

in this culturally estranged situation saw him become alienated and filled with rage. American society is often very cruel and breeds self-hate, alienation and sorrow, as if in a petri dish. As a young man, Hyung-Rae killed somebody in a senseless episode. For this, he was convicted and sent to a life of imposed cruelty.

In prison, he befriended Russell "Maroon" Shoats, a well-known political prisoner, who managed to escape from prison - twice! Maroon noticed a deep talent in Hyung-Rae and mentored him in politics. Lucky for us, he encourage him to develop his artwork.

Hyung-Rae has also provided his artwork freely and prolifically for "the cause." I put a zine of his work together entitled, *The Artwork of Todd Hyung-Rae Tarselli*, which is also done on legal paper and available through my distro. His themes cover the hypocrisy and lies of the Bush administration and their murderousness throughout the world, but mainly focus on the pain of life in prison - particularly in the controlled units, where he is forced to subsist. In fact, a main reason he (and Rashid) are forced to live in control units is because of the powerfulness of the truth they bring forth, which is a testament to their bravery and love for their fellow man, whether locked in a nearby cage or in some other way menaced by the U.S. government. He can be contacted at:

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Many people have a vague idea about the gruesome conditions faced by prisoners in America. Since 9-11-2001, things have worsened dramatically - especially for those who are active revolutionaries. The authorities do not want the truth to come out of the gulags and come down hard on the most talented and powerful writers and artists - the George Jacksons of today.

Kevin (Rashid) Johnson perhaps most embodies the spirit and thirst for revolt this vast, evil gulag system screams for. He is an incredibly talented artist, but also a keenly aware political analyst and strategist. He and I were able to collaborate for several months, before his recent transfer from one supermax prison in Virginia (Wallens Ridge) to the another one (Red Onion.) I edited a powerful zine of his writings and artwork that =contains seven intense articles, with titles like *Revolution - A Blueprint, The Making of the New World Order, Amerika - Freedom is Slavery, Ignorance is Strength and others.*

Throughout the zine are 24 of his drawings. I received his originals on 8 1/2 x 11 typing paper, which were all done using a two inch stub of a ball point pen, which is often the only tools allowed for them to communicate with. Sometimes pencil is also used by these artists. I made this 60-page zine on legal sized paper (8 1/2 x 14,) so I wouldn't have to reduce the drawings too much and it would stay basically to scale on the page. Plus, on several drawings he also added text (and symbols) to make his message all the more unmistakable.

What struck me about his artwork was the dynamic totality of the message — instant and stark. The subtlety of the shading he is able to produce using such limited tools is spectacular - especially on the originals. The process of using a copying machine to make them ready for a cut-and-paste zine, which is how I do them, doesn't do them justice, at all. Also, the emotions on the faces, often of well known revolutionaries, shows not just a talent for producing accurate portraits, but a fine sense of adamancy and determination. He is equally able to portray warm human emotions, celebrating the vibrancy of black people. His work is a study in political focus.

Many of his drawings are collages, sort of many drawings in one, which compound the effect he is succeeding in presenting. He has indeed, taken the teachings of George Jackson to another, artistic level and given it a present day urgency.

He's also transcended partisanship and works with many different groups and individuals, making his work freely available for many underground publica-

tions, without compensation, which we couldn't very well afford, anyway. He is singularly interested in taking the struggle to the next, and the next and the next level - to armed revolution. He's drawn pictures for me to help dramatize the Peotone Airport fight I am closely involved with.

He's drawn explosive covers for zines I've done and other publications, like *OFF!*, *Vibe* and others. His political writings, although I don't agree with everything he says, is the most profound and penetrating that I have seen in a long while. It's obvious that he is a serious master of history (revolutionary history,) tactics and world politics.

He is also a beacon of resistance to his fellow captives. On October 5th, 2003, he was brutally assaulted - twice - by the Red Onion goon squad because of his involvement in defending a fellow prisoner. He was gassed with pepper spray, beaten into unconsciousness and attacked with two! 250,000 volt stun guns. While he was unconscious, they ripped out many of his dreadlocks. When he awoke, he was handcuffed and secured with a black box "ambulatory restraints." Then, on a pretext, they came back to assault him some more, while he was totally defenseless. To this, he calls it "routine." Rashid said, "I am thoroughly hated by these pigs ... I prefer it no other way."

"If you (and others) have the time and it's not a burden, please call the warden of this prison. His name is Daniel Braxton and his # is (276) - 796 - 7510. Also, give the director of the DOC a call if you can. His name is Gene Johnson and his # is (804) - 674 - 3000. Please inform them about this latest incident of hair pulling and such. The beatings are commonplace, but the hair pulling is completely absurd. Demand some answers, investigations, and do whatever you can to make them feel uncomfortable."

You can procure his zine through my distro and contact Rashid directly, at:

Kevin Johnson #185492  
South Chicago ABC Zine Distro  
Red Onion State Prison  
P.O. Box 721  
Pound, Virginia 24279  
Homewood, Illinois 60430

Todd (Hyung-Rae) Tarselli is the other talented prisoner artist featured here. He is a native of Korea, who came to live with an Italian-American family when he was a young boy, hence his seemingly incongruous name. Growing up