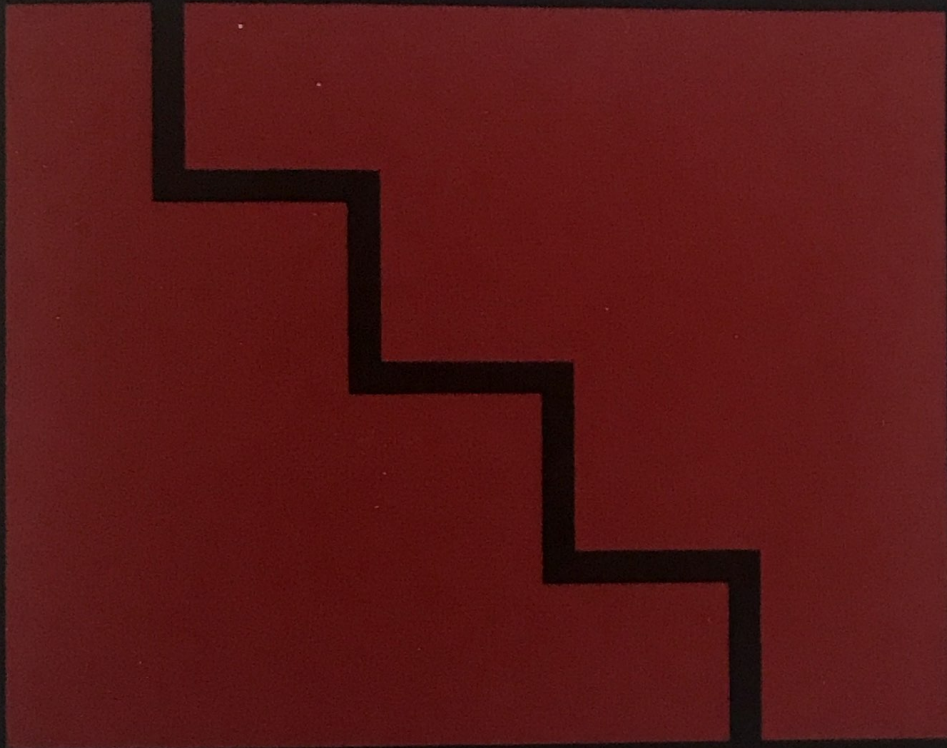




JUNE 2021

VOL. 16 NO. 2

ST ANTONY'S INTERNATIONAL REVIEW



REVOLUTION, RETRENCHMENT, OR
REFORM? SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN
A CHANGING POLITICAL WORLD

A JOURNAL OF ST ANTONY'S COLLEGE,
THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

CAN THE PANTHERS STILL SAVE US? STREET ACTIONS, NON-PROFIT FACTIONS AND THE NON-MOVEMENT AGAINST STATE VIOLENCE

Oscar Fabian Soto and Clint Terrell
University of Santa Barbara

Abstract

In the United States, corporations and the global elite have adopted “systemic change” as their slogan, a mere symbolic reform pushed forth to adopt policies that will continue to oppress poor working-class communities. The current upheavals and social movements, we notice, lack revolutionary theory, political education, and critique of global capitalism, specifically in their fight against the criminal justice system. Instead, the majority of social movements focus on reform – a change within the system itself rather than changing the entirety of the system as a whole. There are only a handful of non-profits or NGOs throughout the United States committed to systemic change. Therefore, the two points we attempt to argue in this paper is that the movements in the United States against super-policing and hyper-incarceration do not address their root causes, which connect their repression with global capitalism. In addition to this, both fail to do this, in part because they have no revolutionary ideology or program, which often, if not entirely, critiques capitalism as the root cause of policing and hyper-incarceration. Second is that the non-profits and NGOs enter the scene, and the global elite, with massive funding packages, try to substitute reformist propaganda and policies that continue to perpetuate the system of capitalism for mass mobilisation and systemic change. What we are connecting here is that NGOs, financed by corporate foundations, are the ones that propagate reformist ideologies and push forward the reformist agenda of the global elite, which does nothing to change the inequalities around the world. The purpose of this paper is to look at two current US movements and their efforts against the criminal justice system. Finally, the paper analyses the lack of revolutionary pedagogy and revolutionary systemic praxis in oppositional organising circles, bringing it back to the Black Panther Party's most critical class ideologies.

Introduction

There are decades where nothing happens; and there are weeks where decades happen.

-Vladimir Lenin

Around the globe, we continue to see major systemic upheavals, from the continued revolution in Haiti to massive protests in Chile, Ecuador, Bolivia, and the women's march in Mexico. The root causes of these upheavals are all linked to the crisis of global capitalism that has continued to wreak havoc on humanity. In the United States, massive anti-racist protests have taken over the streets demanding racial justice for the murder of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Tony McDane, Rayshard Brooks, and Oluwatoyin Salau, among others. Widespread protests in 50 States have encountered massive, militarised police repression with the US military and federal agents who are abducting protestors in unmarked vehicles. All this backed by the former United States President. Additionally, the Covid-19 virus has infected and killed millions of people worldwide. The pandemic's rising numbers and the inability to control the spread are pushing us further into a catastrophic global economic recession. Our current global conditions are, we believe, symptomatic of the neoliberal social order which, according to David Harvey, is 'a political project carried out by the corporate capitalist class as they felt intensely threatened both politically and economically towards the end of the 1960s into the 1970s.'¹ But this global project does not have any more capital reserves to contain the coming global financial chaos, and has now unleashed a massive repressive project against poor communities.² The massive overaccumulation, an excess of capital, owned by the global elite has brought misery and grotesque inequalities across the globe. Global capitalism, a system that by nature continues to produce overaccumulation and *surplus humanity*,³ has developed many different systems of social control against poor working-class communities, including hyper-incarceration,⁴ hyper-policing and repression.

As statistical data now shows, the levels of global social inequality and economic polarisation are currently at unprecedented levels. In 2016, the richest one percent of humanity controlled over half of the world's wealth and twenty percent controlled over ninety-five percent of that wealth, while the remaining eighty percent had to share less than five percent.⁵ Those who suffer from these inequalities are the global workforce. According to the International Labor Organization, more than 1.5 billion workers or about fifty percent of the global workforce are 'vulnerable' workers, a category that includes informal, flexible, part-time, contract, migrant, and itinerant workers.⁶ The ILO reported that, in the late 20th century, one-third of the global labour force remained

unemployed and underemployed.⁷ Capitalism, and in this case global capitalism, kills hundreds of thousands of human beings worldwide. In 2016, more than 5,000 workers died as a result of hazardous working conditions⁸ and, in 2017, more than 2.3 million workers died as a result of occupational accidents or work-related diseases.⁹ Predictably, brown and black racialised groups are overrepresented in these figures, not because of racial discrimination, per se, but because they are overrepresented in the most hazardous occupations.¹⁰ The only way out of this crisis is a revolutionary program that reverses global inequalities through a redistribution of wealth, in addition to a new system that pushes power downwards to the most vulnerable populations.

Here, we wish to draw attention to the contradictory impulses within the current movement: the tension between reform and revolution. We argue that the suppression of revolutionary theory or 'a crisis of political education,' as stated by Robin Kelley, in the contemporary push for political change in academia, activism, and the societal sphere, are responsible for transforming innumerable uprisings from potentially revolutionary movements into sentimental and inconsequential moments.¹¹ Movements that lack political and revolutionary agendas are often co-opted and funded by the global elite and NGOs, which pose no threat to the current system. Two examples of stalled social movements seeking to address 'repressive captivity' are those primarily focusing on police violence and hyper-incarceration.¹² Both of these movements have long legacies. Still, particularly within the last decade, radical events have produced significant uprisings that have failed to gain any real political traction or generate revolutionary social change in the United States. The two main points we are arguing here are: (1) The movement in the United States against policing, police violence, and hyper-incarceration has not gained any political traction; and (2) When the movements do push for revolutionary change and political education, they are often pushed out to the margins, or else become co-opted into a more passive movement which poses no threat to the system.

Movements that have been pushed to the margins include immigrant rights movements. While this movement called for racial justice and immigration reform, immigrants coming from Mexico, Latin America and Central America continue to suffer from the repressive tactics of the United States. U.S. Republicans under the Trump Administration continued to push hardline conservative ideologies and policies that targeted specific groups. For example, on 7 May 2017 the US Department of Justice, backed by Trump's White House, implemented a 'zero tolerance' policy targeting undocumented immigrants to discourage migration into the United States.¹³ This policy has received major criticism, as recordings have captured the cries of children detained and being held in cages. In addition, during Trump's Administration he terminated nearly 320,000 Temporary Protected Statuses (TPS)

designated for Salvadorian, Honduran, and Haitian asylum seekers.¹⁴ TPS is a temporary status given to eligible people from certain countries who currently reside in the United States. The status is granted to people from countries currently affected by armed conflict and natural disaster.

Of course, we do not wish to generalise by saying all the social movements today fail to hold any revolutionary consciousness, revolutionary praxis, and anti-capitalist agenda. While we agree that there are organisations and social movements which exhibit anti-capitalistic analysis, class consciousness, revolutionary consciousness, and which are fighting for immigrant rights, we argue that this has not translated down to the masses, which continue to suffer from oppressive systems of social control and policies that criminalise poor populations, such as those referenced above. Critical Resistance, the leading radical organisation in the fight against the criminal justice system and the prison industrial complex, is a prime example of an organisation fighting for decades against capitalism, racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression. Marxists, such as Ruth Wilson Gilmore and Angela Davis, have for decades centred anti-capitalist frameworks in the fight against the criminal justice system and the prison industrial complex.¹⁵ But an argument can be made that current movements, such as the organisation Black Lives Matter (BLM), have not set forth a programme that offers a real threat to the global capitalist social order. In fact, there has been political division between BLM chapters and BLM Global network on the basis of co-optation and loss of political agenda.¹⁶ This is not to say that activists, organisations, and academics have until today been quiet in the fight against the criminal justice system and global capitalism. On the contrary, we argue that there are certain types of social justice discourses that tend to be amplified over others because they are more palatable for the institution of philanthropist surveillance, also known as the non-profit industrial and professionalisation complex, which for so many years has immobilised revolutionary-based movements.

We agree that contemporary movements have brought different demands, from abolishing the police to defunding the military, as well as an upheaval of the entire criminal justice system. We want to make it clear that we are not opposed to this. Nor are we questioning the courageous activism and movements which have disrupted the system as a whole. However, these efforts have heretofore done little to change the dominance of global capitalism. We must see anti-racist struggle and anti-capitalist struggle in relationship to one another. Race and class are not separate, but rather are inextricably interwoven together in the larger totality of the American socio-political reality. Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor's work, *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation*, precisely highlights the relationship between anti-racist movements and class-struggles. She states, '...racism, capitalism, and class rule have always been tangled.'¹⁷ Stuart Hall echoes this sentiment by stating, "Race is the

principal modality in which members of that class “lived,” experience, make sense of and thus *come to a consciousness* of their structured subordination.¹⁸ Finally, the Red Nation movement, which identifies as Indigenous Marxist, has integrated an anti-racist analysis to an anti-capitalist Marxist framework. But why haven’t these frameworks trickled down to the masses to create a mass transnational movement against global capitalism?

We want to make it clear that, at the core of any political education curriculum on the criminal justice system and the prison industrial complex, policing, criminalisation, and hyper incarceration must be seen as byproducts of capitalism. In other words, their main purpose is protecting the private property of the super-rich and corporations.¹⁹ The movements against policing, police violence, and hyper-incarceration, therefore, both fail to address these issues, in part because they fail to spread revolutionary ideological agendas to the masses. It is not our intent to blame the movements, but rather highlight the detrimental effects of massive funding pools pushed downward by the global elite to tame any revolutionary praxis from below. Such efforts include accepting some of the leadership from these social movements into the ranks of the middle and upper classes. This is highlighted extensively by *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex* book. Edited by INCITE!, the book engages directly with the relationship between the non-profit industrial complex, the co-optation of radical goals and thinkers, and the expansion of the carceral state.²⁰ As the non-profits or NGOs come onto the scene, most are subdued and co-opted by corporate elites that substitute mass mobilisation with passive and mild reforms. Reforms are often, if not always, no threat to the current system. The connection we are highlighting here is that NGOs and non-profits, financed by corporate foundations, are precisely those organisations that propagate reformist ideologies and push forward a reformist agenda that is no threat to the system of global capitalism. Instead of abolishing the system as a whole, there is a continuation of the oppressive mechanisms of the criminal justice system and the prison industrial complex.²¹ On the other hand, many people who choose to work in the non-profit sector envision a more radical transformation of society, but either lack political education themselves or end up working for organisations that are explicitly at odds with revolutionary praxis.

What follows is a very brief description of reform/co-optation versus abolition/revolutionary theory and systemic change. Following this description is an analysis of two contemporary events that have produced uprisings and massive mobilisations, but have deteriorated into networks that perpetuate the status quo, on the one hand, and push for mild reforms on the other. First, we will examine the 2013 California Prisoner Hunger Strike against long-term solitary confinement, which gained widespread support on the streets and simultaneously produced

substantial prison reforms and a plethora of ineffectual non-profit organisations. Next, we will examine the murder of Mike Brown and George Floyd. Mike Brown, an unarmed black teenager, was murdered by the Ferguson, Missouri police officer Darren Wilson, a tragic event which sparked the Hands Up, Don't Shoot movement and then into the Black Lives Matter organisation. The other is the murder of George Floyd by a Minneapolis police officer named Derek Chauvin, which sparked mass protests in all fifty states of the United States. While the murder of Mike Brown and George Floyd has generated much more street energy than the California Hunger Strikes and has produced a litany of mild reforms, both movements failed to gain their initially-desired political or revolutionary traction. In large part, these partial achievements come due to the absence of revolutionary politics, decades of Red Scare propaganda, and significant corporate funding pushed downwards to tame these movements. We do recognise that there has been massive legislative and political changes (i.e., defunding and dismantling of police departments, eradicating gang injunctions in some areas of California, and stopping the building of new prison facilities), but these changes have not brought any systemic change to the oppressive system of global capitalism.²² It is not our intention to discredit these movements, but rather to show their limitations and offer insights for improvement in a way that can bring about more substantive change. The following section will address some of the tensions between reformism and abolition.

Reform/cooptation vs abolition/Revolutionary social change

Why is the language of abolition, revolution, and class struggle absent from today's social movements? As Robinson argues, this is due, in part, to the betrayal of the intellectual.²³ The mass social movements that began in the 1960s and continued to the 1970s and beyond have shown us that revolution, abolition, and radical social systemic change are not in the agenda of the global elites, but full of reformist ideologies funded by corporations. The dismantling of social programs and the growing dominance of the right-wing agenda in the United States political system has been made possible, at least in part, by the successful repression of the civil rights and liberation movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Through mechanisms like police violence, on one part, and hyper-incarceration on the other, the cooptation mechanism continues to repress poor communities who do not fit into the status quo. Members from oppressive groups and former members that identified as radicals joined the ranks of academia and professionalisation. These new intellectuals then become the new petty bourgeoisie, whose former revolutionary class struggles fade away into reformist arguments that perpetuate the capitalist state.

Thus, since the 1960s, forms of inclusion like 'multiculturalism,'

'diversity,' and postmodern identity politics paradigms have become engulfed in higher academia and activist circles. These small examples of reform and equitable integration were no threat in the 1970s, and still pose no threat to the current system of capitalism. Of course, the global elite have embraced these ideologies as a way of incorporating people from 'radical' organisations into non-threatening inclusion, equality, and diversity propaganda. As would be, this propaganda has neglected any anti-colonial, anti-imperialist, and anti-capitalist rhetoric. Furthermore, it has expanded the global elites' wealth, while also 'diversifying' the top one percent. Thus, postmodern identity-based politics, funded by corporations and the global ruling class, pushed away and silenced any revolutionary politics in the 1970s. Any type of revolutionary social change, whether ethnic, racial, or sexual forms of oppression, must be amplified by workers' struggles all across the globe that target capitalism as the root of the reproduction of race, racism, and other forms of inequality.

We can see the verge of massive co-optation processes of current movements today. Senior members of the Democratic Congressional and Senate leadership, part of the global elite, even knelt for eight minutes and forty-six seconds to pay homage to the death of George Floyd at the US Capital in June 2020. The new direction of global corporations and the global elite's call against systemic racism and for social justice is dangerous, to say the least. The newfound interest in anti-racist rhetoric, massive funding for 'racial justice,' and reforming of the criminal justice by corporations is symbolic of their newfound interest in co-opting Black Lives Matter, hyper-incarceration, and anti-policing movements currently taking place in the United States. Amazon, Bank of America, Facebook, Google, Home Depot, Nike, Walt Disney Company, Warner Bros, the National Basketball Association, and Verizon are already welcoming language critical of systemic racism. Fighting for racial justice is their new mantra. CEOs of these major corporations whose donations have embraced policing, hyper-incarceration, social inequality, and racial injustices for decades are indeed attempting to commodify these movements into passive groups. Instead of embracing a mild reform from corporate elites, which history has shown leads to continued and intensified repression, social control, and oppression, we must instead fight for the total abolition of global capitalism, influenced by revolutionary social theory and political education.

As anti-racist protests continue to engulf one of the world's strongest and wealthiest nations, there is a complete absence of truly substantive to systemic change. We argue that abolition of prisons, of policing, and the implementation of anti-imperialist and anti-colonial agendas and revolutionary social theory should be at the forefront of these movements. The current wave of mass protests in the United States should not be reduced only to black and brown murder rates, or to

racism itself, but must be tied historically to the consequences of global capitalism and to the class struggles inherent within this system. These include global pandemics, overpopulation, systemic racism, and the vast underemployment rates across the globe. The same organisations and political agents of the corporate world that in recent decades have praised capitalist globalisation, and their by-products—which include super-policing, hyper-incarceration, and racist systems—have now come to embrace anti-racist protests. This embrace seeks to push for mild reform to weaken and destabilise demands for revolutionary social change, similar to the situation that occurred in the 1970s. We now continue this analysis by asking what we can take from the Black Panthers Party, which became the biggest revolutionary threat in the United States in the 1960s, in order to guide us through this moment?

Fred Hampton, the charismatic leader of the Black Panther Party, stated, 'We never negated the fact that there was racism in America, but we said that the byproduct, what comes off capitalism, happens to be racism.'²⁴ Hampton, the leader of the Chicago chapter, who was assassinated by the FBI and Chicago Police in 1969, then goes on to argue: 'Capitalism comes first, and next is racism. That when they brought slaves over here, it was to make money. The idea came that we want to make money, then the slaves came to make that money. That means, through historical fact, that racism had to come from capitalism. It had to be capitalism first, and racism was a byproduct of that.'²⁵ George Jackson, a captive revolutionary that was shot and killed inside San Quentin State Prison on August 21, 1971 shortly before the Attica Prison uprising—the biggest prison rebellion to date—echoed this sentiment by stating, 'It is the system that must be crushed, for it continues to manufacture new and deeper contradictions of both class and race. Once it is destroyed, we may be able to address the problems of racism at an even more basic level. But we must also combat racism while we are in the process of destroying the system...Racism is a fundamental characteristic of monopoly capital.'²⁶ We understand that the rhetoric of Hampton and Jackson have been complicated a great deal in the past decades by scholars. Nevertheless, this anti-capitalist sentiment pushed forth by Fred Hampton and George Jackson seems to be completely absent from current social movements.

Angela Davis, a communist and a Black Panther, continues to highlight the importance of not divorcing capitalism and racism,²⁷ mainly because of non-profit organisations' ability to squash any revolutionary praxis. On a macro scale, the solutions are not to reform law enforcement, the prison system, or the criminal justice system, all contributors to hyper-incarceration, but rather to generate alternatives to punishment. Reforming these systems will only reinforce a larger system that, under capitalism, intends to protect the private property of the rich and powerful from the poor and dispossessed through

criminalisation, stigmatisation, and marginalisation.²⁸ As we will see with the following case studies, movements that do not push political education, revolutionary social theory, and revolutionary praxis may fall into the co-optation mechanisms of the ruling groups.

Hungering for revolution: From Pelican Bay to Ferguson and the immobilisation of social change

The California prisoner hunger strikes of 2011 and 2013 represent a historic moment of counter-hegemonic sentiment in the U.S. and demonstrate the necessity for a revitalisation of revolutionary politics, theory, and praxis in grassroots organising circles. The conditions that sparked the hunger strikes were the California Department of Corrections and 'Rehabilitation's' (CDCr)²⁹ criteria for gang validation which enabled the state to keep so-called gang members in solitary confinement indefinitely. Sitawa Jamaa, Todd Ashker, Arturo Castellanos, and Antonio Guillen, also known as the 'Short Corridor Collective,' had all been in solitary confinement for more than a decade, with others being isolated for more than twenty or thirty years.³⁰ They were documented as being each other's enemies based on their race and gang affiliations, but after two unsuccessful hunger strikes in 2011 and 2012, they issued the 'Agreement to End Hostilities' statement.³¹ This marked the beginning of a sixty-day hunger strike in which more than thirty-thousand people in California State Prisons and county jails participated. The hunger strikes quickly gained the attention of street activists, earned a five-minute segment on MSNBC, and resulted in the Supreme Court Case *Ashker v. California* after gaining the attention of the United Nations.³²

It should be duly noted that the Short Corridor Collective had its own political education program and that their hunger strikes were modeled after the teachings of Bobby Sands and the Irish Republican Army. Not only were the hunger strikes successful in gaining international attention, demonstrating their potential as a vehicle for a revolutionary movement, but they also served as my own introduction to the world of political organising. By the time of the hunger strikes in 2013, I (Clint Terrell) had been out of prison for three years, attending community college, and preparing to transfer to a four-year university. I had previously served a three-year prison term in California of which most of my time was spent in administrative segregation units (ASU) and security housing units (SHU).³³ I first learned about the hunger strikes from Steven Czifra, whom I knew from prison, and who was now a student at the University of California, Berkeley. On a visit of mine to the Berkeley campus, Czifra familiarised me with the 'Agreement to End Hostilities.' Czifra was involved with several prison abolitionist organisations in the Bay Area. He was at the forefront of public demonstrations in support of the hunger strikers' demands, and he was helping to develop a formerly-

incarcerated student organisation now known as Underground Scholars. I knew that the likelihood of the 'Agreement to End Hostilities' to unite prisoners across racial lines into a political force was idealistic, but I also knew that CDCr could not be allowed to continue terrorising prisoners with an arbitrary gang validation criterion. I decided to organise a similar student organisation to raise awareness about the hunger strikes at the community college I was attending, but at this point I still did not have a clear conception of the difference between reform, abolition, or revolution. In other words, political education was still missing from my college experience.

The fervor around the hunger strikes in the streets and on college campuses was exhilarating, and it was at this time that I became familiar with the antagonistic discourses of reform, abolition, and revolution. As the student organisations that I was working with deliberated how to make the most effective interventions, there were essentially two different strategies that fractioned the groups. One strategy was to work with community organisers and to use resources available to students in order to make interventions outside the university, such as holding demonstrations and rallying support from people with incarcerated family members throughout California. The other faction sought to build up a safety net for soon-to-be released prisoners by creating a center on campus that would be solely staffed by formerly incarcerated students. The latter strategy proved to be more economically viable, and it is through this model that we can identify a common pitfall of grassroots organising. Rather than tapping into the fervour of the hunger strikes to build up a political party, the 'movement' against solitary confinement quickly degenerated into a network of non-profit ventures centered around a culture of redemption and exceptionalism.³⁵

Robin Kelley, as stated above, calls this the 'crisis of political education,' wherein movements, activists and, in larger part, academia lack political education or revolutionary thought. As someone who spent well over a year-and-a-half in solitary confinement, I was committed to helping some of my old acquaintances get re-integrated into the general population where they would have access to more rehabilitative programs, college courses, and opportunities to better themselves. On the other hand, I had an elementary understanding that the direction the movement was heading would not do anything to disrupt business as usual within the monstrous institution that is CDCr. To be sure, many of these non-profits are seen in a favourable light by incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people and they provide valuable services for people who lack access to resources through more conventional means, but they also allow the state to regroup and strategise the next round of punitive measures. For example, some hunger strikers such as Todd Ashker have voiced concern for CDCr's tactics of exporting rehabilitative programs from general population prisons to protected custody prisons,

as many of the hunger strikers have been released back into general population in the aftermath of the *Ashker v. California* victory.³⁶

Non-profit organisations addressing prisoner rights are not an entirely new development, and calls for prison abolition from activists and public intellectuals have been present since at least the 1970s. Prior to the hunger strikes, there was a plethora of abolitionist scholarship by notable scholars and activists such as Angela Davis and Ruth Wilson Gilmore. Davis's *Are Prisons Obsolete* and Gilmore's *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalising California* contain holistic explanations for the contemporary status of the U.S. prison regime and sophisticated strategies for stopping the construction of new prisons and replacing them with more humane models of justice.³⁷ For example, Gilmore cautions against conspiracy theories about racial cleansing vis-à-vis the War on Drugs as an explanation for prison expansion. Instead, she employs Marx's theory of surplus populations which he develops in his chapter on "So-Called Primitive Accumulation" in *Capital Vol. 1*. Marx tells the story of Scottish Highlanders being driven off their farmlands and forced into the industrial seaport towns with the excess labor being driven back to the Highlands and rehired for a wage while there remained another demographic that was not able to obtain factory jobs or to be rehired on the lands that they once partially owned. This latter demographic became a surplus population who mostly became beggars and vagrants who were criminalised and brutalised. Gilmore demonstrates how this history is constantly repeating itself under capital, with special attention paid to the Great Depression, when Okies were driven to California from the Midwest to compete with the existing Mestizo population for agricultural work, thereby creating a new surplus population. According to Gilmore, the criminalisation of Okies and Mestizos overburdened the small jail systems of Central California, and it is from here that we can trace the phenomenon of prison expansion in the Western US.³⁸ Where Gilmore gives us the framework for understanding the contemporary prison regime and strategies for resisting it, Davis provides us with alternatives to incarceration through her concept of restorative justice.

Likewise, organisations such as All of Us or None, Legal Services for Prisoners with Children, and Critical Resistance were on the scene for decades prior to the hunger strikes, but were largely unknown to anyone outside of small activist and intellectual circles.³⁹ When the hunger strikes made international headlines in 2013, a number of criminal justice reform organisations sprang up almost overnight. Nonprofits such as Anti-Recidivism Coalition, established in 2013, and Just Leadership USA (JLUSA), established in 2014, have grown into multimillion-dollar organisations. Anti-Recidivism Coalition claims that its purpose to 'empower' formerly incarcerated people and 'create safer communities,' whereas JLUSA states that its mission is to cut

the national prison population in half by 2030, advanced by the social media hashtag #halfby2030.⁴⁰ While these are noble liberal causes, they represent a break from more critical activists and intellectuals who have been organising against the US prison system since at least the late 1970s. Whether the people who lead these organizations merely lack a political education themselves, or they are in conscious opposition to it because it is conducive to their funding objectives, they are not offering substantive challenges to the prison regime and global capitalism and they may, in fact, be prolonging the problem.

The marginalisation of more critical prison abolitionist activists and intellectuals can be traced through the elevation of multimillion-dollar criminal justice reform non-profits but, on the other hand, the hunger strikes did give life to the organic development of several street organisations. For instance, California Families to Abolish Solitary Confinement, as well as a number of formerly incarcerated student organisations, coalesced around the shared experience of having loved ones stuck in the bowels of the most expansive prison system on earth.⁴¹ The organic development of the latter organisations portrays the potential of an incident like the hunger strikes to be a vehicle for a revolutionary movement through its ability to assemble a multitude of people. There are currently 2.3 million people in US prisons, with another 3.4 million on probation or parole.⁴² These approximately 6 million people have millions of mothers, fathers, wives, husbands, siblings, and extended family members who are tired of seeing their loved ones brutalised by the state. Even in my inchoate state of political consciousness, I saw the potential for a mass mobilisation against a repressive regime. What I saw instead was an influx of philanthropic monetary support, a dissolution of street energy, and the social elevation of a handful of formerly incarcerated individuals, myself included, into the ranks of academia, non-profit bureaucratic positions, and public employment.

The professional direction that the movement against 'mass incarceration' took is not only the result of a lack of revolutionary theory, or political education, but also the presence and popularisation of a particular kind of education. Michelle Alexander's *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* came out in 2010 and immediately became a *New York Times Bestseller*. In Alexander's first chapter, she notes that, 'Department of Defense funds increased from \$33 million to \$142 million between 1981 and 1984' while 'anti-drug funds to the Department of Education decreased from \$14 million to \$3 million.'⁴³ Unlike Gilmore, whose *Golden Gulag* was published 3 years earlier, Alexander's book provides no real critique of global capital and perpetuates the race-reductionist explanations that Gilmore cautions against. Yes, black and brown communities are disproportionately affected by the criminal justice system but, if we reduce the criminal justice system to little more than a racial problem, we are perpetuating

the system of global capitalism. The same year that Alexander's book hit the *New York Times Bestsellers* list, Governor of California Arnold Schwarzenegger, in his State of the State speech, stated, 'What does it say about our state—any state—that focuses more on prison uniforms than caps and gowns? It is simply not healthy.' In 2014, California passed Senate Bill 863 which allocated \$500 million in bond money to remedy overcrowding in county jails which incentivised education programs for incarcerated individuals.⁴⁴ Ironically, SB863 immediately led to the construction of five new county jails that were deemed 'program facilities' in a state which already had one-hundred and ten county jails, but only fifty-eight counties.⁴⁵ This development was praised by many prison reform advocates centered around rehabilitation and reentry programs for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals. The idea that academic scholarship can influence the political sphere of public discourse and consequently inform political praxis is evidenced by the reformist shift of anti-prison activism in the early 2010s. This reformist shift directly coincides with the marginalisation of scholars and activists such as Davis and Gilmore, whose critical work has never been featured on the *New York Times Bestsellers* list, and the popularisation of such scholars as Alexander. While Alexander herself can occasionally be seen taking more critical stances, as can be seen in her interview with Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor and Haymarket Books (2017) where she briefly mentions how a socialist program might begin to address 'mass-incarceration' and in comparison to her race reductionist book *The New Jim Crow*, she is not consistent and we can see the importance of maintaining a stronghold on critical abolitionist language to dissuade conservative opportunists from appropriating our struggles and deploying revisionist reforms.

The marginalisation of critical and revolutionary voices within the political sphere of public discourse erodes the concept of political education which leads to the stonewalling of political movements and the dissolution of revolutionary energy. We can see an example of this with the landmark Supreme Court case *Ashker v. California*. As the case reached a settlement in 2015, calls for abolition and chants such as 'End Solitary Confinement!' and 'Free All Political Prisoners!' began to be replaced by slogans such as 'Education Not Incarceration!' and 'Schools Not Prisons!' To be fair, *Ashker v. California* was somewhat successful in ending the decades-long era of draconian solitary confinement with hundreds of validated 'prison gang associates' being immediately released from solitary along with the majority of the signatories of the 'Agreement to End Hostilities.'⁴⁶ Todd Ashker, a leading prisoner within the Agreement to End Hostilities movement, and plaintiff of the Supreme Court case, and Sitawa Jamaa, a leading black prisoner, were not released from solitary confinement. However, the settlement did give some reprieve to activists on the streets.⁴⁷ On the other hand, the rhetorical shift towards education as a remedy for incarceration coincided with a wave of popular

academic scholarship centered around recidivism and reintegration, and no real push for abolition, which was bolstered by the developing culture of redemption and exceptionalism of formerly incarcerated college students.⁴⁸

The movement against police brutality, spearheaded by the social media hashtag #BlackLivesMatter, followed a similar trajectory as the movement against solitary confinement—albeit on a much larger scale—but which also correlates with the absence of revolutionary thought in public discourse. In 2014, one year after the California prison hunger strikes, and while *Ashker v. California* was still being litigated, Ferguson, Missouri police officer Darren Wilson shot and killed Mike Brown, an unarmed black teenager. A turbulent uprising ensued after Brown's mother set up a memorial where Mike Brown was shot and an officer allowed his police dog to urinate on it, angering a crowd who had gathered to mourn the passing.⁴⁹ 'Hands Up Don't Shoot' quickly became the rallying cry of the uprisings as Dorian Johnson, a witness to the shooting, claimed that Brown had his hands raised in the air and cried, 'Don't shoot!' as officer Wilson opened fire.⁵⁰

Civil unrest ensued for months in Ferguson, even as it was met with brutal military suppression from local police and the National Guard. While there were a handful of local Ferguson activists making demands for tangible resources to be funneled into the Ferguson community, along with calls to prosecute killer cops, the Hands Up Don't Shoot chant began to be drowned out by the slogan Black Lives Matter. Where local Ferguson organisers saw the need to connect the issue of police violence to poverty in the Ferguson community, Black Lives Matter activists were initially concerned with police reform and policy changes, as is evidenced in their 10-point manifesto presented in 'Campaign Zero.'⁵¹

Similar to Alexander, Black Lives Matter has also begun to take a more critical stance by re-centering the discourse of defunding police around a redistribution of wealth, for which they have falsely been accused of being a 'Marxist organisation' by far-right wing and anti-Semitic conspiracy theorists. On the other hand, with the launch of Black Lives Matter Global Network, there has been an exodus from the organisation known as 'Black Lives Matter 10.' Black Lives Matter 10 has expressed their frustration with Black Lives Matter Global Network's lack of transparency with how funding from major donors is being distributed, as well as with how decision-making on certain initiatives have priority within the larger organisation's agenda.⁵² Regardless of which direction these organisations ultimately take, the discordance for a path forward in fighting state violence underscores the influence that public discourse has on activists' strategies and the importance of maintaining critical and explicit abolitionist language in our critiques of police terror and global capitalism.

The recurrence of contemporary social movements losing their

street momentum and failure to bring about real structural change is largely due to a lack of strategy and exclusive rhetorical advancements which is consistent with a lack of engagement with revolutionary thought and political education. It should be duly noted that both the fights against solitary confinement/prison expansion and police brutality have come to be contextualised as anti-racist struggles. To be sure, and we agree, that there is no shortage of data to demonstrate how incarceration and police brutality disproportionately impact people of color. Yet, as Zaid Jilani points out, 95% of police killings in 2015 occurred in neighborhoods with incomes under \$100,000 and the median family income in neighborhoods where police killed people was \$52,907.⁵³ Predictably, studies have shown that the majority of people incarcerated in the U.S. come from impoverished backgrounds. According to a 2018 Brookings Institution study, only 13% of incarcerated men and women earned more than \$15,000 prior to incarceration and only 55% reported any income at all after a year of being released.⁵⁴ We can see a common thread here that unites anti-racist grievances with workers' struggles, a detail that is all too often missing from the political sphere of public discourse, and something that needs to be revitalized in order to work towards a general strike with a holistic agenda which, by default, addresses both issues of police violence and hyper-incarceration.

Many local Ferguson activists understood the relationship between police killings and poverty, which sought to create a massive public political education platform in an effort to control the media narrative about the root causes of police violence and strategies to oppose it. For example, the organisation Hands Up Don't Shoot, aptly named after Brown's last words, sought to build a political movement that would train people how to be self-sufficient in an economy that has systematically excluded them, while adequately redirecting public funds back into the Ferguson community.⁵⁵ In fact, very little of the local conversation was focused on police reform itself, and one of their primary strategies was to eradicate what they saw as the 'black misleadership class' from the Democratic Party through an information campaign that would be spearheaded by their own media platforms. In other words, a revitalisation of political education at the highest levels of public discourse.⁵⁶

The local Ferguson activists' strategies of taking control of the media narrative to politically educate the Ferguson community, as well as to develop strategies for reclaiming their city, put them at odds with many Black Lives Matter organisers who were mostly not from the area. One such Ferguson activist who was outspoken against Black Lives Matter was Darren Seals. Seals was an employee at Wentzville General Motors Assembly Center and a self-educated activist who engaged critically with the teachings of Malcolm X, Fred Hampton, Assata Shakur, and other black radical thinkers. In an article titled, 'Meet Darren Seals. Then tell me black

death is not a business,' scholar and journalist Sarah Kendzior recounts Seals' confrontation with Black Lives Matter activist DeRay McKesson. Seals confronted McKesson about not being from Ferguson and using the Black Lives Matter platform to raise money in Mike Brown's name. McKesson himself is actually from Baltimore, Maryland and a number of other Black Lives Matter organisers traveled to Ferguson from as far away as Chicago, Illinois, Washington D.C., and Los Angeles, California.⁵⁷ Seals was suspicious of Black Lives Matter's fundraising efforts and the ways in which they seemed to be taking control of the narrative in the mainstream media. This of course, was in direct opposition to Seals' and other Ferguson activist's political education initiatives.

Black Lives Matter has gone on to become a multimillion-dollar organisation while extrajudicial police killings of poor Black, White, Brown, and Indigenous people have gone on largely uninterrupted since police brutality has become part of a national public conversation.⁵⁸ Furthermore, many Black Lives Matter activists stand in direct opposition to the type of political education advocated by Seals and other Ferguson activists. For example, Melina Abdullah, former chair of the Pan-African Studies Department at California State University Los Angeles and co-founder of the Los Angeles Black Lives Matter chapter introduced Ron 'Maulana' Karenga as one of her principal mentors at the 50th anniversary of Pan-African Studies. Karenga was a co-founder of the Us organisation which was often at odds with the Black Panther Party. In addition, Karenga himself was implicated in the murders of Panther members Alprentice 'Bunchy' Carter and John Huggins.⁵⁹ Sadly, the rift between Black Lives Matter organisers and local Ferguson activists seems to be reproducing some of these old antagonisms.

For example, when confronted by Seals, McKesson laughed, and Seals slapped him across the face with an open palm.⁶⁰ This action was criticised by activists across the board, but Seals went on to post a document titled, 'Bending the Arc from Interest to Investment' to his public Facebook page which seemingly promises millions of dollars to Black Lives Matter with a large portion of money being devoted to 'training, professional development, coaching, and organisational development.'⁶¹ The document was found on the Association for Black Foundations Executives website and listed donors from such foundations including Soros Open Society, Emerson, and Monsanto. Lest we perpetuate right-wing, anti-Semitic conspiracy theories about George Soros funding the radical left, it is important to note that many scholars have been sounding the alarm about the absorption of organic street movements by philanthropic non-profit ventures. Dylan Rodriguez, in his article 'The Political Logic of the Non-Profit Industrial Complex,' explains how placatory social justice organisations are legitimised by private foundation money while former and potential revolutionaries are criminalised.⁶² He goes on to suggest that private financial groups such

as the Mellon, Ford, and Soros foundations exist to 'contain and surveil public political discourse.' Considering the containment and surveillance of public political discourse, it is also important to note that the legitimisation of placid social justice organisations and criminalisation of revolutionaries simultaneously coincides with an erasure of revolutionary theory.

In line with Rodriguez's theory about how the elevation of placatory social justice organisations coincide with the criminalisation, or sometimes disappearance of potential revolutionaries, Seals was found shot and burned to death in his car in a St. Louis parking lot one month after he posted the 'Bending the Arc from Interest to Investment' document to his Facebook page. There is no evidence to suggest that Seal's death is related to his posting of the document, and his murder has still not been solved, but his voice was nonetheless silenced during a critical moment of the Ferguson and Black Lives Matter divergence. Thus, we must be wary of newfound monetary contributions by global elites and corporations as it is highly possible that some organisations may be co-opted and welcomed into the ranks of the upper class. Today, with the murder of George Floyd, it seems that we are heading into the same direction, as major corporations funnel money downward to combat 'racial justice' issues, without changing the system itself demonstrating the importance of revolutionary theory at the level of public discourse and political education at this moment in time.

Dylan goes on to point out in his article that while many social justice non-profits may be funded by liberal foundations such as Mellon, Ford, and Soros, they are increasingly staffed by Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC).⁶³ Unfortunately, many of the people who work in these establishments are as ideologically at odds with revolutionary thought as the white liberals who fund them. The disidentification with revolutionary theory by many BIPOC intellectuals and activists is in large part due to the elevation of racial nationalism as an accepted model of opposition to 'systemic white supremacy.' There is a popular myth, especially within the realm of academia, that 'the left' is racist because its insistence on centering class struggle does not do enough to explain systemic white supremacy.

Systemic white supremacy itself is nothing more than the historical development of bourgeoisie nationalism once explained by V.I. Lenin in his essay, 'On the National Question.' Lenin's critique is dated and there have been many more well-known intellectuals to explicate the national question at length from anarchist intellectuals such as Mikhail Bakunin's *God and the State* to more contemporary scholars such as Cedric Robinson's *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*. Yet, Lenin's essay is indicative of the range of intellectuals to make a critique of nationalism and is who the Black Panther Party drew on heavily to develop their critiques of Black cultural nationalism. Lenin states,

'For the complete victory of commodity production, the bourgeoisie must capture the home market, and there must be politically united territories whose populations speak a single language, with all obstacles to the development of that language and its consolidation in literature removed.'⁶⁴ While many contemporary intellectuals may call Lenin and others of various leftist and Marxist traditions 'class reductionists,' the Black Panther Party was able to draw on these seemingly archaic theories to develop a sophisticated strategy for fighting systemic white supremacy/bourgeoisie nationalism and state violence through working-class internationalism, or 'inter-communalism' which is anti-racist by definition.

The erasure of revolutionary theory from public political discourse and the elevation of racial nationalism in reaction to systemic white supremacy is explained as 'Black Power nostalgia' by Cedric Johnson in his article, 'The Panthers Can't Save Us Now.' Johnson suggests that the legacy of the Black Panthers is a distorted version of black nationalism and he calls for a revitalisation of 'anti-capitalist politics situated in class experiences.'⁶⁵ While Johnson acknowledges the inaccuracy of remembering the Black Panthers as black nationalists, he neglects the nuts-and-bolts of the Black Panthers Party's actual politics. The Black Panthers exuded a philosophy of 'inter-communalism' which they developed from their interpretation of Marxist-Leninism. In Huey P. Newton's collection of speeches and essays, *To Die for the People*, he states:

In 1966, we called our Party a Black Nationalist Party. We called ourselves Black Nationalists because we thought that nationhood was the answer. Shortly after that we decided that what was really needed was revolutionary nationalism, that is, nationalism plus socialism. After analyzing conditions a little more, we found that it was impractical and even contradictory. Therefore, we went to a higher level of consciousness.⁶⁶

Newton goes on to describe the contradictions of all forms of nationalism and argues that nations have been eroded by U.S. imperialism, or as he calls it empire, and that, 'these transformations and phenomena require us to call ourselves "intercommunalists" *because nations have been transformed into communities of the world.*'⁶⁷ Newton's analysis reflects a rigorous engagement with revolutionary theory which is largely missing within the contemporary political sphere of public discourse. What we have instead is organic outrage at conditions created by our current economic model without an analysis, as if police violence, hyper-incarceration, homelessness, and extreme wealth inequality exists in a vacuum. It needs to be understood that police murders, hyper-incarceration, homelessness, addiction and every other social ill that

continues to be spearheaded by the non-profit industrial complex are symptoms of extreme wealth inequality fueled by global capitalism.

There are hundreds, if not thousands, of non-profit organisations throughout the U.S. committed to systemic change. These organisations are representative of trends in social justice discourses and many well-meaning liberals commonly mistake social trends with social movements. But are these social movements? Movements entail mobilisation. So, what keeps social justice trends around police brutality and mass incarceration from turning into movements? It is not for a lack of numbers or support as there are nearly six million angry people either incarcerated or under some form of state supervision and locked out of conventional means of living in the U.S. The problem is that many people do not know where to start and non-profit centers present themselves as oppositional infrastructure when the majority of us remain abandoned to the streets and prison system. There is a common misconception that movements require funding, yet many social movements start with small scale demonstrations organised by self-sustaining autonomous organisations. This pitfall is largely due to a lack of political education for well-meaning actors and a systemic erasure of revolutionary thought.

Conclusion

We got a lot of answers for those people. First of all, we say primarily that the priority of this struggle is class. That Marx, and Lenin, and Che Guevara and Mao Tse-Tung and anybody else that has ever said or knew or practiced anything about revolution, always said that revolution is a class struggle. It was one class—the oppressed—those other class—the oppressor. And it's got to be a universal fact. Those that don't admit to that are those that don't want to get involved in a revolution, because they know that as long as they're dealing with a race thing, they'll never be involved in a revolution. They can talk about numbers; they can hang you up in many, many ways, but as soon as you start talking about class, then you got to start talking about some guns. And that's what the Party had to do.⁶⁸

-Fred Hampton, *It's a Class Struggle Goddamit!*

The preceding discussion has outlined two different movements that have produced much-needed uprisings but have come short in providing any revolutionary change. We argued that the lack of revolutionary theory, revolutionary praxis, and the lack of political education have contributed to the uprisings becoming networks, rather than having any revolutionary threat to the system of capitalism. Both the prison hunger strikes and the mobilisation for racial justice have produced enormous policy change that benefits the greater good, but yet comes short of any revolutionary, systemic change needed to provide

liberation for all.

107

It is not our intention in this paper to endorse the specific Marxist-Leninist brand of the Black Panther Party, but rather to offer some clarity for what Johnson calls a revitalisation of 'anti-capitalist politics situated in class experiences.' Whether it is Marxist-Leninism, Maoism, Anarchism/Libertarian or Revolutionary Socialism, there needs to be a revitalisation of leftist coalition building which unapologetically corresponds to contemporary anti-racist mobilisations. Quite simply, in an age of pandemics, people need cures. Aside from the epidemiological crisis we are currently facing on a global scale, we all also suffer from a perpetual pandemic of global capitalism. The only cure for this scourge is revolutionary socialism, which can only be achieved with a critical analysis of capitalism within the political sphere of public discourse. To quote one of Hampton's famous last speeches:

We got to face some facts. That the masses are poor, that the masses belong to what you call the lower class, and when I talk about the masses, I'm talking about the white masses, I'm talking about the black masses, and the brown masses, and the yellow masses, too. We've got to face the fact that some people say you fight fire best with fire, but we say you put fire out best with water. We say you don't fight racism with racism. We're gonna fight racism with solidarity. We say you don't fight capitalism with no black capitalism; you fight capitalism with socialism.⁶⁹

Of course, socialism is an equally frightful word to anti-racist liberals and racist conservatives alike, and while we do not have time to outline a holistic socialist program, we can take the time to explain what socialism is not. Socialism is not an authoritarian state-controlled economy, it is not the welfare capitalism of the democratic socialist countries of Northern Europe lauded by the likes of Bernie Sanders or Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, and it is not 'for white people.' Socialism is merely a tried and true model of organising people into a stateless, classless society in which the industries of the world are democratically managed by the people who work in them; a world in which the rock quarries and lumber yards are controlled by stone masons and carpenters. Contrary to popular belief we aim to cut out the middleman, that is, the bureaucratic buffer between people who are forced to work for a living and those profiting off of their labor which is upheld by the military, police, and prison system. Socialism is the overthrow of all existing property relations, and the dismantling of institutions that uphold them. 'Anything less than this is reform', said George Jackson.⁷⁰

As Fred Hampton once said in a speech delivered at Northern Illinois University in November 1969, 'We don't need no culture except a revolutionary culture. What we mean by that is a culture that will

set you free.'⁷¹ The Black Panther party pushed forth a revolution, a transformation of the whole society, to be achieved by combining Black, Brown, White workers and the poor proletariats in opposition to the capitalist empire. The criminal justice system, including police violence and hyper-incarceration, as we see it today has become increasingly ensconced in the economic, political and ideological life of the United States. Thus, the criminal justice system is much more than the sum of all the jails and prisons in this country. It is a set of symbiotic relationships among correctional communities, the labor market, transnational corporations, media conglomerates, laws and policies and the global political economy. This article has shown the current movements against police violence and hyper-incarceration lack a real critique of global capitalism, as well as revolutionary social theory and a political education system which, in turn, presents a challenge if we truly want any sort of systemic change. The lack of revolutionary theory, as we have highlighted above, does not push for any systemic change, but pushes for mild reforms that contribute to the perpetuation of the global capitalist status quo.

An abolitionist and revolutionary social movement approach involves imagining a constellation of alternative strategies and institutions, with the ultimate goal of abolishing the prison system, hyper-incarceration, and hierarchical systems of inequality. These constellations must be centered in a continued revolutionary socialist ideology that fights for social justice, systemic change, and emancipation from global capitalism for all. This entails developing alternative frameworks for social justice, systemic change, and restorative justice instead of punishment, and disposability. In addition, dissemination of the material wealth fetishisation and the abolition of private property that allows global capitalism to prosper. It is critical to center de-incarceration, de-militarisation, anti-imperialism and anti-colonial strategies to develop alternative systems to imprisonment, punishment, super-policing, and abolishing the whole criminal justice system. Such an approach would include the de-militarisation of schools, police, and dismantling the military; revamping the healthcare system to provide affordable health care for all; meaningful and rewarding employment that does away with the exploitative reserve army of labor; revitalising public educational systems and providing free education for all; and, perhaps a system without the criminal justice system. As these massive upheavals continue, it has become clear that abolishing the criminal justice system ultimately involves a broader struggle against global capitalism backed by revolutionary theory, revolutionary praxis, and political education. All of these are the original premises of revolutionary political thinkers before us. In the end, we must push for an abolition and systemic change from the whole system of global capitalism. This social transformation is a genuine revolutionary rallying cry.

Notes

- 1 David Harvey, "Neoliberalism Is a Political Project," *Jacobin*. Brooklyn, NY (23 July 2016), <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2016/07/david-harvey-neoliberalism-capitalism-labor-crisis-resistance/>
- 2 William I. Robinson, *The Global Police State* (Archway London: Pluto Press, 2020).
- 3 For more on surplus humanity please refer to William I. Robinson, *The Global Police State* (Archway London: Pluto Press, 2020).
- 4 Sociologists used the term *hyper-incarceration* to describe US incarceration (Wacquant 2009). As opposed to *mass incarceration*, *hyper-incarceration* denotes that not all Americans are subject to arrests and incarceration, but rather it is the relative surplus population, usually restricted to the poor urban inner city mainly racialized communities, who are regularly policed and imprisoned. (which sociologists, beyond Wacquant?)
- 5 Oxfam, "An Economy for the 99%," *Oxfam America*, (January 2017), <https://www.oxfamamerica.org/explore/research-publications/an-economy-for-the-99-percent/>
- 6 International Labour Organization, "World of Work Report 2014: Developing with Jobs," Geneva, Switzerland, (2014) https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_243962.pdf
- 7 International Labour Organization, "ILO World Employment Report 1998-99," Geneva, Switzerland: ILO, (24 September 1998), https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_007996/lang-en/index.htm
- 8 American Federation of Labor & Congress of Industrial Organizations, "Death on the Job: The Toll of Neglect, 2018," Washington, DC, (26 April 2018), <https://afcio.org/reports/death-job-toll-neglect-2018>
- 9 Michael Bueher, Edmundo Werna and Mark Brown, "More Than 2 Million People Die at Work Each Year. Here's How to Prevent it," *World Economic Forum*, (23 March 2017). <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/03/workplace-death-health-safety-ilo-fluor/>
- 10 Dana Loomis and David Richardson, "Race and the Risk of Fatal Injury at Work," *American Journal of Public Health*, no. 1, (January 1998): 40 – 44.
- 11 Robin D. G. Kelley, "Black Study, Black Struggle," *Boston Review*, (7 March 2016) <http://bostonreview.net/forum/robin-d-g-kelley-black-study-black-struggle> (accessed August 5, 2020).
- 12 Term used by Christopher Bickel, "From Child to Captive: Constructing Captivity in a Juvenile Institution." *Western Criminology Review*, no. 1 (2010): pp. 37-49.
- 13 William A Kandel, "The Trump Administration's "Zero Tolerance"

- Immigration Enforcement Policy," *Congressional Research Service* (February 26, 2019) <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/homesecc/R45266.pdf>
- 14 Megan L. Wood, "An Incomplete – and Very Short – List of the Most Racist Policies the Trump Administration has Tried to Enact," *Courier* (August 12, 2020) <https://couriernewsroom.com/2020/08/12/trumps-most-racist-policies/>
- 15 Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *The Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalising California* (Los Angeles and Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2007); Angela Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete?* (New York, NY: Seven Stories Press, 2003).
- 16 Left Voice, "'To Ally With the Democratic Party Is to Ally Against Ourselves': BLM Inland Empire Breaks with BLM Global Network." *Left Voice* (February 4, 2021) <https://www.leftvoice.org/blm-inland-empire-break-with-black-lives-matter-global-network>
- 17 Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation* (Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2016), 216.
- 18 Stuart Hall, Chas Critcher, Tony Jefferson, John Clarke, and Brian Roberts, *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State, and Law & Order* (reprint 2013, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1978), 340
- 19 David Correia and Tyler Wall. *Police: A Field Guide*. Brooklyn (NY: Verso, 2018).
- 20 INCITE!, *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007).
- 21 William I. Robinson and Oscar Fabian Soto, "Passive Revolution and the Movement against Mass Incarceration: From Prison Abolition to Redemption Scripts," *Social Justice: A Journal of Crime, Conflict & World Order*, vol. 46, no.4 (2020): pp. 121 – 129.
- 22 While we recognise that there has been massive legislative and political changes in defunding and dismantling of police departments, eradicating gang injunctions in some areas of California, and stopping the building of new prison facilities, there is also research that shows an increase in legislative and political changes that fund police, create gang injunctions, and continue to build prisons, i.e. immigration detention centers.
- 23 William I. Robinson, "The Betrayal of the Intellectual," *Forum for Planetize the Movement* (April 2020) <https://greattransition.org/gti-forum/planetize-movement-robinson>
- 24 Sean Ledwith, "Fred Hampton: Black Panther and Red Revolutionary," *Monthly Review* (New York, NY: 8 June 2020), <https://mronline.org/2020/06/11/fred-hampton-black-panther-and-red-revolutionary/> (accessed August 5, 2020).
- 25 Ibid.
- 26 George Jackson, *Blood in My Eye* (Baltimore, MD: Black Classic Press, 1990), 112.

27 Angela Davis, *Black Journal Interview with Angela Davis* (1972) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SwD3LGo3a7o> ; Angela Davis, *How Capitalism Affects the Working Class* (2018) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jUeHI06HavE>

28 David Correia and Tyler Wall. *Police: A Field Guide*. Brooklyn (NY: Verso, 2018).

29 It is common practice for abolitionists in California to use a lower case “r” in CDCR to emphasize that rehabilitation is not prioritized within the California State Prison system, or the California Department of Corrections and “Rehabilitation.”

30 The Short Corridor Collective is aptly named after a housing unit within Pelican Bay State Prison’s D Facility in which each of the mentioned prisoners were housed. D Facility’s short corridor is not only designed to isolate prisoners from the general population, but to also isolate them from the larger body of SHU prisoners.

31 The Agreement to End Hostilities statement was an open letter to the public, general population prisoners, and the California State Prison administration promising to end racial violence in return for ending indefinite solitary confinement under the gang validation criteria. See, “Agreement to End Hostilities.” n.d. Libcom.org. Accessed July

32 See “Thousands on Hunger Strike in California Prisons.” 2013. MSNBC. July 12, 2013. <http://www.msnbc.com/melissa-harris-perry/thousands-hunger-strike-california-pris>.

33 Every prison in California has an Administrative Segregation Unit (ASU), but there are only three prisons in California with designated Security Housing Units (SHU) designed for long-term solitary confinement: Pelican Bay State Prison, California State Prison Corcoran, and California Correctional Institution.

34 This detail is from my own memory and confirmed by original Underground Scholars members, Steven Czifra, Nalya Rodriguez, and Martin Vela-Sanchez.

35 William I. Robinson and Oscar Fabian Soto, “Passive Revolution and the Movement against Mass Incarceration: From Prison Abolition to Redemption Scripts,” *Social Justice: A Journal of Crime, Conflict & World Order*, vol. 46, no.4 (2020): pp. 121 – 129.

36 See, Ashker, Todd. “Unresolved hunger strike issues: Five Core Demands, 40 Supplemental Demands and CDCR’s STG-SDP” Bay View: National Black Newspaper. Sept, 14. Web. <http://sfbayview.com/2014/09/unresolved-hunger-strike-issues-five-core-demands-40-supplemental-demands-and-cdcrcs-stg-sdp/>

37 See, Angela Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete?* (New York, NY: Seven Stories Press, 2007); Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalising California* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: The Regents of the University of California, 2007).

38 See, *Golden Gulag* pp. 17-20

- 39 See, <https://prisonerswithchildren.org/about-aouon/>; <http://criticalresistance.org/about/cr-structure-background/>
- 40 See, <https://antirecidivism.org/>
- 41 See, <https://solitarywatch.org/cfasc/#:~:text=California%20Families%20to%20Abolish%20Solitary,australia%20levitra%20administrative%20housing%20units.>
- 42 Wendy Sawyer and Peter Wagner, "Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie 2020," Northampton, MA: Prison Policy Initiative (March 24, 2020), <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2020.html>
- 43 Alexander Michelle, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York, NY: The New Press, 2010), 49.
- 44 *Bill Text - SB-863 Correctional Facilities: Construction.*
https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201320140SB863. Accessed 23 Mar. 2019. Ch. 3.131
- 45 Jeffrey Lin and Joan Petersilia, "Follow the Money: How California Counties Are Spending Their Public Safety Realignment Funds," *Stanford Criminal Justice Center*, SSRN Scholarly Paper, ID 2395527, Social Science Research Network, (1 Jan. 2014) <https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=2395527>. Pp. 18-23
- 46 According to the California Code of Regulations Title 15, a prison gang associate is defined as, "a person who is involved regularly or periodically with members or associates of a gang." This is different from the definition of a prison gang member: "A member is an inmate/parolee or any person who has been accepted into membership of a gang. Yet, both offences carry the same punishment of an indeterminate SHU Term. See "California Code of Regulations Title 15. Crime Prevention and Corrections" Division 3, Rules and Regulations of Adult Institutions, Programs, and Parole. Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. Chapter 1, section 3378. Pp. 218
- 47 It should be noted that Todd Ashker taught himself how to practice law while in solitary confinement and is a well known "jailhouse lawyer." See, Keramet Reiter, *23/7: Pelican Bay Prison and the Rise of Long-Term Solitary Confinement* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016).
- 48 William I. Robinson and Oscar Fabian Soto, "Passive Revolution and the Movement against Mass Incarceration: From Prison Abolition to Redemption Scripts," *Social Justice: A Journal of Crime, Conflict & World Order*, vol. 46, no. 4 (2020): 121 - 129.
- 49 Follman, Mark. n.d. "Michael Brown's Mom Laid Flowers Where He Was Shot—and Police Crushed Them." *Mother Jones* (blog). Accessed August 8, 2020. <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2014/08/ferguson-st-louis-police-tactics-dogs-michael-brown/>.
- 50 See, <https://www.cnn.com/2014/12/14/justice/ferguson-dorian-johnson-statements/index.html>
- 51 Tom Proctor, "Black Lives Matter Delivered Their 10 Point Manifesto, This Is

What They Want,” *Pucker Mob*. August 25, 2015. <https://www.puckermob.com/lifestyle/black-lives-matter-just-delivered-their-10-point-manifesto-and-this-is-what-they-want/>.

52 See, King, Maya. “Black Lives Matter power grab sets off internal revolt” *Politico*. Dec 2020. Web. <https://www.politico.com/news/2020/12/10/black-lives-matter-organization-biden-444097>

53 Zaid Jilani, “95% of Police Killings in 2015 Occurred in Neighborhoods with Incomes Under \$100,000.” *AlterNet.org* (July 8, 2015) <http://www.alternet.org/civil-liberties/95-police-killings-2015-occurred-neighborhoods-incomes-under-100000?sc=fb>

54 Adam Looney, “5 Facts about Prisoners and Work, before and after Incarceration,” *Brookings* (blog), Washington, DC (March 14, 2018). <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2018/03/14/5-facts-about-prisoners-and-work-before-and-after-incarceration/>.

55 “Theory + Practice.” n.d. HandsUp United. Accessed August 9, 2020. <http://www.handsupunited.org/theory-practice-programs>.

56 See, “Hands Up, Don’t Shoot! | #TheSpark | Movement News, Analysis & Culture...” n.d. Accessed August 9, 2020. <https://handsupdontshoot.com/>.

57 Sarah Kendzior, “Meet Darren Seals. Then Tell Me Black Death Is Not a Business,” *The Correspondent*. (October 1, 2016). <https://thecorrespondent.com/5349/meet-darren-seals-then-tell-me-black-death-is-not-a-business/1512965275833-fe73c5b1>.

58 Valerie Richardson, “Black Lives Matter Cashes in with \$100 Million from Liberal Foundations,” *The Washington Times* (August 16, 2016) <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2016/aug/16/black-lives-matter-cashes-100-million-liberal-foun/>; David Mikkelson, “Did George Soros Fund Ferguson Protests and Black Lives Matter,” *Snopes* (January 22, 2015) <https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/riot-act/>

59 Bruce A. Dixon, “Why I Can’t Celebrate Kwanzaa.” *Jacobin*, Brooklyn, NY (December 12, 2018) <https://jacobinmag.com/2018/12/kwanzaa-ron-karenga-black-panther-party>

60 See, Kendzior. Pp. 6

61 “Bending the Arc from Interest to Investment” Association of Black Foundations Executives. 2016, PDF. <http://www.abfe.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Support-Ferguson-and-Beyond-Resources.pdf?fbclid=IwAR3NyJsNFwgBRtIZsP7dpxZtnq5fBC307s5iGYz7p4X-OZ-4W7xVYG6JsA>

62 Dylan Rodriguez, “The Political Logic of the Non-Profit Industrial Complex” in *The Revolution will not be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2007).

63 Rodriguez, pp. 2

64 Vladimir Lenin, *Collected Works*, (Moscow: Progress Publishers, Volume 19, 1977) Pp. 24

- 65 Cedric Johnson, "The Panthers Can't Save Us Now" *Catalyst*, Vol. 1. No. 1, (Spring 2017), 1. <https://catalyst-journal.com/vol1/no1/panthers-cant-save-us-cedric-johnson>
- 66 Huey P. Newton, *To Die for the People*, ed. Toni Morrison (New York, NY: Random House, 2009), 31.
- 67 *Ibid.*, 32. Emphasis added
- 68 Fred Hampton, "It's a Class Struggle Goddammit!" (speech, Northern Illinois University, Chicago, November 1969), <http://www.lfks.net/en/content/fred-hampton-its-class-struggle-goddammit-november-1969>
- 69 Fred Hampton, "Power Anywhere Where There's People," (speech, Oliver Church 1969), <http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/45a/717.html>
- 70 George Jackson, *Blood in My Eye* (Baltimore, MD: Black Classic Press, 1990), 8.
- 71 Fred Hampton, "It's a Class Struggle Goddammit!" (speech, Northern Illinois University, Chicago, November 1969), <http://www.lfks.net/en/content/fred-hampton-its-class-struggle-goddammit-november-1969>