A PUBLICATION OF CRITICAL RESISTANCE

FREE TO PEOPLE IN PRISONS, JAILS, AND DETENTION CENTERS • ESPAÑOL AL REVES

ISSUE 18: SURVEILLANCE

Watching the Olympics
Understanding and Resisting Surveillance of Mass Events

BY ISAAC ONTIVEROS & RACHEL HERZING

These days, systems of surveillance are astonishingly complex, pervasive, and have extraordinary reach. Understanding surveillance helps us understand technologies that provide the connective tissue between policing, militarization, imprisonment and detention, border control, immigration, urbanization, and transnational capitalism. Keeping tabs on where people go, how they get there, whom they go with, and what they do is key in maintaining the state’s power and control.

In Discipline and Punish, French philosopher Michel Foucault traces the history of imprisonment and explores how Western societies began to define order in relationship to how they punished and imprisoned people. Foucault also discusses how these definitions of order, in turn, were used to discipline different strata of the population, whether they were prisoners, workers, or children. One of Foucault’s significant contributions to current understandings of how power and control work is his analysis of how the logic of containment and violence perfected in the prison was extended back out into wider society.

Modern philosophies, theories, techniques, and technologies of surveillance have largely been developed and perfected in prisons, settings in which nearly every aspect of life of people in prison was watched, categorized, documented, catalogued, and regulated and in which the idea being stripped of freedom of any kind is inextricably intertwined with the of being overseen, at all times. What gets tested and honed within prison walls then flows back into society at large and again back into prisons in a continuous loop. The core of surveillance explored by Foucault rests on the idea that surveillance functions most effectively when it is as pervasive as possible, when everyone is certain that they are somehow being watched at all times, and when the feeling of being watched is deep seated and coaxes us into acting accordingly to stay in line.

Over 50 percent of the world’s population now lives in cities. And as our populations swell in smaller and smaller spaces, surveillance is increasingly used to monitor and control people’s activities. Similarly, the threats of people consolidated in limited geographic spaces for mass events—large gatherings such as demonstrations, encampments, and sporting events—tend to trigger mass surveillance. Mass events employ a high concentration of existing surveillance technologies. They are sites for the development and implementation of new technologies. Even as they are by definition not permanent, mass events are sites of legalization and normalization of a culture of surveillance. They extend and expand the criminalization of populations labeled as threats by the state. Mass events generate incredible profits for security firms and companies that produce surveillance and other policing technologies. Finally, and, maybe most importantly, mass events generate a high potential for violence by government and private entities employing the surveillance tools in law enforcement.

The use of police and military surveillance at large scale protests and demonstrations is something that probably won’t strike too many readers as surprising, even as the intensity of surveillance and its relationship to the militarization of policing is truly disturbing. Demonstrations and encampments from Tahrir Square in Cairo, to Occupy Oakland, to protests against NATO in Chicago have been met with intense surveillance in the form of video cameras, undercover agents, informants, aerial observation, phone taps, digital communications interception, and the confiscation of computers and cameras. For readers familiar with the history of state counterintelligence programs, you know that the information gathered through these surveillance methods may then be used to target leaders, disrupt the public’s ability to know about and participate in political events, instill fear, suspicion, and spread lies, coordinate violent crackdowns, and otherwise neutralize political demands, and impacts. When it comes to state repression of political mass mobilization, surveillance is a very important tool.

But in thinking about surveillance as a tool of state repression, it might be less obvious...

Continued on page 3, “Olympics”

IN THIS ISSUE

Letters to the Editors, 3
Infographics
Your Cellphone, Surveillance Device, 3
Costs of Surveillance vs. Social Security, 9
Arab Uprisings
Digital Policing and Revolt, 4
Interview
Ashanti Alston and Masai Ehehosi
Interview, 5
SHU
Security Housing Unit Surveillance in California, 7

Fundraising
Grassroots Organizations’ Funding Problem, 8
Timeline
U.S. Surveillance, 1900s to Today, 10
Ends 2012, 10
Borders
The PIC Moves South, 11
Reviews, 12

WALL IN PALESTINE
PHOTO: ALESSANDRO

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Dear Readers,

Thanks again for supporting The Abolitionist! In this issue we examine the ways surveillance limits our communities’ capacities to act in liberatory ways. As we know, surveillance is an integral component of the prison industrial complex. Equally as important is our ability to confront surveillance in order to create a society in which people are free of constant tracking and cataloging as a means of driving them into cages or turning their homes and neighborhoods into virtual prisons. This issue seeks not only to document the terrifying sophistication of surveillance systems, while offering examples and spurring dialogue about how to abolish them.

While the topic of surveillance spans a vast variety of issues and sectors, the pieces in this installment of The Abolitionist offer some points of entry for understanding the topic. From our returns to past issues of the paper, and two authors, David Gilbert and Eric A. Stanley in dialogue via reviews of each other’s books.

Walking the fine line between caution and paranoia takes patience and care. We hope that the sampling of perspectives offered here provides new insights and information and generates energy and a renewed commitment to fighting for a world free of the fear and mistrust on which surveillance depends.

In struggle,
The Abolitionist Editorial Collective
CR to Chara,

I’m writing after reading the printed interview with Eugene Thomas, in Issue #15. In his interview he mentioned the ultimate sacrifice of Bobby Sands and 9 other Irish political prisoners made 30 years ago during a drawn-out hunger strike.

It’s sad to say that 30 years later the same issues caused these brave men to sacrifice their lives still remain unresolved and are still being fought for.

Men and women are still fighting British occupation in the British occupied 6 counties of Ireland (sometimes called “Northern Ireland”). Irish families are still being subjected to the same fascist and bigoted actions of British Colonial Police and Armed Forces. A lot of people think this was “squared away” with the Good Friday Agreement. Sadly this is not the case.

As the men and women of Ireland continue the fight for National Liberation the Brits are up to the same dirty tricks, putting them in prison for vague charges that amount to merely being vocally opposed to British Imperial rule of their homeland.

Today Irish POWs are subjected to the same treatment the prisoners of ‘81 were subjected to. Constant and degrading invasive strip searches, physical abuse, verbal abuse, psychological abuse, 24-hour lockdown, loss of “good time,” little to no educational opportunities, little recreation, refusal of visits with family and legal counsel.

The British have again tried to classify and treat the POWs as common criminals and again the British are being resisted. The prisoners are “convicted” in special no jury courts, with little to no evidence, where the only “evidence” needed in most cases is the word of a senior police official. The POWs are housed in a special high security section. A lot of special attention for mere “criminals.”

Recently two members of Republican Sinn Fein, Cait Trainor and Sean Moloney, were arrested by British Forces for refusing to conform to armed resistance in an interview. Also recently arrested was Marian Price, 32 County Sovereignty Movement Secretary, and Chairperson for the Irish Republicans Martin Cory has been held in jail for 15 months now with no charges. Why? For attending marches, rallies, and demonstrations. In Maghberry Prison Irish POW Damien McLaughlin has been beaten and forcibly strip searched 10 times during the month of February.

Not only is it the prisoners who suffer the wrath of bigoted British jailors, but the prisoners’ families as well. Families coming to visit are routinely harassed, verbally abused with bigoted remarks, strip-searched and followed home, and have their cars torn apart in a “search.”

Irish POWs are currently on strike, suffering beatings, resulting in broken limbs, broken noses, sprains and massive bruising, forced and violent invasive strip searches and lockdown. The prisoners seek to end degrading treatment, the repeated invasive strip searches, freedom of movement and freedom of association, among other things. To find out more you can visit http://www.32csm.net.

Muran buiochas for your time.

Do Chara,

MICHAEL O’CUIR, FCC
PO Box 1004 CA 95601

My Friends of The Abolitionist,

Hey, howdy, n’ Hello. First off, I want to say “Right on!” for y’all’s happenin’ Abolitionist! Hell yeah!

‘Bout time for us to get some help! I dig what y’all got goin’ on! Keepin’ us informed on a lot of issues and also exposin’ some of the slimy shit the systems are trying to pull!

I am really proud of the fallas in Georgia [Issue #15]. That was some koolness! Hope it got some things changed for real! Too many times the systems likes to just plan to implement changes! Kind of like that slimy word that gives the prison systems plenty of time to do nothing and get smooth away wiff it. What word, you say? “Temporary!”

“The inmates are being “temporarily” housed in a time and will get moved into the building as soon as possible.” That “temporarily” bullshit let the Arkansas DOC house 120 inmates in a building only designed for 60 by using bunk beds! That sucked big time! ADC got away with that slimy shit for 9 years!...

This bit of wisdom be true! There is nothing as frightening as ignorance and stupidity in action.

So fellows, please put me on y’all’s mailing list and please keep up the Great Happenings!

Loving kindness and compassion,

ROY TESTER,
TUCKER CORRECTIONAL FACILITY
AR

Dear Editor,

I sincerely believe that Marilyn Buck’s physical departure [cover story Issue #15] from this hypocritical society only two weeks after their so-called freedom was what her enlightened spirit longed for. Her sentient spirit didn’t want to stay much longer, just enough to say goodbye to those whose love for her is genuine and sincere...

Her legacy has nurtured out spiritual growth... She has outgrown her earthly garments for the more designed for 60 by using bunk beds! That sucked big time! ADC got away with that slimy shit for 9 years!...

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Direct to Charlie,

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Her legacy has nurtured out spiritual growth... She has outgrown her earthly garments for the more
YOUR CELLPHONE, SURVEILLANCE DEVICE

The best way to avoid cell phone surveillance? Don’t use a cell phone. But since for many of us convenience outweighs the risk of being tracked, here’s how to reduce your risk.

Continued from page 1, “Olympics”

A t the same time, this year’s Olympics are also see- ing the largest mobilization of England’s military power since World War II. Pre-games estimates are staggering, with a mobilization of 12,000 police officers, 13,500 military personnel (more than Eng- land currently has deployed at war in Afghanistan), at least 20,000 security guards, 1,000 U.S. security personnel (including FBI agents and 300 MIB (English counterintelligence) agents). Britain is also mobilizing an aircraft carrier, surface to air missiles, unmanned drones, and fully armed military jets in its security measures. A key element of this mas- sive militarization of the Olympic Games will be a vast arsenal of surveillance tools includ- ing—countless video cam- eras, scanners, biometric ID cards, check- points, license plate recogni- tion devices—all coordinated by state of the art control centers. Legal aid are being withheld and intimidated to allow greater police power. The entire Olympic zone will be surrounded by 11 miles of electrified fence.

The public relations machine put to work by British officials assures the global community that this level of muscle is necessary to keep the Games safe from potential security risks. They have identified everyone from “soccer hooligans,” to the IRA, to “Islamist terrorists” as potential threats. The intense display of militarized might creates an interest- ing logic, forcing people to feel safe by reminding them that this level of muscle in necessary to keep neu- bulously defined, but highly dangerous threats at bay. They forget to mention the people they have displaced to build new stadiums, the people they are sweeping up to make invisible during the games, and the people they are threatening their neighbors should be afraid of. By imbuing their public rela- tions campaigns with fear mongering and this logic, forcing people to feel safe by reminding them that this level of muscle in necessary to keep neu- bolously defined, but highly dangerous threats at bay. They forget to mention the people they have displaced to build new stadiums, the people they are sweeping up to make invisible during the games, and the people they are threatening their neighbors should be afraid of. By imbuing their public rela- tions campaigns with fear mongering and this logic, forcing people to feel safe by reminding them that this level of muscle in necessary to keep neu- lly defined, but highly dangerous threats at bay. They forget to mention the people they have displaced to build new stadiums, the people they are sweeping up to make invisible during the games, and the people they are threatening their neighbors should be afraid of. By imbuing their public rela- tions campaigns with fear mongering and this logic, forcing people to feel safe by reminding them that this level of muscle is necessary to keep threat, in turn, is understood as hostility which in turn, must be met with a military response.

Continued on page 8, “Olympics”
On January 25th, 2011, demonstrations erupted in cities across Egypt. Eighteen days later one of the world's most-entrenched dictators was forced from power.

In the Egyptian uprising, digital technologies were used as both a catalyst for the revolution as well as a tool of repression. The events in Egypt, like others of the so-called “Arab Spring,” are complex, nuanced and deeply entangled with the intersection of the former (and most-likely current) regime’s interests and those of the current/former US military. This is not the place to delve into the intersection of U.S. foreign policy and its relationship to the proliferation of surveillance and censorship technologies. A more recent example of the increasingly dangerous terrain in which these new channels of communication place activists.

The disruption of cellphone coverage and Internet on the 28th exacerbated the major problem with the use of digital mobilization. While some political actors were not aware of or interested in the unrest, it forced more face-to-face communication, i.e., more physical presence in streets; and finally it effectively decentralized the rebellion on the 28th through new hybrid communication, spreading and organizing, requiring much harder to control and repress than one massive gathering in Tahrir.

In fact, it's hard to believe the Egyptian uprising would have succeeded had digital mobilizing been limited to online social networks. The key lies in the ways this mobilizing caused a break in the public’s awareness of the revolution, and the resulting detriments of those perceived as central organizers of the uprising along with widespread censorship of news and communication. Censorship and surveillance were amongst the first and most aggressive strategies of repression employed by Mubarak’s regime. The decision to cut off communication channels against the protests was just one of many. In the words of Deep Packet, this firm provides tools which enable new modes of repression, censorship, and surveillance. Whether or not these tools were used solely for repression is another question, as is their impact on the capabilities to avoid identification and repression. The Tor Project, a free piece of software that allows users to anonymously connect to the Internet, has been important avenue for communicating with the outside world. The Tor Project, a free piece of software that allows users to anonymously connect to the Internet, has been an important avenue for communicating with the outside world. The Tor Project, a free piece of software that allows users to anonymously connect to the Internet, has been an important avenue for communicating with the outside world. The Tor Project, a free piece of software that allows users to anonymously connect to the Internet, has been an important avenue for communicating with the outside world.

Meanwhile, Elsewhere in the Region... The Surveillance Industry Thrives

While the U.S. government was quick to champion certain uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa as a triumph of democracy it has failed to acknowledge the complex relationship between the technologies used for repression and those used for communication. In Bahrain, for example, the government assumed that the use of digital surveillance and censorship technologies would prevent the spread of the protests. However, the protests were not just limited to digital mobilization, but also enabled by the use of traditional communication channels such as the German-Finnish partnership of Nokia Siemens, which is also a player in Egypt. This backfired on the Bahraini government as the protests were able to continue despite efforts to silence them.

In Syria, however, U.S. complicity in the crushing of protests is a bit more ambiguous, and may have actually weakened a desired outcome. While it clearly fears what the fall of the Assad dynasty, there is definitely no love lost between the U.S. and the Iran, Hezbollah, Hamas, etc.-allied regime. But like in Egypt and Bahrain, Assad’s security services have relied on surveillance to monitor, arrest, and assassinate dissidents, especially in the early phases of Syria’s uprising prior to its militarization.

The interests of these companies, however, have not necessarily matched those of the Obama administration, which has responded to the above pressures by providing new sanctions against Syria. This conflict of interest is not new, and it's clear that the Western companies are using their profits to support regimes across the globe in hopes of assisting people's movements. Having learned from earlier examples of surveillance and repression, some companies have any responsibility when it comes to how their products are used: The surveillance systems that we discuss in our seminars are available all around the world. Do some countries use them to suppress certain political groups or individuals? Yes. But it's their business, it's not ours. Hopefully.

It's estimated the global industry for mass surveillance now brings in over $5 billion annually. This privatization of state surveillance projects across the globe has allowed for the U.S. to both publicly support the use of technology against authoritarian regimes while also profiting off of their suppression.

Digital Resistance and Solidarity

While the Egyptian government attempted to use digital technologies as a way to repress the uprisings, networks of activists from around the world quickly mobilized in solidarity with the protests. In the process, these networks revealed the hypocrisy of U.S. foreign policy. This was only made more clear when the surveillance and monitoring of activists by security forces were done with the tacit approval of the U.S. government. Most notably, the company NaaS was important avenue for communicating with the outside world. The Tor Project, a free piece of software that allows users to anonymously connect to the Internet, has been important avenue for communicating with the outside world. The Tor Project, a free piece of software that allows users to anonymously connect to the Internet, has been important avenue for communicating with the outside world. The Tor Project, a free piece of software that allows users to anonymously connect to the Internet, has been important avenue for communicating with the outside world.

Many of the security technology purchased by repressive regimes is sold at the Intelligence Support Systems expo, organized by the company TeleStrategies. According to the report, the lack of official government policies on the sale of surveillance technology makes it difficult to identify the real intentions of U.S. companies.

While uprisings and revolutions will always be about physical bodies in public spaces, technologies still remain an important tool in transmitting information and spreading news of repression. For example, in Syria, where attempts to organize protests on social networks were quickly hindered, information technologies like the Internet have been important avenue for communicating with the outside world. The Tor Project, a free piece of software that allows users to anonymously connect to the Internet, has been an important avenue for communicating with the outside world. The Tor Project, a free piece of software that allows users to anonymously connect to the Internet, has been an important avenue for communicating with the outside world. The Tor Project, a free piece of software that allows users to anonymously connect to the Internet, has been an important avenue for communicating with the outside world. 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Like all technologies that came before them, digital-information technologies have not necessarily matched those of the Obama administration, which has responded to the above pressures by providing new sanctions against Syria. This conflict of interest is not new, and it's clear that the Western companies are using their profits to support regimes across the globe in hopes of assisting people's movements. Having learned from earlier examples of surveillance and repression, some companies have any responsibility when it comes to how their products are used: The surveillance systems that we discuss in our seminars are available all around the world. Do some countries use them to suppress certain political groups or individuals? Yes. But it's their business, it's not ours. Hopefully.
Nothing to Lose But Our Chains
Organizing Under Surveillance

In exploring the role of surveillance as a cornerstone of the prison industrial complex (PIC), The Abolitionist wanted to examine its history, how it has been used and continues to repress for liberation and self-determination. We interviewed two long-time revolutionaries and Critical Resistance members, Ashanti Alston and Masai Ehehosi, to outline some of this history as well as their own experiences organizing under surveillance for more than 40 years.

A lot of people have very different definitions of surveillance. Can you explain what surveillance means to you?

Ashanti: It’s really important that people have a historical understanding. We have to always deal with what surveillance meant when there was this European conquest of the African continent—capturing and enslaving a people, and then what became the United States; setting up slave ports and always having to have people keep an eye on and move or capture as possible so you could go on and conquer to your quest to conquer the world. The whole system of slavery is one that is constant surveillance, as it is the part of the mechanisms of conquest. When you colonized people not been under surveillance?

It’s important to understand what that means for those of us who are still victims of that original surveillance that came with the conquest of our people that we still have not been able to get off our backs yet in 2012.

Masai: That relates to how I see surveillance—it’s continuous. Years ago when Ashanti and I first started to become involved, it was specifically about technology or from one perspective doing something “illegal.” Revolution is always illegal to the oppressor. It’s because the independence struggle began. Independence is always considered illegal; just struggling for a just society is always considered illegal. If we’re talking about anything to cause real change, then we’re also talking about surveillance.

How has surveillance changed over time? What factors led to the way it is today, and how are they used now?

Ashanti: There’s a greater use of technology to evolve more serious surveillance as time goes on and our technology is developing, as it always does. A lot of people who are targets or potential targets of surveillance are having to become more aware of surveillance than before. Facebook, credit cards and other kinds of information about us, we don’t accept this, we see we can actually bring this reality to this historical truth, and actually be free.

Masai: This is where the Abolitionist comes in. Your communities shift or intensify over time, specifically in terms of surveillance of immigrant communities, Muslim communities, and young people?

Ashanti: It’s from Plainfield, New Jersey, and Faisal’s a small city in the north of New York city. We’re dealing with what became the police force, which may have contributed to the rebellion there in the 80’s, when Black folks were able to get weapons and run the police out. It wasn’t a magical thing, it was just doable and it was done.

The mid ’70s to mid-80’s when I go to prison and came out, there was a huge increase in the numbers, sophistication, as well as the resources that the police services have access to in terms of technology, such as the collection and use of fingerprints. Police forces started to look more like military forces, and the resources were up. Police forces were recruiting soldiers involved in imperialist wars to become police officers. That was a big change for me to see.

Things were so different from before we were captured and imprisoned, but we still came out with that same commitment to care for how long will the police get. I don’t care how terrified my people get. We have got to figure out how to get people to say, “No! We do not accept this occupation army!”

Continued on next page, “Interview”
ISSUE 18

Ashanti: CR was very active, doing a lot of really concrete grassroots work and trying to raise this consciousness around the need to get rid of prisons, to get people really thinking about abolition and how it could be meaningful for them. As a result of the police tap, more of the community came out. And in 1996, we noticed certain individuals started to get harassed more. We’ve always assumed this was somehow getting tapped. It really came to a head when some of us went to the first Anarchists of Color Conference in Detroit. Coming back, we wanted to raise some money to help pay for some the costs. The police used the fundrasing activity to vamp on us. They used the excuse that someone reported a minor drinking alcohol on the sidewalk. The next thing you know, a small army of police descended upon Critical Resistance. They ended up arresting a bunch of people. We knew the reason was because CR was building a foundation. The police knew they were being genuine about coming up with organizations around this idea we do not need prisons. It didn’t look good for the police to just let this go, so somebody gave the order for them to shut us down.

CR made it through and was able to be strong. A reason why we survived was because the organization had the resources to protect us from getting tapped by each other during the assault and getting pepper spray out of people’s faces, to taking care of people’s emotional needs. Having a hospital and getting the message out. CR broadened its work. People from different organizations and communities were coming to the office to help. In a sense it’s like what Mao said: when your enemies attack you, you need that. Things were coming together, because we knew concrete programs or ideas had to be the things that we organized around and not all the abstract stuff.

How has surveillance (or the fear of it) shifted the culture or practice of organizations and how has that impacted the work?

Ashanti: I want people to understand that as they are getting this from two different angles, they are saying, ‘Hey, this is going to be safe.’ And that’s why they ain’t won yet. In the last 10 to 15 years, young folks know more than what we knew. There’s this new generation that is really trying to change things. The free idea is that they’re still or even more afraid to take risks when it comes to action whether its organizing or even doing those activities that require secrecy. People are looking at the consequences and they’re not taking the strategic risks. They’re doing actions and organizing in the kind of activism that is safe. I see it within organizations I’ve been a part of. Just how bright these younger folks are and how energetic, but how they limit themselves in terms of so much they can do but it takes risks.

I know folks want to be as free and happy as we do. But if you cannot accept the system is going to be on you. That means you have to fight, or you’re going to be in a certain confine of what you do, and we’re going to keep perpetuating. How can we be free as a society? How can we do that if we’re not even making much progress to glorify the ‘60s, especially the Panthers, police will not take them other steps to encumber the system. This goes on day in and day out. Not only is it hard for certain organizations to get support, but also organizing itself is deemed a gang related activity. When prisoners do attempt to organize, they’re not going to get any funds. How those units work is in order to get certain things that you may need or to be released into general population in the prison, you have to name somebody as part of a gang. I know CR has played a major role in supporting the hunger strikes that came out of Pelican Bay in California, running the media team, connecting with prisoners and family members and whatnot. I did similar work connecting with folks in these units when I worked at American Friends Service Committee, so I know a major challenge is negotiating things like prison control over communication and letters being used with surveil- lance to pull information, and then units have to stop the organizing. We know from these situations that it’s about organizing the family, family units. It’s about an understanding of things being negative it’s about what poses a threat to the system.

What lessons have you learned that you think could strengthen the fight that is happening now and that needs to happen?

Ashanti: As somebody who’s come out of CR, I understand abolition to require knowing the weapons they used to capture Africans and how to take them apart. Those slave forts became prisons, and those same armed forces are there to control people so American life can keep on going. You’ve got to raise all issues that made the ‘60s happen. You need to help millions of people understand the violent history and how we can best fight against the system that caused the violence. When we talk about violence, we mean it. We mean it.

People need to read up on things like COINTELPRO and they need to do the work. If people have studied their history, and you are serious about this, then you know back in the day we were very serious about this and still are. I know it was called being underground but I used to think of it as being above ground. We weren’t talking about supporting prisoners we were talking about liberating pris- oners. Ashanti and I spent time and we actually left a lot of folks behind. When we were inside, folks inside were being politicized and we were working in there. The revolution didn’t stop for us. People were being trained to go back outside. We got out and it was like the revolution had stopped. Is there anything else you want our readers to know?

Ashanti: I know it’s harder, and it’s gotten harder. Prisoners today are doing a different kind of job. People have studied their history and you are serious about this, then you need to know the system is going to come down on you, that very knowledge keeps you within the system. You have no control over prisoners are filling up. We have more control units now than ever and the folks that need to be done, I just don’t know if they know what’s really necessary. The prison administration created madness inside the prisons by manufacturing the growth of prison populations, the flux of drugs, etc. That consciousness that was there during the revolutionary prison movement with George Jackson—that’s not there anymore, but there are individuals inside doing that. Malcolm X. We want to be transformed as Malcolm X. We’re trying to find themselves and be relevant, but they don’t get the support. A lot of people don’t know about them. We think those inside that are moving that way are getting the consciousness that they can play role, and they should continue to do that. Folks on the outside should figure out ways to support them, because some of them want to be a part of something that’s giving their life new meaning. Can we then send them money. You know, the way a Black folk can get a lawyer or get a lawyer on to help them out? We on the outside go to keep finding ways to support folks on the inside. Prison is a microcosm of what we got out here, and there are definitely street organizations out here where you have got this. Why are the police doing that? That challenge can’t stop us. We got to brainstorm; we got to be creative.

For those in Pelican Bay and beyond in every prison: keep writing, learning, bonding with each other, and trying to create those revolutionary spaces you can use to survive and grow. Hopefully at some point we can begin to connect these struggles again like in the late ’60s and early ’70s when the revolutionary prison movement was going on. We had a huge presence on the streets were solidly connected. We have to work towards that again.

Ashanti Alston is a former member of the Black Panther Party and soldier in the Black Liberation Army, for which he was a political prisoner and prisoner of war for a total of 14 years. Since that time he’s been working with political prisoners building revolutionary movements mostly in the New York area. He has been a member of Critical Resistance since 1999. He is a member of the Institute for Anarchist Studies, Malcolm X Grassroots Movement, Student Liberation Action Movement and Anarchist People of Color.

Masai Ehosho also a former member of the Black Panther Party, has been a prisoner of war both as a member of the Black Liberation Army and as a citizen of the United States. He is the a founding and current member of Critical Resistance.

Molly Porsig is a member of Critical Resistance, Oakland, and is an editor for The Abolitionist.
The commission would have very broad powers. It could investigate anyone. It would create a public perception that whoever is being investigated is being investigated for being gang related, or for possession of an illegal weapon or drug. It would give the appearance that whoever they are investigating is a terrorist, a traitor, a disloyal or a criminal, even if all they are doing is advocating lawful views.

The primary purpose of the Violent Radicalization and Homegrown Terrorism Prevention Act was to neutralize “homegrown terrorism and violent radicalization” through “the process of adopting or promoting and extremist belief system that espouses or advocates violent means to further the political beliefs.” The prison administration confiscated some of my outgoing mail referring to Black August, on the grounds that it was promoting gang activity. This unfailingly (a) criminalizes prisoners or perceived gang members, (b) and asks the public to believe that the violent radicalization and homegrown terrorism prevention Act was to neutralize “propaganda efforts to repress political organizing, especially among prisoners of color.” This is not the only facet of fascist legislation like the Violent Radicalization and Homegrown Terrorism Prevention Act: To neutralize people deemed a threat to the status quo through intensive surveillance, control and torture.

It was not too long ago that George Bush Jr. launched a propaganda campaign through the creation of the Special Housing Units (SHU), which are sections of Pelican Bay’s CMU are clearly subjective, arbitrary, and based on innocuous activity. It would give the appearance that whoever are investigated as “potentially a traitor, disloyal, or a terrorist, even if all they are doing is advocating lawful views.

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Fertilizer for the Grassroots

BY INGER P. BRINCK

The backdoor of the house in which my partner and I reside in Oakland, California is covered by weeds and the soil is hard, dry, and sandy. Wanting the balcony to look like the Yard, I took some of the soil to a local nursery and asked what I should do. A friendly staff person, The Enforcer, at my bag of dry Fertilizer jokingly asked, “Are those your cat’s ashes?” Fortunately, not! All the nurses passed 52 percent to 48 percent. She said, in part:

What we are here together, confident that we are all created in your image which is expansive enough to include gay and lesbian, bisexual, transgendered and gender non-conforming identities, skin colors and body shapes and sizes.

The experience of the Franciscan House Center reveals a survivor strategy: Hey, essentially conducted a background check on a person,经贸 suffered, punished me, and I reside in Oakland, California is covered by weeds and the soil is hard, dry, and sandy. Wanting the balcony to look like the Yard, I took some of the soil to a local nursery and asked what I should do. A friendly staff person, The Enforcer, at my bag of dry Fertilizer jokingly asked, “Are those your cat’s ashes?” Fortunately, not! All the nurses passed 52 percent to 48 percent. She said, in part:

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Even as the costs of government surveillance rise, politicians and interest groups are making moves to cut basic services, putting the security of the state before the security of the people. Below, the price tags of surveillance in the U.S.— and how many people these funds could help support (based on the average national unemployment benefit pay out of $1,200 per month).

Cost to install a camera surveillance system on a city bus:
- or the benefits for one person for one year and three months

Cost per year to operate a traffic camera covering four lanes of traffic:
- or the benefits for one person for four years

Cost to install one surveillance camera:
- or the benefits for one person for almost one month

Cost to operate one U.S. customs and border control unmanned drone, per year:
- or the benefits for one person for a little over one month

Cost of a SCRAM alcohol monitoring bracelet and modem:
- or the benefits for one person for four years

Police department costs to track outgoing numbers dialed by one cell phone for one year:
- or the benefits for one person for 2 weeks

Cost to operate one U.S. customs and border control unmanned drone, per year:
- or the benefits for one person for almost one month

Since 2001, the amount provided to the states of New Jersey and New York through the federal High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area program that spied on Muslim and other groups, including Critical Resistance:
- $135 million
  - or the benefits for one year for 9,375 people

Overtime paid to Border Patrol agents since 2006:
- $1.4 billion
  - or the benefits for one year for 97,222 people

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Infographic by Oliver Spires

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Mailing Address __________________

Billing Address (if different) ________________

Please charge my credit or debit card.
Credit card type: ____________________________
Credit card number: ________________________
Expiration date: ____________________________

I have enclosed a check payable to Critical Resistance.

Yes, please send me email updates!
Email address: ____________________________
The FBI), started a fingerprinting index system, with the General Intelligence Division (a division of the FBI) that also collected fingerprints from state and local law enforcement agencies as well as fingerprints at the U.S. border. The FBI grew to a collection of fingerprints in date with over 15 million on file.

First helicopters used by police units following World War II.

Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) established via the National Security Act with the purpose of coordinating U.S. intelligence efforts, including to infiltrate, surveil, and destroy groups deemed threats by the government.

Project COINTELPRO (Counter Intelligence) was established in 1956 with the purpose of infiltrating, surveilling, and destroying groups deemed threats by the government including the U.S. Communist Party, Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, and other domestic groups suspected of being a threat to the nation.

The Citizen's Commission to Investigate the FBI breaks in to set FBI office in Las Vegas, Nevada, with the purpose of investigating any illegal activities related to the FBI in the context of the Vietnam War. Many of its recommendations were later adopted in various publications, and are still influencing U.S. law enforcement today.

Trail of Broken Treaties: The US government's policy of forced relocation and expulsion of indigenous peoples from their lands. Activists are advised to leave with hives and charges due to a large number of federal investigators confiscating documents related to reservation issues.

Founding of the Earthseed Movement. The movement uses digital technologies to interfere with government surveillance andそこなによる観察行動たちを防ぎます。

USA PATRIOT ACT: The use of surveillance to obtain information about suspected terrorist activities. This law empowers law enforcement to obtain information about suspected terrorist activities and sınırland, even if there is no clear indication of a threat.

The information collected through surveillance can be misleading. Although its supposed purpose is to tell the true story in situations in which no witness is present, a security camera will often tell the opposite story. A video feed may show a prisoner exit the restroom with clenched fists. Next Prisoner B exits the restroom with a bloody nose. The first conclusion drawn would be that Prisoner A assaulted Prisoner B. However, the footage does not show what transpired in the restroom. Perhaps Prisoner B attacked Prisoner A, who acted in self-defense.

The worst form of demagoguery is manifested in anti-immigrant propaganda. Along the US-Mexico border one sees surveillance on steroids as the US Border Patrol, along with the military, play their war games. All their high-tech gadgets are employed and deployed to prevent the impoverished laborer from ever reaching American soil. Pure xenophobia is covered with the rue of terrorist threats and exaggerated tales of drug cartels commandeering American cities. But when that excites but fails to incite, the masses are warned with the battle cry, “They’re coming across the border to steal your jobs!” And so all the king’s pawns rally to the frontline of窄狭-mindedness. These ultrapatriotic minions will then be warned with the battle cry, “They’re coming across the border to steal your jobs!” And so all the king’s pawns rally to the frontline of narrow-mindedness. These ultrapatriotic minions will then vote for the politician they can create in their own image, the one who promises to build them the Promised Land.

It is never wrong for the people to demand their dignity. It is never unjust for a mother to shout: “Let my people go!” It is never criminal for the slave to refuse to build the very pyramid from which the overseer will enslave her/him. And it is always the duty of every abolitionist to cast his/her rod in order to defeat an oppressive system.

The information prescribed through surveillance is a fact of life. Television programs such as Big Brother and other similar shows help people accept that they are being watched and that their every action is being recorded.

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COINTELPRO Re...
The United States today uses an extensive and unprecedented form of imprisonment and policing as social control of its most marginalized communities. It is a unique culture of incarceration: no other country leaves so many people behind the same door, nor has the perfected imprisonment as a tool of innocuously perpetuating racial, economic, and social inequality.

—Michelle Alexander, The New Jim Crow

USA's Prison Industrial Complex Moves South of the Border

By Nasim Chatha, Reprinted with Permission from the Alliance for Global Justice (AGJ.org)

The United States today uses an extensive and unprecedented form of imprisonment and policing as social control of its most marginalized communities. It is a unique culture of incarceration: no other country leaves so many people behind the same door, nor has the perfected imprisonment as a tool of innocuously perpetuating racial, economic, and social inequality.

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Led in large part by William R. Brownfield, the Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, the U.S. is aiding Latin America and Caribbean governments to become more completely “American”, involving new prisons, new imprisonment and policing as social control of its most marginalized communities.

By Nasim Chatha, Reprinted with Permission from the Alliance for Global Justice (AGJ.org)

Sustainable Security, Mano Dura resulted in massive gang incarceration, and confinement in special prisons allowed gang members to strengthen group cohesion and structure.

CARS is very similar to Plan Colombia, enacted more than a decade earlier, in that it increases U.S. military presence in the region, making it easier to procure a military and police financing and infrastructure, both for the local governments and the United States.

In 1990, the U.S. and the United Nations signed the Cartagena-Bogotá accord, which provided for U.S. assistance to Colombia to combat drug trafficking and violence, in addition to being profitable businesses for some U.S. companies. In 1999, the U.S. and Colombia signed the Plan Mérida agreement when he became ambassador to Colombia in 2007. We can expect more of the same.

According to the Colombian Coalition Against Torture, “It is of serious concern that Colombia’s prisons are increasingly militarized. Indeed, the majority of prisons visited...are under the command of high-ranking members of the military and police forces, either retired or active, and lack the skills necessary to manage a prison.” At least five of the sixteen prisons were run by graduates of the notorious School of the Americas. The program in the end was a failure, but instead an expansion of the role of the prison in social control.

Colombia’s notorious new prison, La Tramacua, with its filthy and violent conditions, has held scores of Colombia’s thousands of political prisoners and is known for using torture: currently, the Colombian prison system holds 9,500 political prisoners, the vast majority being held for nonviolent resistance and political opposition. The prison population has grown by over 50% since 2000, while the population has grown by only 1%. In addition, the strange phrase “in the Colombian context” is used to refer to the Colombia program, so capturing when it leads one to reflect on the nature of the culture we send abroad, was also used by the Dominican Republic’s attorney general Radhames Jimenez Peta in an announcement that six new prisons were being built: “We are beginning a new anti-gang initiative in the Dominican Republic,” he said. Likely there is little or Brownfield influence there as well, seeing quickily into the phrases that make it into press releases.

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The “war on drugs” declared by the Reagan administration led to an unprecedented war on incarceration practices has never been conducted in this country, with all the internal violence is mirrored, and in some ways amplified and distorted, in much of the rest of the Americas.
We live in a digital age: the age of social media where everyone seems to have a Facebook or Twitter account, or uses Twitter or Google Plus or countless other online tools, some useful for our work, and some not. I expected to read about how to disappear and find good, politically-grounded tips on how to create safe spaces, for instance, particularly by policy or other government agencies, while still being able to use the host of online networking and data-sharing tools available. I have to say, I was disappointed on a number of fronts.

The author spends the bulk of the book describing how to disappear, as the title suggests. Ahearn is clear to point out, multiple times, that he is not in the business of helping or suggesting that people do illegal things. He is clearly stating that you should take care of personal debts prior to disappearing, that he does not recommend stealing someone’s identity, nor does he condone illegal tactics used by other skip-tracers such as extracting banking information. His approach to disappearing is three-pronged: misinformation, disinformation, reformation. Misinformation involves finding all of the information that is available about you in the world and altering in some ways, so that you might call your bank or phone company and claim that there is a misspelling in your name or that you have received a suspicious phone call. Disinformation involves fabricating information and creating bogus trails for people to follow. You might accept an offer to a distant city and an apartment for rent and then set up false utility accounts. GYMs link our membership cards to photos that are stored in a central database. Open houses are advertised with a false email address for that purpose and that you might actually travel to a different city and find an apartment and claim that there is a misspelling in your name. Ahearn is clear to point out, multiple times, that someone might be a cop or a federal agent. Disinformation is an excellent tip. The anonymity of the internet means you never really know who you are talking to, and that someone might be a cop or a federal agent. Disinformation involves fabricating information and creating bogus trails for people to follow. You might accept an offer to a distant city and an apartment for rent and then set up false utility accounts. Gym membership cards are linked to photos that are stored in a central database. Open houses are advertised with a false email address for that purpose and that you might actually travel to a different city and find an apartment and claim that there is a misspelling in your name. Ahearn is clear to point out, multiple times, that someone might be a cop or a federal agent.

THE FUNDAMENTAL CONTRADICTION IN HOW TO DISAPPEAR IS THAT WE DON’T WANT TO DISAPPEAR AT ALL. RATHER, WE WANT TO FIGHT THE PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX TOOLS OF DISAPPEARANCE AND DEVASTATION.

Actually moving to a new place and starting a new life, of course, or rather new lives, requires that you must always use pre-paid credit cards (or pay cash), pre-paid cell phones, set up multiple mail drop boxes with private postal companies and use multiple and sometimes temporary email accounts so that your information is less traceable. The author’s tips for using social media are perhaps more applicable to the work of Critical Resistance and similar organizations and real communities. He recommends that if you must use social media to maintain a social network, then use an anonymous email address for that purpose and that you use a pseudonym or perhaps a misspelling of your name. He reiterates that it is important to trust no one on Facebook or other social media sites and to use phone or regular email to communicate with family. Finally, if you for whatever reason must communicate online and use phone or regular email to communicate with family. Additionally, he used the word “commie” at least once to describe people we should be wary of.

My most strident critique of Ahearn’s work is that he has both his lack of political focus and his focus on the individual when it comes to avoiding and evading surveillance. How to Disappear offers little, if any, connections to political organization or political policies. Most of Ahearn’s strategies require distancing, so that your information is less traceable. The author spends the bulk of the book describing how to disappear, as the title suggests. Ahearn is clear to point out, multiple times, that he is not in the business of helping or suggesting that people do illegal things. He is clearly stating that you should take care of personal debts prior to disappearing, that he does not recommend stealing someone’s identity, nor does he condone illegal tactics used by other skip-tracers such as extracting banking information. His approach to disappearing is three-pronged: misinformation, disinformation, reformation. Misinformation involves finding all of the information that is available about you in the world and altering in some ways, so that you might call your bank or phone company and claim that there is a misspelling in your name or that you have received a suspicious phone call. Disinformation involves fabricating information and creating bogus trails for people to follow. You might accept an offer to a distant city and an apartment for rent and then set up false utility accounts. Gym membership cards are linked to photos that are stored in a central database. Open houses are advertised with a false email address for that purpose and that you might actually travel to a different city and find an apartment and claim that there is a misspelling in your name. Ahearn is clear to point out, multiple times, that someone might be a cop or a federal agent. Disinformation is an excellent tip. The anonymity of the internet means you never really know who you are talking to, and that someone might be a cop or a federal agent. Disinformation involves fabricating information and creating bogus trails for people to follow. You might accept an offer to a distant city and an apartment for rent and then set up false utility accounts. Gym membership cards are linked to photos that are stored in a central database. Open houses are advertised with a false email address for that purpose and that you might actually travel to a different city and find an apartment and claim that there is a misspelling in your name. Ahearn is clear to point out, multiple times, that someone might be a cop or a federal agent.

Perhaps the most salient critique I have of How to Disappear is that the book’s focus on individualism. Ahearn perhaps steers clear of the more nefarious of business engagements, he has no qualms about informing the authorities when something seems fishy, especially if you happen to be a person in an abusive relationship. Moreover, he uses language and tactics that are alienating at best and at worst, sexist and red-baiting. Part of a skip-tracer’s list of tricks when trying to locate someone is to “pretex,” or to call establishments such as phone or other companies, credit card companies and the like and pretend to be the individual in question, whether it is to discover information such as an address or to make changes on behalf of a client such as an address or name change. He states more than once that it’s easier to evade a colder woman company representative with a false personal story about grandchild or the like than a man. Additionally, he used the word “commie” at least once to describe people we should be wary of.

Finally, I think we can find the greatest strength of How to Disappear in the critique and analysis of the book. Ahearn does a really great job of examining the breadth of surveillance that exists in our world. So, surveillance is not only connected to or initiated by law enforcement, but information about even the most minute details of our lives is collected by all kinds of agencies, businesses and individuals. Most times we are not even aware of what we are giving away and what is being used for true for social media outlets. We might think we are showing our support for a friend by “liking” their business on Facebook and suddenly ads for outdoor equipment are appearing on a webpage. If you think that this is just another way that capitalism, for which the prison industrial complex is both a weapon and an overall logic, is becoming further entrenched. This kind of “participatory surveillance” creates an environment in which we unwittingly shore up the defenses of the PIC even as we seek to overcome the alienation it causes.

Jayden Donahue is a member of Critical Resistance-Critically Oakland through which he participates in Tactical Technology Collective and Front Line’s Tactical Technology Collective and Front Line’s TACTICAL TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE AND FRONT LINE’S TACTICAL TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE AND FRONT LINE’S BAY AREA COALITION TO STOP POLITICAL REPRESSION (BACSPPR).
E ven though it was over 30 years ago, I remember well the anxiety about the future and the possibility of a new world without depression, repression, of regimentation, reputedly rife with violence! For me, for many of us, the saving grace was solidarity from other prisoners as those already established helped us to learn to navigate this rocky shoal, especially when you re- 
someone who faces an extra dimension of hostility from the guards, with 
many prisoners joining in to abuse you—not for anything you did but just for who you are? That’s the situation for many transgender and queer prison-
ners. The isolation, disdain, and violence can be vicious and incessant. This is a problem for trans/q (T/Q) prisoners; it’s an important issue for all of us. Every time we join the dominant powers in society in mistreating oth-
ers, every time we seize a dimension of how this anti-human system rules over, we undermine our ability to resist and to organize against repressive and cruel 
compassionate communities that can provide the sainthood and humane alternative to the punitive and damaging prison industrial complex (PIC).

Now we have a wonderful new weapon both for deepening our understanding of the system and for building solidarity in Captive Genders, a collection of essays edited by Eric Stanley and Nat Smith.

This razor sharp, double-edged sword argues effectively both that prison aboli-
tion must be central to T/Q liberation struggles and that T/Q self-determination is central to prison abolition. After producing and physically enforcing the gender binary, rigidly defined by birth genitalia rather than self-determination, while attacks on T/Q people divide prison-
ers and reinforce the repressive powers of the state. For both prison activists and T/Q advocates, all of us need to be “...firmly grounded in the invisible, experiences, and agency of the most marginalized within society.” (13). We need to be conscious, as Yasmine Nair reminds us in this volume, how racism, poverty, lack of health care, mental health care, and institutionalized limited job prospects affect millions of us in this country.

In this book, “trans/q (T/Q)” is used as an umbrella term. “Trans” includes all those who express gender differently from the way it is traditionally assigned at birth—whether heterosexual, transsexual, transgender, cross-dresser, androgynous, or any other challenge to the strict gender binary and stereotypes. “Queer” refers to people whose sexual desires, identities and practices don’t conform to heterosexual norms. The prison in-
dustrial complex, with emphasis on the “complex,” encompasses the political and economic forces of repression and control: prisons and jails, immigration detention centers, deportation and internment facilities, the war on drugs, and the massive prison system in this country.

Captive Genders is emphatically not about liberal reforms such as passing “hate crimes” legislation. As Morgan Bassichis, Alexander Lee, and Dean Spade argue forcefully in their essays, such laws strengthen the repressive institutions that exploit the political power of these institutions. They do not change the individual biops. But instead, the problem is endemic to a system based on racism, patriarchy, state violence, and capitalism. And for T/Q people it’s not just a question of discrimination but is also the basic destruction of their very life chances and life spans. T/Q people are more likely to be disowned by their families, kicked out of school, rejected for jobs, denied entry into gender-defined shelters or hospital treatment centers, and unable to get appropriate medical care. These realities for people like this are burned by napalm. He cites the “emotional impact” of those photos to be the turning point in his life. He was inspired by the protest movement against Vietnam began to escalate. The book follows his life from underground community organizing to founding a revolutionary anti-war fighter and ends with his eventual imprisonment in 1981. He intentionally does not write about the war.

In the chapter “The ‘90s and the Mak-
ing of a Revolutionary,” Gilbert details his early college years where his activism and analysis intensified. In 1963, he joined CORE (Congress on Racial Equality) and began working with the Columbia chapter of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), a group which organized primarily on college campuses against the Vietnam War. He states, “The feeling of having been cast out from among students or ad-
herent to those explosive years, and more importantly, a personal, and intimate relationship with the lives of the many. This is a necessary read. He gleans his own history for traces of what and when his otherwise aboveground life was underground. And he does so with a deep commitment to self-reflexivity as he continues to write about his experiences.

While both his historical perspective and the political sketch he offers are well ar-
cultivated and important, I find the tone of his writing to be a vital intervention into the otherwise austere way the history of the U.S. radical left gets retold. This tone is supported by a deep commitment to self-reflexivity as he continu-
alimony for misfits in his, and his, history. For example, rather than writ-
ing his story, then concluding with some compulsory comments on “women”, Gilbert offers a powerful critique of the ways the left helped produce a culture of misogyny that, like the larger world they were resisting, silenced women, reproduced the gender binary, and protected a kind of middle-class white- ness. He does offer some thoughts on queer underground and the transformational potentials of the movement. This is not to suggest that this work or our collective dreams for another world are finished. To the contrary, the struggle to organize and resist those traditions within our narratives. However, the raw power and urgency often articulated by those that lived these years seems to have been evaporated in the present and replaced by more protracted visions and constricted possibilities. The revolution that many then believed was “right around the corner” in the U.S. has yet to come, or perhaps it is on the way, just much more slowly, and in a different form than was once thought.

Longing for another era is of course much easier than living in that time. But luckily we have records of this collective history that can inform how we struggle differently today. David Gilbert’s new autobiography, Love and Struggle: My Life in SDS, the Weather Underground and Beyond (PM Press, 2012) is essential to abolition. The PIC helps produce and physically enforces the gender binary, rigidly defined by birth genitalia rather than self-determination, while attacks on T/Q people divide prison-
ers and reinforces the repressive powers of the state. For both prison activists and T/Q advocates, all of us need to be “...firmly grounded in the invisible, experiences, and agency of the most marginalized within society.” (13). We need to be conscious, as Yasmine Nair reminds us in this volume, how racism, poverty, lack of health care, mental health care, and institutionalized limited job prospects affect millions of us in this country.

FALL 2012

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David Gilbert, Love and Struggle: My Life in SDS, the Weather Underground and Beyond (PM Press, 2012)

Both reviews continued on next page
transphobia, ableism—to transform society. At the same time, TQ liberation adds an essential dimension to prison abolition, not only in countering a division among prisoners but also in showing how the strict enforcement of the gender binary and stereotypes—the pressures for men to always be “macho” and for women to appear “weak”—limit everyone’s humanity.

Prison abolitionists aren’t just advocates for a narrow sector of the oppressed, prisoners. Even more, we are for safe, healthy, self-determining communities that have the resources needed to flourish. The criminal justice system works totally at cross-purposes to that vision. On one level the punitive approach produces violence, incurs the costs of prison drain and violence, while the costs of prevention drain off public funds needed for positive programs. But the contradiction is even more fundamental. The war on crime and the mushrooming of incarceration—the U.S. prison population is now eight times what it was in 1973—has been the spearhead for turning back the advances the Black Liberation movement and the many other social movements that helped inspire in the 1960s and early 1970s. The Julie Südbury essay is particularly good at sketching the history of Black struggle, and Stephen Gillum relates the heightening of incarceration—the U.S. prison population is now eight times what it was in 1973—has been the spearhead for turning back the advances the Black Liberation movement and the many other social movements that helped inspire in the 1960s and early 1970s. The Julie Südbury essay is particularly good at sketching the history of Black struggle, and Stephen Gillum relates the heightening of incarceration—

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“IT is precisely because of our love of life, because we revel in the human spirit, that we became freedom fighters against this racist and deadly imperialist sy

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At 18 the Abolitionist

Armed Affect

pressional support was provided by Progressive Labor, and on the other side was the Revolutionary Youth Movement, who argued that class cannot be understood without an analysis of racism and sexism (this antagonism still figures forcefully today). The convention ended with the walkout of many delegates.

This split lead to the creation of the Weathermen, later renamed the Weather Underground, a clandestine organization dedicated to militant direct action, namely bombing buildings with precautions as to not harm anyone as a way to expose the violence of U.S. imperialism both domestically and around the world. Reluctant at first, Gilbert eventually joined a Weather collective and headed underground.

While many others have written about living underground in the U.S. and of the Weather Underground in particular, Gilbert’s account brilliantly oscillates between the intensity of living underground—evading police, obtaining and using fake IDs, building bombs, and then the monotony of everyday life—trying to find under the table-work, months of planning for a single action and perhaps most vividly the isolation from being cut off from your former life. While Gilbert offers insight on how power worked “inside” the underground, he writes with what I see as a deep sense of ambivalence. Not a political am

David Gilbert was a political prisoner, author, and mentor. In addition to Love and Surrender he also authored No Surrender: Writings from an Anti-Imperialist Political Prisoner, a book of essays.

Order Captive Genders, edited by Nat Smith and Eric Stanley at akpress.org, or by writing to: AK Press, 574 A 23rd Street, Oakland, CA 94612. (Prisoners receive a 30% discount)

David Gilbert is a political prisoner, author, and mentor. In addition to Love and Surrender he also authored No Surrender: Writings from an Anti-Imperialist Political Prisoner, a book of essays.

Continued from page 11, “Border”

NEWER PRISON PLANS IN MEXICO AND CENTRAL AMERICA will likely serve this purpose as well. We can expect many more arrests in the affected countries.

We can look beyond even Colombia into the U.S. where the war on drugs is also a war on black and brown communities, victims of the decline of industry, are under constant police surveillance. In every city there exists a population of men with felony records who have no redemption in the eyes of society and much less access to employment. This is the nature of our “penitentiary culture” which we have now begun to export. Our prison industrial complex perpetuates the spirit of Jim Crow legislation, the system created to psychologically privilege poor whites in order to kill interracial class-based political alliances against the rich business class (Alexander). It thus suppresses broad political dissent, and also creates to psychologically privilege poor whites in order to kill interracial class-based political alliances against the rich business class (Alexander). It thus suppresses broad political dissent, and also creates

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How to Submit

If you want your name and address printed with your article, please include it as you would like it to appear. If you do not wish to have your name or address included, please let us know that when you submit your piece. If possible, send a copy of your submission, not the original

Writing Suggestions

Try to write an outline before you write the piece. Ask yourself: does the first paragraph tell the reader what the article is about? Do the middle paragraphs support and develop the introduction? Does the last paragraph have a conclusion and some suggestions for action? Even if writing is difficult for you, your ideas are worth the struggle. Try reading your piece out loud to yourself or sharing it with someone else. Doing this might help you clarify the ideas in your own mind.

Send your submission to: The Abolitionist (c/o Critical Resistance) 1904 Franklin St., Suite 504 Oakland, CA 94612

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Review 14

“The Transforming Society”

We accept articles, letters, creative writing, poetry, interviews (in English and Spanish), and art.

The theme for the next issue (#20) of The Abolitionist will be borders. Please send us writing or artwork related to immigration and prison industrial complex abolition. Unfortunately we cannot accept all of the pieces we receive. Any pieces we consider for publication will go through an additional editing process for both content and grammar. The deadline for submissions is December 7, 2012.

Ideas for Articles and Artwork

• Examples of current prisoner organizing
• Practical steps toward prison industrial complex abolition
• Ways to help keep yourself and others physically and mentally healthy while imprisoned
• Updates on what’s happening at the prison you’re in (for example: working conditions, health concerns, lockdowns)
• Legal strategies and important cases that impact prisoners
• Alternatives to policing, punishment, and prison
• Experiences of life after imprisonment
• Your opinion about a piece published in a recent issue

What to Submit

• Articles should not be more than 1,500 words (about 5 handwritten pages)
• Letters should not be more than 250 words
• Empowering artwork that will print well

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Order David Gilbert’s Love and Surrender: My Life in SDS, the Weather Underground and Beyond at pmpress.org, or by writing to PM Press, PO Box 23912, Oakland, CA 94623.

Eric A. Stanley is the co-editor of Captive Genders: Trans Embodiment and the Prision Industrial Complex (AK Press, 2010) and co-director, along with Chris Vargas, of the films Homotopia (2006) and Criminal Queens (2012).

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Order David Gilbert’s statement in court on September 13, 1982 after he had been arrested and charged in connection with the Brink’s truck robbery, an attempted expropriation done in solidarity with the Black Liberation Army, that eventually led to his imprisonment. These words encapsulate the nature of his nonviolent action of the struggle against the perpetuation of a revolutionary life under the powers of a state that is intent on liquidating resistance at all costs. While Gilbert’s details of the Weather Underground and SDS in many of the pages in those histories, his work in offering us a tool for today is what makes Gilbert’s book a necessary read for all of us interested in systems of power. Even after serving over 30 years as a political prisoner, Gilbert writes with the same clarity, dedication, and even humor, as he reminds us that care—that care for each other and for our movements—produces an impact that if not matched with political potentiality can be as much of a threat to our movement as a bomb. Revolutionary struggle, says yes, but love too, love and struggle, indeed!

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Send Us Your Writing and Artwork!

How to Submit

If you want your name and address printed with your article, please include it as you would like it to appear. If you do not wish to have your name or address included, please let us know that when you submit your piece. If possible, send a copy of your submission, not the original

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