

Black Panther Collective Community News



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Panther eyes are watching

In October 1966 the Black Panther Party launched armed patrols of the police in the brutality plagued Black community in Oakland . Thirty one years later, the men and women of the Black Panther Collective , armed with audio and video recording devices and a knowledge of their legal rights, have taken to the streets of Manhattan to document the excessive use of force and utter disregard for human rights by the police in Black and Latino communities. These Patrols are part of the on-going Brutality Prevention Project , sponsored by the Black Panther Collective with the assistance of the William Kunstler fund for racial justice. The goal of the project is to mobilize poor and oppressed communities to be active participants in developing community controlled police observation teams in an attempt to expose police misconduct .

Ironically, it was only days after the Panther Patrol received coverage from local news media, one day after top NYPD officials smugly quoted statistics about the "decline" in police brutality , that the vicious torture and sodomy of Abner Louima by NYPD officers

burst into the headlines. This past week the outrage and anger expressed by many in the Black community has been coupled with condescending drivel by mainstream politicians and police spokespeople tripping all over themselves to declare this case an isolated incident. However those of us who are the everyday victims of police brutality, those of us who have filed hundreds of unanswered complaints to the Civilian Complaint Review Board, know that brutality is the rule , not the exception . We know the names of too many dead victims of police brutality like Michael Argenio , Shu'aid Abdul-Latif, Annette Perez, Willie Lucas, Anthony Baez, Michael Wayne Clark, Maria Rivas, Anthony King, Charles Campbell, Nathaniel Gaines, and Kevin Cedeno to swallow the line that the officers that assaulted Brother Louima are just "a few bad apples."

Reports of police brutality, shootings and deaths in police custody in New York City have risen in recent years, and Latinos Blacks and other people of color make up more than two thirds of the victims. The police force acts to reinforce the status quo that pushes Blacks and Latinos to the bottom of the socio-economic order. The reality is that to monitor the

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70th Pct. Atrocity its Giuliani Time

Saturday Aug. 16th thousands of people marched on the 70th Pct. in Brooklyn to protest the brutal police attack on Abner Louima a Black Haitian , arbitrarily arrested, beaten in route to the precinct, then attacked by police in the precinct who shoved the wooded handle of a toilet plunger into his rectum then into his mouth breaking his teeth. The community could barely contain its anger as they marched in solidarity with all the many victims of police brutality , shouting at the cops who lined the streets , calling them the sick racists that they are and telling them to get out of our community.

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This attack started when cop Justin Volpe took off his gun belt out in the street handed it to another cop and started a fight with a brother who promptly knocked him on his ass. The brother then melted away into the crowd. Considering what Vople did afterwards we think its a shame that the brother did not have a little more time to work on Justin . So the cops arbitrarily pulled Abner out of the crowd , threw him in the car , drove a few blocks and started beating him up. When Patrick Antoine came on the scene they started beating him too.

While Abner was being attacked in the precinct bathroom , no one there did anything to help him. Instead it appears a number of cops acted to cover up the attack , denied him medical attention for several hours and then lied to hospital personnel claiming Abner had been injured having sex. When a concerned nurse at the hospital called the Police Bureau of Internal Affairs to report the attack the cop on duty failed to act on her plea for help for Abner and did not log the call in. So it was two days before police officials responded to the information given by people at the hospital and Abner's family , two days that the cops had to destroy evidence and fabricate their stories, and three days before all charges against Mr. Louima and Mr. Antoine were dropped.

This latest outrage has particular political significance because the victim has told of how the cops who assaulted him in the precinct used racist slurs , threats against his family and shouted that "this is Giuliani time , not Dinkins time." These cops were expressing their belief that the highest levels of city government backed their hand in their terror campaign against Black and Latino people. We see

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why they think like that. Giuliani has always campaigned on a platform that seeks to turn New York into his version of Copland . In 1993 when he was running against David Dinkins he gave a speech at city hall before thousands of police where he attacked Dinkins and his proposal to form an all civilian Complaint Review Board . The cops loved Rudy's speech so much they almost started a riot jumping on people's cars and blocking the Brooklyn Bridge. Later six cops leaving the demonstration jumped and severely beat Yunwas Muhammad, an 18 year old Black youth.

The police did all they could to put Giuliani into power including cruising the streets of Queens on election day illegally using their patrol car speakers to urge people to get out and vote for Giuliani. When Rudy won the election the cops responded as if they had been unleashed and Rudy has done everything he could to cover their tracks . He has weakened the Complaint Review Board , ignored recommendations that would set up a permanent task force to deal with police brutality and corruption and he has rushed to support every cop who has shot someone before the facts are even in. On Aug. 17, a NY Times reporter noted several other instances when police have told Blacks that they better watch out because Giuliani is in office.

This is an election year and so the mayor has moved swiftly to do damage control . Four cops have been arrested ,many more have been transferred out of the area and Black and Latino cops have been brought in to replace them. We do not need cops who hate and fear the people in our community riding through our neighborhoods looking for a reason to beat us up. The people must police the police •

Akil Al-Jundi



With the passing on August 13 of Akil Al-Jundi , we must recognize the life and work of our brother— leader of the Attica rebellion , organizer , and advocate of the liberation of all oppressed peoples. He was a good friend to our collective and we will miss him •

The spirit lives on

BRUTALITY TRAINING VIDEO

The brutality that regularly goes on behind the privacy of locked prison gates was revealed when a training video for jail guards which depicted guards in the privately run Brazoria County Detention Center in Angleton, Texas kicking inmates, coaxing dogs to bite them and shocking at least one prisoner with a stun gun became public last week. If you stop to think that the guards knew they were being

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UPS STRIKE

The strike is over but there are some good lessons to be learned from the recent showdown between the UPS shipping company and 185,000 teamster led workers. UPS seemed to think at the beginning of the strike that they had a pat hand. They thought that they had the momentum of recent history on their side. Who can blame them for being smug in their belief that they could break the strike and the union by dividing the workers.

Since 1981 when Ronald Reagan broke the Air traffic controllers strike, fired most of the 13,000 strikers and imposed a lifetime ban on federal employment for any of the fired workers, the labor movement and the living standard of most working people has been on the steady decline. Reagan's actions sent a clear message to companies that they could break both strikes and unions by firing strikers and hiring replacement workers. This intimidated the unions and the workers they are supposed to represent. So working people have been taking a beating while companies hold down wages, downsize, lay off hundreds of thousands of workers and then change the nature of work to maximize profits by hiring part time, temporary, transitional, casual, workers who earn half the pay and little or no benefits. Is it any wonder that corporate profits soared in the last decade?

When the teamsters launched this strike their stated goal was to reverse this trend and the main issue became the creation of 10,000 more full time jobs along

with wages and maintaining a multi-employer pension plan.

The company position was that of the 46,000 jobs added since 1993, 80 percent were part time because they needed low paid part timers to keep pace with their main competitors the US Postal Service and Federal Express, competitors which also use a lot of low paid part timers. UPS also claimed that since their full time drivers were the highest paid in the industry, they needed a lot of low wage part timers to balance things out. This was an obvious attempt to get the drivers to abandon the struggle to help the part timers (60 percent of the total workforce) and cross the picket line. The company laid down an ultimatum--what they called their best and final offer, called for the membership to turn against union leadership and vote on their offer and then called on President Clinton to invoke the Taft Hartley act to force the strikers back to work. They did not think that the workers were organized well enough to hold out for long, they expected that after a few days there would be a stampede of workers crossing the picket line. They were wrong.



Public support helped win the strike because many Americans are now being pushed into these low paying job categories usually reserved for Blacks. Any resurgence in labor's influence has the potential for being good for Black workers and their community, but Black people must get involved in organizing in their unions and in their communities and making sure that we take the lead in forcing the unions to repudiate any of their past racist practices •

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taped, if you stop to think that two of the guards involved in the beatings were hired despite the fact that they had prior brutality convictions, if you stop to think that the Brazoria County sheriff's office initially stated that they didn't think the tape displayed wonton abuse, it should become crystal clear that when you enter prison in this country, you check all of your civil rights at the gates.

Those of us in the Black and Latino community who are being shuttled into these prisons—one of the largest growth industries in this country, need to take heed. In Texas, prisons have become profitable business as over 5,500 inmates from as far away as Hawaii have been transferred to Texas counties with an excess of jail cells. County officials in Texas receive an average of \$40 a day for out-of-state prisoners which amounts to 80 million for Texas counties and private companies that own prisons.

The Texas criminal injustice system where privatization, brutality, and profit walk hand in hand is an ominous sign for our future •

Panther eyes cont

authority of the police, to force them to obey the letter of their own laws is to expose the face of state repression and to literally put oneself in the line of fire.

When the BPC police patrols were launched, immediately the police began to try to intimidate team members and threaten us with arrest and confiscation of our cameras. The police tried to intimidate team members into leaving the scene or turning off our video cameras. However, being aware of our legal rights we informed the cops that video-recording them is the people's right.

The response by the police has been subdued thus far. Still we foresee that once the public spotlight is removed from the NYPD and the publicity about police brutality dies down, then the cops will engage in more overtly confrontational tactics. The fact that we are acting fully within the realm of the law will not protect us from this crackdown. Team members operate at great risk. The purpose of the Brutality Prevention project is not to create martyrs but to provide a model for poor and oppressed communities to begin to empower themselves by policing the police. We hope to inspire people all over the country to monitor police activities in their community.

Only a few weeks old, the Brutality Prevention Project has already begun to plant seeds of change. During the patrol the team distributes literature to community folks and empowers the people by our example. Community members see that the police cannot stop the team from asserting their rights. One evening they witnessed the

spectacle of one officer who was so frustrated with his inability to terrorize team members that he vented his anger by kicking a mailbox. In Washington Heights, where the patrols have been launched, they have had a tangible effect on the community. Residents have become educated as to their rights, and have supported the team by their presence when the team monitors the police. In addition, political graffiti depicting Panther eyes with the phrase "Panthers are watching you" scrawled underneath has sprung up around the community. Panther eyes will continue to watch the police, long after Abner Louima's name has faded from the headlines. We call on the people to join us •

Call for Community Supporters

The Black Panther Collective has been struggling to foster revolutionary change and mobilize poor and oppressed communities in the US since its inception in New York in 1993. We have many ongoing projects that need community support and participation in order to be fully effective.

- ♦ We need you to donate stamps, envelopes, office supplies and help xerox our literature. In addition, we desperately need cash donations to support our work.
- ♦ We need you to distribute our literature to your family, friends, classmates, members of your union, church or community group.
- ♦ If you are an artist, a poet, or have good writing skills, we need you to contribute to our publications.

- ♦ We are developing a Brutality Archives to document ongoing incidents of police brutality in New York. We need your pictures, written accounts of incidents, and videotapes of police misconduct.
- ♦ We are in the process of developing Community Political Education Classes. If you would like to learn Black, Latino and working class history, read the works of revolutionary theorists from all over the world and understand the current state of the economy in the US, or if you are a teacher or would like to assist with curriculum development, add your name to our mailing list.
- ♦ The Black Panther Collective works to raise public awareness about the plight of the over a hundred political prisoners in the US. We urge people to write letters to political prisoners, and call us for more information on how they can become an active part in the political prisoner movement.

To volunteer your time call or write us:

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