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CALL FOR PAPERS

We invite two-page proposals for papers and other contributions to a conference on:

**AFRICANA STUDIES AGAINST CRIMINAL INJUSTICE:
RESEARCH – EDUCATION – ACTION**

April 11-12, 2003 at Columbia University in New York City.

DEADLINE FOR PROPOSAL SUBMISSIONS IS DECEMBER 14, 2002

**AFRICANA STUDIES AGAINST CRIMINAL INJUSTICE:
RESEARCH – EDUCATION – ACTION**

**Center for Contemporary Black History
Columbia University
April 11-12, 2003**

The conference is sponsored by the Africana Criminal Justice Project (ACJP), an initiative of the Center for Contemporary Black History (CCBH) at Columbia University, and is made possible by generous support from the Criminal Justice Initiative of the Open Society Institute. The co-conveners of the conference are Drs. Manning Marable (CCBH Director) and Geoff Ward (ACJP Coordinator)..

❖ OVERVIEW

We invite scholars, educators, practitioners, community organizers and others to submit 2-page proposals for papers and other presentations for an academic and community conference on **AFRICANA STUDIES AGAINST CRIMINAL INJUSTICE: RESEARCH – EDUCATION – ACTION**. The conference will address problems and solutions along the intersection of race, crime and criminal justice, with an emphasis on two major themes: 1) *Crime and justice in Black Studies research and education*; and 2) *The collateral consequences of criminal injustice for African-American and Black Diaspora communities*. We are especially interested in papers and other presentations that illustrate and inform effective strategies of research, education and collective action on these issues. Accepted papers will be considered for publication in two special issues of *Souls: A Critical Journal of Black Politics, Culture and Society*, as well as other projects developed and distributed through the Africana Criminal Justice Project, a research, education and community organizing initiative of the Center for Contemporary Black History at Columbia University.

❖ THE CONFERENCE

Few institutional contexts evidence a greater need for innovative scholarly attention, education, and collective action than the U.S. criminal justice system. Our nation's response to poverty, unemployment, drug abuse, crime and other social problems has grown increasingly hostile and exclusionary, amounting to an oppressive campaign of mass criminalization and incarceration. The generally adverse consequences of this response are exacerbated by corresponding trends including divestment in public education to fund the prison industrial complex, disregard for the rehabilitation and re-entry of young and adult prisoners, and the disenfranchisement of citizens who have served criminal sentences and returned to their communities. While these criminal sanctions and policies are directed at individuals, they have an aggregate social consequence, an impact that is concentrated in highly-segregated, poor and otherwise marginalized African-American and Latino/a communities.

The incredible increase in rates of incarceration in the United States over the past three decades is well-documented, as is its disproportionate impact on poor men and women of color. Yet, far less is known about the broader and enduring political, economic and social consequences of these trends, and how strategies of research, education and collective action can contribute to reversing their destructive consequences. We doubt that the mainstream in criminology and other social sciences is fully able or inclined to interpret and help in addressing these pressing issues. We believe that effective leadership on these issues within the academic community can and must be provided by scholars and programs in African-American and Africana Studies.

As an interdisciplinary field of research and education, Africana Studies has fostered innovative approaches and expertise in the study of African-Americans and the Black Diaspora, especially in terms of community processes, social problems, and social change. Africana Studies is also distinguished by its forthright commitment to the pursuit of social and racial justice. Though not often recognized for their contributions to the study of crime and justice, a long line of scholars and public intellectuals have contributed to what is distinguishable today as a literature of Africana criminology and criminal justice. We hope to stimulate greater engagement with this intellectual tradition, to identify its contributions to research and education, and to promote even greater commitment in the field of Black Studies to critical engagement with the intersection of race, crime, and injustice.

More than an academic exercise, this conference is part of an effort to address the crisis of mass criminalization and incarceration confronting African-American and other Black Diaspora communities. There is urgent need to develop new insight and strategies to address forms of social and political exclusion generated, reproduced and/or intensified by racialized criminal justice policies and procedures. It is also important that we understand these processes in relation to the historical and global development of the "color line" of social control. Africana Studies is poised to make valuable contributions to a growing body of work on the collateral consequences racialized mass incarceration, informing new strategies of critical research, education, and collective action. To this end, the Center for Contemporary Black History at Columbia University is organizing this academic and community conference on, *AFRICANA STUDIES AGAINST CRIMINAL INJUSTICE: RESEARCH – EDUCATION – ACTION*.

❖ KEY CONFERENCE THEMES

We are soliciting papers and other presentations which address two broad themes: 1) *Crime and justice in Black Studies research and education*; and, 2) *The collateral consequences of criminal injustice for African-American and Black Diaspora communities*. We encourage participants to address these themes creatively, and in manners consistent with their personal experiences, interpretations, and expertise. To stimulate thought on specific topics related to these themes, we offer the following examples of key (and often overlapping) issues to be addressed:

1. Historical perspectives on crime and justice in the Black experience.
2. Comparative perspectives on race, crime, and injustice in the African Diaspora.
3. Biography, literature and art on crime and criminal justice in the Black experience.
4. The impact of the criminal justice system on Black families and communities.
5. Disfranchisement and other forms of “civil death” and disability.
6. Black prisoners’ physical and mental health.
7. Juvenile justice in the Black experience.
8. Black children with incarcerated parents.
9. Black women in prison.
10. The death penalty.
11. The prison industrial complex.
12. Black political economy and criminal justice.
13. Policing and police brutality in the Black experience.
14. The “Wars” on Crime, Drugs, and Terror.
15. Black political prisoners.
16. Black prisoners’ writings.
17. Black prisoners and religion.
18. Black radicalism and the experience of incarceration.
19. Critical race theory.
20. Black scholarship on crime and criminal justice.
21. Black community education on crime and criminal justice.
22. Academic and activist coalitions – What works?
23. The presence and significance of Black professionals in justice administration.
24. Legal challenges and legislative reform.
25. Prison Abolition – What, when, why, and how?
26. Relating “Restorative Justice” to the Black experience, including the issue of reparations.
27. Organizing among current and former prisoners, their families and communities.

❖ GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSIONS

Proposals are welcome from scholars of various disciplines (i.e., social sciences, humanities, law and public policy), educators, justice practitioners and community activists. Interdisciplinary papers and collaborations are strongly encouraged. **Proposals should be no longer than 2 single-spaced pages** and should include a statement of the primary question or topic, an overview of the approach taken in addressing it (including theoretical framework and research method if appropriate), major findings/conclusions, and implications for research, education and/or collective action. Proposals should include suggested themes under which the author (s) believe the submission best fits, indicating a primary and secondary theme (See above for list of broad conference themes). Authors may submit more than one proposal, and each will be considered separately.

Proposals can be faxed (212-854-7060), e-mailed gkw2001@columbia.edu, or sent through conventional mail to: Geoff Ward; Institute for Research in African-American Studies; 758 Schermerhorn Extension; 1200 Amsterdam Ave., MC 5512; New York, NY 10027. Please indicate "ACJP Conference Proposal" in your correspondence. **The postmark deadline for proposal submissions is December 14, 2002.**