

Issue 17: Fall/Winter 2010

4STRUGGLEMAG

from the hearts and minds of north american political prisoners and friends



www.4struggle.org

4strugglemag
P.O. Box 97048
RPO Roncesvalles Ave.
Toronto, Ontario
M6R 3B3 Canada



Marilyn Buck ● Lolita Lebrón ● Pantherism ● Gender Violence and Informants
Australian & Colombian Prison Resistance ● UN Universal Periodical Review
Political Prisoner Updates ● Poetry ● Book Reviews ● Letters ● and more!

Welcome to 4strugglemag

You have just come to a dynamic and unique publication, where Truth (real and raw) speaks to power. This magazine focuses on the insights and experiences of U.S. political prisoners on major issues of the day. While a lot of the writing is by political prisoners, other activists, allies, revolutionaries and insightful outside voices are included. We publish 3 issues a year and all back issues remain posted on the website (4strugglemag.org).

4strugglemag is an independent non-sectarian revolutionary voice. We are unapologetically anti-imperialist and solidly in support of progressive national liberation, especially the struggles of New African/Black, Mexicano/Chicano, Puerto Rican and Native American Nations presently controlled by U.S. imperialism. Reflecting the work and principles of political prisoners held by the United States, 4strugglemag advocates for justice, equality, freedom, socialism, protection of our Earth, human rights and peace.

www.4strugglemag.org is primarily an e-magazine, but hard copies are available (see sidebar for subscription details). We encourage readers to respond, critique and carry on discussions in the magazine. We value and encourage feedback and discussion. The address of each political prisoner is posted with his/her article so people can directly communicate with them (few political prisoners have access to the internet).

We like dialogue, but we are not going to print racist or pro-imperialist messages, so you government agents and klansmen don't bother wasting your time.

Each issue of 4strugglemag focuses on at least 3 main topics. Additional poems, graphics, essays, announcements and more are included. Unsolicited writings and graphics are accepted and welcomed. We won't guarantee printing, but we'd like to see your work. This and other correspondence should be sent via regular mail to the following address (remember it costs 75 cents to send a letter to Canada from the U.S.).

4strugglemag
P.O. Box 97048
RPO Roncesvalles Ave.
Toronto, Ontario
M6R 3B3 Canada

or via email to:
jaanlaaman@gmail.com
Jaan Laaman, editor
anti-imperialist political prisoner

Call for contributors

4strugglemag is looking for quality writing that contributes to critical, revolutionary thought and reflection. In particular, we are interested in the following:

Feature articles: In-depth, analytical articles that critically examine a particular issue, historical occurrence, political idea, or current event. We are looking for well-researched articles that broaden and challenge revolutionary thought. If you are in need of research help, don't hesitate to ask. We may be able to supply some of the resources needed in order to write a well-informed piece. We can also help with the editing and/or writing process.

Book reviews: Is there a book you'd like to review for 4strugglemag? Let us know. If you don't have the book, we can arrange to get it to you.

Letters: We love to hear from you. Please let us know if we have permission to print your letter.

Subscriptions

Support 4strugglemag's commitment to providing free prisoner subscriptions by subscribing or donating yourself. We publish 3 issues a year.

Prisoner subscriptions: free
1 year standard subscription: \$15
1 year solidarity subscription: \$30
(Solidarity subscription covers 1 year for yourself and subsidizes a free prisoner subscription).

To subscribe by credit card or paypal, check out our website: www.4strugglemag.org

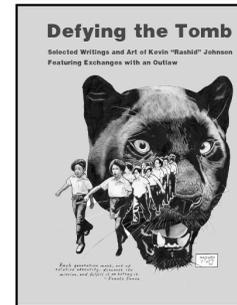
If you wish to pay by cheque or money order, please **get in touch first**. We cannot cash cheques made out to 4strugglemag.

Moving?

Don't forget to send us your new address!

KERSPLEBEDEB PUBLICATIONS

Kersplebedeb • CP 63560 • CCCP Van Horne • Montreal • Quebec • Canada • H3W 3H8
web: <http://www.kersplebedeb.com> • email: info@kersplebedeb.com • *Prisoners Pay No Postage*



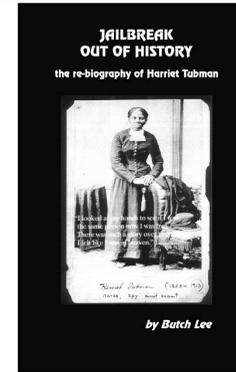
Defying the Tomb

Selected Prison Writings and Art of Kevin "Rashid" Johnson, Featuring Exchanges With an Outlaw

ISBN 978-1-894946-39-1
386 pages paperback

\$20.00

This beautifully illustrated book includes a series of essays by Kevin "Rashid" Johnson, Minister of Defense of the New Afrikan Black Panther Party–Prison Chapter, as well as an intriguing and educational correspondence between Rashid and the revolutionary prisoner "Outlaw". Includes a foreword by Russell "Maroon" Shoats, introduction by Tom Big Warrior, and afterword by Sundiata Acoli.



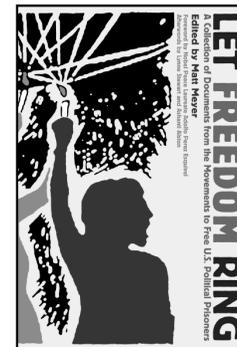
Jailbreak Out of History

the re-biography of Harriet Tubman

by Butch Lee
ISBN 0-9731432-0-7
87 pages paperback

\$8.75

Firmly re-rooting Harriet Tubman in the context of patriarchy, race, class, and armed struggle. A fascinating, and much needed, examination of the woman and her times. At a time when violence against women of color is at the center of world politics, uncovering the censored story of one Amazon points to answers that have nothing to do with government programs, police, or patriarchal politics.



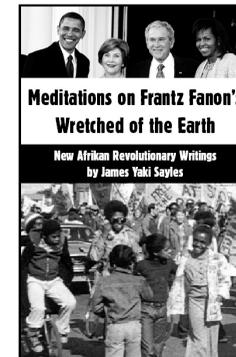
Let Freedom Ring

A Collection of Documents from the Movements to Free U.S. Political Prisoners

edited by Matt Meyer
ISBN 978-1-60486-035-1
912 pages paperback

\$37.95

Represented here—in over one hundred documents from the past 20 years—are prisoners from the movements that have most challenged the U.S. empire from within: Black Panthers and other Black liberation fighters, Puerto Rican independentistas, Indigenous sovereignty activists, white anti-imperialists, environmental and animal rights militants, Arab and Muslim activists, war resisters, and others.



Meditations on Frantz Fanon's Wretched of the Earth

New Afrikan Revolutionary Writings by James Yaki Sayles

ISBN 978-1-89494-632-2
399 pages paperback

\$20.00

"This exercise is about more than our desire to read and understand *Wretched* (as if it were about some abstract world, and not our own); it's about more than our need to understand (the failures of) the anti-colonial struggles on the African continent. This exercise is also about us, and about some of the things that We need to understand and to change in ourselves and our world." (James Yaki Sayles, aka Atiba Shanna)

up a ladder of consciousness, circling & spiraling towards a heightened state of revolutionary awareness. You see, the Comrad has both the practical & the theoretical experience that he brings to the table here & lays out. This work is important.

i remember what Comrad Yaki would do was type out position papers, policies & long theoretical tracts & send them out to Us wherever We happened to be. That way We'd all have the same things & then he'd expect Our comments, positions & feedback. So a lot of these Meditations on Wretched - especially Parts One, Two & Three - We (Comrads of the NAC) got in raw letter form. i can remember thinking as these papers arrived, how was he able to see things as he did - so vividly, so astoundingly clear? The answer, of course, is study & meditation. The Brotha was a "beast" - seriously. And trust me, We need beasts more than ever.

We come now upon the actual Meditations on Wretched of the Earth, the primary namesake of the work. If you've read my first book, Monster, you'll know then that on page 345, i wrote about my initial arrival at San Quentin SHU (the hole) & a fellow prisoner sending me Frantz Fanon's Wretched of the Earth. This was '85 or early '86. Admittedly the book was over my head - i couldn't overstand what Fanon was saying. i even admitted this in the book. i wanted to, tho, cause i'd heard that it was considered the "Panther Bible". Well, it now appears that not even they completely overstood Wretched of the Earth. A small consolation to what's left of my ego...

When We started receiving these Meditations i was so grateful that the Comrad had taken the time to break down Wretched from a New Afrikan Communist perspective. This work will last a hundred years because it is the truth. And it is rich with substance & dialectical-materialist reasoning. It's solid & concrete. It is a true weapon for Our struggle & should be read, studied, discussed, meditated upon & practiced in order to realize a better world than that in which We now live. This work will take its place next to Settlers: Mythology of the White Proletariat, by J. Sakai; Night-Vision: Illuminating War & Class on the Neo-Colonial Terrain, by Butch Lee & Red Rover; False Nationalism False Internationalism: Class Contradictions in the Armed Struggle: Coming of Black Genocide, by Bottomfish Blues. i won't go into the Wretched Meditations, by now you should be ready to go forth. Trust me, this is ideologically gold! Lets get free!

Re-Build!
Sanyika Shakur
New Afrikan Communist

G20: The Crown Drops its Charges Against the Gym Arrestees!

Montreal, October 14th, 2010 — The Anti-Capitalist Convergence (CLAC) is overjoyed at the Crown's decision to drop its charges against the almost one hundred demonstrators who were arrested this past June during the people's protests against the G20 Summit in Toronto.

Several dozen people from Montreal who had taken advantage of transportation and lodging organized by the CLAC, found themselves arrested, detained and facing conspiracy charges following a brutal police raid on the University of Toronto gymnasium on June 27th. Lacking any evidence to back up its case, today the Crown Prosecutor announced that the conspiracy charges would be dropped against these people who were arrested at the gymnasium.

The CLAC is also pleased to announce that charges have been dropped against three of its members, who were "preventatively" arrested on the morning of June 26 and detained for over 72 hours on the basis of these makeshift charges. This latest about-face by the Crown constitutes an implicit admission of defeat; it shows how flimsy the charges are and how scandalously the police behaved during the security operations around the Summit. It is now clear that the mass arrests at the gymnasium, like the vast majority of the arrests during the Summit, were arbitrary and uncalled for, and were intended to terrorize the demonstrators and to discourage them from exercising their right to protest in the future.

In that vein, the CLAC would like to remind people that the Crown is persisting in its prosecution of twenty organizers that it is wrongly accusing of being the "ringleaders" behind the events of June 26th. There are two CLAC members amongst these scapegoats; they are facing three charges of conspiracy and are currently subject to draconian bail conditions including house arrest.

Alex Hundert of Toronto is one of the twenty people facing conspiracy charges. He was arrested for a second time at his sureties' home on September 17 for having, according to the Crown Prosecutor, breached his bail condition of "not organizing or attending any public demonstrations." Earlier that day, Hundert had taken part in a panel discussion at Ryerson University about resistance to the G20. During a second bail hearing that took place on October 6 and 7, an Ontario Justice of the Peace ruled that by displaying "the same kind of behaviour as he did in meetings prior to the G20," Hundert had indeed breached one of his bail conditions. It seems that speaking at a university talk in Canada is now to be considered a "public demonstration." This is a total aberration, a direct attack on the most basic form of freedom of expression: someone is being held in prison for having simply expressed his ideas in public! Recently, at Alex's last bail hearing, the crown tried to impose harsher conditions, attempting to stop him from expressing his political opinions in public, or in the media. He refused these conditions and remains behind bars until he can appeal them. Besides Alex Hundert, four other people remain behind bars on charges stemming from the G20.

Table of Contents

UPDATES POSTED THROUGHOUT	
Letters	1
Tributes to Marilyn Buck, <i>by the Certain Days collective, Chairman Shaka Zulu, David Gilbert and Russell Maroon Shoats</i>	4-5
Wild Poppies, <i>by Marilyn Buck</i>	6
Alternatives while Waiting: Self-Reliance, <i>by Marilyn Buck</i>	7
Women "Political" (Not) in the News, <i>by Linda Ford</i>	8
Lolita Lebrón: 'I am a Revolutionary,' <i>from PSLweb.org</i>	10
Mother Borinquen, <i>by Chris - Gordo</i>	11
An ALKQN Commemoration to Lolita Lebrón, <i>by Rey Salomon</i>	12
Running Down the Walls: 2010 Reports	14
Political prisoners in Australia, <i>by Marisa Sposaro</i>	16
Deprivations in Colombian Prisons, <i>by Nixon Barrera</i>	18
Anti-war, International Solidarity Activists Refuse to Cooperate with Grand Jury, <i>from grandjuryresistance.org</i>	19
Why Misogynists Make Great Informants: How Gender Violence on the Left Enables State Violence in Radical Movements, <i>by Courtney Desiree Morris</i>	20
Unify, <i>by Crimson Bard</i>	24
Buried Alive, but Fighting On, <i>by Lynne Stewart</i>	25
Submissions to the UN Universal Periodical Review	27
Carlos Alberto Torres: Free, After a Fashion, at Last, <i>by David Gespass</i>	30
Muslim Alliance of North America Seminar: The U.S. Prison System, Muslims and Human Rights Violations, <i>by Bonnie Kerness</i>	31
Isolated in Federal Communication Management Units, Silenced Voices Need Ours, <i>by Andy Stepanian</i>	34
Keep the Struggle Up, <i>by Coyote Sheff</i>	36
At the Roots of Mapuche Resistance, <i>by Dawn Paley</i>	38
The Foundations of Pantherism, <i>by Shaka Zulu</i>	40
Fighting Strategy to Defeat G8/G20 Global Imperialist Kkkorporation, <i>by Danny Bonds</i>	43
Safiya Bukhari, Presente!, <i>by David Gilbert</i>	45
On Meditations: A Weapon for Struggle, <i>by Sanyika Shakur</i>	47

Cover: Lolita Lebrón, by Jesus Barraza. dignidadrebelde.com

Issue #17 - Introduction

Hello readers, visitors and friends. Welcome to issue 17 (Fall 2010), of 4strugglemag, a major voice of U.S. political prisoners.

This issue begins on a somber note: we dedicate this issue to the lives and memory of two outstanding revolutionary freedom fighters — Señora Lolita Lebrón and Ms. Marilyn Buck. Both these sisters passed on separate days in August 2010. 4strugglemag will certainly open its pages to more words of remembrance and love for these sisters from readers in future issues.

This year's Running Down The Walls was pretty widely held in cities and prisons around the country. We have a section of reports and photos about RDTW. This is followed by important updates on PPs in the U.S. and news from Australia too.

Our section on analysis begins with information from the U.S. Human Rights Network. They coordinated and led a coalition of 25 human rights organizations and their reports expose U.S. government violations of human rights. These reports are being presented to the UN in Geneva in November. We also have an insightful essay called "Why Misogynists Make Great Informants" that all activists should check out. In addition we have analysis on Pantherism, letters, poems and more.

As always, we welcome feedback and debate from activists, allies, prisoners and revolutionaries. Send us your best edited writing.

This is the end of the 2010 year issue, so let me send warm Red Season's and Kwanzaa greetings to all my political prisoner comrades, as well as revolutionary activists, friends and allies.

2011 will probably see a more reactionary U.S. Congress, added on to the ongoing USA war state. There is a lot of work to do: anti-war, anti-repression, economic survival, human rights and more. Send us your ideas/essays on all this and the elections for issue 18, which will be out in early March 2011. Until then, we are going to keep on struggling, hope you do too.

Freedom is a constant struggle!

Jaana Laaman, editor



Dedication

Issue 17 of 4strugglemag is dedicated to the memory, the noble lives, the spirit and struggles of two world class revolutionaries: Señora Lolita Lebrón and Ms. Marilyn Buck. Lolita passed on August 1, 2010 and Marilyn on August 3, 2010. Both these hermanas endured long years of captivity as political prisoners (33 years for Marilyn and 25 years for Lolita). One positive thing was that neither woman died in prison.

Everyone at, and associated with, 4sm was deeply saddened when the world heard this news in early August. These women were our comrades, our friends, and yet so much more. Both Lolita and Marilyn were teachers and guides, leaders and spokespersons, thinkers and workers. And these women were freedom fighters — urban guerrillas!

They dared to dream of freedom and justice for colonies, for working women and men, for racial and gender equality, and for the end of hunger, suffering, injustice, for an end to imperialism. They dared to voice their dreams, hopes and visions for a revolutionary socialist future. They dared to take direct forceful action — just revolutionary action — to make the dream real.

Marilyn and Lolita were like our favorite sisters, aunts, our best female friends, at their caring, compassionate concerned best. They were also fully determined, genuinely brave leaders and warriors, willing and able to step forward to end the terror of U.S. colonialism and imperialism.

The readers of 4sm are certainly not alone in mourning and missing these dear comrades. Millions of people around the world will send a thought or prayer and raise a fist of resistance to Marilyn and Lolita, nowhere more so than on Lolita's beautiful island nation of Puerto Rico. For the last several decades Lolita Lebrón was seen and respected as the moral conscience and symbol of independence and justice for the people and nation of Puerto Rico.

Marilyn Buck was also deeply respected and admired by increasing numbers of activists and people for her life long work and contributions to the freedom struggle.

We will truly miss you sisters. The spaces you left cannot really be filled, but your words, work and deeds will help guide and inspire us forward. Speaking for myself and other political prisoners, we will continue the revolutionary and militant struggle that you, Lolita and Marilyn, upheld, and I hope many of you readers, inside and out join us too.

ship of the capitalist Nation of Islam had more in common, on a class level, with the U.S. ruling class, than it did with people of its own Nation. So when Malcolm pointed out that the hit on Kennedy was a "case of the chickens coming home to roost" - & the bourgeois press reported it (knowing Elijah Muhammad's class allegiance) - Elijah Muhammad acted swiftly to show his class allegiance with capitalism & submission to imperialism. He silenced Malcolm for ninety days.

Malcolm, however, had that infernal thirst for truth & genuine freedom & kept on studying & investigating other struggles that resembled Ours only to find that "every revolution fought has been against capitalism & for some type of socialism."

We can learn a whole lot from the steadfastness of Malcolm in the face of varying degrees of adversity that rushed upon him. He committed class suicide in prison; he overcame his addiction; he became an excellent orator, recruiter & military strategist; he read, studied & meditated constantly - never being satisfied with what was. He associated with other movements & struggles. He travelled & made alliances. And, too, We must understand that when he left the petty-bourgeois Nation of Islam, according to what his beliefs were initially, he wasn't just going against Elijah Muhammad, but against Allah himself. Elijah Muhammad had propped himself up as the "Messenger of Allah", so to oppose him was to oppose Allah. No easy feat, huh?

Once he found orthodox Islam he was relieved, i'm sure, to learn that that b.s. old Elijah was kicking was just that. So, Malcolm was a true revolutionary - he was the message he brought. And it is this sort of fortitude, thoroughness & conscious effort that We must strive to emulate. This is, of course, a strong piece & a well placed piece in the work. Props to the rad & kudos to the keen eye of the editors.

* Eighth, "Reflections on Victor Serge's 'What Everyone Should Know About (State) Repression'". Perfect piece, perfect placement. i know i keep saying this, but building a book of this magnitude, of this depth & seriousness, is like arranging an album of classic jazz - some Bird, or Coltrane. The layout has to be coherent & consistent in order to maximize the effect. In order to realize the intent - which of course, is to heighten awareness so as to see things both as they really are as well as they can be.

So, the "Model of Personal Transformation" of Malcolm is followed by "What Everyone Should Know About (State) Repression" - can you dig that? They were able to repress & eliminate Malcolm, the Muslim Mosque Inc. & the Organization or Afro-American Unity (both of his young orgs) because their security wasn't tight. Because there was no real culture of security.

i remember when this piece first was sent to me in 1988, the actual pamphlet the Comrads printed it in was called:

"Study Notes On Secure Communications: So That We Don't Fool Ourselves Again". It was an eye-opening piece then & it's still - more so - an eye popper now! Especially in the day & age of Patriot Acts & Homeland Security! It's timely & precise. It reminds Us that any anti-imperialist activity is against the law & expect to be surveilled. Therefore work overtime to create a culture of security & need to know. The stress throughout this piece is consciousness. Overstand your situation, believe that the enemy is always alert, act always as if your phone is tapped, your mail is being opened & that anyone can be turned. It's not about being paranoid - it's about being secure. But again, all this stems from being conscious, overstanding your politics, keeping them in command & maintaining a working-class stand. "Never say anything over the phone that you wouldn't say to a police officer." Why? Because the police are your class enemy - they represent the settler state as a first line of defense & offense.

We have to overstand, dialectically, that weaknesses of every kind begin within - as a qualitative degeneration. That the primary cause of change is within a thing - anything. And that the secondary, or quantitative development is what alters the time & the space of the thing. So We know that Our old Movement was destroyed by its primary weaknesses - by the internal, or qualitative, deficiencies - & only secondarily by the outer or quantitative make up of the contradiction.

The internal was Us, Our orgs & the class make up of them & how they in turn related to each other & the masses. With no clear class-based criterion for recruitment. Our qualitative center was weak, unsound & not ready for prime time with the imperialist state. The secondary make up of this contradiction was the imperialist state as represented by its various security agencies, foundations, social orgs & loyal citizens. We learned that the FBI, or Cointelpro didn't "destroy" Our Movement. Didn't scatter Our forces. On the contrary, Our Movement was weakened from within. We, as the rads say, "Fooled Ourselves". Like the New Afrikan in this piece who after discussing surveillance & knowing that others' cars had been tagged, still refused to "be an espionage agent" - to secure himself. It's almost as if We have grown biased against Our own safety & security. And this discussion, as pointed out by Comrad Yaki, took place at the so-called height of consciousness. And yet & still, stunning strikes were able to be made against Us by the oppressive forces.

We are not emphasizing security & safety in order to just be "safe & secure" - We are emphasizing security & safety in order to carry out Our activity of re-building. In order to raise up cadres who can relate to the masses in order to replenish ranks, in order to re-build Our Movement, in order to get free & build Socialism. If We are to do these necessary things We need to survive, to have a sense of safety & security. And of course, to make strikes. Can you see how things are building with this work? We are climbing

way, i.e. a rev can commit class suicide by becoming a capitalist or criminal. Conversely, a backward, or lumpen, individual can transform into a rev.

Also, while skilfully explaining this process, the difference between the two (rev vs. criminal) & how to go about actually doing it (thru study, struggle & practice) - the rad lays down some very important definitions: Captive Colonialists (those New Afrikans captured who are not revs, but natural citizens of the Nation); Political Prisoners (New Afrikans captured for non-military anti-imperialist activity) & Prisoners of War (those New Afrikans who are captured for carrying out military strikes against the state). Also included within these definitions is the category of PP or POW where one who is already in a kamp, who has transformed his or her colonial/criminal mentality, makes political/military assertions & is consequently locked in a SHU/Control Unit for it, is recognized by Our Movement.

These definitions, along with the whole “Transforming...” piece on the criminal/colonial mentality, is of the utmost importance to have in Our ideo-theoretical arsenal because they give Us concrete lines to follow, to adhere to & to apply in Our overstanding of struggle in the belly of the beast.

* Fourth, “Scenes from the Battle of Algiers”. Now, i’ve read, studied & meditated on the “Transforming...” piece, i have read the paraphrased version of Ali Aponte’s scene in question - but i never saw the movie. Thought the Comrad’s paraphrased version was sufficient. That is until i read the actual scenes from the film! A master stroke by the editors to bring the actual scenes in. It totally brings to life what the Comrad wrote in the “Transformation” piece. It’s like seeing it as it happens & if you’re a real studier (like me) you won’t be able to help yourself from going back to the “Transformation” piece after you’ve read the actual “Scenes”. The fact is the transformation must be genuine & thorough - not an emotional commitment based on “race,” or an imagined slight, but a genuine & authentic transformation of class allegiance & interest. And this must be tied into the struggle for National independence & Socialism. i feel this piece is pivotal in the work as a whole.

* Fifth, the “Raids on Chicago Public Housing - Fact Sheet” - here We see the rad going back to the block or the hood in an effort to point up the continuing genocidal violence perpetrated under the guise of bourgeois law & order. And while this was written for Crossroad in 1989, it is just as relevant today as it was then. But what can We learn from this? We can see that We need to be more conscious & active in Our particular areas of operation - to document, study & struggle with the people who are in these conditions. Again, from the masses to the masses. And, again, like everything else, the Comrad keeps politics in command by tying the Chicago Housing Raids into the overall genocidal violence of U.S. capitalism against internal nations. Get out, get active, get involved in what’s

going on where you live. Learn from the masses, keep your politics in command, transform the conditions under which you live.

* Sixth, We have the “From One Generation to the Next” piece. Again, right out of the New Afrikan P.O.W. Journals, Books 1-7. Also in abbreviated form in False Nationalism False Internationalism: Class Contradictions in the Armed Struggle. This, too, was/is beautifully placed because it clearly puts into perspective the continuity of struggle & migration. And isn’t it poignant today with what’s going on with immigration (so-called) issues with Mexicanos? Our New Afrikan ideological formulation instructs Us that just like Mexicano people (or other immigrants) who are coming across the artificial & political border in search of work & better conditions, so too did New Afrikans migrate out of the National Territory & into amerika in search of better jobs & nicer “white” folks. And, true to the social development of others, before & to come, the Northern cities proved to be devastating to Our cultural unity & awareness.

This is essentially what “From One Generation to the Next” points out. “That Ours is a struggle with continuity, unbroken except occasionally in Our own mind.”

Now, if you’re not aware at this point of Yaki’s consciousness & energy; the class nature of the struggle; the National reality of New Afrika as an internal neo-colonized Nation; or of the existence of Our Provisional Government, Declaration of Independence & the war waged against oppressed nationalities & Our efforts to extricate Ourselves from U.S. capitalist-imperialism & the need to transform your colonial (allegiance to the oppressor nation) & criminal (allegiance to individualism, exploitation & capitalist class interests) mentality - while constructing a proletarian/revolutionary mentality - then you’re not reading, studying or meditating on this work.

But read on - read over & think deeply, cause this is the truth!

Where else are you gonna find quotes by Martin Luther King, jr. on: “Extremism, Capitalism, Imperialism”? Read on.

* Seventh, “Malcolm, Model of Personal Transformation” - here, no clearer, is the actual transformation of the colonial/criminal mentality in Brother Malcolm X. And altho We know that his early stages of consciousness with the patriarchal theocracy of the NOI was hardly complete, We know that he continued to grow, transform & develop his revolutionary mentality. It’s unfortunate for Us all, however, but it is a testament to his seriousness & commitment (and correct line) that he was targeted & assassinated by reactionaries in league with the settler government. Continuously, We are confronted with class alliances that go above & beyond what’s perceived as “race.” The leader-

Letters

Greetings comrades, brothers and sisters of the struggle of our oppressive nature that we’ve been subjected to in this capitalist country of amerikkka. I am presently incarcerated in this prison complex in Missouri (also known as Misery) at Licking (also Lynching) in isolation. I have come into the knowledge of 4struggle by one of my brothers, who’s also confined in isolation. But the brother has shared with me his insight and 4strugglemag to better help with my comprehension and ways to overcome oppression for all that suffer under the hands of capitalism. I just would like to extend my appreciation to 4strugglemag and all the comrades who help deliver knowledge and divine wisdom to brothers and sisters all over the world. This is really extraordinary work that is put together issue after issue. But I would love to become a member of 4struggle and start receiving the knowledge that is put into every issue.

Mr. Antwon Williams Sr.

Dear 4strugglemag

Revolutionary greetings,

I am a Texas souljah, still in the struggle and I send you this letter to again thank you for 4strugglemag, which I continue to receive. I also speak on behalf of all other bros on my unit who I signed up a year ago to receive 4strugglemags. They really enjoy the articles, knowledge, and history it provides. I have been encouraging all prisoners to fight the good fight against oppression, in promoting positive mentorship by my own example. We must all educate to liberate; each one must teach one if we ever want to see progress. I continue to reach out to our lost bros on my unit in various ways so that I can see them grow and mature into authentic manhood. Although I am constantly persecuted by oppressive prison officials, I continue on in the struggle to do my part. I’ve been subjected to med. custody for 2 years as a result of reprisals and deliberate indifference to my best interests and right to equal protection, in retaliation for my activism and my political beliefs. They want me to conform to their wicked system or suffer. I will never sell out or compromise the struggle for truth, justice and liberation of the people. Willie Lynch Syndrome gets no love or play in my world. Therefore I ask that all brothers and sisters of the struggle stay strong and keep ya’ head up. For all the bros out there, I recommend you read the following books:

1. *Visions for (Black) Men* by Na’im Akbar
2. *Know Thyself* by Na’im Akbar
3. *Akbar Papers in African Psychology* by Na’im Akbar
4. *The Mis-education of the Negro* by Charles G. Woodson
5. *We are our own Liberators* by Jalil Muntaqim
6. *The Rebirth of African Civilization* by Williams Chancellor

7. *Making Great Decisions* by T.D. Jakes
8. *How to Eat to Live* by Master Fard Muhammad
9. *Are You Still a Slave* by Ali Sharazad
10. *Knowledge of Self, etc.* by Supreme Understanding

Love, peace and solidarity to all bros and sistas of the struggle. Power to all people – no justice, no peace!

Cordially,
Oliver Eshman Lister II
1279183
CY unit 899 FM 632
Kenedy TX
USA 78119

Peace and Blessings, my beloved Brothers and Sisters.

I hope this missive finds you strong in faith. I also hope that circumstances will soon make it possible for us to meet. Let us hope that the dark clouds soon pass away, and the deep fog of misunderstanding be lifted from the fear-drenched minds of our fellow oppressed; and in some not too distant tomorrow, the radiant stars of brotherly and sisterly love will shine over our great minds with scintillating beauty. As for myself, despite the many obstacles I tend to encounter based on past engagements, I’m striving to prevail the test of time in the face of adversity; as well as excel beyond the masses of turmoil and stagnation.

Before going any further, I ask that my words below not be misconstrued; for what is mentioned is not for the faint of heart or timid. Without further ado, please grant me the honor of sharing myself with you, along with my thoughts on the ‘Misconception of One’s Identity’, ‘Liberty Versus Equality’:

I’m a young Black soldier; age 30 (D.O.B. 8.13.1979); born and raised in Brooklyn, NY; I enjoy reading, writing, studying law, partaking in meaningful conversations, working out, etc. I’m currently serving a 30 year prison sentence for acts that were admitted to by others who opted not to proceed to trial, with a promise of leniency, provided ONLY if I’m implicated. Therefore, through the power of corruption within the office of the Brooklyn District Attorney; its employees, A.D.A. Joseph Alexis and A.D.A. Bari Altberg presented false and inadmissible evidence of my trial. Serving to deny me a fair trial; which further served to taint the minds of the Jury rendering a verdict of guilty (robbery).

My beloved Brothers and Sisters; Piru (Powerful Individual Re-enforcing Unification) Umoja, which means Unity and is the first principle of Nquzo Saba. This, my Brothers and Sisters is in fact my name. Yet, it has continuously been misconstrued for purposes other than its appropriate use by prison officials, who have created numerous hurdles in my quest to ameliorate and possibly liberate the minds of

individuals who are deemed prone to experience the harsh realities of prison. I've been plagued unjustly by the New York City Department of Correctional Services (Riker's Island), as being a known gang leader, who allegedly orchestrated, ordered and participated in several assaults on uniformed staff (Correctional Officers) in order for others to be a part of a particular gang; namely the 'Almighty's'. I've been penalized on numerous occasions for my attempt to ameliorate as well as for stressing the importance of communication with individuals on the outside of these prison walls. My incoming and outgoing mail is monitored by the captain of 'Gang Intelligence' who shields himself under the euphemism of 'Crisis Intervention Unit' (CIU). As a result, there are times when my outgoing mail never reaches its destination, and there are times when I don't receive my incoming mail from certain associates. I've been prevented from writing my sister (real sister), for reasons of alleged gang activity through my correspondence. Yet, none of my correspondence to the outside community has promoted gang violence, acts of oppression or anything of the sort that will render prison officials making me a focal point of their conspiracy to thwart my plan of productive growth, that will ultimately be conducive to our youth as a whole.

My beloved Brothers and Sisters, so many of our fellow oppressed have concluded that this government is within our best interest, but do not fully understand the purpose of this government's existence. This oppressive and capitalistic government has created several branches of enforcement. Yet, the enforcers of these branches are too incompetent as employees of these branches. One branch I seek to expound on is 'Crisis Intervention Unit' (CIU), which is a euphemism for 'gang intelligence unit'.

Brothers and Sisters; I respectfully ask that you all not be fooled by CIU, who not only exist in prison, but also on the streets. They are rampantly targeting many individuals for unnecessary causes. They've created a power that envelopes society as a whole, including our youth, our future. Unless I'm blind, it appears that only oppressed people (the poor of all ethnic backgrounds) are the victims of these incompetent enforcer's atrocities that go ignored by the superiors within their field.

Many of us, including myself, have made decisions in the past that have ultimately affected our vision for the future. Please take notice; I'm no angel in the sense of the word. Some say I'm a 'fool'; some say I'm a 'gangsta'; some say I'm a 'reformer'; while others may say I'm a young 'anarchist'. To be honest with all those who seem to have many depictions of me; I want you all to know, I'm a young soldier within this struggle who has vowed to endure the pain, sweat and tears in obtaining liberation along with my fellow oppressed Brothers and Sisters. Does this make me crazy? Does this make me suicidal?

Both questions are open for discussion. Free your mind

and express yourselves honestly.

Many may not want to face reality, because the truth hurts. My main objective and end goal is to hurt you mentally and stand beside you as you hurt at the same time, watch you fall until you're ready to lift your head with pride and stand with authority. We as oppressed people have succumbed to our conditions, thereby given up the strength to overcome the conditions of oppression. Brothers and Sisters, we've become lazy; and until we're willing and ready to acknowledge our laziness, then and only then, can we, the oppressed people, be ready to overcome our current oppressive conditions, whether it be in prison, on the streets, in our homes, or at work. Oppression must be annihilated. I, Piru Umoja, # 06.A.1269, am demanding the urgency of the oppressed people's immediate action, in changing the conditions to which we are subjected. We do this by abominating oppression we inflict on one another, by helping out elders when we see they are in need of some sort of help, by properly grooming and teaching our children, and by cleaning our homes and communities. Come on people, we're not paying attention to details or else; what's needed, which is mentioned above will not have to be mentioned. Once we're able to acknowledge and act on what's needed to end oppression, within the small part of our society, i.e. within self, home and our communities, then we move forward as a whole to abolish oppression on its forefront.

There have been many who have suffered, fought and even died in their quest to abolish oppression. Some will consider themselves abolitionists, while others may consider themselves martyrs. We as an oppressed people are deeply failing ourselves right before our own eyes and don't even realize it. More importantly, we're failing our youth, the future, who consider us their idols. Let's wake up brothers and sisters. We have to pay attention to detail.

My beloved Brothers and Sisters, the prison system is alleged to have been designed to rehabilitate the convicted, yet the prison system has become a base for exploitation of the convicted. Yes, there are programs that may be deemed conducive to certain prisoners. Yet, not all prisoners are eligible to participate in such conducive programs, because of an alleged failure to meet a certain criteria set forth by the 'Grand Wizard'. Prison is a society within a society that thrives tremendously from the injustices it inflicts upon so many Brothers and Sisters. Immediate steps are needed in order to purge such acts of oppression.

My beloved Brothers and Sisters, I've come to learn that 'Action', not the fruit of our action, is what's important. Though we may not, in our time, observe the fruit of our action, that doesn't mean we give up the strength to obtain our liberation. Even though our beloved Brother Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., is resting in peace, until his last breath, he continued to speak and urge all to unite, for the common cause of freedom, justice and equality, as well as for food, clothing and shelter. He is currently smiling at how

On Meditations: A Weapon for Struggle

BY SANYIKA SHAKUR

The following is a review of *Meditations on Frantz Fanon's Wretched of the Earth: New Afrikan Revolutionary Writings* by James Yaki Sayles. The review is written by New Afrikan Communist Sanyika Shakur, the author of the international bestseller *Monster: the Autobiography of an L.A. Gang Member*, and a comrade of Yaki's.

We have here ideo-theoretical gold. A presentation of New Afrikan Communism so profound, clear & precise that if utilized correctly & with consistency, will raise consciousness & sharpen practice. The material here in Yaki's *Meditations On Frantz Fanon's Wretched of the Earth*, runs comprehensively thru a coherent theme: a brief preface by Comrad Hondo; an editorial introduction allowing the reader to "meet" Our late comrad Yaki - which does a great job at highlighting some of the political & social circumstances & conditions that ultimately shaped this illustrious Brotha into the dynamic New Afrikan Communist he became.

We see his involvement with the student orgs & demos; his community service & his military actions, leading to his capture & imprisonment. In the kamps tho. the comrad poured in on & evolved into the ideo-theoretical giant that touched Us all. Rightfully, the editors began at the beginning. Then they expertly connect the dots that will ultimately raise the consciousness & heighten the struggle.

* First, with the "War for the Cities" — which is a lesson he always taught Us which is to function with the People in the area in which you live. Deal with the People who are "off the block." The old tired & true From The Masses to The Masses.

The rad was from Chicago, so it stands to reason that this would be where he'd concentrate his initial efforts. It's where he knew best. And yet as We see he doesn't just say "Oh Chicago is such a bad place" - as if We can only clean-up Chicago, We'd be alright. No, Yaki ties "War for the Cities" into the whole colonial matrix of u.s. imperialism. The language is precise, clear & conscious. is any ghetto - it is but one of the urban reservations that We find Ourselves stranded on.

* Second, after establishing the fact of a war - of national oppression & genocidal violence - We fall into the "Free the RNA 11: Prisoner of War" chapter - brilliant! Both Yaki's piece & the editorial placement. Cause We are reading, studying & meditating the things that are engaging Our social consciousness: Him (Yaki); How (National Oppression); What (War); Where (New Afrika - inside amerika,

"a prisonhouse of nations"); Why (capitalist-imperialist exploitation for wealth & profit) - but let me not get ahead of myself here.

In explaining who the RNA 11 are, Comrad Yaki diligently explicated how, why, where & when the Provisional Government was formed. Crucial this is because most New Afrikans, while natural citizens, remain woefully oblivious to these facts. And as such, they go unknowingly along with the current colonial-settler government of amerika because they see or know of no other alternative. Truthfully, the masses aren't necessarily down with the U.S. government, but without an alternative they cling to what is available. So, presenting this piece after "War for the Cities" highlights the realization of Our alternative to U.S. settler government. Simultaneously it points up the lengths to which the oppressive arrangement will go to keep it's position firm & crush any opposition. Over 500 New Afrikan Nationalists signed the New Afrikan Declaration of Independence. No more than seventy five euro-amerikans signed the U.S. declaration of independence. Imagine that. The difference? Class. Cats will get caught up on that nationality thing, or as the cultural nationalists stress, "black race," & miss the boat altogether on the class significance that is the concrete under any struggle. But as always, Comrad Yaki blows away all that foolishness here. Yes, it's a good thing to be around New Afrikans - but i'd rather be around Communists.

* Third, lest We forget, the Comrad (& again the editorial geniuses) goes right into "On Transforming the Colonial & 'Criminal' Mentality." i remember when i first read & studied this piece back in the mid-1980s - it was shocking to me. No, seriously, because up until that time i was thinking like the old Eldridge Cleaver, that the criminal or outlaw was just like a revolutionary. That as long as he or she was breaking the law or shooting pigs they were somehow on Our side. That when the revolution matured & We hit the streets, in confrontation with the state, they'd be with Us against the law. But "On Transforming..." shattered that line of thinking & brought the truth right down front! And, in so doing, taught a fantastic lesson in dialectics.

The criminal has no qualm with capitalism, colonialism or imperialism. In fact, the criminal is in league with these evils. Why, the capitalist is who the criminal wants to be. The criminal can only flourish under capitalism - with some degree of impunity. The criminal is an individualist, a greed driven parasite, just like the capitalists. The criminal has more in common - as far as class aspirations - with the oppressor than he or she has with the working class &/ or revolutionaries. Again We are confronted with class & class interests. How practical it is to run this chapter right after the "RNA-11: POW" piece; lest people get the notion that packing heat & correcting pigs is the be all & end all to revolution. To transform one's mentality is, in essence, to commit class suicide. To alter one's class allegiance. Of course it's dialectical, far from static, so it can go either

posturing--trying to show how tough or technically adept we are. The sound approach is to stay rooted in our principles and our commitment to the oppressed. Instead of rumors and backbiting against comrades and instead of the liberalism of not raising differences directly, we need open and constructive discussion. Instead of labeling someone a snitch based on a hunch (placing false snitch jackets on comrades was one of the FBI's most successful disruptive tactics against the BPP) we need thorough and fair ways to investigate and adjudicate such charges: "We can no longer afford the luxury of rumormongering, making unsubstantiated, allegations, or harboring ill feelings without airing them" (47).

COINTELPRO, the FBI's illegal and murderous assault against the BPP and other radical organizations, figures prominently in her writings. But Safiya does not place all the blame for the demise of the BPP there. She looks frankly at internal weaknesses. People who got caught up in ego, who put self-advancement ahead of basic principles, became vulnerable to the pressures and tricks of COINTELPRO:

"[...]people in the Party allowed liberalism and egos to become more important than what we were working for [...] The people and advancing the struggle are more important than any individual" (120). At its height, the bitter split in the BPP led to tragic, fratricidal violence:

"After the split, it was a time of paranoia. The resulting violence was totally opposite to what the Party was about. COINTELPRO brought about a war inside the Party. Through COINTELPRO, people worked under the guise of being Panthers and instigated incidents. Threats were made over the phone and we feared for our lives. They created a war atmosphere" (29).

Safiya stays rooted in the historical context of what created these cracks under superhuman pressure on a very young and inexperienced organization. At the same time that principles required the Party to defend a Black community faced with brutality and killings by the police, the Panthers themselves were under police fire and attack in offices and homes around the country. Safiya neither glorifies the BPP and subsequently the Black Liberation Army's use of armed self-defense nor airbrushes it out of the history. Where she's emphatic is on the primacy of politics, a politics rooted in serving the people.

One of the most controversial topics is sexism within the BPP. Safiya neither glosses over the problem nor allows it to be used--as several white left groups, themselves very sexist, tried to do--to discredit the Panthers. She describes some of the problems and is unambiguous: "[...] we must deal with the problems of male chauvinism--along with domestic violence--in our communities" (60). She's also clear about the history of oppression of Black people and how that has created a different framework than the domi-

nant society for the development and overcoming of sexism. Like society as a whole and pretty much all left groups at the time, sexism was a big problem in the BPP. But the Party also took a monumental step forward for the times in having the courage to address women's liberation and in being almost unique in affording Black women opportunities to be active organizers and have high levels of responsibility within the organization.

Since Safiya didn't get to edit or update essays for this book, some of her positions get frozen in time. She may well have had more to say about sexism and the role of women in the movement a decade after that piece was written. Or, as Laura Whitehorn points out in her introduction, Safiya's subsequent years of work with allies in PP campaigns undoubtedly led to a more supportive view of lesbians and gays than implied in the negative connotations of her late 1980s remark about homosexuality as a "temptation" to be resisted. But the point is not that the reader has to agree with every sentence in the book or even that Safiya would stand by each and every line, but rather that *The War Before* offers a wealth of experience and insightful reflections about principled organizing. For me, the most powerful, poignant piece in this book is "Lest We Forget," a pamphlet she put together in the early 1980s. So many bright, idealistic, young Black revolutionaries died in the chaos of the police attacks that it's hard to remember who they were. Safiya took on the extremely painful but tender, loving effort to list, with brief profiles, 43 people who lost their lives in the Black liberation struggle from 1966 to 1981, 28 of whom were killed between 3/68 and 11/73. This accounting is stirring in capturing the intensity of the struggle--the sacrifices involved--and in simultaneously reminding us that each person was a real, precious human being.

Safiya is very clear about the challenges ahead: "We have taken on, in our movement, the biggest enemy of human beings in the world: the U.S. system of capitalism" (215). At the same time she underscores our source of strength. For each of us changing the world "[...] begins with rebuilding the character into a revolutionary character of which the central component is love" (93).

There is much more in *The War Before*--her own process of radicalization, her belief that Islam and revolution are compatible and complementary, her astute analysis of how post-traumatic stress disorder affected veterans of the struggle, her cogent advocacy for death row PP Mumia Abu-Jamal, her closing essay on the incredible and little known injustice to Kamau Sadiki, and more. But I'll end the review here with:

- Wonda Jones and Laura Whitehorn, THANK YOU for retrieving and making this treasure trove available.
- Safiya Bukhari, PRESENTE, your organizing, your love, your lessons live on with us.

far we've come, at the same time he's crying and frowning at how quickly we're destroying each other, by destroying ourselves. Wake up people, because we're not paying attention to detail. We may never know the results of our action, but if we do not act one thing is for sure: there will be no results. There's a saying, "A closed mouth doesn't get fed". Well, I say, "An oppressed soul who accepts the conditions of oppression doesn't seek to be liberated". I want you, my beloved Brothers and Sisters, to know Martin Luther King Jr., once said, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere". Brothers and Sisters, this means, 'whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.'

My beloved Brothers and Sisters, liberation is not what we're asking for; liberation is what we're demanding. We shall have no fear about the outcome of struggle, even if it may come at a cost. We will one day overcome struggle, because our goal is to be uplifted and to be unified. I know through painful experience that freedom is never given voluntarily by the great oppressor: it must be demanded--by the oppressed. I want my beloved Brothers and Sisters to stand straight; turn to face the person next to you, head up, right hand interlocked with the person next to you and PROUDLY say, 'freedom is a must.'

So many of our Great Leaders have returned to the essence, only to be omitted from today's studies, which is part of why our children and some of our elders are mentally blind to their history, which has been repeating itself. Our history always seems to be hidden or kept away from us at all cost. Yet, we're taught the history of others.

Through the years, I've been able to garner a mass of brothers and sisters who seek liberation. Yes, there's endless obstacles placed before us; yet, we do not harbour acrimony towards those who seek our ultimate downfall, for their goal is to completely eradicate the next Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, Fred Hampton, George Jackson, Jonathon Jackson, Marcus Garvey, Nat Turner, Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, Rosa Parks, Ida B. Wells, Assata Shakur, Angela Davis, Kathleen Cleaver, Susan B. Anthony, Shirley Chisolm, Elaine Brown, Silvia Baraldini, Marilyn Buck, Lolita Lebrón and countless others. They are not forgotten and will forever be loved.

My beloved Brothers and Sisters, before I depart temporarily, I would like to share with you all a jewel for life's experiences: A divided people is a conquered people; destroyed and nothing more than a shell of a people. Therefore, my beloved brothers and sisters, I hope my words weren't expressed in vain and that they're acknowledged accordingly, freedom is a must.

I would like to give a shout out to Brother Dr. Mutulu Shakur: you are a very strong Brother. "Better days are coming". (These are the words of your son, Tupac Shakur, may he rest in peace).

My Brother Shaka Zulu; you may be many miles away from me. I still look forward to connecting thoughts with you. My Beloved sister Danielle Cox, out in Wilsonville, OZ. You have a very strong mind and I look forward to building with you. My Brother 'Ira' in Northern, CT. I love you. Mere words are an understatement. You will forever be within my heart. Those of you I have not mentioned, none of you are forgotten.

A soldier in the struggle.
Piru Umoja; DIN#06.A.1269
Southport Correctional Facility
P.O. Box 2000
Pine City, New York, 14871

Oscar Lopez Rivera: Come Home! The International Campaign for his Freedom

In preparation for Oscar's January parole hearing, the National Boricua Human Rights Network is stepping up its efforts to gather letters addressed to the parole commission asking that Oscar Lopez Rivera be granted parole. Oscar was arrested in 1981 along with eleven others for "seditious conspiracy," for his alleged association with the Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional (FALN), a Puerto Rican Independence group. His sentence does not even link him to specific actions, but instead to the conspiracy charge. The remaining eleven Puerto Rican activists have been released from prison, and yet Oscar remains locked up.

prolibertadweb.tripod.com

Robert Seth Hayes parole denied

From NY Jericho: Just spoke with Robert Seth Hayes. His article 78 appeal of his sixth parole denial was summarily rejected by the judge at the end of August. Seth had another parole hearing, his seventh, on September 28, 2010 and was swiftly informed of its denial on September 30th and yet another two-year hit. People should write to Seth at this time so that he knows he has our support (it's also his birthday on October 15).

Robert Seth Hayes
#74-A-2280
Wende CF, Wende Rd.
PO Box 1187
Alden, NY
USA 14004-1187

Marilyn Buck 1947-2010

The Certain Days: Freedom for Political Prisoners Calendar collective was deeply saddened to hear of Marilyn Buck's passing on August 3, 2010, just days after the 2011 calendar went to print.

Marilyn, a long-time political prisoner and acclaimed poet and translator, passed peacefully, surrounded by friends at the Brooklyn home of her attorney and long-time close friend, Soffiyah Elijah. A few short weeks earlier, on July 15, Marilyn had been released from the federal Bureau of Prisons medical facility in Carswell, Texas and paroled to New York City. She was 62.

Marilyn served a total of 33 years of an 80-year prison sentence for politically motivated actions undertaken in support of self-determination and national liberation and in opposition to racial injustice and U.S. imperialism. Throughout her years in prison, Marilyn remained a steadfast supporter of fellow political prisoners and an advocate for the women with whom she was imprisoned. Visit marilynbuck.com and marilynbuckpresente.org to read more about Marilyn's inspiring life and work.

To Marilyn Buck

BY CHAIRMAN SHAKA ZULU, NABPP

When I was asked by a Comrade recently who was it that I wanted to meet in the future, when I got out of prison, I listed Comrades Assata Shakur, Mumia Abu-Jamal, Kevin Rashid Johnson, Sundiata Acoli and Marilyn Buck.

Marilyn Buck, oh Marilyn! I heard you the other day on KPFA, all the way in New Jersey, as you left prison. You said that we must continue our struggle to be free from capitalist imperialism, and that all oppressed people around the world deserve our support. I was elated to hear you after 25 years in the belly of the beast sounding strong and determined.

I just cannot get over the fact that they somehow killed you by denying you medical attention early on. Well, my Comrade, you are gone now, but how fitting to now be added to the list of freedom fighters that our young revolutionaries will honor every BLACK AUGUST. What a fitting epitaph!

I must end this now before my tears stain the whole paper. Love you Ms. Guerrilla. All Power to the People!

Shaka Zulu 244128
NSP P.O. Box 2300
168 Frontage Road
Newark, NJ 07114 USA

How I Met Marilyn Buck

BY DAVID GILBERT

From *No Surrender: Writings from an Anti-Imperialist Political Prisoner* (AK Press, 2004)

The year 1967 was a hothouse for rapid and intense changes in SDS (Students for a Democratic Society, the main radical student organization that allied with the Black struggle and spearheaded the anti-war movement). The guiding slogan of the day was "move from protest to resistance," and we were in the midst of a soon-to-be-successful struggle to get the organization to define the system as U.S. imperialism. It was also the year that SDS held its first national workshop on women's liberation. The way women's liberation was put on the agenda for the national convention was almost accidental (there had been almost no explicit struggle within the "New Left" about male supremacy at this point). At a spring planning meeting, a long list of workshops was proposed for the summer convention; women's liberation was added to the list without discussion or much thought about its significance.

But as the women-only workshop was meeting at the convention in Ann Arbor, Michigan, it became clear to everyone around that something very significant was happening. When their report was later presented to the organization as a whole, the plenary session was chaired by a representative from the workshop – Marilyn Buck.

The reaction in the plenary to the mere announcement of a report on women's liberation was the most disconcerting experience of my years in SDS. Men hooted and whistled from the floor, threw paper planes at the chair, and shouted things like, "I'll liberate you with my cock." Some men and most women were supportive of the report, but the initial response was defined by this raucous attack.

The memory of that scene is still vividly with me some 18 years later (in 1985). I was sitting in that plenary session (trying to get called on to speak), shocked and chagrined by the reaction. SDS was supposed to be an organization defined by siding with the oppressed against the oppressor; even with little previous struggle, one would have hoped for at least an initial openness to and support for women's issues. Clearly there was a lot of struggle yet to go.

Another strong impression was of the dignified and determined way in which Marilyn chaired the session. She never lowered herself by responding in kind to the catcalls and snide remarks hurled at her, nor did she ever retreat an inch in the face of this unruly attack. She calmly and firmly insisted that the report be completed and seriously discussed, and this goal was achieved despite the disruptions.

The report from the women's workshop at the 1967 con-

Safiya Bukhari, Presente!

BY DAVID GILBERT

Safiya Bukhari, The War Before: The True Life Story or Becoming a Black Panther, Keeping the Faith in Prison, and Fighting for Those Left Behind. The Feminist Press 2010.

It's February, 2000. I'm in Comstock prison and heartbroken. My dear friend, the beloved political prisoner of war Nuh Washington, is in the infirmary with terminal liver cancer. Nuh, an extraordinarily soulful and compassionate comrade, has been in prison for close to 30 years as a result of the government's war against the Black Panther Party (BPP) and the Black liberation struggle. Even though he's close by, I can't see him because general population prisoners are not allowed to visit the infirmary. The guys who work up there look out for him the best they can, but some of the COs are taking advantage of Nuh's weakened condition to harass him.

Then, almost miraculously, I get to spend a day with him. Two leaders of the Jericho Movement for U.S. Political Prisoners have organized a visit on February 28, Nuh's 59th birthday, bringing up his elderly mother and his brother. While the family members call Nuh down, Safiya and Paulette call me and--with good timing and good fortune--we all get to sit together. The six of us have this unbelievably relaxed, loving, joyous birthday party, a truly splendid day. At the end, as I take him in his wheel chair to the infirmary orderly, I say one last time, "Happy Birthday." Nuh looks back at me, with glistening eyes and, a sweet smile, and says, "It has been, a very happy birthday."

The person who accomplished this magic was Safiya Bukhari, along with her New York Jericho co-coordinator Paulette Dauteuil. It was no mean feat. Safiya, who had a full time job, was not only an initiator and leader of Jericho but also a founder and chair of the Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Campaign in New York City, and she was a vice president of the Provisional Government of the Republic of New Afrika (a revolutionary Black nationalist formation) as well. Safiya was unparalleled in how hard she worked and in how much she did to support and strive to free political prisoners and prisoners of war (PP/POWs). Tragically Safiya died all too early of a pulmonary embolism at the age of 53 in 2003.



Now thanks to the initiative of her daughter, Wonda Jones, and an Amazonian editing effort by Laura Whitehorn, many of Safiya's writings and speeches have been collected into *The War Before*--a sparkling gem of a book where even the preface by Wonda Jones brought tears to my eyes. It turns out that in addition to being a stellar organizer, Safiya provided astute and invaluable reflections on that work and on the challenges to building a movement. Her style is direct and accessible--reading these selections is almost like having a conversation--and Laura Whitehorn provides very helpful brief introductions to each piece. Those, along with the useful footnotes, provide today's readers with the context and meanings of the different cases and organizations mentioned.

Safiya herself spent 8 1/2 years as a political prisoner, from January 1975 to August 1983, in Virginia's harsh prisons. She had to fight to save her own life threatened by medical neglect. She was one of the founders there of a program with the delicious title MILK, Mothers Inside Loving Kids, as a way to prevent the separation of children from their incarcerated mothers. She also fought for an adequate law library, decent job training, and religious freedom.

But Safiya's dedication to PP/POWs preceded her own stint in prison and flowed from her political understanding. As early as 1972 she tried to form a National Committee to Defend Political Prisoners, but she was soon forced underground and then busted. She remained clear on the reasons for the rest of her life. Such efforts aren't a distraction from other work but rather the continuity of the struggles for social justice: "The issue of political prisoners is [...] an integral part of [the] movement [...] It must be woven into the very fiber" (102).

This book goes way beyond her trailblazing work around PP/POWs. She provides about the best sense I've seen of what it was like to be a Panther in those breakthrough but dangerous years of 1966-1973. She does so by being very concrete about day-to-day activities--working in the Free Breakfast for School Children Program, running an office, political education, physical fitness, criticism/self-criticism. And she has an amazingly balanced and nuanced view of the history. She accomplished that almost impossible dual task for revolutionaries: stand firm on fundamental principles; openly examine and criticize mistakes.

Safiya provides a valuable lesson on security for organizations under attack by the state. The pitfall is

some of the public. I think corporations and their government allies are in fact upset and disrupted by having to face demonstrations and public anger every time they meet. Let's not forget Seattle in 1999. Their gatherings can be shut down and many can be enlightened and mobilized against them and their agenda. This is part of the process of making change.

Finally let's look at how popular movements and struggles develop and grow. Individuals and organizations respond to and speak out against government/corporate abuses and power. At some point a consensus develops and a movement (of multiple organizations) comes into existence. This movement in turn enlightens and encourages more awareness and activism. As the struggle sharpens (including people getting arrested), some people and forces within the movement consider, advocate and take up more militant tactics and even more revolutionary strategy. These are just general thoughts, but the main idea is that active opposition and resistance - beginning with marches and rallies in the streets, is some of how people and movements grow and develop serious revolutionary alternatives and challenges to established elites, governments and the corporate global order.

Letter from Jalil Muntaqim

In the meantime, I'm doing everything I humanly can to promote the second edition of *We Are Our Own Liberators*. Trying to make it go viral in cyber-space, so if you have any ideas to promote the book on the internet please do so. I have a copy of reviews being circulated on the internet; *Workers World* paper published one, Pan-African News Service picked it up, and other periodicals will place advertisements. I recently did an interview for a new hip-hop magazine called the "Corner Store" mentioning the work. My thinking is if Paterson fails to do the right thing, the book will certainly increase my base of support by my 2012 parole hearing. I'm thinking about organizing a rally at the Division of Parole in 2012 if it becomes necessary.

One of the problems I'm confronting, which seems to be endemic in the overall movement is the level of "liberalism" infecting the progressive community. I'm really thinking about writing an overall criticism of the entire movement (what is supposed to be a movement). This anemic determination to challenge the system has essentially given the right-wing the overwhelming advantage to shape and mold public opinion to create an environment to usher overt fascism. A neo-Christian nationalist fascism is being formed with all of the trappings reminiscent of the advent of Nazi Germany.

But what is fundamental to the existence of "liberalism" in the "left" is this growing visceral opposition to any degree of militancy. It seems the progressive community has been cowered into a permanent state of passive resistance. A defensive posture bordering on cowardice in the face of reactionary racist marching to a tune of jingoism and xenophobia... So as you can tell, I'm extremely dissatisfied with the "left" total existence and capitulation to reformism.

Recently I have been in discussion with folks about initiating a two-pronged national strategy with the overall objective to restore a militant determination in the movement. The first prong, a national signature petition campaign calling for the Reopening of COINTELPRO Hearings. This initiative will be for all of 2011, with the goal of collecting 250,000 signatures in such time. Obviously, for this to be successful all activists who claim to support U.S. PP/POWs will need to join and hit the bricks and talk up COINTELPRO, PPs and get signatures... This would essentially be a national consciousness-raising campaign on our issue, up close and in person, with "the people," to gain their support and signatures; the second prong—a national mobilization to submit the signature petition demanding Reopening COINTELPRO Hearing and Amnesty for U.S. PP/POWs in D.C. during Spring Break 2012. The signature petition will be given directly to the CBC (John Conyers) and Obama's White House. After the submission in a rally participating activists will be instructed to return to their home state to challenge candidates during fundraising, town hall meetings, debates, etc. on our issue. In this way, our task/goal is to ensure our issue is raised onto the national debate during the election year of 2012.

I'm confident that the 20 month campaign could have tremendous impact to resurrect a militant national determination, raising both national and international consciousness on the existence of U.S. PP/POWs and their fight to demand amnesty. This is a win-win strategic proposition. Of course, Claude Marks/ Freedom Archives documentary "COINTELPRO 101" could prove extremely instrumental in being a catalyst, inspiring and giving additional political support to the national campaign.

Revolutionary love and unity,
Jalil Muntaqim (Anthony Bottom)
77-A-4283
P.O. Box 618
Auburn, NY
13021 USA

vention was an important watershed for our movement. It was the first major salvo to open up the issue of women's liberation within the New Left; it also exposed the appalling depth of male supremacy within our ranks; it was the beginning point for a tremendous amount of struggle, struggle on which we still have a long way to go. For me personally, it was also a very striking introduction to the extraordinary and deeply committed comrade who chaired that session.

Later, while underground in the 1970s, I occasionally spotted bits of news about Marilyn. Given that first encounter, it came as no surprise (but this is certainly never a given) that she became our movement's finest example of a white person fighting in solidarity with Black liberation, someone whose commitment and consistency we all needed to emulate... But now, with more recent common work as political prisoners, I have the pleasure to add that – along with her visible political practice that is so thoughtful and principled – Marilyn Buck is a wonderfully warm, caring and creative human being.



For the Martyr Marilyn Buck

BY RUSSELL MAROON SHOATS

The oppressors say you were the only white in the Black Liberation Army:

They seek to sow confusion and division

But you were more than that!

In Ireland you would have been in the Irish Republican Army

In Africa the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique

Or the Southwest African People's Organization,

In Vietnam the National Liberation Front.

You were the Vietcong!

That's why the oppressors hated & feared you:

You were the "Enemy of the State"

An oppressive state.

But you were always on the side of the oppressed, a dependable ally and friend,

Our Sister,

The "New Woman" that Che hoped for,

An anti-imperialist Freedom Fighter:

That's why we ALL LOVED YOU!

Rest in peace my Sister

A job well done!

Wild Poppies

BY MARILYN BUCK

I remember red poppies, wild behind the school house
I didn't want to be there, but I loved to watch the poppies

I used to sit in the window of my room, sketching charcoal trees
what happened to those magnolia trees, to that girl?

I went off to college, escaped my father's thunderstorms
Berkeley. Rebellion. Exhilaration!

the Vietnam war, Black Power, Che took me to Chicago
midnight lights under Wacker Dr. Uptown. South Side. Slapped
by self-determination for taking Freedom Wall photos
without asking

on to California, driving at 3:00 in the morning in the mountains,
I got it: what self-determination means
A daunting task for a young white woman, I was humbled

practice is concrete ... harder than crystal-dream concepts

San Francisco, on the front steps at Fulton St.
smoking reefer, drinking "bitterdog" with Black Panthers and white
hippie radicals, talking about when the revolution comes

the revolution did not come. Fred Bennett was missing
we learned he'd been found: ashes, bones, a wedding ring
but later there was Assata's freedom smile

then I was captured, locked into a cell of sewer water
spirit deflated. I survived, carried on, glad to be
like a weed, a wild red poppy,
rooted in life

Originally published in Rescue the Word. Available on the CD Wild Poppies from freedomarchives.org.

I am also a strong advocate to free political prisoners/POWs and also to take on the U.S. prison plantation system. Being a political prisoner is not my only work. I think it is wasteful and short-sighted to relegate political prisoners to only working around themselves. Just because we are prisoners does not mean that we have lost our reasoning, analytical powers. We still have world views based on long years of experience. Too many, even in our political movements, would prefer to relegate us to museum pieces, objects of campaigns perhaps, but not political subjects and comrades in an ongoing political struggle against imperialism, oppression, and exploitation. The state tries to isolate us, true; that makes it all the more important not to let it succeed in its proposition. We fight for political identity and association from here; it is important that political forces on the outside not lose sight of why the state wants to isolate and destroy us, and therefore fight to include us in political life — ideological struggle, etc. In many struggles many militants have been exiled yet they have still been considered part of their struggles, not merely objects. We, we here, could be considered internally exiled. Don't lock us into roles as objects or symbols.

Fighting Strategy to Defeat G8/G20 Global Imperialist Kkkorporation

BY DANNY BONDS

I have much love, respect and solidarity for the protestors, demonstrators and activists who mobilized and participated in street protest and corporate property destruction at the G8/G20 summit in June 2010 in Huntsville and Toronto. Their dedication, courage and sacrifice for the cause of freedom, justice and equality for all peoples, and resistance against racism, capitalism, fascism, imperialism in its many varied forms deserves honour, praise and support. However, I don't think their strategy of resistance and protest is wise or effective from a progressive or revolutionary standpoint, and I believe the comrades who are being arrested, charged, convicted and imprisoned are too valuable (highly valued assets) to the anti-racist, anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist, justice and freedom movement to be used and lost/taken away from the movement in this way. It causes focus to be distracted from organizing for and advancing the main aims or cause of the movement, and to be spending way too much time, effort and resources defending, supporting and trying to free those arrested and political prisoner comrades once they are caught up in the enemy's/establishment's repressive security and criminal processes.

When the short and long-term benefits to the movement from such street protests and acts of corporate property destruction are weighed against the heavy loss or burden incurred in the form of lost human resources and skill and enormous legal defense costs, it becomes crystal clear that the movement must develop a better and more cost-effective fighting strategy. This fighting strategy should be one that gets the maximum benefit and effect from every contribution or sacrifice. There should be no arrests and no comrades becoming political prisoners except for progressive or revolutionary acts of resistance that significantly and decisively advance the movement, and thereby deliver crucial or devastating revolutionary blows to the G8/G20 global imperialist kkkorporation.

The question is how do we openly or covertly defeat or bring the kkkorrupt G8/G20 nations, multinational corporations and banking institutions to their knees without being arrested, captured or killed by the enemy? We have enough political prisoners, prisoners of war and martyrs already! We don't need anyone to add to these unless it is absolutely necessary and clearly worthwhile for some extraordinary or special reason.

The nations, multinational corporations and banking institutions represented by the G8/G20 kkkklan are not really

hurt or adversely affected by the street protests and acts of corporate property destruction. However, the resistance movement is severely wounded by the overwhelming police violence and state repression against our comrades.

We must target the G8/G20 global imperialist kkkorporation on a level and in a way that really and significantly hurts or weakens its basic functioning capacity. This can be done by setting up better alternative governments and institutions for the people on the national and global level, and by countering and discrediting their global and national kkkorporate agenda by advancing a better global and national people's agenda.

We can and will defeat the G8/G20 kkkklan on the global level only by setting up an alternative people's world congress to compete against it and better meet the needs of the people and planet worldwide. When we do this, the people of the world will withdraw their support or disinvest from them, and the G8/G20 kkkklan will wither away and die a natural death.

In the spirit of General George Jackson, free the land!

Editor's Response: *Danny's article and thoughts on the best and most useful tactics to use in anti G8/G20 corporate globalism demos and struggles, has already engendered some debate. Asm will print further responses and we encourage this discussion about strategy and tactics. As a long held political prisoner, who has gone through years of costly and energy consuming trials, etc., let me throw out some ideas and questions.*

I share Danny's love and solidarity with G8/G20 resisters, but I think it is important to look at the nature of the demonstrations and the different things people were arrested for. From what I've heard and read, some folks were arrested for street fighting - destroying some corporate property. Many others were rounded up, probably illegally in fact, just for marching and protesting. Others were preemptively arrested before (and after) the marches for being leaders, speakers, organizers. Basically the state attacked the anti G8/G20 resisters, and it was not primarily based on the fact that some corporate property was damaged.

It is a fact that the government will defend the corporate/capitalist elite. There are many ways activists and revolutionaries should oppose and confront corporate global rulers and their government allies. Danny's ideas about creating alternative institutions and discrediting the corporate global and national agenda is valid. I'd like to hear more concrete ideas on alternative institution work.

Demonstrations, worldwide, every time and place the G8/G20, IMF, WTO, etc., get together to scheme and plot their agendas, is one clear way to discredit corporate globalism. Yes it entails risks, but it puts the issues and acts of the corporations on public display and educates and mobilizes

than “how to think” constitutes the nightmarish reality of life in Amerika’s prisons and jails. These prisons and jails are really money-making machines of exploitation and brutality--nothing else.

The average Amerikan might be surprised to know that their Beloved Constitution, that document written by slave masters and property owners, that document dripping with the blood, sweat and tears of Indian and Afrikan peoples, contains a little known provision called the 13th Amendment, which states:

“Neither Slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist in the United States, or any place subjected to their jurisdiction.”

For the 75% of people of color in Amerika’s prisons, the 13th Amendment translates into modern day slavery. Everywhere we go let us proclaim to the people that the bourgeoisie cannot be serious when they start this “freedom talk” when a significant segment of its populace are still in slavery.

The communist Panther cannot be defeated or conquered with bourgeois propaganda if he and she truly understand that our scientific socialism, Pantherism philosophy and class struggle constitutes the “living soul” of the original Black Panther Party. Pantherism is teaching us to go forth to make sure the freedoms and aspirations of the peoples are met.

It is strange to repudiate Democratic Centralism (DC) as being “brutally efficient and capable of outdoing anything the bourgeois forces are capable of” in one breath, but praise and uphold V.I. Lenin in another, the protagonist of Democratic Centralism, as Comrade Russell Maroon Shoats does in “The Dragon and the Hydra.” Democratic Centralism enables us to jump over the pitfalls inherent in petty-bourgeois party formations by bringing the whole revolution into “full play.”

Democratic Centralism allows a revolutionary party the unity of will and ideological cohesiveness, knowing it will be under constant assault every step of the way. DC makes available to all its members inner-party democracy that will unleash their creative initiative in the service of the New Afrikan Nation.

How else can one free a people from the grip of the greatest bandit of all recorded history? It is only with DC as our shield that we can unite an advanced detachment of revolutionary fighters, and as our spear to protect the people.

Comrade Maroon forgets to mention that those who used the DC method and seized state power did so surrounded by counter-revolutionaries working with international imperialism. This situation required a bit more centralism on the part of revolutionaries to protect the people’s hard won revolution from being overturned.

If Comrade Maroon is giving us a history lesson on what happened to revolutionary formations like the ones he belonged to for 40 years, we accept the constructive criticism, but we must rush to add that--and we are not being harsh here--some Comrades from his era are still smarting from the in-fighting and petty sectarianism that turned them against the DC and vanguard party structure. We are not concerned with people’s feelings; it is the objective conditions of oppression that dictates how we move against the vampire beast.

We are neither a religious nor cultural nationalist formation that is tolerated and even endorsed by the power structure, but a genuine revolutionary organization solely interested in freeing the people by expropriating the expropriators.

The members of the Party must toughen their “skin” and hold steadfast to our strategy of building base areas of people’s power! They must observe Party discipline, the minority must obey the majority, and the whole Party should obey the Central Committee. Whenever someone in the party has made a mistake they should not be castigated and hurled out of the party. We have a rule that states that he or she must first be given the chance to undertake criticism and self-criticism. We must

take care to educate people in our ideological and political line. Our principle must still be “learning from mistakes to avoid future mistakes,” and “curing the disease to save the patient.” Dare to struggle, Dare to Win! Panther Love!

All POWER TO THE PEOPLE!

Shaka Zulu #244128
NSP P.O. Box 2300
168 Frontage Rd.
Newark, NJ
USA 07114

* I want to clarify that when we refer to the BPP existing from 1966 to 1971, we are referring to its revolutionary period. It limped along until 1980 increasingly sinking into reformism and gangster-like rhetoric and activity, before its final demise.

Alternatives While Waiting: Self-Reliance

BY MARILYN BUCK
Originally written for Critical Resistance

In her final days, despite her illness, Marilyn took the time to send this article for the 2011 Certain Days: Freedom for Political Prisoners Calendar.



A community’s people, with their creative energy and labour, are the greatest resource it has, but an increasing number, mostly young, are MIA, in graves or prisons, into which so many rush obliviously when they act out Hollywood-constructed desires, images, and stereotypes to “make it” in the midst of still-white supremacist and hierarchical America. Far too many have embraced the 30 years of culturally-contrived amnesia that has mis-educated them to believe in the very system that exiles them to the cages. Valuable human beings – community residents, who could have and should have been the teachers, nurses, doctors, mechanics, public servants, and builders of their communities are disappeared.

Among the disappeared and exiled, many haven’t been formally educated or taught to read well, having dropped out or been driven out of the faltering California school systems, weakened both by funding and a general disregard for and animosity towards the children of the working and underemployed classes, particularly when Black, Latino, or Asian. There are a few, if any, educational or rehabilitation-gearred programs within prisons. On a recent KPFA radio program, a freed elder pointed out that many of California’s prisons are on lock-down at any given time, meaning that the few programs that do exist, however reluctantly and apathetically, do not function much of the time.

In the prison charnel houses, forgetfulness or oblivion settles like quicklime on the spirit, intelligence and bodies of exiled and illegalized young people. A sense of responsibility to the community is replaced with rage, and beneath any posturing, despair, self-mutilation, and suicide.

Alternatives? To re-imagine communities with the resources to educate children, to provide work with sufficient income, to get drugs and the weapons of collective suicide out, to make the streets safe again for children, elders and the young women and men. This is similar to the 10-point program the old Black Panther Party called for, a program

that in slightly different manifestations is still understood world-wide as necessary for community and nations’ health and well-being for peace and justice.

It’s never too late to learn, to get educated or develop the social or political conscience necessary to challenge the systematic social genocide of our communities. No one has to stay lost; no one is not subject to change. The question is: will you change yourself, have a hand in your destiny and development, or will you accept the changes forced at you by the prison systems’ dog-eat-dog programming that wants you to become a gladiator and a puppet?

There are many who are looking for ways to break such a decimating cycle. Meanwhile, what? The prisoner’s alternative is not to wait for alternatives and social change from the outside, but to begin a process of reconstruction on the inside.

To be a builder, or to be a demolisher, those are the choices. It’s easy to demolish, to destroy. You can be a one-man or a 100-man wrecking crew, but to build you have to become a bricklayer, willing to dig foundations, willing to take care of your neighbourhood and work with others. It means being humble and giving back because when you left you took a whole lot of human and community potential with you. It means learning what you need to know. Find a teacher, no matter whether they wear your colours, are your colour, or are low on the ladder of that peculiar prison concept of “respect.” (Prison culture doesn’t really give any prisoner true respect, or better-said, dignity; the man is still pulling the strings.) If you can’t learn a skill you want where you are (like being a doctor or an environmental engineer), learn all you can about the world. Learn about other societies; learn about communities’ fight for self-reliance and self-determination. Learn Spanish, or English, or Chinese. Or history. The more you study about the world, the better able you will be to see where you are and can go in the world. Choose to be on the side of the people who are not the greedy rulers and bosses.

Of course it’s easier to succumb to the haters who want to decimate your community, and to hang with those who participate in the suicide of their own communities through ignorance and individualism. Reignite your creativity and imagination that you may have put aside when you were 14 or that was discouraged in school. There is enough war from without, end the wars from within. Nothing can be built during a civil war, and certainly nothing can be defended from the war from without, without skills, knowledge and dignity of connection to and love for your community. Become a warrior for reconstruction.

Set a premium on education. No one can ever take it from you. Ultimately, knowledge and skills are more valuable than gold and SUVs, or anything you may have possessed for a few brief moments in life, before prison became your home with its prolonged lesson in absence.

Women “Political” (Not) in the News

BY LINDA FORD
www.truth-out.org

We rarely hear about the prisoners of Abu Ghraib and Bagram and Guantanamo. And what we generally hear is unlikely to confront U.S. culpability for the full horrors experienced by the prisoners of American wars of empire and occupation. And what of American political prisoners at home? The ever-suspect Muslims, the anti-war and anti-globalization and pro-environmentalists — the aging Black Panthers and Weather Underground and Native-American activists — some of them tortured, kept in solitary confinement for years? (See James Ridgeway’s site solitarywatch.com). How many of us know the long history of political prisoners in America, of whom we weren’t, by definition, supposed to have — this land of the free? Many of those political prisoners have been, and continue to be, women. Femaleness does not protect a woman from being considered an enemy of the state, in fact, as “unnatural” women, perhaps the opposite.

Women have been enthusiastic activists since this country’s earliest days. They’ve become political prisoners after joining movements which have been anti-capitalist, as labor organizers, socialists and anarchists, running afoul of pro-business/corporate/government authorities; anti-patriarchal critics of a male-dominated/militarist society; anti-white supremacy, black civil rights activists and revolutionaries, or Native-American or Puerto Rican nationalists; or anti-imperialist/anti-war pacifists or protesters of American empire, from WWI to Vietnam, to Iraq/Afghanistan.

A number of these unnatural female activists have been in the news, at least in the “alternative” news, this summer. They are: Lolita Lebrón, Marilyn Buck, Lynne Stewart and Aafia Siddiqui. The first two women have recently died, and the last two have been resentenced (Stewart), or have received sentence (Siddiqui). They represent different time periods and eras of American dissent and repression.

Lebrón and Buck were anti-white supremacy/anti-imperialist activists from the 1950s-80s. Lebrón, who was a Puerto Rican nationalist, died on August 1 at the age of 90. From the 60s through the 80s, in a serious, comprehensive and all-encompassing attempt at revolution, women participated in groups that favored radical action — even armed resistance — against what they saw as an oppressive American state. Puerto Ricans have been fighting U.S. control since the American takeover in 1898. An uprising in the 1950s was followed by martial law, and Puerto Rican Independistas took the struggle to America. In March of 1954 Lebrón wanted to dramatically tell the world that

Puerto Rico was “a U.S. colony.” Shouting “Viva Puerto Rico Libre!” she led a small group which opened fire in the House of Representatives, firing 30 shots and wounding five Congressmen. Lebrón claimed she had fired her shots at the ceiling. She said she had not intended to kill anyone and was not sorry for the “act of freedom for my country.” (democracynow.com, August 2, 2010) Lebrón got life in prison, but was pardoned by President Carter in 1979 and returned to Puerto Rico, where she continued in the struggle against U.S. colonialism. She was arrested at age 81 for protesting the American bombing range at Vieques. Fellow women Puerto Rican nationalists have also received harsh jail sentences. After conviction of involvement in a movement-led Connecticut robbery in 1983, Alejandrina Torres was raped in prison and then placed in solitary at Lexington prison in Kentucky (See Matt Meyer, ed., *Let Freedom Ring: A Collection of Documents from the Movements to Free U.S. Political Prisoners* 2008, 15; Joy James, ed., *Warfare in the American Homeland: Policing and Prison in a Penal Democracy* 2007, 166).

Dovetailing with Lebrón’s jail time was that of a woman who also spent a very long time in prison: Marilyn Buck. She died of cancer, an illness very much exacerbated by her incarceration, at age 62 on August 3, right after she finally secured release. Buck was an activist in the intense, politically charged atmosphere of the 60s and 70s, part of the huge movement challenging the American system: the capitalist state and white supremacy. Such activists were using words and ideas that, according to historian Dan Berger, “the state deemed too powerful to let slide as so much free speech” (In Meyer, “The Real Dragon,” 4). The full force of the state came down on groups like the Black Panthers and Weather Underground, advocates of armed struggle against what they saw as a racist colonial power. Buck protested against the Vietnam War, racism, brought “women’s lib” to the SDS, was pro-Palestinian, anti-Shah (of Iran) and pro-Native-American, Mexican-American and Black Panther (Meyer, 771-772).

In 1973, Buck was arrested for securing two boxes of bullets for, and being associated with, the Black Panthers. She got ten years. After three parole attempts were rejected she escaped in 1977. In 1985 she was recaptured, accused of helping prisoner Assata Shakur escape, and for being part of the Weather Underground’s “Resistance Conspiracy” — which purportedly planned several governmental bombings in the East. For that, she got 80 years in a California prison, where she wrote prize-winning poetry and analytic articles on the psychology of female repression. She argued that women political prisoners have bad experiences unique to them since women “already endure both social and cultural oppression and repression from childhood on ... women are vulnerable to even deeper humiliation and degradation” (James, 238). Considered a “terrorist,” she was put in solitary and held incommunicado after 9/11. In a sentiment with which Lebrón would have agreed, Buck said she did not want to be a forgotten woman prisoner but

afraid to support all Marxist-Leninist revolutionaries everywhere — no matter who curse our class solidarity.

Pantherism teaches that communist freedom requires that the working class as a whole fight to overthrow its oppressors, the bourgeois capitalist class, and then establish a new government under the dictatorship of the proletariat. The proletarian people must step forward to take history into their own hands. Our Party must educate the people so that they will throw their weight and power behind the international campaign to smash imperialism. Pantherism also demands that we oppose both narrow (Black bourgeois) nationalism and reactionary (Amerikan) patriotism, with a Maoist world outlook and international proletarian socialism. So we say, “Revolutionary Black Power to the Black people!” and “Indian Power to the Indian People!” “Arab Power to the Arab people” and so on, but we also support the unity of all oppressed people.

The other question most frequently asked by people is why another Black Panther Party? Unlike some narrow Black nationalists who are always advocating retreatist politics into the Democratic Party of oppression, we the people know that the original Black Panther Party was a tremendous force and a political vehicle that inspired our people to reach within themselves to find the creative spirit of doing for self. The BPP should be a model to all who are concerned with social justice and peace. We believe the original Black Panther Party (1966 to 1971)* suffered an untimely demise before it could mobilize the weight of the working class Black people to advance the Black liberation struggle to victory. Thereby, it left a legacy to be picked up and carried on from one generation to the next. No other party or organization has inspired and mobilized Black people like the old BPP did. The Party’s demise was caused by internal weaknesses, egoism, and factionalism, combined with an intense campaign of government infiltration, assassination and false imprisonment called COINTELPRO, in which more than 2,000 Party members were arrested and many were killed.

The late Khalid Muhammad created the new Black Panther Party in 1990 as a split from the Nation of Islam, and we considered these to be our brothers and sisters, but we have fundamental ideological and political differences with them. We believe in class struggle, not racial separatism. Our motivation is love for our Black people, not hate of anyone, and we believe that all oppressed people must unite against our common oppressor, the imperialist-capitalist system. Though our Party was founded in the prisons, we do not confine ourselves to them. We see the New African Black Panther Party as the embryo of a new vanguard party, following in the footsteps of the original BPP.

The Party made errors, and we intend to learn from, not repeat, them, and these are different times, which require fresh analysis and creativity. The Patriot Act and the creation of the office of Homeland Security go way beyond

the FBI’s COINTELPRO campaign in violating people’s rights.

We say that the original Black Panther Party was a beautiful organization! Let the reactionary Black nationalist curse us, but we must be about the business of serving the people! We stand for the absolute right of all oppressed people to determine their own political destiny, to decide how to use their own economic resources and organize their own political economy to meet the needs of their own people. Historically, Black people in America’s strongest ally have been the American Indians, the indigenous people of Turtle Island. They have stood with us for nearly five centuries in resisting colonialism, and we have lived among them as runaway slaves and fellow guerrilla fighters in many campaigns. Osceola, Seminole war chief, led Indian and Black people in military actions that repeatedly defeated the slave masters and the U.S. Army of occupation, and there are many other examples. The BPP cultivated alliances with many other revolutionary formations representing diverse ethnic groups such as the Young Lords Party/Puerto Rican Revolutionary Workers Organization and FMLN, the Brown Berets and La Raza Unida Party (Chicago), I War Khun (Chinese Americans), Aug Katipunan (Filipino Americans), the Young Patriot Party (Appalachian Whites) and the White Panther Party, the John Brown Liberation League, the SDS, Weatherman, etc. In 1970, some 10,000 to 15,000 people, representing many parties, groups, and collectives from across the U.S. and internationally, answered the BPP’s call to attend a Revolutionary People’s Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia. Due to the already developing internal schism within the BPP, this momentous development was not followed up on. Resurrecting the Party will help to rekindle these important links.

The oppressed poor and working class people, approximately 10 million of them world-wide, are caged in prisons and jails not due to any real criminal activity on their part, but because they are poor and working class. This constitutes a reserve army of cheap labor for the political and economic capitalist system, and we are determined to reach them with the explosive doctrine of Pantherism and Panther Love.

I am one of the 10 million. So is Comrade Kevin Rashid Johnson. Most of us live in the fastest growing industry in the United States: The Prison Industrial Complex. Amerika holds 5% of the world’s population, roughly 300 million-plus people, but accounts for 25% of the world’s prisoners, 75% of whom are Black and Latino.

They call these places Department of Corrections but they should be abolished because they are anti-people and anti-human. The violence and torture, the horrible food, the isolation wings that perpetuate sensory deprivation, the Parole Boards that constantly deny us parole on the pretext that we are “likely to commit another me,” the inadequate educational facilities that teach us “what to think” rather

The Foundations of Pantherism

BY SHAKA ZULU, Chairman, NABPP

Editors note: This is in part a response to the article “The Dragon and the Hydra” by political prisoner Russell Ma-roon Shoatz, featured in 4sm 16.

1. “Yes, he turned and walked past the eyes of my life. And he nodded and sang without sound. And his face had the look of a man who knew strife. And a feeling familiarly came around. REFRAIN — I said, Man, where have you been for all these years. Man, where were you, when I sought you. Man, do you know me as I know you. Man, am I coming through.”
2. “And he spoke in a voice that was centuries old. And he smiled in a way that was strange. And his lips of night spoke about our people’s plight. And a feeling familiarly came around. REFRAIN — I said, Man where have you been for all these years. Man, where were you, when I sought you. Man, do you know me as I know you. Man, am I coming through.”
3. “And we sat and we talked about freedom and things. And he told me about what he dreamed. But, I knew of that dream long before he had spoke. And a feeling familiarly came around. REFRAIN — I said, Man, where have you been for all these years. Man, where were you, when I sought you. Man, do you know me as I know you. Man, am I coming through.” — New Afrikan Black Panther Party’s National Anthem

The first thing that you should know about the New Afrikan Black Panther Party, is that we are a vanguard Party of revolutionary nationalist and communist committed to the principle that all people have the unalienable right to determine their own destinies.

These unalienable rights we make upon U.S. imperialist are universal rights that the people want everywhere — to have land, bread, housing, education, clothing, justice, peace and people’s control of modern technology. These basic rights will guarantee the people’s survival — we will not compromise the people’s will and desire on any terms.

Although our party was born in the bowels of the racist prison system — we gladly embrace the hope of the oppressed masses for freedom and socialism by steeling our minds and body’s for the protracted people’s war. As Comrade Huey once said, “Jail is an odd place to find freedom, but that was the first place” most of us found ours.

The New Afrikan Black Panther Party is an above-ground legal movement. We do not advocate or support any illegal

activities. The Party organization stands for the liberation of Black people and all oppressed people everywhere.

We have been organized to serve the needs of people of the oppressed New Afrikan Nation and to imbue them with a revolutionary education that teaches them their true role in society. We do not advocate ethnic hatred or racist views and practices among the people. We fight racism with dialectical materialism, Panther Love and international proletarian solidarity.

The Black Panther Party takes class struggle as our philosophy: “There is a struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie...The oppressors, oppress the oppressed, while the oppressed need to fight back and seek a way out before they start looking for philosophy. It was only when people took this as their starting point that there was Marxism-Leninism, and that they discovered philosophy. We have all been through this.”

For us the people are the makers of history. With a correct ideological orientation we can build unity with all people who are truly sincere about making revolution based on the idea that another world is possible.

My message to all our class Brothers and Sisters all over the world suffering from intolerable poverty and super-exploitation is simple: We no longer have to live that way; our future can truly be right and healthy if we dare to rebel against our oppressors.

The science of revolution teaches that in order to overthrow anything one must first develop a revolutionary organization comprised of people who are dedicated to revolutionary communist goals. Our Party is a stick to swing at the oppressor; a fighting force armed with social science and class struggle. We must move the people against the death machine of oppression with a stick, book and gun.

We have received dozens of letters from people asking me to fully explain the ideology of Pantherism (which is illuminated by Marxism-Leninism-Maoism) as it relates to the concrete conditions of oppression of New Afrikan people, and all oppressed people in the 21st century.

Pantherism is the revolutionary ideology of the New Afrikan Black Panther Party. Pantherism says that the primary contradiction for us is between the oppressor settler state and our neocolonized reality. We must free the New Afrikan Nation in solidarity with other nations in empireland. Pantherism stands firmly against the imperialist neocolonizers and capitalist bloodsuckers. We should unite with all progressive people who want to bring forth a socialist world.

Our ideology is a fighting ideology talking about confiscating the wealth of the super-rich exploiters, the bourgeoisie, through a revolutionary war of liberation. We must not be

a “comrade in an ongoing struggle versus imperialism, oppression and exploitation” (Meyer, 772).

Stewart and Siddiqui, who were also arguably victims of white supremacy and imperialism, have both felt the enormous consequences of the anti-“terrorist”/anti-Muslim era, beginning with the 9/11 bombings. Stewart’s case actually pre-dates the 2001 bombings in the US - although she was convicted under a Patriot Act that some argue should not have been applied to her by Attorney General Ashcroft; while Siddiqui was on a watch list created by that same AG. The “war on terror” hysteria has resulted in rapid and profound changes for political and civil rights in this country.

One immediate occurrence has been a concentration of power in the executive, making the president the “decider” in matters of war, peace and the law. Bush, and now Obama, have used the law in a politicized Justice Department, enforcing laws like the Patriot Act, which has led to the arrest of thousands of innocent people without charges or legal representation, and has also been used to punish lawyers who represent the accused “terrorists.” Lawyer Stewart was recently resentenced after her Patriot Act conviction.

In the wake of the terror hysteria, 69-year-old Stewart became a political prisoner in January, for trying to defend her client, Sheikh Abdel Rahman, convicted for a 1996 New York City terror plot. Technically, she was charged for providing material support, through a press conference, to her client’s intended “terrorist conspiracy.” It’s questionable that she should have been tried under a Patriot Act passed in 2001. Her surveillance started in 2000, and the provision regarding “special administration measures” severely limiting the ability of the accused to communicate with the outside world, probably shouldn’t apply to lawyer-client communication. Disbarred, disgraced and sentenced to 28 months, in spite of having breast cancer, colleagues say she was really jailed for being a long-time, zealous advocate for Black Panthers and Weather Underground “bombers.” Stewart thinks she was being made an example to deter other lawyers, male or female, from defending “controversial figures and causes” (Meyer, 680, 801; Marjorie Cohn, commondreams.com, November 25, 2009).

In her resentencing trial of July 15, this was even more apparent. As this country accepts greater infringements on civil liberties, lawyers, especially those with “progressive” political beliefs (Meyer, 682), are among the first to feel the effects. Stewart’s sentence was increased nearly five times, to ten years. Her judge, John Koeltl, on reconsidering her sentence, said she lied in court, abused her position as lawyer, and showed “no remorse.” Stewart talked about how prison had “diminished” her ... she was “losing pieces” of her personality (democracynow.com, July 16, 2010). As she has also said: “The police state has now arrived” (Stewart, “Afterword,” 753, in Meyer).

“Police state” may sound extreme, but maybe not. Political prisoner Laura Whitehorn has argued that torture is not new in the U.S., even of women, but now it is an “integral part of U.S. imperialism, with white supremacy as a fundamental element” - torture as a “weapon of domination” (James, 273-274). So, when Pakistani-born neuroscientist Aafia Siddiqui, 37, who studied and worked in America for years, was convicted of trying to kill American military officers and FBI agents, it’s not surprising that her bizarre and murky story includes her torture at the hands of her American captors. Siddiqui, after a strange, unsettling trial in New York City in January, was found guilty and was sentenced to 86 years, after a recent postponement, on September 23. Watched in the early 2000s because of her Muslim activism, she disappeared in Pakistan in 2003, only to reappear in Afghanistan in 2008, disoriented and carrying plans to blow up New York buildings.

Many believe she was kidnapped by the Americans in 2003, with her three children, raped, tortured, with one of her children dying, one missing, and one now with her sister. British journalist Yvonne Ridley has written that Siddiqui and other women have been, and are, at Bagram and other U.S. torture prisons. There is very shaky evidence of her attack on soldiers with an M4 assault rifle that was somehow left unattended. But she was the only one who got shot, grievously, in the stomach. “Lady al Qaeda” (so-named by *The New York Daily News*) was convicted in January. Her mind seemed to wander. She was forced by the judge to come to the court every day, which meant undergoing daily strip searches, just continuing her horrors.

Although human rights groups say she is no extremist, in her testimony, Siddiqui insists she was held in a secret prison by the Americans. (Petra Bartosiewicz, *Time*, January 8, 2010.) Siddiqui was supposedly tried for assault, not terrorism, but the government lawyers constantly told the jury she was a terrorist. Solid evidence was never presented that she was an assaulter or a terrorist. During her trial, witnesses described Siddiqui as a “completely broken human being” (Siddiqui representative Tina Foster in Chris Hedges, “The Terror-Industrial Complex,” truthdig.com, February 8, 2010).

We can celebrate woman’s suffrage and work for an ERA, but we have to remember the underside, the dark side, of women and politics in this country. For women who are politicals, for Lebrón and Buck, for Stewart and Siddiqui, life in jail can be horrible in ways peculiar to women. Historian Dylan Rodriguez writes of a “gendered degradation” for political women in prison, through “profound, discrete acts of violent male authority.” (Rodriguez, “Forced Passage: Imprisoned Radical Intellectuals and the U.S. Prison Regime,” 2006, 195-195.) Women, traditionally supposed to be docile and relatively nonpolitical wives and mothers, have to suffer for not only being anti-imperialist or anti-white supremacist, but for being “unnatural females.”

Lolita Lebrón: 'I am a Revolutionary'

Puerto Rican Freedom Fighter Dies at Age of 90

From PSLweb.org

Lolita Lebrón, Puerto Rican nationalist leader and revered icon of independence, died on August 1 at age 90. She suffered from a cardiopulmonary condition.

Amidst a sea of Nationalist and Puerto Rican flags, hundreds of people showed up to pay their respects to Lebrón who was lying in wait in the island's capital. A mass and a commemoration took place where political figures, ex-political prisoners and independence fighters, as well as the public at-large, expressed their love and respect for the woman who some are now calling the "mother of Puerto Rican nationalism." People sang the nationalist anthem at various points and chanted "Lolita Lebrón, example of courage!"

Among the prior political prisoners present were Alicia Rodriguez, Carmen Valentin, Juan Segarra Palmer, Adolfo Matos, Elizam Escobar and, the most recently released political prisoner and independence fighter, Carlos Alberto Torres. While people waited in line to see Lolita, constant chants of "Que viva Puerto Rico libre!" could be heard, along with the response: "Que viva!"

Many speakers reflected on how Lebrón's life influenced them personally and the struggle for Puerto Rico's independence. The Macheteros sent a statement vowing to continue the fight for independence. Her widower, Dr. Sergio Irizarry, said to the crowd present: "Don Pedro (Albizu Campos) and Lolita are figures made of the same stuff, made with the fire of patriotic passion that raises the people. The date of our independence is marked on the calendar; sooner or later we will be free."

The legislature, on behalf of Don Pedro Albizu Campos' daughter, Laura Albizu, is petitioning the governor for an official three-day mourning period for the whole country. On August 2, dozens of people attended a memorial for Lolita in Spanish Harlem next to a mural of Don Pedro Albizu Campos and Che Guevara. Those in attendance remembered Lolita's courage, the campaign to win her release and her days in New York after she was released. Colleagues, friends and longtime members of the independence movement spoke of her indomitable strength in prison, and her profound impact on the struggle for independence. Hiram Rivera, vice president of the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party-NY, said, "Lolita will live in the hearts of those Puerto Ricans who believe in the freedom of our nation." A group of artists will be working on a new mural dedicated to her in the next few weeks.

The Attack On Congress and Lolita's Release

Doña Lolita, as she is singularly known in Puerto Rico—no last name necessary—became a nationalist hero in 1954 when she organized an assault on the U.S. Congress with her comrades Rafael Cancel Miranda, Irving Flores and Andres Figueroa Cordero.

On March 1, 1954, Lolita and her three comrades calmly entered the Capitol, walked through the lobby and up to the visitor's gallery above the chamber in the House of Representatives, which was in session. Shortly thereafter, Lolita gave the order, the Nationalists unfurled the Puerto Rican flag, Lolita stood up and shouted "Que Viva Puerto Rico Libre!" and within seconds they opened fire on the U.S. Congress.

Five congressmen were wounded in the attack. All four Nationalists were immediately arrested. Soon after the attack, the mass media launched a campaign to demonize the Puerto Rican independence movement.

But Lolita was not intimidated: "I am not sorry! I am not sorry to come and demand freedom for my country in any place." As she had written on a note in her purse the day of the attack: "My life I give for the freedom of my country. This is a cry for victory in our struggle for independence. . . . The United States of America is betraying the sacred principles of mankind in their continuous subjugation of my country." The four were soon convicted and given life sentences.

During the social upsurge of the 1960s and 1970s in Puerto Rico and the United States, more and more people raised the demand for the immediate release of the four as political prisoners and combatants in a just war of self-determination. An international campaign arose, which gained steam with the diplomatic and political support of revolutionary Cuba. The pressure paid off in 1979, when President Jimmy Carter granted amnesty to Lolita Lebrón, and



struction have increased the incursions into Mapuche territory, and continued to threaten the survival of the Mapuche people. In a 2008 report, Amnesty International noted that unresolved territorial disputes related to the extractive industries and logging have caused "tension resulting in violence":

"Mapuche leaders have informed us that police officers have used excessive force, including tear gas and rubber bullets, and firing shots from moving helicopters, including lead shot. In order to suppress the protests, to the detriment of the physical and psychological integrity of people who are often not involved in these actions, particularly children, women and the elderly."

The hunger strike that is ongoing in Chile today is a wake up call to the world about the criminalization of Mapuche peoples who continue standing up to defend their lands.

Canada's relationship with Chile has long been based on mining and free trade, having signed a bilateral Free Trade Agreement in 1997. In 2008, Canadian outward foreign direct investment in Chile was measured at \$8.346 billion. Canada's priority sectors in Chile are among those that have most aggravated the Mapuche conflicts, including "mining, forestry, fishing and agricultural industries."

Disturbingly enough, among other programs, between 2005 and 2008 the Canadian International Development Agency funded a program in Chile called "Ensuring the Rights of the Accused in Chile," which "transfers Canadian experience in the field of criminal defence to help strengthen the reformed Chilean justice system."

Colombian supporter Manuel Rozenal writes that for the Chilean state to put Mapuche resistance on trial "... under anti-terrorist legislation is preposterous, and actually transforms the struggle for life into a terrorist activity, a precedent from Chile to the Continent and, indeed, the world. "

Important Mumia Legal News

BY ROBERT R. BRYAN, Lead counsel for Mumia Abu-Jamal

There is a significant new development regarding my client, Mumia Abu-Jamal, the journalist and author who has been on Pennsylvania's death row for nearly three decades.

Oral argument scheduled, United States Court of Appeals: The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit has just granted oral argument in Mumia's case. (Abu-Jamal v. Beard, No. 01-9014). The arguments will be before a three-judge panel on November 9, 2010, 2:00 pm. This will be in the Ceremonial Courtroom, U.S. Courthouse, 6th & Market Streets, Philadelphia.

Mumia & I spoke shortly after the order was received. He was humbled by the good news. We are cautiously encouraged that the federal court has taken this step. This is significant in the ongoing litigation to save Mumia's life and win the case. At stake is whether he will be executed, or granted a new jury trial on the question of the death penalty. We previously won on this issue, but early this year the U.S. Supreme Court vacated that decision and ordered that the case be again reviewed by the federal court.

New movie, Justice On Trial: Yesterday Justice On Trial premiered in Philadelphia. It is by Johanna Fernandez, a professor at Baruch College, New York, and Kouross Esmaeli of Big Noise Films. The release of this superb film comes at a perfect time since it counters another movie, The Barrel of a Gun, that was also shown the same day. The Barrel production is replete with distortions and wild theories, and is supported by those who wish to see my client executed, including the Fraternal Order of Police.

Petition to President Barack Obama (Mumia Abu-Jamal and the Global Abolition of the Death Penalty): Over 24,000 people from around the world have signed the petition, including three Nobel Prize winners. We need many more for this to benefit Mumia. Some of the signers are: Desmond Tutu, South Africa (Nobel Peace Prize, 1984); Günter Grass, Germany (Nobel Prize in Literature, 1999); Elfriede Jelinek, Austria (Nobel Prize in Literature, 2004); Danielle Mitterrand, Paris (former First Lady of France); Fatima Bhutto, Pakistan (writer); Colin Firth (Academy Award Best-Actor nominee, 2010); Noam Chomsky, MIT (philosopher and author); Ed Asner (actor); Mike Farrell (actor); Robert Meeropol (son of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, executed in 1953); Michael Radford (director of the Oscar winning film Il Postino); members of the European Parliament; members of the German Bundestag; European Association of Lawyers for Democracy & World Human Rights; and Reporters Without Borders, Paris.

How to Help: For information on how to help, both by signing the Obama petition & donating funds, please go to Mumia's website <http://www.MumiaLegalDefense.org>.

Conclusion: Mumia is in the greatest danger since being arrested in 1981. We will not stop until he is saved.

Law Offices of Robert R. Bryan
2088 Union Street, Suite 4
San Francisco, California
USA 94123-4117

At the Roots of Mapuche Resistance

BY DAWN PALEY, Vancouver Media Co-op

More than 34 Mapuche political prisoners in Chile have entered into day 69 of a hunger strike to bring attention to their struggle and force significant changes in the way the Chilean state treats Mapuche people.

The hunger strike has entered into a critical and possibly deadly phase: Bobby Sands, an Irish revolutionary and a well known casualty of hunger striking, died after 66 days. Other hunger strikers have survived for longer, including Mapuche woman and ex-political prisoner Patricia Troncoso, who refused food for 112 days to protest the “predatory and inhumane economic model” in Chile and the still active anti-terrorist laws used to criminalize the Mapuche people.

The central demands of the hunger strikers and their supporters are that Mapuche people be tried in civil courts instead of in both civil and military courts, and that dictatorship-era anti-terrorist legislation not be used against them. Their struggle, at its roots, is in defense of their territory and culture, and in that way is similar to the struggles of Indigenous peoples around the world.

Indeed, the situation among the Mapuche people is dire. Their fight to maintain their freedom and independence dates back to the first Spanish invasion of their territory in 1541. Since then, their land base has been whittled down to a series of reserves, which were broken up into individual lands under the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet.

Since the end of the dictatorship in 1990 laws have been passed that recognize the rights of Indigenous peoples to land, however these have not been honored and Mapuche people have continued to organize against transnational corporate activities in their lands.

“Although there have been many Chilean and international policies implemented to strengthen and support Mapuche communities - such as funding for intercultural health and sustainable development programs, legal processes for land claims, international and national legal support against and compensation for human rights abuses, Mapuche language programs, etc - the dominant model of industrial development including foreign investment still imposes structures of power over, rather than collaboration with the Mapuche people,” Claire Sieber,



an anthropologist who graduated from the University of Victoria in BC and has spent time working with Mapuche people, wrote to the Vancouver Media Co-op in an email.

Dams throughout Mapuche territory have flooded vast expanses of territory, and displaced entire communities. In the 1990s, Spanish owned Empresa Nacional de Electricidad (National Electricity Company, ENDESA) began a project of building six dams on the Bio Bio river in Pehuenche Mapuche lands. Some of these dams were funded through loans from the World Bank’s International Finance Corporation and the Inter American Development bank.

The effects of the damming and flooding of Mapuche territory continue to be felt. “Although ENDESA supplied some Pehuenche in El Barco with new homes and electrical appliances (without free electricity or employment opportunities to pay electrical bills... I have seen gas ovens and laundry machines used as cupboards), and rectangular plots of land fenced with barbed wire (contrary to the semi-nomadic and communal land organization of the Pehuenche)— they did so not taking into account the seasonal mobility and community organization of the Pehuenche,” wrote Sieber.

“This past summer in Chile I met families distraught over new fences from outside (non Pehuenche) landowners that prevented the families from taking their livestock to the summer grazing areas they have been using for generations,” she wrote. “The landowners were charging per head of livestock for the passage of the animals through their land. Prices Pehuenche farmers in this area cannot afford.”

Also in the late 90s, in an earlier example of the criminalization of Mapuche resistance, forestry disputes flared up, and “in December 1997 the police fought Mapuche protestors from the communities Pichi-Lincoyan and Pilil-Mapu. The communities were claiming their lands, and this generated a conflict because the government ignored Mapuche demands,” according to Mapuche writer Aldisson Anguita Mariqueo. He notes that at this time:

“The response of the ‘democratic’ government of Chile was to arrest twelve Mapuche under the legal umbrella of the Internal Security Law. This law, inherited from the military dictatorship, allows the security forces to search private residences and to arrest and interrogate any ‘suspicious’ individual without judicial intervention. Once Mapuche protestors were taken away under this law, no information was given to their families as to their whereabouts, intensifying the confusion, fear and hopelessness among their families and communities.”

Road building and airport con-

the other nationalists, after spending 24 years in prison.

A Living Legacy

The action taken by Lolita Lebrón and her comrades shocked the imperialists in Washington and helped stimulate the independence movement in Puerto Rico. Her lifelong dedication to the cause serves as an inspiration for the next generation of activists and revolutionaries to pick up the torch of independence. With the recent victory of the student strike in Puerto Rico, and the militancy of the labor movement, there exists the basis for a resurgent anti-colonial struggle.

The Party for Socialism and Liberation raises unconditionally the banner of independence for Puerto Rico, regardless of the tactics the national liberation movement employs to

expel the reigns of foreign oppression from its homeland. What Lolita and her comrades did reflected the fury of the colonized Puerto Rican nation and every subjugated people that strives for a world free of oppression.

The PSL honors the legacy of Lolita Lebrón and sends our regards to her family and comrades during these hard times. As revolutionaries here in the colonizing country, we have a special responsibility to the Puerto Rican independence movement: to weaken imperialism from within, and ultimately overthrow it. We pledge to continue this struggle and forever raise the banner of Puerto Rico’s independence.

What Lolita yelled that day in 1954 still resonates today: “Que Viva Puerto Rico Libre!”

Mother Borinquen

BY CHRIS - GORDO

This is dedicated to Lolita Lebrón, a fearless warrior and supporter of our own independence. My condolences and sympathy for her family and loved ones.

Mother Borinquen
To Millions You’ve given birth,
equally loving them all.

You’ve taken care of all of your children,
never abandoning one.

You’ve even adopted others, to love
as your very own.

You’ve fed the hungry, gave to the needy,
sheltered the homeless, and clothed the poor.

Your daughters are a reflection of you, you know,
Always so willing to give.

Yet, many of them are abused and disrespected
by those who have no shame!
“Oh Borinquen my beautiful Mother”
Why must you suffer so much pain.

Have you not been raped
enough by the pirate bastards of the past,
who you welcomed with open arms,
and your heart of peace was stabbed.

Borinquen, My beautiful Mother,
why do you carry the burdens of others...

I know You’ve taught me always to be humble
and kind,
and to never wrong another -
and not once have I disobeyed you.

But I am your son, and like any other,
for his mother, I am too willing to die...

Oh! My beautiful Mother - Borinquen,
how long must I stand by?

Or have you forgotten Mother Borinquen,
that you are the mother of millions of
Warriors ‘Brave Lords’, who are ready to
march at your command and raise
above the battle of Armageddon to keep you from
harm.

Will you call upon me?
Will you call upon me - Mother Borinquen,
when the time comes?

For I am your native son,
the one who for years you protected
and cradled in your arms,
and now I wish to do the same for you.

I love you with an undying passion!
And what ever waters I may cross,
I promise to carry you in my heart
and to teach your children, my brothers
and sisters, about Borinquen.
My Beautiful Mother’s name.

An ALKQN Commemoration to Lolita Lebrón

FROM REY SALOMON

Beautiful Brown Woman de Nuestra
America....

Independentista de Nuestra
Causa...

On March 1st 1954, when you
And your three compañeros
Marched into the gallery of the U.S. Congress;
When 5 congressmen
Were struck by bullets,
You became immortalized...
Within the Coronet of our Nation.

In 1998 (where abuelo Fidel had the N.O.I.)
It was us,
The A.L.K.Q.N.,
Who stood by your side
Before the U.N.
And the world.

You will always be our Sister....

Upon the date of August 1st, 2010,
You will now forever be embodied
Within the colors
Of Black and Gold
(One of our "Antecesoras Antiguas,"
Guiding and keeping us strong
As we battle the forces
That seek to deny...)

Every time that we salute,
With our right fist upon our heart,
Exhibiting our willingness
To die for each other...
In the words of our Nation's cry
of Amor de Rey y Amor de Reina...
Will echo the words
Of Lolita Lebrón:

Sangre de mi sangre,
Hija de mi madre....

"¡Viva Puerto Rico Libre!"

(May you rest in the peace and freedom you so fervently
sought)

1. Every year, the first week of March marks the anniversary of the Almighty Latin Kings and Queens Nation (A.L.K.Q.N.)
2. The National Emblem of the A.L.K.Q.N. is a crown. The points of a five-pointed Coronet signify the five principles which every member of the A.L.K.Q.N. is to live by.
3. The Sacred Colors of the A.L.K.Q.N., Black and Gold, represent, amongst other things, those who have given their lives fighting against colonialism and for the free political and cultural expression of all Third World (Black and Gold) People, and among the commonwealth of all individuals.

See: *The Almighty Latin Kings and Queens Nation: Street Politics and the Transformation of a New York City Gang*, by David Brotherton and Luis Barrios (pgs. 258, 34)

Eric McDavid's Appeal Denied

Eric McDavid is a political prisoner, currently serving a 20 year sentence in federal prison for "thought crime." He was arrested in January 2006 (as part of the government's ongoing "Green Scare" campaign against environmental and animal rights activists) after being targeted by an undercover informant who formulated a crime and entrapped Eric in it. Eric was targeted by the state for his political beliefs, and his case is important for everyone who dares to stand up.

Dear friends, It is with heavy hearts that we write to tell you that Tuesday, September 21, the 9th circuit court denied Eric's appeal of his conviction and sentencing. Given all that has happened these past 4+ years, this news isn't shocking so much as it is maddening and upsetting. The state has, from the beginning, used dirty tricks and lies to hold Eric captive. As many have said, they wished to make an example of him...

And in that, at least, they have been successful. But not in the way that they might have wished. Because for us, Eric has been a constant example of strength, courage and integrity. Of staying the course, even when the deck is totally stacked against him. And of not losing one's Self in the midst of potentially crushing adversity.

This is a very difficult time for Eric and his loved ones. Please send Eric a note of support to let him know he is not forgotten.

Eric McDavid 16209-097
FCI Victorville, Medium II
Federal Correctional Institution
PO Box 5300
Adelanto, CA 92301

www.supporteric.org

with love beating in our chests. Revolutionary love. We keep that warrior spirit alive, and these pigs fear it, they hate it, and they envy it and that's why they're always trying everything they can to try to crush it, break it, tame it and destroy it, but no matter how hard they try, or what they do, there's not much they can do to take that away from us.

Books and knowledge give us breath, it pumps life into our veins and activate our brains. With knowledge we are invigorated, rejuvenated and made worthy. Knowledge gets us going; knowledge is what sets us free. We use these books to quench our thirst and to feed our hunger.

Through these trials and painful situations I've come to learn the lessons of struggle and the importance of a revolutionary, underground education. I've learned how vital it is to my survival to be able to keep the fire of resistance burning in my heart. I've come to learn about sacrifice, solidarity and fortitude. I've got little baby cousins, nephews and nieces that I haven't even met yet. I've fucked off my release date many times already, catching more time on my prison sentence for taking stands against these pigs and their injustices done to us. It's hard for me to turn my back on the struggle. I've recently participated in a brutal riot here on my unit and I've got two years left before I go home, and now I'm getting letters from my moms and my brother, asking me what the hell am I doing, don't I want to come home? They've made sacrifices for me, to help get me out of here, spending money on attorneys for me and everything, and yet I'm still in here caught up in the struggle and I'm conflicted, I want to go home, but I just can't sit back as my fellow comrades stand up and make sacrifices to make important changes for everybody else. My family doesn't understand my commitment to the struggle and it breaks my heart just as I know it breaks their heart to watch me do things that will jeopardize my release date.

But now I realize that the struggle is going to continue whether I'm in here or out there, and after all that I've been through and all that I've done, I am so lucky to still have the chance to get out of here. And now it's time to go home. It's for me to get out of here and do this from the other side of the razor wire.

I'm gonna do what I can to plant seeds and raise awareness while I'm still here because it's impossible to overlook all the atrocity that's going on around me every day. I see all these youngsters coming to prison now, little dudes as young as 14 years old! There's no true leadership or anything meaningful in here for them to latch onto and it kills me. I see all the fakeness and foulness around here, and I'm always railing against it, trying to raise consciousness to these real issues we're faced with. The mentality of some of these cats around here is hard for me to grasp and seems "suspect" in my eyes. The way they think, the way they act, I'm not feeling it. If you're not striving for change or seeking solutions, or trying to elevate yourself,

then what are you doing?

All I can say is that I got love for the real cats in here, I feel for them, especially the ones that have to stay here, I feel for them and will always keep them in my heart, recognizing them as kindred spirits.

I've done all I can to stock up all the comrades in here with good literature and to raise consciousness around here. I've been going at it so hard that I ended up losing two good friends out there who acted as my main benefactors, Gina and Katy. They couldn't do it anymore, they couldn't afford to keep making copies of books and literature for me, they couldn't afford to keep buying books for my comrades in here, and it got to the point where they would dread getting a letter from me because I was always asking them to support me with this project or that project, on a mission to try to flood this prison with as much literature and educational materials as I can. They just couldn't do it anymore. I feel bad that I won't be receiving letters from these beautiful, compassionate warrioresses anymore. I feel bad that I've become so obsessed with my mission to raise awareness that I failed to take into consideration their needs and limitations. I will really miss them.

So, as one door closes, I guess it's time to look on to new things and start focusing on my release date. I have to figure what I'm gonna do when I get out of here, how can I keep the struggle up from the other side of the fence, and things like that. I don't have plans on getting rich or anything like that, I don't care about none of that. I've been in solitary long enough to know that I don't need lots of money to survive, so that's one lesson I'll be taking to the streets. I just want to be real and live right, helping when I can. I have a lot to figure out and a lot to think about. Two years to go, so close, yet so far away...

Until then, I will continue writing these essays, articles and zines, and things like that. This is my contribution to the struggle. I'm gonna let people know what's going on, what we're going through in these hellholes, I'm gonna keep spreading the truth whether these pigs like it or not, because the truth is dangerous! The truth is revolutionary! The revolution starts in our minds, so let's get free, one mind at a time! My love goes out to all the people out there who have committed themselves to our struggles in here. Keep doing what you do, keep the struggle alive, keep it up.

If you want to be hard, you gotta go hard!

"Our expressive powers were strong and vibrant. If this could be nurtured, if the language skills could be developed on top of this, we could learn to break through any communication barrier. We needed to obtain victories in language, built on an infrastructure of self-worth." -- Luis Rodriguez (from his book: *Always Running: La Vida Loca, Gang Days in L.A.*) Good book, read it!

Keep the Struggle Up

BY COYOTE SHEFF, Nevada ABC (Prison Chapter)

We have been slammed down, oppressed and confined to these prisons, ghettos and graveyards. Our stories and our lessons are manicured by the epidemics of pain, poverty, discrimination and struggle. We get poorer and the rich get richer as the story goes. There's no justice, no rehabilitation, no freedom. We are taken to court on trumped up, bogus shit, given 20 charges for one incident, bullied into taking a "deal," and then we are appointed a public defender 'cuz we don't have the money to acquire a more sufficient attorney, and in one year the person who is supposed to be representing us is a public defender, and then then next year that same person is a district attorney! So how could we really trust these people? How could we trust them with our lives? How could we be so willing to put our freedom in their hands?

It doesn't make sense to repetitively place our lives and our freedom into the malefic hands of people who actually despise us. Will there ever come a time when we can start taking control of our own lives? When we can stop depending on the same people that oppress us, to help us? Is there any legitimate, respectable way to get ourselves out of the deleterious grips of this death machine? Is there any way to end these sentences of perpetual suffering? All the questions that come to me while I marinate in this lonely world of darkness, reflecting on the many sorrows I've seen. So many questions, but hardly enough answers.

The frustration leads me to sit up on my bunk and start strategizing on different ways that I can encourage my comrades in here to start taking the initiative to study and learn the law. I have a Xerox copy of Mumia Abu Jamal's new book, *Jailhouse Lawyers* and I pass it out to others, trying to use it as a tool to inspire prisoners to learn how to become attorneys for the poor and oppressed. I sit here and wonder, "What else can I do? What clever ways are there to inspire people to study, to get them to learn?" Wouldn't it be great if we could become our own attorneys, or would it even matter?

I've held study groups and had many one-on-one study sessions with comrades in here, where we've sat around for hours talking and debating, searching for tangible ways to represent ourselves and to learn how to bring ourselves out of this state of oppression, and to eliminate oppression and poverty altogether. To break through the barriers, to rise above the tragedies. Right now it's just talk, but later who knows what it will be? Everything starts in the mind; one thing leads to another.

In this graveyard, it's so hard to get books and literature sent in, because the administration has deliberately set so many obstacles and put so many restrictions and limits

on things when it comes to receiving books that so many people in here have become discouraged and ended up giving up on trying to get books sent in. But I've been on an adamant mission for years to acquire all the literature I can get sent in to me, and to pass it out to as many people as I can, trying to turn this graveyard into a revolutionary university, so people in here can take all this time they have on their hands and use it to elevate their minds, reaching for higher degrees of learning, finding liberation through books. I love to be involved in all of these various acts of raising consciousness; I feel it's so necessary in these times and situations. Not to mention that I've seen the lengths these pigs will go to make sure they're keeping us confined to ignorance and stagnation. Books and reading materials are so important for us here, we who dwell in this gloomy world of degeneration.

I pass out literature on philosophy, politics, psychology, science, spirituality and I'm always passing out revolutionary materials too, and whatever else I can get, having study sessions when I can, discussing things with my neighbors for long hours into the night, all the way until my breakfast tray arrives, and sometimes, if the conversation is really good, I'll eat and talk at the same time, every once in a while setting the tray down to pick up a book, or an article, so that I can read a passage, sentence, or paragraph out loud to my neighbor, to reinforce the stance I'm taking on certain subjects, or to help get my point across more clearly. I love to learn, I love to teach and I love to engage others. I crave the intellectual stimulation, and I can tell they crave it too.

We are here, confined to these cells, but we've found ways to communicate and express ourselves, to soak up knowledge and pass it on to others who we've deemed worthy of receiving such valuable gems. It's miserable and depressing in here, so much atrocity and deterioration, but we've found ways to make the best out of a bad situation. We understand that we should never just lay down and accept this. We understand that we have to keep the spirit of resistance going strong inside of us, seeking solutions, striving for freedom, making sacrifices when the situation requires us to do so, and never giving up, never breaking down. Everybody that I consider a comrade understands this, and with this understanding we try to reach those that don't understand, but who really need to understand. With understanding things are made clear, and when that happens, change happens.

You'll find some of the most brilliant, most creative, most intelligent, most resourceful and most innovative individuals right here, confined to these hellholes. That's what happens when we have all this time on our hands, with the fire of resistance burning in our hearts. We've been discarded by society and caged like animals, left to rot and decay, to deteriorate and fade away into a black abyss, to disintegrate into tiny fragments of nothingness. But we are here, alive and fighting to maintain our existence, going strong,

MOVE Update: July/Aug 2010

BY THE MOVE ORGANIZATION

On the Move

On May 13, 2010 (the 25th anniversary of the bombing-death of our family), the parole board interviewed the MOVE women in prison, for the 3rd time, and denied their release for the 3rd time, as well as the rest of the MOVE 9 – claiming that the prosecutor had a negative response to their release, and they refused to accept responsibility for a policeman being killed.

Meanwhile, 25 years ago Philadelphia cops murdered 11 of our family members and have yet to spend a day in prison, despite the fact that the cops, and city officials were found guilty of "deliberate" murder of our family. These are the blatant inconsistencies and prejudices that MOVE is constantly fighting against. What gives this system the right to dismiss our family's lives, with no consequence, like they're not important, but keep MOVE in prison over 33 years, because they refuse to say they killed a policeman, because they didn't.

We're not surprised the parole board refused to release the MOVE 9 for a 3rd time – we expected it. And it has nothing to do with what they say, or don't say. MOVE told the P.B. the truth about what happened August 8, 1978, and the P.B. treated MOVE like they were lying.

But MOVE knows just as "politics" were involved in the MOVE 9 case, politics are the knee joints of the parole board. (The parole board members are appointed by the governor, who are themselves ex-cops and D.A.s.) And ain't nothing fair or honest about politics, ain't that right. The P.B. is carrying out the city and judges' vendetta against MOVE because MOVE exposed its cops for being brutal, racist – exposed its politicians for being phony, corrupt, and exposed the judges for condoning all of this wrong, including perpetuating the pollution and poisoning of our earth. Politics have always been used at the convenience of this system, and it ain't no different in our case.

If the political atmosphere was in MOVE's favor, and the situation was the same, the MOVE 9 would have been released. Look at Nelson Mandela. Even the racist government of South Africa released Nelson Mandela after 27 years in prison. Even though the stand Mandela took against Apartheid was seen as illegal, the U.S. government applauded his release, criticized and condemned the apartheid government of S.A. because it was politically advantageous for the U.S. But this government is committing the same crimes against MOVE, for the same reason, the S.A. government put Mandela in prison.

The parole board will say they will not release the MOVE 9 from prison even after 33 years, yet this country has accepted, embraced Germany, Japan, Russia after those countries have killed American men, women, children, and soldiers not that long ago. Japan bombed Pearl Harbor, killing over 2000 soldiers in 1941, and the United States of America have united with Japan in less than 33 years.

MOVE ain't in prison for killing anyone; we're in prison because we tell the truth about this system, and it's just that plain. And it is only through the wisdom of John Africa's teaching that MOVE can see this. During the trial for the MOVE 9, John Africa sent a message to the trial judge, and all of the judges of the world and those concerned with the problems of the world. Here are a few excerpts taken from that message

"The courts are the tools of industrial plague granting big business privilege to poison our earth, scientific dreams that have turned to nightmares, nuclear plants belching sickness, weak lungs, pushed on the people despite their resistance, crippling our children until they are dead, killing, retarding and causing miscarriage, reforming life's way to that of a science, taking our water, familiar and clean and turning it into a potion that's poison, air that was right as the god that sustains it is now strangulation to all that must breathe it, nuclear waste is a raft of you judges and will always plague people until it's no more, it can't be made safe, despite what you tell folks, with laws and amendments you stuff down folks' throats, for nuclear power is still in existence and waste is the monster that comes with this horror, a horror that's monstrous in process and after, a disease that is caused will be laid at the court, laid on the judges and those that command them, politicians, industrialists, all those of greed, this is the filth that you judges protect, rich folks and industry, big business, money, poor folks is just like dead wood to the courts, they're cut up and burnt up and set out as trash... you hurt people in the name of industry ever since the existence of industry, monopoly, exploitation, you have ailed poor folks despite innocence, freed rich folks despite guilt, collected your salary from both and made poor folks pay the bulk of it...you judges cause problems, create burdens, keep things from being right, the burden of taxation is the foundation of your system was built on righteousness however, it would be, in fact, right, cause you can only be what you are, and when your system proves wrong your legal has been proven wrong, and the move organization ain't respecting nothing that's wrong"

(All writings taken from JOHN AFRICA'S Guideline are originally written in upper case letters, and no periods.)

In May 2010, the MOVE Organization filed murder charges against the city of Philadelphia's cops and officials who took part in and oversaw the bombing of the 11 MOVE members murdered on May 13, 1985.

Running Down the Walls: 2010 Reports



Tucson, Arizona

At 1:30 p.m., supporters of political prisoners released balloons into the sky over the U.S. Penitentiary in Tucson, in solidarity and support of political prisoners everywhere, and in particular Jaan Laaman, who is incarcerated there. Shouts were heard from inside the walls as prisoners ran and saw the balloons in the air.

This action was followed by the national Anarchist Black Cross Federation's Running Down the Walls. This 5k run/bike/walk event occurred across the country in city parks and streets, as well as inside the country's prison system.

At 7 p.m., runners in Tucson pounded the pavement in support of those behind the walls. This year the run was dedicated to the memory of Lolita Lebrón, Marilyn Buck and Jonathan Jackson.

For more info on how to get involved in supporting political prisoners and prisoners of war in the U.S., please see www.abcf.net/la/index.htm



Greenfield, Massachusetts

U.S. Political Prisoner supporters from Vermont and Massachusetts joined together on August 7 in Greenfield, Massachusetts to participate in the first official Connecticut River Running Down the Walls (CRRDTW). The event drew 20 people and raised over \$1,000 in pledges and other donations. The event was coordinated by Vermont Action for Political Prisoners (VAPP) and the Prison Book Project of Western Massachusetts. Proceeds went to the ABCF warchest and the VAPP warchest, as well as a portion to the Marie Mason Fund on behalf of the Prison Book Project. The CRRDTW was a great opportunity to honor our freedom fighters, whether locked up or free, whether alive or no longer with us — especially Marilyn Buck, who we recently lost less than a month after being released from prison.



Guelph, Ontario

[Toronto ABC was proud to participate in Guelph ABC's excellently organized Running Down the Walls event. Together we raised over \$3,000 for the ABCF warchest and the G20 legal defence fund. Below is a speech given by a member of Guelph ABC to start the day.]

We'd like to welcome and thank everyone for coming out to this year's Running Down the Walls solidarity run, which is the first one ever held in Guelph. Running Down the Walls is a 5KM run in support of political prisoners and prisoners of war that has been put on by the LA-ABCF for the past several years now with solidarity runs being held simultaneously in various cities and prisons across North America. This year is no exception with known runs happening in Los Angeles, New York City, Mexico City, Denver, Boston, Connecticut River, Albuquerque, Dannemora, Tucson, USP Tucson and the run here in Guelph. All funds raised at this year's Guelph run, with our intended goal of \$2000, is being split fifty-fifty between the Anarchist

noon when a guard said to me, "kid...., keep your head up; you know you're just here to balance things out. You'll be home soon enough." As the guards got more comfortable with their own bizarre restrictions they started to slip up and refer to some of us non-Muslims as "balancers." They never directly said it, but almost daily they acknowledged the fact that this facility was illegally conceived outside of the parameters of the Administrative Procedures Act.

A little over a year has passed since I walked out of the secretive CMU facility and began my road home to a somewhat normal life. Abu-Sayyaf was not as fortunate as I was. He is slated to serve at least another 10 years in the CMU and then it is expected that he will be deported, ...where to no one really knows...

Abu-Sayyaf was born Palestinian, so in the eyes of the world government, he is now a stateless citizen. He is not charged with substantive violent crimes and yet is unjustly labeled a terrorist by the United States, and presumably its allies. What is even more heart-trampling is Abu-Sayyaf's endless love for his children. Abu-Sayyaf's name by birth is Adham Amin Hassoun, but he wants to be known as Abu-Sayyaf; Abu, in Arabic, means father, Sayyaf is the name of Adham's son. He told me that he has been stripped of everything he once had, with the exception of the boundless love he has for his family and children. He wants to be known only as the father of his son, the one thing in this world that makes him most proud.

There are 70 other men in situations like Abu-Sayyaf's, split between the populace at the Marion CMU facility and a second CMU facility in Terre Haute, Indiana. These are 70 stories of doctors allegedly breaching economic sanctions to deliver penicillin and insulin to children in need, or anti-war tax protestors, not stories of car bombers, hijackers, or the incidents that most of us have come to identify as terror-related. These are 70 stories that our government is ashamed of, and hopes to keep tucked away within these restrictive, secretive, purely political prisons, out of the reach of the media, out of the reach of visitors, away from the touch of their families and children, hampered by vetted mail, a lack of telephone communication, and -- worst of all -- severed from constitutionally protected rights of due process.

These 70 men have been stripped of their voices, and because of that they need ours. I implore everyone who reads this to participate in the first public comment period Congress is offering since these units were first illegally established in 2006. The Federal Bureau of Prisons and its director Harley Lappin need to see that you, the public, care about the basic human rights of these men in the CMUs, and want to see them matriculated into general population prisons where they can at the very least exercise the same rights to due process, privileged communications with their legal counsel, and once again be able to visit with and touch their family members and loved ones (like other

prisoners in general population are allowed). Please submit comments online, write the address below and please send a copy of your letter to the Center For Constitutional Rights. The Center For Constitutional Rights will outline your concerns in an argument orated to Congress. This public comment period will only be open until June 7, and CCR is asking that you submit your letters by June 2, 2010 so that they can be included in their argument.

Andy Stepanian is a social justice activist and publicist from Long Island, NY. In his early teenage years Andy found a home on the front lines of civil disobedience and non-violent direct action struggles for earth, animal, and human liberation. Amidst organizing protests, anti-war rallies, and anti-globalization summits, Andy and his friends helped lay the framework for the swelling and vibrant Long Island all-ages music scene.

-In 2004 Andy and 6 other activists were indicted on charges of conspiring to financially disrupt a New Jersey contract animal testing facility. The trial of Andy Stepanian, Lauren Gazzola, Kevin Kjonas, Jacob Conroy, Darius Fullmer, and John McGee would later be named the landmark "SHAC 7" trial. The SHAC 7 were found guilty in what federal prosecutors called, "a litmus test of protected speech on the internet." Free speech lawyers associations, the National Lawyers Guild, and the Center For Constitutional Rights began a campaign to repeal the controversial law used against Andy and his co-defendants.

The SHAC 7 were each sentenced to between 1-6 years in federal prison and were treated by the prosecution as "terrorists." Andy served 3 years in federal prison, and his last 6 months of incarceration were spent in a high security secretive program called The Communications Management Unit. The unit was over 70% Muslim, and its designees were all political cases. Andy would later realize that he was the only inmate released from the secretive program, that some federal officials have named "Little Gitmo." The story of Andy and the SHAC 7 has become the focus of a feature-length documentary by Finngate Pictures expected out in 2011. Similarly, a screenplay about Andy and the SHAC 7 has also been acquired by Hollywood giant Lions Gate Pictures.

Today Andy works as a publicist for Princeton Architectural Press, and in his free time he and his friends run The Sparrow Project, an outfit that provides PR services to social justice, environmental and political activists, musicians, and artists who want to braid relevant social messages with their creative process. He has toured colleges giving lectures on grassroots activism, and has made appearances on the CBS nightly news, Democracy Now, Hannity's America, and has been the subject of interviews in The LA Times and Reuters. Most recently The Sparrow Project has partnered artists with charitable causes to develop silk screened shirts to directly benefit the cause to which they are dedicated.

The AFSC recognizes the existence and continued expansion of the penal system as profound spiritual crises. It is a crisis that allows children to be demonized. It is a crisis that legitimizes torture, isolation and the abuse of power. It is a crisis that extends beyond prisons into school and judicial systems. I know each time we send a child to bed hungry that is violence. That wealth concentrated in the hands of a few at the expense of many is violence, that the denial of dignity based on race, class or religion is violence. And that poverty and prisons are a form of state-manifested violence.

I've been part of the struggle for civil and human rights in this country for over 45 years. We need to alter the very core of every system that slavery, white supremacy and poverty has given birth to, particularly the criminal justice system. The United States must stop violating the human rights of men, women and children. We need to decriminalize poverty and mental illness. We must eliminate solitary confinement, torture and the use of devices of torture. We need heed El-Hajj Malik Shabazz who, in his last speech, directed us to fight for human rights through the enhanced use of international law. Sensory deprivation, brutality and devices of torture have nothing to do with safe and orderly operation of prisons and everything to do with the spread of a culture of retribution, dehumanization and sadism. The restriction of civil rights is something we can and should debate regularly as a society. The violation of human rights, and fundamental human decency, simply is not negotiable.

Isolated in Federal Communication Management Units, Silenced Voices Need Ours

BY ANDY STEPANIAN, former SHAC 7 political prisoner
Huffington Post (www.huffingtonpost.com)

Editor's Note: Former political prisoner Andy Stepanian's article on the CMU Marion gives important additional information on this extremely restrictive and probably constitutionally defective federal prison (see "Little Guantanamo" by Daniel McGowan in issue 13 of 4sm for more detailed information on the CMUs). He ends his essay by calling on people to lodge their opposition to this prison at federal hearings that were held this past June. These hearings came and went and to date there has been no lessening of restrictions or repression at the CMU in Marion.

When it was hard for me to find vegan food in prison, Abu-Sayyaf used to bring food to the bars at the front of my jail cell. He knew I was a strict vegan and that I abstained from the consumption of all animal products. He used to read all the ingredients on packages and even then double check with me if the food was something that would fit my

diet. I am sure that in the government's eyes they assume that Abu-Sayyaf wanted something from me in return, but in reality Abu-Sayyaf only wanted to make sure that I was safe, healthy, well fed, and taken care of.

Before Abu-Sayyaf was an inmate in a secretive U.S. political prison called a "Communications Management Unit," he was a computer programmer for a software company in Florida. Abu-Sayyaf was an immigrant; he attained rights as a U.S. citizen, he gave back to his community, to his co-workers, he generously donated to UNICEF, and he gave much of what he had to people outside of this country, specifically to children in Bosnia.

Abu-Sayyaf saved the money he made at his company, volunteered for charities, and worked with one to help build an orphanage in Bosnia. He wanted to bring dignity and hope to the lives of Bosnian youth who had lost their parents in the Serb-Croat war of the 1990s. In their indictment against Abu-Sayyaf, the government alleges that he was affiliated with Benevolence International, a charity once championed by the Clinton administration for their fight against ethnic cleansing, but in the politically liquid times following the attacks of September 11 2001, found themselves under scrutiny. In March of 2002 the Sarajevo offices of the charity were raided by Bosnian Police and during the raid an unbelievable list of non-profits titled "The Golden Chain" was reportedly found jotted on a piece of loose leaf paper on the floor of the office. The CIA will later contend that the list found cataloged the top contributors to Al Qaeda. The Bush administration quickly labeled Benevolence International and the bizarre laundry list of other non-combatative groups as terrorist organizations. Shortly thereafter Abu-Sayyaf would find himself indicted on charges of providing monetary aid to a "terrorist organization."

Abu-Sayeff found himself in the center of a press circus, packaged in what federal prosecutors nickname a "piggy-back" indictment where he stood trial alongside Jose Padilla, a name so spectacularly soiled in the public eye that anyone standing alongside of him would have little chance of beating trial. Abu-Sayyaf spent 4 years in solitary confinement in a Florida prison before he was moved to the secretive government facility in Marion, Illinois. He was the first inmate to arrive at the facility and when he arrived the prison guards were ordered not to talk to him.

He spent another 2 weeks by himself before other inmates were transferred there. It was then and there that I met Abu-Sayyaf. I too was sequestered to this secret prison, for reasons that to this day remain vague and over broad. Abu-Sayyaf and I watched as more men would come to the unit almost weekly. We saw a pattern develop. 4 Muslims and then one non-Muslim, 4 Muslims and one non-Muslim. My theory that my placement there was for balance, a sort of safety valve on what seemed like an almost unavoidable ethnic-discrimination lawsuit, was verified one after-

Black Cross Federation Warchest program which provides stipends to political prisoners, prisoners of war and their families most in need of assistance and the G20 defense fund.

As resistance movements grow, escalate and intensify as we have seen and are currently seeing with the local indigenous struggles at Tyendinaga and Six Nations, opposition surrounding the the 2010 Winter Olympics, widespread anarchist and anti-authoritarian attacks on Statist and capitalist institutions such as the Royal Bank of Canada fire-bombing in Ottawa and particularly with the G20 summit in Toronto, so does the State's repression. As we're seeing with some 300 people facing criminal charges from the G20 protests, some of whom are still in jail, more of our comrades are and will be dealing with the court system and spending time behind bars.

This is nothing new. We can look to past examples to see how the State deals with resistance and subversion. The Black Panthers, the Black Liberation Army, the MOVE organization, the American Indian Movement, the Vancouver Five, and all the other anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist and anti-authoritarian revolutionaries who still sit in cages, many serving life sentences — not to mention those who died behind the walls in captivity or were outright murdered like Fred Hampton and George Jackson. All of those people mentioned, and all the countless others unmentioned are our comrades and must not be forgotten.

That is why we are here today — to let our comrades locked up on the inside, and out on house arrest, know that we have solidarity with them, their ideas and their actions. We care not about whether they are "guilty" or "innocent" as resistance will always be seen as a crime by those in power. During these reactionary times of increased repression we must also shatter the lies and spin being peddled forth by the ruling class, the police and their obedient lapdogs in the corporate media who label radicals and anarchists "terrorists" and "extremists" while at the same time defending



the sanctioned violence and hypocrisy of the authoritative capitalist system. We must resist their attempts to keep us silent and complacent, but most of all we must resist their attempts to keep us isolated! Our struggle continues inside and outside of prison!

Lastly, we would like to specifically dedicate this year's run to Marilyn Buck who passed away from uterine cancer on Tuesday August 3 in Brooklyn after being released from prison on July 15, 2010 due to her condition. Marilyn was an anti-imperialist political prisoner who was imprisoned for 25 years for her actions in support of women's liberation, national liberation, social and economic justice.

Again, we would like to thank everyone who either donated their time, money and/or came out to participate. For an end to all prisons! Let's run down the walls!

Los Angeles, California

On the day that we remember Jonathan Jackson and his heroism, we also remembered two warriors who fought and resisted this system their entire lives. Marilyn Buck and Lolita Lebrón were freedom fighters in every sense of the word; they embody the spirit of true revolutionaries. We gathered on a misty cool morning at South Gate Park in south LA. Twenty strong, we were all eager to run with our thoughts on our heroes and imprisoned comrades.

After the mist cleared, we ate snacks and told stories about the folks who were running at that very moment elsewhere in the world. The political prisoners who ran down the walls are the true reason we run, we run WITH them and with their fighting spirit.

The event overall was pleasant, we met new friends, visited with old ones, and raised a few dollars for the cause. Running Down the Walls 2010 was a complete success inside and outside of the prisons.



Political prisoners in Australia

BY MARISA SPOSARO

Introduction

I am from 3Cr community radio in Melbourne Australia. I am part of a small collective which broadcasts a prison show called "Doin time." I have been involved in the prison struggle for many years, and have been in organizations such as Anarchist Black Cross Melbourne, Anarchist Black Cross Federation Los Angeles and Advocacy for Women in Prison in Melbourne. I have also worked with other organizations involved with Aboriginal deaths in custody. Jaan Laaman suggested to us, (Anarchist Black Cross Melbourne) that we write a piece about political prisoners in Australia and some of the organizations and resources that are available in the prison struggle here in this country. It is important to note here that police powers are greatly increasing in Australia and civil liberties are being compromised more and more.

For clarification, this is not a critique of the prison system. Rather, I am drawing upon sources to talk about political prisoners in Australia, and then go on to list resources that are available.

Lex Wotton

The most well known recent political prisoner who is now on parole is respected Aboriginal leader Lex Wotton who is from Palm Island. Lex Wotton, 41, was sentenced to six years jail in November 2008 for inciting an angry mob to burn down the Palm Island police station in November 2004. The riot erupted after the release of a post-mortem examination on local indigenous man Mulrunji Doomadgee who died while in custody. The Queensland Parole Board approved Wotton's application for release after just 19 months in prison, on a range of conditions. These include a ban on attending public meetings without prior approval, a ban on gambling or attending venues where gambling is conducted and a ban on speaking to the media.

The *Courier Mail*, a well known Australian paper, reported that "Palm Island locals expressed their dismay at the conditions, saying they would only serve to isolate Wotton from the community where gambling was a popular pastime and rallies a regular occurrence. "I haven't heard of a prisoner in Australia having this kind of condition of release since David Hicks, and Lex Wotton is certainly no terrorist" said community leader Rob Blackley. "He's being denied a political voice and the ability to contribute." Mr Blackley said he had never heard of a parolee being banned from speaking to the media. "It would be hard on any proactive individual in society to be denied the right

to speak to media; that's a fundamental right." he said. "I think they'll find we'll get around it somehow." Palm Island Mayor Alf Lacey said the conditions would restrict Wotton's ability to "fit into the community again." "This is Lex's home. We should never forget that." he said. A Queensland Corrective Services spokesman said the condition of not talking to the media was fairly standard for all parolees. He said failure to abide by any of the conditions would mean Wotton could be charged with breach of parole and returned to jail.

What happened is now well known. A coronial inquiry found that police officer, Chris Hurley, hit Mulrunji with such force, the blow was fatal. His liver was cleaved in two. Hurley received compensation and a promotion while respected community leader, Lex Wotton, was jailed. After 19 months behind bars, Lex is now free, but politically muzzled.

Akin Sari, an arrestee from the G20 campaign in Melbourne was placed in prison for approximately 12 months on trumped up charges. He is now out of prison but serving parole.

Australia is not the paradise that many overseas visitors seem to think it is. Asylum seekers are locked in detention here. Recently eleven refugees protested on the roof of the Villawood Detention Centre with a hunger strike. Refugee groups have received reports of detainees refusing water and in some cases, slashing themselves and even threatening suicide. No one should be illegal, and there should be no borders.

Australian Resources

Anarchist Black Cross Melbourne

We support political prisoners and prisoners of war under the guidelines of the Geneva Convention. We support environmental and animal rights activists on a case by case basis. We support Indigenous people who are imprisoned for the protection of sacred sites, the rights of their land, culture and achieving justice for their own people.

We support the rights and protection of asylum seekers in Australia and neighbouring countries. We also support prisoners who are politicized behind bars on a case by case basis. Thorough research is conducted about each prisoner or arrestee before agreeing to support.

ABC Melbourne does not support sex offenders or racial and supremacist prisoners. We are committed to stopping Aboriginal deaths in custody. ABC has sought to bring attention to the plight of all prisoners, with an emphasis on anarchists and class war prisoners.

We provide support for arrestees by raising money at benefits and fundraising concerts. We also have a bulletin cov-

er said the group "reflects the concerns of Muslims who have grown tired of being stopped at airports, constant questioning and relentless security years after the attacks of 9/11." She goes on to say that "If it's not a war on Islam, then these practices must be stopped."

The department of corrections is more than a set of institutions: it is a state of mind. It is that state of mind which expanded the use of isolation, the use of devices of torture, the Counter Intelligence Programs, and the Department of Homeland Security, against activists, both inside and outside the walls. Ojore, the man who first contacted us in 1986, was released from the control unit via litigation in 2002 after 16 years in isolation. In 2004, he was placed back into isolation with no explanation. When I called the Department of Corrections, I was told that this was upon the request of Homeland Security. In a 2008 Classification decision, this was confirmed in writing which said the Department "continues to show concern regarding your admitted affiliation with the Black Liberation Army. Your radical views and ability to influence others poses a threat to the orderly operation of this Institution." Ojore examples the history of control units. After 22 years of living in isolation, he was released from prison in August of 2009 via court order. He also examples the perceived threat of Islam. On January 26, he was kidnapped from an Amtrak train, accused of "endangering public transportation" and arrested in La Junta, Colorado. Because of his unusual name, newspaper articles had him being Muslim and talking about Al Qaeda. A judge dismissed all charges one week later, enabling him to be here today.

The latest progression of control units are called "security threat group management units." This is particularly egregious because it is the government which gets to define what a "security threat group" is. According to a national survey done by the Department of Justice in 1997, the Departments of Corrections of Minnesota and Oregon named all Asians as gangs, which Minnesota further compounds by adding all Native Americans. New Jersey, Oklahoma, and Pennsylvania go on to list various Islamic groups as gangs.

In 2004, four Islamic prisoners in California were indicted on charges which included conspiracy to levy war against the U.S. government. One result of this was a 2006 report called "Out of The Shadows: Getting Ahead of Prisoner Radicalization" by George Washington University's Homeland Security Policy Institute. The report states that the "potential for radicalization of prison inmates poses a threat of unknown magnitude to the national security of the United States," noting that "every radicalized prisoner becomes a potential terrorist threat." The report states that it focuses, "in particular on religious radicalization in conjunction with the practice of Islam." On November 7 in that same year, *USA Today* reported that the FBI and Homeland Security were "urging prison administrators to set up more intelligence units in state prisons, with an

emphasis on background checks to ensure that extremist Muslim clerics don't have access with prisoners." In a January 20., 2010 article, U.S. law enforcement authorities are quoted as believing that "as many as three dozen Americans who converted to Islam in prison have traveled to Yemen, possibly to train with Al Qaeda." The article says that "the radicalization of the individuals has alarmed U.S. officials even though no evidence has tied them to terrorist activities."

For those of us monitoring U.S. prisons over decades, the targeting of radicalization, the targeting of specific groups, the surveillance and infiltration of those groups feels very familiar. There is no doubt in the minds of many of us that Islam is being targeted. I believe what is happening to Imam Jamil Al-Amin is a vivid example of profiling because of his political history and his religion. The U.S. government which has moved from the 1970s illegal Counter Intelligence Programs to the currently legalized Office of Homeland Security, continues to lock down people for their beliefs, and is still seeking to identify those who have the potential to politically radicalize others. After each Homeland Security Code change, Prison Watch is flooded with calls from people reporting Islamic loved ones being removed from general population and placed in isolation. I also have no doubt that Islam itself is suspect to the U.S. government, and that any Muslim, no matter how law abiding, is suspect.

Our work today needs to be embedded in struggle against this system and its continued use of isolation and torture as a tool of behavior modification and political repression. I would also ask the Alliance to consider some programmatic embracing of Islamic prisoners who are coming home and need Muslim community service providers. Oppression is a condition common to all of us who are without the power to make the decisions that govern the political, economic and social life of this country. We are victims of an ideology of inhumanity on which this country was built. If we dig deeper into U.S. practices, the political function that they serve is inescapable. Police, the courts, the prison system and the death penalty all serve as social control mechanisms. The economic function they serve is equally chilling. Just as in the era of chattel slavery, there is a class of people dependent on the poor, and on bodies of color as a source for income; and a government which uses incapacitation as a form of social control. How U.S. prisons function violates the United Nations Convention Against Torture, and a host of other international treaties. Prison practices also fit the United Nations definition of genocide which includes the killing of members of a racial or religious group; the causing of serious bodily harm to members of a particular group; deliberately inflicting on a group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction; imposing measures intended to prevent births within that group and; forcibly transferring children of that group to another group.

being terrorized, intimidated, and the humiliation of being naked and not knowing whether the masked guards were male or female. These went on for an entire summer, until activists inside and out were able to stop this senseless torture. If we think back to slavery and to images of the civil rights movement we understand that dogs have been used as a device of torture for hundreds of years in the U.S.

The thread that binds all of the above testimonies is that they are from men, women and children who are being held in isolation and who are experiencing the use of devices of torture in human cages where there are few witnesses.

Picture yourself in an 8 by 10 foot cage in a human warehouse. There may be a dozen cages on either side, and you may be in the middle tier of tiers above and below. Picture yourself in this eerie silence for 23 to 24 hours a day for the next 15 years. There is a steel door between you and the rest of the world. One prisoner reported that on the first window visit with his lawyer, he was rectally searched three times going to the visit and three times when being returned despite the fact that he hadn't been in the same room with another human being for 6 months. I have received thousands of descriptions and drawings of four and five point restraints, restraint hoods, restraint belts, restraint beds, stun grenades, stun guns, stun belts, spit hoods, chain gangs, black boxes, tethers, waist and leg chains.

The history of control units began with the movements of the 60s and 70s. My generation genuinely believed that each of us was free to dissent politically. In those years, people acted out this belief in a number of ways. Native peoples contributed to the formation of the American Indian Movement dedicated to self determination; Puerto Ricans joined the movement to free the island from U.S. colonialism; Whites formed the Students for a Democratic Society and anti-imperialist groups, while others worked in the southern Civil Rights movements. This was also a time that the New Afrikan Independence Movement reasserted itself; the Black Panther Party for Self Defense was formed, as well as a time when there was a distinct rise in the prisoner rights movement. It was time when television news had graphic pictures of State Troopers, Police, the FBI, and the National Guard killing our peers. It was a time when I saw on the evening news the bullet holes fired by police into Panther Fred Hampton's sleeping body, a time when young people protesting the Viet Nam War died on the Jackson and Kent State campuses killed by the National Guard, a time when civil rights workers were killed with impunity, and a time when we felt as if there was no opportunity to stop mourning because each day another activist was dead. These killings and other acts of oppression led to underground formations such as the Black Liberation Army and the Weather Underground.

The government, in response to this massive outcry against social inequities and for national liberation, utilized Counter Intelligence Programs called COINTELPRO conducted

by a dozen federal agencies, which had as an objective the crippling of the Black Panther Party and other radical forces. Over the years that these directives were carried out, many of those young people who weren't murdered were put in prisons across the country. Some, now in their 60s and 70s, are still there.

While the U.S. denied that there were people being held for political reasons, there was no way to work with prisoners without hearing repeatedly of the existence of such people, and the particular treatment they endured once in prison. As early as 1978, Andrew Young, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, was widely quoted saying "there were hundreds, perhaps thousands of people I would describe as political prisoners" in U.S. prisons.

Across the nation, we saw an enhanced use of sensory deprivation/isolation units for such people in an attempt to instill behavior modification. It was this growing "special treatment" which we began monitoring. At the time, Ralph Arons, a former warden at Marion, was quoted at a congressional hearing as saying, "The purpose of the Marion Control Unit is to control revolutionary attitudes in the prison system and in society at large."

For those of us who have been in the struggle for decades, the deliberate use of long term sensory deprivation is haunting. People that we've known, worked with and loved have been, and are, being held in this manner. The names – Ojore Lutalo; Sundiata Acoli, Assata Shakur, Marshall Eddie Conway, Albert Nuh Washington; Geronimo Pratt; Herman Bell, the Angola 3, Dhoruba Bin Wahad, Dr. Mutulu Shakur, Mumia Abu Jamal; Leonard Peltier, Jalil Muntaquim, Sekou Odinga, Ray Luc Levasseur, Kazi Toure; Leonard Peltier, Oscar Lopez Rivera, Alejandrina Torres, Dylcia Pagan, Bashir Hameed, Standing Deer, Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin; Richard Williams, Tom Manning, Merle and all of the Africas, Susan Rosenberg, Kwame Izequire, Laura Whitehorn, Russell Maroon Shoats, Linda Evans, Marilyn Buck, Imam Jamil Al-Amin - these prisoners, many of whom are Islamic, and hundreds of others – haunt the spaces of every control unit, supermax prison, ad seg unit and special housing unit in the country. No matter what name they are given, their purpose is the same as in Abu Ghraib or Guantanamo – the breaking of minds.

For people of my generation, our work is done with a lifetime passion and an understanding that the work is not risk free. We've made a promise to those dead and alive to abolish these torture chambers. People throughout the world are beginning to understand what the prisoners have been saying to us for decades about the oppressive, war-like tactics of the U.S. government toward criticism or resistance. People in prison have warned us that what happens inside finds its way out here. In a May 5 2009 article in *The Trentonian*, Afsheen Shamsi of the Council on American-Islamic Relations says that their coalition "is upset over what it says is increasing surveillance in mosques." She

ering not only prison related issues, but also Aboriginal rights, and genocidal issues in the Aboriginal struggle.

For further information please write to P.O. Box 300 Brunswick East 3057 Victoria, Melbourne Australia

Indigenous Social Justice Association Melbourne

The Indigenous Social Justice Association Melbourne (ISJA Melb) was established in January 2005 to organize a Melbourne rally and march as part of a National Day of Action (NDA) to mark the first anniversary of the death of Kamilaroi teenager, TJ Hickey in Redfern, and to demand a fresh inquiry into the circumstances surrounding his death.

Those organizing this NDA held consultations with interested members of the Victorian Aboriginal community. Participants in these consultations enthusiastically supported the proposal for a Melbourne rally to demand justice for TJ but asked that this not be a one off event but part of an ongoing effort to permanently stop Aboriginal deaths in custody.

ISJA Melb is a grassroots, multi-racial activist group open to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people which works collaboratively with others around the country campaigning to stop Indigenous deaths in custody. ISJA Melb works in collaboration with those who have lost a loved one in custody and makes its decisions democratically with all meeting participants having an equal say.

ISJA Melb's primary objective is to stop Aboriginal deaths in custody and support Aboriginal people's quest for justice. However, it recognizes that the struggle to end Indigenous deaths in custody cannot be separated from the wider campaign for Indigenous rights. This is why we also work to advance campaigns to recognize the sovereignty of Australia's many Indigenous nations and the negotiation of genuine treaties with these nations and why we oppose the federal government's intervention into NT Aboriginal communities.

ISJA Melb calls for:

- A massive reduction in the rate of Indigenous imprisonment which is currently 13 times the rate for non-Indigenous Australians.
- The full implementation of the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, including those recommendations that both arrest and imprisonment be the sanctions of last resort.
- Because nearly 50% of the deaths in custody investigated by the RCIADIC were of the stolen generations, we call for the full implementation of the recommendations of the Bringing Them Home report.
- No further increases in police powers. We oppose calls to further arm police with weapons such as tasers.

- The establishment of elected community based review boards with the full legal and legislative powers to investigate, discipline and charge police, prison and custodial health officers found to be involved in a death in custody, negligence or lack of duty of care to those they have a responsibility to and for. This is to include all juvenile justice areas.
- The provision by State and Federal Governments of adequate funding for Families who have lost a loved one in custody to meet at a states/territory level followed by a national meeting, as required, to allow their collective demands to be formulated, including suitable and adequate compensation.

ISJA Melb also sees the connections between the treatment of Australia's Indigenous nations and other Indigenous people and oppressed nations around the globe and extend our solidarity whenever we can. We also note a pattern of institutionalised racism embedded within the capitalist law both in Australia and in other parts of the world. This is why we support the campaign to free political prisoners such as Lex Wotton, Mumia Abu-Jamal and Leonard Peltier. ISJA Melb believes that what we do makes a difference. We organize rallies, speak-outs, meetings, community education, petitions, benefits and other grassroots campaigning to highlight injustice and win a world where deaths in custody no longer occur. We do not place our faith in the system to deliver justice for Aboriginal people. Instead, we work to build an effective grassroots movement that cannot be ignored.

Melbourne Copwatch

Melbourne Copwatch is dedicated to bringing an end to police violence, abuse and intrusion into the lives of ordinary people. Police are the major cause of torture across the world. From the streets, to the police stations, from the courts to the prisons, the stories of violence, racism, abuse, concocted evidence and the racist, colonialist and capitalist exercise of police discretion infect and destroy the lives of millions.

Mainstream media compounds this war on the people. More and more of us live the lives of imprisonment, whether this is behind the bars of a jail or the wireless prisons of over policed communities.

Police are taking over the roles of community agencies and are funded to run camps for kids, holiday and welfare programs. The police are a law enforcement agency. Their intrusion into community sector roles come at the very same time as the community sector is disempowered and defunded from providing proper services, a disturbing and frightening reality. Far from increasing trust, police intrusion into the community sector creates disengagement and alienation.

Contact abcmelb@yahoo.com.au for more details.

Deprivations in Colombian Prisons

BY NIXON BARRERA, Inmate of High Security Prison, Combita, Boyaca

Translated by Projet Accompagnement Solidarité Colombie (Montreal)

In this country, due to the merciless and unordered attack of the government of the security forces against working class sectors and the opposition, and also due to the social and armed conflict that we suffer, prisons have filled up following massive selective captures that abandon the introduction of “Democratic Security” (old doctrine of National Security), in a mad attempt to put a stop to discontent and society’s demands for change.

We, the prisoners who arrive at the prisons have many different profiles; among us there are prisoners charged with political crimes (rebellion) and common crimes, social prisoners, friends of the government (read: parapoliticians, paracos, “the reinserted,” etc.) Of this heterogeneous group of prisoners, the most harmed and sought after are we, the political prisoners, for having opposed the regime. The government puts all of the weight of its repression, with its foundation in anti-insurgent plans, on us.

In our nation there exists no coherent or fair politics of criminality, nor does there exist programs of socialization which offer opportunities for academic and professional achievement that influence the development of prisoners’ lives. The politics of criminality in Colombia are driven by the whims of the government in power, which have turned it into a staunch revenge against detainees. In recent years, with the direct interference of the federal bureau of prisons of Uncle Sam and the funds from Plan Colombia, high security prisons have been built which are, in reality, true concentration camps where respect and human dignity are left to the guards’ determination.

In these prisons taxed by gringos it seems that we have returned to medieval times; they tie our hands and feet with heavy chains before going out to do any sort of errand, as if we were headed towards the gallows instead of to a simple medical or judicial appointment. Here, like in concentration camps, prison guards control the use of all basic services such as water, electricity, telephone, television, etc. Those services are cut and returned as the prison guards please, obligating us with this manipulation to live as they want, and affecting our autonomy and self-determination as human beings.

The prisons of Colombia, which are products of despair, abandonment, and lack of opportunity, have turned into true “pots” of commercialization, purchase and consumption of hallucinogens (marijuana, basuco, cocaine, etc.) with the

complicity and participation of the guards in this lucrative business. Also, there exists another phenomenon which is growing at an alarming rate, which is the indiscriminate consumption of psychiatric drugs with the complicity of medical professionals. For prisoners all of these vices are a refuge which “helps” them to drive away their problems and to “disconnect” them from the harsh reality of their lives which they refuse to confront. But this whole problem is understandable when one considers the impact a 70-year prison sentence must have on a prisoner, who discovers that he or she will remain buried for life in a dungeon far from family and with very few possibilities.

Who is to blame for this ill-fated politics of criminality? Without a doubt, the guilty ones are the state and the governments which only go after effects without addressing the real causes that generate, on the one hand, discontent and rebellion and, on the other, the sinking of youth into petty crime as their only opportunity for survival. The state and its government thus are responsible for not offering equality and opportunities for the well-being of citizens.

In the prison, we political prisoners have always been the counterpart to the frightening politics of decomposition, and with our social vision of a new state, we have created spaces for study and coexistence which are free of consumption of psychoactive substances. In the same vein, through judicial-political struggle and permanent denunciation, we carry on battling the silencing and repression, turning ourselves into the stone in the shoe of our executioners. We also teach inmates to fight for their rights; that is why we remain hopeful despite the fact that in a decade the regime has done away with five spaces for political prisoners, disseminating us in different prisons in the country. INPEC is interested in seeing prisoners go about in a lost world, far from reality, because that way we neither reclaim our rights nor denounce their atrocities.

The deprivations political prisoners face are enormous and they distance us from our reality as opponents of the ruling system. The majority of us are confined in these concentration camps called high security prisons, dispersed throughout the country. The first thing they deprive us of is family, putting our loved ones in real vicarious to visit us; other prisoners are totally separated from their families who for security and economic situations they will never again be able to see.

In spousal relationships, the deprivation and the subjugation is degrading; each month they lock us in a cold room for 45 minutes, giving us no control over the time which leaves us with the constant sensation that the tombo is about to come knocking. A couple’s relationship under such conditions of lack of dignity is the cruellest that could happen to a prisoner, and still they dare deny that these pigsties are concentration camps.

In terms of material possessions, they deprive us of any object of service or personal presentation, such as watches, tran-

Muslim Alliance of North America Seminar: The U.S. Prison System, Muslims and Human Rights Violations

BY BONNIE KERNESS, AFSC Prison Watch Project Washington, DC - February 13, 2010

I’d like to share a little of my own history. My early observations of oppression in this country began in the 1950s when I was 12 or 13 watching television news and seeing children of African descent my own age in the South being hosed by police for trying to go to school.

I spent my twenties working in Tennessee in the civil rights movement, ending up at Highlander Center, which was the training school for organizers in the South. Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, Kwame Toure (known as Stokley Carmichael), Imam Jamil Al-Amin (known as Rap Brown) and hundreds of others were trained there, until the State of Tennessee investigated Highlander staff for sedition (treason against the State) and we were under court injunction forbidding us to continue training organizers.

Since 1975, I’ve served as a human rights advocate on behalf of people in prison throughout the country, coordinating the Prison Watch Project for the American Friends Service Committee in Newark. Many of the men, women and children that I take testimony from call their imprisonment “the war at home” and neo-slavery.

In the mid 1980s I received a letter from Ojore Lutalo who had just been placed in the Management Control Unit at Trenton State Prison. He asked what a control unit was, why he was in there and how long he would have to stay. We knew little of control units, except for the 1983 lockdown of the Marion Federal prison, and what we learned from the many prisoners who reached out to the AFSC to mentor those of us trying to give voice to what was and is happening.

We began hearing from people throughout the country saying that they were prisoners being held in extended isolation for political reasons. We heard from jailhouse lawyers, Muslims and prisoner activists – many of whom found themselves targeted and locked down in 24/7 solitary confinement. The AFSC began contacting people inside and outside the prisons to collect testimonies of what was going on in those isolation units. We had no idea how many people were experiencing this form of torture, the conditions in those units and how many control units there were.

I want to share with you some voices that I hear during my day. The first two from children: “I went in when I was

14. They have what they call the “hole.” Kids that fight go in there. If you refuse they come and get you. You get a shower once a week and they bring the food to you. I was so cold.”

“If you do something wrong, they put you in lock down. I could hear people scream, yell and holler. I saw boys get strung out on meds. They make you take sleeping stuff in needles. They used pepper spray on this girl who was fighting. They sprayed her directly in her mouth and she couldn’t breathe. We told them that she had asthma, but they wouldn’t listen.”

In Elizabeth, NJ, Eddie Sinclair Jr. hung himself in the Union County Youth detention facility; Eddie was 17 and had stolen a bicycle. He had missed a court appointment, was picked up and locked in isolation. It is not irrelevant that Eddie’s father is African and his mother is Puerto Rican.

From the adult prisons we hear: “John was directed to leave the strip cell and a urine soaked pillow case was placed over his head like a hood. He was walked, shackled and hooded to a different cell where he was placed in a device called “the chair” where he was kept for over 30 hours resulting in extreme physical and emotional suffering.”

Another describes being knocked to the ground, kicked and maced in his eyes. He then gives a detailed description of the beating with shields and batons the guards refer to as “nigger beaters.”

A woman wrote saying, “I was locked in isolation, sitting there week after week, month after month. Not once was I ever taken out of my cell which had a window that was four inches wide. I started to rub my nails against the rubber seal around the window. It was a thick, hard rubber which I rubbed for months with bleeding nails. It took 8 months to get a tiny opening to feel fresh air.

Another wrote, “the guard sprayed me with pepper spray because I wouldn’t take my clothes off in front of five male guards. They carried me to my isolation cell, laid me down on a steel bed and took my clothes off, leaving me with that pepper spray burning face.”

Some of the saddest letters are from prisoners writing on behalf of the mentally ill – like the man who spread feces over his body. The guards’ response to this was to put him in a bath so hot it boiled 30% of the skin off him.

“How do you describe desperation to someone who is not desperate?” began a letter to me from Ojore Lutalo who went on to depict everyone in the Control Unit being awakened by guards dressed in riot gear holding barking, salivating dogs at 1 a.m. every other morning. Once awakened, the prisoners were forced to strip, gather their belongings while feeling the dogs straining at their leashes snapping at their private parts as they are trained to do. He described

Carlos Alberto Torres: Free, After a Fashion, at Last

BY DAVID GESPASS, www.truth-out.org

History is generally written by the victors. Thus, the American Revolution is recorded as a just struggle for liberation by colonies formerly subject to the whim of the despotic King George III. The “Tories” who supported the king and opposed independence, even though they made up as large a percentage of the population as the revolutionaries who called for independence, are reviled in our text books for choosing the wrong side.

Puerto Rico is today, and has been since the Spanish-American War in 1898, a colony of the United States. It took half a century, until 1948, before its people were allowed to elect their governor. In 1952, the U.S. Congress declared it no longer a protectorate, but a “commonwealth.” But while the euphemisms changed, Puerto Rico’s colonial status did not. One might think that a country like the United States, incubated and born in the armed struggle against colonial authority, would show some empathy to those who chose the path of revolution against an occupier. One would be wrong.

I met Carlos Alberto Torres in 1985 after a National Lawyers Guild colleague from Chicago stayed at our home in Birmingham when she visited him in federal prison in Alabama. By then, he had served five years of his 78-year sentence for “seditious conspiracy,” the official charge for engaging, as a member of the Puerto Rican independence group, Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional (FALN), the Armed Forces for National Liberation, in revolutionary struggle for the liberation of the colony from the United States. Not entirely parenthetically, Judge Learned Hand referred to the charge of conspiracy as “that darling of the modern federal prosecutor’s nursery,” since it requires so little in the way of proof. Indeed, whatever Carlos was convicted and sentenced for, it was not for causing physical harm to a single person.

After that visit and over the next several years, until he was moved to a more remote federal prison, I was fortunate to see him periodically though, in retrospect, not often enough. Carlos never imposed on me and always assured me that knowing I was available if he needed help was enough for him. But he was far from friends and family and I was his one personal contact with the free world. His father was able to visit him once that I recall while he was in Alabama.

During the years he was in Alabama, his interest was rarely over his own fate. More often, he would want to talk to me about the needs of fellow inmates or matters of concern to the population as a whole. Still, I had the opportunity to discuss with him how he should reconcile his desire to get out

of prison with his political principles. He had, at his trial, refused to recognize the jurisdiction of a colonial court to try him, insisting he be treated as a national of a free and independent country seized as a prisoner of war.

The man I remember was soft-spoken, reflective, serious and caring. He was certainly committed to the cause of his homeland’s independence and the betterment of the Puerto Rican people. One can debate his tactical choices and whether independence is the best course for Puerto Rico, though it seems odd that being a colony would ever be a preferable option to the colonized. What no one who has sat down and talked to Carlos can doubt is his fundamental decency and his sincerity. That is something President Clinton had not done before he offered clemency in 1999 to 12 other Puerto Rican political prisoners, but refused to include Carlos.

Despite his more than 30 years in custody, Carlos contributed much. He invested in his fellow prisoners, teaching them literacy in both English and Spanish, earned a college degree and mastered the skills of painting and pottery making, exhibiting his work throughout the U.S., Puerto Rico and Mexico. But he could have contributed so much more had he been freed sooner. Finally, he is about to be released on parole. Celebrations took place July 26 in Chicago and are planned for July 27 in Puerto Rico, to honor him on his release. It is indeed cause for celebration, but thoughts of what might and should have been in a world and a country that looked at the real individual and not the image portrayed by prosecutors and the media, lend a sobriety and somberness to the joy of the occasion.

Not quite a year ago, I became the president of the National Lawyers Guild. As such, I have the good fortune to boast of the remarkable work done by our members, which is to say to brag about what other people do. So, I take pride in the report that our International Committee presented to the UN Decolonization Hearings on June 21 of this year, even though I did not contribute a comma to it. The report exposed the ways in which the United States maintains colonial control over Puerto Rico and discussed the resistance to that control and the human rights violations that accompany it.

It then went on to discuss the (to coin a phrase) cruel and unusual sentences imposed on Puerto Rican independentistas. It mentioned two in particular who had spent decades in custody, Carlos and Oscar López Rivera, as well as Avelino González Claudio. The Guild, along with many other organizations, had previously passed resolutions calling for their release and, following the presentation, so, too, did the Decolonization Committee. Thus, our happiness over Carlos’ release is further tempered by the continuing incarceration of the other two prisoners. The campaign for their release continues. We will do our part, but we recognize that it will be - as it always has been - a larger movement than just the National Lawyers Guild that wins justice for the oppressed.

sistor radios, belts, literature, etc., obligating us to live lost in time and very uninformed. They also deprive us of our rights to equality and access to justice. At a glance one can see the differences in prison regimen applied to us, the opposition, compared to the friends of the government, para-política prisoners, those imprisoned for corruption and for “false positives,” etc. The latter, the friends of the government, are kept in special prisons near their families, with every sort of commodity, with chat programs, casinos, and all types of appliances, three visits per week, etc. We the opposition are locked in concentration camps far from our families and deprived of everything imaginable.

What this means is that the laws in our country continue to be applied only to the poor and that the white-collared petty thieves and friends of the government have clubs for prisons with all the state’s guarantees.

The only thing the regime has not been able to deprive us of nor confiscate from us is the sacred right to continue being rebels and to continue with our heads high defending our convictions and principles, constructing a new homeland from this trench of temporary struggle, unmasking and combating day by day the traps of their rotten system.

With courage and force we will continue to fight through action and through judicial-political systems with the support of NGOs, social and working class sectors, syndicates, students, human rights professionals, our families and the international community, so that in Colombia a politics of criminality that is in agreement with the reality of the country may be established, with alternative penalties where administrative profits protect all of us without exception. A unique prison regimen must also be established in all prisons in the country allowing for family visits every eight days and eight hours and prisoners’ placement must be such that we remain near to our families.

Anti-war, International Solidarity Activists Refuse to Cooperate with Grand Jury

grandjuryresistance.org

Chicago, IL -- Several anti-war and international solidarity activists announced their refusal yesterday to testify before a grand jury convened in Chicago, allegedly investigating “material support” of groups the federal government has designated as “terrorists.” The first of a set of hearings was scheduled to start October 5th, but the government withdrew the subpoenas in response to activists asserting their Fifth Amendment right, and now must consider whether to offer them immunity. According to the Associated Press, all of the 14 activists subpoenaed within the past two weeks are refusing to testify, a considerable setback for the federal government.

“We believe we have been targeted because of what we believe, what we say and who we know,” said Stephanie Weiner, one of the subpoenaed activists refusing to cooperate with the grand jury. Denouncing the government’s use of the grand jury as a “fishing expedition,” and an attempt to intimidate activists, Weiner told a crowd rallying yesterday in front of the Dirksen Federal Building that “we will not be silent.” Rallies were held yesterday in Chicago, Minneapolis and other U.S. cities to protest what activists are calling a “witch hunt.”

Weiner and her husband, Joe Iosbaker, were among several members of the Freedom Road Socialist Organization whose homes and offices were raided by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in Chicago and Minneapolis on September 24. Additional activists have been questioned by the FBI in California, Michigan, North Carolina and Wisconsin as part of the same investigation. The FBI seized computers, cell phones, organizational paperwork, and other personal items in the raids.

On the same day as the FBI raids, and on the following Monday, the federal government issued a total of 14 subpoenas to compel activists to testify before a federal grand jury, ostensibly investigating connections between anti-war and international solidarity activists, and groups such as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), Hezbollah, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, which are designated “terrorist” organizations by the U.S. government.

International solidarity activists believe that the government is attempting to use a recent U.S. Supreme Court decision, *Holder v. Humanitarian Law Project*, to derail and criminalize their efforts to support the liberation of Colombian and Palestinian people. Historically, the government has chosen to prosecute individuals and organizations that provide monetary support to groups designated as “terrorists,” but the Humanitarian Law Project ruling interprets “material support” to even include political speech.

“Grand juries have been used for decades by the federal government as a tool of political repression,” said Kris Hermes of the Grand Jury Resistance Project. “Grand juries conduct secret investigations, deprive legal counsel to those subpoenaed, and can jail you for refusing to testify,” continued Hermes. “There is no place for politically motivated grand juries in a democratic society.”

If the government chooses to offer immunity to the subpoenaed activists, and they still refuse to testify, they can be charged with civil or criminal contempt. If found guilty of civil contempt, activists could be jailed up to the length of the grand jury, typically 18 months, in an attempt to coerce their testimony. A charge of criminal contempt, however, can result in a far longer sentence, the length of which is left to the court’s discretion. For more information on these cases, see stopfbi.net

Why Misogynists Make Great Informants: How Gender Violence on the Left Enables State Violence in Radical Movements

BY COURTNEY DESIREE MORRIS, truth-out.org

In January 2009, activists in Austin, Texas, learned that one of their own, a white activist named Brandon Darby, had infiltrated groups protesting the Republican National Convention (RNC) as an FBI informant. Darby later admitted to wearing recording devices at planning meetings and during the convention. He testified on behalf of the government in the February 2009 trial of two Texas activists who were arrested at the RNC on charges of making and possessing Molotov cocktails, after Darby encouraged them to do so. The two young men, David McKay and Bradley Crowder, each faced up to fifteen years in prison. Crowder accepted a plea bargain to serve three years in a federal prison; under pressure from federal prosecutors, McKay also pled guilty to being in possession of “unregistered Molotov cocktails” and was sentenced to four years in prison. Information gathered by Darby may also have contributed to the case against the RNC 8, activists from around the country charged with “conspiracy to riot and conspiracy to damage property in the furtherance of terrorism.” Austin activists were particularly stunned by the revelation that Darby had served as an informant because he had been a part of various leftist projects and was a leader at Common Ground Relief, a New Orleans-based organization committed to meeting the short-term needs of community members displaced by natural disasters in the Gulf Coast region and dedicated to rebuilding the region and ensuring Katrina evacuees’ right to return.

I was surprised but not shocked by this news. I had learned as an undergrad at the University of Texas that the campus police department routinely placed plainclothes police officers in the meetings of radical student groups—you know, just to keep an eye on them. That was in fall 2001. We saw the creation of the Department of Homeland Security, watched a cowboy president wage war on terror, and, in the middle of it all, tried to figure out what we could do to challenge the fascist state transformations taking place before our eyes. At the time, however, it seemed silly that there were cops in our meetings—we weren’t the Panthers or the Brown Berets or even some of the rowdier direct-action anti-globalization activists on campus (although we admired them all); we were just young people who didn’t believe war was the best response to the 9/11 attacks. But it wasn’t silly; the FBI does not dismiss political work. Any organization, be it large or small, can provoke the scrutiny of the state. Perhaps your organization poses a large threat,

or maybe you’re small now but one day you’ll grow up and be too big to rein in. The state usually opts to kill the movement before it grows.

And informants and provocateurs are the state’s hired gunmen. Government agencies pick people that no one will notice. Often it’s impossible to prove that they’re informants because they appear to be completely dedicated to social justice. They establish intimate relationships with activists, becoming friends and lovers, often serving in leadership roles in organizations. A cursory reading of the literature on social movements and organizations in the 1960s and 1970s reveals this fact. The leadership of the American Indian Movement was rife with informants; it is suspected that informants were also largely responsible for the downfall of the Black Panther Party, and the same can be surmised about the antiwar movement of the 1960s and 1970s. Not surprisingly, these movements that were toppled by informants and provocateurs were also sites where women and queer activists often experienced intense gender violence, as the autobiographies of activists such as Assata Shakur, Elaine Brown, and Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz demonstrate.

Maybe it isn’t that informants are difficult to spot but rather that we have collectively ignored the signs that give them away. To save our movements, we need to come to terms with the connections between gender violence, male privilege, and the strategies that informants (and people who just act like them) use to destabilize radical movements. Time and again heterosexual men in radical movements have been allowed to assert their privilege and subordinate others. Despite all that we say to the contrary, the fact is that radical social movements and organizations in the United States have refused to seriously address gender violence[1] as a threat to the survival of our struggles. We’ve treated misogyny, homophobia, and heterosexism as lesser evils—secondary issues—that will eventually take care of themselves or fade into the background once the “real” issues—racism, the police, class inequality, U.S. wars of aggression—are resolved. There are serious consequences for choosing ignorance. Misogyny and homophobia are central to the reproduction of violence in radical activist communities. Scratch a misogynist and you’ll find a homophobe. Scratch a little deeper and you might find the makings of a future informant (or someone who just destabilizes movements like informants do).

The Makings of an Informant: Brandon Darby and Common Ground

On Democracy Now! Malik Rahim, former Black Panther and cofounder of Common Ground in New Orleans, spoke about how devastated he was by Darby’s revelation that he was an FBI informant. Several times he stated that his heart had been broken. He especially lamented all of the “young ladies” who left Common Ground as a result of Darby’s domineering, aggressive style of organizing. And

with or without the use of arms. Hundreds of members of the Puerto Rican Independence movement, the Black Panther Party (BPP), the Young Lords, the Weather Underground, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), the Republic of New Africa (RNA), the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), members of the American Indian Movement (AIM), the Chicano Movement, the Black Liberation Army (BLA), Environmentalists, the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM), peace activists, and everyone in between were targeted by COINTELPRO for “neutralization.”

Government Repression Included Murder

In 1969, the FBI and local Chicago police agents were responsible for the predawn assassination of Fred Hampton and Mark Clark as they lay asleep in their beds. Hampton and Clark were the leaders of the Chicago office of the Black Panther Party.

Harsher Sentences and Repeated Denial of Parole

Many of today’s political prisoners were incarcerated as a direct result of COINTELPRO’s activities, namely, they were targeted because of their political beliefs and/or actions. Unlike those convicted and sentenced for similar crimes, political prisoners were given much harsher sentences and subsequently routinely denied parole. Former BLA member, Sundiata Acoli (a.k.a. Clark Squire), the codefendant of exiled Assata Shakur, was sentenced to life plus thirty years for the death of a New Jersey State trooper. He was eligible for parole after twenty years. After serving twenty-two years, however, the New Jersey parole board denied him parole and gave him an unprecedented twenty-year set off. Susan Rosenberg was sentenced to fifty-eight years for possession of explosives and denied parole despite her exemplary prison record. Mumia Abu Jamal, a former Black Panther Party member, was sentenced to death for a crime he did not commit. Leonard Peltier was sentenced to life in 1975; another model prisoner, he was denied parole again in 2009. Acoli and Peltier are but recent examples of the use of the parole process to exact political punishment. Parole officials often acknowledge the advancing age, deteriorating health, significant release plans and good prison records of these aging PP/POWs.

Recommendations

1. All U.S. political prisoners/prisoners of war (PP/POWs) imprisoned as a result of COINTELPRO must be immediately and unconditionally released from U.S. prisons.
2. The United States must institute an Executive review of all cases involving those imprisoned as a result of COINTELPRO.
3. The United States must initiate a criminal investiga-

tion into the conspiracy to commit the murder of Fred Hampton, Mark Clark and other political activists targeted by COINTELPRO.

4. The United States must adopt the necessary measures to ensure the right of PP/POWs to seek just and adequate reparation and satisfaction to redress acts of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and to design effective measures to prevent the repetition of such acts.
5. The United States must, at a minimum, afford death row inmate Mumia Abu Jamal and Native American Leonard Peltier new trials.

Notes

1. This Report was submitted by The National Conference of Black Lawyers and The Malcolm X Center for Self Determination. The cluster group is comprised of NGOs, grassroots organizations, church groups, attorney organizations, elected officials, college professors, law professionals, students, concerned citizens, and others. Read the UPR Political Prisoner Report: www.ushumanrightsnetwork.org/sites/default/files/Political-PrisonersReport.pdf

Truth to Power: Guerilla Projection on FBI Headquarters in Washington DC

October 2 2010 - Washington D.C. - Glass Bead Collective in conjunction with Indymedia Minneapolis, Indymedia Pittsburgh and DARTT executed a direct action projection on the J Edgar Hoover Building/FBI Headquarters.

“We are shining a bright light on the F.B.I. and its unlawful COINTELPRO style nationwide attack on the antiwar movement,” said Vlad Teichberg of the Glass-bead Collective. He continued “The latest Grand Juries in Chicago and New York have targeted the homes and families of solidarity activists. These latest attacks are effectively criminalizing the support of global social movements and is a blatant attempt to take away the freedom of association from American citizens.”

“These F.B.I. raids are a recent reminder of the constant attacks our communities face every day,” said Teichberg. He continued, “we wanted to bring truth to power by projecting images of the victims of F.B.I. attacks.”

These recent raids only emphasize the importance of organizing for equal justice for all: people, animals, and the earth. This action was in honor and solidarity with political prisoners around the world.

Video at www.youtube.com/watch?v=nTFqf9QXtV0

charges dismissed. Not only have the perpetrators never been brought to justice, but also two of them now serve as agents with the Anti-Terrorist Task Force of the Federal Prosecutor's Office under the auspices of U.S. Department of Homeland Security and have resurrected the dismissed charges based on the tainted confessions. This is a violation of article 5(b) and (d) of the Convention guaranteeing the right to be free of excessive force and the rights to freedom of speech, expression, assembly and association.

The Government's increasing disregard for the U.S. Constitution and its human rights obligations is further displayed in its treatment of Muslim, Arab and South Asian inmates. In 2006 and 2007, the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP or "Bureau") secretly created the Communications Management Unit (CMU), a prison unit designed to hold dangerous terrorists and other high-risk inmates, requiring heightened monitoring of their external and internal communications. Many prisoners, however, are sent to these isolation units for their constitutionally protected religious beliefs, unpopular political views, or in retaliation for challenging poor treatment or other rights violations in the federal prison system. Over two-thirds of the CMU population is Muslim, even though Muslims represent only 6 percent of the general federal prison population.

In 1996, the U.S. government established Special Administrative Measures, or SAMs, to limit the communications of prisoners with an alleged reach and ability to commit violence; now SAMs can be placed on anyone with a "proclivity for violence." Without criminal conviction, it limits contact and ability to communicate with the outside world – including members of the family. SAMs are being imposed disproportionately on Muslims suspected of connections with terrorism and is typical of how terrorism suspects are being treated in U.S. prisons and courts.

Recommendation for Action by the U.S. Government

1. Take leadership role to insure creation of public education and protections afforded under U.S. Constitution and international treaties and conventions are applied vigorously.
2. Adopt and ratify all major treaties and conventions, without RUDs.
3. Commute the sentences and release all U.S. Political Prisoners/Prisoners of War (PP/POWs) and exiles from the COINTELPRO/Civil Rights Era immediately and unconditionally.
4. The United States must institute an Executive Review of all cases involving those imprisoned as a result of COINTELPRO and adopt the necessary measures to ensure the right of COINTELPRO PP/POWs/Exiles to seek just and adequate reparation and satisfaction to redress acts of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and to design effective mea-

asures to prevent the repetition of such acts.

5. That Mumia Abu-Jamal and Leonard Peltier, at a minimum, be afforded a new trial.

Political Prisoners in the United States of America: Submission to the UN-UPR

In 1976, a Congressional sub-committee popularly known as the "Church Committee" was formed to investigate and study the FBI's covert action programs. The Church Committee concluded that the FBI "conducted a sophisticated vigilante operation aimed squarely at preventing the exercise of First Amendment rights of speech and association, on the theory that preventing the growth of dangerous groups and the propagation of dangerous ideas would protect the national security and deter violence." The Committee's factual findings revealed massive human rights violations against U.S. citizens based on race, political ideas, and political affiliations.

In the final reports of the Committee, permanent means of congressional review were recommended. Shockingly, none of the recommendations made by this Congressional committee addressed the human rights violations suffered by dozens of civil/human rights activists who were victimized by the U.S. government's political repression against African-Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Native American communities. Such repression resulted in murders, injuries, false arrests, malicious prosecutions and lengthy imprisonments of scores of political activists. Many of these persons languish in prisons throughout the United States, political prisoners and prisoners of war, subjected to cruel and inhumane conditions. Several have died in prison; others have endured years of solitary confinement, poor medical care, and various other forms of abuse, including periodic perfunctory parole hearings resulting in routine denial of release. Others are exiled abroad with bounties on their heads and in fear of U.S. rendition.

Today's political prisoners, prisoners of war, and exiles were civil/human rights activists who became victims of the FBI counterintelligence program called COINTELPRO. COINTELPRO consisted of a series of covert actions directed against domestic dissident groups. In these programs, the Bureau went beyond the collection of intelligence to secret actions designed to "disrupt" and "neutralize" target groups and individuals. These techniques were adopted wholesale from wartime counterintelligence techniques. It is indisputable that COINTELPRO was responsible for maimings, murders, false prosecutions and frame-ups, destruction and mayhem throughout the country. It had infiltrated every organization and association that aspired to bring about social change in the United States, whether

when those "young ladies" complained? Well, their concerns likely fell on sympathetic but ultimately unresponsive ears—everything may have been true, and after the fact everyone admits how disruptive Darby was, quick to suggest violent, ill-conceived direct-action schemes that endangered everyone he worked with. There were even claims of Darby sexually assaulting female organizers at Common Ground and in general being dismissive of women working in the organization.[2] Darby created conflict in all of the organizations he worked with, yet people were hesitant to hold him accountable because of his history and reputation as an organizer and his "dedication" to "the work." People continued to defend him until he outed himself as an FBI informant. Even Rahim, for all of his guilt and angst, chose to leave Darby in charge of Common Ground although every time there was conflict in the organization it seemed to involve Darby.

Maybe if organizers made collective accountability around gender violence a central part of our practices we could neutralize people who are working on behalf of the state to undermine our struggles. I'm not talking about witch hunts; I'm talking about organizing in such a way that we nip a potential Brandon Darby in the bud before he can hurt more people. Informants are hard to spot, but my guess is that where there is smoke there is fire, and someone who creates chaos wherever he goes is either an informant or an irresponsible, unaccountable time bomb who can be unintentionally as effective at undermining social-justice organizing as an informant. Ultimately they both do the work of the state and need to be held accountable.

A Brief Historical Reflection on Gender Violence in Radical Movements

Reflecting on the radical organizations and social movements of the 1960s and 1970s provides an important historical context for this discussion. Memoirs by women who were actively involved in these struggles reveal the pervasiveness of tolerance (and in some cases advocacy) of gender violence. Angela Davis, Assata Shakur, and Elaine Brown, each at different points in their experiences organizing with the Black Panther Party (BPP), cited sexism and the exploitation of women (and their organizing labor) in the BPP as one of their primary reasons for either leaving the group (in the cases of Brown and Shakur) or refusing to ever formally join (in Davis's case). Although women were often expected to make significant personal sacrifices to support the movement, when women found themselves victimized by male comrades there was no support for them or channels to seek redress. Whether it was BPP organizers ignoring the fact that Eldridge Cleaver beat his wife, noted activist Kathleen Cleaver, men coercing women into sex, or just men treating women organizers as subordinated sexual playthings, the BPP and similar organizations tended not to take seriously the corrosive effects of gender violence on liberation struggle. In many ways, Elaine Brown's autobiography, *A Taste of Power: A*

Black Woman's Story, has gone the furthest in laying bare the ugly realities of misogyny in the movement and the various ways in which both men and women reproduced and reinforced male privilege and gender violence in these organizations. Her experience as the only woman to ever lead the BPP did not exempt her from the brutal misogyny of the organization. She recounts being assaulted by various male comrades (including Huey Newton) as well as being beaten and terrorized by Eldridge Cleaver, who threatened to "bury her in Algeria" during a delegation to China. Her biography demonstrates more explicitly than either Davis's or Shakur's how the masculinist posturing of the BPP (and by extension many radical organizations at the time) created a culture of violence and misogyny that ultimately proved to be the organization's undoing.

These narratives demystify the legacy of gender violence of the very organizations that many of us look up to. They demonstrate how misogyny was normalized in these spaces, dismissed as "personal" or not as important as the more serious struggles against racism or class inequality. Gender violence has historically been deeply entrenched in the political practices of the Left and constituted one of the greatest (if largely unacknowledged) threats to the survival of these organizations. However, if we pay attention to the work of Davis, Shakur, Brown, and others, we can avoid the mistakes of the past and create different kinds of political community.

The Racial Politics of Gender Violence

Race further complicates the ways in which gender violence unfolds in our communities. In "Looking for Common Ground: Relief Work in Post-Katrina New Orleans as an American Parable of Race and Gender Violence," Rachel Luft explores the disturbing pattern of sexual assault against white female volunteers by white male volunteers doing rebuilding work in the Upper Ninth Ward in 2006. She points out how Common Ground failed to address white men's assaults on their co-organizers and instead shifted the blame to the surrounding Black community, warning white women activists that they needed to be careful because New Orleans was a dangerous place. Ultimately it proved easier to criminalize Black men from the neighborhood than to acknowledge that white women and transgender organizers were most likely to be assaulted by white men they worked with. In one case, a white male volunteer was turned over to the police only after he sexually assaulted at least three women in one week. The privilege that white men enjoyed in Common Ground, an organization ostensibly committed to racial justice, meant that they could be violent toward women and queer activists, enact destructive behaviors that undermined the organization's work, and know that the movement would not hold them accountable in the same way that it did Black men in the community where they worked.

Of course, male privilege is not uniform—white men and

men of color are unequal participants in and beneficiaries of patriarchy although they both can and do reproduce gender violence. This disparity in the distribution of patriarchy's benefits is not lost on women and queer organizers when we attempt to confront men of color who enact gender violence in our communities. We often worry about reproducing particular kinds of racist violence that disproportionately target men of color. We are understandably loath to call the police, involve the state in any way, or place men of color at the mercy of a historically racist criminal (in)justice system; yet our communities (political and otherwise) often do not step up to demand justice on our behalf. We don't feel comfortable talking to therapists who just reaffirm stereotypes about how fucked-up and exceptionally violent our home communities are. The Left often offers even less support. Our victimization is unfortunate, problematic, but ultimately less important to "the work" than the men of all races who reproduce gender violence in our communities.

Encountering Misogyny on the Left: A Personal Reflection

In the first community group I was actively involved in, I encountered a level of misogyny that I would never have imagined existed in what was supposed to be a radical-people-of-color organization. I was sexually/romantically involved with an older Chicano activist in the group. I was nineteen, an inexperienced young Black activist; he was thirty. He asked me to keep our relationship a secret, and I reluctantly agreed. Later, after he ended the relationship and I was reeling from depression, I discovered that he had been sleeping with at least two other women while we were together. One of them was a friend of mine, another young woman we organized with. Unaware of the nature of our relationship, which he had failed to disclose to her, she slept with him until he disappeared, refusing to answer her calls or explain the abrupt end of their relationship. She and I, after sharing our experiences, began to trade stories with other women who knew and had organized with this man.

We heard of the women who had left a Chicana/o student group and never came back after his lies and secrets blew up while the group was participating in a Zapatista action in Mexico City. The queer, radical, white organizer who left Austin to get away from his abuse. Another white woman, a social worker who thought they might get married only to come to his apartment one evening and find me there. And then there were the ones that came after me. I always wondered if they knew who he really was. The women he dated were amazing, beautiful, kick-ass, radical women that he used as shields to get himself into places he knew would never be open to such a misogynist. I mean, if that cool woman who worked in Chiapas, spoke Spanish, and worked with undocumented immigrants was dating him, he must be down, right? Wrong.

But his misogyny didn't end there; it was also reflected in his style of organizing. In meetings he always spoke the loudest and longest, using academic jargon that made any discussion excruciatingly more complex than necessary. The academic-speak intimidated people less educated than him because he seemed to know more about radical politics than anyone else. He would talk down to other men in the group, especially those he perceived to be less intelligent than him, which was basically everybody. Then he'd switch gears, apologize for dominating the space, and acknowledge his need to check his male privilege. Ironically, when people did attempt to call him out on his shit, he would feign ignorance—what could they mean, saying that his behavior was masculinist and sexist? He'd complain of being infantilized, refusing to see how he infantilized people all the time. The fact that he was a man of color who could talk a good game about racism and racial-justice struggles masked his abusive behaviors in both radical organizations and his personal relationships. As one of his former partners shared with me, "His radical race analysis allowed people (mostly men but occasionally women as well) to forgive him for being dominating and abusive in his relationships. Womyn had to check their critique of his behavior at the door, lest we lose a man of color in the movement." One of the reasons it is so difficult to hold men of color accountable for reproducing gender violence is that women of color and white activists continue to be invested in the idea that men of color have it harder than anyone else. How do you hold someone accountable when you believe he is target number one for the state?

Unfortunately he wasn't the only man like this I encountered in radical spaces—just one of the smarter ones. Reviewing old e-mails, I am shocked at the number of e-mails from men I organized with that were abusive in tone and content, how easily they would talk down to others for minor mistakes. I am more surprised at my meek, diplomatic responses—like an abuse survivor—as I attempted to placate compañeros who saw nothing wrong with yelling at their partners, friends, and other organizers. There were men like this in various organizations I worked with. The one who called his girlfriend a bitch in front of a group of youth of color during a summer encuentro we were hosting. The one who sexually harassed a queer Chicana couple during a trip to México, trying to pressure them into a threesome. The guys who said they would complete a task, didn't do it, brushed off their compañeras' demands for accountability, let those women take over the task, and when it was finished took all the credit for someone else's hard work. The graduate student who hit his partner—and everyone knew he'd done it, but whenever anyone asked, people would just look ashamed and embarrassed and mumble, "It's complicated." The ones who constantly demeaned queer folks, even people they organized with. Especially the one who thought it would be a revolutionary act to "kill all these faggots, these niggas on the down low, who are fucking up our children, fucking up our homes, fucking up our world, and fucking up our lives!" The one

Submissions to the UN Universal Periodical Review

Editor's note: On Nov. 5 2010, the U.S. government will be required to appear before the United Nations in Geneva, at what is called a "Universal Periodic Review" (UPR) of Human Rights in the United States. Three categories of information will be presented:

- The U.S. Government report
- Summary of previous UN Recommendations
- Summary of Stakeholder (Civil Society) reports

This third section combines the reports of 25 human rights groups in the U.S. The U.S. Human Rights Network (USHRN) coordinated the submission of these 25 reports, which expose and detail violations of human rights by the government. The reports include information on the death penalty, criminal justice, political repression, racial profiling and U.S. political prisoners. 4sm is printing the summary of two reports below.

The full reports are available for download by visiting www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodiesUPR%5CPAGES%5CUSSession9.aspx. You can contact the USHRN to get more information and these documents at:

Malcolm X Center
321 W. Antrim Dr.
P.O. Box 16102
Greenville, SC
29607 USA
enjericho@gmail.com

State Repression: Submission to the UN-UPR

While recent years mark key anniversaries in U.S. political and social history, e.g. public accommodation, voting rights, school desegregation, civil rights and anti-war protest landmarks, the protection and advancement of civil and human rights have declined amidst the celebration of these landmark years. The current environment tends to be little more than a cover for law enforcement which has grown increasingly more repressive and hostile to the U.S. Constitution's 1st, 4th, 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments, in addition to international obligations.

The United States has remained true to its longer history of political repression and use of its criminal justice system to quash dissent. In addition, it falls short of meeting its international human rights obligations as provided in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, U.N. treaties that it has ratified, and other international instruments. More spe-

cifically, its violations are of basic human rights protected in the International Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, as well as the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

Police in the United States, along with other arms of law enforcement, continue to be used to suppress efforts demanding recognition, protection and fulfillment of social and economic human rights; namely, the right to education, health, housing, work, and social security. Such efforts, sought individually and collectively, have, and continue to be primary targets and are met with racial profiling, surveillance, infiltration, provocation, immobilization, arrest, detention, police violence, prosecutorial misconduct, excessive sentences, and death — all with impunity. 1960s Civil Rights Movement activists caught in the government drag net known as COINTELPRO are victims of such misconduct and remain in prison to this day.

Police still routinely make unfounded mass arrests and detentions to keep people off the streets and out of the eye of the media, which tends to be accommodating. There is the return of police-initiated violence at demonstrations, arrest of unembedded journalists, and the use of so-called less-lethal weapons against peaceful protesters. These weapons—among them chemical sprays, impact projectiles, and electroshock weapons, cattle prods of the 1960s—are often associated with fatalities. This practice persists though condemned by several independent panels and the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

Ongoing and pervasive profiling throughout the United States on the basis of race, immigration status, national origin, religion or ethnicity, under the guise of fighting illegal immigration, drugs, and terrorism, have resulted in increased migrant deaths, mass incarceration and use of torture against African Americans and other persons of color. Law enforcement officers, throughout the country, who have engaged in torture for the purpose of extracting confessions continue to escape prosecution while individuals who were tortured are prosecuted or languish in prison based on the use of coerced confessions in their criminal cases.

In addition to the Abu Ghraib style Chicago Police Torture Cases (Burge Cases) of 1973, is the current case of the San Francisco 8 (SF8). Both are examples of the longstanding domestic use of torture against African Americans by law enforcement officers. The Burge Cases were based on race. The SF8 case is based on race and political beliefs and activities. Thirty years ago, Black Panther Party for Self Defense members (a social justice organization) were tortured over several days, in various ways including electric cattle prods to their genitals, confessed and signed pre-written statements regarding various crimes and the 1971 death of a San Francisco Police officer. In 1974, a federal court ruled that the tainted statements were inadmissible and the

ed. You never know what can work! I was also asked how much time I could give. We'll see.

Just as the establishment tried to finish off Lisbeth Salander by burying her alive, I too am trying to dig myself out. Give me an assist. Continue the work. That is most important to me. Join the ongoing campaigns for Justice for the Scott sisters, Mumia Abu-Jamal, Leonard Peltier, Albert Woodfox and Herman Wallace (of The Angola3).

Remember all the political prisoners. Write to them. Put a little something in their commissary.

Force the government to end the imperialist wars.
Fight racism.
Fight for Palestine.
Challenge the politicians.
Demand that they tell you where they stand on me.
Resist! Resist! Resist!

My gratitude and boundless embraces for everything everyone has done.

Love/Struggle

Lynne Stewart
53504-054 MCC-NY 2-S
150 Park Row
New York, NY 10007

www.lynnestewart.org
llawyerleft@gmail.com

RNC 8 court saga finally over

BY SHEILA REGAN, TC Daily Planet (excerpts)
www.tcdailyplanet.net

The final four defendants of the RNC 8 all took plea deals on Tuesday (October 19), ending the two-year-long court saga that began with the 2008 Republican National Convention. Rob Czernik, Garret Fitzgerald, Nathaneal Secor and Max Specktor each pled guilty to gross misdemeanor charges, and their suspended sentences mean that none of them will serve jail time.

On August 29 and 30, 2008, two days before the RNC started, the Ramsey County Sheriff's Department raided the RNC Welcoming Committee Convergence Center and three homes and arrested members of the RNC Welcoming Committee, an anarchist/anti-authoritarian group. Monica Bicking, Garrett Fitzgerald, Erik Oseland, Nathaneal Secor, and Eryn Trimmer were the first to be arrested, followed by Luce Guillen-Givens later that day. Rob Czernik and Max Specktor were arrested on September 1.

The RNC 8 were originally charged with conspiracy to commit riot in the second degree and conspiracy to commit criminal damage to property in the first degree. The two conspiracy charges were later enhanced with a terrorism charge under the 2002 Minnesota version of the Federal Patriot Act, but last spring Ramsey County Attorney Susan Gaertner dropped the terrorism enhancement. Nathaneal Secor pled guilty to conspiracy to commit damage to property to the third degree, and was sentenced to 180 days in jail with \$1000 fine which was suspended to 100 hours of community service, a \$200 fine and one year of probation. Secor said at the trial that it would be disingenuous for him to state that he was at the victim of the court, but stated that Ramsey County Sheriff's Department was also guilty of crimes, exercising an "absurd degree of social control." Secor said that he would "continue to work for nothing less than liberation."

Max Specktor pled guilty to conspiracy to commit riot to the third degree, and was also sentenced to 180 days in jail with a \$500 fine, which was suspended to 100 hours of community service, one year of probation, and a \$200 fine. "I accept total responsibility for conspiracy," Specktor said to Judge Teresa Warner, "but that is only part of the story." Specktor said that he refused to participate in the spectacle of democracy. "I refuse to sleep walk through life," he said. Rob Czernik pled guilty to conspiracy to commit riot in the third degree. When asked whether he was guilty of conspiring to commit riot, he responded "proudly." He was sentenced to 180 days in jail with \$500 fine which was suspended to the same community service obligation as the others, a \$200 fine and two years of probation.

Garret Fitzgerald also refused to swear an oath with the words "under God." He pled guilty to committing damage to property to the third degree. When asked whether he admitted that what he did was wrong, Fitzgerald responded "I knew it was against the law." He called the charges against him exaggerated and overblown, and said "I've never denied that I broke the law," but that "we were specifically targeted because of our political beliefs." Fitzgerald also attempted to read for the court *The Lorax* by Dr. Seuss, but Judge Warner did not permit him to read the whole thing. He was sentenced to 180 days in jail with a \$1,000 fine, which was suspended to 100 hours of community service, a \$200 fine, and two years of probation.

Charges were dismissed against Monica Bicking, Erin Trimmer and Luce Guillen-Givens on September 16. Erik Oseland pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit damage to property in the 3rd degree, a gross misdemeanor on August 27, in a deal that required him to serve a 91-day sentence in the Ramsey County Workhouse beginning on October 20. He is the only one of the RNC 8 who will serve time in jail.

who would shout you down in a meeting or tell you that you couldn't be a feminist because you were too pretty. Or the one who thought homosexuality was a disease from Europe.

Yeah, that guy.

Most of those guys probably weren't informants. Which is a pity because it means they are not getting paid a dime for all the destructive work they do. We might think of these misogynists as inadvertent agents of the state. Regardless of whether they are actually informants or not, the work that they do supports the state's ongoing campaign of terror against social movements and the people who create them. When queer organizers are humiliated and their political struggles sidelined, that is part of an ongoing state project of violence against radicals. When women are knowingly given STIs, physically abused, dismissed in meetings, pushed aside, and forced out of radical organizing spaces while our allies defend known misogynists, organizers conclude in the state's efforts to destroy us.

The state has already understood a fact that the Left has struggled to accept: misogynists make great informants. Before or regardless of whether they are ever recruited by the state to disrupt a movement or destabilize an organization, they've likely become well versed in practices of disruptive behavior. They require almost no training and can start the work immediately. What's more paralyzing to our work than when women and/or queer folks leave our movements because they have been repeatedly lied to, humiliated, physically/verbally/emotionally/sexually abused? Or when you have to postpone conversations about the work so that you can devote group meetings to addressing an individual member's most recent offense? Or when that person spreads misinformation, creating confusion and friction among radical groups? Nothing slows down movement building like a misogynist.

What the FBI gets is that when there are people in activist spaces who are committed to taking power and who understand power as domination, our movements will never realize their potential to remake this world. If our energies are absorbed recuperating from the messes that informants (and people who just act like them) create, we will never be able to focus on the real work of getting free and building the kinds of life-affirming, people-centered communities that we want to live in. To paraphrase bell hooks, where there is a will to dominate there can be no justice, because we will inevitably continue reproducing the same kinds of injustice we claim to be struggling against. It is time for our movements to undergo a radical change from the inside out.

Looking Forward: Creating Gender Justice in our Movements

Radical movements cannot afford the destruction that gen-

der violence creates. If we underestimate the political implications of patriarchal behaviors in our communities, the work will not survive.

Lately I've been turning to the work of queers/feminists of color to think through how to challenge these behaviors in our movements. I've been reading the autobiographies of women who lived through the chaos of social movements debilitated by machismo. I'm revisiting the work of bell hooks, Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, Toni Cade Bambara, Alice Walker, Audre Lorde, Gioconda Belli, Margaret Randall, Elaine Brown, Pearl Cleage, Ntozake Shange, and Gloria Anzaldúa to see how other women negotiated gender violence in these spaces and to problematize neat or easy answers about how violence is reproduced in our communities. Newer work by radical feminists of color has also been incredibly helpful, especially the zine *Revolution Starts at Home: Confronting Partner Abuse in Activist Communities*, edited by Ching-In Chen, Dulani, and Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha.

But there are many resources for confronting this dilemma beyond books. The simple act of speaking and sharing our truths is one of the most powerful tools we have. I've been speaking to my elders, older women of color in struggle who have experienced the things I'm struggling against, and swapping survival stories with other women. In summer 2008 I began doing workshops on ending misogyny and building collective forms of accountability with Cristina Tzintzún, an Austin-based labor organizer and author of the essay "Killing Misogyny: A Personal Story of Love, Violence, and Strategies for Survival." We have also begun the even more liberating practice of naming our experiences publicly and calling on our communities to address what we and so many others have experienced.

Dismantling misogyny cannot be work that only women do. We all must do the work because the survival of our movements depends on it. Until we make radical feminist and queer political ethics that directly challenge heteropatriarchal forms of organizing central to our political practice, radical movements will continue to be devastated by the antics of Brandon Darbys (and folks who aren't informants but just act like them). A queer, radical, feminist ethic of accountability would challenge us to recognize how gender violence is reproduced in our communities, relationships, and organizing practices. Although there are many ways to do this, I want to suggest that there are three key steps that we can take to begin. First, we must support women and queer people in our movements who have experienced interpersonal violence and engage in a collective process of healing. Second, we must initiate a collective dialogue about how we want our communities to look and how to make them safe for everyone. Third, we must develop a model for collective accountability that truly treats the personal as political and helps us to begin practicing justice in our communities. When we allow women/queer organizers to leave activist spaces and protect people whose violence

provoked their departure, we are saying we value these de facto state agents who disrupt the work more than we value people whose labor builds and sustains movements.

As angry as gender violence on the Left makes me, I am hopeful. I believe we have the capacity to change and create more justice in our movements. We don't have to start witch hunts to reveal misogynists and informants. They out themselves every time they refuse to apologize, take ownership of their actions, start conflicts and refuse to work them out through consensus, mistreat their compañer@s. We don't have to look for them, but when we are presented with their destructive behaviors we have to hold them accountable. Our strategies don't have to be punitive; people are entitled to their mistakes. But we should expect that people will own those actions and not allow them to become a pattern.

We have a right to be angry when the communities we build that are supposed to be the model for a better, more just world harbor the same kinds of antiquer, antiwoman, racist violence that pervades society. As radical organizers we must hold each other accountable and not enable misogynists to assert so much power in these spaces. Not allow them to be the faces, voices, and leaders of these movements. Not allow them to rape a compañera and then be on the fucking five o' clock news. In Brandon Darby's case, even if no one suspected he was an informant, his domineering and macho behavior should have been all that was needed to call his leadership into question. By not allowing misogyny to take root in our communities and movements, we not only protect ourselves from the efforts of the state to destroy our work but also create stronger movements that cannot be destroyed from within.

[1] I use the term gender violence to refer to the ways in which homophobia and misogyny are rooted in heteronormative understandings of gender identity and gender roles. Heterosexism not only polices non-normative sexualities but also reproduces normative gender roles and identities that reinforce the logic of patriarchy and male privilege.

[2] I learned this from informal conversations with women who had organized with Darby in Austin and New Orleans while participating in the Austin Informants Working Group, which was formed by people who had worked with Darby and were stunned by his revelation that he was an FBI informant.

Unify

BY CRIMSON BARD

As the blackness of racism unfolds
The whiteness of oppression beholds:
A grayness; for regression I'm told...

...They are which deceives the poor
feeds them poison to kill off more.
Uprising hatred dismantles our core –

Our core principles long forgotten plus
loyalty, honesty, sincerity and trust.
Amongst ourselves we fight in ignorance and gust!

We let them beat us blindly and know
Our education truly needs to grow.
So, let's practice subjugation to show

That when subservient policy's in place
Political leaders care not its disgrace;
We'll not abide by capitalism, we'll not abide to save face!

For they are a frailty whom I call, "Faust!"
He who neighbors his enemy/master's house
Hidden quietly as the typical "church mouse."

It is like foreign government policy change...
Development in Amerikas doesn't bring...
Well, it doesn't bring anything!

Except adversity to those who want to achieve –
achieve freedom from oppression and believe –
Believe there's still something left to achieve!

Between you and me, the bi-racial minority
Taking a stand against our forced inferiority
We can fight, fight as one people in conformity!

And be one unit standing long we stand
Answering to never one simple man,
And taking not his opprobrious demands!

(You're intelligent) so separate the science of mind
from their alliance of fascist kind
And leave no – leave no minority behind.
A unity as pure as, "semper fi!"
Brothers and sisters alike... you and I
Can make such a change, if only we'll try...

... Come together, move together... "UNIFY!"

Buried Alive, But Fighting On

A letter to friends from LYNNE STEWART

For those who don't know, Lynne Stewart is a 70 year old radical attorney who was imprisoned for staunchly defending her clients -- as a post-911 threat to other leftist and progressive attorneys to "back off."

In the best-selling Steig Larsson trilogy, *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, *The Girl Who Played with Fire*, and *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornet's Nest*, the heroine, Lisbeth Salander, a hardwired, brilliant young computer genius is shot and presumed to be dead, but is actually buried alive by the antagonist. He is a prototype of the cruel, greedy, misogynistic, exploiter.

She claws herself out of her premature grave and, indomitable and focused, defeats him. Finally by the end of volume three she has triumphed - using her own brains and relying on her friends and comrades - over the entire corrupt corporate, governmental, military power structure that had been trying to oppress and suppress her, her whole life.

Thursday July 15, Federal Judge John Koeltl attempted to bury me alive.

Acting for the Government and Judges of the Second Circuit Court of Appeals, he sentenced me at their demand, to more than five times the term he originally thought "right and just." With his new sentence, of ten years, I am buried in the Prison Industrial Complex until I am nearly 80 years old, if I make it. But, believe me, I, like Lisbeth Salander, intend to lift the dirt off and, even if weakened and wounded, regain my voice and strength!

Like Lisbeth, I too will always fight back. Justice has been my life, and upholding the Bill of Rights, my joy to defend and utilize on behalf of the People. Since I am now reduced to asking everyone's support and help for personal problems, whether medical or designation of my prison, or other legal issues, I want everyone to know what's expected and to have immediate connection to the people who will continue to be responsible for me and getting the word out. Along with that, I hope you will maintain contact if there is an opportunity where you live or at an event sponsored by your organization, to speak out about my current situation and highlight the injustice of increasing my sentence only to satisfy the most conservative judicial elements and feed the fear of the so-called war on terrorism.

Medical: I still have a number of unresolved conditions - mysterious spot on my uterus to be checked (biopsy) for possible cancer, monitoring of bladder condition, a newly discovered kidney stone. My chronic problems — under-tred diabetes, high blood pressure, cholesterol and assorted aches and pains and annoyances of aging! The Judge di-

rected that I stay at MCC in New York City so that my doctor will continue to be responsible for my treatment. Our daughter, Dr. Zenobia Brown, will continue to consult with him.

Prisons: The Judge also directed that I remain at MCC during the pursuit of an appeal. He also recommended to the Bureau of Prisons that I be sent for imprisonment to Danbury FCI in Connecticut, about two hours driving, or on Metro North Rail line, from New York City. Visiting conditions will be much better and I will be able to see more of my family and supporters for longer periods in more ameliorative surroundings. Of course, the Bureau of Prisons is a law unto itself and if it decides I need to go elsewhere, the Judge's recommendation doesn't control. There are a limited number of women's prisons. They are in Minnesota, Florida, California, and West Virginia.

There is also the Federal Prison Hospital for Women in Carswell, Texas (near Fort Worth).

The Numbers: ten years equals 120 months; 87 percent Good Time Credit for Good Behavior equals 104.4 months; Already Served, equals eight months. Totaled out, it is approximately eight years. The last six to 12 months is usually served in a halfway house (but nothing about this case has ever been usual!) The Grand Total is 84 months more to go.

Where so we go from here legally?

Court-wise, we are still making decisions about possibilities of appeals, campaigns for commutation, clemency, etc. Keep in touch with the web page.

There will always be issues for me. Incidentally, I mentioned at sentencing that I had volunteered to teach GED and literacy in here, and had been turned down — BOP regulations. They have neither program, nor any education program for the women. The following Monday, a sign-up sheet was posted for...GED and literacy classes, a first here according to long term prisoners!!! The classes have start-

