

# 4STRUGGLEMAG

from the hearts and minds of north america's political prisoners and friends



Jericho 10/10 March • 2008 Elections • San Francisco 8 • Black August  
Updates • A Basic Introduction to Dialectical and Historical Materialism

# Welcome to 4strugglemag

You have just come to a dynamic and unique publication, where Truth (real and raw) speaks to power. This magazine focuses 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 Mother Earth, Human Rights and Peace.

www.4strugglemag.org is primarily an e-magazine, but hard copies are available (free to prisoners, \$4 an issue for people outside -- yearly \$12 subscriptions are available). We encourage readers to respond, critique and carry on discussions in the magazine. We have a discussion board at www.4strugglemag.org/board, and we welcome email and mail at our P.O. Box. We value and encourage feedback and discussion. The address of each political prisoner is posted with their article so people can directly communicate with them (no political prisoners have access to the internet). We like dialog, 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 unrelated 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 69 cents to send a letter to Canada from the U.S.). Please note that our address has changed, and use this address in the future. If you have sent mail to our old address, don't worry -- we'll get that too.

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or via email to:  
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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:

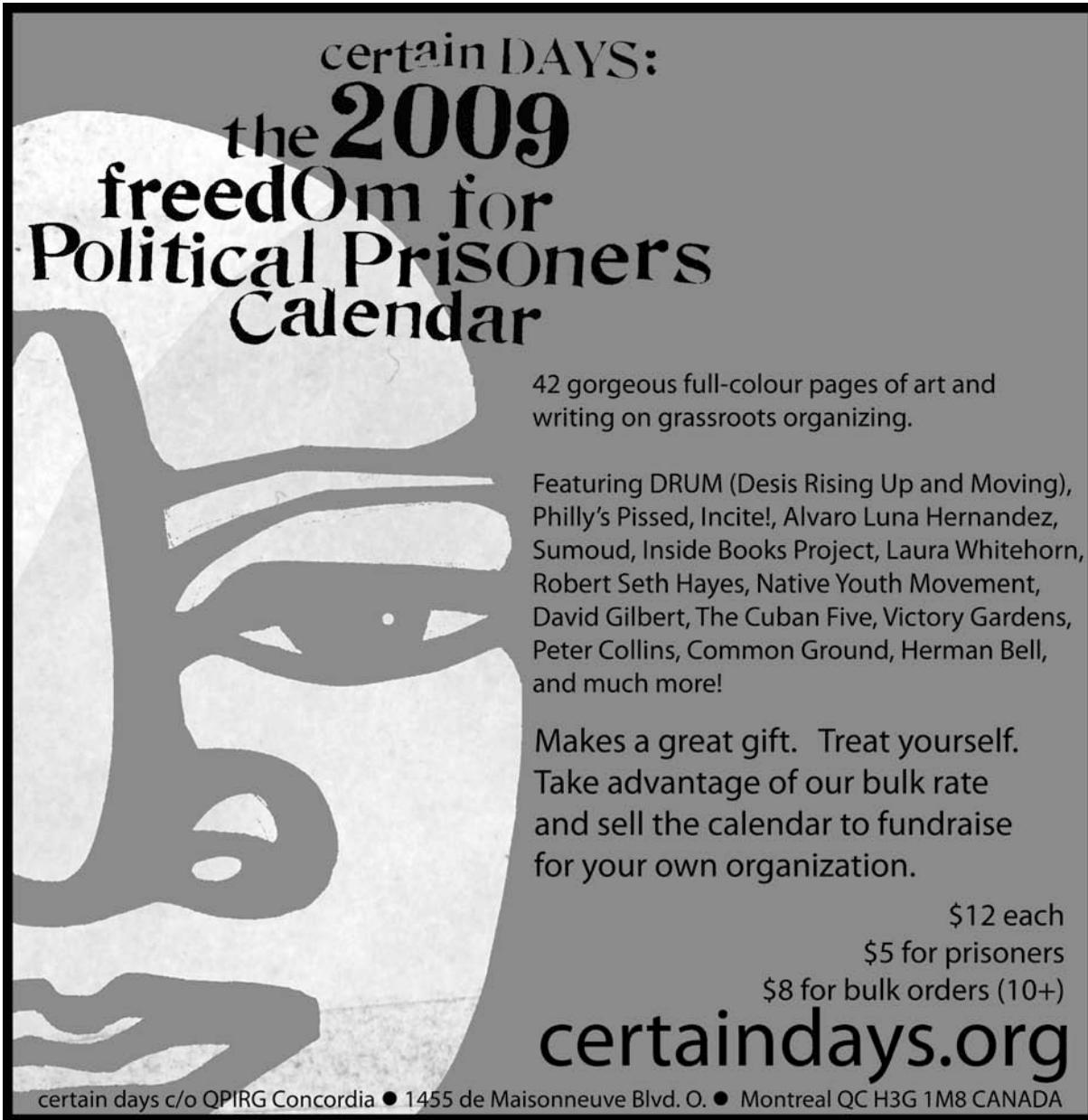
**Feature articles:** We're looking for in depth, analytical articles that critically examine a particular issue, historical occurrence, political idea, or current event. We are looking for well-researched articles that broaden and challenge revolutionary thought. If you are in need of research help,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

**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 you would like your letter printed in the next issue.

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## Introduction

Hey everyone, welcome to issue 11 of 4strugglemag, a powerful voice of political prisoners in the U.S.!

We had hoped to get this issue out early this summer, instead it is coming at you in late August. We are having some problems, especially getting hard copies produced and mailed out. Any activist groups who could help with this are urged to contact us.

This issue has timely and important information for you. The first section is all about the Jericho October 10th, free all political prisoners march to the UN Building in NYC. Everyone is really urged to check out and spread this information. The 10/10 march must be large, loud and dynamic. Everyone who cares about and supports any or all political prisoners, needs to know that this rally is the single most important event for ALL U.S. political prisoners and really needs your support.

Section two has information on the San Francisco 8 case. Their trial starts in September. We missed August this year, but we still have information on Black August in Section three.

Section four has information on a variety of issues, including the annual ABCF sponsored Running Down The Walls benefit runs. They are being held in LA and many other cities and prisons across the country. Everyone is urged to join a run or organize one in your prison or city. There are also thoughts on Obama and the elections, and more.

In the final section, we are doing something different. We are reprinting an entire pamphlet - "A Basic Introduction to Dialectical and Historical Materialism." This is a time tested training document used in and out of prison. Various activist and revolutionary groups have used it to help people learn and sharpen their revolutionary analysis skills. 4strugglemag will open its pages in future issues, to questions, feedback and dialog on this pamphlet specifically, but more broadly on the need for more and deeper scientific revolutionary analysis in our work and movements.

We look forward to your feedback on everything in this issue. We hope to have issue 12 out soon, with material on the 10/10 Jericho march and the elections among other things. Please don't forget, we need big and loud support for the Jericho 10/10 UN rally!

**FREEDOM IS A CONSTANT STRUGGLE!**

Jaan Laaman, editor

## More Information from Jaan Laaman

Earlier this year, I began doing short (7-10 minute) radio commentaries for KCBLR ([www.KCBLR.org](http://www.KCBLR.org)). A few other air wave stations/programs have also picked up these commentaries. They cover a variety of political and social issues.

These commentaries are also available for listening or downloading at [www.freejaan.com](http://www.freejaan.com). At least one or two new ones are produced each month. The latest one, no.7, is about the 10/10 Jericho march at the UN Building and provides background information on political prisoners in the U.S., the Jericho Movement, and details on the march. I am open to more radio stations and internet sites using my commentaries. They are all available at the freejaan blog site, but anyone who is interested in regularly using my words should contact the site or me and each new commentary will be emailed to you when it is produced.

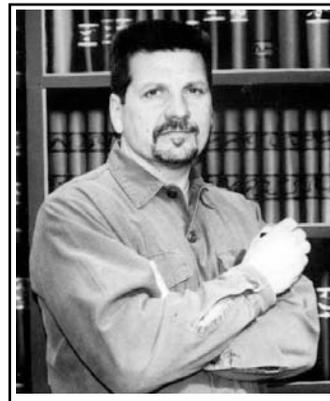
One other piece of information I'd like to let people know about - at the end of this year, I'll complete my Mass state sentence (I've been here in Walpole the past 8 years). I'll then be sent back to the federal system, to begin an on and after 53 year sentence (conspiracy to overthrow or disrupt the U.S. government).

I don't know what federal prison I'll be sent to. I will certainly not regret leaving Walpole state prison, although I will miss some good brothers here. Heading off to some new penitentiary with a big sentence pretty much sucks too, but I do look forward to seeing some of my political prisoner comrades again in the federal system.

4strugglemag readers in prison should be aware that while I can receive mail directly from other prisons here in the Massachusetts state system, the federal system does not allow prisoners to receive mail from other prisons. 4strugglemag and the freejaan blog site will keep people informed of my new address.

Wherever I wind up, I'm going to keep on struggling -- hope you do too.

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rights feminists were at the time leaders of the abolition movement). Wimyn's liberation peaked in the 1920s, and then declined after the primary goal of suffrage had been reached. The second wave occurred at an equally significant time, the revolutionary 1960s, when political and social changes were dramatically taking place all over the world. This second wave sought a greater equality for wimyn in the family, the workplace, and political life.

However, while some concessions have been gained, wimyn are far from liberated. There is a dangerous trend within liberation movements to mistake concessions as liberation, and this trend quenches the revolutionary spirit. Concessions quickly turn from stepping stones toward final liberation into a compromise made with the slave-master, a pacifier. Polished handcuffs are still handcuffs. Concessions, like religion, can be the opium of the masses. Reform can be one of the greatest weapons against revolution. And just as former colonies of Empires can be held in neo-colonialism - a state of being politically independent yet in economic bondage - so can voting wimyn still be held in neo-patriarchy - politically free (i.e. able to vote, hold public office, etc.) yet economically and psychologically held under the sway of the male gender.

To put it blatantly, wimyn are still considered as the man's slave. Suffrage has not effected liberation, for the capitalist system in which these votes are cast gorges itself on all kinds of oppression and exploitation, and cannot be voted into ceasing this ravenous trend. Consider the television commercials that are forced down our throats and into our minds. Of all the advertisements for cleaning products, grocery shopping, cooking supplies, and all the other things that have to do with the household, when have you ever seen a man doing the mopping, cleaning the toilet, buying the groceries, feeding the children (or the wife)? It is always the womyn doing these things, reinforcing the idea that a womyn's place is in the home, acting out her divinely sanctioned role as the man's servant, the man's accessory, the man's slave. It is still considered as a "romantic" exception to the rule when the man cooks for the womyn. This mentality is also dominant in television shows like sitcoms, where the womyn is seen doing all the household work, where it is humorous how the man usually hates his wife (especially as they get older), where he usually hates to have sex with her, or when he does have sex with her it is a joking thirty-second ordeal.

Furthermore, it is still taken for granted that the womyn who marries will change her name to the man's name, relegating her birth name (which is probably her father's name) to the position of "maiden name." Hell, it is still taken for granted that marriage, with all of its political, economic, and religious intrusions, is the accepted route to be taken for a man and a womyn who have committed to each other, and that those who do not marry are not actually committed, and any children born to them are damned by that disparaging adverbial phrase "out of wedlock."

Again, wimyn have yet to be liberated. Reforms and concessions may make some positive changes; but if the underlying socioeconomic system remains intact, then the oppression will only take on more creative and subtle forms designed to perpetuate wimyn's bondage. Wimyn therefore need revolution just as bad as oppressed nationalities. For wimyn to truly be liberated, a revolutionary change must take place to sweep away the exploitative order and restructure the society from the bottom up according to truly human values instead of financial gain. Wimyn will not be liberated by allowing their movement to be placed on the backburner in the freedom struggles, or by passively expecting liberation to be granted automatically when revolution comes. Wimyn must consciously link their freedom struggle to the greater proletarian international struggle to abolish capitalist imperialism. Feminine capitalism will not benefit wimyn any more than Black capitalism benefits Blacks.

Which brings me to the next point: Not only do wimyn need revolution, but the revolution needs wimyn. The Panthers need wimyn. As we seek to embody, even in the headquarters of global capitalism, the future socialist society, we need wimyn in our ranks equally as great, if not greater, than we need men. A male-dominated revolutionary movement can be just as patriarchal as capitalism, and the result will be a pseudo-socialist society that continues to hold onto male privilege, just as white privilege will be retained if nationalism is not held in its proper significance.

But an isolated feminine movement can be just as reactionary as reverse racism. Wimyn must be their own liberators; however, that can only truly happen if their struggle is kept in the right perspective, within the broader focus of ending capitalistic exploitation of humanity, viewing every specific liberation as a microcosm of the whole. We need wimyn in our ranks, creating revolutionary programs that serve to liberate themselves and at the same time promote the liberation of the international proletariat as a whole. Wimyn, we need you! Rise up and throw off the millennia-old yoke of male domination; demand your liberation and your equality, and join the Panthers in the revolutionary movement to abolish all oppression and bring humanity from the epoch of exploitation to the epoch of freedom.

**FREE THE WIMYN!!! ALL POWER TO ALL THE PEOPLE!!!**

Spider

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## Free the Wimyn!

BY COMRADE SPIDER,  
Spokesperson, White Panther Organization

Before there were gods, there was the Goddess. Before Zeus, Horus and Yaweh, there was the Great Mother. The Earth was her physical presence and fertility was the most potent expression of her power. The feminine conceptualization of deity was a reflection to a time when lineage was reckoned according to the wimyn (as opposed to the man), and wimyn as a whole were greatly revered as the source of one's life and being. In short, fertility was the all-important aspect of these economically simple times, most prominently displayed in wimyn giving birth, and therefore the power of fertility was personified in the Great Mother.

However, as man's role in the economic production of society increased, so the deity (or deities) began to take on more masculine forms. And as the man began to express his new-found prominence in more dominant ways, so did the deity begin to morph from a life-giver or an incarnation of nature to an overlord, kind and tyrant. Mother right was overthrown and patriarchy took the throne. The same gods that were created by the male would end up instituting male-dominated priesthoods and codes of law, in which were enshrined, codified, and ratified the divinely sanctioned lordship of the male over the female. As the economic production and exchange in society became increasingly more complex, syncretistic and contradictory, this symbiotic relationship between the male and his god followed suit, and the nature of the deity became more paradoxical, illogical, and unfortunately oppressive.

Almost nowhere is the materialist conception of history given such credence than in the parallel between a society's economic relations and its idea of a god. But more concrete than issues of change in religious dogma is the way that wimyn have suffered since the establishment of patriarchy as the norm in male-female relations. The role of wimyn in society has undergone its various transformations as the mode of human production has evolved to present-day imperialist capitalism, with ever-increasing subtle subjection and oppression as the theme that runs through every societal change. As the capitalist system compels the bourgeoisie to exploit the proletariat if such a system is to exist; and as the system of slavery by its very nature necessitates the exploitation of the slave by the slave master; so the current socioeconomic system of oppression profits by reinforcing

the concept that the wimyn is to remain subordinate to the rule of the man, that she must stay in her god-sanctioned "place" in society, and that she will always be the "weaker vessel."

I mean, think about it. Wimyn make up about 51 percent of the United States population. And a great number of those are to this day living in some form of repression, as wimyn, whether they realize it or not. That's 51 percent of a country's population that not only has to deal with the crushing weight of capitalist exploitation, but also the double weight of gender oppression. In other words, the pervasive patriarchal mentality that is supported by the current system serves to ensure that wimyn, half the nation's population, are held in submission by debilitating psychological chains. It is therefore doubly more difficult to rebel against the current order, not having the advantage of "male privilege."

And all of this in spite of suffrage. Yet, does the right to vote signify that liberation has come? Did New Afrikan suffrage liberate New Afrikans? The first major wave of the wimyn's liberation movement took place in the 1800s, mainly as a response to the great economic and political changes brought about by the industrial revolution, a very significant parallel with the proletarian rebellions of that time (It is also no accident that many of the equal



## Letters

Loyal readers of 4strugglemag will know that in the past year we have faced some challenges in financing our production and distribution. This is in part due to the success of this project – we've got more subscribers than ever across Canada and the United States, and we remain committed to sending free copies to prisoners. We appreciate your patience as we work to find ways to put out new issues as often as possible.

We thank our comrades Jill and Dave of Vancouver's Anti-Poverty Committee for their generosity and hard work in printing and distributing Issue 10, and we thank our friends in DC for taking responsibility for the current issue. Moving forward, we will continue to rely on others in our community to support 4strugglemag. We are also planning a subscription drive that will encourage outside activists to help us keep sending free copies to prisoners.

We'll keep working to improve the magazine: the level of analysis, the focus on topics that will propel social justice forward, and the opportunities for dialogue across movements, across generations and across prison walls.

For that reason, we're introducing a letters section to this issue, starting with one that we've had for a while now. When you write, please mention if it's okay for us to print your letter in the magazine. We can't print all of the letters that we get (and we may edit for length and clarity), and we certainly hope that you'll keep sending us articles, poetry, artwork and more. This is just one more way of giving our readers a voice.

- Sara Falconer and karen emily

## Revolutionary greetings

Dear 4strugglemag laborers,

I just got my eager hands on Issue 5 and Issue 8 of your mag only after engaging my PPC Brothers in a conversation about the plight and suffering of (mis-educated) juveniles serving life without parole (LWOP) and other harsh sentences in Amerika's koncentration kamps improperly termed prisons.

Thereafter they strongly encouraged me to reach out to you in hopes of joining us in highlighting the inhumanity and inequities of LWOP for child offenders, and other unduly harmful sentences given to youths. We believe the national attention would be the impetus to help wake up and mobilize the locals to Amerikan neo-racism, class elitism and gender bias – as it relates to youths, mainly youths of color, more specifically New Afrikan (Black) males, and unjust sentences not only here in Michigan but other states within

the U\$. Empire, which imposes such unredemptive sentences on child(ren) offenders.

But first, I had never read your e-magazine until April 4, 2007. This is after the previously mentioned conversation. Then one of the PPC Brothers said, "I got something right for you." It turned out to be two issues of 4strugglemag. After reading everything, I overwhelmingly thanked him. He responded, "I got a few more where that came from." Now that I'm aware of your existence, I'd like to say THANK YOU for putting out such functional, right knowledge. The New Afrikan experience in Amerika has been cornered off into a few places, due to the insidious nature of the poison of white supremacy, racism and its allied (mass) media cohorts, but the ones who contribute to and live for the cause and struggle stand strong in their beliefs and convictions and I admire all of you for giving so much of yourselves to helping others find themselves and their humanity.

I hope all of you remain strong, safe and continue striving to spread social-political consciousness to those who are socially engineered and asleep on their feet, from the negative ill-effects of imperialism, colonialism, fascism, sexism, monopoly kapitalism and white supremacy racism, to mention but a few.

Having said that I formally request to be placed on your mailing list to receive future issues of 4strugglemag. I also have two important recommendations that I would like to suggest for print within 4strugglemag.

1. Because of new readers like myself, would you please define such ideologies as colonialism, fascism, imperialism, sexism and white supremacy racism (in historical and contemporary terms)?
2. Can you designate a page solely for the purpose of recommending a list of books – for reading and studying?

In order to build a mass (people) movement that enable us to checkmate and/or eliminate the negative "isms" and create a world predicated on Ma'at and Nguzo Saba we have to build human beings by providing them with a proper education or functional knowledge that moves the peoples minds – into the direction of unity, solidarity, supreme organization and sacred love – and away from their polar opposites, if you will.

## Each One Teach One

Like Brother Akili, I too have noticed a central theme common among many PPCs, PPs and POWs and their organizations. Very few of these mags have addressed and diagnosed the impact of imperialism, monopoly kapitalism and white supremacy racism on the psyches and minds of youths in concrete terms, and once internalized (consciously or subconsciously) what are the characteristics or symptoms? And what role does this play in them being tar-

geted by the imperialists and extreme kapitalists for prison incarceration and expansionism? How does anti-depressant medication of the youth play into all of this? I've never seen so many young persons on anti-psychotic drugs, etc., on which they depend as though it was a mother's breast or a baby's bottle. It is really disheartening and disturbing.

Anyhow, when I read: Welcome to 4strugglemag, the second paragraph I knew that I had to touch base with you at some point in time, and encourage you to obtain a copy of Human Rights Watch's report entitled "The Rest of Their Lives: Life Without Parole for Child Offenders in the U.S.," and urge you to seriously consider running a series of articles centered around this report.

My PPC Brother said, "PPC (juvenile lifers) are like the forgotten voice in the struggle." I'm hoping this letter will be the beginning by which we change this. What 4strugglemag will lend its hand, arm and voice in expressing its oppositional position to LWOP sentences (etc.) on child offenders, in direct violation of Articles 34 and 40 of the Convention of the Rights of the Child.

I look forward to your revolutionary response.

All power to the poor and oppressed. Free all PPs and POWs. Abolish the death penalty and JLWOP. End SHUs. Down with imperialism, sexism and racism

Ona Move  
Love and Struggle,

Sankofa

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Note: Ma'at is an ancient Afrikan concept defining the unifying principles of harmony (or balance) by which ALL creation is ordered, and Nguzo Saba are the seven principles of Kwanza (or Communalism).

Pamoja Tutashinde!  
(Together we will win!)

[Note from 4struggle: We will run excerpts from the Human Rights Watch report on LWOP for child offenders in Issue 12, and will also work towards building the definitions of terms and book recommendations that Sankofa requested. We hope that readers will contribute to these discussions!]



a worker to dig up the raw gold ore. Let's say the worker digs up 100 pounds of gold ore in eight hours of work. Now the capitalist has 100 pounds of gold ore, which we'll say is worth \$1000. The capitalist pays the worker \$100 for his/her day's work, leaving the capitalist \$900 extra value (for simplicity sake we will call this all profit, but some of it is other than that), and now the gold itself has a value of \$1000. The capitalist now hires a gold smelter who in eight hours, we'll say, melts the ore down into a gold brick, which we'll say is worth \$2000. The capitalist pays the smelter \$200 in wages, smelting being more skilled labor than digging, leaving the capitalist with a \$2000 gold bar that cost him or her \$300 to acquire (the workers actually produced it). Now the capitalist finds a goldsmith who he hires to turn the gold bar into many gold rings. He pays the goldsmith \$500 for his work. The capitalist then sells the rings for \$4000 – their exchange value. The workers whose labor brought the gold from zero value to its full \$4000 value got \$800, and the capitalist got the remaining \$3200. This is just a simplified example, but the rule is that commodities get their value when a worker puts his/her labor and time into changing some material into a commodity.

Under developed commodity production, when commodities are exchanged through the medium of money, their values are expressed with a definite sum of money. The value of the commodity is expressed in terms of money. Exchange value becomes the price of the commodity. This is a simple look at what Marx called **THE LABOR THEORY OF VALUE**.

Returning to the idea that most jobs, especially the worst ones, could be automated, we see that the capitalists cannot move to this stage because if only human labor power increases value and thus makes profit, then they need human labor power. This does not mean that people won't keep losing their jobs in the U.S. because of automation, since automation increases the capitalists' rate of profit. If the capitalist has one laborer and one machine doing the work that ten workers without machines did before, then of course, he/she has to pay less wages and saves money or increases profit, but it does not mean that the capitalists will take that total step. Only socialism, not governed by profit, could and will move to a stage where backbreaking labor is less needed, because this would be to the benefit of working people.

Finally and generally, socialism as a social-productive system is the first time since primitive communalism that society is run and controlled by the majority of people (the working class). The people who work and produce would also be the people who own and decide what should be done, when, how and why. The working class as opposed to the capitalist class would be the class in power, and it is always true that whoever controls the economy also controls the government. The working class as a whole would determine how society would live and grow, by setting up and using truly democratic methods and institutions. Then

the schools, medical services, recreational facilities, and all other social institutions would be open and available for the people to use. There would be no one to deny us these or other things if we as a class were running the country. Socialism is the logical and necessary next stage of society and human development on this planet – anything else would be going backwards.

This is just a short outline of socialism. How any specific socialist society would look would be up to the people of that country to determine. Part of this determination is how industrially and materially developed the country was to begin with. Cultural, historical, and environmental factors will also influence the faces of socialism. Therefore, it is not only likely, but most assuredly true that different countries will have unique aspects to their socialist democracies.

**Conclusion**

This, then, is a basic look at dialectical and historical materialism and, very briefly and generally, a materialist breakdown of the stages of human society's development, including a peek at how socialism will be in our country. This is not reading fortune cookies, astrology charts, or any other metaphysical hocus-pocus. It is a concrete evaluation of concrete realities using the powerful tools of dialectical materialist understandings of the real world. These tools, and the insights we gain using them, enable us to move forward with foresight and planning. This is only an introduction; so many points were left out and most aspects were only covered briefly and generally and, therefore, somewhat mechanically. It is hoped and urged that at least two additional short books be read: *Dialectical and Historical Materialism*, by J. Stalin and *On Contradiction*, by Mao Tse Tung. Both are available at political bookstores and both provide a much richer understanding of this powerful tool that we need if we want to struggle more effectively.

Even with only this basic understanding, we can see that the world is moving forward and that the day of the common people, the working class, is approaching. As in all other stages though, we must realize that conditions develop and groundwork is laid while the majority of people are still not aware of their full scope. But when a certain point is reached, we begin to see and understand (if we don't purposely shut our eyes) the full nature of our enemy, as well as our own power and duty. Thus begins the last stage of the old. The people whose day has come must then step forward and make that complete qualitative leap ahead. This is not easy and it never has been, but all we really have to lose are our chains – the chains that confine us to a life of wage slavery in a system of discrimination and injustice, the chains that hold us in prison cells in capitalist dungeons, the chains that allow us only frustrated half lives as the oppressed class in a capitalist nightmare. The New Day Is Ours To Build!

collectively own the means of production and the goods they produce, and decide how to allocate those goods as well.

As it now stands, all production is done for only one purpose – profit. The capitalists are not concerned with whether the commodities and services they have produced are useful or not as long as they can be sold. In fact, a huge portion of U.S. production today is war production. In the summer of 2008, the Iraq war is costing U.S. taxpayers \$12 billion a month. This comes out to \$5000 a second! In addition it is costing taxpayers another \$40 billion per month for the rest of the military-industrial complex expenses. This serves no purpose but high taxes and death for us and obscene profits for the military-industrial complex. For the capitalists, war production is a highly profitable business, and when war involving U.S. troops breaks out they rarely send their sons or daughters to die. Meanwhile, people in this country today, let alone in the rest of the world, are going hungry, live in rotten housing, cannot afford decent medical care, have to send their children to old, overcrowded schools, etc. What has happened is that now, when our country has reached a point where poverty and suffering could be wiped out, the capitalists refuse to do it, because it is not profitable. The capitalist class has outlived all its usefulness and is standing squarely in the way of necessary progress. This is not just because they are all greedy nasty individuals (although most, no doubt, are), but because the only way the capitalist system can operate is on private property and profit, and these are thus protected as inherent, constitutional rights that may not be legally challenged. Therefore, the solution requires more than a matter of putting a so-called “nice guy” into office, because even a “good guy” has to act within the limits of the system.

While we are reaching the level of production where all the goods needed could be produced and made available to working people, we find ourselves plagued with inflation, recessions, depressions, severe cutbacks, and declining living standards. Why? Again, because the capitalist class is only after profit. They not only don't produce what is needed, they actually destroy crops while people are hungry, produce business jets and even more senseless cars and gadgets while many people still do not have refrigerators or running hot water, or even a home to live in. Under socialism, goods and services are produced not because someone can make a fast buck, but because they are needed and wanted by the people. Capitalism always has and will have cycles of recession, depression and so-called good times. Although in the 1950s and 60s, a lot of talk was smeared around the U.S. about how this problem of capitalism had been resolved, today as banks are failing and homes are being foreclosed, we all understand that it is as ready as ever to fall into a full-blown depression. Socialist countries never have depressions because they do not operate on a market economy. Instead, they have a planned and thought-out economy that is designed to meet people's

needs. During the great depression of the 1930s, the only major country that was not laying people off was the Soviet Union, which had a socialist economy then.

Socialism resolves many other contradictions that present day capitalism imposes on us. By overthrowing the capitalists' political control and setting up a working class democracy, it is possible to establish a socially owned means of production. Having resolved these work relations contradictions, we could begin building not only a more materially plentiful life, but an emotionally and socially satisfying and ecologically sustainable one as well. Under capitalism the idea is that you gain at someone else's expense. Such a basis for society quite naturally leads to an overall hostility, distrust and negativity amongst the people. Socialism is instead based on the principle that mutual cooperation leads to advancement. It is not hard to see how, in a socialist system, society would grow increasingly harmonious and people, regardless of race, sex, or any other features, would have the greatest possible freedom to develop their full human potential.

Looking ahead, we can see we are reaching a point in the United States where most hard manual labor could be performed by machines. The capitalists will never move to this stage because it will mean cutting their own throats. Instead, they focus on automating good jobs for which workers must be paid well and leaving low-pay hard labor for the workers.

Unskilled workers, who do most of the dirty, dangerous, boring work, tend to be cheaper than the machines that would replace them. They are also plentiful and easily replaced, which makes it difficult for them to make demands on the bosses. Skilled workers, whose jobs tend to be more interesting and satisfying, must be paid more because their knowledge is in short supply. Also they can make demands on the bosses because they are not so easily replaced. You can't go to the Home Depot parking lot and pick up a van-load of diesel mechanics. In order to understand this more fully, we must examine a certain aspect of work and capitalist production.

Karl Marx, 170 years ago, discovered that under a money system (A capitalist system, that is, although money is used for a while when a country is transforming to socialism. Goods and services are allocated by other means once it becomes fully socialist, so money becomes useless and disappears.), all goods and services that are made to be sold (commodities) only get value once some worker has put his or her labor on them. By value we mean exchange value or money value, not use value. Anything that is useful has use value (air, for example) but only commodities that are made to be sold have exchange value or just value. That might sound strange, so let us take an example. Let us say we think there is gold buried in the yard in its raw mineral ore state. This gold has no value as long as it is lying underground. Now a capitalist comes along and hires

**ON 10/10/08**  
**DEMAND FREEDOM!**  
 FOR ALL U.S. HELD POLITICAL PRISONERS AND PRISONERS OF WAR  
**NATIONAL MARCH AT THE UNITED NATIONS**  
 12 NOON: 42<sup>ND</sup>-47<sup>TH</sup> AND 1<sup>ST</sup> AVE >> MARCH TO MADISON SQUARE PARK

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On October 10th 2008, the Jericho Movement will mark the 10th year of their march to the United Nations. Jericho will be joined by supporters on this momentous occasion, demanding freedom and justice for all political prisoners and prisoners of war. In order to commemorate this event, we are printing statements written by political prisoners to mark the occasion.

## Political Prisoners in America: The Jericho Movement and the October 10th National March to Set the Captives Free

BY JAAN LAAMAN

There are over 100 political prisoners in various prisons across the United States. These women and men are listed and recognized as political prisoners by numerous national and international human rights, legal defense and progressive/socialist organizations. These captive activists come from the Civil Rights/Black Power/New African Liberation struggles, the Puerto Rican Independence Movement, Indigenous People's survival struggles, Chicano/Mexicano movements, anti-imperialist/anti-war movements, anti-racist/anti-fascist struggles, the Women's Movement, social and economic justice struggles, and especially in the past several years, from the environmental and animal rights movement.

We, U.S. political prisoners, are Black, white, Latino, Native American and Asian. Most of us have been in captivity since the 1970s and 80s. Some of us were convicted on totally fabricated charges, others for nebulous political conspiracies or for acts of resistance. All of us received huge sentences for our political beliefs or activities in support of these beliefs.

Additionally, there are thousands, probably tens of thousands of revolutionary-minded, politically-conscious prisoners in U.S. jails. These are people who became more politically aware and active once they landed in prison. Since 9/11/01, the U.S. has also imprisoned thousands of Arab and Muslim visitors to this country, as well as some Islamic citizens and residents.

The U.S. government likes to deny that it holds political prisoners. This is a lie. The harsh punitive conditions of confinement, often in special control unit type super max prisons, that we political prisoners face day in, day out, decade after decade, exposes and refutes this government myth. Not only does America hold political prisoners, but we are being held under longer sentences than any kind of

prisoners, anywhere in the world! Despite this, we remain committed to our communities, movements and most of all, our principles. As best we can, through our voices and lives, we continue to uphold the politics of justice, equality and liberation, especially for the poor and working class people throughout the world.

In 1998, a very principled and politically conscious march and rally of over 10,000 people gathered in Washington DC to demand the freedom of all political prisoners held in the United States. The march was called the Jericho Freedom March, and from it the Jericho Movement was born. The Jericho Movement is the only nationwide political prisoner advocacy organization, whose sole purpose is to inform the public about and advocate for the release of all political prisoners in the U.S. This Fall, ten years after the original Jericho march, on October 10, 2008, the Jericho Movement is calling for a march and rally to demand freedom for all U.S. political prisoners, in front of the UN building in New York City. We, political prisoners held by the United States, are fully and energetically in support of this march.

Most of us who were already political prisoners at the time of the original 1998 march are still behind prison walls today. There have been a small number of joyous advances. President Clinton released 11 Puerto Rican Independence activists in 1999. Just before he left office in 2000, he gave amnesty to two more political prisoner sisters. A few individuals have been released on parole or after long fought appeals. Death from illness, after decades of captivity have sadly taken some respected and loved comrades as well.

The large majority of women and men who were political prisoners ten years ago remain locked up today. In addition, the ranks of U.S. political prisoners have grown in the past several years. Many people have been imprisoned for their work to protect our Earth and environment. The Puerto Rican Independence movement as well as the New African/Black Liberation struggle have also seen more of their activists imprisoned. These new prisoners of conscience are joining the dozens and dozens of Black and Puerto Rican freedom fighters presently in captivity, some of whom have been locked up for over 30 years now. Recently people have also been imprisoned for anti-war activities. This includes active duty U.S. soldiers who have courageously refused to continue to participate in the wars Bush started, wars that most Americans today oppose. The ranks of U.S. political prisoners are growing and the need for a public outcry and demand for justice and freedom is clearly needed today.

We U.S. political prisoners want and need your awareness, support and participation in the 10/10 march.

Personally, I am in my 24th straight year of captivity. Along with my comrade Tom Manning, who is being held in the federal prison system, we are the last two Ohio 7

This demonstrates the protracted nature of our struggle.

The capitalists developed the new means of production and brought the world the machine age. We must keep in mind, though, that when we say the capitalists developed industrial production, we mean they were the force pushing the ideas and setting up the plants. It was the working class who actually sweated and worked to build the factories and who then worked in the plants and produced the goods. Just as the feudal nobility class and its subordinate craftsman class became useless with the development of machinery, so, too, the world is now at the stage where the capitalists are worse than useless: they are a drag on further social progress. Today, all production is done socially (many people work together to produce the commodities), yet the instruments of production are owned privately and therefore, the products become the private property of the factory owners. This is often expressed as the contradiction between **social production** and **private appropriation**. Put in blunt terms, laborers work and produce everything, while the owners do little to nothing, but get to keep most of the benefits of our work. On top of this, they turn around and try to convince us that they are doing us a favor by giving us a job – by letting us work our lives away to make them rich! Plus they get to make the decisions about what is produced, meaning much of our productive capacity is wasted on military madness to defend bourgeois power and produce luxury goods no one but a minority elite can afford, instead of affordable housing, food, education, healthcare, transportation – social goods for all.

Just like the nobles were against change to capitalism, the capitalists are vehemently against the change to socialism. Since they control the vast majority of the governmental, public, and private institutions (media, schools, courts, etc.), they use them to try to make up explanations and theories to try to convince the working people that socialism is no good for anyone and that we should continue to accept their rule over us. If need be (and we see this every time a union goes on strike and throws up a strong picket or when prisoners rebel or a community protests), they will use force to try to stay in power. Still, even with all their courts, cops, and miseducation, the tide of history is against them and sooner or later the capitalist class must be moved aside so a new age can begin.

We see then that the capitalist system is marked by several contradictions, the key ones being: the contradiction between social production and private appropriation; the struggle between major capitalists, especially those in different countries, each trying to cut the others' throats and, if necessary, dragging working people into wars to do so; the struggle between large monopoly capitalists and smaller capitalists who continually get eaten

up by the larger ones; and, finally but most importantly, the continuous and irreconcilable class struggle between the decadent capitalist class, who are trying to hang on to their power even though the huge majority of people suffer, and the ever-growing strength of the working class, which is moving to bring a new and better system and age. It is this last contradiction, the struggle between the working class or proletariat and the capitalist class or bourgeoisie, which is based on the concrete reality that capitalism is not meeting the needs of working people. That is the propelling force which will bring about the next qualitative social change to socialism.

### Socialism

Socialism is the latest (fifth) main stage of human society that some countries are already beginning. It is the level of development where the contradiction between social production and private appropriation is resolved by making the appropriation social also. This means the major industries, mines, farms, railways (or, in other words, all the major means of production) are under the control of the working class. This is easily accomplished by socializing these enterprises (socialized is where the people, community, or state owns them). Under socialism, the state or government in turn is truly controlled by the working people; they not only vote once every couple of years for government officials, but also have more direct and real control of the day-to-day operation of the workplace.

For example, if you worked in a factory, you and your co-workers would be making most of the decisions on the work, conditions, etc., as well as having a real voice, along with all the working class, in deciding national and other large issues as well. This is really only logical because it is the working people that actually make all the goods that the country needs. Therefore, they should be the ones who



the Palestinians under its control. Saudi Arabia has a puppet legislature and disenfranchises women, no one votes for the King, etc. While democracy is the label that capitalists use for their system, this does not mean all people have real equal rights or opportunities. It actually means democracy for the capitalists and “obey” the rules for the working class. In fact, capitalist democracy only allows a small amount of political democracy: the right to pick between a few candidates selected by the ruling class. Social and economic democracy is conveniently omitted from the capitalist definition. People don’t get to vote at all on the things that are currently most important to them such as job issues or property relations.

**On top of this, they turn around and try to convince us that they are doing us a favor by giving us a job – by letting us work our lives away to make them rich!**

As we saw, many merchants and traders had become rich in the later part of the feudal era, but since they were not born to the “right” parents, they were a force without any real political power. These early capitalists controlled the towns and cities, but only so many people could be employed as craftsmen and shippers, etc. The cities stayed small and the real political power remained in the hands of the landowning nobility. Then came the industrial revolution, the invention of the steam engine and the invention of large-scale machinery. In other words, a large qualitative leap occurred in the means of production.

The invention of machinery ended the handicraftsmen method of production and brought in the rise of factories and the corresponding mass movement of the people from the countryside to the cities to work these new mills. This drastic change in the means of production led to new contradictions and struggles politically and socially. Two notable political struggles were the American revolution against the English king and colonial system led by the young capitalist class of America, and the French revolution of 1789, led by the French capitalist class against the king, nobility, and state church. The new struggles and contradictions that came with the ending of feudalism and the rise of capitalism led to significant social changes for the common people too. Under feudalism the peasants had certain rights, but they were still legally tied to the land. The new capitalist ruling class had no need to own the people or to make them live on their land because they were not primarily land owners – they were factory and business owners. The feudal noble class had a certain responsibility to the peasant. In the case

of a very bad harvest, the landowners would have to open their storehouses (just a little of course) to keep the serfs alive so they could produce for the nobles again the next year. The capitalists, however, only needed the workers to labor in the mill. If business was bad (as it always is every several years in the cycles of capitalism), they would not want any responsibility to feed and clothe the workers. The capitalist class did not need or want a peasant class. They needed a working class, a group of workers not tied to the land, who lived in the shadow of the mill and who were so-called “free” to sell their labor power to the capitalists, whenever the capitalists needed it. The rest of the time the workers were “free” to starve. As we know, the working class became a reality and soon grew into the largest class in industrialized countries.

Another major reason for the peasants freeing themselves was that in order to overthrow the nobility, the capitalist class (being a minority itself) had to ally itself with the peasants, who of course did most of the actual fighting and dying. After overthrowing the feudal system and liberating themselves from the nobles and serfdom, the common people would not let themselves be re-enslaved in the same manner by the capitalists. So the capitalists did it a different way – one that gave them more power than any noble.

The qualitative advance in the means of production not only led to political change – the government power was taken from the landowning nobility class by the capitalist class – but also great social change. The new productive forces required that the workers be better educated and more skilled than the peasants had been, so they could understand and operate the machinery in the factories. This meant that some education was begun for working people. Also, in order to just have enough workers available to labor in the mills, cities grew up around the factories and most people became urban dwellers. Common people gained legal and political rights (though we all know that even today these rights exist a lot more on paper than in our real lives). Life today is vastly different than in the feudal era, and it is all a product of this rise of the machine age.

While the industrial system of capitalism freed the common people from one type of bondage, it created a new type – wage slavery. In the earlier stages of capitalism, the conditions of exploitation of working people were savage. Sixteen hour work days, child labor including six and seven year-olds, starvation wages, dangerous working conditions, severe repression any time the workers sought to improve their conditions – all this and more. Yet just as the common people fought against slavery and serfdom, they fought against the capitalists and their government system. Through immense suffering and struggle, the working class has been able to improve its conditions of life and work, up to and including actually overthrowing the capitalist overlords in some areas. Unfortunately, various failures have allowed the capitalists to reconquer large areas of the territory from which they were once evicted.

anti-imperialist political prisoners still in captivity. I will fully complete my Massachusetts state sentence at the end of 2008, and then I will be transferred to the federal system to begin a 53 year sentence.

Captivity takes its toll on human beings. My comrade Tom has and continues to deal with serious medical issues, as do many of the other aging political prisoners. I continue to miss and mourn my comrade Richard Williams, who died of illness added to by the extremely poor prison health care system, while in a federal prison 2 years ago.

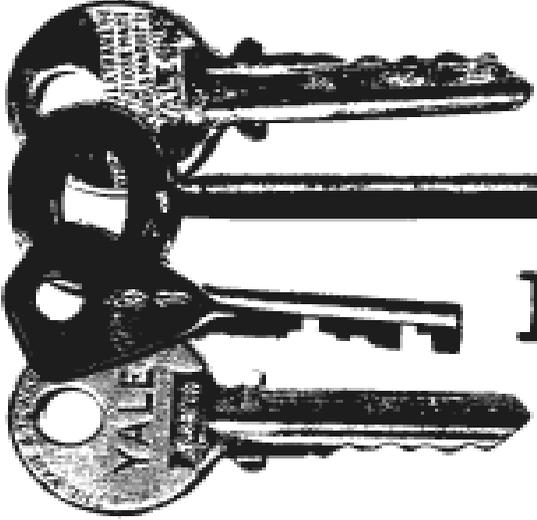
The government imprisons people as political prisoners for multiple reasons. First of all in order to take serious leaders and activists out of circulation and to stop their work. Imprisonment is also used to intimidate other activists and to slow down or destroy liberation, peace and justice organizations and movements. Locking people up puts a very heavy toll on activists’ families, especially their children. It also hurts and damages the friends and communities of the prisoners.

The U.S. government has sought to silence us, and hurt our families, communities and the struggles we come from. Despite this, political prisoners in America, like our counterparts in other countries, have continued to speak, write and participate, as best we can, in the efforts for peace, justice, freedom and equality in the continuing struggles against imperialism, tyranny and war.

Earlier this year I began doing regular radio commentaries on a broad variety of political issues. They are also available as podcasts at [www.freejaan.com](http://www.freejaan.com). So we political prisoners continue to do what we can to stay connected and active in the important and necessary ongoing peace and justice struggles. We are going to stay active and we hope you do too. Come and join the 10/10 march and rally. Bring your family, friends, co-workers and fellow students and help raise the cry, so the whole world can hear.

**FREE ALL U.S. POLITICAL PRISONERS NOW!**

**Jericho 10th Anniversary**  
**MARCH TO THE UNITED NATIONS**



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 for  
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## UN 10/10 March

BY SUNDIATA ACOLI

Greetings Sisters, Brothers and Comrades,

My name is Sundiata Acoli, and i'm a 71 year-old New Afrikan PP/POW who's been down for the last 35 years in maximum security prisons. A few months ago i was transferred to FCI Otisville, New York (a medium security prison) and i'm coming up for parole again in 2010. That's the update on my case.

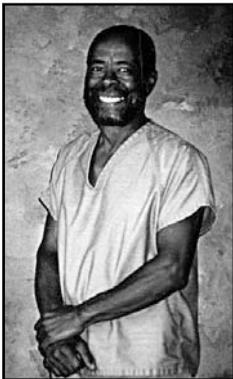
It's not that different from many other New Afrikan PP/POWs or exiles, some who have been down just as long or longer than i have: Ruchel Magee, Hugo Yogi Pinell, Romaine Chip Fitzgerald, D.C. Cox, Russell Maroon Shoatz, Jalil Muntaqim, Herman Bell, Assata Shakur, Nihandi Abisodun and others. The one thing we all have in common is that we're Black and no Black u.s. PP/POW has ever been granted amnesty or a pardon. So we still have a lot of work to do as a u.s. PP/POW movement.

But it can be done: the Puerto Rican movement has shown us how to do it, and the anti-imperialist movement did too, to a lesser extent. i'd like to congratulate Ashanti, Paulette, Kazi and the rest of the crew for the great job they've done in re-invigorating Jericho and moving it in a direction it needs to go.

As for what's happening today? i think the PP/POW movement is in a transition stage. By that i mean Bush woke a lot of people up. He was the wolf, arrogantly riding roughshod over people of color and the poor at home and abroad.

Our people and movement suffered setbacks, but Bush's arrogance, bluster and blunders brought the imperialists many military, political and economic setbacks too (except for "Big Oil" corporations) so generally it's "Good riddance, Bush!" and "Hello, Obama!"

Frankly, should Obama win, most revolutionaries won't expect anything to change other than the Black masses finally realizing their long-held dream of a "Black President" and various sectors using that fact to declare the race issue solved. But i do think an Obama tenure would leave people of color and the poor with a more realistic interpretation of how "color doesn't really matter," how racism and exploitation are embedded in the system and how the only way the masses will ever get a break is the revolution.



Just as Bush's harshness, arrogance and blunders intensified the struggle from the right, i think Barack's non-change would do the same from the left. Our job is to organize in a manner to take advantage of the non-change that's sure to come. i thank you.

Sundiata Acoli (C. SQUIRE) #39794-066  
P.O. Box 1000  
Otisville, NY 10963  
USP Otisville

## Jericho: On to the UN

BY DAVID GILBERT

So many things have changed since I was thrown in prison in 1981. Back then, there was no internet or iPods; AIDS hadn't been identified as a virus-borne epidemic; global warming was not a topic of public discussion. The inequality of wealth, already obscene, was only 1/2 of what it is now; the number of people in prison, already inexcusably high, was only about 1/3 of the 2.3 million people behind bars today. The U.S. national debt was only 1/9 of today's more than 9 \$ trillion.

So much has changed, but so many of the fundamentals of the system are the same. The corporations and banks still get rich through plundering the poorest countries of the global South, and the U.S. still wages periodic, vicious wars to control those areas of the world. This society is still based, regardless of the latest euphemisms and attractive tokens, on white supremacy, class rule, the subordination of women and homophobia. The global clock races ever closer to a catastrophic midnight of irreversible environmental damage.

POW/PPs remain relevant because of the continuity of resistance, with a vision of a more humane and cooperative way to live together, to this oppression ... a continuity that goes back to the first slave rebellions and the first battles by Native Americans to save their cultures and the land. The reason to raise the issue of POW/PPs is to highlight that continuity, and, most importantly, to honor it by continuing to work for social change today. A better, more humane world is certainly necessary ... and, with all of us making our most full-hearted effort, it just may be possible.

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Clinton Corr. Facility



feudal ruling class had enormous power over the people. The vast majority of people were peasant farmers or serfs who were legally tied to the land they worked (they could not leave the land without permission of the nobles who owned the land). The serfs, however, had some rights. For example, while they still could be bought and sold as part of the land, they could not be killed arbitrarily. They also owned their own tools and animals, and were allowed to keep a portion of the crops they grew on the landlord's land. The aristocracy needed the labor of the serfs to extract the wealth from the land and maintain the infrastructure on which the nobles' power was based, and so had to grant these concessions to the peasants.

This system developed through further improvement of the means to production. Iron and steel were produced and high-grade weapons and tools like swords and plows and other farm implements were made. This meant that more could be farmed faster and better. A slave, however, gets the same amount of food and rest and remains a slave whether he works fast or slow and therefore has no incentive to produce more, even with better tools. But if a person can see some gain in his/her work, like the possibility of keeping part of the product, s/he will work more. This gave landowners incentive to discard the slave as a less productive laborer in favor of the serf, who had his or her own tools, animals, and a greater interest in his or her work. Landowners also did not have a big investment in serfs that would be lost if the serf died or ran away. These factors, as well as more and more slave revolts and the breakdown of the old slave-owning empires, led the system to change – it led to the development of feudalism.

With feudalism's new methods and tools, people were able to produce ever more things beyond food and to do that better and faster. Handicrafts and later, artisan manufacture (not to be confused with industrial production which did not develop until capitalism), grew and developed. Towns and cities arose to accommodate this new type and level of commerce. Some serfs ran away from the nobles to learn various trade skills in outlying districts, which expanded development more. Some nobles set certain peasants up in castle shops to produce the various goods needed by the nobles' estates. Craft guilds arose and kept and expanded the knowledge and techniques of various handicrafts; children were apprenticed to craftsmen so they could learn trades. Specialization emerged. Along with this development was the growth of towns and cities as centers of manufacturing and trade. Urban centers grew up where the raw materials were gathered, the products were made and sold, and where transportation was good (crossroads, river forks, seaports). As a result, a wider system of commercialism, sometimes called mercantilism, grew.

As the variety and availability of products grew and their prices declined, demand for them by people in different areas increased. Middlemen arose to bring buyers and sellers together. These were the traders, merchants and bankers

who filled the needs of economic growth and development in ways a primarily land-based nobility could not. Society began to see people who were not members of the noble class but whose families had, over many years, accumulated more money than many nobles. (The rich non-nobles were often called burghers in Europe, and from this word we get bourgeois or capitalist.) Yet the noble class, along with religious authorities, remained in control of the government, which, though increasingly national, was still mostly local.

These were the seeds of the new system, capitalism, which was developing while the feudal system was still strong. The strength of the feudal system is what sharpened the contradiction between the then ruling class of land-owning nobles and the new mercantile class, the peasant class, and the emerging body of workers not employed as farmers. The rise of new tools and procedures of manufacture, agriculture and commerce also raised new contradictions and struggles grew as the needs of the nobility and the inefficiency of the feudal system inhibited progress. This system was also marked by the subjugation of the majority of the people by the minority noble class. The basis of the nobles' class power was that they owned the land, which was the major means of production for the majority of people. This gave them material power, when the wealth derived from the land dwarfed all other sources of wealth.

Feudalism was marked by two main types of struggle: first, the class warfare of the serfs against the nobility and, later, the conflict between the growing capitalist forces of bankers, merchants, traders, and manufacturers against the ruling nobility class also. The serfs struggled because they wanted freedoms and their own land, and the bankers, etc., because they based their power on money, trade and production, not on land-owning and agriculture. The feudal system, with its constant wars, irrational property relations and other costs of maintaining an aristocracy, impeded the change that would allow societies to grow and develop through new forms of economic and social activity. In this situation, the nobility was one aspect of the contradiction; peasants, workers and the bourgeoisie was the other aspect.

### Capitalism

This leads us to the fourth stage – capitalism – and its most recent and usual political system, capitalist democracy. We must bear in mind, though, that when they need to protect their political and economic power, the capitalists think nothing about changing from capitalist democracy to out-and-out fascist dictatorship. Nazi Germany was an example of this, as were the CIA and capitalist overthrows of the popular democratic governments of Iran, Guatemala, and Indonesia and their replacements with repressive dictatorships. Moreover, the degree of democracy within capitalist countries varies. Israel, for example, allows virtually no democracy for, and acts as a dictatorship towards,

slave owning society, the slave would get nothing at all for his/her work.

In a factory where the workers were partial owners, but there was also partial corporate ownership, this would be an example of a combination of cooperative and exploitative relations of production.

### Materialist Outline: Overview of Human Societal Development

Having some understanding of dialectical and historical materialism, we can now look at human history and see how and why, in a very general way, the large scale changes have occurred. The world has seen four main societal-productive systems so far and some countries are beginning the fifth level. These stages were primitive communalism, slave holding, feudal, capitalist and now we are moving towards socialism. We will briefly and very generally cover these stages and spot some of the main factors that led the development from one stage to the next higher one. We will point out the key struggles or contradictions, which through their resolution led to human advancement.

#### Primitive Communalism

First we see primitive communalism, where people used stone, wood, bone and crude hand-made tools (the means of production were primitive). There was no developed agriculture because people did not have the tools or know-how at the time. Frequently, they had no need to develop them, as nature fulfilled their needs. The people lived together in small wandering groups, spending almost all of their time on just surviving. They shared their wealth communally. They didn't do this because they were any smarter or loved each other any more than at any later age; they did it because working together, hunting and gathering plant food together was the only way they could survive. Labor worked in common led to the common ownership of the means of production, such as it was, and to the sharing of the fruits of the work. The idea of private ownership of the means of production, except perhaps for personal ownership of certain weapons, did not yet exist. Tribes grew up over the years and they shared their common goods. While there may have been occasional fighting between different tribes, basically the people lived and shared equally among themselves. There was no exploitation, classes or class struggle.

Primitive communalism was by far, the longest-lasting system that existed everywhere on Earth. When human beings first emerged on this planet, we lived and survived in primitive communal families, clans and tribes, sharing and working together for thousands and tens of thousands of years.

#### Slave Owning

Next we see the slave owning system. It must be noted though, that the whole world did not develop all at once. Some areas moved ahead while others remained at the lower level because of the particular conditions and situations in each area. We can still see parts of the world today where feudal type (peasant and landowner) relations exist, but most of the world is capitalist with some areas having other types of relations.

As primitive communal groups learned how to better use their environments, some became less nomadic. This helped bring about the beginning of agriculture (the deliberate cultivation of crops and domestic animals). This also led to more permanent settlements, since it was less necessary to follow and hunt wild animals. This in turn led to the development of new technology. People began to use metals – copper, bronze and later iron – to make better tools and weapons (the means of production took a qualitative leap forward). More settled lives also allowed the accumulation of more material possessions than could be readily carried by nomads.

With the development of better tools/weapons, more could be produced and communal societies began to develop a surplus of goods; that is, not everyone had to work full time for the group to survive. This surplus could either be divided equally among all or it could go to a few who then didn't have to work. At first, the communal system remained, but then some people developed better weapons and knowledge of agriculture. The surplus that these advances provided was kept by individuals and we begin to see the concept of private property develop. Since certain people developed these new tools, weapons, and methods (especially of farming) before others, they saw that more could be farmed and produced if more people could be put to work. Their superior weapons enabled them to conquer less developed peoples, enslave them, and bring them back to their lands to work. So the slave system came into existence.

We see that an advancement in the means of production enabled private property to develop, which led to the emergence of classes – the slave owners and the slaves. Thus, class society was born. While it was a brutal system and most people suffered, the world as a whole reached a higher material level in the sense that more was produced. As a result, the struggle for a better standard of living became more a social struggle than one of constant struggle for survival and nature. The slave-owning period is marked by intense class struggle and warfare between the slaves and the slave owners.

#### Feudalism

The next stage is the feudal system. Here, church officials and a small landowning elite (usually called the nobility or aristocracy) derived most of the benefits of society. This

## Political Prisoners and the Politics of the United Nations

BY OSCAR LOPEZ RIVERA

The United Nations Special Decolonization Committee held hearings dealing with Puerto Rico's colonial status case on 9 June 2008. Over forty petitioners appeared before the Committee providing it with valuable and up to the date information about Puerto Rico's colonial plight, its dehumanizing and devastating effects and with possible solution to eradicate it. The petitioners represented different political parties in Puerto Rico, governments of Latin America and Caribbean nations, non-governmental organizations, labor unions and civic organizations. Even the governor of Puerto Rico, Anibal Acevedo Vila, made an unexpected appearance (no sitting governor had ever taken such a step) informing the Committee about the lack of democracy the present status represents and about the need for the us government to clarify exactly what happened in 1953 with Resolution 748.

The Special Committee approved, by consensus, a favorable and comprehensive resolution which includes the following points: 1) recognition of Puerto Rico's inalienable right to self-determination and independence, and of its identity as a Latin American and Caribbean nation; 2) asking the United Nation's General Assembly to thoroughly examine, in all its aspects, Puerto Rico's case; 3) calling on the us government to assume the proper process and mechanism to allow Puerto Rico to exercise its self-determination and independence in accordance with UN Resolution 1514 (XV); and 4) asking the us government to release all Puerto Rican political prisoners.

At this juncture, the most urgent task and challenge before us is to get the UN General Assembly to hear Puerto Rico's case as the Committee's resolution specifies. It behooves this august body to take up this matter immediately. First, because eighteen years ago, it made a commitment to eradicate colonialism. Second, because fifty-five years ago it was coerced and hoodwinked by the us government to approve resolution 748 — a farce that has only helped to perpetuate colonialism in Puerto Rico. And third, because the us government is asking the world community to recognize Kosovo's independence. Kosovo is a province of Serbia that was taken over by ethnic Albanians using force, terrorism and ethnic cleansing with the aid and assistance of the us government and its armed forces. It's important to point out that hundreds of Puerto Rican soldiers have been sent to Kosovo to do the us government's dirty work.

If the us government doesn't have any qualms in asking the world community to recognize Kosovo's independence

then it shouldn't have any problems recognizing Puerto Rico to exercise its inalienable right to self-determination and independence in accordance with 1514 (XV). It shouldn't have any problems, either, recognizing the fact that Puerto Rico is a Latin American and Caribbean nation, and the issue of its colonial status must be resolved with the help of the world community.

The United Nations General Assembly must fulfill its responsibility, correct the mistake it made by approving resolution 748 and notify the us government that the colonial case of Puerto Rico is not a domestic issue. Puerto Rico will be independent and sovereign, and a member of the United Nations, and it will struggle for a better and more just world. Pa'lante en Resistencia y Lucha.

For more information on the aforementioned resolutions:

1. Resolution 748 (VIII): Cessation of the transmission of information under article 73 e of the Charter in respect of Puerto Rico: <http://daccess-ods.un.org/TMP/8925765.html>
2. Resolution 1514 (XV): Declaration on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples: <http://daccess-ods.un.org/TMP/9721184.html>

True to the priorities of the National Boricua Human Rights Network, including an end to the continuing political repression and criminalization of progressive sectors of the Puerto Rican community, the NBHRN has supported Tania Frontera and Christopher Torres from the moment the FBI served them with subpoenas in December 2007 to appear before a federal grand jury in Brooklyn, New York.

On June 27, NBHRN once again demonstrated its support. Along with the Comité Pro Derechos Humanos de Puerto Rico (Human Rights Committee of Puerto Rico), and through their New York National Lawyers Guild attorneys Alan Levine and Jeffrey Rothman, they presented in court a Motion to Intervene in the Motion to Quash the Grand Jury Subpoenas served on Frontera and Torres. The motion asserts that the subpoenas have a chilling effect on the constitutional rights of association and expression of the both organizations, particularly given the long and sordid historical trajectory of the United States colonial domination of Puerto Rico and its unceasing efforts to criminalize and destroy the movement for the independence of Puerto Rico.

Unbeknownst to counsel, the court filed the motions under seal, and assigned the case to Judge Carol Amon. On June 27, as on previous dates when Frontera and Torres were scheduled to appear, the Hostos One Eleven Grand Jury Resistance Coalition convened a demonstration on the courthouse steps, and then entered the courtroom to watch the proceedings. The government asked the judge to clear the courtroom, arguing that grand jury matters are to be secret. Lawyers for Frontera and Tones, Susan Tipo-

graph and Martin Stolar of the National Lawyers Guild, recounted that in their vast experience with grand juries, the public has never been excluded from hearings on motions to quash, nor have such motions ever been filed under seal. The court ordered briefs on the secrecy issue, as well as on the motion to intervene, and ordered the government to respond adequately to the motion to quash and reveal whether the subpoenas or grand jury questions were founded in illegal electronic surveillance.

The motions will be argued on July 28. If they are denied, and if Frontera and Torres refuse to collaborate, as they have publicly stated, the ranks of Puerto Rican political prisoners will undoubtedly grow by two. This swelling of the ranks would take place one month after the adoption of the annual United Nations Decolonization Committee resolution, affirming the application of international law requiring decolonization to the case of Puerto Rico, and urging, among other things, that the president of the United States release all Puerto Rican political prisoners.

Carlos Alberto Tones and the Network are preparing his parole campaign (which as of this writing) is set for February 2009 as well as engaging in a fundraising campaign for his pottery workshop, El Cemi. Carlos is also adjusting to his new surroundings, after being transferred to FCI Pekin, IL. For more information on the campaign, please email [alejandrom@boricuahumanrights.org](mailto:alejandrom@boricuahumanrights.org).

Oscar Lopez Rivera has written several articles, one on the UN Decolonization Committee hearings this past July, for Jericho as well as produced several new paintings.

To view them, and for more information on Puerto Rican Political Prisoners, please visit: [boricuahumanrights.org](http://boricuahumanrights.org)

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## Call to Action

BY MARILYN BUCK

No one is born a political prisoner. We each become a political detainee from whatever time or place in which our conscience and imperative to challenge injustice and inequality developed.

The U.S. political prisoners and POWs are doctors, scientists, workers, artists, unemployed people and the disenfranchised, marginalized and historically oppressed. Most of us are anti-imperialist and have carried on the tradition of seeking justice, living with compassion and clear eyes even inside these cruel, deranged prison cages.

As an internationalist, I am outraged at the war, the torture of prisoners, assaulting and driving civilians into exile from Iraq and Afghanistan to right here in the U.S. in New Orleans, LA. I would hope that all the political prisoners and POWs also support women's equality and freedom worldwide. There has been much foot-dragging when it comes to women's liberation which has not only impoverished the resources of newly-liberated nations but has also played a major role in the ability of many countries to remain free of the shackles of neo-colonialism and anti-democratic political, social and economic conditions.

While different ones of us struggle on different fronts, let us hope that we all remain standing to support the right to self-determination of nations, and end to the hierarchy of capital, nation, race and gender, and for that principled piece that will aid life to survive on this planet.

Most of the U.S. political prisoners have been imprisoned for 25 years and more, though as the U.S. continues its wars and pillage, there are many younger U.S. residents detained as political prisoners. Meanwhile, other nations that have held political prisoners for decades are releasing their prisoners. Germany not so long ago released long-held Red Army Faction prisoners held more than 25 years.

Let the conscience of the world, represented in the UN, speak out in the name of the U.S. political prisoners and POWs.

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ings), but because they confront a different set of material circumstances and thus have a different type of economic system (a way of making and distributing the necessities of life) upon which their social system and consciousness are based. We have a different system and this is what leads us to think, feel and act differently. It is not any particular teacher, religious leader, or politician that determines how a society thinks, although leaders and religions do play a moving ahead or holding back role at given times. Instead, it is mainly the concrete material conditions of that society at that time in history that determine, overall, how people think and live and how they see themselves and the world. It is people's social being that determines their social **consciousness**.

The third feature of materialism is that it recognizes that all things are fully knowable and understandable, if not now, then at some future stage of development. Contrary to capitalist idealism, which denies the possibility of knowing the world and its laws and holds that the world is full of so-called "things in themselves" that can never be known to science, materialists show that the world and its laws are fully knowable, that knowledge of the laws of nature, tested by experiment and practice, is real knowledge having the validity of objective truth. Further, there aren't any things above being known in the real world. There certainly are things that are still unknown, but these will be discovered and made known by the efforts of science. This idealist song and dance about not knowing things is an old story. Hundreds of years ago they used to argue that the earth was flat, that the sun revolved around the earth, that eclipses of the sun and moon were caused by gods and so on. Today, even little children know these things are not true. In the same way, what we have yet to discover is not something magical, rather something that our children will have the task of making known.

There is a final factor to consider about materialism. What is the single most important thing that decides what material level a given society is on at a certain time? What more than anything else determines what type of economy a country has and therefore, what type of government and social system it has? 'Economic system' or 'economy' are terms for how a country produces all its goods (food, shelter, clothing, etc.) and services (transportation, communications, energy, etc.), how these things are owned and controlled, and how they are divided and distributed among the people.

There are many factors that go into determining what material conditions exist in a society at any given time. Population is one. If a land does not have a minimum population level then there can be no society. But if we compare the population of, say the U.S. and India, we see that India has many more people, but not nearly the material level or living. If we took other examples, we would see the same: that population alone does not determine what material level a society has.

Geography is important. Land changes, rivers move, mountains rise up and wear away, but this happens very slowly in physical nature. Human societies evolve amid these changes, drawing upon the land and its resources. Looking at the U.S., for example, we see that about 400 years ago some European colonists came here, built homes and a society for themselves that grew and developed. About 230 years ago, they fought a violent independence war (Revolutionary War) and brought about great changes in their society. One hundred years later, the democratic revolution moved qualitatively forward, again through a violent struggle (Civil War), through which Black people won legal rights (on paper at least). This also gave federalism and industrial development full control of the economy and government. Previously, slave-owning agrarian landlords shared political and economic power with the industrial and financial capitalists. For the next hundred years, labor and civil rights struggles raged, gaining labor and political rights for broad sections of the people, including women. Yet in all those 400 years, the geography of the land has not changed in any great sense, except for human-made changes like cities and environmental damage. Hence, we have to say that geography alone, because it changes so slowly, is not the most important factor either.

The single most important factor in determining what material level a society is on is the **means of production**. The means of production is a term that describes the instruments and resources used to create the goods that a society needs and wants. The means of production primarily refers to machines and tools, but it also includes natural resources and land.

Closely associated to the means of production are the **forces of production**, which simply means the workers and their knowledge of how to make things. Connected to this, and also important, are the **relations of production**. This term describes the relationship between the workers and machines they use to produce goods and who owns the means of production and the goods produced by them. The relations of production answers the question of who owns the products produced by the workers (the forces of production), using the machines/tools (the means of production). There are only three general categories of relations of production: cooperative, exploitative and a combination (partly cooperative, partly exploitative).

If workers collectively own their own factory and their own means of production, then they would also own what they produced. This would be cooperative relations of production.

If a capitalist corporation boss owns the factory, the workers would not own anything they produced. This is exploitative relations of production. Here the workers get so many dollars for each hour of their labor. If the workers are prisoners, they will get so many pennies an hour. In a

revolutionary accomplishments, to pick up those weapons, and carry the struggle forward.

Materialism has three essential features and stands squarely opposed to the assertions of philosophical idealism, which is the general world outlook that the capitalists (and other reactionaries) push. **First**, materialism teaches that the world by its very nature is made of matter. Everything comes into being on the basis of material (that is, real) causes, in accordance with the laws of motion and matter. **Second**, materialism states that matter is primary and thought is secondary and derived from the material world. Matter is objective reality existing outside and independent of the mind and everything mental is actually a result of our material world. **Third**, materialism teaches that the world and its laws are fully knowable. While many things remain to be discovered, there is no such thing as things beyond or above the laws that govern all real change and development.

Examining the three basic features of materialism more closely, we see that materialism's first understanding is that the world (and all countries in the world and all things in each country) is the way it is, because of the concrete material conditions that actually exist. These real conditions develop in accordance with the laws of dialectics. More specifically, this means that the common people and the tools they have at any given time in any given country, the corresponding industry and farming they conduct with these tools, and the types of relations that exist between producers and consumers (that is, who owns and controls the tools and products) determine the material conditions of that society. These material conditions determine what type of society exists. Furthermore, what type of industry and agriculture there is will primarily determine what type of social and political institutions (government, schools, courts, and so on) will exist. Rulers, religious forces and many other factors have an effect on the society, for they are among the contradictory aspects of the whole. Nevertheless, the actual material level of development of the society is the primary basis for what type of social and political institutions it will have.

Societies, then, develop the type of social and governmental apparatus that, generally speaking, correspond to their

**If the information is bad or our analysis is wrong, we are like the chicken trying to hatch a rock; no matter how good our thinking is, we will never hatch correct conclusions.**

economic level of development and which are intended to meet the needs of the people. But the needs that are met are mainly those of the ruling class, the group in the dominant position of the contradiction in the society. As the United States presently demonstrates, the government does not often meet the real needs of the majority of people. This is because we are still operating under the economic principle (capitalism) and government structure that dates back over 200 years. Regardless of how good or honest our elected officials might be, they can never meet all of the people's needs because the social, economic and governmental institutions themselves are inadequate for the job. In other words, we are still being ruled by old methods -- methods that serve the interests of capitalist business and trade. We, as a people, are not owners of capitalist trade or business in any real sense -- in fact we are its victims -- and we are ready for a new stage in society. We are told the system is democratic, but what vote do we have where we work, rent, buy? It's either the boss', landlord's, banker's way or the highway. We are ready to make the qualitative step from the old to the new because social and economic structures no longer meet the real needs of the people -- the structures are holding back needed growth and development. It is time for a new arrangement of things.

The second feature of materialism states that matter is primary and thought is secondary because it is based on and derived from matter. There are two parts to this. First the brain, our organ for thinking, is made of matter and works by metabolizing matter; without the brain there is no thought. Second and more significantly, people's consciousness at any given time is primarily determined by the existing economic and social level of development at that time. It is not people's minds that determine how they live and think. Instead, it is the physical conditions, what they see and experience around them from their first moments of life until they die, that play the main role in determining how they think. This does not mean that we are robots or that we don't have free thought, but we can only see and think about things that have some relation to our lives.

The things we think about come from outside as information. What we think and decide to do about them comes from inside as our analysis and our plans. If the information is bad or our analysis is wrong, we are like the chicken trying to hatch a rock; no matter how good our thinking is, we will never hatch correct conclusions.

An example of this principle of the material determining the mental would be that whenever the industrial countries have run across a previously unknown tribe or people, say in some remote rainforest, these people have without exception been found to have completely different customs and ways of life and to see their whole existence differently than we do. More subtle but still obvious differences can even be seen between, and even within, nations and regions closer to the mainstream. This is not because people's bodies or brains are different (we are all human be-

## The Jericho Movement: 10th Anniversary

BY JALIL MUNTAQIM

The effort to build support for U.S. Political Prisoners is far longer and arduous than the 10-year existence of the Jericho Amnesty Movement. The struggle in support of political prisoners has existed since chattel slavery and the abolitionist movement in this country. Often, various communities band together to demand the release of those who fought against racism, sexism and environmental contamination seeking to make whole what the corporate government has sought to exploit and destroy.

It is in this rich history of struggle that the Jericho Movement evolved and came into existence. From out of the Free Angela Davis, Free Huey, Free the San Quentin 6, movements came the Free the Panther 21, Free the N.Y. 3 and the Move 9 to the continuing struggle to Free Leonard Peltier, Mumia Abu Jamal and Marilyn Buck. All of these struggles further indicate how over the centuries and decades there has been a continuum of U.S. corporate government repression\* and efforts to fight back leading to activist, dissenters and revolutionaries being captured and imprisoned.

Today, we are in an unique position to build a united and uniform national organization that represents the issues and concerns of U.S. political prisoners. We are able to build a national and international determination to demand amnesty -- calling for their immediate release and exoneration. This is especially true for those U.S. political prisoners who are victims of the unconstitutional FBI Cointelpro operations. In this regard, it is possible to point directly to an illegal and unconstitutional government operation that the U.S. Senate Select Committee condemned. The importance of demanding, for example, the reopening of Cointelpro hearings, is the impact it would have on exposing the repressive nature of the Patriot Act and the plethora of post 9/11 laws & White House enactments designed to repress dissent and usher in State overt fascism in this country.

The Jericho Amnesty Movement is historic in what it seeks to achieve in terms of forging a coalition of activists concentrating on the central issue of U.S. political prisoners. It has been established via a petition to the United Nations, tours by International Jurist visiting U.S. political prisoners, plus several International Tribunals recognizing that U.S. political prisoners do in fact exist. There is no denying their existence, yet progressive forces in the U.S. are so divided they have been unable to force the U.S. corporate government to adhere to the rule of law in the recognition and treatment of U.S. political prisoners. This is a failure of the overall progressive movement that the Jericho Am-

nesty Movement has sought to rectify. While the Jericho Amnesty Movement has gone through several transitions in the past ten years, it consistently calls for and petitions the progressive movement in this country to join and unite in support of U.S. political prisoners. In order to be successful, this is the ultimate goal of the Jericho Amnesty Movement.

Join the Jericho Amnesty Movement, establish a chapter and develop a working relationship with a U.S. political prisoner. Build a Jericho support group in your community organization, in your faith-based group, at the community center, on college campuses, and ensure the position of U.S. political prisoners are represented at every progressive event. That is what you can do from this day forward, spreading the word across the country and making links to the Jericho website and those of the many political prisoners.

Earlier this year, the Honorable Archbishop Desmond Tutu and six other Noble Peace Prize Laureates issued an international call demanding the charges against the SF8 be dropped and that Herman Bell and Jalil Muntaqim (A. Bottom) be immediately released on humanitarian grounds. This is not the first time internationally renowned persons have recognized the existence of U.S. political prisoners demanding their release. Mumia Abu Jamal has a street name after him in France and gained international support for his release, as has Leonard Peltier. Can we do anything less here today? We must build the kind of national organization and determination that ensure the names of U.S. political prisoners are household words, and streets are named after each of them in the course of demanding their release from prison. That is the kind of movement we need to build to ensure that the legacy of struggle that each of these political prisoners represent is preserved for generations of activists to learn of their examples and sacrifices.

Let us all contribute to this noble task in whatever way we can. As Ojore Lutalo once said, "Any movement that does not support its political prisoners is a sham movement." The Jericho Amnesty Movement is far from being a sham movement -- it is genuine, sincere and courageous and if you possess these qualities, then join Jericho and build this dynamic political movement. Remember: We Are Our Own Liberators!

\* The Act to Provide a Government for the District of Columbia, Section 34 of the Forty-First Congress of the United States, Session III, Chapter 61 and 62, enacted on February 21, 1871, states:

"The UNITED STATES OF AMERICA is a corporation, whose jurisdiction is applicable only in the ten-mile-square parcel of land known as the District of Columbia and to what ever properties are legally titled to the UNITED STATES, by its registration in the corporate County, State, and federal governments that are under military

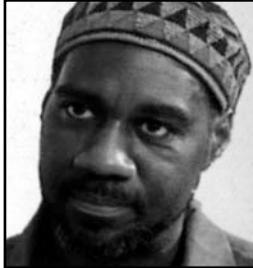
power of the UNITED STATES and its creditors.” (Emphasis added)

Furthermore, pursuant to Title 28 U.S.C. 3002 (15) (a), the United States is a Federal Corporation. Title 28 U.S.C. 3002 (15) (3), further informs that all departments of the U.S., is part of the corporation. The Commerce Department acquires birth certificates via county and state governments, which contractually, makes these live births ultimately commerce property of the U.S. Corporation, with a monetary value attached to each certificate.

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## MOVE Update: Parole Hearing

BY MOVE

In April 2008 the MOVE 9 were denied parole despite us doing 30 years in prison and being highly recommended for release by the prison administrations. The parole board claim their reasons for denying us parole is, we didn't take responsibility for the crime by not admitting guilt. They want people to think that if we had said we were guilty, we would have been paroled. It's a lie! The parole board never had any intentions of releasing us, but they had to give some reason to try to justify it.

Move didn't kill nobody and this government knows it. Police reports stated that Ramp was shot in the back of the neck while facing our house and the bullet travelled downward. Move was in the basement below street level making it impossible for Move to have been the ones who shot Ramp. Judge Maimed admitted publicly after convicting us that he didn't know who shot the cop. But the Parole Board is demanding we say we're guilty, take responsibility for a crime we didn't commit and the courts never proved we committed. We were tried, convicted and sentenced to 30-100 years for 3rd degree murder, now the Parole Board has tried, convicted and sentenced us again

for something that's not even a crime - it's not a crime to say you're innocent.

The Parole Board is supposed to judge you on your conduct, use that to determine if you should be released from prison or not. We have an honest, clean record that shows we not a threat to the community and deserve officials feel we are guilty or not, they spending 30 years of our lives in prison. are to be released from prison, and whether these have made us pay for that conviction by

The Parole Board asked how can we say we're innocent when we were found guilty by a judge. There are thousands of innocent people in prison. Judges make wrong, unfair and prejudicial decisions. Their opinions have caused innocent people to suffer in prison and caused many innocent people to lose their lives. Judges are human, they're not infallible, they are not God! Yet the Parole Board upholds the judges decisions like they are always right by denying people parole because they refuse to say they're guilty - or for not - showing remorse, like they're saying about MOVE; only to find out 10, 20 years later that these people were innocent and had to be released.

There were 12 adults in the basement when the police attacked us on 8/8/78. We were all arrested, given the same charges, but 3 people were released when they said they were not Move members. The judge sent 9 innocent people to prison for what the judge claim one of us is guilty of, overlooking the 3 other people in the basement of the Move house, when the cop was shot, who were tried separately from the 9 of us. But the judge said everybody in the basement of the Move house when the cop was shot is guilty - meaning that 12 people should be in prison for murder instead of 9, according to the judge. Maimed's own statement and the release of the other 3 people who were in the basement that day proves that the Move 9 ain't in prison for committing a crime. We're in prison and being kept in prison because we are Move members committed to JOHN AFRICA.

Judge Maimed stated in an article a few days after he sentenced us that "Move members have said they are a family so I sentenced them as a family," but we were being tried for murder not being a family. Sending us to prison for being a family is a contradiction of the charges, which is like trying a person for a rape they did not commit and finding them guilty of arson when they are innocent of arson and rape.

Philadelphia officials know Move didn't kill nobody but they want us to say we're guilty to clear their bloody reputation. They murdered 11 of our family members May 13, 1985, because our family was pushing for an honest investigation into our case. Even though they were found guilty of murder not one cop or official spent a day in prison. This horrendous act of injustice have caused people around the world to be outraged. It has drawn people to the Move 9's

contradiction in every single thing, and this, more than all else, causes its motion and development. External forces are also important, but dialectics understands that external causes are the condition of change, while internal causes are the basis of change. For example, a chicken sitting on an egg will lead to a baby chick, while the same chicken can sit on a rock forever and hatch nothing - the internal contradictions are the most important factor in the development and motion of not just the egg, but all things.

Similarly, dialectics shows us that while the capitalist system and government might seem powerful, the less visible realities of life, ideas and general conditions of work and existence carried around in the hearts, minds, and lives of the people the government is oppressing, are actually the more powerful force. We see glimpses of it now and then, during the middle of an uprising, on a solid picket line, at a rally, or even when a group of oppressed people sit together and discuss how to get out from under the injustice. Thus, we see that the people's consciousness is a force that has not yet come fully into its time; nonetheless it is what will eventually take over the old system. Of course, this does not happen without a lot of pain and struggle and, especially, it will not happen until we, the people who are the victims of injustice, begin consciously pushing and fighting for change.

This, then, is an introductory definition of dialectics, a method that teaches us how to observe and analyze the movement of contradictions in things in the real world and, on the basis of such analysis, to find ways to resolve the contradictions and thus bring about a new thing or situation.

Put another way, dialectics is the scientific method of understanding how things are and how they change. Dialectics recognizes: **1.) that all things are connected; 2.) that all things are in motion (developing or dying away); 3.) that quantitative changes (changes in size or amount) are step by step changes that lead to qualitative changes (changes in substance or type) which come about swiftly or abruptly (and in the case of society, violently and abruptly), transforming the old into a new thing or situation and 4.) that the primary basis of all change and movement is the internal contradiction that exists in all things.**

So when we face a problem, we should look at its internal make-up to determine the various aspects of the contradiction, examine its connections to other things, determine what the progressive new aspects of the situation are and how these are affected by both the internal contradiction and external things. Then, finally and most importantly, we determine how our own actions on the problem will speed up these new progressive aspects to the point that a qualitative change, or a change that brings the new force to the dominant position, can be made.

### Historical

The historical part of dialectical and historical materialism means that we can study the history of humankind with this same tool of materialist dialectics. History then becomes understandable not as a series of accidents or mistakes or mythical occurrences, but as the development of social and material forces that are connected, in motion, and changing internally and externally, resulting in a struggle that changes their form. Therefore, we can see that there is no so-called "eternal" principle of history, except change itself, and every system must be seen in its own conditions, time and place. Struggle and change builds up the pressure of internal contradiction until complete transformation suddenly occurs. Nonsense like the so-called "inherent right" of capitalist private property thus makes about as much sense as the so-called "divine right" to rule over everyone that ancient (and some present) kings used to claim. Dialectical understanding allows us to sweep aside all arguments that there are unchangeable situations like the subjugation of peasants to nobility in feudal times or workers to capitalists in modern times.

### Materialism

Materialism is the way of understanding or interpreting the world that sees the real, physical, or material things around us as what this planet is really made of. Many ancient philosophers used semi-materialist forms of understanding to explain the world. It wasn't until Marx and Engels developed the dialectical method in connection with the materialist understanding though, that it became a scientific method of studying the development of humankind. In addition, it wasn't until 1917, when the Russian people kicked out their king and corrupt nobility and set up a new form of society and economy, that the conscious application of dialectical materialism became the guiding principle of any country. (All societies develop by the laws of materialist dialectics, including capitalist countries. But the capitalists and their ideological flunkies - most economists, many college professors, etc. - either do not understand or purposely try to hide the dialectical materialist insight because this science, applied to our modern times, clearly and objectively points out the need for the end of capitalist rule and the beginning of socialism.) Since that time, many other people have gotten rid of their leeches and oppressors (phony presidents, dictators, kings). Progress has been made. The contradiction between capitalists and workers, however, has not been resolved. Neither has the contradiction between victims of imperialism and their imperialist oppressors. The accomplishments of liberation forces guided by dialectical materialism were steps in the struggle, but on a worldwide scale the capitalists still hold the dominant position. This also means that even past victories can be temporarily reversed - since 1990 many socialist and revolutionary movements and governments have suffered setbacks or have been thrown back to a capitalist dog-eat-dog system. It is up to us to build on past

cess of movement from one level to a completely different level. This is described as the **quantitative change** or movement at some point leading to a **qualitative change**. This means that things don't just repeat or go in circles. Because a thing is connected and influenced by many other things, it is moved step by step (quantitative change) up to a certain point, where the thing then rapidly and abruptly makes a complete change (qualitative change) in itself. Let us take an example of this in the world of nature by looking at water, which is made of oxygen and hydrogen. If we apply heat or cold to water, it changes degree by degree (quantitative change), until it reaches a certain point. There the water abruptly changes its form (qualitative change) to steam or ice. It makes a complete change.

This same process of change is true for all things. Take a society for instance. As methods of industry change, as inventions are made, as people create their necessities of life in new ways and learn new things, and as numerous other factors change, sooner or later the institutions, including governmental structures, have to change. The power has to be moved from the hands of one class of people to another. The new ruling class will then begin building new institutions and methods of running society (new political, social and economic structures).

The American colonists mentioned above, for example, were at first loyal subjects of England. But as this country developed and shipping and farming grew and commerce and manufacturing developed, the colonial government's system of taxation and regulation became obsolete to the point of actually holding back further industrial and commercial development and growth in the colonies. Since English rule did not allow the qualitative change the expansion demanded, some of the American colonial elite and some of the American public began to organize to get rid of the old order. After a period of peaceful attempts to secure the needed changes, the Revolutionary War took place and, after the successful completion of this war against imperialism, a new system of government was established. This new system allowed a much greater degree of independence for the development of economic and social life.

This new system was essentially a capitalist and slave owning regime in which a minority elite of property, plantation and business-owning white males, whose power was based on control of resources and commerce, freed itself from the restrictions of feudal privileges administered by English monarchy. Though a qualitative change from what had preceded it, that change was not as great a qualitative step as that made by the Bolsheviks in overthrowing the Russian monarchy, also mentioned above. In the American Revolution, the genocide practiced against the Native population was not reversed. Black slavery was not abolished, the conditions of indentured servitude were not improved. Many poor white men remained disenfranchised, and women of all colors and classes could not vote and had even fewer rights than their men. A new ruling class replaced the old,

new contradictions emerged and the seeds were sown for the next great qualitative change, toward which we are working today. The system established 200 years ago was far from perfect and loaded with contradictions. Although significant progress has been made in increasing popular freedom, today the system is still not working adequately for anyone except a small class of super-rich, powerful owners and controllers (the capitalist class or bourgeoisie, as it is also called). This is a direct example of how societies change and move, and how at one point a new group or class springs forth from the ashes of the old system to take over and begin a new one.

**...the seeds of the new are present even in the old, when the old is still powerful**

The fourth point, though last, is the most important one in order to understand and use materialist dialectics. Number four states that besides all the outside influences on a thing (and let us remember we are talking about everything that exists), the thing in question has **internal contradictions**. Everything has two opposing aspects (internal contradictions) and each set of these opposite aspects forms a contradiction. When we speak of a thing we are really talking about a set of opposites that struggle with each other, yet coexist and combine to form the thing itself. There is no up without down, no cold without hot, no victory without defeat, no capitalist class without a working class, etc. When a ball is thrown in the air two contradictory forces are at work simultaneously – the force propelling the ball upward and the force of gravity. While gravity is weaker, the ball goes up. When gravity becomes stronger the ball changes direction and comes down. Likewise, in modern society we have two main classes, the capitalist class or bourgeoisie and the working class or proletariat. Although the two classes have different interests, they coexist together and form one society. As long as the capitalists hold the upper hand in the society, they can dictate the rules to a great degree and will do so to their own advantage. While we, the working class, are kept in the secondary or weaker position, we are in constant struggle with the capitalists. But when the working class turns this around, when we assume the dominant position of the contradiction, when we become the class in control of our society, we will have the greater say, we will dictate how and why the society will develop and grow. In other words, the seeds of the new are present even in the old, when the old is still powerful.

This last point, then, says that there is a constant movement, constant struggle, between the two opposing aspects of the thing in question and this conflict of the internal contradictions is the most important single force that leads the thing to change. Or, to put it briefly, there is an internal

case and they see that we were railroaded and imprisoned unjustly - and now this example with the Parole Board crystallizes that injustice even more.

Move people are innocent and it is our innocence, our consistent example of loyalty, commitment, family that have gained Move world wide support. It's our consistent example that has people who were once critical of Move, now questioning this government. We have been denied parole because we maintain our innocence. Phila. officials and cops admitted to murdering 11 Move people 5 of our children and not one of these cops or officials have ever apologized, shown any remorse and they continue to minimize their crime. Every year on May 13th, when the murder of our family is remembered, Phila. officials, namely D.A. Lynn Abraham who opposed our being paroled, says to people, "it's time to move on," well when are they going to apply that to Move. Thirty years is enough - Move should be released from prison and let us move on. That is the solution to the unrest in Phila. between Move and the city.

The racist apartheid government of South Africa released Nelson Mandela after 27 years in prison. Even though the stand Nelson Mendela took against apartheid was seen as illegal, the U.S. government applauded his release, criticized and condemned the apartheid government of South Africa for the murder and unjust jailing of the people of South Africa but the U.S. government is committing the same crimes against Move - beating, shooting, bombing Move people since 1972, and keeping us in prison because we are Move Members. This is not just a Move issue this is an issue of injustice. If people let this government continue to do this to Move, the government will do the same thing to you, your children and all of those you love.

To Quote JOHN AFRICA (quote)

When a person sends innocent people to prison, those who think this violation stops with the victim are as much a prisoner of hte tyrant as those behind the prison wall. When an innocent person is sent to prison like guilty, the principle of innocence is under attack and the innocent of all the innocent is assaulted, an innocent example is a free

example. Those who are silent about the condition of the innocent is silent about the position of freedom. When innocence is jailed it ain't just John Brown that is jailed. Freedom is jailed because freedom does not stop with John Brown no more than innocence stops with John Brown's mother - end quote, long live John Africa!

Remember the fight the MOVE Organization is waging in the courts and prisons is for your sons and daughters too. The drugs, the beatings, the rape of men and women by prison officials and inmates exist, the mental cruelty prisoners have to endure exist, and unless you are rich you and your children are not immune to these conditions...JOHN AFRICA

For more information, check out [www.onamove.com](http://www.onamove.com)

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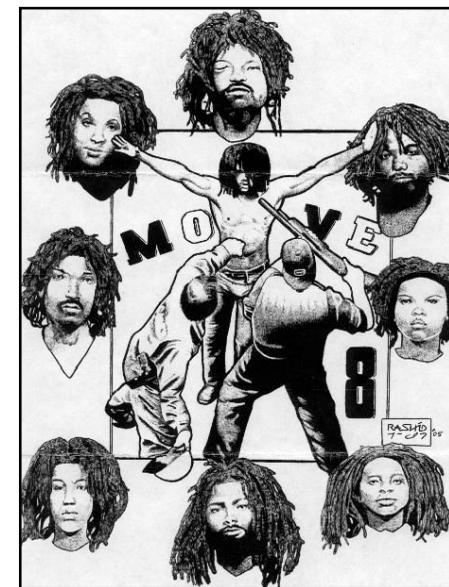
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## Fighting Mass Incarceration and Public Opinion

BY SARA OLSON

In a country that adheres to a code of individual vengeance, a tendency toward torturing individuals seems a logical progression. Employing extraordinary rendition, among other techniques, the U.S. currently hides up to 27,000 people in secret prisons around the globe doing God-knows-what to them but...relax...we are assured by moral arbiters like Bush, Dick Cheney and John Yoo that it's all legal. Why do they get away with this? Because everybody in these secret prisons or in Guantanamo or Bagram AFB or Abu Ghraib are terrorists, that's why. You know...terrorists.

Worse, the average American believes this crap. A drumbeat of propaganda is rhythmically hammered into American brains through mainstream media mantras presented by well-coifed news-readers, embedded in the back pockets of powerful local, statewide, national, and international corporate mouthpieces. The audience swallows this hypnotic swill wholesale, even if they don't believe it.

Although mass incarceration has become a useful method for social control of millions, particularly poor people with a special emphasis on people of color, one category of inmate has never been interned in U.S. prisons, political prisoners. There are no political terrorists...er...prisoners in the U.S. Everyone knows this. The U.S. imprisons no one for political acts or beliefs. In China? Sure. Russia? Absolutely. The U.S.? No!

That's one reason that it's so difficult to organize support for political prisoners. Americans believe that if you're in prison -- hell, if you're merely indicted -- you're guilty! Thus, the steps to torture under the Bush regime were greased with the false lubricant of "the rule of law." Even the more than one hundred exonerations of death row inmates in recent years haven't awakened the sleeping populace to the large numbers of prisoners who are actually innocent, predatory prosecutors on the prowl for judge-ships and political office and the woeful state of defense representation. There's no opposition to the life-destroying lengths of American prison sentences. Supermax prisons that bury people alive and drive them crazy are research laboratories for the FBI and CIA on how much prisoners can take until complete disintegration. No U.S. citizen bats an eye at any of this gross inhumanity. Imprisonment and social demonization mark inmates for life whether or not they're released to the "free" world.

The editor of a local liberal monthly who regularly publishes articles by prisoners, including a few pieces I wrote, asked me what I want to do when I get out of prison. I said I want to alert the public to the horrors of the mass incar-

ceration industry. He said, "Why? Nobody cares about prisoners." I suppose he's correct.

California, the state with the largest prison population of all fifty states, has roughly 170,000 men and women behind bars. In response to a lawsuit, a federal three-judge panel was appointed to confront the overcrowding with a target reduction of 40,000 inmates in the next four years. Inmates are dying due to the lack of medical care because there are too many prisoners straining the inadequate health services. No state agency, few legislators or any governor of either major political party has the courage to address this catastrophe.

Recently, I heard a radio interview with the economist Dr. Michael Hudson, from the University of Missouri. He discussed the causes of America's recent economic collapse.... war, greed, corporate theft...and the rather glum prospects for the near future. I told some prisoners about Hudson's declarations and stated that soon, if not already, California will be incapable of paying for its 33 prisons, numerous youth facilities and fire camps. They said, "Good! They'll have to let us out!" I thought, "Hmm-mm." I then told the same info to a much more politically savvy inmate. She said, "Omgod! They'll lock the gates, stake out the perimeters with sharpshooters, and these places will become (that's right) -- death camps!" But...Nobody cares about prisoners. There are no political prisoners in the United States.

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easier to understand, especially for those of us who have not had much contact with these ideas before. Hopefully, this pamphlet will motivate a desire to learn more about these powerful tools of emancipation.

It is then up to each of us individually, and all of us together, to use and develop these weapons of understanding. Thus armed, we will be more successful in the many battles we have yet to engage with the enemy, before we as a people can control our lives and determine what kind of country and world we want to build for ourselves and future generations.

### Dialectical and Historical Materialism

#### Dialectics

Dialectics comes from the Greek word meaning to debate. There has been a crude form of dialectics in existence for thousands of years. In ancient times, there were philosophers who believed that the way to best arrive at the truth of a statement was by revealing the contradictions in the argument, that is, the opposing, competing ideas within the argument. The clash of opposite opinions was seen as the best way of getting to the truth. This was the ancient dialectical method.

The modern materialist dialectical method developed by Marx is much more definite and therefore able to provide us with a much clearer understanding. Materialist dialectics goes beyond just seeking the truth of a statement, beyond just understanding that contradictions are present in statements, into understanding that contradictions exist throughout nature and the whole material world. The Marxist dialectical method has four basic features. **First**, all phenomena of nature (or simply put, all real things) are connected. **Second**, everything is in constant motion. **Third**, all phenomena are undergoing constant change. **Fourth**, the change and development of things is the result of the interaction of opposing forces or internal contradictions within everything. All this is in opposition to what is called metaphysics. Metaphysics sees the world and things in it as static, isolated, one-sided. It views any change there is as simply one of magnitude, a mere increase or increase in quantity on a set stage. Metaphysics is the common philosophy advanced by capitalist thinkers and is taught in U.S. schools. In general it is the type of world outlook the capitalist system tries to foist on us so we stay in the dark about what's really going on.

The first point of materialist dialectics is that all matter – everything that exists – is connected. Not only are, say, people and prisons and courts and cops related, but all life – water, fish, air, people, machines, countries, etc. – all things are organically connected with, dependent on, and determined by each other. In order to understand any one thing, say prisons, we have to see all the related aspects. Laws, for example, who makes them? Who are they made

to serve and protect? Courts: who are the judges? Are they from our backgrounds and communities, or are they rich and privileged? Cops: who do they arrest? Do they collar the petty burglar and pot smoker? Or do they even investigate the corporate executive who daily steals millions by price fixing and other schemes? And who does the system protect? Does it serve the bankers and corporate moguls or some poor person who calls in a complaint late at night in some ghetto neighborhood? Does that protection allow those banks and corporate elites to pay poverty wages in unsafe factories that pollute air, water and land in our communities?

Of course, not every connection between things is of equal importance. Deciding which are the most significant connections at any given time in the situation being studied is also important. Looking at things and their connections in a dialectical materialist way will help us do that. If we look only at one thing in a narrow increase and decrease way, we will not really see the underlying reasons why the thing in question is the way it is. This is part of the problem of not seeing who our real enemies are. By not understanding the connections between things, we often wind up fighting each other (white against Black and so on), instead of dealing with the real oppressor. We must always, then, view all related aspects from the beginning of any situation to determine what are the connections, which are most important, and how they affect each other.

The second point of materialist dialectics is that all matter, everything, is in motion. Things never stay the same. Instead, something is always arising and developing and something is always disintegrating and dying away. The only real constant is constant motion and change. This is true whether we are considering atoms, plants, people, or societies. All related aspects are always influencing one another and things are always developing and/or disintegrating, always in motion. This is probably pretty clear to us. But what is important is to be able to spot the new growing forces that are moving, even though they seem small and less important compared to the larger dominant power. That way we can help these new forces develop and move (or nip them in the bud before they bear bitter fruit). The longstanding dominant power of the Russian czars (kings), for example, was overthrown by seemingly much weaker forces in 1917, as was the rule of the British monarchy here in the American colonies in 1776. In the first case, these forces were the Russian people led by their revolutionary Bolshevik party; in the second, the American colonists led by their radical, albeit bourgeois, leaders. The new forces that were able to accomplish these large tasks had been in existence, growing and developing, long before they were able to win their struggles – and having done so, give their people a much better life.

The third point of material dialectics is that this connection of things and how all matter is always moving (rising and falling away), has a certain definite method or pro-

## A Basic Introduction to Dialectical and Historical Materialism

### What is Dialectical and Historical Materialism?

Dialectical and historical materialism is the most precise way of thinking about and understanding the real world: what goes on around us, why, how it began, where it might and should go. It is a tool for people to use in understanding how and why things happened and in planning how to create those future changes that we know are necessary. In short, it is the world outlook of revolutionary scientific (as opposed to daydreaming or wishful thinking) socialism. This tool of understanding was first developed by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. They drew the logical parts, the real truths, from earlier philosophies of ancient dialectics and vulgar materialism into one whole that for the first time enabled people to understand the full workings of reality, including social life.

Breaking the terms of dialectical and historical materialism down, we will see that the way we examine how real things begin, develop, and end is dialectical, while the way we will understand this reality is from a materialist viewpoint. The historical part means that history, the story of humankind, is also scientifically understandable by dialectical materialism.

### Why Should We Be Concerned About This Way of Thinking and Understanding What Goes On Around Us?

This is a very legitimate question, especially for us in poor inner-city communities, sweatshop workplaces, jail-like schoolrooms or actual prison cells. The politicians, bosses, cops and a lot of other fools and clowns all have some kind of game to sell us. Answering this question about how to understand and think about the world is not just another game. Nor is it simply an academic exercise to conduct in a classroom or in your head.

If we put our own fantasies and bad-mouth yard talk aside for a moment, we will have to admit we are in a pretty nasty situation, or at least close to it. We are all on the losing end, if not the actual bottom of this system: low-paying, no security, dead end jobs or no jobs at all; unfit, overpriced housing; poor or no medical care; schools that miseducate and often encourage conflict between groups of students. To enforce our subjugation to this social arrangement, the U.S. government's Bureau of Justice Statistics (in 2008) reports that about 2.5 million people are locked up (over 1.6 million in prisons, 800,000 in jails and over 100,000 in juvenile facilities). Another five million-plus are on bail, probation, parole or house arrest according to a recent Pew

Center report. In all reality, very few of us can honestly say we have beaten the system. For working people and the rest of us in the communities, life is just making it week by week.

Most of us in prison are locked up for small-scale scams. Whether it is stealing, dealing or something else, it usually involves a few hundred or maybe a few thousand dollars. These scams are almost always at the expense of some other relatively poor person. They don't hurt the system or its rich owners, whose far more destructive corporate crimes outdo our petty offenses. Others are locked up for victimless crimes – smoking grass, prostitution, etc. Still others are in captivity for crimes of anger, frustration, or despair. Some of us have been railroaded, some convicted for fighting against the government and system. Very few, if any of us, can say we have gotten a fair break or justice. Almost all of us come from a poor or working class background. In our communities, as in captivity, life is a long hustle.

Though we find ourselves on the bottom, many of us are by no means defeated or resigned, and we are always looking for ways to get relief, ways to bring about better conditions. Yet in many instances, when we finally rise up and show our concern and anger, we are only partially successful. All too often we are beaten back or sold out and this leads to further frustration and despair. There are, of course, many specific reasons for various non-successful strikes and movements. But a common and crucial problem is that we really do not know our enemy. We are not aware of how they got their power and control. Not power in the simple sense of say, the warden being appointed by the board of trustees or director of prisons – rather the more basic understanding of how the politicians, bankers and corporate heads own and control everything, including our lives. We don't really know how they maintain this authority, nor where their primary weaknesses are. Likewise, we often have not studied and thought our own positions, both our weaknesses and lack of control and our strengths and sources of power, as well as the best methods of using these most effectively. In other words, if we enter a struggle with little or no idea of the future, we can only be successful by luck or chance. This is just as true in our daily battles with landlords, bosses, and guards as it is in times of actual military engagements. Dialectical and historical materialism can provide us, and all oppressed people, the tools to understand how we have gotten to our sad condition and, more importantly, how we can change this.

The purpose of this pamphlet is not to lay out any specific strategy of struggle. Rather, the hope is that it will help some folks develop this particular and proven method of understanding. Dialectical and historical materialism is a tool – a tool to examine any situation that we may be confronted with. This paper seeks to introduce this tool. All the ideas in it are much more thoroughly explained and demonstrated in numerous books and pamphlets. The purpose of this booklet is to make the more detailed writings a little

## On the Here and Now

BY HERMAN BELL

I write this to salute Jericho for the years it has been in the storm fighting for liberation and social justice, and to say a few things about a comprehensive strategy to free our PPs.

I urge our friends and supporters to develop a comprehensive package that calls for the release of all our PPs. Rather than addressing their plight on a case-by-case basis, which is how it has traditionally been done since the 70s. It has not been a successful strategy – though one or two brothers have gotten out, too many comrades remain confined, and none of them are getting any younger.

Thus in the traditional case-by-case approach, I see no future hope of ever getting our PPs released from prison. In my view the case-by-case approach confines their plight within the criminal justice system – limiting it to the so-called “facts,” “due process,” and “conviction” in their case. This approach is equivalent to having to find the needle of a constitutional violation in a haystack of a so-called fair and impartial trial and jury verdict.

It's like having Sisyphus in Hell consigned to push a rock up a hill that can be pushed but so far before it tumbles back down again and he continuously has to start over again. Thus the case-by-case is the rock that we've been pushing up the criminal justice hill to get our people out of prison and like Sisyphus we've had no success.

Instead, our fight for their freedom ought to be fought in the political and humanitarian arena, where the blind eye of U.S. justice is precluded from impinging or coloring unfairly the cause motivating their political and humanitarian struggle for social justice. In practically every country since the 70s, political detainees who were imprisoned and not executed during that time have been released.

By contrast, except for a limited number of Puerto Rican and anti-imperialist comrades, the U.S. has released none of its political detainees. Why not? Why not indeed: in my view this question changes the playing field and thus places the plight of our PPs squarely within the political and humanitarian arena, and it lends even more substance to the “why not” question.

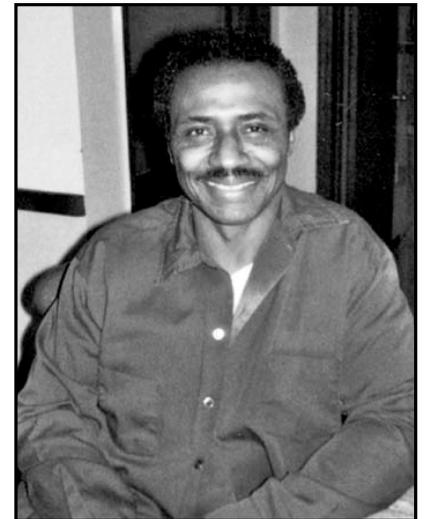
In conducting the COINTELPRO hearings the Church Commission certainly could have asked the “why not” question because it found a raft of FBI culpability in its investigation of COINTELPRO. Yet no FBI agents served prison time for committing illegal acts against our movement and targeted individuals, while victims abound in those caught in the web of FBI illegal schemes to provoke, sabotage, slander, entrap and murder (as in Fred Hampton,

George Jackson, Bunchy Carter, John Huggins and numerous others); and many of those same victims still languish in U.S. prisons today.

This situation is unconscionable and it cries for a change in strategy, which is why I urge you to convene a forum of concerned people and PP support groups and hammer out a national campaign to free our PPs. Rather than individual support groups supporting a particular PP, why not instead support a national campaign to free them all? It requires a structure, a steering committee, a tremendous amount of educating and fundraising. In conjunction with this a call should be made to re-open the COINTELPRO hearings – since the Church Commission found the FBI's COINTELPRO campaign culpable in conducting illegal acts against targeted people in our movement but offered no remedy for its victims, we provide a remedy: release of all our PPs, even if some of them are released to host countries outside the U.S. Connect these hearings in a notion of “Truth and Reconciliation” and our objective will rest squarely in the political and humanitarian arena that we seek rather than in a courtroom where success has stubbornly eluded us. The U.S. could well be ready to engage in this type of discussion for reasons that are beyond the scope of this call.

Such a strategy suggests a more promising outcome than what we've experienced in the past; and perhaps our comrades can go home before they grow too old to care.

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## The SF8: A 37 year-old case

BY CLAUDE MARKS

The San Francisco Eight (SF8), former members and associates of the Black Panther Party for Self Defense, were charged in 2007 with murder and conspiracy charges from 1971! Herman Bell, Jalil Muntaqim (aka Anthony Bottom), Ray Boudreaux, Richard Brown, Hank Jones, Richard O'Neal, Harold Taylor and Francisco Torres range in age from 58 to 73. They are husbands, fathers, grandfathers and great-grandfathers, and they have been employed for many years in professions including licensed electrician, building engineer, real estate appraiser and community court judge. They are well respected in their communities and deeply loved by their families.

The case against the SF8 is a frame up, based on tortured-induced confessions and fabricated evidence. In 1975 this same case was thrown out of court. It has been revived by Homeland Security using funds that are available to target political activists as "domestic terrorists" in the post-911 era. ALL CHARGES AGAINST THE SF8 SHOULD IMMEDIATELY BE DROPPED!

### The case against the SF8 is built on tortured confessions

"Do you remember me?" Those words, smugly uttered in 2003 by Homeland Security deputized agents, Frank McCoy and Ed Erdelatz, sent shock waves of pained memories through John Bowman (now deceased but named in the criminal complaint against the SF8 as a co-conspirator), Ruben Scott and Harold Taylor. Back in 1973, McCoy and Erdelatz were inspectors with the San Francisco Police Department investigating the death of Sgt. John Young who had been killed in an ambush of the Ingleside police station in 1971. The two inspectors believed that the ambush had been carried out by Black militants, most likely members of the Black Panther Party for Self Defense (BPP), but they were unable to bring charges against anyone until they learned that New Orleans police had arrested 13 alleged members of the BPP. They rushed to the scene to join detectives from Los Angeles, New York City and FBI agents, and over the next several days this joint team of detectives and agents attempted to extract confessions from Bowman, Scott and Taylor. When the three former Panthers refused to give the desired answers, the interrogators exited the room and the goon squad from the New Orleans police department took over, literally determined to beat confessions out of them. After the beatings, the New Orleans "team" exited and the interrogators returned.

The methods used were eerily similar to those used in Guantánamo and Abu Ghraib in recent years. Suffoca-

tion using plastic bags, wool blankets drenched in boiling water, beatings with blunt instruments, blind folding and the use of electric cattle prods on the genitals and sensitive areas of the body were just some of tools of torture employed by the New Orleans police department. McCoy, Erdelatz and their cohorts carefully crafted the story they wanted each man to provide and once the men were at a breaking point, they got them to "confess" to their version of the story as the price for making the torture stop. Returning to San Francisco, McCoy and Erdelatz provided the District Attorney with the coerced statements and the trio was indicted in 1974. However, the District Attorney failed to inform the grand jurors that the confessions he heavily relied upon were coerced. Defense motions to dismiss the indictments were granted by a San Francisco judge in 1975 and 1976, and the case was dormant for the next 30 years.

### The COINTELPRO connection

In the sixties and seventies, hundreds of Black Panthers were targeted by the Federal Government's secret counter-intelligence program, COINTELPRO. The FBI and local police forces assassinated, arrested, tortured and framed Panthers, as well as many other activists, because they believed that they posed a fundamental threat to U.S. society. In San Francisco, the FBI wiretapped Panther headquarters, infiltrated the chapter, and used every possible avenue to provoke violence within the organization. The case against the San Francisco 8 has to be understood in the context of COINTELPRO's program to destroy the Panthers, the organization which was called the country's greatest security threat by J. Edgar Hoover.

"Today's Phoenix Task force is a continuum from COINTELPRO," argues Daro Inouye, Jalil Muntaqim's lawyer. The Phoenix Task Force is the umbrella organization that has empanelled various Grand Jury investigations in this case and is overall responsible for this decades-old Panther prosecution. It includes the US Attorney, the FBI, local police agencies including the SFPD, and the California Department of Justice. Homeland security money makes this attempt to re-criminalize the Panthers possible.

### Homeland Security's role

McCoy and Erdelatz retired from the San Francisco police department, but immediately after 9/11 they were deputized as Homeland Security agents and given a huge federal budget to reopen this dormant investigation. Emboldened by their new position and empowered by a seemingly endless flow of money, the pair began visiting the eight men and their spouses, as well as relatives, friends, ex-wives, employers (current and former), neighbors and associates all over the country.

McCoy and Erdelatz barraged everyone they visited with probing questions, all the while trying to convince them that they were really investigating "white activists" from

## Introduction: What is "A Basic Introduction to Dialectical and Historical Materialism and Why is 4struggle Printing it Now?"

BY JAAN LAAMAN

This relatively short pamphlet was originally written 35 years ago in N.H. state prison, by a young revolutionary who had recently been thrown into prison for anti Vietnam War activities. It was written to inform and educate small circles of prisoners who were quietly meeting in political awareness study groups. It was often retyped and later on photocopied.

It was read, studied and passed on, hand to hand. From N.H., it made its way to other prisons in New England and later to the federal prison system and beyond. In time, some outside revolutionary and activist organizations also came across this writing and used it to help inform and train their members.

Over the years probably thousands of activists and revolutionaries have read and/or studied this booklet. It has been used by certain underground fighting organizations and some public activist groups to help train their cadre. Untold numbers of prisoner study groups across the country have also used it to train members.

This pamphlet lays out the need for, and explains the method of, using scientific revolutionary analysis to break down any problem.

It is only by truly understanding the roots of a problem or situation, that we can then begin to plan and execute solutions and campaigns to overcome the problem, obstacle or enemy.

To really analyze a situation or problem, we should have a scientific structured method to break the problem down to understand its causation. Dialectical Materialism is the best tool to do this. This pamphlet presents a basic picture of Dialectical Materialism, especially to readers who don't have much or any previous familiarity with it.

This pamphlet has been updated a few times. It was just updated and revised in 2008, primarily by political prisoner

Bill Dunne, with the assistance of Jaan Laaman, the original author of this booklet.

4strugglemag recommends, especially to young readers and activists, that you read and study this material. Make copies, pass them around. It is most useful to sit down with a small group of fellow activists and study it together. If someone has previous knowledge or study experience with dialectical and historical materialism, with scientific revolutionary analysis, then they could be the study group coordinator. If everyone is pretty much on the same page, take turns leading the reading and discussions. Go over it section by section and in at least some sections, line by line. Although there is serious information in this pamphlet, it is an introduction to scientific revolutionary analysis, and the suggested follow up readings and other more detailed writings on dialectical and historical materialism should be pursued.

Any comments, questions and feedback are welcome. If there is an interest, 4strugglemag will reprint all feedback on this in the next issue.

Communicate to educate - Educate to liberate!



# A Basic Introduction to Dialectical and Historical Materialism

the sixties and seventies. For Bowman and Taylor, seeing their torturers again brought the nightmares from 1973 rushing back.

When the visits failed to produce the desired results, the men were harassed and subpoenaed to federal and state grand juries over the course of the next few years. They were required to give fingerprints, DNA samples and eventually were jailed for civil contempt because of their refusal to give testimony before a state grand jury.

Upon their release from jail in 2005, they founded The Committee for the Defense of Human Rights (CDHR) to publicize their experience and the range of human rights abuses perpetrated by the United States government. As members of CDHR they traveled around the country speaking at various venues and sharing their stories. With the help of supporters they created a DVD entitled "Legacy of Torture" and planned its premier for late January 2007 in San Francisco. Five days before the premier, they were arrested, charged and held on \$10 million bail. McCoy and Erdelatz had carefully circumvented the San Francisco District Attorney's Office and had prevailed upon newly elected California State Attorney General, Jerry Brown, to take up the prosecution supported by the federal bankroll.

## Building Support for the SF8

A team of dedicated and experienced defense lawyers quickly came together and provided representation for the men. Through their efforts, bail was reduced to amounts the men could raise with assistance from their families and supporters. Herman Bell and Jalil Muntaqim have been imprisoned for over 35 years on another COINTELPRO case and are eligible for parole. Upon their release they resumed their speaking engagements building awareness about their case, COINTELPRO and political prisoners. They have been invited to speak and show the DVD at forums across the country. Support among prominent politicians, actors, lawyers and religious leaders continues to grow as well as among community members and grassroots activists. Danny Glover, Harvard Law Professor Charles Ogletree, Ron Daniels, former Executive Director of the Center for Constitutional Rights, Bill Fletcher, former President of TransAfrica, Michael Ratner, Board President of the Center for Constitutional Rights, Lois Dauway of the World Council of Churches, former Georgia state representative, Cynthia McKinney, Cindy Sheehan and Noble Prize Laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu who launched an International Campaign calling for the dismissal of the charges and the release of Bell and Muntaqim. The initial signers of the International Call were as follows:

The Most Reverend Dr. Desmond Mpilo Tutu, Archbishop Emeritus of Cape Town, Primate of the Church of the Province of Southern Africa; Nobel Peace Laureate 1984

Mairead Corrigan Maguire, Community of Peace People,

Northern Ireland; Nobel Peace Laureate 1976

Betty Williams, Community of Peace People, Northern Ireland; Nobel Peace Laureate 1976

Darryl Jordan, Director-American Friends Service Committee\* Third World Coalition (Nobel Peace Laureate 1947)

William Wardlaw, Executive Director's Leadership Council, Amnesty International\* (Nobel Peace Laureate 1977)

\* Organizations listed for identification purposes only

## WEAKNESSES OF THE PROSECUTION'S CASE

- Defense motions make clear reference to missing exculpatory evidence including "negative comparisons" of latent prints by FBI fingerprint examiners from 1971 and 1975.
- No DNA samples match any of these men.
- The government hoped that the Grand Juries would pressure someone into cooperating with their prosecution. Instead the brothers refused to cooperate and built unity.
- The prosecution hoped that the charges and arrests would break someone. The opposite has happened and the SF 8 are using this as an opportunity to organize, build a movement against repression, and talk about other political prisoners, torture and COINTELPRO.
- The case continues to depend almost entirely on the tortured statements that have been discredited and thrown out of courts in the 1970s.

## The Abu Ghraib/Guantánamo Connection

Abu Ghraib, Guantánamo and Extraordinary Rendition have exposed the ugly reality that the U.S. employs and backs torture in prisons and detention facilities around the world in direct violation of international law. The U.S. has ignored the international outcry and instead has tried to legitimize its use of torture as necessary in its war against terror. The case of the San Francisco 8 extends the effort to make torture an acceptable practice to a domestic case. The prosecution is hoping that what was inadmissible 35 years ago has now been normalized. This case could set an intolerable moral standard and a disastrous legal precedent.

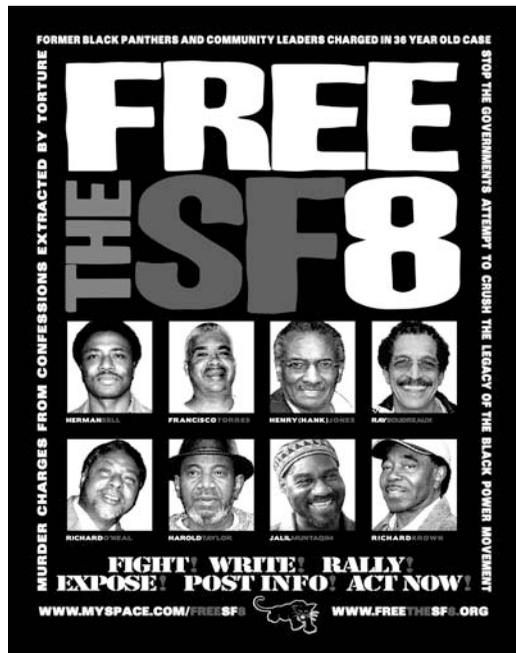
Meanwhile, the support committee is circulating an open letter to Jerry Brown, demanding that all charges be dropped even while support across the country builds. Visit [www.freethesf8](http://www.freethesf8) for more information on this.

In the spring of 2008 the original conspiracy charges against five of the men were dismissed because they had exceeded the statute of limitations. Similar motions to dismiss on behalf of the remaining three men charged with conspiracy will be reargued after the preliminary hearing. Richard O'Neal was charged only with conspiracy and is no longer a defendant in this case. However, immediately after the dismissal of his conspiracy charges the prosecution served him with a subpoena to testify on its behalf against his former co-defendants at upcoming hearings!

In 2009, the preliminary hearing along with hearings on a number of defense motions including motions to dismiss will begin.

The importance of community support for the SF8 has been consistently felt in the courtroom. People of all ages flock to the court proceedings and frequently high school classes can be seen in attendance. What better way to teach them about civil and human rights than to bring them to court to watch "justice" unfold?

For more information about the SF8 go to [www.freethesf8.org](http://www.freethesf8.org). Please donate generously and help to spread the word about this important case.



## Hip-Hop Wrong!

BY JALIL MUNTAQIM

In the rhythm of an urban jungle we hop-scotch across a body chalk-out on asphalt, we hip-hop without reason or knowledge of the time in rhyme, lock-step to a funky beat, finger-popping and heads nodding to a death march of lyrics setting a tone without hesitation of self-annihilation.

Coming to terms with the spoken word whose message is to suffer peacefully with your eyes closed to a racist reality. Just as there is a calm before the storm, a tornado of destructive music rumbles through your brain, leaving in its wake the shame of what happened yesterday – fragmented memories slammed against the wall of today's tragedies.

Lessons unlearned - karma repeated in a future term.

As capitalists capitalize the capital flies the racist flag - bars and stars or stars and stripes, when they come at night it doesn't matter they bring the same fright, a lead coated hangman's noose shaped like a dum-dum, you can't run to afraid to fight intoxicated by the illusions of their might. And the band play on with a bass-line that thumped in syncopation to slamming drums to a drugged-out hip-hop nation.

## Oppression Is!!!

BY KAMAU TEBOGO ZULU DAMALI

Oppression is slave boats, shackles and bloody whips; sick infants being tossed out of ships, women being raped, men being eviscerated – wizened to wimps;

Oppression is the mugging of Alkebulan/Afrika, Asia, Australia, and what is now known as the Amerikas;

Oppression is HIV/AIDS orchestrated by Europe to destroy entire villages and to orphan millions of children;

Oppression is rapacious pale faces with blue eyes, lost Black, Brown, Red, Yellow men strapped with technines and abused little babies with never ending cries;

Oppression is the United States House of Representatives, where bills are passed to manufacture more prisons, to keep the wealthy ones rich and the poor ones in check by way of Truth-In-Sentencing;

Oppression is the U.S. military invading nations in the name of democracy and liberation, when its true aim is plunder and subjugation;

Oppression is the heinous molestation of young precious children, the horrific discrimination of all women and the systemic marginalization of poor people.

Oppression is the death penalty, where hundreds of innocent people reside, where close to a thousand, over the years, have met their demise, where government decides who dies; what week, what day, what month, what year, what time;

Oppression is the FBI and DEA who infest economically disadvantaged communities with drugs and guns to justify modern day slavery;

Oppression is immense hunger and starvation, utter poverty, unemployment and Kapital exploitation;

Oppression is police brutality; violent beatings, excessive shootings, racial profiling, false imprisonment – and they claim to serve and protect humanity;

Oppression is the Department of Corrections, where injustice, persecution and repression is the normal practice

Oppression is the United States Government... Yeah, That's what oppression is!!!

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Under cross-examination, Katenies was asked by the Crown lawyer if she would accept paying a cash bond. She replied, "That would be extortion at this point because jurisdiction has not been dealt with." She added, "I don't see why you should incarcerate me and beat me into submission without answering my question."

She refused the accusation of contempt, stating, "It is [your law] and your constitution that you keep talking about. Why do you continue to ignore me and our people, who have our own land and constitution?"

In his final submissions, the Crown argued that Katenies "has nothing but complete disdain for the laws of these courts," adding, "Quite frankly, Your Worship, both mother and daughter don't recognize our jurisdiction."

The Crown asked the court to keep Katenies in custody.

Nonetheless, the presiding Justice of the Peace, Ms. Leblanc, decided to release Katenies under certain basic conditions: that Katenies reside with her mother and notify the Akwesasne police of any change of address (Katenies has lived with her mother for the past eight years, since the death of her father); that her mother post a surety (a \$1,000 bond without a deposit); and that Katenies appear in court or designate counsel to appear in court for her. Her next court date has been set for July 14, 2008, at 9am at Cornwall's Superior Court.

*The following is an excerpt from a recently released report by Mohawk Nation News (MNN), "written in consultation with family members and with direct witnesses to the events described."*

On June 14, Katenies, Kahentinetha [two Mohawk grandmothers, both part of the MNN network and known for their outspoken criticism of US, Canadian and international power cartels] and Sakowaiaks [a companion] went through the [Canada-US] border and were told to wait under the canopy. They sat peacefully for an hour, surrounded by guards. Some Mohawk Elders showed up to watch. Several other vehicles were searched and released. Only Indigenous people were stopped. Eventually a platoon of guards marched towards the car, all wearing leather gloves.... A chief later told them that the gloves were for protection from blood. It was a sign they planned an attack.

Katenies was dragged...from the car...They knocked her down, pinned her to the ground and forced their knees into her back. They handcuffed her and smashed and rubbed her face into the pavement. Sakowaiaks still remembers the sound of flesh hitting the pavement.

...She was imprisoned and held incommunicado. They would not let her mother see her or talk to her. She had heard her daughter was injured. She asked several times and was refused. Katenies asked to see her mother. The guards said she didn't ask for her. She was strip searched...

It was only after the assault on Katenies began that Kahentinetha was ordered to get out of the car. She saw...what they were planning to do to her. Kahentinetha had been beaten by police in the past...

She was handcuffed and imprisoned. Once in the cell... some of the officers deliberately tightened the handcuffs several times. This cut the circulation to her hands. They ignored her cries as pain shot up her arms. Flashes of light went off in her head and sharp pains shot into her chest. They yelled racial taunts and threats at her and kept ordering her to bend down. A man stood behind her and had his hands on her pants...

The medical record confirms that despite excellent physical condition, Kahentinetha had a trauma-induced heart attack.

This attack took place three days after Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper's apology for the abuses that took place at the residential schools.



## Black August: A celebration of freedom fighters

BY DOC HOLIDAY ET AL., previously printed in 4strugglemag #2

*Black August originated in the California penal system in the 1970s. Many significant events in the New African Nation's struggle for justice and liberation have occurred in August. The commemoration of Black August particularly hails the advances and sacrifices of Black Freedom Fighters.*

*Following are several pages of authentic information on Black August provided by Doc Holiday, an original comrade of George Jackson and a longtime figure in the Black Liberation and prison struggle. Doc is presently in prison in Marion, Illinois.*

The month of August gained special significance and importance in the Black Liberation Movement beginning with a courageous attempt by Jonathan Jackson to demand the freedom of political prisoners/prisoners of war which the Soledad Brothers' case were the center of attention.

On August 7, 1970 Jonathan Jackson, William Christmas, James McClain, and Ruchell Magee were gunned down at the Marin County Courthouse Uprising in Attica prison, 1971 in that attempt for freedom. Ruchell Cinque Magee remains the sole survivor of that bid for liberation. He also remains a POW at Folsom prison doing life. Though this rebellion was put down by gory pigs and their agents it was internalized within the hearts and minds of the people on the outside in the larger prison as well as those in the concentration camps (prisons), internalized in the same fashion as we honor other heroic African Freedom Fighters, who sacrificed their lives for the people and the liberation.

On August 21, 1971, almost exactly a year following the slave rebellion at Marin County Courthouse, George L. Jackson (older brother of Jonathan Jackson as well as one of the Soledad Brothers) whose freedom was the primary demand of the Marin rebellion, was assassinated at San Quentin prison in an alleged escape put forth by prison administration and the state to cover its conspiracy. Comrade George Jackson was a highly respected and purposely influential leader in the Revolutionary Prison Movement. Jackson was also very popular beyond prison, not only because he was a Soledad Brother, but also because of the book he authored appropriately entitled "Soledad Brother." This book not only revealed to the public the inhumane and degrading conditions in prison, he more importantly, correctly pointed to the real cause of those effects in prison as well as in society, a decadent Capitalist system that breeds

off racism and oppression.

On August 1, 1978 brother Jeffery "Khatari" Galden, a Black Freedom Fighter and Prisoner of War, captured within the walls of San Quentin was a victim of a blatant assassination by capitalist-corporate medical politics. Khatari was another popular and influential leader in the Revolutionary Prison Movement.

An important note must be added here and that is, the Black August Concept and Movement that it is part of and helping to build is not limited to our sisters and brothers that are currently captured in the various prison Kamps throughout California. Yet without a doubt it is inclusive of these sisters and brothers and moving toward a better understanding of the nature and relationship of prison to oppressed and colonized people.

So it should be clearly understood that Black August is a reflection and commemoration of history; of those heroic partisans and leaders that realistically made it possible for us to survive and advance to our present level of liberation struggle. People such as Nat Turner, Harriet Tubman, Gabriel Prosser, Frederick Douglas, W.E.B. DuBois, Marcus Garvey, Paul Robeson, Rosa Parks, M.L. King, Malcolm X, and numerous others in our more contemporary period. It must be further clarified that when we speak of "Culture Development," we are not advocating Cultural Nationalism and/or merely talking about adopting African names, jewellery, dashikis, etc. Our primary interest lies not only in where we came from, but the nature of "WHY" we were forcefully brought here, understanding the character of "CONTINUOUS" struggle with the recognition that it is a Protracted struggle and developing the necessary lifestyles to guarantee its success.

**August 20, 1619:** First born Afrikan captives were brought to England's North Amerikan colony of Jamestown, Virginia.

**August 16, 1768:** Charlestown, South Carolina. Rebellious Afrikan slaves (known as maroons) engaged British military forces in bloody battle defending their camp which was a haven for fugitive slaves.

**August 30, 1800:** Day set for launching Gabriel Prosser's revolt. On this day over 1000 armed slaves gathered to endeavor to secure their liberty, however bad weather forced them to postpone the revolt and betrayal ultimately led to the crushing of their physical force.

**August 21, 1831:** Slave revolt launched under the leadership of Nat Turner which lasted four days and resulted in fifty-one slaveholders and their loved ones being subjected to revolutionary People's justice.

**August 29, 1841:** Street skirmish took place in Cincinnati between Afrikans and Euro-Amerikans, wherein for five days Afrikans waged valiant struggle in defense of their women, children and property against brutal, racist terror

campaigns.

**August 1854:** Delegates from eleven states met in Cleveland at the National Emigration Convention of the Colored People, to advance the position that an independent land base (nation) be set up for the absorption of captive Afrikans in Babylon who wanted to return to Afrika.

**August 1, 1856:** North Carolina. Fierce battle erupted between fugitive slaves and slaveholders who sought their capture and re-enslavement. Only recorded casualties was among slaveholders.

**August 1860:** Freedom (slave) conspiracy uncovered with the discovery of an organized camp of Afrikans and Euro-Amerikan co-conspirators in Talladega County, Alabama.

**August 2, 1865:** Virginia. A statewide conference of fifty Afrikan delegates met to demand that Afrikans in Virginia be granted legal title to land occupied during the Civil War. Numerous off-pitch battles ensued during this same month as terrorist mobs moved to evict Afrikans from the land and were met with resistance.

**August 17, 1887:** Honorable Marcus Garvey, father of contemporary Afrikan Nationalism was born.

**August 1906:** Afrikan soldiers (in service of Babylon) enraged behind racial slurs and discrimination struck out and wrecked the town of Brownville, Texas.

**August 1906:** Niagara Movement met at Harpers Ferry, Virginia and issued Marcus Garvey's historic manifesto against racist discrimination in Babylon against Afrikans.

**August 1, 1914:** Garvey founded Universal Negro Improvement Association, advancing the call for Land, Freedom, and Independence for Afrikan people.

**August 23, 1917:** Afrikan soldiers in Huston engaged in street skirmishes that left more than seventeen Euro-American racists dead.

**August 1920:** Over two thousand delegates representing Afrikans from the four corners of the earth gathered in New York for the International Convention of the Negro People of the World, sponsored by UNIA convention issue a bill of rights for Afrikans.

**August 1943:** Slave revolt took place in Harlem as result of a K-9 shooting a brother defending the honor of

Afrikan womanhood. More than 16,000 military and police personnel were required to quell the rebellion.

**August 1963:** 190,000 Afrikans (250,000 people all toll) took part in the March on Washington led by Dr. Martin Luther King to petition for the extension of the rights and privileges due to them mandated by the U.S. Constitution.

**August 1964:** Afrikan-launched, comparatively large-scale urban slave revolt in the following cities: Jersey City NY, Paterson NJ, Keansburg NJ, Chicago IL, and Philadelphia PA. These slave revolts were for the most part sparked by either police brutality or disrespect shown toward Afrikan womanhood.

**August 16, 1965:** Urban revolt took place in Northern Philadelphia.

**August 7-8, 1966:** Large-scale urban revolt was launched in Lansing, Michigan.

**August 28, 1966:** Waukegan, Illinois, urban slave revolt launched in response to police brutality.

**July 30-August 2, 1967:** Urban slave revolt launched in Milwaukee.

**August 19-24, 1967:** Comparatively large-scale urban slave revolt was launched in New Haven, Connecticut.

**August 7, 1970:** Jonathan Jackson killed in firefight while leading the Marin County Courthouse raid. George Jackson

**August 21, 1971:** George Jackson shot and killed in San Quentin by tower guards.

## Black August Program

Most standard history books tend to either play down or ignore New African resistance as a factor in the destruction in the slave economy. On the other hand, when one understands New Africans are still an oppressed nation, the reason for such deception becomes clear. Black August contends that not only was such resistance a factor in the destruction of the slave economy, but New African resistance to slavery continues to inspire New African resistance to national oppression. Herbert Aptheker (the author of "American Negro Slave Revolts") recounts the personal remark of one New African involved in the civil rights struggle:

"From personal experience I can testify that American Negro Slave Revolts made a tremendous impact on those of us in the civil rights and Black Liberation movement. It was the single most effective antidote to the poisonous ideals that blacks had not a history of struggle or that such struggle took the form of non-violent protest. Understanding people like Denmark Vessey, Nat Turner, William

## Imaginary Lines: Mohawk grandmothers assaulted at border, refuse court charges

Reprinted from *The Dominion*, July 9, 2008

(www.dominionpaper.ca)

*Based on an article by Nazila Bettache and Jaggi Singh, organizers and members of No One Is Illegal Montreal. The original version was published by No One Is Illegal Montreal.*

A vehicle with two Kanion'ke:haka (Mohawk) women was stopped by the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) at Akwesasne at 2pm on Saturday, June 14. The vehicle was crossing into Canada from the United States. Akwesasne is a Kanion'ke:haka Indigenous community that includes parts of Ontario, Quebec and New York, and residents, travelling within their community, routinely cross between states and provinces.

One Elder, Katenies, who does not recognize the authority of the CBSA over Kanion'ke:haka land, was consequently arrested. At least four male guards forced her face-down onto the ground, handcuffed her, and took her into custody, where she remained for three days.

CBSA guards also demanded that the other woman – Kahentinetha Horn, an Elder of 68 years – leave the car she was driving. She refused, and she too was overpowered by at least four male CBSA guards. She suffered a heart attack while in handcuffs. Because of the intervention of her brother—a lawyer who was crossing the border at that time—she was eventually taken to the local hospital in Cornwall, Ontario, by ambulance, and spent four days in the Critical Care Unit.

The two women are Mohawk rights activists, grandmothers, and publishers of Mohawk Nation News.

Katenies was targeted for arrest by CBSA guards on an outstanding warrant for allegedly running the border in 2003, and offenses resulting from her refusal to appear in court. Katenies has maintained since 2003 that border officials and the Canadian courts have no jurisdiction over Kanion'ke:haka people or land, and feels that a court appearance would validate a colonial justice system.

The charges the CBSA originally indicated they would bring upon Kahentinetha were never brought forward.

Meanwhile, Katenies was jailed and was granted a bail hearing at the Superior Court in Cornwall three days later, on Monday, June 16.

Supporters from Six Nations, Sharbot Lake and Akwesasne attended court to act as witnesses to Katenies' continued refusal to recognize Canada's courts. Several Elders from the Akwesasne community referenced the bridge blockades undertaken in the 1960s and '70s to assert the rights under treaty law of free movement of Indigenous peoples at the border. They consider Katenies' current stance as part of the same ongoing and long-term struggle for sovereignty.

At the hearing, the federal Crown lawyer objected to Katenies' release on bail. A senior investigator with the CBSA testified for the Crown. He outlined the various warrants and court dates in the case, and Katenies' continual and consistent refusal to recognize the authority of the Court, or the jurisdiction of the CBSA over the border.

In the words of the CBSA investigator, Katenies "has nothing but contempt for the Canadian judicial system." The investigator, who has lived and worked at the Cornwall border crossing for two decades, admitted that it is "not uncommon" for Mohawks to cite the lack of jurisdiction to border officials, although he called Katenies "an extreme case."

Both Katenies and her mother, Nancy Davis, addressed the court. Davis refused to tell the court whether she lived in the Ontario or Quebec part of Akwesasne, stating clearly that she "lives on Kanion'ke:haka territory" and is a citizen of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. She remarked with a smile: "I'm the only one who has authority over my daughter."

Under cross-examination by the Crown lawyer, Davis stated, "We feel we have the right to travel where we want, to go where we want. [The border] is an imaginary line for Americans and Canadians, not Mohawks."

Asked outright if she recognized the authority of the court, Davis replied simply, "No."

Katenies also addressed the court, reiterating that she did not recognize its jurisdiction, and refused to accept all charges, declining to have them read to her. When the court clerk tried to swear her in, Katenies stated, "I can only tell what I know."

Katenies emphasized that she continues to demand that the courts address the jurisdiction question; that is, under what authority can colonial Canadian courts, agencies or officials claim to have jurisdiction over sovereign Mohawks? She stated, "I'm a passionate person, I'm a mother and I'm a grandmother. But, I've had no respect. No one has looked at what I've put forward."

Katenies had already served the court with a motion to dismiss previous charges, and invoked the jurisdiction question, on January 18, 2007.



lives his political convictions. At the time of his arrest for the shooting death of a policeman, Zolo was a well known activist in his hometown of Gary, Indiana. He was an ex-con who had grown up in extreme poverty, but he was also the valedictorian of his CETA federal job training class and had received a scholarship to Purdue University just prior to his arrest. He was involved in the campaign to make Martin Luther King's birthday a national holiday and had designed a button used by campaigners in Gary. He also declared himself a conscious citizen of the Republic of New Afrika and was involved in the struggle for self-determination of African people in America.

Since his arrest Zolo has fought the charges against him from his prison cell, often on death row. His tireless efforts have exposed the unfair and racist way his case has been handled by the authorities. He has defended his own rights and the rights of other prisoners, winning the respect of fellow prisoners and jailers alike. His victories, overturning his death sentence twice, have set precedents cited by other prisoners.

As Indiana Circuit Court Judge Steve David wrote in a May, 2005 decision: "fundamental principles of fairness, due process, and speedy justice" were violated in Zolo's case. Judge David also pointed out that "the State bears most of the responsibility for the delay between the defendant's 1982 conviction and the currently pending penalty proceeding." In 1993, the Indiana Supreme Court overturned Zolo's original death sentence because the prosecution had failed to turn over a gunshot residue test. In 2002, the Indiana Supreme Court overturned Zolo's second death sentence because "the jury pool selection process was fundamentally flawed," including the unconstitutional exclusion of Blacks.

Judge Steve David ruled that prosecutors could no longer seek the death penalty because Zolo's constitutional rights to a speedy trial and due process would be violated. But prosecutors appealed and two years later, the court ruled that "neither the delay nor any prejudice that Azania may suffer from it violates his constitutional rights. The State may continue to seek the death penalty." The Court then appointed Marion Superior Court Judge Robert Altice as special judge to preside over Zolo's new penalty phase, because Judge Steven David was called to active military duty.

Now the Indiana courts have set a new date for a trial before a jury on the sole issue of Zolo's sentence on October 20, 2008. The proceeding will probably be in Fort Wayne. However, Zolo and his lawyers, Jesse A. Cook of Terre Haute, Indiana and Michael E. Deutsch of the National Lawyers Guild and the People's Law Office in Chicago are fighting for a change of venue to Gary, Indiana or Indianapolis, both cities with a more diverse jury pool. Zolo hopes that progressive activists will again pack the courtroom to show their opposition to the death penalty as they

have in the past.

The Indiana courts have also held that Zolo's new sentencing proceeding will be conducted pursuant to the current Indiana death penalty statute enacted in 2002, which means that when the trial court judge receives a sentencing recommendation from the jury, the judge is to sentence the defendant "accordingly," whether the jury recommends the death penalty, or a term of years. The jury will thus be presented with the stark choice of the death penalty or Zolo's release within a short time, and the danger is that the jurors will choose the death penalty because they may succumb to media hysteria and believe that a person convicted of killing a police officer is too dangerous to let out of prison.

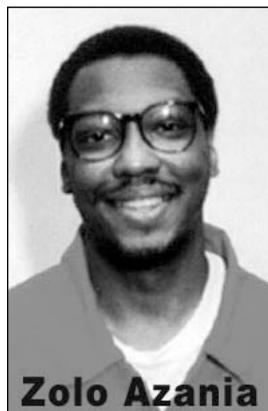
The Indiana Supreme Court has written that "In Azania's case, the specter of an unconstitutional sentence particularly arises where the jury might consider Azania's future dangerousness. We held that future dangerousness was not a concern in Azania's re-sentencing, because the trial judge would have the final say in applying the death penalty and because the jury system requires that we trust juries to follow the law in their deliberations. With the trial judge's sentencing discretion limited by the 2002 death penalty statute amendment, we emphasize again that a trial judge is not expected, and indeed not permitted, to enter a sentence where the sentence, or the manner of arriving at it, is illegal."

The stakes are high for this next step in Zolo's more than a quarter century of fighting for justice, for his freedom and for his very life. Those who oppose the death penalty need to continue to get the word out that Zolo is a wonderful person who contributed much to the lives of others and still has much to contribute, and that the government should not be allowed to put him to death.

#### What can we do to support Zolo?

Plan to come to court in October 2008, and write to Zolo at:

Zolo Azania #4969  
Indiana State Prison  
P.O. Box 41  
Michigan City, IN  
USA 46361



Zolo Azania

Lloyd Garrison etc. provided us with that link to our past that few ever thought existed."

Black August contends that from the very inception of slavery, New Africans huddled illegally to commemorate and draw strength from New African slaves who met their death resisting. Black August asserts that it is only natural for each generation of New Africans faced with the task to liberate the nation, to draw strength and encouragement from each generation of New African warriors that preceded them. It is from such a rich heritage of resistance that Black August developed, committed to continuing the legacy of resistance, vowing to respond to the destruction of colonial oppression with our George Jacksons, Malcolm Xs, and Fred Hamptons etc.

New African resistance moved decisively into the 1920s and 1930s. Evidence of this was movements like The African Blood Brothers, The Share Croppers, The Black Bolsheviks, etc. Unduly there is an incorrect tendency to confine the discussion of African Nationalism to the well-known Garvey movement as the sole manifestation of national consciousness. The Garvey movement was the point of the emerging politics of New African resistance in labor, national consciousness, (i.e. literature, jazz, art, etc..) in the struggle for the land, in all areas of politics, like a great explosion of previously pent-up National Consciousness took place among New Africans.

The sixties was a further example of New African resistance to national oppression. It should be emphasized here that that struggle of non-violence was at that time a strategy of illegality, of danger, of arousing New Africans to direct confrontation with the colonial oppressor. Whether it was a sit-in at a segregated lunch counter or bus station, the movement deliberately broke the colonial law.

Inevitably the anti-colonial struggle moved to a higher level, growing beyond the initial stage of non-violent civil rights protest. Non-violent civil rights strategy was tried and discarded by New Africans, who found that it was a failure, incapable of forcing an entrenched settler's colonial regime to change.

Black August purports that it is important to briefly mention such events to counter the colonial propaganda that the riots of the 1960s was due to anger brought on by overcrowdedness and summer heat. Black August asserts that in order for New Africans to arise to the historical task of defending the Nation, it is imperative that New Africans have a historical perspective of themselves resisting colonial oppression.

Black August avers that at a time when the Black Nation is experiencing the destruction of its community through planned gentrification, at a time when the quality of New African life is being blunted through unemployment, prison, drugs, high infant mortality and poverty, the call of

New African organization should be one of resistance.

Black August is the antithesis to "celebration" and empty "homage." Black August attempts to place struggle and sacrifice on center stage. In this respect, Black August summons all progressive people who identify with the legacy of resistance to colonial oppression by actively participating in Black August. Thus during the entire month of August in commemoration of those Africans who have made the supreme sacrifice for the cause of African Liberation and reflect upon the significance of those contributions as well as to draw closer to the continuing necessity for resistance, we embrace the following as tenets to be practiced during Black August.

## Tenets of the Black August Program

1. A fast which historically has been used as an expression of personal commitment and resistance. Hence, from the sunrise until evening meal we will abstain from eating.
2. We abstain from consuming any type of intoxicants for the entire month of August. The necessity for this should be self-evident for all serious participants of Black August.
3. We limit our selection of television and radio to educational programs, i.e. news, documentaries and cultural programs, etc.
4. During BA we emphasize political and cultural studies for individuals involved in BA. Participants in BA should pair off with someone else you know to study and share knowledge of African Affairs.
5. As an outward expression of BA we wear a Black arm band on the left arm or wrist as a tribute to those Africans who have died as a result of their sacrifice for African Liberation. The arm band can be worn either on the inside or outside of your clothing.

Black August (BA) is a revolutionary concept. Therefore, all revolutionaries, nationalists and others who are committed to ending oppression should actively participate in Black August. Such participation not only begins to build the bridges of international solidarity, but it is through such solidarity that we strengthen ourselves to struggle for victory.

James "Doc" Holiday # 86555-012  
P.O. Box 1000  
Marion, IL  
62959 USA

## I Stand Accused

BY DEANDRE WILLIAMS

I stand accused in a land of fools, convicted of a crime never accrued. You see, they claim that I'm a threat to the future of our innercity Black youth because I refuse to let them blind our Black children with all these psycho-social lies and holocaustic half-truths which are specifically designed to perpetuate the progression of genocidal crimes against our own kind by planting seeds of "self-hate" inside the music which our children listen to and embrace, oblivious of the messages machinations to completely eradicate the existence of the entire Black race.

And see...

While these children of ours are busy nodding their heads to the beat, all they're really doing is nodding off to sleep. But they don't realize this, cause they're too caught up in the vibe to recognize the obvious. And you can look into their eyes and see that they're not even there. I mean, it's like their minds are ensnared by the illicit practices of psychological warfare, which has caused a lot of these brothas and sistas to become lost in the chaos, gambling away their lives with the shillings of ghetto life, killing each other just to make a living in a land of shambles – ridden with strife. Which ain't nothing but a cemetery surrounded with the flickering flames of sacrificial candles, despite the undying struggle of sistas and brothas like myself who beat our fist against the brick walls of prison cells – in our rebellions fight for our freedom and our rights. With solidarity as the foundation of our final call...

I stand accused...

As one of the few young Black men who understands what this government is trying to do by capturing the minds of innocent individuals like me and you, and using us to fight "their" wars in order to keep us oblivious to what's really in store for those of us they label as misfits of poverty, the minority and the poor.

And see...

They feed us scraps and mislead us into traps, and whenever we're in need they flip the script on us and give us their backs. And yet, we continue to pay their paychecks and hustle up their money stacks, while using us to support their statistical facts of recidivism – knowing good and well who the hell is coming back to jail.

It's like villainism,

The way we're thrown into these cells and held as hostages – against our will. Imprisoning us in a place where they were meant to dwell: And then they wanna refer to us as "animals" for the acts we allegedly commit, when they're nothing more than "cannibals." It's just that: "We refuse to submit" – regardless of the fact that this is some "real inhumane shit!" Attempting to dehumanize us by changing our names to "digits."

## Zolo Azania Update

Reprinted from the Naitonal Jericho Movement Website (<http://www.thejerichomovement.com/zoloazania.html>)

### Zolo to Face a Third Death Penalty Trial

Indiana Supreme Court in a 3 to 2 decision allows the State of Indiana to seek the death penalty for the third time in the case of Zolo Agona Azania.

Indianapolis -- On Thursday, May 10, 2007 the Indiana Supreme Court reversed Boone County Superior Court Judge Steve David's ruling that barred the state of Indiana from pursuing the death penalty in the case of Zolo Azania. Lake County Prosecutor Bernard Carter appealed Judge David's ruling and that resulted in oral arguments before the Indiana Supreme Court on June 27th, 2006. Zolo, who was convicted of murder in 1982, has spent the last 26 years in Indiana prisons, most of that time on death row. Twice the state has had Zolo's death penalty verdict overturned by the Indiana Supreme Court due to the prosecution's suppression of evidence favorable to the defendant, ineffective assistance of counsel, and systematic exclusion of African Americans from the jury pool.

In Judge David's ruling, he argued that the state could not seek the death penalty against Zolo a third time because of the length of time that had passed since the crime was committed (24 years at that time), and that the delay was caused primarily by the state. Many of the witnesses, material and character, are now deceased and much of the evidence is either missing or destroyed. David also found that a jury at a third sentencing trial would be unduly focused on the "future dangerousness" of the convicted, depriving Zolo of an unprejudiced decision by the jury. Judge David concluded that society's interest would be best served by barring the state from a third death sentence.

The majority opinion, written by Justice Sullivan and supported by Chief Justice Shepard and Justice Dickson, tries to blame Zolo Azania for the 25 year delay by having the audacity to file appeals to his conviction and death sentence which ultimately exposed mistakes and misconduct by the prosecution in his trials. As stated above, it was this same Indiana Supreme Court that found there was just cause for these appeals. To now blame Zolo for the delays caused by pursuing them is tantamount to blaming the victim.

Justices Boehm and Rucker both wrote dissenting opinions supporting Judge David's ruling. In his dissenting opinion Justice Boehm found the majority opinion's arguments for attributing the delays to Zolo as "both novel and indefensible." Justice Rucker was troubled by the inordinate delay (25 yrs plus) affecting Zolo's ability to

produce character witnesses and cross examine state witnesses.

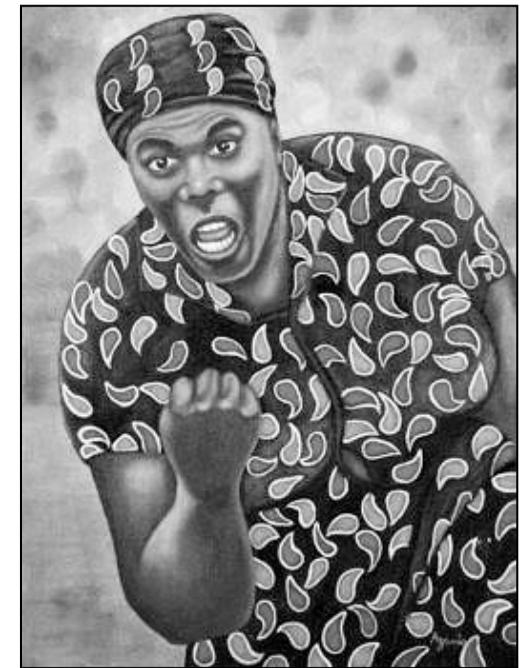
The state of Indiana has already convicted and held Zolo for over 25 years for a crime for which he has always maintained his innocence. It is only fair that it drops its pursuit of the death penalty that is cruel, inhuman, racist and has no place being used in a civilized society.

Zolo's lawyers are considering a petition for certiorari to the United States Supreme Court.

### Sentencing Hearing October 20, 2008

The Indiana courts have set a new date for a trial before a jury on the sole issue of Zolo's sentence, which could be the death penalty, on October 20, 2008. Since 1981, for more than 25 years, he has been imprisoned by the state of Indiana. He is recognized by the Jericho Movement and others as a political prisoner. Zolo did not receive a fair trial and has always maintained his total innocence of any involvement in the crime for which he is imprisoned.

Zolo is a prolific writer and an accomplished artist whose work has been exhibited in many places around the country. His writing and his art reflect who he is: A man who



Woman Fist of Fury: for Human Rights (1999) by Zolo Azania

## Running Down the Walls in Boston

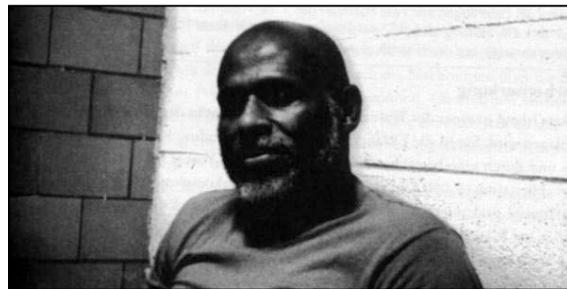
On September 14th, folks from all over will come together in the spirit of fitness and social justice. People inside and outside the prison walls will be taking part in Running Down the Walls, a 5k to raise funds for 1010, a national mobilization calling for freedom for U.S.-held political prisoners and prisoners of war. Our goal is to raise \$2,000, as well as raise consciousness and mobilize our communities to liberate these Freedom Fighters.

The organizers of the Boston RDTW are in full support of those running on August 23rd, however we have chosen to hold our event in September to keep with our tradition of combining RDTW with a celebration of brother Leonard Peltier's birthday. This year Leonard will be 64 years old, and has spent the last 31 years in captivity. It is time we come together once and for all to free Leonard Peltier and all political prisoners and prisoners of war! If you're in the area, please come down to the pond. We will be getting in shape together, and providing much needed resources for our comrades.

Jaan Laaman Legal Freedom Fund  
P.O. Box 681  
East Boston, MA 02128

## In Memoriam

On August 30, 2008, as Issue 11 of 4strugglemag was going to print, political prisoner Bashir Hameed passed away after more than 26 years of unjust imprisonment. Bashir's supporters and family had been campaigning against the medical neglect he was experiencing despite ongoing complaints of shortness of breath, chest and stomach pains, and a history of heart surgery. We salute Bashir for his long history of inspirational resistance, and we will feature a tribute to him in Issue 12.



## A Letter from Colombian Political Prisoners

More than 7500 political prisoners of war in Colombia have a long history of struggle and resistance inside the prison walls. We are a product of the social and armed conflict that rages in our country, between the putrid oligarchy who wages war to protect the interests of the exploiting class, and the diverse social sectors (students, workers, peasants, natives and insurgents) who struggle for emancipation. Because we want to be free, we are victims of assassinations, disappearances, displacement, and mass arrests. A counter-insurgency plan - dubbed Plan Colombia - designed by the CIA and DEA, make extradition a weapon used to dismantle and uproot freedom fighters. The most vile frame-ups have been used against freedom fighters like, Simon, Sonia, Ivan. They have already been tried by North American courts. Three other comrades, Nelson, Efrain, y Álvaro, have been summoned by the Imperial North, in spite of the Colombian Constitution and international treaties that stipulate that no national can be extradited for political crimes.

Prisoners are held in maximum security penitentiaries in Colombia built with money provided by Plan Colombia and directed by the USA's Prisoner Bureau. These prisons are veritable concentration camps where we feel we have been extradited, since each prison is like a piece of the Empire on our own territory. Despite the on-going repression, we, the political prisoners, have managed to develop our political and organizing work with the help of social sectors on the outside who denounce the injustices of what we live through on the inside. From our jail cells, we continue to struggle for another world which is possible.

Check out the Projet Accompagnement Solidarité Colombie ([www.pasc.ca](http://www.pasc.ca)) for more information.



I stand accused...

Because I refuse to be a fool – having paid my dues. I mean, what do I look like starving myself just to stuff their mouths with food? Especially when the government has us so confused that we've begun to fool ourselves into believing the dreams that these politicians sell – like crack cocaine on the streets of memory lane. This shit is insane!! I mean – so-called “Negroes” swear they know the game. But if they knew anything about their history and present circumstances, they'd understand the hidden incentives involved – they're being systematically tamed by their own egos – while watching the wheel of life revolve like the cylinder of a pistol in the midst of a draw: the government done basically gone AWOL...

And see...

A lot of us embrace ignorance, like a rebel without a cause, working against our own selves by helping to make their laws. And I can't say that I don't understand this because I do. I mean, it ain't hard to understand the idiosyncrasies of a fool when analyzing his or her language or studying his or her pattern of behavior – cause their symmetry of stupidity is too deeply imbued...

I stand accused,

Sort of like a nation under siege. In the middle of a battlefield, branded as an enemy, - essentially, because of my insight, I've become the cause of all “their” enmity.

You see, I'm not meant to be intelligent, because people of my complexion are regarded as irrelevant. And when it comes to counting votes, our votes are nothing more than “anecdotes” – a politician's private joke I mean.

Who are we to them when it comes to making decisions – except products of a white collared economy, where our individual identities are as descriptive as anonymity?

While I stand accused... you think about it...

My patience strong!

DeAndre Williams  
#99A0052  
Upstate Correctional Facility  
P.O. Box 2000, 309 Barehill Road  
Malone, NY 12953 USA

## American Tears

BY NAOMI WOLF - Originally published by the Huffington Post: [www.huffingtonpost.com](http://www.huffingtonpost.com)

*Naomi Wolf is a mainstream American writer and best-selling author*

I wish people would stop breaking into tears when they talk to me these days.

I am traveling across the country at the moment -- Colorado to California -- speaking to groups of Americans from all walks of life about the assault on liberty and the 10 steps now underway in America to a violently closed society.

The good news is that Americans are already awake: I thought there would be resistance to or disbelief at this message of gathering darkness -- but I am finding crowds of people who don't need me to tell them to worry; they are already scared, already alert to the danger and entirely prepared to hear what the big picture might look like. To my great relief, Americans are smart and brave and they are unflinching in their readiness to hear the worst and take action. And they love their country.

But I can't stand the stories I am hearing. I can't stand to open my email these days. And wherever I go, it seems, at least once a day, someone very strong starts to cry while they are speaking.

In Boulder, two days ago, a rosy-cheeked thirtysomething mother of two small children, in soft yoga velours, started to tear up when she said to me: "I want to take action but I am so scared. I look at my kids and I am scared. How do you deal with fear? Is it safer for them if I act or stay quiet? I don't want to get on a list." In D.C., before that, a beefy, handsome civil servant, a government department head -- probably a Republican -- confides in a lowered voice that he is scared to sign the new ID requirement for all government employees, that exposes all his most personal information to the State -- but he is scared not to sign it: "If I don't, I lose my job, my house. It's like the German National ID card," he said quietly. This morning in Denver I talked for almost an hour to a brave, much-decorated high-level military man who is not only on the watch list for his criticism of the administration -- his family is now on the list. His elderly mother is on the list. His teenage son is on the list. He has flown many dangerous combat missions over the course of his military career, but his voice cracks when he talks about the possibility that he is exposing his children to harassment.

Jim Spencer, a former columnist for the Denver Post who has been critical of the Bush administration, told me today that I could use his name: he is on the watch list. An attorney contacts me to say that she told her colleagues at the

Justice Department not to torture a detainee; she says she then faced a criminal investigation, a professional referral, saw her emails deleted -- and now she is on the watch list. I was told last night that a leader of Code Pink, the anti-war women's action group, was refused entry to Canada. I hear from a tech guy who works for the airlines -- again, probably a Republican -- that once you are on the list you never get off. Someone else says that his friend opened his luggage to find a letter from the TSA saying that they did not appreciate his reading material. Before I go into the security lines, I find myself editing my possessions. In New York's LaGuardia, I reluctantly found myself putting a hardcover copy of Tara McKelvey's excellent *Monstering*, an expose of CIA interrogation practices, in a garbage can before I get in the security line; it is based on classified information. This morning at my hotel, before going to the airport, I threw away a very nice black T-shirt that said "We Will Not be Silenced" -- with an Arabic translation -- that someone had given me, along with a copy of poems written by detainees at Guantanamo.

In my America we are not scared to get in line at the airport. In my America, we will not be silenced.

More times than I can count, courageous and confident men who are telling me about speaking up, but who are risking what they see as the possible loss of job, home or the ability to pay for grown kids' schooling, start to choke up. Yesterday a woman in one gathering started to cry simply while talking about the degradation of her beloved country.

And always the questions: what do we do?

It is clear from this inundation of personal stories of abuse and retribution against ordinary Americans that a network of criminal behavior and intention is catching up more and more mainstream citizens in its grasp. It is clear that this is not democracy as usual -- or even the corruption of democracy as usual. It is clear that we will need more drastic action than emails to Congress.

The people I am hearing from are conservatives and independents as well as progressives. The cardinal rule of a closing or closed society is that your alignment with the regime offers no protection; in a true police state no one is safe.

I read the news in a state of something like walking shock: seven soldiers wrote op-eds critical of the war -- in *The New York Times*; three are dead, one shot in the head. A female soldier who was about to become a whistleblower, possibly about abuses involving taxpayers' money: shot in the head. Pat Tillman, who was contemplating coming forward in a critique of the war: shot in the head. Donald Vance, a contractor himself, who blew the whistle on irregularities involving arms sales in Iraq -- taken hostage FROM the U.S. Embassy BY U.S. soldiers and kept with-

## Why We Jog

BY THE LA-ABCF

As the stillness of the morning gives way to the sound of children kicking soccer balls through the park, a small group of people gathers around a cluster of picnic tables. At ten in the morning it's still overcast and a damp seventy degrees. Today is August 23rd 2008, the 81st anniversary of the execution of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti.

Sacco and Vanzetti were convicted and sentenced to death for killing two men during a robbery of a paymaster and his guard. Like modern day political prisoners and prisoners of war, they were railroaded in the courts because of their anarchist politics. Despite overwhelming evidence that pointed to their innocence, the two were executed in 1927.

The unjust arrest and conviction of Sacco and Vanzetti brought support from millions of people around the world. This movement to support them and save their lives thought that Sacco and Vanzetti were just two examples of how unjust this system is. These two men's refusal to renounce their political beliefs was the reason they were arrested and ultimately the reason they were executed by the state.

Sacco and Vanzetti are well known political prisoners, but many political prisoners and prisoners of war in this country remain unknown and unsupported. These "unknown" PP/POWs are why the ABCF exists, and the reason we gather in the park today is to Run Down The Walls.

Starting in 1999 in the hills of Griffith park in Los Angeles, and continuing with one small break to today, LA-ABCF has organized a 5k non-competitive run/jog/walk (and now bike ride) designed to raise funds for the ABCF Warchest and other programs supported by local organizations.

The funds raised have been divided between the ABCF Warchest and the Prisoner Art Project -- a fund designed to monetarily assist political prisoners with art supplies. In '02, the run helped the autonomous settlement of Maclovio Rojas in Mexico -- which has faced consid-

erable repression over the years. In 2006, RDTW helped raise funds for the Growing Healthy program sponsored by the New Panther Vanguard. In 2007, RDTW helped raise funds for the Black Riders Liberation Party and their Watch a Pig program. This year it went to El Centro Cultural de Mexico, a community center in Santa Ana dedicated to developing a cultural and educational bridge that brings together a variety of cultural projects from Mexico, Central and South America. Also this year RDTW helped raise funds for The Committee to Free Chip Fitzgerald, the support group dedicated to the release of Romaine 'Chip' Fitzgerald. Chip is the longest held Black Panther political prisoner in the United States.

Beyond the fund raising aspect of Running Down The Walls there is, at the core of the event, one thing: SOLIDARITY. Solidarity Runs are one of the strongest components of Running Down the Walls, and take place in various prisons and cities across the country and occasionally across borders. There have been solidarity runs in prisons such as USP Leavenworth (KS), USP Lompoc (CA), USP Atwater (CA), and MCI Walpole (MA) Navosta (TX), Inez (KY) and Detroit (MI). In addition to this we have begun to expand runs to other cities, such as Winnipeg, Phoenix, Tucson, Boston, and Montreal.

PP/POWs have organized runs in their locations as an act of solidarity with those of us running in LA. In the past comrades like Malik Smith, Leonard Peltier, Ali Khalid Abdullah, Tom Manning, Bill Dunne, and many more have put their running shoes on and broke a sweat along the prison fences. These comrades have also reached out to our social prisoner comrades, who have in the past been committed to Running Down the Walls year after year.

"If it had not been for this thing, I might have lived out my life talking at street corners to scolding men. I might have died, unmarked, unknown, a failure. Now we are not a failure. This is our career and our triumph. Never in our full life can we hope to do such work for tolerance, justice, for man's understanding of man, as now we do by accident. Our words - our lives - our pains - nothing! The taking of our lives - lives of a good shoemaker and a poor fish peddler - all! That last moment belong to us - that agony is our triumph." - Bartolomeo Vanzetti 1927

**RUNNING DOWN THE WALLS**

**AUGUST 23, 2008**  
10 am - 2 pm

**Whittier Narrows Regional Park**  
750 Santa Anita Ave, El Monte, CA 91733

for more information: [www.abcf.net/la](http://www.abcf.net/la)

## Ramsey County Charges RNC 8 Under State Patriot Act, Alleges Acts of Terrorism

BY BRUCE NESTOR

In what appears to be the first use of criminal charges under the 2002 Minnesota version of the Federal Patriot Act, Ramsey County Prosecutors have formally charged 8 alleged leaders of the RNC Welcoming Committee with Conspiracy to Riot in Furtherance of Terrorism. Monica Bicking, Eryn Trimmer, Luce Guillen Givins, Erik Ose-land, Nathanael Secor, Robert Czernik, Garrett Fitzgerald, and Max Spector, face up to 7 1/2 years in prison under the terrorism enhancement charge which allows for a 50% increase in the maximum penalty.

Affidavits released by law enforcement which were filed in support of the search warrants used in raids over the weekend, and used to support probable cause for the arrest warrants, are based on paid, confidential informants who infiltrated the RNCWC on behalf of law enforcement. They allege that members of the group sought to kidnap delegates to the RNC, assault police officers with firebombs and explosives, and sabotage airports in St. Paul. Evidence released to date does not corroborate these allegations with physical evidence or provide any other evidence for these allegations than the claims of the informants. Based on past



abuses of such informants by law enforcement, the National Lawyers Guild is concerned that such police informants have incentives to lie and exaggerate threats of violence and to also act as provocateurs in raising and urging support for acts of violence.

“These charges are an effort to equate publicly stated plans to block-

ade traffic and disrupt the RNC as being the same as acts of terrorism. This both trivializes real violence and attempts to place the stated political views of the Defendants on trial,” said Bruce Nestor, President of the Minnesota Chapter of the National Lawyers Guild. “The charges represent an abuse of the criminal justice system and seek to intimidate any person organizing large scale public demonstrations potentially involving civil disobedience,” he said.

The criminal complaints filed by the Ramsey County Attorney do not allege that any of the defendants personally have engaged in any act of violence or damage to property. The complaints list all of alleged violations of law during the last few days of the RNC -- other than violations of human rights carried out by law enforcement -- and seeks to hold the 8 defendants responsible for acts committed by other individuals. None of the defendants have any prior criminal history involving acts of violence. Searches conducted in connection with the raids failed to turn up any physical evidence to support the allegations of organized attacks on law enforcement. Although claiming probable cause to believe that gunpowder, acids, and assembled incendiary devices would be found, no such items were seized by police. As a result, police sought to claim that the seizure of common household items such as glass bottles, charcoal lighter, nails, a rusty machete, and two hatchets, supported the allegations of the confidential informants. “Police found what they claim was a single plastic shield, a rusty machete, and two hatchets used in Minnesota to split wood. This doesn’t amount to evidence of an organized insurrection, particularly when over 3,500 police are present in the Twin Cities, armed with assault rifles, concussion grenades, chemical weapons and full riot gear,” said Nestor. In addition, the National Lawyers Guild has previously pointed out how law enforcement has fabricated evidence such as the claims that urine was seized which demonstrators intended to throw at police.

The last time such charges were brought under Minnesota law was in 1918, when Matt Moilen and others organizing labor unions for the International Workers of the World on the Iron Range were charged with “criminal syndicalism.” The convictions, based on allegations that workers had advocated or taught acts of violence, including acts only damaging to property, were upheld by the Minnesota Supreme Court. In the light of history, these convictions are widely seen as unjust and a product of political trials. The National Lawyers Guild condemns the charges filed in this case against the above 8 defendants and urges the Ramsey County Attorney to drop all charges of conspiracy in this matter.

Bruce Nestor, President  
Minnesota Chapter of National Lawyers Guild  
3547 Cedar Avenue South  
Minneapolis, MN 55407

out recourse to a lawyer in a U.S. held-prison, abused and terrified for weeks -- and scared to talk once he got home. Another whistleblower in Iraq, as reported in Vanity Fair: held in a trailer all night by armed contractors before being ejected from the country.

Last week contractors, immune from the rule of law, butchered 17 Iraqi civilians in cold blood. Congress mildly objected -- and contractors today butcher two more innocent civilian Iraqi ladies -- in cold blood.

It is clear yet that violent retribution, torture or maybe worse, seems to go right up this chain of command? Is it clear yet that these people are capable of anything? Is it obvious yet that criminals are at the helm of the nation and need to be not only ousted but held accountable for their crimes?

Is it treason yet?

This is an open invitation to honorable patriots on the Right and in the center to join this movement to restore the rule of law and confront this horror: this is not conservatism, it is a series of crimes against the nation and against the very essence of America. Join us, we need you.

This movement must transcend partisan lines. The power of individual conscience is profound when people start to wake up.

Former Deputy Attorney General James Comey said No: he told a colleague that they would be ashamed when the world learned about the Administration’s warrantless wire-tapping. Comey said No: history will look at this torture and disgrace the torturers. A judge today ruled that the U.S. can’t just ship prisoners out of Guantanamo to be tortured at will -- she said No. The Center for Constitutional Rights is about to file a civil lawsuit -- against Blackwater: they are saying No.

In Germany, according to historian Richard Evans, in 1931-1932, if enough Germans of conscience had begun to say No -- history would have had an entirely different outcome.

If we go any further down this road the tears will be those of conservatives as well as progressives. They will be American tears.

The time for weeping has to stop; the time for confronting must begin.

## A Haiku

BY NETDAHE WILLIAMS STODDARD

Acceptance is strength  
Courage is a by-product  
They will always hurt

## 10/02

BY NETDAHE WILLIAMS STODDARD

In this “Free” Country  
Court papers prove  
my surveillance from age four  
Pops is locked in  
behind a solid steel door  
and he is officially  
not allowed books anymore  
I’ve learned to date and number the pages of  
letters written and sent  
to know which ones have been lost, stolen  
or hidden and when  
I’ve known too many scape-goats  
strong, beautiful self less ones  
media made into thieves  
cut-throats and bums  
I’ve said I was scared to join them and  
scared is exactly what I meant. but I also  
learned that if you don’t stand tall the  
first time, then... a punk gets punked out  
so calling ugly things ugly  
is a big part of what it’s all about and  
in this “Free” Country  
I’ll speak truth even thru  
a toothless and beaten mouth.

*Netdahe Williams Stoddard lives in Vermont.  
He is the son of Richard Williams, a long held  
political prisoner who died in 2005.*

## Barack Obama and the 2008 Elections

BY JAAN LAAMAN

Clearly, 2008 has been and continues to be a history making election year. I'd like to offer a little analysis and personal thought on the presidential campaign and especially on Barack Obama.

With Hillary Clinton coming close to winning the Democratic Party primary and Barack Obama winning, and thus becoming the first Black major party candidate for president, electoral politics have been forever changed in the United States. And this is a good thing.

For me personally, this being my 24th straight year of captivity, of being a political prisoner of the U.S. government, the past 8 or 9 months have been a continuing learning process. I did not truly believe that America was ready to elect a Black man as president. I wasn't even sure that America was ready to support a white woman as president. I am very pleased to find out I was wrong.

Of course Obama has not won the election yet, but there are real changes we can already see. In the past 5 to maybe 10 years, the United States has gone through a cultural and societal shift, a positive progressive growth in terms of race and racism. This positive development is centered in young and younger people. But a significant number of voters of all ages, whites, Blacks, Latinos and others, cast their votes for Obama. As a country we can be proud to see that the deadly grip of the false, ugly and dangerous ideology of white supremacy, is finally being lessened and even rejected by larger percentages of people in this country. This is a good and positive development that will benefit this country and reach beyond the next election.

Of course racism and discrimination against people of color is not dead. The Klan and other fascists are still out there hating, plotting and sneaking around. Killer cops are still shooting Black men and usually getting away with it. Obama's candidacy hasn't ended this, and even if he is elected the next president, these problems will continue. Barack Obama is clearly an intelligent and dynamic person. His electoral success, so far, is because he has tapped into the public's real desire to break with the pro-corporate, reactionary, warmongering policies of the Bush government. The people want an end to the war in Iraq and Obama is seen as the more anti-war candidate. The ever rising cost of gas and food, the tens of millions without health care coverage, while banks are seizing more and more homes, and the real estate market is collapsing, are all reasons why people are desperately looking for real change, and Obama has presented himself as the candidate of change.

Let's be clear though, Obama is not a revolutionary and he poses no threat to the capitalist system. From the beginning, his campaign was backed and pushed by some sectors of the U.S. ruling class and political elite. More and more of these powerful corporate and monied ruling forces have recently thrown their support behind Obama. Large sectors of the ruling class in the United States recognize that a President Obama can do more to support and consolidate the interests of the U.S. system, I'm talking about corporate, military and government interests, the interests of U.S. imperialism of the U.S. Empire, than any other candidate or person presently out there. They believe he can do more than a tired old John McCain with his Bush like ideas.

A President Barack Obama can reach out to countries - both governments and their people - like no one else could. According to the Pew Global Attitude Project, a very recent worldwide survey, over one-third of the countries surveyed see the U.S. more as an enemy than a partner. Many across the globe blame the U.S., at least in part, for slumping economies and global warming. Europeans are more negative towards the U.S. government now than they were in the year 2000, and highly negative views prevail across the Muslim world. Yet in July, after this survey, Obama took a trip to Afghanistan, the Middle East and Europe, and demonstrated that many foreign leaders and their publics, especially in Germany, were very willing and interested in listening to and dealing with him.

The rulers in the United States are desperate to seek a way to halt the rapid deterioration of their position as the world's dominant economic and military power. U.S. imperialism is bogged down in two wars it can not win and is afraid or unwilling to abandon. The possibility exists that the Bush government might push the country into a third war against Iran before the November elections, even though they don't have an extra army of 2 or 3 hundred thousand soldiers to invade Iran.

Obama and his ruling class backers want to try a different approach. Essentially Obama wants to rely less on raw military might. He wants to put a friendlier face on U.S. imperialism and strengthen its ability to compete economically with China, Europe, India, Latin America, etc. A President Obama would be much more welcomed and listened to by countries around the world than the present Bush government or a McCain government.

Obama's ongoing campaign and possible presidency is even now opening doors of societal change and progress in the U.S., and this is a good thing. If he becomes president he will try to open doors for U.S. imperialism especially in other countries. This won't be good for us the people in America, but it will benefit U.S. corporate interests.

These are some of the realities of this interesting and historical 2008 election. Let's keep our eyes open and our in-

is not the reason why we are supporting McKinney.

McKinney's "Power to the People Campaign" gets most of its program from the draft program of the still-information Reconstruction Party. Activists in New Orleans and the Gulf Coast, together with supporters nationwide, have been developing a Reconstruction Party as a mass political vehicle to fight for the reconstruction of the Gulf and justice for Katrina survivors.

The draft program of the Reconstruction Party is inspired by the program of the original Black Panther Party. The Reconstruction Party draft program calls for, among other things: self-determination for Black people, the relocation of displaced survivors of Katrina back to the Gulf, jobs, healthcare and housing, reparations for Black people, an end to racist terror and political repression, an end to the prison-industrial complex and an end to the war.

McKinney's campaign is laying the foundation for a radical coalition of Black, Latin@, Asian and Indigenous activists, trade unionists, progressives and revolutionaries. This is important and timely.

We have no illusions regarding the difficulty that McKinney's campaign will face, because this presidential election is like none other before it.

### The economic crisis and prospects for class struggle

Barack Obama is the first Black person to be the nominee of a ruling-class party, and he could be the first Black president of the U.S. Many are understandably excited about Obama's candidacy, especially Black people.

No matter how far Obama moves to the right, most likely Black people are going to come out in unprecedented numbers in November in the hopes of achieving something that very few thought possible a year ago. Apart from Black voters, many others will vote for Obama in November for reasons that are historically progressive. And some will not vote for Obama because of his name, because they think he's Muslim and because he's Black.

Race, or what some of us call the national question, is central to this year's election. But then there is the negative side to this contradictory development. Should Obama win the election (a prospect that shouldn't be considered certain), the U.S. imperialist ruling class will have a gifted Black politician to help them save their troubled empire. An Obama presidency as the face of an imperialist state will not change anything fundamental, but on the surface it will mark a change, a new situation.

The U.S. capitalist class desperately needs to try something new to help them with their overlapping crises of deepening economic turmoil and imperialist war. In the board rooms of Wall Street, some are, no doubt, hoping

that someone like Obama can delay or derail an uprising against widespread depression-level social conditions, or at least be the scapegoat for the unbearable misery that the ruling class has in store for workers.

The Obama phenomenon is more than anything else a sign that the period of political reaction, which has held the working class back and weakened revolutionary movements, organizations and their revolutionary ideas, is coming to an end.

No matter who wins the election, the magnitude of the spiraling crisis of world imperialism, centered here in the U.S., is going to challenge all the forces who share an anti-imperialist, working-class-centered socialist orientation to put aside narrow views, sectarian habits and small differences that have festered during a long and demoralizing period of world reaction.

The material conditions for resurgence of the working class may sooner than later reach levels not seen in this country since the 1930s. In order for the working-class movement to grow politically and organizationally, it will take time, experience in the class struggle, and the assistance of conscious political forces who are dedicated to reviving the struggle.

What is required of all of us who consider ourselves among the dedicated? At a minimum it is a higher level of clarity, seriousness, confidence, solidarity and coalition building. McKinney's campaign is Black-led, anti-imperialist, working-class-centered and has a multinational radical base with the potential of unlimited growth.

Of course, we believe that the struggle should not be confined to the electoral arena, especially as the capitalist ruling class completely dominates the electoral process. We must be in the streets fighting the war, fighting foreclosures and evictions, fighting in solidarity with immigrant workers, etc. However, Workers World believes that supporting the McKinney campaign is a step forward towards the path that the movement needs to take.



The threat of a CIA-supported Islamic takeover on the USSR's southern flank posed pointblank the unconditional military defense of the Soviet degenerated workers state. As we wrote at the time: "A victory for the Islamic-feudalist insurgency in Afghanistan will not only mean a hostile, imperialist-allied state on the USSR's southern border. It will mean the extermination of the Afghan left and the reimposition of feudal barbarism—the veil, the bride price. Moreover, the Soviet military occupation raises the possibility of a social revolution in this wretchedly backward country, a possibility which did not exist before."  
—Spartacist (English-language edition) No. 29, Summer 1980

The Soviet intervention was unambiguously progressive, underlining the Trotskyist understanding that despite its degeneration under a Stalinist bureaucratic caste, the Soviet Union remained a workers state embodying the historic gains of the October Revolution of 1917, centrally the planned economy and collectivized property. These were enormous gains, not least for women and the historically Muslim peoples of Soviet Central Asia, where conditions before the Bolshevik Revolution had been as backward and benighted as in Afghanistan.

A Red Army victory posed the extension of the social gains of the October Revolution to Afghanistan through a prolonged occupation and the country's integration into the Soviet system. Though undertaken purely for defensive geopolitical reasons, the Soviet military intervention cut against the grain of the nationalist Stalinist dogma of "socialism in one country." The Red Army troops, many of them recruits from Soviet Central Asia, who fought against the CIA-backed mujahedin believed they were fulfilling their internationalist duty. And so they were! This military intervention also offered the prospect of reanimating the Bolshevik program of proletarian revolutionary internationalism in the Soviet Union. Pointing to the Stalinist bureaucracy's capacity to betray, we stressed at the time that a genuinely internationalist perspective toward Afghanistan required a workers political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy and return the Soviet Union to the road of Lenin and Trotsky.

Joining the imperialists' anti-Soviet war drive, the bulk of the left internationally condemned the Soviet "invasion" of Afghanistan. The anti-Communist ISO and its then-parent group in Britain, Tony Cliff's Socialist Workers Party (SWP), criminally stood with the imperialists. The 12 January 1980 issue of the SWP's Socialist Worker blared, "Troops Out of Afghanistan!" For its part, the Maoist RCP declared in Revolutionary Worker (11 January 1980): "Superpowers Square Off Over Afghanistan," and condemned "Soviet social imperialism." In order to cover for its treachery, the RCP invented Afghan Maoist groupings opposed to both the mullahs and the Soviets. But the real enemy of this "opposition" was the liberating Soviet troops, as the

RCP made clear in a retrospective article in Revolutionary Worker (10 March 2002): "Revolutionary and progressive forces, including the country's Maoist organizations, threw themselves into the fight against the Soviet invaders."

The horrors being played out today in Afghanistan are among the starkest expressions of the choice that has been posed since the advent of the imperialist epoch in the latter part of the 19th century: socialism or barbarism. As proletarian internationalists in the U.S., we seek to win workers and youth to the understanding that the most reactionary force standing in the way of human progress is U.S. imperialism, represented by the Republicans and Democrats and their small-time offshoots, like the Greens. We fight to build a revolutionary workers party dedicated to the overthrow of this barbaric system and to the establishment of workers rule.

## Why Workers World is Endorsing Cynthia McKinney for President

Reprinted from *Workers World*, July 17, 2008  
www.workers.org

Workers World newspaper in the past has supported the candidates of Workers World Party running for national office in the U.S. presidential elections and who have put forward a revolutionary socialist program. This time we are taking the unusual step of endorsing the candidacy of Cynthia McKinney because these are unique times and this is a unique candidate.

McKinney, a courageous Black woman and former U.S. Congresswoman from Georgia, has become one of the most militant leaders and voices for the U.S. left, progressive and Black movements.

Because of her militancy in the struggle against the war, the struggle to impeach Bush, as well as her struggle to expose the government's role in the displacement of survivors of Hurricane Katrina, she was branded too Black and too radical to walk the halls of Congress. She was pushed out, not once but twice, by the leadership of the Democratic Party. Last year, McKinney severed her ties to that party.

On July 12, McKinney and her running mate, activist Rosa Clemente, won the Green Party's nomination to run for president and vice-president, respectively. The Green Party's nomination will put McKinney on the ballot in about 20 states, which is no small thing in the U.S. where the ruling class has made it very hard for any electoral formation independent of, and even slightly to the left of, the two major ruling-class parties to get ballot status. The Green Party

dependent activist voices heard -- our anti-war voices, our voices of outrage at gas prices, food costs and police abuses. Our independent activism, our rejection of Bush and his corporate policies, our demand for peace and bringing all U.S. troops home now, might even help to push Obama and his campaign in a more progressive direction.

Before I finish, lets stop and be honest now. Wouldn't it be kind of cool to have a President named Barack Obama? Wouldn't we all be just a little bit proud to see this happen?

*Astrugglemag is not connected to or affiliated with Worker's Vanguard or Worker's World newspapers, nor are we members of their respective parties. We do see both of these Left-Socialist organizations and publications as real advocates for revolutionary change. That is why we are offering some thoughts from them on the elctions. As is obvious, they have quite different ideas on how to respond to the upcoming elections.*

*The Worker's Vanguard, "Break With the Democrats! For a Workers Party!" piece is an except of a much longer article (readers can go to their site for the whole article).*

## U.S. Imperialists Out of Afghanistan, Iraq!

Reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* #918 (1 August 2008)  
www.icl-fi.org

Break with the Democrats! For a Workers Party!

As he prepared for his recent trip abroad, Barack Obama fleshed out his plan to remodel the U.S. imperialist presence in the Near East region. In a July 14 *New York Times* op-ed piece, the presumptive Democratic presidential candidate called for "redeploying" troops from Iraq while maintaining "a residual force" in that country that could total as many as 50,000 troops. He also called for dispatching two U.S. combat brigades—as many as 10,000 soldiers—to Afghanistan, in addition to the 32,000 U.S. troops already there. In his July 24 speech before an enormous crowd in Berlin, Obama appealed to the European powers to send more troops to Afghanistan, declaring: "America cannot do this alone." By all indications, Obama's trip achieved its purpose: demonstrating that, as president, he would be quite effective in furthering the interests of U.S. imperialism.

If in racist, capitalist America a black man were elected president it would still do nothing to change the fundamental conditions of working people, blacks, women and the oppressed. Working people need a party that fights for

their class interests, a workers party committed to sweeping away the murderous imperialist order through socialist revolution. As Trotskyists (i.e., genuine Marxists), we fight for the political independence of the working class from the capitalist class enemy. We take a principled stand of never voting for, or otherwise extending any political support to, any capitalist politician—Democrat, Republican, Green or "Independent." Nor would we run for executive office—president, governor or mayor—ourselves. In the U.S., the president is the top cop responsible for the most massive military power in history and for the domestic machinery of repression that maintains social oppression and exploitation. As we wrote:

"Obama simply seeks to become the overseer for the whole plantation. The class he serves is a reactionary gendarme internationally and the enemy of the multiracial proletariat and oppressed masses 'at home,' not least since the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, which left Washington less restrained in its machinations."

—"Obama's Speech: 'National Unity' in Service of U.S. Imperialism—Break with Democratic Party of War and Racism!" (WV No. 911, 28 March)

### Down With U.S. Imperialism!

Obama's trip took place at a time when the situation facing U.S./NATO forces in Afghanistan had become, as he put it, "precarious and urgent." June was the deadliest month for U.S. troops in Afghanistan since the war began in late 2001, a result of what U.S. commanders say is a 40 percent increase over last year in insurgent attacks. Republican and Democratic politicians nowadays like to rail against Islamic fundamentalism. But not so long ago, the U.S. bourgeoisie, including the liberals who were tailed by most of the left, heralded Islamic reactionaries as "freedom fighters," as the CIA doled out billions to the mujahedin fighting the Soviet Army in Afghanistan in the 1980s. This was the largest covert operation in CIA history, and included aid to Osama bin Laden, who would later turn on his former masters.

In mid-July, U.S. troops abandoned a military outpost in eastern Afghanistan after some 200 insurgents almost overran it, killing nine U.S. soldiers. It was the deadliest one-day loss for U.S. forces in Afghanistan in the past three years. U.S. commanders in Afghanistan have sought to counter the push by insurgents with stepped up airstrikes, causing a skyrocketing number of civilian deaths. According to Afghan officials, more than 70 civilians have been "mistakenly" targeted by U.S. bombs and missiles in July alone. Among them were at least 47 people in eastern Afghanistan, mostly women and children, who were killed as they traveled to a wedding party.

Meanwhile, in recent months, U.S. forces have carried out a number of airstrikes, often with the approval of the Pakistani military-backed regime, within Pakistan itself. This is

similar to the policy of U.S. military incursions into Pakistan's western tribal regions that is advocated by Obama. On May 14, a Predator drone hit the village of Damadola near the Afghan border, killing more than a dozen people. On June 10, U.S. planes hit a Pakistani border post, killing eleven soldiers. Many enraged Pakistani military commanders saw that U.S. attack as a deliberate act intended to "punish" Pakistan for not preventing insurgents from crossing into Afghanistan.

The Afghanistan war, which was embraced by liberals as a "just" response to the September 11 terror attacks, has meant continued brutal oppression of women as well as warfare among the various tribal warlords. Afghanistan's imperialist overseers brokered a constitution that effectively enshrined Islamic fundamentalist sharia law, while in Iraq, Islamic clerics are granted authority to strike down "un-Islamic" laws.

As proletarian-internationalist opponents of U.S. imperialism, we recognize that when the insurgents in Iraq and Afghanistan aim their blows against the U.S. occupiers and their lackeys, such acts coincide with the interests of the international proletariat. But we do not imbue the forces presently organizing guerrilla attacks on U.S. forces with "anti-imperialist" credentials.

We warn that in the absence of working-class struggle in Iraq and internationally against the occupation, the victory of one or another of the reactionary clerical forces is likely to come about through an alliance with U.S. imperialism. We are intransigent opponents of the murderous communal violence against other ethnic, religious and national populations oftentimes carried out by the very same forces fighting the occupation armies. And we condemn the kidnappings and executions of foreign civilian workers in Iraq.

We have stressed from the beginning that the chief means of defending neocolonial Afghanistan and Iraq against the overwhelming military might of American imperialism and its allies is through international working-class struggle, especially by the multiracial U.S. proletariat. The bombings in Afghanistan and the devastation of Iraq have gone hand in hand with the capitalist rulers' onslaught against working people, minorities and most everyone else domestically. The "war on terror" that served as the pretext for the occupations has led to the shredding of democratic rights and a massive increase in the repressive powers of the capitalist state.

The perspective of class struggle against the capitalist rulers at home requires a political struggle against the trade-union bureaucracy, which supports the capitalist system and its political parties. A clear example of the role of the labor bureaucracy was the political basis on which the West Coast port shutdown by the ILWU longshore union on May Day against the U.S. occupation of Iraq (but not

of Afghanistan) was carried out. Coming amid ongoing contract negotiations with the Pacific Maritime Association, this action was a powerful display of union muscle to the shipping bosses. But it was wrapped in red-white-and-blue American chauvinism by the ILWU International bureaucracy and subordinated to the union tops' endorsement of Obama for president. At the San Francisco May Day rally, which was politically dominated by speakers from the Democratic and Green parties, an ILWU Local 10 official read out a statement from International president Bob McEllrath declaring, "We're standing up for America, we're supporting the troops...We're loyal to America." Such vile "America first" chauvinism was a pledge of allegiance to the bloody U.S. occupiers against the peoples of Iraq and Afghanistan.

For their part, the various antiwar coalitions—United for Peace and Justice, ANSWER, Troops Out Now and Not In Our Name—were built by the reformist left on a class-collaborationist and social-patriotic basis, preaching the lie that imperialist war can be ended under capitalism. The purpose of these coalitions has been to forge a political alliance with "peace loving" sections of the bourgeoisie, i.e., liberal Democrats. Thus, such actions as were organized by these coalitions never called for military defense of Iraq and Afghanistan against American imperialism, limiting their slogans to pacifist "No to War" appeals to the imperialist rulers.

In June, a range of fake leftists such as Socialist Action, the International Socialist Organization (ISO), the Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL) and Workers World joined with an array of liberals at a gathering in Cleveland dubbed the "National Assembly to End the Iraq War and Occupation." Endorsers included the Progressive Democrats of America and Cynthia McKinney, presidential candidate of the bourgeois Green Party. This confab was modeled on the 1970s National Peace Action Coalition (NPAC) campaign that sought to limit the protests against the Vietnam War to the pacifist demand to bring the troops home. In building the Cleveland conference, the organizers disappeared the occupation of Afghanistan in order to appeal to liberal Democrats. This is not new. During the Vietnam War, when, unlike Iraq today, there was a struggle not only against imperialist occupation but for social revolution to overthrow the capitalist order in Vietnam, NPAC opposed the call for the military defeat of U.S. imperialism. In contrast, the Spartacist League stood for military victory to Vietnam's workers and peasants and declared, "All Indochina Must Go Communist!"

Typically, the various "peace" coalitions call for a reordering of the bourgeoisie's priorities: money for education, not war, etc. However, the capitalist system cannot be pressured or reformed to work in the interest of human needs. The relentless drive for profits and spheres of influence by the rulers of the U.S. and other big capitalist powers necessarily results in wars and neocolonial pillage.

Imperialist aggression and war are not "policies" that can be ended within the framework of capitalism—the entire system must be overturned. Only by wresting the means of production from the hands of the capitalist imperialist rulers and creating an international planned economy can the needs of the billions of toilers now consigned to hideous poverty begin to be met and the threat of war ended once and for all.

### Republicans, Democrats Ratchet Up Threats Against Iran

Two months before Obama's visit to Baghdad, the Christian Science Monitor (14 May) revealed details of a meeting in early April of Iraqi president Jalal Talabani and other top Iraqi officials with Iran's Brig. Gen. Qassen Suleimani, the head of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Quds Force, a paramilitary group that American officials say is backing Shi'ite militias in Iraq. The article quoted an American official who said that Suleimani "promised to stop arming groups in Iraq and to ensure that groups halt activities against US forces" and was "willing to 'send a small team' to 'discuss any issue' with the Americans." Indeed, Iran is credited, including by Washington's quisling Iraqi regime, with having used its influence to have al-Mahdi Army leader Moqtada al-Sadr order his forces to stand down after fierce fighting between his Shi'ite militia and government troops earlier this year.

With their kept bourgeois media in tow, the Democrats as well as the Republicans continue to foment hysteria over Iran's nuclear energy program. Iran is subject to three sets of UN sanctions as well as a growing number of U.S. sanctions, the first imposed 25 years ago. Obama incurred criticism by presumptive Republican candidate John McCain for saying he would negotiate with Iranian leaders, but Obama has repeatedly emphasized that he would keep "all options," including the threat of military attack against Iran, "on the table."

In a provocative move in early June, Israel staged a major military exercise in the Eastern Mediterranean that was widely described as a "dress rehearsal" for an attack against Iranian nuclear facilities. Iran responded in early July by test-firing long-range missiles in the Persian Gulf, including one that Tehran said had the range to reach Israel.

The signals from Washington concerning a possible attack on Iran have lately been mixed. In late June, responding to the Israeli military exercise, Admiral Michael Mullen, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, met with his counterpart in Israel. According to the Jerusalem Post (4 July), Mullen was trying "to throw cold water on any possible Israeli intentions." At the same time, the London Sunday Telegraph (6 July) reported:

"Those familiar with the Israeli-American military talks believe that Israel is still determined to act before Iran has

enough highly enriched uranium to build a bomb, and before Tehran has acquired the Russian SA-20 air defence system to protect its nuclear facilities....

"Former defence and intelligence officers who advise the Pentagon have disclosed that the US military is looking into possible outcomes for military attacks featuring varying levels of American involvement."

Meanwhile, on July 19 a high-ranking State Department official joined negotiations between the European Union and Iran, despite the Bush administration's insistence for years that it would not engage in direct talks unless Tehran first suspended its enrichment of uranium. U.S. officials also leaked the fact that Washington was seeking to establish a diplomatic presence in Tehran for the first time since relations were severed nearly three decades ago.

We are in no position to judge the likelihood of an impending U.S. or Israeli attack on Iran. As revolutionary opponents of U.S. imperialism, we oppose any economic sanctions against Iran, which are an act of war. The Iranian government says that it does not plan to develop the bomb. In fact, given the threats by the imperialists, it would be perfectly reasonable and necessary for Iran to pursue getting nuclear weapons and adequate delivery systems to deter attack. In today's world, possession of nukes has become a necessary means of maintaining national sovereignty. In the event of military attack against Iran by the U.S. or by Israel—the only nuclear-armed country in the Near East—operating on behalf of the U.S., it is in the interest of the international proletariat to stand for the military defense of Iran without giving an iota of political support to the reactionary Tehran regime.

### We Said: Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!

The insurgents the U.S. faces in Afghanistan today are Frankenstein's monsters turned on their former masters. U.S. aid to the Afghan mujahedin began in the late 1970s under the Carter administration, which had launched an anti-Soviet "human rights" crusade. The Islamic fundamentalist mujahedin were in rebellion against the pro-Moscow People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), which took power in April 1978. The PDPA sought to implement some minimal reforms to bring Afghanistan closer to the 20th century: land distribution, freeing women from the burka (the head-to-toe "veil"), reducing the bride price to a nominal sum and providing education for girls. These basic reforms sparked a ferocious rebellion by landlords, tribal chiefs and mullahs who launched a jihad (holy war), burning down schools and flaying teachers alive for the "crime" of teaching young girls to read. When the PDPA requested assistance from Moscow in quelling this bloody rebellion, the Soviet Army intervened, acting to defend the USSR's southern border against the CIA-backed insurgency. This was the first war fought in modern history where the status of women played the central role.