

CBC staff requested to  
prepare statement 5/19/72

CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS

MEMORANDUM

March 16, 1972

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TO: Congressman Louis Stokes, Chairman  
FROM: Howard T. Robinson, <sup>HTR</sup> Executive Director  
SUBJ: U. N. Conference on Prison Reform

A member of our staff participated in the U. N. Conference on Prisons held on February 26th and 27th in New York City.

The conference was sponsored by the United Church of Christ Commission on Racial Justice. Irv Joyner, Director of Community Organization, convened the conference.

Mr. Joyner has requested the Caucus to consider taking the following:

1. Encourage political figures to endorse its petition seeking to have the U. N. Human Rights Commission to conduct an independent investigation of prison conditions in this country.
2. Recommend that the federal government invite the U. N. Human Rights Commission to conduct an independent investigation into prison conditions in the United States.

Mr. Joyner believes that the Congressional Black Caucus could greatly aid their lobbying efforts with U. N. representatives if a strong and immediate position is taken on the above issues.

The attached letter further explains this matter.



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

COMMISSION FOR RACIAL JUSTICE

287 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10010, Tel. (212) 475-2121 Suite 520

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Congressional Black Caucus

CHARLES E. COBB  
*Executive Director*

Tuesday, February 29th, 1972

Mr. Mitch Dasher  
Congressional Black Caucus  
415 Second St. N.E.  
Washington, D.C.

Brother Mitch:

Thanks to you and the Congressional Black Caucus for your participation at the UN Conference on Prisons on February 26th and 27th. Your input as a work area coordinator has aided us as we now sit down to put all that data in final form for presentation to the UN Human Rights Commission.

As a follow-up we are requesting that the Congressional Black Caucus aid us in the encouragement of political figures to endorse the petition effort. In addition to this we would like for the Caucus to recommend that the U.S. government invite the UN Human Rights Commission to conduct an independent investigation into prison conditions in this country. A strong stand on the above point by the Caucus would aid us greatly in our lobby efforts with UN representatives. We will be requesting that the Black political convention endorse our petition efforts. We will need your voices at the point also.

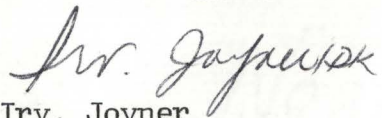
There is much that must and can be done to force some change in the condition of prison in this country. The petition is just one effort. It is not futile and it can help to generate public support on all levels.



Tuesday, February 29th, 1972  
Mr. Mitch Dasher  
Page 2.

I hope to hear from you and the Caucus in the immediate future in regard to the supportive role that you can play in the petition effort.

In the Struggle,



Irv. Joyner  
Director,  
Community Organization

IJ/dk  
cc: Howard Robinson

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Prison

JAN 10 1972

MINUTES OF THE NATIONAL BLACK INVESTIGATION  
TASK FORCE MEETING

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STATLER HILTON HOTEL - NEW YORK CITY  
Friday, November 5th, 1971 - 3:00 p.m.

The first meeting of the National Black Investigation Task Force was opened with prayer by the Reverend William Land, of the Commission For Racial Justice.

Opening remarks were made by the convening Chairman, the Reverend Charles E. Cobb, Executive Director of the Commission For Racial Justice. Those remarks dealt with the history and reasons for the creation of the Task Force.

A few minutes were then set aside for people in attendance to introduce themselves.

Following these introductions the Reverend Cobb introduced Mr. Irv. Joyner who had the staff responsibility of pulling the Task Force together.

Discussions followed on the feasibility and the need of the Task Force as Irv. Joyner directed conversation to the document sent to all Task Force members prior to the meeting outlining the functions and operations of the Task Force. All participants agreed with the contents of the documents and made commitments to become a functional part of the Task Force's activities.

Work areas of the Task Force were presented and explained by Irv. Joyner. After some discussion on these areas, assignments were given out. The assignments and persons responsible for each area are:

Legislative

John Conyers (Represented by Bob Carr)  
Howard Robinson  
Mrs. Dorothy Taylor  
Richard Barber (Represented by Mrs. Clagget)  
John Bass

Affiliation

Congressman  
Congressional Black Caucus  
Louisiana Legislator  
Urban Dev't, Inc.  
Dept. Of Welfare  
St. Louis Missouri

Investigation

Imamu Baraka  
Howard Robinson  
John Conyers  
Mrs. Dorothy Taylor  
Mrs. William Chance  
James Hicks  
Mrs. Elaine Jenkins

Committee for Unified Newark  
(See Above)  
(See Above)  
(See Above)  
Coalition of 700 Black Women  
National Urban League  
Oneamerica, Inc.



Legal Confrontation

Attorney Haywood Burns

National Conference of Black  
Lawyers

Attorney William Chance

National Bar Association

Organization and Mobilization

Imamu Baraka

(See Above)

James Hicks

(See Above)

Irv. Joyner

Commission For Racial Justice

Hiram Maddox

Ohio Black Ministers Confer-  
ence.

Research

Institute of the Black World  
(Represented by Haywood Burns)  
Howard University

Atlanta Ga.

Washington, D.C.

Public Relations & Education

William Artis  
Imamu Baraka

Commission For Racial Justice  
(See Above)

Finance

The Reverend Charles E. Cobb

Commission For Racial Justice

For those people who did not attend the meeting, will you please indicate the work area that you will commit yourself to as a part of the Task Force. This commitment on your part is essential to the successful operation of the Task Force.

Attached you will find an explanation of each work area. If you have any questions or comments please send them to:

Mr. Irv. Joyner  
Commission For Racial Justice  
287 Park Avenue South  
New York, New York 10010

NOTE: Will you also send to me the names that you have and addresses of all groups and individuals that you have knowledge of working on criminal justice and penal reform. This information is extremely important.





UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

COMMISSION FOR RACIAL JUSTICE

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287 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10010, Tel. (212) 475-2121 Suite 520

COMMISSION FOR RACIAL JUSTICE  
AND THE  
CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND PENAL SYSTEM

CHARLES E. COBB  
*Executive Director*

Our work in this area has begun with the organization of the National Black Investigation Task Force on November 5th. This Task Force is designed to develop a national movement around changes within the criminal justice and penal system. As staff coordinator of the Task Force I will attempt to:

1. Create apparatuses where groups and organizations working in the area of criminal justice and penal reform can come together to maximize their efforts.
2. Create organizations of interested individuals in this area i.e., relatives of inmates, clergy, student, professional groups, political interests, etc.
3. Aid in the stimulation of legislative and legal confrontations in our efforts to bring about meaningful change.
4. Prepare and disseminate educational materials in this area from a Black perspective detailing what has to be done and how it can be done.
5. Serve as the catalyst for the continual mobilization of members of the Task Force.
6. Others.

The Task Force is not an organization, but an effort by concerned Blacks to bring about meaningful change in this area. In addition to working with the Task Force I will be in the continual process of mobilizing church resources -- United Church of Christ and other denominations -- to aid in the change process. We hope to develop guidelines detailing exactly what various groups can do in this area. Much of our activities with white groups working on penal reform will be channeled through the Reverend Allan Fisher, New Approaches in White Communities.

The Task Force will work directly with Black and Third World groups and will have the following goals and objectives.



FUNCTION:

The Task Force will function more as a coalition than as an investigatory body. While one function will be to investigate, that will not be the total scope of the Task Force. Briefly the Task Force will be responsible for;

1. Investigating events and actions culminating in the death of George Jackson.
2. Investigating the living conditions of prisons and the treatment of prisoners at select prisons across the country.
3. Developing specific actions and/or recommendations to bring about meaningful changes in the prison and criminal justice system.
4. Create an apparatus on the local, state and national level to organize and mobilize support for actions developed by the Task Force.
5. Compile and document existing prison conditions for use by other organizations, agencies, and efforts.
6. Develop appropriate legislation on a local, state and national level to correct the prison system.
7. Develop "involvement tasks" for the various groups within the Black community who are interested in changes within the prison system.
8. Locate, channel, and create funds for groups organized to work with inmates prior to release and after release.
9. Initiate legal actions, where ever necessary, to break down employment discrimination, loss of constitutional rights and other forms of discrimination against ex-inmates.
10. To study possible alternatives to the present prison system.
11. Others.

AREAS OF ACTIVITIES OF THE  
TASK FORCE

The Task Force will be broken down into the following work areas:

1. Legislative

To Prepare models of legislation on a national, state and local level to deal with;

1. Pre-Incarceration
2. During Incarceration
3. Post-Incarceration

2. Investigative

To prepare and implement the investigation process. This is to include selection of sites, preparation of visits, selection of Investigation panel, planning of Investigation procedure. This group should be conscious of Investigation already done by Blacks as part of other Investigation efforts.

3. Research

Responsible for the gathering, Interpretation, and dissimilation of information on;

1. What the conditions are at present.
2. What should be done to correct those conditions.
3. Groups and agencies working on changing the conditions.
4. Ideal and rationale Criminal Justice and detention system.

4. Legal

To prepare legal briefs and attacks on the Criminal Justice and prison system to stimulate change, protest and insure rights, and to rectify unjust decisions.

5. Organization and Mobilization

The day-to-day work of organizing and mobilizing people to support, understand and campaign for suggested changes to be made.



6. Financial

To pool and locate funds necessary to carry out all of the activities of the Task Force.

7. Public Relation

Dissimilation of information to news agencies and other sources (especially Black Sources) to inform the communities across the country of the need for a change in the prison and detention system.

Thus far we have received commitments from the following groups and individuals to work with the Task Force.

Congresswoman	- Shirley Chisholm	- New York
Congressman	- Ronald Dellum	- California
"	- Charles Rangel	- New York
"	- Parren Mitchell	- Baltimore, Maryland
"	- William Clay	- St. Louis, Missouri
"	- Louis Stokes	- Cleveland, Ohio
"	- John Conyers, Jr.	- Detroit, Michigan
"	- Walter Fauntroy	- Washington, D.C.
The Reverend	Jesse Jackson	- Operation Breadbasket
" "	Charles Koen	- United Front of Cairo
" "	James Cone	- Union Theological Seminary
" "	J. Metz Rollins	- National Committee of Black Churchmen
" "	Lou Walker	- IFCO
Representative	Julian Bond	- Georgia Legislature
"	Dorothy Taylor	- Louisiana Legislature
Dr. Ralph	Abernathy	- SCLC
Attorney	William C. Chance	- National Bar Association
"	Haywood Burns	- National Conference of Black Lawyers
Mr. Dick	Gregory	- Entertainer, Activist
Mr. Imamu	Baraka	- Committee for Unified Newark Congress of African People
Mr. Harold	Sims	- Urban League
Mr. Howard	Fuller	- Malcolm X Liberation University
Mr. Vincent	Harding	- Institute of the Black World
Mr. Gerald	Cunningham	- Disciple of Christ
Mr. Mel	Rivers	- Fortune Society
Mr. Howard	Robinson	- Congressional Black Caucus
Miss Elaine	Jenkins	- Oneamerica, Inc.
Mr. Hiram	Maddox	- Ohio Black Minister's Conference
Mr. Joe	Walker	- Muhammad Speaks
Mr. Richard	Barber	- Urban Talent Development, Inc.

Possible states that the Task Force will operate in will be;

- |               |                 |                  |
|---------------|-----------------|------------------|
| 1. Maryland   | 6. California   | 11. Pennsylvania |
| 2. New York   | 7. Washington   | 12. Georgia      |
| 3. New Jersey | 8. Illinois     | 13. Texas        |
| 4. Louisiana  | 9. Missouri     | 14. Ohio         |
| 5. Arkansas   | 10. Connecticut | 15. Others       |

IJ/dk



- A That upon successful completion of the minimum term, a prisoner must be granted a right to parole based on his or her institutional record, subject to the conditions and restrictions of the Division of Parole. Parole shall not be granted if a prisoner is insane, or if his or her prison record does not substantiate this right.
- B That all prisoners granted parole having lived up to the conditions and restrictions set therein do so successfully for a period of three (3) years, the prisoner must be granted a certificate of release from disability, declaring the balance of his sentence "Null and Void".
- C That all prisoners having been granted parole and not abiding by the provisions and restrictions of same, i.e., committing a "crime", said provisions in subdivision (B) shall not apply and the maximum of natural life will remain in full force, and subdivision (B) will be activated when the parolee is re-paroled.

### PROPOSAL III

That all prisoners serving sentences with a maximum that is other than life, and a minimum that is set by law, under the old and new penal law, to meet the parole board after serving eight (8) years and four (4) months, if the present sentence they are serving exceeded the eligibility of eight (8) years and four (4) months.

- A That upon successful completion of the minimum term in no event exceeding eight (8) years and four (4) months, a prisoner must be granted a right to parole based upon his or her institutional record, subject to conditions of the Division of Parole. Parole shall not be granted if a prisoner is insane, or if his or her prison record does not substantiate this right.
- B That all prisoners granted parole having lived up to the conditions and restrictions set forth therein do so successfully for a period of three (3) years, a prisoner must be granted a certificate of release from disability, declaring the balance of his or her sentence "Null and Void".
- C That all prisoners, having been granted parole and not abiding by the provisions and restrictions of same, i.e., committing a "crime", said provisions in subdivision (B) shall not apply. However, the parolee shall be given credit for the time that he or she reported to the Parole Officer.