels, entangled  
amidst the vines & thorns that adorn  
this broken shell that swells  
from the fetid corruption  
buried deep within their fascist sin.  
as Jokers grin amongst men  
who will never surrender  
my intention, is to shatter these chains; be brave  
& show these soul assassins.....

**I AM STRONGER THAN THEIR CAGE**

— J. KAYNE

# OPERATION PUSH

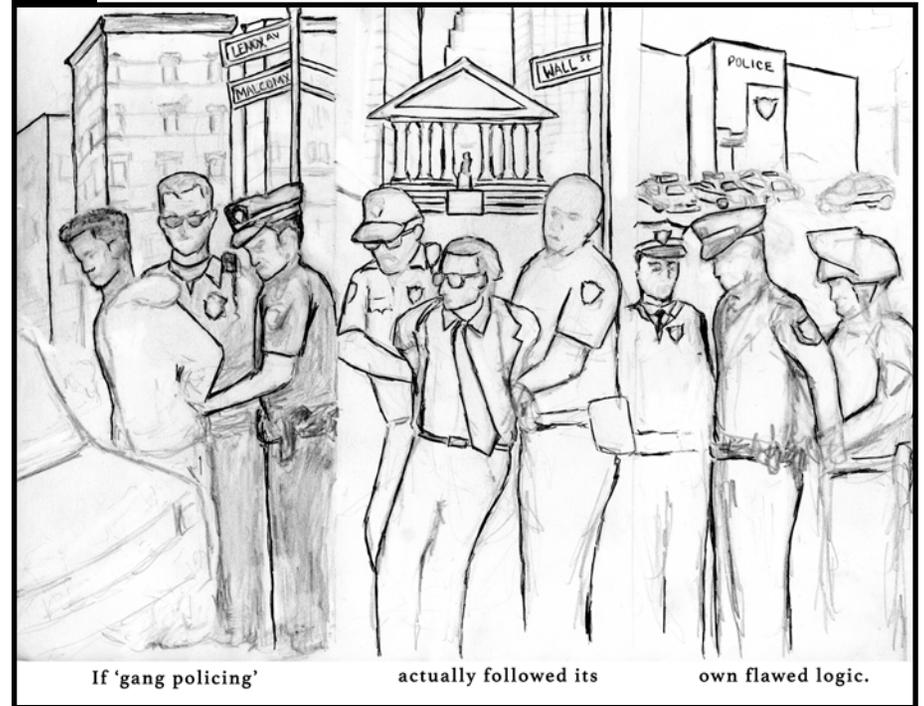
On December 6, 2017, incarcerated workers in Florida announced a month-long work stoppage to protest the brutal, inhumane conditions and exploitation characteristic of the state's prison system, dubbed Operation PUSH. The incarcerated workers made the goals and strategy clear and succinct in their statement:

*“Every Institution must prepare to lay down for at least one month or longer. No prisoners will go to their job assignments. Our goal is to make the Governor realize that it will cost the state of Florida millions of dollars daily to contract outside companies to come and cook, clean, and handle the maintenance. This will cause a total **BREAK DOWN**.*

*In order to become very effective we must use everything we have to show that we mean business. This is our chance to establish **UNITY** and **SOLIDARITY**. This is the strategy of Operation **PUSH!** A voice locked up is not a voice unheard!<sup>1</sup>”*

Broadcasted immediately by IWOC and Fight Toxic Prisons, the call stemming from workers in eight different FDOC facilities quickly drew support and participation from other incarcerated workers in Florida and in other states, from outside community organizations, and from public figures such as Angela Davis. Leading up to the beginning of the work stoppage, slated to begin on January 15, 2018 (MLK Jr. Day), the FDOC did everything it could to suppress the action. Reports of organizers being held incommunicado up to two weeks before the start of the action began rolling in and just two days before the beginning, on January 13, dozens of suspected participants and organizers were placed in solitary confinement across the state while family visiting hours for MLK Day were completely canceled at Lake Butler and Everglades CI. Coordinated actions began inside as planned on the 15th and were met with lockdowns across the state resulting in limited information about the start of the lay down. To pressure officials to meet prisoners' demands, outside rallies were held at 3 facilities and a large rally was held at the FDOC office in Tallahassee culminating in an occupation of the lobby and the felony arrest of 1 protester. Support for Operation PUSH continued to blossom as a phone zap on January 22 tied up the FDOC all day and let officials know that we stand in solidarity with striking workers. Clearly intimidated, the FDOC stepped up its repression and torture of organizers on the inside. Kevin “Rashid” Johnson detailed to supporters at Fight Toxic Prisons and Gainesville IWOC the level which authorities are willing to go, keeping him exposed in a cold, drafty cell away from other prisoners and targeting anyone else directly or indirectly involved with the work stoppage. Following his alarming report, a phone zap organized for the following day

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successfully pressured officials into giving Rashid a meeting with his lawyers and into making improvements in his conditions. As of this writing, the work stoppage continues with confirmed participation in 17 different FDOC facilities and outside. Solidarity spreads with banner drops, MLK Day rallies and over 150 community organizations standing in support of Operation PUSH from across the globe.

If we view the State's repression and attempts to black out any information about the work stoppage with clear eyes, we can see the truly great threat that actions like Operation PUSH pose to the existing order. Founded and continually run on slave labor, the plantation owners (the State and its capitalist class) will not give up slavery of their own volition. But an abolitionist movement uniting inside and outside workers determined to put a final end to the plantation system, will force them to.

<sup>1</sup> [incarceratedworkers.org/news/operation-push-prison-work-stoppage-called-mlk-jr-day](http://incarceratedworkers.org/news/operation-push-prison-work-stoppage-called-mlk-jr-day)