

Issue 15: Spring 2010

4STRUGGLE MAG

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



www.4strugglemag.org

4strugglemag
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International Women's Day • Revolutionary & Prison Struggle • Book Reviews
Sri Lanka and National Liberation • Political Prisoner Updates

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 Earth, human rights and peace.

www.4strugglemag.org is primarily an e-magazine, but hard copies are available (free to prisoners, \$6 an issue for people outside, \$15 for yearly subscriptions). We encourage readers to respond, critique and carry on discussions in the magazine. We value and encourage feedback and discussion. The address of each political prisoner is posted with his/her article so people can directly communicate with them (few political prisoners have access to the internet. Some federal prisons now have an email system for prisoners but you have to be on a pre-approved email contact list before you can send or receive email from the prisoner. Therefore, you must first write to the prisoner and get all the information on how to get on his/her approved email list). We like dialogue, but we are not going to print racist or pro-imperialist messages, so you government agents and klansmen don't bother wasting your time.

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

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or via email to:
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Jaan Laaman, editor
anti-imperialist political prisoner



Subscriptions

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

Prisoner subscriptions: free

1 year standard subscription (3 issues): \$15

1 year solidarity subscription: \$30

(Solidarity subscription covers 1 year for yourself and subsidizes the subscription of a prisoner.)

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

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

New Website

We're proud to announce that we've completely revamped our website. Check us out at 4strugglemag.org for all the content you see here, as well as up-to-date action alerts, political prisoner updates, tools, resources, and a bounty of links to other great organizations.

NO ONE CAN STOP THE RAIN

A benefit show for 4strugglemag Views, Thoughts, and Analysis from the
Hearts and Minds of North American Political Prisoners and Friends

Honest I's
Jazz/Punk/Blues/Rock

Danger!
Danger!
Folk/Powerpop/Death Metal



4STRUGGLEMAG.ORG

Sunday March 7th, 2010
Rearview Mirror, 193 1/2 Baldwin St.
7pm doors \$5-\$10 sliding scale

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Issue # 15 - Introduction

Welcome to 4SM #15, a major voice of u.s. political prisoners. Whether you are checking us out online or are reading the hardcopy, you see that both editions are coming at you in an improved and updated form. With our upgraded hardcopy we are also initiating an effort to increase its outreach and subscriptions, to prisoners and outside people. Share your copy and spread the word about this unique revolutionary voice. Let us know what you think of our upgraded format and look.

We begin this issue with a major salute to International Woman's Day (IWD - March 8th), and the contribution and struggle of the sisters.

Section 2 has book reviews. A new and important book on Fred Hampton's murder is reviewed by Sundiata Acoli. A thought provoking artistic book of poetry, by long held political prisoner Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa, entitled *The Black Panther is an African Cat*, is also reviewed. A review of *Will you Die with Me: My Life and the Black Panther Party* will be included in the next (July) issue.

Section 3 covers revolutionary struggle, prison struggle and more. We salute May Day, bring you information from the Chairman of the New African Black Panther Party and have many other very interesting and informative articles.

The final section is a long, informative and analytical essay on the civil war in Sri Lanka. Bill Dunne lays out the struggle of the past 30 years and also draws broader conclusions and begins a discussion on the entire question of national liberation struggles. This discussion is begun by the article that follows, which I wrote, on nations, national liberation and revolution. 4SM will welcome further input on this question and will print readers' thoughts, if we receive them, in future issues.

We have updates on various political prisoners throughout the issue. Check this out and do what you can to help.

See you in issue 16, out in July 2010. This will include our yearly salute and words on Black August, information on the



Fall 2010 Running Down The Walls runs, and more. We welcome your thoughts and input on any ongoing 4SM discussions, as well as analysis and information on other revolutionary topics. 4SM wants your best, edited, well thought out and laid out writings -- graphics also. See you in July.

Freedom Is A Constant Struggle!

Jaan Laaman, editor
10372-016
P.O. Box 24550
Tucson, AZ 85734

Cover: Portrait of Marilyn Buck by Tom Manning. Marilyn Buck is an anti-imperialist political prisoner, imprisoned for her actions carried out in support of national liberation, women's liberation, social and economic justice. Tom Manning is a Vietnam veteran, working class revolutionary and U.S. political prisoner. See page 29 for an urgent call to help Tom receive medical treatment.

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 supply some of the resources needed in order to write a well-informed piece. We can also help with the editing and/or writing process.

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

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

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Glossary

In Issue 12, we began building a glossary of terms that are relevant to the discussions and articles printed in 4strugglemag. In issue 13, we printed definitions submitted by Marland Henry Gibson. As stated previously, we're hoping this section can prove to become an ongoing dialogue on the terms and language we use to define our analysis. As part of that dialogue, we received the following letter from David Gilbert, anti-imperialist political prisoner, voicing his opinions on previously-printed definitions.

From David Gilbert, anti-imperialist political prisoner

Good going to you and Jaan and all involved on another valuable issue of 4strugglemag! Daniel's piece is important, and Sundiata's is a gem...

While i'm praising 4struggle, indulge me while i bring up two minor points about the glossary.

"Bourgeoisie" is actually a synonym for capitalist class, not for today's middle class. The origin of the term is indeed middle class, but it doesn't refer to today's middle class as given in the glossary. The root is from burgher, or townsman, because that was the class in the middle between nobility and peasants -- a class that was emerging as the seeds of capitalism were sprouting in late feudalism. It was made up of the townsmen who developed workshops and commercial trade and captured the surplus that became capital. So, what was the middle class back then, under late feudalism, became the ruling class of capitalism. That history explains why, even though the historical origin of the word is middle class, the best synonym in a capitalist society for bourgeoisie is capitalist class. Otherwise such classics as "The Communist Manifesto" -- where Marx describes capitalist society as being split into two great contending classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat -- don't make sense at all.

The definition of lumpen-proletariat isn't exactly right either. Unemployed working class sounds like the reserve army of labor, which is a sector of the proletariat. Although there can be some overlap between the two, lumpen technically refers to déclassé elements, often those who've fallen out of various classes, that don't have a direct relationship to the mode of production. That position is the basis for their dual potential, as the glossary explains, to 1. (a la Marx) be dangerous and undisciplined elements that can be used by the ruling class against the struggle, and 2. (a la Fanon) to be very dissatisfied and militant against the status quo.

These clarifications are minor points; the definitions don't detract at all from what i consider a stellar issue. Congratulations!

Ojore N. Lutalo Legal Fund

Ojore is a former member of a Black Liberation Army formation and was released from prison last August after spending over two decades inside for actions on behalf of Black liberation movements.

On January 26th, while returning home from the Los Angeles Anarchist Book Fair on Amtrak, Ojore was detained at gunpoint and charged with endangering public transportation in La Junta, Colorado after several passengers allegedly heard Ojore make threatening remarks against the train while talking on his cell phone.

After 2 days in jail, Ojore was released on bail, after \$4,500 was raised from people from all over the country, who rose to the occasion and donated funds and property to secure his release. The ensuing investigation revealed that the steward on the train never heard Ojore make any threatening remarks and the passengers, after being re-interviewed, said they never heard him make any specific threats. In light of this information, the District Attorney dropped the charges against Ojore.

Throughout this week-long ordeal, Ojore and his comrades were steadfast in refuting the charges and media smear campaign. Many threats were made online against him on various news websites.

While Ojore is free and back home in New Jersey, he intends to pursue a civil liability suit against Amtrak. He will be seeking monetary compensation for all the expenses incurred such as the bail, which was non-refundable, the cost of having to fly home after Amtrak denied him the right to return home on the train, and other legal expenses. More funds are needed for legal and travel expenses.

Please donate whatever you can! You can send checks or money orders (payable to Tim Fasnacht) to:

Tim Fasnacht
Philadelphia ABCF
P.O. Box 42129
Philadelphia PA
19101 USA



ity (workers and peasants and farmers) within each nation. Colonialism, that is where an outside foreign country conquers and rules another country, has been a historical reality of the past several centuries. In response the world has seen innumerable anti-colonial, national liberation struggles and wars. The desire of people to have self-determination and their own national independence has been universal. When this desire is blocked we always see a nationwide nationalistic push for independence. The fact is, nation states and nationalism is a reality of this era of history.

Depending on conditions, time and place, nationalism can be progressive and revolutionary or reactionary, racist and fascist. Presently the nationalism of big power imperialistic countries is almost always negative and reactionary, and used to attack, invade and occupy other smaller countries. Likewise the nationalism of smaller countries or colonies, the ones being attacked or occupied, can be an expression of the revolutionary effort to liberate it. So nationalism is not inherently reactionary or revolutionary.

In modern times many national liberation struggles, particularly those led by communist/socialist parties/movements, have been revolutionary and nationalist - for example Vietnam AND CUBA. But nationalism should not automatically be assumed to be revolutionary. None the less, I do not think Bill is correct to say, "that nationalism is at best obsolescent as a revolutionary strategy."

As a working class revolutionary and socialist, I am first of all an internationalist - a proletarian internationalist. The struggle for the future, is certainly a struggle for the working class of all nations to get rid of their own capitalist misleaders - rulers, and to establish the democratic rule of the working class and majority of people for their own common interests, in line with the similar majority common interests of people in other countries. In order for the world to survive and thrive this has to be our future. With this struggle certainly will come the new culture Bill spoke about. A culture based on cooperation, modern technology and a common effort to make sure our planet and all of us on it, survive.

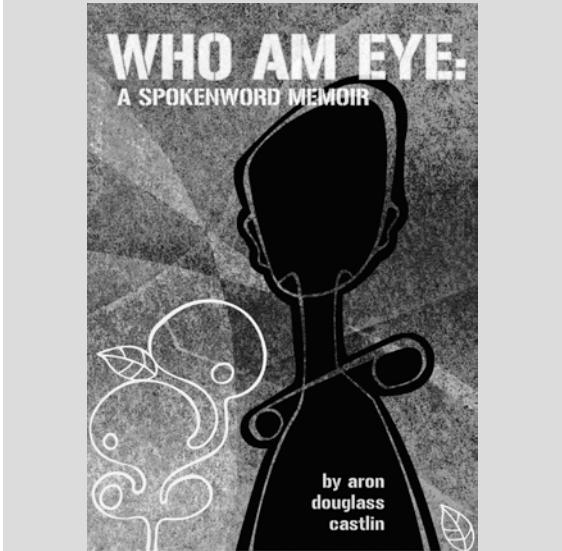
People and nations, countries need to come together to do this, but nations have to come together as independent equal entities. Until all colonies and many neo-colonial relationships are abolished, until each nation has the right to step forward as an independent entity, national liberation struggles will continue to exist. National liberation struggles, to have the best chance of success, should be as progressive and revolutionary as possible. A national independence struggle has to unite many sectors and classes in its nation to be successful. The crucial question is, under what ideology and leadership is the liberation struggle organized? A progressive, secular, leftist, non-racist, in fact internationalist outlook, is the ideology and organizing

method that is most likely to lead the struggle to success. Once a nation is independent, immediately a new struggle ensues to create the new just and equitable society in that country. This effort is at least as difficult as the independence struggle, and Bill is correct in pointing out that way too many successful national liberation struggles have not yet resulted in very just, democratic or equitable countries. Gaining national independence is only the first step towards political, social and economic revolution. In a world economy dominated by imperialism and corporate capitalist globalism, the WTO, NAFTA, IMF, World Bank, etc., it is extremely hard for smaller countries and economies to not fall under the dictates of U.S. and western imperialism. The struggle continues though and one example is countries like Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador, Cuba and others working together and posing some alternatives in South America.

Bill raises many important questions, but I do not think the era of national liberation struggles, as one necessary road to revolutionary change and progress, is over. Nationalism and especially self-determination, including the right to national independence, for colonial (and many neo-colonial) subjugated people and their nations, continues to be a reality in the world. This means that progressive secular national liberation struggles will continue to be one revolutionary path towards the future.

New Book by Akili Castlin

Who Am Eye: A Spoken Word Memoir. To order, visit www.akilicastlin.wordpress.com or write us at 4strugglemag. \$15 (including postage).



Letters

Dear 4strugglemag collective,

Sacred sisters, sacred brothers, my great family of all humanity – I love you all.

Tsi yo li ha – I greet you from this iron house, this old dangerous prison, that is now the new Marion or 'SMU' compounding the problems of negative thought, in these guards and oppressed men alike.

Gad a do lis di ha – I pray, in Cherokee – Tsa La gi every day. I start as soon as I wake up at 6:00 am. I pray for my sons Eduardo – Carlos – Shilo and my son with Jodie, then I pray for all sources of Ama – water and my spirit guides. I pray for all water in the Earth and Universe to be healed, making water pure again. As I splash my face 7 times and drink 7 times, thanking Creator and Mother Earth for all water. We have a 'dire' emergency here in the Earth my sisters and brothers – both people and animal-bird-spider Tree People. All of us. Yet I address the people warriors – I pray for everyone to rise up and shut these destructive industries down for good. Please everyone stop thinking of selfish matters. Consider 'all life' and place all life above and before yourselves. Also everyone needs to rush to the aid of the NYM (Native Youth Movement) up in Chase BC to shut off the power of trespassers playing games on their sacred mountains – go help Natukatnana and all her Sisters and Brothers. Now – please do not wait, no wasting time. Oh – my cellie Andrew has something to say. He is a Yupik Eskimo of Alaska.

.....

My name is Andrew Adams Jr. My cellie is Oso Blanco. He prays in Cherokee and does some very special spiritual things I've seen done back home. He sits at his table all day, writing letters to try to inspire people all over the Earth. Sometimes he looks up at me, turns his radio off and gets very serious and says, "don't worry bro, the revolution is coming. We are going to be free to go help our people."

I really do hope this really happens. Because we really do need one. For the better of this Earth, this corrupt government needs to be crushed, and everyone needs to go back to the old ways and quit hurting Mother Earth. It has to happen for the better. If not, this Earth is going to die and there is going to be nothing left. Or the Mother Earth will smash us all.

Thank you. I love you all. Andrew Adams

[Oso Blanco writing again]

Ok be strong my brothers and sisters.

We are all sacred, so we must realize we are sacred beings. Please please rise up. I am praying for the economy to crash – so people will stop living as mindless, destructive slaves. Let us all get back to the garden – nature and higher consciousness. Before the animal, bird and spider brothers and sisters vote us off the Earth.

Yona Unega
Oso Blanco
de Aztlán

Dear 4strugglemag,
Revolutionary greetings!

I've been receiving yall's magazine for about 3 1/2 years, and am truly blessed with all of the info and dialogue the network puts out. Thank you so much.

I wanted to touch base with all of you on the subject of juveniles serving life without parole (LWOP), as well as other harmful and unduly sentences given to youths.

As a 15 year old child, I was arrested and originally charged with murder – the charge was later upgraded to a capital murder. I was certified as an adult at 15 years of age and transferred to the adult court, went to trial and was found guilty and given an automatic life sentence 35 calendar years before being eligible to see parole.

I know my constitutional rights were violated as to 'due process' – the arresting officers never contacted my family, nor the Mexican Consulate to be present during questioning. I had/have dual citizenship and know I have rights. I know I wasn't given a fair trial so I hired a legal team from Ohio, which is NLPA after 2 appeals being denied. Also I'm retaining an attorney which they recommended to represent me.

Texas has one of the worst judicial systems in the entire U.S.

I am not giving up on my freedom – even after 17 years of being incarcerated! I also feel national attention should be brought to the inhumane treatment of juveniles – especially when one as myself was wrongfully convicted!

Keep me in mind and in yall's prayers. Have a good year!
Respectfully,
Manuel R. Romero, age 32.
1992-2009-?

Dear 4Strugglemag,

I have spent 4 ½ years incarcerated, which has completely restructured the person that I am in a revolutionary way. I got your mag from my neighbor the other day and was impressed with its content; most of the articles felt like they had been pulled right from my head. I am a tutor/teacher here and I use that opportunity to promote critical thinking and discussion of political topics, and I've lately been using your Issues 14 and 15 to aid in our discussions, particularly among the youth here (of which I was one until recently).

During my time incarcerated, some very intelligent gentlemen decided to invest their time in me and changed me from a complete religio-fascist that I was at one time into a stronger, much more intelligent self-described revolutionary. Prison, having a different effect than what the state would prefer, has educated me and shown me the real perspective of what our country is at and the people suffering and struggling under the dominant ruling class. My goal now is to do everything I can to tear down the ignorance and institutions of fear that I once was under but now see through.

Other than to praise your mag as one of the few avenues for prisoner freedom of speech, and to request a subscription myself, I am also sending an article I wrote called "Religio-Capitalism" which is based on my own experiences about the negative effects of how religion influences, and is intertwined with, capitalism, and why church and state aren't really separate. Please consider it for inclusion in your next issue, it offers a perspective of someone who used to be on the other side. And please send me a copy of your next issue regardless.

My Salutations,

Chris Dankovich #595904
Thumb Correctional Facility
3225 John Conley Drive
Lapeer, MI 48446

Religio-Capitalism

BY CHRIS DANKOVICH

In every religion during creation the head deity gives his newly created man the Earth and tells him to do what he pleases with it. Man is given a woman and told to do what he pleases with her. In every society, in every state, the dominant class (and as evidenced above, gender) will use, or create, whatever ideology and morality it can to keep its dominance; in the process the dominant class will attempt to deify itself. This produces a sense of entitlement by the dominant class that is the basis of what capitalism is built on.

Inheritance is the main aspect of that entitlement (an essential worship of the fates) and demonstrates the racial divisions inherent in capitalism. Entitlement and therefore inequality between different individuals is explained simply by where and to whom you happen to be born. Kings inherit the "divine right" to rule, the upper classes inherit their position, based solely on genetic, and therefore racial, features. But as no human being has the ability to decide where or to whom they are born, this lack of choice violates the very nature of the most professed "moral" of capitalism: that everyone has an equal opportunity to be successful. Those African-Americans who suffered before, during, and still today after the civil rights movement can attest to this: equality cannot be maintained in a system where one group, united by any means but usually by relation or race, inherits its advantages. And capitalism by its very nature is the use of one's own advantages, such as knowledge or means, to manipulate and take advantage of another human being's disadvantages or ignorance for a profitable gain. The process of maintaining one's advantages requires the prevention of others from acquiring those same advantages.

To maintain their advantages, the dominant class introduces a morality and a set of laws based upon that morality, designed to keep individuals submissive. Every society, every state, every religion has its own version of morality, in each created by, and created to benefit, that particular group's dominant class. This morality creates fear through stigmatism and direct punishment for disobedience of the morality, and therefore its creators. As the creators and distributors of this morality, the morality once accepted acts to deify the dominant class, while at the same time making it immoral to challenge them or do anything which would help to bridge the gap and remove their sole ownership of whatever advantage makes them dominant. The enforcement of morality is through fear, fear being the foundation upon which the state is built. Throughout most of human history, this fear has been produced through association with the supernatural.

Every king, ruler, and other members of the dominant classes through history until our modern industrial era have associated their rule with religion because of the raw power granted them by appearing as a representative of the deity on Earth. No longer was the dominant individual or class required to spend as much time instilling fear to enforce their morality on the population. The fear came instantly with religion.

Compare this with modern times, where church and state are seemingly separated in our industrial-capitalist nations. With the advent of industrialization, the separation of church and state in America and elsewhere became a way to modernize and consolidate the power of the dominant classes. The state was built with an aura of religion stacked with ceremony and unnecessary tradition, along

more monolithic. Many people were killed, dispossessed, disenfranchised in the name of enforcing adherence to the "proper" national vision. Whether the LTTE would have continued those practices against Tamil opposition in a Tamil state is a moot question, though the LTTE structure and practice suggested it would. Making the agreement that would have satisfied most of the nationalist demands short of a nation when that was possible and victory had become unlikely. It is still too early to tell the extent to which the Sri Lankan ruling class will use its nationalist regimentation and fears in the aftermath, but the continued internment of 127,000 Tamils in camps as of 1 December 2009 does not bode well. Nationalism thus made the struggle resemble one for fascism more than liberation.

The LTTE focus on a nationalist revolution rather than a revolutionary nationalism limited its support. The government's appeal, particularly externally, was less focused on the nationalism and much more on counterterrorism. That allowed it to garner support from disparate sources, including Israel and the former Soviet Union. Though the LTTE derived some support from other national liberation movements and their supporters, its narrow nationalism limited its appeal and thus ability to obtain more widespread military, political and economic support. While the commitment and skill of a movement's cadre can sometimes overcome disparities in resources, they could not in the LTTE's case.

The people of Sri Lanka generally would have been better off had they worked out the nationalist differences back when they had a foreign colonizer (and even before that, in order to avoid having a colonizer). Had they presented a revolutionary nationalist front wherein class was the primary distinction, the nationalist division would not have spun into civil war and all the blood and treasure and development opportunities that squandered. Verily, had the post independence revolutionary trend been more effective at the organization and execution of its own revolutionary challenge to the post-colonial regime, the result would have been more like Cuba, which also had racial and ethnic divisions with which to contend and still managed to defeat the imperialists' puppet regime and bring a much bigger piece of the benefits of revolution to its people.

Although the quarter century of the LTTE's struggle and its bloody end can teach us much about the theory and practice of armed struggle, its most important lesson is that nationalism is at best obsolescent as a revolutionary strategy – in fact, is not necessarily revolutionary. Indeed, it can actually be used to undermine, forestall, divert, and even prevent revolution. Nationalism might have some tactical uses, but what the world and all its subdivisions need is an all people's struggle for a world-wide socialism that will both democratize the world and redistribute its wealth more equitably and sustainably.

Nations, National Liberation and Revolutionary Struggle

BY JAAN LAAMAN

As the 4SM editor, I'm going to exercise my ability to begin some debate on certain practical and theoretical points, raised and argued by Bill Dunne, in his detailed essay on the Sri Lankan civil war.

In the latter part of Bill's essay, under the headings, "The Lesson, The Prescription, The Conclusion," he criticizes some of the LTTE's practice and their underlying basis of nationalist struggle. Bill's analysis and arguments about the LTTE's methods and practice, of how they organized their nationalist struggle, are serious, thought provoking and often convincing. From the specifics of this Tamil struggle Bill draws conclusions about the relevance and correctness of nationalist struggles in general, arguing that, "Nationalism as a revolutionary strategy, however, is a demonstrated failure." In the following paragraphs Bill asks, "what are revolutionaries talking about when they talk about nations?" He then goes on to discuss culture, geography, race, etc.

First, let's be clear what revolutionaries are and should be talking about, in terms of defining nations and thus national liberation struggles. The revolutionary, as well as modern scientific definition of a nation is a people with a: 1.) common history/culture/language; 2.)common economic relationship/ties; 3.)a common or shared land mass. This definition holds true whether we are talking about an independent self ruled country or a subjugated colonial nation.

Let's take a moment to talk about the history and origin of nation states and the nationalism they foster. The world today, primarily organized in nation states, is largely a product of the capitalist era of human societal development/history. That is, nation states along the lines of how we know them today, have been in existence for about 500 years. Prior to that the world was organized in feudal states/kingdoms, in empires, and in tribes. we see remnants of this in the world today.

With the advent of nation states we also witnessed people seeing themselves as members of particular nations - French, Mexican, Irish, Vietnamese, etc. Nations and the people with them aspired to be independent and self ruling. However one looks at it, this is and has been a reality of the world, particularly in the past 100 years.

Individual nations can and have been ruled in a variety of different ways, from democratic and equitable to fully fascist and repressive. For the most part elite small classes (the capitalist class usually) rule (and abuse) the major-

of evolution while skewing that evolution toward benefiting a few local elites at the expense of the global majority, ensuring the evolution would not move us toward the greatest good for the greatest number?

The answers to those questions suggest it is incumbent on anyone who would revolutionize human society such that war and poverty and exploitation and oppression are banished from the world to design and implement the social technology requisite to a human nation rather than wait for it to evolve (or not). It IS a matter of choice and not of unbridgeable divisions: people in Alabama and New York, Texas and California, despite markedly different cultures, recognize themselves as part of a larger entity, have common in addition to separate government, will not make war against each other even though that was not always the case; so it goes between Quebec and British Columbia; so it goes in Europe, where people increasingly see themselves as Europeans first and whatever other nationality second; so it goes in India, already a nation of nations, Tamils included. And those situations were evolutionary. We can accelerate the process.

Cultural purists may object, insisting that culture is a sacred object, immobile and unchanging –that it is what it is, and cannot be altered lest it become what it ain’t and thus doom all its practitioners to loss of “identity” and worse. Of course, the argument for cultural rigidity ignores the changes wrought on all cultures by social and technical give and take and the resulting fact that no culture is the same as “tradition” would have it. In no culture are eyeglasses, motor vehicles, computers, medical imaging, etc., “traditional” except, perhaps, in the emerging modern culture – which is not old enough to have tradition, at least in the sense meant by “traditionalists” who would cling to the old ways merely because they are old. To the extent that people in underdeveloped/overexploited parts of the world do not drive, fly, air condition, telephone, e-whatever, etc., the new culture revolutionaries need to build would extend access to those benefits (and perhaps the new cultural software would reduce that access where it has reached levels that actually impede popular pursuit of happiness). Nationalist insistence that culture must stay as it is or that aid not be mutual but extended at arm’s length from one separate and distinct entity to another (or not) either impedes the equalization or sets up a new imperialism. Just as production has become socialized, so its blandishments need to be as well, so all of its rewards are and must be globalized rather than locked up in nations pursuing their own interests foremost. Current nationalist visions, however, deny the possibility of a united humanity, accepting instead the divisions of race, ethnicity, gender and culture as inherent and irreconcilable. After all, they claim via the world wide web, it has always been that way.

The conclusion

It seems almost a human trait to root for the underdog, especially where it was never an overdog. This is particularly true where the image is one of valiant fighters waging heroic battle against long odds for a just cause – for a revolutionary cause. That is the image most people on the left had of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in their 26-year armed struggle for national liberation and a homeland independent of the Sinhalese-dominated Sri Lankan state. It was therefore easy to mourn the brutal suppression of the LTTE for the war crime it was and misapprehend the lessons this defeat might hold for the people who aspire to make revolution elsewhere.

The picture of a plucky LTTE challenger to an imperial boot on the aspirations of the Tamil people callously destroyed by an oppressor state, however, is the product of an incomplete and one-dimensional, romantic analysis that fails to distinguish between revolution and nationalism. Left out is the fact the Sinhalese majority in Sri Lanka had a pretty good nationalist argument in itself, and the historical circumstances gave the Sinhalese reason to fear their own colonization. That might not have been the most astute assessment of the situation, but it resonated with the ignorant and fearful. Also left out of the picture is that only one of the many Tamil nationalist groups was actually revolutionary, and that one was suppressed by the LTTE. There was no history of democracy within the LTTE and no guarantee that an LTTE state would not be an autocracy. Indeed, its structure suggested a strong man regime like the ones that disserved so many other “liberated” countries. Dedication to cause and heroic fighters worthy of admiration do not mean the cause is most just or will – or should – achieve victory.

The nationalists on both sides divided the embryonic Sri Lankan nation into competitive rather than cooperative sides, the seeds for which were sown by British imperialism tending its own garden. The Sinhalese initiated the post-colonial nationalist conflict with legalistic attacks on Tamils and tilted the field so the Tamils could not resist effectively in the political forum. Revolutionary forces opposed to that and the ruling class mismanagement (from a popular perspective) sought to overthrow the government but were defeated. That was a wakeup call to the nascent Sri Lankan ruling class, which included both Tamil and Sinhalese members. Thereafter, intercommunal violence began and accelerated, instigated in large part by that ruling class and its religious handmaidens. Divide and rule is a ruling class tactic that predates national or revolutionary consciousness.

Perhaps worse than inter- was the extent to which intra-communal violence was fomented as dominant factions on each side, but most egregiously the Tamil side, sought to draw ethnic lines more sharply and make the “nation”

with itself replacing the “God” figure through propaganda and programming of nationalistic views. The illusion of freedom is created to blind individuals from the fact that there is even a struggle and to justify the position of the dominant class without the need for a supernatural justification. Power remains in the hands of the dominant class and will always remain so as long as the advantages held by them, particularly knowledge in our current age, are prevented from falling into the hands of the lower classes, which have been made ignorant and without the ability to rise out of their position as a whole, as evident in the major cities of the world. Knowledge simply of the existence of a different possible way of life, of opportunity, for most is lost. The state, run by whatever class is in control, becomes the proverbial self-centered God telling man to never eat of the tree of knowledge, not out of concern for the man, but for the fear of man becoming God.

Dear 4SM,

First of all, although this is just a letter of appreciation, any part of any communication(s) submitted on my behalf may be used by 4SM.

Secondly, I have heard so much about this publication, 4SM, that now I have received “Issue 14” and am pleased to discover that it is all I expected. The magazine was filled with relevant issues and was presented well. As you know, it is very important for one’s enduring repression to have an outlet. I found the articles to be very “polished” which speaks to the author’s development. I was familiar with most of the people mentioned in the publication. It was interesting to learn of the outcomes and updates of their situations through time and continued diligence.

Third, the piece on women prisoners was heartfelt. It was very sickening to see the abuses female prisoners are subjected to which are beyond what male prisoners face. I was enlightened to the plights of my female counterparts by an associate who established programs for female prisoners held in Danbury, Connecticut. Even so, I was still surprised and saddened by some of the facts in the article. The treatment of female prisoners by male staff reminded me of a piece I read titled “The Psychology of a Prison Guard.” It detailed the degeneration of the mental and emotional state of the “typical” guard. In particular, when a person is first hired to work in corrections they often see it as just a job. Over time that same person becomes dissatisfied and frustrated by the mundane routine and the emotional detachment one must muster in order to deal with human beings in an unnatural environment. As such, prisoners become the object of hatred, albeit subconsciously, because they begin to be viewed as the cause of all that is wrong with the guard’s daily “existence.” This is evidenced by statements such as “if it weren’t for you I wouldn’t be here!” Which in reality is true in the regard that if there were no prison-

ers and ultimately prisons, guards will be unemployed. I said that to say this: it is extremely sad to see people try things just because they think that they can get away with them. The entire concept of prison in Amerika needs to be revamped. It is archaic to say the least. Most people feel that prisoners should be punished and that it is their personal responsibility to do so. When this mentality is coupled with the reality that this colony come to be known as Amerika was founded on violence, exploitation and oppression, it becomes easier to see that many have been abused/hurt in some form or fashion. As a result, many of these people seek an outlet for their suppressed pain and insecurities while prisoners make an ideal target and outlet. When the Supreme Court ruled that prisons are not to be held accountable, for the most part, “to outside entities for the day to day operations of prisons,” it caused peer pressure to be the ruling factor of employee conduct. “Whistle blowers” are extremely rare. I strongly agree that there needs to be increased awareness and solidarity between male and female prisoners activist groups along with the prisoners themselves.

Lastly, I know all too well the ugly side of incarceration. Besides being held captive for a crime I did not commit, I recently endured blatant injustice and repression. To be clear, I was involved in an incident at U.S.P. Big Sandy on September 17, 2007. I was in B-4 housing unit when three inmates were told to get on the wall to be “pat-searched.” During said search, an officer Jude began attacking the inmate he was searching. He struck him in the back of the head and then placed the inmate in a headlock. Another inmate involved in the initial search attempted to stop the officer from assaulting the inmate. The last of the three inmates initially involved fled the scene. This in turn caused there to be two guards assaulting the inmate who attempted to assist the inmate who was struck in the back of the head. Please keep in mind that this took place on the first floor of the housing unit also known as the common area. That means that there were approximately 150 inmates witnessing this take place. This is the point where I became involved in the incident. I ran across the unit to stop the two guards from assaulting the inmate who attempted to halt the initial assault. I grabbed one of the guards and pulled him off of the inmate. The guard fell to the ground and as he was in the process of getting up he grabbed me and we began to grapple. After a short time, the staff from other parts of the prison came to “break up” the situation. The three of us were taken, in various states of dress, to the Lt.’s office. Long story short, we were taken from the institution the next morning by “emergency transfer” with U.S. Marshals holding guns on us while in a van to U.S.P. Lee in Virginia. A month later we were taken to District court in London, Kentucky. Nearly every legal procedure was violated. I prepared our defence, which was ultimately sabotaged by court appointed clowns (I meant to say counsel). I am a layman at law, but captured most of the errors on record to no avail. Our presiding judge, G. Van Taten-

hove, stated several times that he intended to make "an example out of us." Subsequently, we were denied calling favourable witnesses and proceeded to trial, during which the term nigger was used frequently and received unflinchingly by the all white jury. During pre-trial we were held at the Fayette County Detention Centre in a special "Inmate Behavioural Modification Unit." We were subjected to sensory deprivation along with an array of physical and psychological abuses. I came to find out that the responsible administration at Fayette Co had strong ties to U.S.P. Big Sandy (S.I.A. Links) especially. The conclusion of trial was conviction. Upon my return to the prison system, my inmate file was severely altered in order to qualify me for the Special Management Program (S.M.U.) at Lewisburg. I search for anyone, especially counsel, who will not be intimidated by the government who may assist in righting this wrong.

Sincerely,
Oceanus Perry
Reg No. 65754-061
S.M.U. Lewisburg

Political Hostages Inside Indiana's Prisons

BY BRO. HAROLD BROWN

In February of 1993, public television journalist, Bill Moyers, wrote an article titled "A Quirk In The Law."

This particular quirk in the law created a small class of political hostages inside Indiana's Prisons. Legislators created and enacted this bill/law in 1979-80, related to multiple life sentences not falling under the jurisdiction of the parole board, meaning that certain prisoners will remain in prison until they die.

I believe a few of these hostages have at least forty in. I personally have served thirty-four years myself. This law affected about forty-six of us initially. Here recently around ten or twelve have died of chronic medical problems!

In the year 1961, the Indiana Parole requirements afforded everybody a chance to appear before "The Parole Board for parole consideration," except prisoners sentenced to death. Currently as it stands now we were denied the right/chance to even appear before the parole board all these years!

This law is clearly illegal. It's also a human rights violation to target a particular group of individuals/prisoners. These laws compromise and undermine the laws set forth by the Honorable State Of Indiana itself, due to the fact that prison is to be a form of rehabilitation.

As it stands currently, it's merely designed to slowly mentally and physically torture these prisoners, who can only be described as political hostages, in line for the slaughter of death, which ever comes first. Historically, Indiana has trailed states on human rights. The question that should be addressed is whether anyone is above the Law. Currently speaking, the answer is 'yes' - The State Of Indiana is, because surely it's not a convicted felon! It is my hope that this letter will shine some needed light on a rogue law in Indiana that has created "political hostages," out of a particular group of prisoners.

We pray that some moral and just fraction of society will come to aid and assist us in anyway possible to ensure that real justice will somehow manifest in our case. Anyone, any organizations who are able and willing to help us, please contact me.

Political Hostage #3
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Carlisle, IN 47838

PLAIN WORDS

An Anarchist Black Cross Federation Publication

The ABCF Update has changed its name to 'Plain Words.' It is a quarterly publication, in print since 1995, produced by the Anarchist Black Cross Federation. It is one of the few publications designed specifically for news/articles about and from political prisoners and prisoners of war in North America.

You can download the illustrated ABCF Updates in pdf format at abcf.net/abcf.asp?page=update

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nation? If so, and given that there is no real physical basis for race, how would the purity be assessed and by whom? Further, if race is the defining national characteristic, then class is secondary and potentially out while monarchy, dictatorship, bourgeois democracy, and fascism are all potentially in. Even if one accepts the necessity for a bourgeois democracy phase and does not count the current regime as that, those potentials would have to be eliminated in theory and practice before a national liberation movement could be revolutionary. And those are only internal questions; if nations are the result of unbridgeably separate races, what is the relationship of the nations to each other? Historically, the relationship between such intrinsically separate nations has been competitive and capitalistic at one end, predatory and imperialistic at another.

Since revolutions cannot be talking about geographical or racist nations, they must be talking about cultural nations. Language, religion, gender roles, racism, xenophobia, traditions, style (literature, art, music, dress, architecture, food etc.), social institutions like economic legal, educational, and political systems, amongst other things, comprise a culture. People who share a similar basket of references in these regards may consider themselves a nation. In fact, that is the basis of most nations today.

But what is culture, really? Culture is nothing more than a set of practices that have evolved among a group to facilitate the conduct of their daily affairs toward satisfying their human needs. It is a fluid thing that changes, or should change, in response to changing circumstances – and that circumstances will change is the one universal constant. Culture cannot be ossified into something rigid, unchanging, inviolable without diminishing its utility in helping its adherents cope with a changing reality. It has to be able to respond to new conditions such as economic, demographic, climactic shifts and improved information that exposes "traditional" tenets such as racism and sexism as counterproductive. In that sense, culture is like any other tool or piece of technology. One patches and modifies and upgrades and repairs the shoe, shirt, can opener, car, computer, software, until it can be replaced with something better as in more useful – whereupon the old one is junked. Cultural technology also has to be sufficiently flexible internally to accommodate differences within the culture, given that culture is more something that has evolved organically than through a set of hard rules, and even its users see and use it differently. Making culture a basis for nationalism necessarily deprives it of these attributes of modification and flexibility and prevents its replacement with better practices.

Beyond that, culture itself has so far been an imperfect instrument and thus a flawed basis for defining a people or nation, let alone THE people. Culture generally has not prevented and even spawns, incorporates and promotes exploitative and oppressive social institutions both locally

and globally. Part of this inclusion of cultural tenets that stuck is the very evolutionary nature of culture. Practices and attitudes that may be an appropriate or at least understandable response to emergent conditions often persist past their usefulness. So it goes with cultural praxis born of ignorance. This evolutionary error and cultural inertia lends culture to manipulation by elites who have the power to create and define at least the appearance of the emergent conditions and may also define themselves as the nation or state. The resulting cultural norms may not – and have in fact proven not – to be in the interests of the actual nation – the large majority class brethren and sistren who share way more interests across all boundaries than they do not. The legacy of thus created cultures past are what made people think "people" is not already plural and humanity consists of competitive, exclusive, and irreconcilable nations that can only be adversarial and not familiar.

The Prescription

Revolutionaries thus should be talking about building a new culture that will incorporate the best elements of previous cultures, alloy them with new and innovative thinking, allow people a range of cultural choices where best practices are not obvious to them, and leave the exploitative and oppressive baggage all cultures carry like capitalism, sexism, racism, etc., in the recycling bin of history. Humanity is now at a place where it not only can, but must, engineer such social technology, create a culture of struggle for the most equitable social reality in which all people will have the greatest possible freedom to develop their full human potential, a human culture on and through which can be founded a human nation. History has been an ebb and flow of learning from the successes and failures of previous social, economic, technical developments in an upward, positive trend of increasing control of humanity's social, economic and technical environment. But that power also carries the potential to crash the system for everyone and certainly the large majority if we allow it to be engineered so that minority elites can pursue their narrow interests at the expense of all others.

We, the people, are no longer entirely subject to the vicissitudes of the material world. We have learned how to engineer elements of the physical world to better suit our needs. We eat food hunted in climate-controlled aisles and gathered from store shelves and cooked without fire, wear clothes mass-produced from synthetic materials, live in glass and steel shelter, ride and fly instead of walk, and live to multiples of our ancestors' ages. We have learned to build the social and technical infrastructure on which all that is predicated, occasionally in quantum leaps. So why can we not do that for culture and nation: design and build them as we would have them? And since we are building to improve the lot of humans generally, why would that not be a human culture and nation? Why would we be content to leave humanity's direction and condition to the vagaries

The theory was that in coming out of feudalism or colonial subjugation, the national liberation struggles would tear hunks off imperial capital until they devoured it. The rotted skeleton of the old order would then sink into history's muddy bottom. We, the people, would roll imperialism up from its ragged edges. The new "nations" would then go through a bourgeois democracy phase that would develop industry and commerce, from which an industrial proletariat would emerge and unite with the peasantry to assume power and equitably redistribute the social wealth. Well, the national "liberation" struggle theory of revolution has not worked out that way.

Instead, national liberation, with rare exception, installed strong man regimes with only a nodding, if any, acquaintance with democracy. In those regimes capitalism rules, frequently financed by imperial capital and regulated by its watchdogs like the International Monetary Fund (IMF). It is okay in such regimes for the citizenry to be impoverished while a small elite is obscenely wealthy. Leadership does not share popular travails. In many cases, policy is determined in imperial capitals or financial centers and given to those elites to impose on their fellow "nationals," which they do for a sliver of the imperialist pie.

Nor does imperialism appear to be collapsing, despite liberation of virtually the entire world from direct imperialism. On the contrary, imperialism has learned more from nationalist/revolutionary struggles than have we, the people. Imperial capital – which, itself, has supplanted feudal imperialism – has replaced, for the most part, expensive direct occupation and administration of colonies with soldiers and bureaucrats from the imperial country with indirect occupation and administration by neo-liberal (and sometimes not liberal) regimes and militaries drawn from indigenous populations. So it went in Sri Lanka, where a Sinhalese and Tamil business elite safeguarded imperial country interests by resisting the emergence of revolutionary opposition with nationalist instigation. And, for the most part, exploitation and oppression in imperial capital interests have continued in the new countries wrought by national liberation. Access to food and water, housing, medical care, and security in that access have generally not improved to the extent it would cut into largely expatriated profits. Nor has control of rank and file people's economic, political and even social lives been substantially devolved to them with few exceptions. Looked at another way, the attainment of nominal (and only nominal, given financial and trade dependencies) independence has also not greatly impaired the neo imperialists' ability to exploit and oppress and has not kept their relative power from actually increasing. Verily, far from tottering toward collapse, the neo imperialist regimes that practice this ever more global capitalism that enables tidal waves of money to wreak more havoc than yesteryear's gunboats have flourished. Moreover, what are revolutionaries talking about when they talk about nations? It cannot be absolute, sovereign

nations in which people in a geographic (or cultural) entity can do whatever their leadership desires without consideration of the desires of anyone outside the entity. Nowadays, humanity is too dependent on resources like energy, trade, oceans and atmosphere that must be produced and/or used collectively. No "nation" can build a Chernobyl or a dam or a bituminous burning power plant on its border with another, either morally or without the expectation of repercussions, flout trade agreements and norms, plunder the fisheries upon which many nations depend and are already collectively held, or spew filth into the skies when boundaries are drawn upon the ground and everyone reaps the wind. Neither can the world afford "sovereign" "nations" compelled to "defend" themselves with nuclear weapons when even a regional nuclear war that ended with only a few score Hiroshima-sized detonations would usher in a nuclear winter that would kill literally hundreds of millions of people outside the conflict zone. Even now, the interdependence of humanity is acknowledged by international law, even if it is honored more in the breach than the observance. "Sovereign" geographical "nations" were – and remain – obsolescent ruling class institutions intended to facilitate exploitation and control, both internal and external. And if nations are not and cannot be absolutely sovereign, what are they but provinces of a world state? Why not acknowledge the obvious and move forward?

Revolutionaries also cannot be talking about gender or race when they talk about nation. Gender "nations" could not be securely independent for long without an oppressive relationship. Racial "nations" could exist, but there is no physiological basis for drawing a hard line between this "race" and that "race." Humans share 99.99% of their DNA, meaning there's an overwhelming argument that there is only one race: the human race. Artificial constructs of race have been socially manufactured to serve various interests, but the fact remains that there is more variation between individuals within those constructs than across the lines defining them. More than that, the old artificial constructs of race rooted in pigmentation and geographical origin are no longer relevant, to the extent they ever were: more relevant nowadays are traits like blood and tissue types and intelligence, which are distributed in equal measure across all of humanity and thus no basis for invidious discrimination. Hence, it would be impossible to fairly determine citizenship of racial nations.

The notion of race nations also poses some other tough political questions. Could someone be dispossessed or deported or otherwise subject to the pains of non-citizen/alien status on the basis of denunciation as foreign by someone(s) darker or lighter or with a more favorably shaped head (or whatever the defining "racial characteristic)? And since "nation" is predicated on "race," race is the defining national identity characteristic and thus transcendentally important, with the "purity" or one's racial pedigree determining one's place in the hierarchy of the race

Resist Imperialism! Solidarity in the Struggle for Women's Liberation!

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www3.telus.net/grassrootswomen/index.html

Anti-imperialist roots of IWD

One hundred years ago in 1908, in the midst of turbulent political and economic times prior to World War I, over 20,000 women garment workers staged a general strike for 13 cold, New York winter, weeks. Their call: better pay and working conditions. Inspired by these Italian and Jewish immigrant garment workers, socialist and feminist delegates to the 1910 International Conference of Socialist Women in Copenhagen called for an annual International Women's Day.

For the next 40 years, International Women's Day was a day of militant demands and actions.

In 1911, 148 garment workers, mostly immigrants from Italy and Eastern Europe, died in the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire in New York City. The women had led a massive strike by garment workers and were struggling to form a union to change their disastrous working conditions. These demands were carried in early International Women's Day marches.

On March 8, 1917, Russian women went on strike for "Peace, Bread and Land." With two million Russian soldiers dead and dismal work and living conditions at home, Russian women kicked off a wave of food riots, political strikes and demonstrations that would end in the Russian Revolution.

During World War II, women took to the streets on March 8th to demonstrate against fascist forces which were on the rise throughout Europe.

But during the Cold War era, widespread IWD street demos came to an end in North America and Europe. By the late 1950s, IWD was celebrated among fewer women, often indoors in small meeting halls and homes.

Inspired by revolutionary struggle in the Third World, the anti-war movement, and organizing in North America against national oppression and systemic racism, the "second wave" women's movement emerged in the 1960s. In places like Vietnam, the Philippines, South Africa, Algeria, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Iran, Nicaragua, and Northern Ireland, women were armed and fighting for their own liberation in the context of national liberation struggles. After

20 years of quiet, indoor commemorations, IWD was revived as a day of action, solidarity and resistance as imperialism ravaged the lives of women the world over.

Solidarity

Today, for working class women and children, the chaos and crisis caused by imperialism is a daily fact of life. At the same time, the organization and resistance of the people is growing—often with women in the lead as we stand up for ourselves and our sisters, our families and our communities.

Canada was founded as a colonialist white settler state, a subsidiary of the British Empire bent on capitalist expansion. Indigenous women and children have borne the brunt of this ongoing occupation, genocide and repression. Today we stand in solidarity with indigenous women here in the DTES and globally who continue to fight for their land and basic human rights for themselves, their children and their nations. We stand with indigenous women who say No Olympic Games on occupied land and No to full decriminalization of prostitution and legalized Olympic brothels that would only accelerate violence against the most marginalized women, especially indigenous women. Today, Canada's political and economic rulers participate in imperialist wars of aggression with Canada's military budget now reaching \$18 billion. Today we stand in solidarity with the women of Afghanistan, Iraq and Haiti who expose the lie that war and occupation will liberate them. We say there is no liberation for women under occupation. And we say our liberation back here is bound up with the liberation of women in Afghanistan, Iraq and Haiti. We know that instead of money going into healthcare, education, childcare, housing – billions are going into the construction of an American style military-industrial complex to make the world safe for Canadian corporations.

The Canadian government also actively supports the ongoing occupation and collective punishment of Palestine. Today we stand in solidarity with the women under siege in the Gaza strip who demand justice and freedom even as they are running out of water, food and electricity, can't get their kids to the hospital, and face constant bombardment and attack by the Israeli military.

Today Canadian corporations, including many of those mining companies headquartered in downtown Vancouver, continue to plunder the land and resources of the Philippines. They continue to benefit there as well as here from imperialist globalization.

The Canadian government, through "development aid," also supports the corrupt, militarist Arroyo government that is responsible for the extra-judicial killings of 887 civilians including many women and children since 2001. Meanwhile, decades of chaos caused by deregulation, lib-

eralization, and privatization have forced many Filipinos to migrate. The Philippine government is only too happy to export its people, especially women commodified as maids, nannies, and prostitutes, and one corrupt neocolonial government after another pockets their hard-earned remittances. At the same time, the Canadian government is happy to exploit Filipinos, many of them women. They are allowed to enter the country, usually temporarily, through immigration programs designed to offer employers and wealthy families the opportunity to exploit women in low-paying service sector jobs and as live-in-caregivers. Today we stand in solidarity with women of the Philippines who resist this organized state violence as well as economic, political and social exploitation at home and abroad.

Today, the Canadian government eagerly promotes and participates in international, regional and bi-lateral free trade agreements. As people organize against the resulting dispossession and environmental destruction, the Canadian government continues to support the repression and criminalization of people's movements struggling for land, justice and freedom.



Today we stand in solidarity with women unjustly criminalized for their resistance and women political prisoners who continue to resist from their jail cells.

Today the Canadian government continues to exclude and exploit those who have been displaced from their families and countries by imperialist globalization.

Today we stand in solidarity with immigrants, migrants and refugees who survive in the face of Fortress North America and its detention and deportation machinery. We stand in solidarity with these women and their children who demand the right to live and work here as equals – not third class non-citizens subject to the worst forms of racist and sexist abuse and exploitation. We demand an end to oppressive policies of Citizenship and Immigration Canada whose agents last month raided a women's shelter in Toronto and arrested a non-status woman and her Canadian born child. We say women in Canada are not liberated when non-status women and their children have to live like hunted animals in this country.

Today the Canadian government continues to attack the rights of working class and marginalized women and children through the trademark tools of imperialist globalization. And daily more and more of us struggle to access food, housing, healthcare, childcare, education and public transit. The BC government in the last few years has cut social spending to welfare, social housing, legal aid and childcare. They refuse to raise the minimum wage, meanwhile the prices of basic commodities and public transit continue to rise. As more women are connecting their experiences, the need to name and resist imperialism grows.

Today on March 8th we take to the streets in solidarity with women worldwide who continue to organize, educate and mobilize for genuine liberation.

Long Live International Women's Day! Oppose state policies of displacement, deportation, violence and exclusion! Canada out of Afghanistan and Haiti! No Olympics on Stolen Land! No Olympic Brothels! End the Seige of the Gaza Strip! · Child care, healthcare, housing and public transit for all!

entities in which glorification of a narrow vision of "nation" and "race" led to imposition of that vision on pain of death, even on fellow nationals. That tracks closely the definition of fascism.

There are other theoretical and practical lessons the Sri Lankan civil war has to offer. Many of the LTTE insurgents' military tactics have found – and will find – application in other struggles in the future. Some, such as the use of conscripted child-soldiers and suicide bombers, show that these are not revolutionary but reactionary tactics and are illegitimate. The LTTE also used guerrilla land, naval and air power, almost unprecedented among insurgents who generally cede the air and water theaters and thus many lives and operational possibilities to the enemy. Many of the non-military tactics through which the Tamil insurgents supported their struggle are also instructive and will be emulated by future rebels. They raised money from a large diaspora of primarily Tamils, but also other like-minded people, and also sent cadre abroad to support the war at home. Though one may argue that the cohesion of the (an) ethnic group facilitated the fundraising, it is more likely a strongly ethnic appeal circumscribed and reduced the effectiveness of the effort. What is not arguable is that the LTTE's international work illustrates the principle that such asymmetric warfare in the modern era requires support from and "rear areas" outside the conflict zone.

The Tamil use of the political process within Sri Lanka, which never acknowledge the secession of the Tamil-claimed northern and eastern areas of the island, will also be further debated: was their tactical participation in and boycott of various Sri Lankan national elections effective or a liability either generally or in particular elections? On the one hand, electoral politics can wring concessions for the movement and for civilians in the line of struggle as well as gain attention for the nationalist cause. Boycotts also allow an oppressor state to "democratically" enact repressive measures unopposed and farther out of the sanitizing light of public attention. A boycott by the LTTE of presidential elections in 2005 arguably allowed a Sinhalese anti-autonomy faction to take over the government; an autonomy agreement would have turned out far preferably to the actual result – which was not unforeseeable in 2005. On the other hand, many nationalists claim that participating in the institutions of the oppressor state lends the enemy legitimacy and is thus collaboration. TMVP participation in provincial elections and Tamil defections to the SLFP in 2008 arguably divided the movement, marginalized the LTTE, and emboldened the government, undermining the armed struggle and making a satisfactory negotiated end to the conflict less likely.

Political process by a breakaway movement is not limited to existing institutions. LTTE conduct in the free zones they occasionally held also offers both positive and negative political lessons. They established banking, police,

education and other institutions that would prefigure, demonstrate and practice the new society they wanted to create. This is essential in inducing populations to accept and support the new paradigm, to see it as an improvement on the old. It is also necessary to facilitate the paradigm's development both within and beyond the free zones. But the LTTE also used its power in an oppressive and exploitative manner as in extrajudicial killings of opponents, confiscation of property and expulsion from LTTE-held areas. The political lesson of that is how the struggle was undermined from the start by its nationalism.

The Lesson

In the context of revolutionary struggle more broadly than Sri Lanka, the Sri Lankan experience (and that of many other areas) tells us that conflating nationalist struggle with revolutionary struggle is a mistake. The two may be fellow travelers on occasion, and on occasion national liberation may be a useful tactic in furtherance of the planetary revolution humanity so desperately needs. Nationalism as a revolutionary strategy, however, is a demonstrated failure. The Tamils could not make it work with uncommon advantages: a large diaspora; a big, populous adjacent area in which they were culturally dominant (Tamil Nadu in India); a disciplined and committed political and military organization; a bumbling, heavy-handed opposing nationalism; and substantial evidence the national division was aggravated deliberately by ruling class interests. Indeed, notwithstanding the sacrifice of multitudinous revolutionary cadre within national liberation movements, too many of those movements have been co-opted and used against the proletariat because they confused nationalism with revolution. Why would anyone think the ruling class more broadly will not continue to use so effective a weapon as pitting proletarians against each other with nationalisms to maintain its hegemony?

With only rare exception, the "nations" that have (heroically) thrown off the yoke of imperialism in the past 60 years or so have not realized the revolutionary potential that seemed virtually in hand when they kicked out the last imperialist. Some have even backslid into dictatorship, deteriorating economic circumstances, and intra-communal struggle that have worsened the plight of the people in whose name the leadership of victorious movements directed people's war. While self-determined poverty may be preferable to a gilded cage, revolutionary struggle can and should improve people's lives materially and socially as well as politically. Poverty, oppression and exploitation at the hands of wavers of the same flag are a cage of another sort. The failures of national liberation in that regard may be blamed on imperialism and its legacy, but that argument carries its own rebuttal: nationalism could not cope with that legacy and/or allowed the new bosses to stop with liberation but without revolution.

unified front for independence. (Even if the conditions and inclination for the British to grant independence had been present at the time, there were also capital commercial interests at stake.) Importation of Tamils from India, many of whom also spoke English and thus were more employable in British business, also sowed division. It led to a perception that the Tamils were favored by and therefore collaborators with the imperialists. Also influential in the division was capitalism. An elite of English-speaking entrepreneurs financed/employed by British capital morphed out of both the Tamil and Sinhalese upper classes. They had an interest in misdirecting popular discontent stemming from growing privation among the poor and less educated, away from the capitalist economic practices that concentrated wealth in fewer and unaccountable hands. This was the forerunner of the neoliberal capitalism that aggravated and exploited national divisions and was behind the national chauvinism that eventually expressed itself as national socialism that bore more resemblance to fascism than to liberation.

By 1970, discontent with the socio-economic state led national liberation to give birth to popular liberation forces. The Marxist People's Liberation Front (JVP), driven by radical youth from both the Sinhalese and Tamil communities, were unable, however, to adequately challenge the nascent neo-liberal capitalism. Radicals were able to push the debate sufficiently to the left that the mainstream nationalist opposition party (SLFP) coalition won a landslide victory on an anti-capitalist platform. But despite social welfare programs such as food and medical care subsidies, the elected government's commitment to anti-capitalism was only election-deep. The revolutionaries thus sought to overthrow that government in 1971 but were defeated. Whether the socialists were precipitant in resorting to armed struggle or the contradiction was precipitated by



circumstances beyond their control is an open question. The outcome suggests prematurity, but hindsight is always 20/20. What is clear, however, is that the radicals did not pay enough attention to the weakness induced by the nationalist dichotomy within both their own party and the society they purported to represent. Illustrating that failure is the later resurrection of the JVP as a rightwing national socialist party and anti-Tamil riots just a few years later. Such internal division and attendant distrust, disorganization and reduction of mutual aid could not have helped but undermine both the theory and practice of revolutionary struggle and armed revolutionary struggle in particular. After the defeat of the uprising, none of the economic problems were solved; verily, they became more acute. Hence, despite many voices for national reconciliation, nationalist conflict escalated – in the instigation of which ruling class institutions were clearly implicated. And of the contending groups, only one minor one, the People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE), had a revolutionary platform, unfortunately secondary to its nationalism.

Left unaddressed, the Sinhalese-Tamil nationalist contradiction spun out of control until the sides fell not only into inter- but intra-communal warfare. What constituted the "nation" and what must be done to preserve/advance notions of national identity and purity and interests became increasingly rigid to the point at which the national line was dictated and policed by politically and militarily dominant factions. The emphasis shifted to the national and away from liberation. Tamil nationalist/revolutionary organizations engaged in military operations against each other, assassinated each others' officials over differences in how to wage the struggle and what was Tamil, and attacked non-Tamils within their communities for no other reason than that they were not Tamils – became imperialists in their own right. Sinhalese leaders, groups and individuals did similarly, assassinating leaders who were "too soft" on the Tamils, forcibly suppressing dissident formations like the original JVP, and targeting long-time Tamil neighbors and associates in areas outside the Tamil-claimed parts of Sri Lanka. The LTTE went so far as to massacre and dispossess the Muslims in Tamil areas even though they were Tamil speakers and largely supportive (at least initially!) of a Tamil homeland. The result of this "ethnic cleansing" was political

academics, professionals and the like. But the basic issues of racism, white and male supremacy and sexism remain as deeply entrenched as ever in the economic, political and social structures of our society. While the Left has incorporated more women and people of oppressed nationalities in its ranks, the concepts of leadership that elevated white men to those positions in the mid-20th century have not fully been analyzed and altered. Safiya's writings offer a profound position on the power women offer in radical movements: Not just the people who do the work, but the people who provide lucid thinking, courage and heart. I don't think it's an accident that so many of the people we see actively engaged in trying to win release of political prisoners, and making sure they are not forgotten, are women.

Q: As a woman political prisoner, what particular challenges did you face and how did you overcome them?

A: The biggest challenge was to keep my heart from irreversibly breaking. Every day, in every jail or prison I was in, I witnessed the destruction of families and communities caused by the incarceration of so many Black and Latina women. Another challenge was the sexual assault prisons force on us—daily pat searches by male guards, an utter lack of privacy or ability to protect our bodies from those men. It exerts a corrosive effect on a woman's sense of herself.

The way these challenges and others (such as the dehumanizing effect of powerlessness) are overcome every day in women's prisons is by the collective power of a community of women. The love and support women prisoners offer one another provides the basis for every level of resistance, from individual refusal to succumb, to more collective efforts to win better conditions. Often, those group efforts arise from a combined leadership of some of the least privileged women along with the most politicized. When those acts of resistance took place they were essentially revolutionary.

Another challenge was that the prison system and government deny the existence of political prisoners. To call people who have resisted and tried to create systemic change in this society criminals or terrorists is not only a way to mask their existence, but also a way to assert that U.S. society is just fine, really democratic and free. Political prisoners resist being criminalized by doing political organizing inside, studying and reading, and staying as connected as possible with political movements on the outside. That is why organizing among leftist groups for support for political prisoners is so important.

Q: Both you and Safiya organized for social justice not just before and after, but while you were in prison - what advice would you give to prisoners who want to be effective activists?

A: The first thing I had to do when I was arrested—sud-

An Interview with Laura Whitehorn on *The War Before*

BY SARA FALCONER

The War Before: The True Life Story of Becoming a Black Panther, Keeping the Faith in Prison, & Fighting for Those Left Behind. By Safiya Bukhari. Edited by Laura Whitehorn. Preface by Wonda Jones. Foreword by Angela Y. Davis. Afterword by Mumia Abu-Jamal.

In 1968, Safiya Bukhari witnessed an NYPD officer harassing a Black Panther for selling the organization's newspaper on a Harlem street corner. The young pre-med student felt compelled to intervene in defense of the Panther's First Amendment right; she ended up handcuffed and thrown into the back of a police car.

The War Before traces Bukhari's lifelong commitment as an advocate for the rights of the oppressed. Following her journey from middle-class student to Black Panther to political prisoner, these writings provide an intimate view of a woman wrestling with the issues of her time—the troubled legacy of the Panthers, misogyny in the movement, her decision to convert to Islam, the incarceration of outspoken radicals, and the families left behind. Her account unfolds with immediacy and passion, showing how the struggles of social justice movements have paved the way for the progress of today.

Q: Why was it important for you to tell Safiya's story now?

A: Safiya's story has been and will remain important for anyone who wants to understand the history of this country over the past 75 years. The history of the Black liberation struggle defines American history in every period, but from the Second World War to now, following the trajectory of that struggle is crucial. At the moment, as people in the U.S. try to figure out what happened to their hopes for Obama and a Democratic Party-led government, going back to reflect on why Black people have yet to receive justice or equality may be just the education the country needs. Her writings remind us of why the struggle for justice is a struggle against capitalism and imperialism.

Q: Safiya writes about her experience of sexism in the Black Panther Party, and how Panther women adopted some successful strategies to empower themselves. How do you see those power dynamics playing out in current movements today?

A: Like the non-progress on fundamental issues of justice for the Black community as a whole, the status and real situation of women has barely budged forward. In both areas, there are more people in the middle echelons now—

denly thrown into a horrid situation and facing many years behind bars—was to review all my beliefs and actions, to know that whatever I faced, it was worth it. (Safiya writes of this process in her book.) Once I did that (it's partly a process of getting over the shock of being arrested and imprisoned), I kept seeking a connection to other activists. I did my first year or so in Baltimore City Jail. I got my hands on a telephone book and found addresses for every progressive organization I could think of. I wrote to them, and a few sent people in to visit me. That was key: Knowing that there were people on the street who were aware that I was there.

On the inside, I had to relearn much of my organizing knowledge, taking my lead from the other women (some of whom had been in jail many times before; most of whom understood power relations intimately—a viewpoint of the powerless, the disenfranchised) about how to organize for our demands. One particular example: The food in Baltimore City Jail was beyond horrible. We knew the Christmas dinner was going to be particularly bad. I urged that we throw our trays on the floor, creating a rebellion. The other women won me over to a different plan: We organized every friendly staff person, everyone's families, the medical staff, etc. to help us hold our own holiday party. We told them why we needed to do it: that we were family, and a horrendous Christmas dinner would hurt us. The result was that we had a kind of independent, lovely party—we even managed to get some folks to smuggle a bit of real booze in (as opposed to the rot-gut hooch we were able to cook up). The prison administration was frightened, because we were refusing to allow them to make us upset and powerless. I learned from that—instead of ending up beaten up, in the hole, and with possible extra charges, we were happy and felt extraordinarily strong. And we did it as a group.

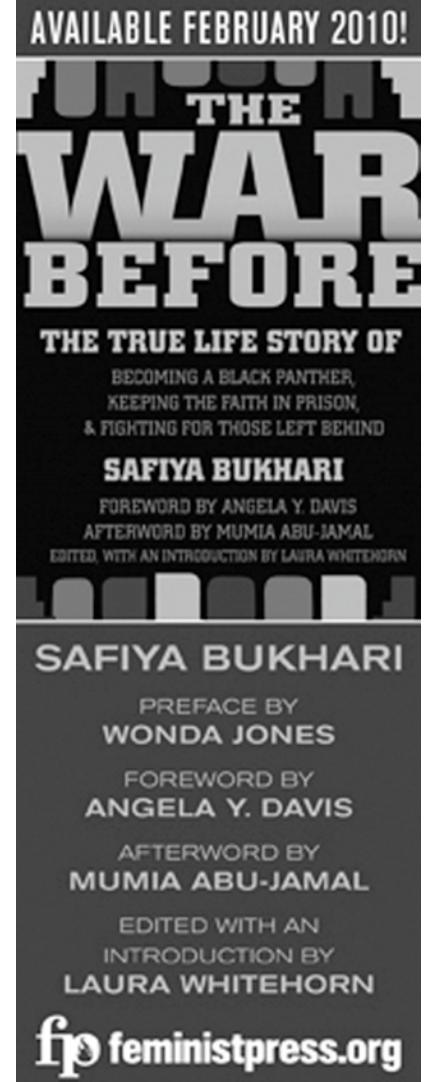
For Safiya, what was key (she writes about this in *The War Before*) was that she did not share the fear the other women had when it came to exercising basic rights. She had the benefit of a political awareness and education. By citing Constitutional

rights, she was able to help people get legal materials. And as a revolutionary, she understood this to be her work—and fulfilling. She also understood the need for repairing family rifts, and she helped to found a group called MILK—Mothers Inside Loving Kids. She saw this as part of the struggle against genocide, because destroying the Black family is one aspect of genocide.

Safiya also teaches us something truly central to organizing anywhere: She loved the fight for justice. If that is your motivation, then you find ways to fight wherever you are. Safiya did that, always.

Q: How can people on the outside support that work without taking power away from the prisoners who are working on those projects?

A: I think those of us on the outside have to recognize three key needs: communication, honesty and respect. The main way I experienced the problem of “taking power away” while I was inside was when people would forget that I didn’t know what they were planning, or what had been done—and when people would tell me that something had been wildly successful, when really it had not. It is tempting to tell prisoners that the work is going better than it may be; that is dangerous, because while we’re inside, we don’t have another reliable source. What I mean by respect is this: On the outside, you don’t necessarily have a good sense of the limitations and dangers prisoners face. The most well intended comment or letter could end up causing someone to be thrown in the hole. I think it is crucial always to find out from a prisoner what his or her actual situation is before planning any work. But I also think it’s important to say frankly what you think should and can be done, and to state any disagreements you have with a prisoner’s view. When I was in prison I was no smarter than I had been on the street. I did know my conditions better than comrades on the outside, but I was not, by dint of being a political prisoner, more to be revered than they. Trying to maintain equality—I guess that would be what I would urge.



Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam the legitimate expression of Tamil people’s aspirations for freedom and self-determination? Or were they the thin edge of Tamil and/or Indian imperialism and the Sri Lankan government’s Sinhalese nationalist response legitimate national defense? Or was the LTTE merely a weaker elitist mob trying to rip off a hunk of the field so uneven against Tamils they could not compete with the bigger mob in the larger country?

The Sinhalese themselves have a pretty good nationalist argument. They were there first, or at least were the ones who displaced and absorbed the aboriginal people of the island. That is not to say “firsties” is the dispositive criterion in determining the legitimacy of nationalist claims. But it is a factor in the national calculus. And to the extent the record can tell us, the Sinhalese did first occupy the area the Sri Lankan Tamils now claim as their home and – and it is even now not exclusively Tamil. The Sinhalese were pushed out through not just one but several invasions by the original Tamils from India, from whom the eighth of the population who are Sri Lankan Tamils are descended. Those invasions damaged the existing culture and its infrastructure enough to cause demographic shifts. Even in the era of European imperialism, Sinhala land was under threat by Tamils. The British settled about a million Tamils from India in traditionally Sinhalese areas to work tea and rubber plantations. These were the forebears of the 5½% of the current Sri Lankan population who are Indian Tamils.

The invasions and the prospect of their repetition from just across the few miles of the Palk Strait raised concerns among the ethnic Sinhalese that their territory, national identity, and control over their cultural lives were at risk as Tamil nationalism emerged in pre-independence Ceylon. Most of the Tamil nationalist groups had connections in and support from the Indian state of Tamil Nadu and elsewhere in Dravidian India. LTTE ideologue Anton Balasingham is quoted as saying, “As a race of people, we are Tamils, and we have our roots in India. India is our fatherland...” and spoke of “renewing” the relationship with India. Such sentiments did not inspire confidence among Sri Lankan or Sinhalese nationalists. Plus, the Sinhalese felt up against the wall: the territorial origin of the North Indian Indo-Aryan immigrants, the proto-Sinhalese, who first landed in Sri Lanka does not share much of the Sinhalese culture, and the Sinhalese have diverged mightily from that in any event. The Sinhalese language and religion have changed and, unlike Tamil, Sinhala is not spoken and the recent incarnation of Sinhalese culture is not practiced anywhere else. Coupled with the linguistic differences, there is the Sinhalese religious mythology that the Buddha entrusted the Sinhalese with safeguarding “true” Buddhism. The Indian/Hindu experience of religious intolerance around India’s partition from Pakistan also argued for Sinhala nationalism. While it is easy to scoff at any inclusion of religious fantasies in political theory and public practice as disastrous, it must be recognized that the fantasies are

important to their possessors. Part of the Tamil argument is religious as well: that their practice of Hinduism is somehow undermined by the Sinhala practice of Buddhism.

Viewed in this context, the Official Language Act of 1956 may be seen as a nationalist act rather than an imperialist one. It made Sinhala the sole official language (which is still the official language, though both Sinhala and Tamil are now recognized as national languages). This act is widely cited as so egregious an attack by the Sinhalese majority on the Tamil minority that it precipitated the long slide toward civil war. Even some of its Sinhalese perpetrators undoubtedly saw and intended it as an act of oppression.

Others, however, saw it in the context of decolonization. The British had made English the language of government and of instruction in schools. Sri Lankan nationalists thus understandably wanted to replace the language of their erstwhile colonial exploiters. Some of the Sinhalese also saw the Tamils as collaborators with the British and as having been unduly favored by them with jobs, etc. and thus viewed any linguistic concessions to the Tamils as soft on colonialism. Others were more pragmatic: a single language for government would be more efficient, especially considering that some three quarters of the population who were Sinhalese would have to learn Tamil to fully understand the workings of their government if Tamil were made a language of government. Sinhala-only did result in some Tamil and English speakers having to leave government and prevented them and Tamil-only speakers from participating in it as much as they otherwise might. This result was intended by extreme Sinhalese nationalists, who used decolonization as a cover for disenfranchisement, and merely accepted by other politicians as a compromise price for elements of their agendas. Thus even so apparently discriminatory an action as an official language law excluding one community’s language cannot be construed as so one-sidedly wrong (if at all wrong under the circumstances) as to completely justify Tamil nationalism or completely condemn Sinhalese nationalism.

The British, with centuries of experience at imperialism, were also good at fomenting the divisions that facilitated their rule. Pressure from a unified, Ceylonese, nationalism wrung concessions from the empire. These included an elected majority in the legislature written into the 1924 constitution. The incorporation of both communal and territorial representation set the nationalist leaders against each other, the minorities preferring the former, Sinhalese the latter. In 1931, once the nationalist movement had begun to regroup after fragmenting over the communal versus territorial representation issue, the imperialists implemented a new constitution providing for a legislature overwhelmingly elected territorially. This not only gave the appearance of (and actually did) favor the Sinhalese, it put nationalist leaders in direct competition with each other instead of leaving a situation conducive to presenting a

In 1999, the LTTE almost got Kumaratunga in a suicide bombing at an election rally; she lost an eye, but won the election. Her new government tried to negotiate autonomy for the Tamils, but failed. Kumaratunga was subsequently unable to maintain a coalition that would give her a parliamentary majority and was forced to dissolve parliament and call new parliamentary elections. A victory by the UNP made Ranil Wickremasinghe prime minister, but he acceded to a ceasefire mediated by Norway and the beginning of peace talks with the Tamils in 2002.

The next year, however, Kumaratunga accused Wickremasinghe of giving the Tamils too much, suspended parliament and took over the defense, interior and information ministries. She called early elections in 2005, and a coalition led by her party won. She appointed Mahinda Rajapaksa prime minister. An agreement between the government and the rebels to share distribution of tsunami disaster aid caused another crisis. In that atmosphere, a JVP withdrawal from the government, escalating Tamil attacks, and the assassination of the foreign minister led to a declaration of emergency rule. Running to replace Kumaratunga who had lost a battle to evade term limits, Prime Minister Rajapaksa formed a coalition with the JVP (then nationalist anti-Tamil), the Jathika Hela Urumaya (JHU), and Buddhist nationalists with which he squeaked out a win in the 2005 presidential elections on an anti-autonomy-for-the-Tamils platform. Contributing to the victory was an LTTE boycott.

At the same time the government was in such disarray, so were the Tamils. The so-called Karuna Faction, named for its leader, former LTTE Commander Colonel Karuna (the group was also later known as the Tamil Makkal Viduthalai Puligal (TMVP), seceded from and opposed the organization. Heavy fighting followed, and Tiger charges that the government had armed and instigated the Karuna Faction, along with widespread ceasefire violations, let LTTE leader Prabhakaran to declare the ceasefire dead in November of 2006.

The civil war intensified during the remainder of 2006 and throughout 2007. Casualties on both sides mounted rapidly: twenty to thirty thousand people were estimated killed from 2006-2008, at least 10,000 of them civilians. Government forces captured the entire eastern province. LTTE forces stepped up suicide bombings in the south and impressment. The Rajapaksa government officially abandoned the ceasefire in January of 2008. Provincial elections in May of that year made TMVP leader Pillayan (S. Chandrakanthan) Chief Minister of the Eastern District

of Sri Lanka, and allied government candidates won other offices. Karuna became a member of parliament in October of 2008, which created tensions between his followers and those of the TMVP. Fighting ensued between the groups in the eastern province. In March of 2009, Karuna became a government minister (for reunification) and he and many of his people joined the SLFP. The Rajapaksa government made a lot of promises about power sharing and development (unfulfilled a year later) and was freed to concentrate on the LTTE in the north. The LTTE capital at Kilinochchi fell on 2 January 2009.

The Teaching

The mainstream view of national liberation struggles is “to the victor go the spoils,” or, perhaps, “the victor writes the history.” In this view, if a national liberation struggle manages to throw out the old imperialists, monarchy, dictatorship, or other political overlord and free its people from the exploitation and oppression of whatever elitist cabal, then it becomes the legitimate government. However it characterizes the ancien regime is the way it was and legitimizes the new government – indeed, makes it heroic. Until that victory, the rebels are terrorists and various other sorts of bad, and governments are “security forces fighting to restore law and order.” In a more progressive, leftist, view, the legitimacy of the particular struggle is analyzed before and through the struggle becoming an armed one. Popular forces can thus be heroic and worthy of support when it is most important. The chances of “power to the people” becoming more than a slogan are thereby increased and of needless war reduced. Such analysis is often difficult, fraught with shades of gray, and too often gets reduced to automatic support for any insurgents, virtually all governments being worthy of overthrow nowadays. In this specifically Sri Lankan context, the answers to the legitimacy questions are neither so easy nor clear. Were the



Tamil demonstrators on Parliament Hill, Canada.

I also think it's worthwhile to try to help people inside get all the resources and information possible. In New York, we try to make sure all the NY state political prisoners have a sub to the NY Times, along with any Left journals and newspapers they want. Books through bars and other groups are important for getting prisoners other kinds of educational materials and info.

Safiya's legacy is apparent in Jericho and the many political prisoner support groups around the world. Yet, as you point out, despite a widespread fascination with the rebellion of the 60s, there has been relatively little interest in the plight of the revolutionaries from that era and beyond who are still imprisoned.

Q: What can the book teach us about taking that work to the next level in building a mass movement to free political prisoners?

A: The book may surprise people. Safiya's thoughts on how to build support for political prisoners evolved over the years, and her original conception of Jericho was a bit different from what Jericho became. *The War Before*, by putting together many of Safiya's positions and ideas on political prisoners, provides a great starting point for us to evaluate and improve our work. Mostly, I think the book's message points to an important way to approach the issue. Safiya's sense of revolution was not something that happened in one period, then disappeared in the next. She traces, in the pages of the book, the gestation of the issue of political prisoners from the days of the BPP to the day she died in 2003. She saw possibilities of how to build support for—and how to fight for release of—political prisoners that have yet to be enacted. Over and over, in various ways, she shows us how the fight to free political prisoners is essential to the fight for justice. Her writings strip away much of the verbiage and illusion surrounding both struggles. She also wrestles with some of the obstacles to this work, suggesting ways to overcome them. *The War Before* also shows the enormous capacity of Safiya's heart and spirit—the solidarity basic to fighting for any sort of social justice and freedom.

Order *The War Before* for just \$9.57:
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Working-Class Women Uniting Against Imperialism

BY ASHLEY MATTHEW

Reprinted from *Basics News*: basicsnews.ca

Toronto - War and occupation. The right to status. Systemic repression. Exploitation. Imperialism. What do these words mean to you? To us, of the Migrant Women's Coordinating Body, it has been important to educate one another about these issues, and many others, and how they affect migrant women, in particular, and working class women, generally.

For three years, the Migrant Women's Coordinating Body has been organizing together as a group of organizations and individuals to march on International Women's Day as a contingent to highlight that the root of women's exploitation and oppression lies in capitalist imperialism. IWD is celebrated by women around the world on March 8, but the main rally in Toronto this year will be held on Saturday, March 6.

This year we are marching under the theme “Working-class women unite against imperialism.” As a lead-up to this year’s IWD rally and march on March 6, we have held a series of educationals to highlight the effects of imperialism on women both here in Canada and abroad. Even beyond IWD, we will continue to hold educationals to learn about women’s struggles throughout history and their contemporary struggles as well. Community mobilization and education is a priority for us as a means to greater unity. Our first educational in the series, “Migrant Women’s Struggles: Here and Abroad,” highlighted international and national liberation struggles of different communities and the role of women in these struggles. We also learned about the impact of imperialism on women throughout the world and its link to the situation for many migrant women that are employed in Canada and other imperialist countries.

The second part of our education series highlighted women’s struggles in Toronto and Canada. Speakers spoke about their experiences of organizing women in Toronto and how imperialism and war have shaped their work. The two forums brought many people together in the commitment to march under the banner of ‘working-class women unite against imperialism on International Women’s Day!’ Leading up to the IWD rally and march here in Toronto, our organization will be holding a cultural celebration on the evening of Friday, March 5, 2010 at the Steelworkers’ Hall, where we will celebrate women’s struggles and successes in the face of imperialism by showcasing the many talents of our communities. And on March 6 we will mobilize the anti-imperialist contingent at 12:30pm in front of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education as we march together in solidarity with one another. Join us on March 6 in uniting against imperialism as the working women of the world!

Measure 11 and Women in Prison

BY DANIELLE COX

We, as women, are persecuted in many respects. Since the time of Colonial America and before, we have been killed for being suspected of "witchcraft," imprisoned for speaking out against the government, and not allowed to vote, own property, or have a say in whether or not we kept our earnings. It has only changed in the last 60-80 years that we have been given rights similar to those of men. I say similar, because we have never and probably will never be considered as an equal in certain fields. Obviously we are thought of as experts in birthing, cleaning, and cooking - a.k.a. the stigma surrounding women from a man's viewpoint. However, when sharing in other job niches with men, we have still come up at a "less than" on a pay scale - by 1994, women were still only earning 71.4% of what men did, although they participated in the same amount of events and did the same amount of work.

Women are also at a large disadvantage while learning. We, as females, are more than 2/3 of the billion people that are illiterate, and 2/3 of the hundred million children that have dropped out of school are girls. (Schultheiss, Katrin, Ph.D., Dept. of Women's Studies, U of Illinois at Chicago, Microsoft Encarta) We also have far more poverty-stricken women in the world, being that more than 70% of the world's poor are female. Gender inequities continue in the collegiate division as well, where women are actually provided less scholarships, less in the budgets for the athletic departments, and fewer women receive doctoral degrees than men, which results in less faculty appointments at colleges.

There are rapidly growing numbers of women jailed in the correctional business these days. We have had many women being charged with identity thefts, because they are stealing money, credit cards, and IDs, either to provide for their family, or to support their ever-growing drug habits. This is pointedly ignored by the government, who has decreased spending on drug treatment programs many times in the last ten years, all under the excuse of a recession or insufficient funding from the federal and state level. . However, what they don't take into account is that 2/3 of the crimes committed by women are drug crimes and non-violent offenses. Some of the problems here that could be solved, but simply are ignored by the correctional business, are the fact that 60% of women who are locked up do not have a high-school education, and more than 50% are unemployed at their time of arrest. Does this not speak of the government's lack of foresight in putting more money and effort towards higher education and drug treatment?

In the only women's prison in Oregon, where I am cur-

rently incarcerated, Coffee Creek "Correctional" Facility, we have huge disparities in the federal and state budgets doled out to the men and women. We are told that many of the privileges that the men receive are because there is an established trust fund set up for the men's prisons that provides college-level courses at a very low cost that help the men complete their bachelor's degrees or associate's degrees in prison. Apparently the women don't have the anonymous donors to give us money, because we have no higher education programs available except at a very high cost that not everyone who wants to take courses is able to afford.

We also are not, according to our safety and security manager, Captain Teal, able to participate in the same activities that the men's institutions are given, because of the fact that our "correctional facility" tag dictates that we are not given the same privileges. This, to me, sounds like a violation of our civil rights. We do not stand up for ourselves because about 80% of the women who come to this prison have been physically, mentally, or sexually abused-and we have never been able to stand up because of our fear of the repercussions.

Coffee Creek Correctional Facility has been open for a little over six years now, and the women that made the move from OWCC were promised by the administrators that their privileges would remain the same as they did when they were in the old prison; i.e. having a recreation room, ice machines, an outdoor area where people could hang out without fear of getting fleas, etc. OWCC was the last prison women were housed before it was condemned \$ t down, and then reopened as a men's minimum facility. Unfortunately, CCCF was built as a transitional intake center for the men to come from county and get processed. Even some of the officers agree that this was never intended for long-term stays and that they should never have put the women here. This place has no room for all the women that they anticipated, and they are constantly "restructuring" so that they have room for all the incoming women. There has been two units added since CCCF opened, and one that is in the process of being opened. Even the segregation had to be expanded with both segregated units having double bunks except for the camera cells where they put the women on suicide watch.

One positive thing about Oregon is that it is mandatory for anyone under the age of 24 to have a GED or diploma when they come into their facilities. Everyone is tested when they come in the prison and if they score low enough on the basic adult learning scale, they are required to take classes and be tutored in whatever subject they have to learn more about (math or reading are the basic tests). Our GED class is brought to us by teachers from Portland Community College, who teach two classes each day for two hours a day, Monday through Thursday. Obviously some of us believe that it isn't enough, since we came in with our diplomas or degrees and would like to do something

On 5 May 1976, Velupillai Prabhakaran founded the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) as a successor to the Tamil New Tigers. The tiger symbolizes not only ferocity, but differentiates from the Sinhalese, whose symbol is a lion (singha) and appears on the Sri Lankan Flag. Ideologically, the creation of a separate Tamil state was the LTTE's only goal. Other Tamil groups included the People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE), Eelam People's Revolutionary Front (EPRLF), the Tamil Eelam Organization of Students (EROS), and the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF). The LTTE ended up opposed to all the others and fought most of them. Initially, the LTTE expressed its militancy in attacks on police and local officials. It also maintained official and unofficial ties to, and received support from, the Indian Tamil state Tamil Nadu, as did other Tamil groups.

In the face of continuing economic decline, the capitalist UNP regrouped and defeated the SLFP in elections in 1977. Junius Richard Jayawardene became prime minister and implemented austerity measures, privatization policies, and other capitalist prescriptions for economic malaise. Anti-Tamil riots almost immediately ensued, perhaps as a diversion from economic travails – a capitalist prescription for political malaise – more than national chauvinism. In 1978, a new constitution was promulgated renaming Sri Lanka the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and providing for a president as head of state. Jayawardene thus acceded to a presidency with expanded powers, and Ranasinghe Premadasa became prime minister. Nothing was done to address Tamil grievances, and anti-Tamil riots ensued again in 1981.

The War

Tamil attacks on police and local government escalated as the Tamil insurgency became more organized. An LTTE attack on the Sri Lankan military precipitated anti-Tamil riots in July of 1983 in Colombo, the then capital, and other cities around the country. Substantial evidence shows the attack was merely a pretext and that the mayhem wrought on Tamils and their property was planned and organized. Some 2000 were killed, including 53 who died under questionable circumstances in a prison outside Colombo, and \$150 million in damage – a lot in a poor country – was done to Tamil property. Most observers acknowledge this as the beginning of the Sri Lankan civil war. Powerful politicians' willingness to foment inter-communal violence appears to have grown from factional struggles within the ruling UNP where caste-connected business rivalries had created tensions. The Vahampura, for example, had been supplanted in business dominance by Karawa and Tamil competition.

In an all party conference that ran for virtually the entirety of 1984, the Jayawardene government sought to defuse the communal issue and its potential for violence. The talks

centered on granting autonomy to all of the country's districts with district councils on the local level and a council of state composed of the chairs and vice-chairs of the district councils. Tamil representatives opposed the plan because it did not include special links between Tamil areas. Sinhalese groups opposed the plan as a giveaway to the Tamils. The talks did not resume. Armed conflict escalated.

The stalemate in negotiations led to Indian involvement. Tamil groups were already receiving aid and support from both official and unofficial sources in Tamil Nadu, India's southeastern state, and 100,000 refugees had already landed in Tamil Nadu. This increasing involvement presented a problem for the Indian government of Rajiv Gandhi, which wished to avoid promoting nationalist sentiments in India with its own religious, ethnic, and linguistic diversities. The instability in Sri Lanka had exactly that potential. In addition, the conflict was attracting foreign powers to meddle in the area as the Sri Lankan government sought military assistance from countries whose influence in the area India found problematic such as the U.S., China, and Pakistan. The Jayawardene government, with little prospect of a peaceful domestic settlement, escalating Tamil insurgency in the North and East and a resurgence of the JVP, had a common interest with the Gandhi government. The two governments thus signed an accord offering the Tamils autonomy in a combined northeast province of Sri Lanka and provided for an Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) in 1987. The Tamils were not consulted in the deal.

In late 1987, India sent 42,000 troops to implement the accord, part of which was disarming the LTTE. The LTTE resisted, and despite heavy fighting, the IPKF could not suppress the LTTE. Premadasa of the UNP defeated Bandaranaike of the SLFP in the 1988 elections and became president when Jayawardene retired the next month. Nationalist pressure impelled Premadasa to negotiate a withdrawal of the IPKF. The IPKF withdrawal was completed in March of 1990 and the Sri Lankan army took over the counterinsurgency. The LTTE assassinated Rajiv Gandhi for his troubles in 1991.

Premadasa was assassinated in 1993, and his prime minister, Dingiri Banda Wijetunga took over the presidency. The next year, former prime minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike's daughter, Chandrika Kumaratunga, took over as prime minister and later president when the People's Alliance (PA) party won elections. Her government arranged a ceasefire with the LTTE, but it endured a scant three months. Fighting resumed in 1995, and the government captured the Tamil capital Jaffna. The war continued inconclusively for the next four years, with the rebels and government each attacking the others' bases and carrying out bombings (the Tamils did many by suicide and improvised munitions, the government with aircraft and artillery) and assassinations.

After the Netherlands fell under French control during the French revolutionary wars, the British East India Company moved in on Dutch holdings in Sri Lanka. The Dutch gave them up without much of a fight in 1796. The British made the island the Crown Colony of Ceylon. They also made a deal with the Kandyan king in 1802 to be the protectors of the realm but could not tolerate an independent kingdom: it was simply too expensive. So they took over in 1815 and suppressed a rebellion in 1818. Despite promises to maintain the customary system, the British immediately started implementing a single legal and administrative system for the whole island. English was made the language of government and medium of instruction in schools. The economic system was also completely revamped. State monopolies, compulsory labor, and restrictions on investment were eliminated. Land was sold cheaply to investors. Phenomenally successful coffee plantations emerged around 1830 but were ruined by a coffee disease. They were replaced by phenomenally successful tea and rubber plantations in the 1880s. Many indentured workers were brought from southern India from the 1840s to labor in these agricultural and related industries. Investment poured in, and transportation and service networks grew to support the plantation system, breaking the isolation of the interior. Jobs for the English-speaking were plentiful.

The Nationalists

By the 19th century, a nationalist movement had emerged in British Ceylon that cut across ethnic, linguistic, and religious lines. Initial demands were for reforms allowing for greater local participation within the colonial system; these were ignored. The nationalist movement gained momentum until civil unrest resulted in the arrest of some Sinhalese leaders in 1915. The arrests prompted unification of Sinhalese and Tamil organizations into the Ceylonese National Congress in 1919. Some concessions to nationalist demands were made in constitutions of 1920 and 1924, including the election of communal representatives to a majority-elected (as opposed to appointed) legislature. This produced the first split among the nationalists: the Sinhalese wanted only territorial representation while the minorities preferred to retain the communal representation. The minorities withdrew from the Ceylonese National Congress over the dispute. A new constitution in 1931 implemented a State Council that included both legislative and executive functions and universal suffrage. Since the franchise was overwhelmingly territorial, it had the effect of dividing national leaders and pitting them against one another rather than presenting a national unity front. English-speaking capitalists, largely derived from the old upper castes of all the communities, formed a new social and political elite. That elite was able to wield power through the constitution's institutions.

Ceylon became independent without a fight on 4 February 1948. Pre-independence elections empowered the United

National Party (UNP), formed by a coalition of nationalist and communal parties. It was dominated by the English-speaking capitalist elite and selected Don Stephen Senanayake as prime minister. The party, however, did not represent the vast majority of Sinhala-educated, Tamil-educated, illiterate, and tradition-oriented people and engendered discontent among them. At the same time, economic problems started to emerge as export prices fell, and imports and population increased. Ironically, an improved and expanded educational system contributed to the instability by creating a large number of educated people who could not find work.

This political and economic disenfranchisement propelled a coalition of Sinhalese nationalist groups to power in 1956. The Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) selected Solomon West Ridgeway Dias Bandaranaike, an England-educated lawyer, as prime minister. His government made Sinhala the official language, gave Buddhism, to which he had converted from Christianity, "primary place," and instituted a nationalist socialism. These policies alienated Tamils, Christians, Buddhists, and even some Sinhalese factions and fomented Sinhalese-Tamil riots in 1958 over Tamil demands for recognition of their language and an autonomous area in the north and east of the country. In 1959, Bandaranaike was assassinated by a disgruntled Buddhist monk. His widow, Sirimavo Bandaranaike, took over the SLFP and formed a government in 1960. She continued implementation of Sinhalese national socialism, nationalized the schools and continued nationalizing the economy. The Tamil Federal Party was banned in 1961.

Continued economic problems, such as employment, shortages, state business failures, and inflation pushed communal issues into the background and dragged the UNP to the forefront in 1965. Don Stephen Senanayake's son, Dudley Shelton Senanayake, led the party in pursuing a capitalist agenda. This fueled inflation and inequality. To combat this direction, the SLFP formed an alliance with two Marxist parties and won a landslide victory in 1970 on an anti-capitalist platform with Bandaranaike as prime minister again.

The reforms implemented were too slow and tepid for both the Tamil and Sinhala educated youth, and revolutionaries among them founded the People's Liberation Front (Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna – JVP). This group launched an armed struggle against the government from the left in 1971. After heavy fighting, the rebellion was snuffed out with aid from the British, the Indians and the Soviets.

Bandaranaike and the SLFP continued efforts to reduce inequality and extend nationalization. A new constitution was enacted in 1972 that renamed Ceylon the Republic of Sri Lanka, made Sinhala the official language (again), and gave Buddhism "the foremost place." But the economy continued to deteriorate with unemployment topping 15% by 1977.

with our time other than get in trouble or simply work, which we are also required to do by law (Measure 17 was the culprit for that, requiring everyone who was medically eligible, even pregnant women and 80-year-olds who had already retired, to work).

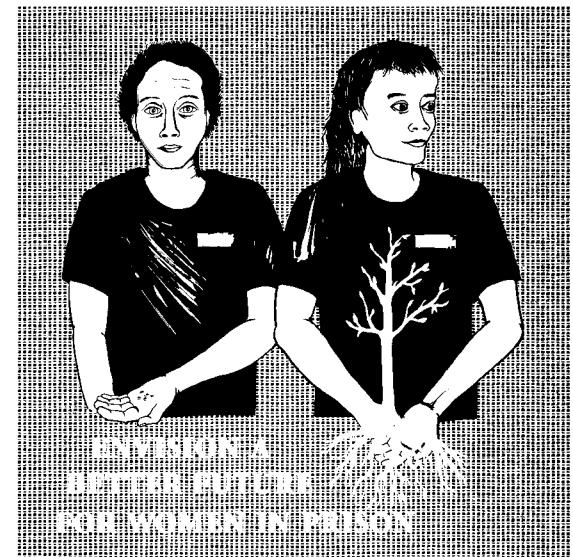
Most of you have probably never even heard of Measure 11. It is a bill that was passed in 1994 that gave every violent offender a day-for-day sentence, and completely voided every judge's ability to take into consideration special circumstances for those of us who are first time offenders, or even those of us who simply have witnessed a crime being committed. Take me, for example. I was sentenced to a Measure 11 murder charge, which gave me a day-for-day sentence of 25 years before I am eligible to go in front of the parole board. I have never even been arrested before-I was a college student three months before I came to jail and then prison. I had just moved to Oregon two years before, to complete high school with my cousins (having the typical teenage problems with my mother being over-protective and wanting to have more freedom) and graduating from the local high school with a 3.8 GPA. My crime, and obviously the sentences imposed by Measure 11, ruined my life. It is now to the point where I could viably sit here for the rest of my middle years and emerge institutionalized and unable to cope or deal with being free.

Much of the media sensationalism that has happened during Measure 11's enactment was most likely what changed voters' opinions about crime. A study done by the Center for Media and Public Affairs found that television coverage of crime more than doubled from 1992 to 1993, while murder coverage tripled during the period, despite the fact that crime rates were essentially unchanged." [Crime down, media coverage up," Overcrowded times (April 1994), p.7. (Marc Mauer, Race to Incarcerate, The New Press, p.72)] People were scared that crime would increase and so they panicked and voted for bills that called for retribution instead of rehabilitation. Obviously, had the bills been read over first, things would have been written differently and we wouldn't have the rate of incarceration in Oregon that we do now.

Note that during the time that this sensationalism and dare I say scare tactics? took place, our Measure 11 law that was written by Kevin Mannix was passed. Measure 11 is a piece of literature that spurred voters to put criminals behind bars and promised to keep crime rates down, and it also put first time offenders behind bars for an unthinkable number of years, with no incentive to keep them or set them in the first place-on the road to recovery. Another piece that snuck in on the end of the Measure 11 vote was Measure 10, which made it so when the bill came up for revote with the citizens, it would take 2/3 of the majority to overturn or even re-write Measure 11. This made it next to impossible to change the statistics that were being created through the over-sentencing of all felons in Oregon.

An 82-year-old man named Loren Parks was the main fundraiser behind Measures 10 and 11, back in 1994. Mr. Parks has given \$12 million dollars to initiative campaigns over the last 15 years (that's \$800,000 a year since 1992, people!). He has also given more than \$4 million to Kevin Mannix alone for his measures and his running for office (attorney general, governor and Congress, all rejected by our "savvy" voters). He also put \$900,000 into a tax-free account for Bill Sizemore, who admitted to two teacher's union attorneys that he used the money for a car for his wife, part of a time share in Mexico, and other undisclosed spending, according to the Oregonian. He is now under investigation for not reporting taxes for the last three years. On top of all this, he is still planning on running for governor. This has gotten a lot of attention in the local news, which could go either way for him in the elections, depending on how it's spun. Mr. Parks has reportedly gone to China, according to Kevin Mannix and the Oregonian. The reporter questioned whether Mr. Parks is attempting to avoid the people who are contacting him and wanting interviews regarding Bill Sizemore's trial and charges and whether or not the allegations are true.

One odd thing that pointedly stood out in the article about Mr. Parks was the fact that he moved to Nevada and has lived there since 2002. It's a mystery why he continues to donate money to Kevin Mannix and Bill Sizemore's campaigns and special interests., as he doesn't live here in Oregon any more. I will continue to update you on the situations written about here, as some friends and I are look-



ing further into the matter. The only conclusion that we can reach about all the money that he has donated is that he owns a medical equipment company here in Oregon and that he simply wants to support the continual cycle of "catch and release" for Oregon's felons.

The cycle could be changed, however, by things as simple as using money spent on certain measures and bills to gain support and public attention for rehabilitation instead of long prison terms. This would then focus the state's attention on drug and alcohol treatment for people who are doing long sentences—since those people need it just as much, if not more than people with short-term sentences—and programs that help long-term prisoners become re-integrated with their communities before they are released.

Any classes that could be added would be welcomed and used to the fullest of their extent by most of the long-term prisoners here. However, the state cites "lack of funding" to us, but of course, they have millions of dollars to build more prisons. Unfortunately, they have no justification for that and no real reason that they have kept imprisoning people who should simply be put into in-patient treatment facilities that would do a world more good than being jailed or imprisoned.

Obviously I am frustrated by the state's lack of attention to its future inhabitants. If anyone out there has any kind of information that they feel might help me in my fight to bring justice to mandatory minimum sentences, or any kind words they want to share with me about what positive things that are happening in their states, please feel free to share them with me. I want to change this state to get real help for incarcerated peoples, be it men or women. It is senseless and imprudent for someone to sit behind bars with a sentence such as mine and to do or say nothing to speak out against it. I hope that all of you are inspired by my words and that you will fight the good fight to bring justice and freedom for everyone, including the political prisoners that are being held without cause. There are inequities in every state that I have seen so far-the crack laws of California, life without parole for the 77 juveniles in Florida, and the 2,300 other young people that are being held for life without parole in other states around the U.S.. A note to them: do not give up hope! There will come a day that you will see free land once again. My hope is that Mr. Obama will be the one to do that for you all. I will continue to send my prayers to you in hopes that you will soon be free.

Thanks to everyone for listening!

Thanks to everyone for listening
Danielle Cox
#15138586
24499 SW Grahams Ferry Rd
Wilsonville, OR 97070

Call to Action

BY OSO BLANCO

Brothers and sisters, all my relations, Red/white/Black/Asian/Arab and Hebrew, and all my Animal Brothers and winged Brothers, I send out my voice to you all.

It is now time to rise up in defence of the Earth, waters, prisoners, poor, Indigenous, children, elderly, animals against empire and destruction. We must all at every level in every struggle rise.

It is time to forget ‘self’ and unite at all corners of the Mother Earth. We all must be wise and selflessly rock and roll against the empire that is seriously destroying the Earth and using electrical technologies to control humanity, as well as prisons, force, chemicals, bio-weapons, TV and other forms of control. Seek higher consciousness in the human “heart realm,” the vision place within the universe of our heart center. Reject this empire and banker-controlled civilization! Wake up people and warriors of compassion, love and justice! Wake up now! There is no time left for ‘talk,’ only to quickly complete the organizing and shift into actions.

This empire of destruction is in continual action to please their elite masters of oppression.

So we who seek to preserve life and aid the poor must persist without doubt. We can no longer afford to sit and wonder what we can do, because each of us knows what we can do, but we are too full of fear to make self-sacrifice. That is the problem that hinders the whole range of struggles for justice. Fear to confront empire. We ‘fear’ because we all know what they use to repress any movement that fights their abuse of Earth, animals and humanity.

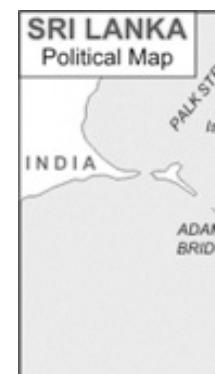
Enough is enough is enough!

There is not an endless space of time left for us warriors,
so get busy!
Free Leonard Peltier for real!
Free Tom Manning! Free Marilyn Buck!
Free that master of political thought,
the great Mumia Abu Jamal.
Enough is enough. I'm not joking – get them free and
stop wasting days.

Love and power
Oso Blanco
Yona Unega
from Aztlán

in the rugged central highlands and eastern coast. Vimala Dharma Surya, a Sinhalese noble, had consolidated power there. The Portuguese tried to install a puppet queen in Kandy in 1594, but Surya defeated them and made their queen his queen. Realizing he could not expel the Portuguese without naval forces, Surya solicited the Dutch, who made extravagant promises of aid in 1602.

The deal with Surya never materialized, but his son, Rajasinha, concluded a treaty giving the Dutch a cinnamon monopoly and other payment for their aid in capturing Batticaloa and Trincomalee on the east coast, Negombo in the west, and Galle on the southwest in 1630-40. The Dutch also took Colombo, the major city on the island, but they froze the Kandyans (Sinhalese rulers of the parts of Sri Lanka not under foreign control) out of the city. The Sri Lankans laid waste to the area around Colombo and withdrew to their mountain stronghold in the interior. The Europeans were really only interested in control of the ports in any event. The Dutch completed their conquest of the Sri Lankan coast with the capture of Mannar and Jaffna in the north in 1658, completely replacing the Portuguese.



A political map of Sri Lanka titled "SRI LANKA Political Map". The map shows the island's coastline and internal boundaries. It is situated between the Indian subcontinent to the west and the southern tip of India to the south. To the east, the map shows the Palk Strait, which separates Sri Lanka from the southern part of the Indian peninsula. The northern tip of the island is labeled "ADAM'S BRIDGE". The map is oriented with North at the top.

The Portuguese divided the area under their control into four "dissavanes" and kept previous subdivisions. Portuguese officials assumed the highest offices. They used their power to promote Catholicism by handing out lesser offices and lands to converts from the nobility loyal to the Portuguese. Revenue previously due to Sri Lankan kings became due to the Portuguese. Many members of the aristocracy embraced Christianity, and some coastal cities such as Jaffna converted en masse.

The Dutch rule merely took over the Portuguese system. Portuguese officials were replaced with Dutch ones. Sinhalese and Tamils loyal to the

Portuguese were replaced with those loyal to the Dutch, to the extent the groups differed. The Dutch extended their control further into the interior than had the Portuguese, but kept the land and production relations intact. The Dutch established courts to administer customary law and attempted to codify it in Tamil and Muslim areas. This turned out to be difficult in Sinhalese areas due to the diversity and complexity of custom, so the administration was on the basis of Roman-Dutch law in Sinhalese areas, further distancing Sinhalese and Tamil. One result was the more rapid spread of private property rights in Sinhalese areas. The Dutch also attempted to replace Catholicism, which they banned, with their brand of Protestantism.



in the Northern District, where they are about 62% of the population. In the Eastern District, they are just over 40%. Tamils are less than 10% in the next most Tamil-populated district, ranging down to less than 1% in the Southern. The Arab-descended are found mostly along the east coast, with some population in the north. The Sinhalese use the Sinhala language, and the Tamils and Arab/Muslims use Tamil. English is spoken by about 10% of the population, generally the most highly educated and most prominent in business. 70% of the population is Buddhist, mostly Sinhalese. About 15% are Hindus, mostly Tamils. Around 8% are Christian and 7% are Muslim.

The History

Sri Lanka's first human inhabitants left no written records but were likely tribal people of the proto-Australoid ethnic group. The remnants of this population were largely absorbed by later immigrants from India, whose migration to Sri Lanka began in the fifth century B.C. The Vedda people, who currently number about 2,000 and live mostly in the central highlands, are considered the descendants of this aboriginal group.

The first colonial settlers of Sri Lanka were Indo-Aryan tribes from Northern India. Assimilation of the Veddas and synthesis of pre-Aryan and possibly Dravidian components launched the Sinhalese cultural tradition. The resulting colonial settler society grew on several parts of the island. It had its capital at Anuradhapura, established by the third kind of the Vijaya dynasty. Population grew and the island's north central region was extensively colonized. During this period in the third century BC, Mahinda, son of the Mauryan emperor Asoka, converted the Sinhalese King Tissa to Buddhism. That led to the establishment of Buddhist institutions, and by the second century B.C., the Sinhalese had accepted Buddhism completely. This aided and abetted the spread of the Anuradhapura kingdom's political control over the rest of the island.

An invasion by the Pandyan Tamils of southeastern India overthrew the Sinhalese kingdom in 432. About 25 years later, however, the Pandyan empire was defeated and Sinhalese rule restored. But that was not the end of southern Indian Tamil meddling in Sri Lankan affairs. The meddling included putting a quisling Sinhalese dynasty on the throne and involving its kings in dynastic wars between Pandys, Pallavas, and Cholas in southern India. The result saw a series of invasions and raids ending with another south Indian occupation of the kingdom in 993.

Vijayabahu overthrew the Chola and restored Sinhalese control in 1070 but was forced to move the capital southeast to Polonnaruwa, a more defensible city. Sinhalese power reached its zenith during the Polonnaruwa period, but again was undermined by southern Indian intriguing. Non-Sinhalese groups spread their influence. Finally, a

south Indian mercenary called Magha overthrew Sinhalese authority in 1214 and imposed an oppressive regime that trampled the Sinhalese religion and culture. He reigned roughshod for 41 years.

Sinhalese rulers were pushed further south, out of the reach of the Polonnaruwa kings. Plus, the central highland terrain was more rugged and inaccessible to conquerors. Hence, the Sinhalese kingdom was reestablished some 70 miles southwest of Polonnaruwa, the first of many moves. The displaced Sinhalese attacked the Tamil rulers and their quislings, but did not reoccupy Polonnaruwa. The foreign Tamil mercenaries, however, did not have the influence on local rulers and officials necessary to run the irrigation and agricultural system that underlay the feudal vassalage that emerged around 1200. The Sinhalese kings' authority was also limited; it generally did not extend much beyond their capitals from about 1200. This disorganization led to an agricultural infrastructure collapse. The land could thus no longer support the large population, further forcing the Sinhalese southwest to more arable lands.

During this period, a south Indian dynasty, Arya Chakravartis, took advantage of the displacement of the Sinhalese southwest and collapse of the Polonnaruwa kingdom after Magha's death to establish a Tamil Hindu kingdom in the north. This kingdom expanded southward, encroaching on Sinhalese turf, less populated due to the decline in agriculture. Before this kingdom, Tamil communities had been scattered among the Sinhalese throughout the island, and its establishment was the beginning of the ethnic, linguistic, and cultural divergence between Tamils and Sinhalese. This separation of the north and east from the rest of the island was exacerbated by fresh migrations from south India after the fall of the Pandyan Tamil kingdom in India in the 14th century.

The second Pandyan empire took advantage of the division, taking much tribute and booty from the Sinhalese. The plunder once included the Tooth relic, a sacred icon of Sinhalese Buddhism. Indeed, the division, weakness, and exploitation of Sri Lanka led to numerous subsequent invasions, including from India once more in the 15th century, during which the Tamil kingdom was made tributary, and by Europeans beginning in the 16th century.

The European occupation/colonization began in 1505 when a Portuguese fleet visited the island. In 1518, the Portuguese received trading concessions and were permitted to build a fort at Colombo. Through political intriguing, bribery, and force, they took control of the Sinhalese Kotte kingdom lands in the southwest by the end of the century. At the instigation of Christian missionaries, the Portuguese succeeded in putting their man on the throne of the Jaffna kingdom in 1591, but invaded again and annexed the kingdom in 1619 to quell continuing resistance. That left them in control of the entire island except the Kandy kingdom

No One Can Stop The Rain

BY ASSATA SHAKUR

Watch, the grass is growing.

Watch, but don't make it obvious.

Let your eyes roam casually, but watch! In any prison yard, you can see it - growing.

In the cracks, in the crevices, between the steel and the concrete,

out of the dead gray dust,

the bravest blades of grass shoot up,

bold and full of life.

Watch, the grass is growing.

It is growing through the cracks.

The guards say grass is against the Law.

Grass is contraband in prison.

The guards say that the grass is insolent.

It is uppity grass, radical grass, militant grass, terrorist grass, they call it weeds.

Nasty weeds, nigga weeds, dirty, spic, savage indian, wetback, pinko, commie weeds - subversive! And so the guards try to wipe out the grass.

They yank it from its roots. They poison it with drugs. They maul it, They rake it.

Blades of grass have been found hanging in cells,

covered with bruises. "apparent suicides"

The guards say that the GRASS IS UNAUTHORIZED DO NOT LET THE GRASS GROW.

You can spy on the grass. You can lock up the grass.

You can mow it down, temporarily.

But you will never keep it from growing.

Watch, the grass is beautiful.

The guards try to mow it down, but it keeps on growing.

The grass grows into a poem.

The grass grows into a song. The grass paints itself across the canvas of life.

And the picture is clear and the lyrics are true, and the haunting voices sing so sweet and strong that the people hear the grass from far away.

And the people start to dance, and the people start to sing, and the song is freedom.

Watch, the grass is growing.



The Unknown Plight of Tamil Women

BY MINNALKODI SIVAN

Reprinted from *Basics News*: basicsnews.ca

February 22 - A nine-year-old Tamil girl was hospitalized after being gang raped by three Sri Lankan Army (SLA) soldiers. A man who protested against the rape was later found dead in a nearby lake and soldiers went door-to-door threatening villagers who started to protest against the atrocities. Reports indicate that the mother filed a complaint. However, given systemic impunity and the disgraceful record of prosecutions of Tamil women's sexual offenders, chances are this 5th grade student will never receive justice...

February 20 - 49 Tamil women detained in the concentration camps were arrested by the Terrorism Investigation Department and taken to Boosa prison – a notorious detention center for torture, rape, murder and disappearances. Similarly another 54 Tamil women in the camps were arrested on February 24 and sent to Boosa prison. Nothing is known of their whereabouts since they are not allowed to contact their family members...

An 8-months pregnant woman, Manju, who is 1 of 254 Tamil Asylum seekers stranded on a boat in Indonesia since October 2009, has no guarantee from the Indonesian government that she will safely deliver her child and have access to medical care. Their boat was Australia-bound and was intercepted by the Indonesian navy upon Australia's request, and now no country is willing to provide asylum. This has left the 254 Tamils stranded in a country that is not a signatory of the conventions on refugee rights and is denying them access to basic human necessities. To make matters worse, the Indonesian government has close ties with the Sri Lankan government and the former are willing to deport them back to Sri Lanka where they are sure to face further human rights abuses. What will become of this woman and her soon-to-be born child?

Tamil women are the most oppressed among the oppressed in Sri Lankan society. They are raped, tortured, sexually abused, abducted, forced into abortions and sterilizations, and murdered. Their perpetrators are hardly ever prosecuted. Their victimization and extinction is reflected in the fact that in comparison to the growth of the Sinhala population, the Tamil population in Sri Lanka has decreased by about 30% since 1948. Their voices have been silenced under the guns and subjugation of the Sri Lankan government, their stories buried with their mass graves dug by the SLA in attempts to hide their lust for violence and blood - forgotten forever. The imbedded culture of impunity has ranked Sri Lanka as the 3rd worst violator of Women's Rights according to the South Asian Human Rights Index 2008. Even

when Tamil women have resorted to armed resistance, their dead bodies end up being denigrated and stripped naked by the Army while captured on cameras/videos for entertainment. Dignity and respect is denied to these sisters, even in death. The struggles of Tamil women are suppressed or ignored in the big media outlets around the world and so there is a desperate need for regular people to advocate on their behalf. Tamil sisters will be mobilizing for IWD here in Toronto with the Migrant Women's Coordinating Body – watch out for our banners! Join us in our struggles and stand in solidarity with women's struggles globally.

I Saw Your Picture Today

BY MARILYN BUCK

For Lori Berenson, Internationalist Political Prisoner

Dear Lori,
I saw your photo in the newspaper
You posed
between sinister sun-glassed security agents,
two women in double breasted suits
bodies rigid
cruelty pressed upon their lips.
You were labeled the terrorist.

I've seen many photos like that
shot from below
looking up the nose
nostrils flared
snapped when the lower jaw is dropped
and the teeth are bared.
Even Miss America
would look fiendish
shot from below.

Photos may be contrivances
one one-hundred-and-twenty-fifth second
of the subject's existence
Reality framed
to depict reality.

Yes, photography is an art
an inception and or deception.
Truth and solidarity
can not be captured
by a single click of the shutter.

February 1996
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Sri Lanka: The Lessons of Others

BY BILL DUNNE, USP Big Sandy, January 5, 2010

Editors Note: Bill Dunne's long and well researched article will probably engender some debate and response from readers. The essay provides a lot of detail on the Sri Lankan/Tamil struggle. It also analyzes and draws conclusions on nationalism and national liberation struggles in general. It is this latter question of nations and national liberation, that may draw debate, and 4SM will print further discussion on this question if we receive responses.'

In the weeks culminating on 18 May 2009, Sri Lankan government forces unleashed a murderous assault on the remnants of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). After capturing the LTTE capital at Kilinochchi in January, the army pushed the rebels – and more than a quarter million civilians – into a small corner of the Mullaitivu District of northern Sri Lanka. With the rebels surrounded and cut off, the government mercilessly pounded the area with howitzers, multi-barreled rocket launchers, cluster bombs, and other heavy artillery, reportedly including banned white phosphorous incendiaries. The barrage went on for days, both indiscriminately and targeting hospitals and other civilian facilities as well as combatants. The media and other outside observers were prohibited from the area during the battle. Relief workers were barred from entry as well. Entreaties for a ceasefire and restraint fell on deaf ears. The rebel-held area was compressed to the size of Central Park (in New York City – about 840 acres) – including tens of thousands of civilians – under the relentless shelling.

The LTTE decided to "silence [their] guns" on May 17 to prevent further Tamil deaths, and rebel official Selvarasa Pathmanathan announced via e-mail that "this battle has reached its bitter end." But the government killed the two LTTE civilian leaders who arranged the surrender through the Red Cross and continued the onslaught for another day. On May 18, Tamil Tiger founder Velupillai Prabhakaran, Sea Tiger commander Colonel Soosai, and Intelligence Chief Pottu Amman were killed by a rocket in a firefight on the edge of the rebel zone. The following day, Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa declared victory.

Estimates of the civilian death toll vary from 7,500 to 20,000, 45% of whom were children, in the last three weeks of fighting, with 15,000 wounded between mid-January and May. A Red Cross representative said they had witnessed "an unimaginable human catastrophe." Between 80,000 and 100,000 people have been killed since the civil war began in 1983. Some 300,000 civilians have been herded into 42 detention camps, where conditions and ret-

ribution will increase the fatality toll.

We may applaud the end of a bitter and devastating civil war. We may lament the defeat of a militant national liberation movement. We may mourn the loss of a guerilla struggle to repel – indeed, overthrow – the materially superior military power of an oppressive state. We may feel solidarity with the remaining Sri Lankan Tamil people whose separatist aspirations are now virtually certainly unfulfillable for at least a generation. And we may condemn the excesses of the Sri Lankan government (and the Sinhala majority) and other governments' failure to condemn those excesses for the extent to which the failure legitimizes such tactics.

Aside from those somewhat remote sentiments, however, why should we trouble our minds with all this death and destruction in a land so culturally and geographically far from our own? Why should we cloud heroic visions of our future struggles with such realities as mayhem, massacre and defeat? Why should we look any further than the claims of whatever observers and commentators we like best? We should, very simply, because if we cannot learn from the experience of others, we may end up sharing their failures and missing their successes. And though politically, culturally, economically, and half a world removed from the Sri Lankan civil war, it has important lessons for us. We are, after all, all humans and have increasingly more in common than at odds.

Geography

The large, teardrop-shaped island (268 m/432 km max. length; 139 m/224 km max. width; area 25,332 m²/65,610 km²), southeast of the southernmost tip of India, was known to ancient Greek and Arab cartographers. They called it Taprobane and Serendib, respectively. Europeans later called it Ceylon. It officially became the Republic of Sri Lanka in 1972 and the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka in 1978. Sri Lanka means "resplendent land" in the Sinhala language. The country is divided into eight provinces: Northern, North Western, North Central, Western, Eastern, Southern, Sabaragamuwa, and Uva. Its capital is Sri Jayewardenapura Kotte on the southwest coast near Colombo, the former capital and largest city.

The Demographics

The most common estimates of the population distribution in Sri Lanka orbit 74% Sinhalese, 12% Sri Lankan Tamil, 5% Indian Tamil, and 8% of Arab descent. There is an approximately 1% smattering of other groups such as European-descended Burghers and Veddas, descendants of the aboriginal people. The distinction between Sri Lankan and Indian Tamils is that between descendants of pre-European colonial era invaders and European colonial era immigrants from India. Tamils are the majority only

May Day 2010

BY JAAN LAAMAN

Political prisoners in the u.s., 4SM and I personally want to send everyone a very revolutionary May Day greeting and salute.

May Day. Many of us, especially working folks and of course political activists and revolutionaries, know that May 1st is a traditional workers holiday - a day of labor unity and recognition that is observed and celebrated in nations around the world. In many countries, May 1st is the official labor day, the day to salute the dignity and contribution of working women and men. In the United States, May 1st is not the official labor day. Some people may mistakenly even think that May Day is an old Soviet workers' day, since it was and still is celebrated in Russia and Europe today. Actually this is a little peculiar, since May Day - International Workers Day - began here in the U.S.A.

In the late 1800s, working people in the United States were fighting for an 8 hour day, an end to child labor, the right to organize unions and more. A large march and rally was held on May 1st, 1886, in Chicago. Thousands upon thousands of workers and their families came out to call for an 8 hour work day. The march was savagely attacked by the Chicago cops. A bomb was later thrown, people were injured and some cops died. The government launched a witch hunt and arrested all the top union leaders and march organizers. Trials, known as the Haymarket Trials were held. The government orchestrated a show trial that railroaded these leaders. Some were executed and others sent to prison.

Working people across the U.S. took up this cause and continued to fight for an 8 hour day. The AFL, the American Federation of Labor (this was before there was an AFL-CIO), asked labor groups around the world for help. In 1889, the First Congress of the 2nd International (a worldwide labor and socialist federation and conference), met in Paris, France, and adopted May 1st as International Workers Day and called on labor around the world to join in and support U.S. workers. There have been labor marches, rallies and gatherings on May 1st, all around the world and in the United States ever since.

In the U.S. the 8 hour day was won, but we all know that the labor movement has a lot of unfinished struggles we yet need to win, including and up to gaining state power for the working class and its allies. The federal government created a 'Labor Day,' in September, as a way to take some of the steam out of May 1st. But the importance of labor should be recognized everyday, so we'll always have May 1st, as International Workers Day, and we'll take Labor Day in September and any other days they want to give us as well.

In 1958, during the McCarthy era of government repression and surveillance, under the Eisenhower administration, the government actually named May 1st as 'Law Day.' Except for maybe some cops and bosses, I'm sure very few people ever think of May Day as 'U.S. Law Day.' In the past few years, May Day in the U.S. has again been marked by large marches and rallies which have been focused on immigrant workers. In 2006, there were marches of tens of thousands of people in Los Angeles and other cities across the country.

In these times of bank and corporate frauds, failures, bailouts and sellouts, as the greed and corruption of large sectors of the capitalist system are exposed, working people and our families, friends and allies, should all come out, strong, loud and proud to May Day rallies and events this year. This country and this world belongs to the working men and women who create all the wealth -- all the products, goods, food and services. It does NOT belong to the corporate big shots and swindlers or to their big politician partners. They have gotten themselves and all the rest of us into serious trouble with their schemes, greed and corruption. It is past time for us, the common people, the working class, to start thinking about new solutions to economic and political problems. This country, this world belongs to all of us and MayDay is a real good time to begin thinking about taking it back. The Future is Yet Unwritten!

Eco-Prisoner Jeff "Free" Luers Released from Prison

PORLAND, Dec 16th, 2009 – Jeff "Free" Luers, political prisoner and environmental activist, was released from the Columbia River Correctional Institution this morning after serving nine and half years. Luers was originally sentenced in 2001 to twenty two years and eight months for the politically motivated arson of three SUV's at a car dealership in Eugene, OR. This sentence was deemed grossly disproportionate to the damage sustained by the car dealership and was condemned by legal professionals, human rights groups and activists worldwide. At an appeal hearing in 2007 it was ruled that Luers' original sentence was illegal, and was consequently reduced to ten years. Upon his release this morning, Mr. Luers stated:

"The last 9½ years have been difficult at best. I have witnessed things in prison that I will carry with me for the rest of my life. I have endured hardship and loss. Without a doubt, this experience has changed me. What hasn't changed is my commitment to environmental and social justice. I would like to thank all the people who have supported me through the years; especially the dedicated few who worked tirelessly to get me out of prison. I look forward to spending time with my loved ones and continuing my education, as well as continuing my activism."

Revolution Needs Wimyn

BY COMRADE SPIDER, Spokesperson, White Panther Organization

Since my article "Free the Wimyn!" generated some dialogue, I would like to further the discussion of this extremely important subject.

I think that the struggle for the freedom of wimyn suffers from two primary maladies. On the one hand, there are those who conceive that wimyn's liberation can be divorced from the overall struggle to end the age of exploitation and oppression of humynity in general, that true freedom for wimyn can take place in a vacuum, apart from other struggles. Among these are usually the bourgeois feminists, who do not care about the liberation of humynity from all forms of oppression, but instead are fighting for so-called 'equal' rights with men – equal, that is, with respect to having the equal opportunity that men have to engage in the mainstream practice of exploiting other humyns for the sake of personal gain. Also among these are the reactionary feminists who, in the same spirit as reactionary nationalists, preach a form of gender supremacy as their primary tool in combating patriarchy and other expressions of male dominance, and who usually have the same fundamental goals as bourgeois feminists, although they may label themselves 'radical' or similar titles for various brands of dissenters.

On the other hand, are those who insist that the wimyn's liberation movement must be subordinated to the proletarian struggle (i.e. the struggle for workers' rights and ultimately socialism), as if wimyn will miraculously be liberated as soon as the means of production are collectively owned. These usually dogmatic-minded people forget that, while it certainly perpetuates and reinforces them, capitalism did not create patriarchy, male domination, and the oppression and exploitation of wimyn. These things existed thousands of years prior to even the first pre-capitalist stages of (European) social development, and they have more than enough potential to exist in a socialist or other non-capitalist society. This does not mean that the oppression of wimyn is not related to the relations of production, since we know that patriarchy has its roots in the time when males started to become more involved in dominant social practices, such as hunting, warfare and religious administration. It simply means that we have to understand where the roots of wimyn's oppression lie, how it has developed throughout various ages and in various geographical locations, and what forms it currently takes. Relatively, capitalism is a baby in the historical timeline, while patriarchy and its many children are all well advanced in age.

These two maladies are not the only obstacles that stand in the way of freedom for the wimyn of the world. 'Outside' of the movement, the problems take many forms, from the

fact that it is expedient for the capitalist-imperialist system to impose on half the world's population a unique form of oppression, to the many religious doctrines that preach male supremacy over the 'weaker vessel,' to the absurd reality that it is now fashionable, it is now a 'hip' and trendy thing, to hate, abuse, exploit and oppress wimyn.

Let's look at this latter problem: that wimyn's oppression has evolved past being just a social practice directly rooted in a corresponding productive relation to being a cultural trend thought worthy of embodiment in artistic expression. Consider the fact that, at least among my peers, 'bitch' or 'ho' has become synonymous with 'womyn.' The word 'bitch' has transcended its former position of being simply a derogatory title to being completely interchangeable with the word 'womyn.' This is reflective of a culture that prides itself in degrading wimyn in much the same way that it prides itself in how much it has advanced a particular sport or a certain kind of music.

In a land where wimyn can vote and hold some of the highest offices in government and business, the colorful forms of violence, hatred and oppression toward wimyn are becoming more and more outrageous. We hear this in the music, in which whole songs are anthems to the degradation of wimyn and praises to the god of misogyny. We also see this in movies and television shows, where rape (and, now, even child molestation) are favorite forms of entertainment, even though it usually has nothing to do with the plot. Its no surprise that, of the many different Law and Order shows, SVU (Special Victims Unit) is the favorite, where countless forms of sexual violation comprise the essence of the series and the legal drama is of secondary priority. They know what the people like and want, and thus it seems to me that men, at least here in Amerikkka (I'm sure elsewhere, too) have come to the point where they are perversely pleased and entertained by tunes of disrespect toward wimyn and by scenes of rape and other forms of violence toward wimyn. If men are now turned on by images of wimyn being raped, I have to ask why? I will let the nature side of men off the hook and venture to say it must be the nurture side. It must be a learned (read: brainwashed) behavior. Which leads me to another question: what kind of society teaches (read: brainwashes) its men to take pleasure in watching wimyn being raped, not to mention taking part in the act itself?

Of course, misogyny is only one end of the spectrum of the crushing oppression womyn are forced to endure. The other extreme takes such forms as bullshit sentimental chivalry where men feel as though they must protect, shelter and save wimyn as if they were invalids (instead of empowering or helping to empower them in a patriarchal world), or the sociopathic attachment that men (and many wimyn, who have been influenced by the form taken by mainstream heterosexual relationships) have for wimyn, usually cloaked in the title of 'love' or the superlative 'true love.' This latter extreme, which is probably not discussed

or focused on so much in revolutionary circles as overt hatred and violence toward wimyn, is a pervasive and unhealthy trend in mainstream relationships among men and wimyn. In typical Western fashion, it is perpetuated and reinforced by the media, in the forms of movies, novels, music and television shows. Psychotic and suicide- or homicide-prone infatuation and attachment wreaks nervous and stressful havoc on the psyches of both men and wimyn in the name of so-called love, mostly because these men and wimyn have been socialized to think that this is the way things are supposed to be.

How have these kinds of attitudes towards relationships come about, and why are they so deeply entrenched in our minds? We are socialized toward this kind of psychopathic attachment, but I think the essence of this mentality lies in two fundamental factors: the fact that wimyn are seen as just so much property in our society, and the fact that our society breeds a mass of self-alienated people who endlessly search for objects that will make them feel ‘whole.’ Put these two factors together and you have a person who, because he or she cannot ‘find’ him or herself, seeks to find that self in objectified property, which, due to natural emotional and sexual attraction that already exists, tends to be found in one’s partner or lover. The natural proclivities toward one another that are genetically encoded in us for the purpose of propagating our species are, in our society, warped and perverted by our characteristic self-alienated and incessant search to find ourselves in objectified possessions. The result is an unhealthy attachment to each other; and, while it certainly affects both men and wimyn, I believe that, in a patriarchal society, the consequences are much more severe for wimyn. Furthermore, throw in a person who happens to be emotionally or mentally unstable, for whatever reason, and you have the ingredients for suicide, homicide, or both.

The capitalist market continues to reinforce the ‘softness’ of wimyn and the ‘hardness’ of men, the weakness of wimyn and the strength of men, the servility of wimyn and the dominance of men. An example is the toys that are bought for children, toys that serve to brainwash children into unquestionably accepting the socio-gender roles that are forced upon them. Little girls are bought play stoves, dolls and play kitchen sets, serving to perpetuate in the young and plastic minds of individual children and in the collective mind of society the assumption that the womyn’s place is in the kitchen cooking food or washing dishes, somewhere cleaning up some man’s mess, or taking care of children. Conversely, little boys are bought trucks, toy soldiers and other action figures, and play tool sets, things which play the same essential role as the girls’ toys in solidifying at a young age social roles based on gender.

Something, I believe, that actually hampers the wimyn’s liberation movement from the ‘inside’ is the tendency to compare struggles for the purpose of emphasizing the importance or indispensability of one over the other. Is the

gender struggle more important than the racial struggle? Is the worker struggle more important than the gender struggle? More often than not, the motivations behind such questions are the selfishness and self-seeking mentality that characterize our society, by which we seek to put our personal interests above collective interests. It is my opinion that every struggle to end exploitation and oppression is important: immensely important. Every struggle must serve itself and other struggles to be successful. When it fails to serve its own struggle in light of other struggles, and vice versa, it overemphasizes its own struggle at the cost of other struggles, and thus at the cost of its own interest. This is the law of interdependency with which true solidarity is infused. The logical end of self-seeking comparison of one struggle with the other is the over-emphasis of one’s own struggle and the under-emphasis of other struggles. Those who are caught up in this vicious cycle end up seeing only their own struggle and blinding themselves to other struggles, thereby cutting themselves off from collective effort and solidarity. The result is a form of lifestyle politics, struggle as a form of identity (again, in a society where we are always looking for identity in objects), where struggle is an end in itself, where one struggles for the sake of struggle and not for the sake of winning and ridding the world of oppression.

This, however, does not imply that the wimyn’s liberation movement must subordinate itself to other ‘more important’ struggles. Having been conditioned by a socioeconomic system that enshrines competition as the principle of survival instead of collective effort and mutual aid, we can easily fall into competing for the primacy of one struggle over the other. Wimyn do not have to wait for men, whether they call themselves communists, socialists, anarchists, radicals, or whatever, to tell them when and how they should struggle and organize, or when they should expect liberation, no more than New Afrikans need a bunch of white people telling them when and how they should be liberated. A hallmark in truly revolutionary struggles for the liberation of various groups of oppressed peoples is the right to self-determination. Wimyn do not need men to determine their destiny for them. They do not have to be guided by male dominated ideologies or organizational forms to effect their liberation, no more than Blacks should be expected to submit to Eurocentric conceptions to bring about their freedom. Every oppressed group has a revolutionary right and duty to determine their destiny.

Of course, this does not mean that wimyn’s liberation can become a reality if wimyn seek to determine a destiny apart from the other half of the world. The humyn species would not last long without the mutual cooperation of both men and wimyn. This is why I emphasize the need for every struggle for the freedom of an oppressed group to organize, theorize and fight in the light of and in cooperation with other oppressed groups, realizing that we are fighting to end the age of exploitation and oppression everywhere, that we as the masses are the makers of history and we

Political Band Releases EP to Benefit Haiti

BY CHRISTA CRAM

Back in June of 2009, the St. John’s-based band Class War Kids recorded several cover songs before going on tour, but it wasn’t until the recent earthquake hit Haiti that it was clear what to do with those recordings. As of January 28, these tracks have been released on an EP entitled Twinkle’s Last Stand. All proceeds from its sale are going to the Batay Ouvriye Haiti Solidarity Network. “Originally it was going to be a free download EP to say thanks to our friends and fans for their support over the past two years – that or they were going to be used as exclusive tracks to an upcoming Rebel Time Records compilation,” said the band’s guitarist/singer, Patty O’Lantern. O’Lantern was listening to CBC on the night that the tragedy happened and felt compelled to assist in Haiti’s relief efforts.

“I remembered Propagandhi helped out after the WTC (World Trade Centre) fell during 9/11. They were out giving blood the next week and encouraged everyone to do the same,” O’Lantern recalled. “We are a political band. I wanted our music to do something rather than just say something. It’s funny because a week or so before us, Propagandhi announced they were releasing a digital EP for Haiti. I actually wrote (Propagandhi member) Chris Hannah and told him we were stealing his idea.”

“It just made absolute sense to do something like this,” explained Randy Rebel from the band’s label, Rebel Time Records. “I would imagine that we will leave the EP up for sale/download indefinitely and rest assured that any monies coming in, no matter when they come in, will be forwarded to Batay Ouvriye. It’s not like the crisis in Haiti will be over in a week or a month or a year, so the needs for funds and fundraising will continue.”

The Class War Kids are asking for a minimum donation of \$3 for the four song digital EP or if you just want to download a song or two, a dollar for each track: “This way if people want to donate more they can, and if they can’t afford much they can still have a copy,” said O’Lantern. “We try to keep everything... as inexpensive as possible. We’re not in it to make tons of cash; we’re in it to

make a difference...I want it to be accessible to kids.”

The album is available on bandcamp and includes the Class War Kids’ take on songs by some great artists such as the Weakerthans and Joe Strummer: “We can play a ton of covers ‘cause it’s fun to throw something into the set when you get bored of the same set list; thus we just chose our faves – ones we kinda really put our own twist on, made them our own and recorded,” said Davey Brat, singer/guitarist for the Class War Kids.

The band hopes that with a little effort, the sales of the EP will help make some difference in Haiti and offer support in their time of need: “We hope to help alleviate some of the suffering and turmoil that is going on right now down in Haiti,” said Brat. They chose The Batay Ouvriye Haiti Solidarity Network to donate the money to because they trust that it will get into the right hands with their assistance and actually help Haiti in rebuilding: “I was excited to think that not only was the money being used to help the people of Haiti but that it was for the poor and working class to organize themselves against the multinational corporations that have helped to solidify the poverty that Haiti is buried underneath,” said O’Lantern.

“One of the biggest issues that the Haitian people are going to face in the wake of this disaster is the cost of rebuilding their country,” said O’Lantern. “When tragedies like this strike, there is a small window between aid pouring in and the voracious feeding frenzy that follows with companies looking to be contracted to rebuild decimated countries. Natural disasters, much like wars, are fantastic for business. The last thing the Haitian people need is to be driven further into the red by greedy North American contractors who will spare no expense.”

It’s clear that this is something The Class War Kids are passionate about. “I am hoping that our contribution, however small, will help the working people of Haiti to rebuild their own nation so that they don’t end up incurring a disgustingly large bill from us that they’ll never be able to get out from under,” said O’Lantern.



ration from loved ones, exclusion from educational and economic possibilities, and at times persecution, imprisonment, and death.

2. The fact that in the name of “national security” means of surveillance and repression have been put into place that are entirely secretive and non-transparent – the possible implications of this are evident and very frightening. 3. The fact that institutions like the No Fly List not only trample on the rights of U.S. citizens, but leave non-U.S. citizens with no rights to fight them at all. If applied systematically, this could severely undermine communication, exchange, and networking of activists and social movements. If this particular case can help draw some attention to these issues, at least it serves a purpose.

Many thanks to everyone who’s shown so much support over the last couple of months and the last few days! I’ll see you all sometime somewhere!

Gabriel was born in Austria but soon began moving around with his artist parents. He grew up in various countries, including Turkey, Italy, England and the U.S., but returned to Austria for most of his formal education and a four-year semi-professional soccer career. In 1996 he received a Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Innsbruck. The following ten years he spent hitchhiking and couchsurfing around five continents. He moved to Sweden in 2006.

Active in radical politics since the late 1980s, publishing projects have always been a focus. In the early 1990s, Gabriel worked with the Austrian autonomist journal TATblatt and anarchist publisher Monte Verita, before turning his attention to DIY zine publishing. Alpine Anarchist Productions was founded in 2000, and distributes pamphlets to this day. Since 2005 Gabriel has been working closely with radical German publisher Unrast. His book “Neuer Anarchismus” in den USA. Seattle und die Folgen” was named “Book of the Year 2008” by Berlin’s Library of the Free. Gabriel also contributes regularly to the Swedish anarchist journal Brand.

Man Pleads Guilty In 1983 Wells Fargo Robbery

By EDMUND H. MAHONY, *The Hartford Courant*

This mainstream news articles provides an update on Puerto Rican political prisoner. Visit prolibertadweb.tripod.com for more information.

A key figure in the \$7.1 million Wells Fargo robbery in West Hartford nearly three decades ago abruptly pleaded guilty in federal court to charges that include smuggling the money out of the country.

Avelino Gonzalez-Claudio, 67, was a leader and strategist of Los Macheteros, a militant, Puerto Rico pro-independence group. In the 1970s and ‘80s, the group claimed responsibility for armed attacks on federal interests in Puerto Rico, two of which caused the deaths of U.S. military personnel.

Gonzalez-Claudio pleaded guilty Friday afternoon in U.S. District Court in Hartford to conspiracy to commit robbery and transportation of stolen money out of the country. Under terms of his plea agreement, he would be sentenced to 7 years in prison and a fine not to exceed \$10,000. Sentencing is scheduled for later this year.

He has been in prison in Connecticut since the FBI arrested him in 2008 in Puerto Rico as he drove through the northern coastal city of Manati. While in prison, he was diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease, and correctional authorities refused to provide him with medication until last month, said his lawyer, James Bergenn. In court, Gonzalez-Claudio appeared gaunt and emaciated, and the disease had taken such hold that he was barely able to speak.

Documents seized by the FBI showed that Macheteros planned to use the stolen millions to finance the violent overthrow of the U.S. government in Puerto Rico and to support leftist insurrections elsewhere in Latin America. Los Macheteros recruited a young college drop-out from Hartford, Victor Gerena, to be its inside man in the Sept. 12, 1983, Wells Fargo robbery. Gerena obtained a job as a Wells Fargo guard, overpowered his co-workers with a pistol, injected them with a narcotic to incapacitate them, and helped stuff the cash into a battered sedan which was driven to the depot by fellow Macheteros.

Gonzalez-Claudio and other Macheteros were accused, among other things, of hiding the cash behind hollow walls in a used motor home and driving the money, in two trips, to Mexico. Wire-tapped conversations, seized documents and other intelligence shows that most of the stolen money was flown from Mexico to Cuba, where it ended up under the control of Cuba’s president at the time, Fidel Castro. Agents continue to seek the two remaining Machetero fugitives wanted in connection with the robbery: Gonzalez-Claudio’s brother, Norberto; and Gerena.

Avelino Gonzalez-Claudio #357422
MacDougall-Walker CI
1153 East Street
South Suffield, CT 06080

all have a common enemy that is overwhelmingly the primary actor in the perpetuation of our individual forms of bondage. I think that most of us agree that this enemy is capitalist – imperialism, the political, economic, and social system of the current ruling class.

Which is why I also emphasize the need for every true revolutionary to be a proletarian revolutionary, without necessarily subordinating other struggles in the name of proletarian revolution, workers’ rights and socialism. After all, the vast majority of the world’s population are workers, tools in the capitalist-imperialist drive for the accumulation of wealth in the form of profit, and it is the reinforcement and perpetuation of our individual forms of oppression – gender, racial, poverty, prisoner, etc. – that better equip us to be their tools. And so it is time for these tools to cry out for justice.

And when I say that wimyn should not have to subordinate their struggle in the name of the proletarian struggle, I mean that wimyn should not be told that they must put their struggle on hold for the benefit of the “greater struggle.” Whenever a specific struggle is put on hold, ostensibly for the greater good of the general struggle, then the general struggle becomes lop-sided or one-sided. Therefore all specific struggles must comprise the general struggle, without emphasizing one over the other, but instead emphasizing the unity of all oppressed groups and peoples in a united front against the enemy that oppresses us all. Since wimyn make up roughly half the world population, then they also make up one of the single largest oppressed groups, and therefore, by virtue of sheer numbers and intensity of generations of exploitation and oppression, they are potentially one of the most revolutionary social forces on the face of the planet. This is why I say that the revolution needs wimyn as much as wimyn need revolution.

In fact, I really have no faith in the ability of a male-dominated party or organization, at least in our contemporary situation, to make a beneficial revolution. Any aspiring revolutionary organization that does not eradicate, or at least implement measures for the eradication of, male dominance at the organization’s inception does not really have a serious shot at being an instrument of revolutionary change, just as I do not feel that any would-be revolutionary group in this country that neglects or underemphasizes revolutionary nationalism can be truly revolutionary. This is one of the most important things that revolutionary groups must keep in mind. If we are going to be instruments for the elevation of the consciousness of the masses, and thus revolutionary change, then we cannot afford to wait until the expropriators are expropriated to begin to purge ourselves, individually and collectively, of bourgeois, capitalist, patriarchal or oppressive values. We must begin to do this now. One of the things that will make the transition from an exploitative class-based society into a socialistic, classless society smoother is purging ourselves of the old, oppressive social relations now. If we are to be

instruments of future change for the better, then we need to embody those future values today. Otherwise we will only be perpetuators of the oppressive values, albeit with revolutionary labels and masks.

Without getting into competitive comparisons of different struggles, I do, however, contend that the wimyn’s liberation struggle is one of the most important and decisive struggles facing the world today, the success of which will be directly proportional to the success of the overall struggle to end all forms (not just capitalist) oppression, and vice versa. The reason for this is that revolution, i.e the struggle to rid the world of oppression and exploitation, is fundamentally a fight to rectify, create, and consciously facilitate the evolution of social relations in ways that are more beneficial to humynity.

And what social relation is more fundamental – in the long run, at least – than the procreative relation between men and wimyn? This relation is fundamental in life processes, as is creating the means of living through various forms of labor, and therefore many different social relations hinge on how this essential relation is played out. I’m not just talking about sex, although that is something that should never be underemphasized. I’m speaking generally of the totality of social relations that spring up from the interaction between opposite genders, and how these social relations interact with and affect the rest of society as a whole. I would even go so far, in stressing the essential nature of this social relation, that it serves as its own separate (yet, of course, not completely separate) base, a reproductive base, and gives rise to its own cultural, social, and political superstructure that interacts with the superstructure rooted in the economic base.

Can the revolution and revolutionary groups afford to neglect, even in the slightest degree, this very important struggle? I didn’t think so. A revolutionary movement will not get very far by putting wimyn and their struggle on the back-burner, by refusing to give wimyn full play in determining their own destiny and working out their own liberation through means of which they approve. Just as whites must let New Afrikans be their own liberators and support their struggles to determine their own destiny, so must men allow wimyn to organize around issues related to their liberation and fully support the absolute freedom of wimyn from the millennia-old tyranny of male domination.

Not that wimyn’s liberation and Black liberation are the same in form and thus require the same organizational forms and methods. Wimyn do not constitute a separate nation, as New Afrikans in this country do. But the essence is the same: a group of humyns who have been oppressed, exploited and brutalized by another group of humyns for personal gain. And wimyn are still the slaves and domestic servants of men in this world, in spite of the many political, legal and economic concessions that have been made on behalf of wimyn. This is because, just like capitalism,

the current relations between men and wimyn cannot be reformed: they must be revolutionized. Wimyn are still in bondage because the social relations between men and wimyn are still essentially the same as they have been. The base has not been changed. Of course, we cannot change some things, like the fact that wimyn must bear children. But the basic forms of how men and wimyn relate to one another – whether sexually, emotionally, economically, familiarly, contractually – can and should be changed, revolutionized, for the better.

Wimyn must ask themselves what kind of world they want. Do they think that men have done a pretty good job with the world, and therefore want to mimic them in how they relate to their fellow humyns? This is what bourgeois feminists want. I say that wimyn should scrap the whole patriarchal conception of reality and decide what kind of world they would like to live in. I believe we men would benefit greatly from their decision.

I feel that the issue of wimyn's liberation does not get enough focus among revolutionary circles, and therefore many groups still tend to be male dominated and chauvinistic. However, if we consider ourselves to be the wave of the future, then we must begin to take that consideration seriously, for there is a good chance that how we relate to one another now will set the mold for tomorrow. If we are still operating in a patriarchal and male-dominated framework, if we in our personal lives as men are still relating to wimyn in much the same way that the rest of society does, then this is the pattern we will set for the future. Just as many whites, even among the left, secretly enjoy white privilege and really do not want to see that privilege abolished, even while they spout revolutionary rhetoric, so do many of us men among the left enjoy male privilege and domination.

Moreover, we must continually launch rectification campaigns against ourselves, through a process of criticism and self-criticism, and purge ourselves from any conscious or unconscious oppressive and exploitative values and relations. We need to protest the many abuses perpetrated against wimyn by our society, whether cultural, physical, social, legal, economic, or sexual, just as much as we protest police brutality, imperialist wars of aggression, and racism. Silence on any of these issues, or mere lip service without any action or change on our part, betrays our deep-rooted acceptance of the way things are.

More and more dialogue, theory, and action need to flourish on the issue of wimyn's liberation. Men must provide, as much as possible, a space for wimyn's voices to be heard, and they should not resist when wimyn create their own spaces. Revolutionary organizations that are still male dominated, whether numerically, in leadership, or otherwise, must begin at once to rectify this blatant neglect to practice truly revolutionary socialistic values in their ranks. Failure to do so will put each of these groups in danger of

being just another reactionary group not really committed to fundamental social change, but instead committed only to serving its own identity as a group. To revolutionize society we must first revolutionize ourselves, individually and collectively. We do this by consciously changing the way we relate to one another. And until we have revolutionized ourselves in every possible or conceivable way, then we cannot claim the status of revolutionary organization, no matter how correct our 'line,' and therefore we cannot claim to be serious about revolution itself.

All power to all the people!!
To the trash bin of history with patriarchal relations!!

For info concerning the New Afrikan Black Panther Party (NABPP), the white Panther Organization (WPO), the New Afrikan Service Organization (NASO), the Red Heart Warrior Society (RHWS), or the Appalachian People's Service Organization (APSO), write P.O. Box 4362, Allentown, PA 18105

Billy Johnson #322385
P.O. Box 679
Whiteville TN 38075

I can receive mail from other inmates. If you are an inmate, let me know if you can receive mail from other inmates or not. If you cannot write directly to another inmate, write the party address above.

Alex Sanchez Free on Bail

We are happy to report that after 7 months of unjust incarceration, Alex has finally been released on bail. After the Ninth Circuit ordered a reopening of the bail hearing by Judge Real, the court found that Alex is neither a flight risk or a danger to the community. We are hopeful that his release on bail marks the beginning of a fair trial in which Alex will have the opportunity to clear his name so that he can continue to do the work he so loves as a truly free man without any restrictions. We are aware that in some ways this is just the beginning. But it is a more hopeful start and we have gotten here together. The values that bind us, our belief in peace, justice and organizing for change in the tradition of peacemakers before us - have gotten us this far. Our community of supporters, friends, family, organizers and people from all walks of life have made a great impact over the past 7 months. We thank you and are honored to walk with you in support of our brother Alex and we continue to be inspired by our collective vision for a world that is more peaceful and just. Stay tuned.

In peace & justice
We Are Alex

Terrorists, U.S. Immigration, and a Canceled Tour

BY GABRIEL KUHN

Sometimes you experience the ultimate anti-climax. With three PM Press books released these months, I had been planning for about a year to come for an extended speaking tour to North America this spring. A couple of months ago, I started planning this more concretely. The anarchist bookfairs in San Francisco, New York, and Montreal provided general reference points, and I got in touch with many wonderful people who helped schedule events in twenty U.S. states and two Canadian provinces. I was also looking forward to the trip on a personal level: I have been traveling to the U.S. regularly since I was nine years old, did part of my schooling there, and meant to visit many dear friends. Admittedly, I was worried about immigration, as I've had problems before – one reason why I haven't visited in five years – but I figured I'll come well prepared. Little did I know that the recently introduced Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) would make it impossible for someone matching an entry on the U.S. government's No Fly List (also known as the Terrorist Watch List) to even board a plane. I considered the process a mere formality, and it actually took me a week to check the outcome of my application. So when the words "Travel Not Authorized" appeared on my computer screen, I instantly thought of a mistake. Certainly I must have missed a letter or digit in my application form. I checked the records. I hadn't missed anything. Nonetheless, I applied again. It only took a few hours to receive another rejection.

Now, here is one thing about the No Fly List: in the name of national security, it is virtually impossible to receive any information about it. Not why your name is on it, not since when, not what you can do to get off the list – in fact, you won't even know whether it's really your name or whether your name matches that of some other "terrorist" suspect. However, after speaking to embassy staff, a mix-up is unlikely in this case. Once it had sunk in that my name was on the list, I had a pretty clear understanding of where the origins of this lay.

When I arrived in the U.S. the last time, in 2005, I was held for seven hours at Philadelphia Airport. First, the stamps of Arab countries in my passport had raised suspicion, then some organizations in my address book, then the literature in my backpack. The immigration officers deemed it necessary to call in an FBI anti-terrorist agent. We went through a pretty ridiculous interrogation, with some other agents storming in at some point, frantically demanding that I get up and put my hands against the wall – apparently, they had found a weapon in my luggage: a camping knife. Once they understood that I had no other "weapons"

on me, they relaxed, and I was allowed to continue with the interrogation in relative peace. Eventually, the frustrated FBI agent said, "Now I know why you've studied philosophy – so you can answer all my questions without saying anything." I felt like I had done well. Then he recommended that I return to Europe voluntarily on the next flight. That way I could "get my papers in order" (I had no papers that weren't in order) and "reapply" for entry to the U.S. – otherwise I'd be removed forcefully, which would automatically imply a five-year ban. I told him that if I was to be removed forcefully there was little I could do (after all, the agents had far more serious weapons than me), but that I certainly hadn't taken an eight-hour flight to Philadelphia to voluntarily turn around and fly back. Since his bluff didn't work, the agent was in a bit of trouble: at the time, I still had a valid B1/B2 visa issued by the U.S. embassy in Vienna in the late 1990s, which meant that a report had to be filed if I was to be removed. Since none of the agent's suspicions – in the end focusing on Earth Liberation Front connections – were based on anything substantial, there was nothing substantial to base a report on either. Grudgingly, I was allowed to enter, although the duration of my stay was severely limited – basically, the officers in charge did what they could within their means to spoil my visit. This was sold to me as generosity. As I left the country within the time I had been given, I thought this incident would have no further consequences. As things stand now, though, it must have earned me a spot in the Terrorist Watch List. The agent got his way after all.

If you are denied authorization to travel to the U.S. through ESTA, you can still apply for a visa at a U.S. embassy. However, three things have to be considered: 1. Unless you are convinced that your case is obviously one of mistaken identity, it is unlikely to be granted. 2. Even if it is granted, it will take a long time, as you'll have to undergo special security screening. 3. Even if you end up getting a visa, it will have been issued by State Department employees – Department of Homeland Security agents might still turn you away upon arrival. Under these circumstances, it became impossible for me to continue planning my tour (which was to start in a month), and I had to cancel. Luckily, the support I've received from friends and organizers in the U.S. since then has been fantastic, and some of the events I had planned will still happen – others are stepping in as speakers, web conferences have been offered, etc. It's like the saying goes: you can ban people but not ideas.

In the long run, I could fight my inclusion in the No Fly List, but I'm not really inclined to do so. It is a time-consuming, costly, and personally compromising affair, and, despite my sadness and disappointment, this individual case is far from tragic: I have a comfortable life in Sweden, I can travel to numerous other countries, etc. What's really worrying are the far bigger problems that this case is an indication of: 1. The complex of immigration and anti-terrorism legislation, which for many people means sepa-

no end that's now threatening to escalate and even worse, spread to neighbouring Pakistan, you can't help but draw comparisons.

And so with all this, even Obama's most adamant supporters must ask themselves, "is he really deserving of a 'Peace Prize' while he's continuing to carry on two wars of conquest and is unwilling to fight for a change to the imperialistic foreign policies of America?" The answer is a clear no.

But Obama's presidency is still young so maybe there's still a chance for him to prove he's more than just talk and that he can actually deliver. But the left and progressives must be aggressive in their message to Obama: that their support isn't mandatory and that American's safety must not be made possible by the oppression and subjugation of other nations.

Also Obama's weakness in accommodating and acquiescing to the reactionary right should stand as a reminder that no matter how hopeful and inspiring the election of Barack Obama was, in American it's not about the man in the seat of power but "the seat of power" itself. Meaning, it doesn't matter who the president is, until the people push for complete and true reform of this capitalist/imperialistic government, "The seat of power" will always dictate the politics of the man within it. And so it's up to the people to redefine our understanding of the brutal war in Afghanistan, that it's not a war against terrorists but one against the Afghan people.

So for Obama to live up to his Peace Prize he must immediately withdraw American forces from Iraq and reject the request from Gen. McChrystal for more troops in Afghanistan (who fail to distinguish between terrorists and insurgents/resistance). If not, then the only clear difference between Obama and Bush will be the obvious: race. But an oppressor of any colour is still an oppressor. And only time will tell whether Obama will rise to the occasion to challenge and deviate away from the exploitative and militaristic policies of the "governing class" and towards true humanitarianism and universal freedom and peace, but not just for the West but also for the Third World. Or will this new administration be just another case of the same "politics of two arms" as usual? Whatever the case may be, the one thing that is certain is, the struggle continues...

Endurance

BY SEHU KESSA SAA TABANSI

while religions and politics
always will fail
and god nor the devil
can grant you heaven or hell

you are lacking
in a surplus of confidence
dying a doomed death in reluctance
there is no self nor determination
to offer you up to sweet assurance
you must seek inside for endurance

when all your leaders
march leading to graves
and our prized saviors
are transformed into slaves
love reverses into an ugly death
and that menacing death is all that is left
for no god offered any other ordinance
than for men and women to strive & have endurance

so you reconsider that
all of the religions are lies
and that even the angels
and all of their gods
taste of death and dies
witnessing heaven and hell
as one in the same
like the right and the left brain
knowing to survive between both
had to have been the divine plan
while stripped of all but common sense
the wisest of all will gain endurance

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BOOK REVIEW: The Assassination of Fred Hampton

BY SUNDIATA ACOLI

The Assassination of Fred Hampton: How the FBI and Chicago Police Murdered a Black Panther, by Jeffrey Haas. Copyright 2010. Published by Lawrence Hill Books, Imprint of Chicago Review Press, Inc., 814 N. Franklin St., Chicago IL 60610. 376 pgs., \$26.95

This book is about the murder of a messiah: Fred Hampton, Chairman of the Chicago Black Panther Party (BPP). Not only could he electrify the Black [Liberation] Movement and unify them, he brought other nationalities into union with this Black Movement and created a revolutionary Rainbow Coalition. He had done this at the local level, Chicago, and was about to go national when cut down by the FBI at age 21.

The book is COINTELPRO - the FBI's Counter INTEllIGENCE PROgram to prevent the rise of a Black Messiah - made plain. It lays bare how Chicago's police murder of Chairman Fred was planned and initiated by FBI Headquarters in Washington, D.C. It also exposes COINTELPRO's hidden hand behind much of the mayhem in the Black community with a '69 COINTELPRO report stating that "Shootings, beatings and a high degree of unrest continues to prevail in the ghetto area of southeast San Diego...it is felt that a substantial amount of the unrest is directly attributable to this [COINTELPRO] program."

The story is told by Jeffrey Haas, a founding member of the People's Law Office (PLO) which preferred to represent Movement people, the poor and oppressed rather than make lots of money. Their main clients at the time were Black Panthers, Young Lords (Puerto Ricans,) and Young Patriots (Southern White youths in Chicago) who together formed the original Rainbow Coalition, the precursor to Jesse Jackson's. Other clients were the predominantly White Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and Weather Underground Organization (WUO), Mexicans, and Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War (PP/POWs) of all nationalities.

Haas' story is a Panther story set in

1969 Chicago: the era of Rolling Stones' "Street Fighting Man." Its plot centers around the Dec. 4th raid that murdered Fred Hampton and the Panther's reaction to that death. (Full disclosure: I know Jeffrey Haas personally and over a decade after Fred's assassination i and other PP/POWs were expertly represented by PLO attorneys Michael Deutsch, Jan Susler and Dennis Cunningham, in a class action suit against prison officials at United States Penitentiary, Marion IL.)

The early morn raid on Fred's apartment also left Mark Clark dead, several other Panthers wounded and his fiancée Deborah Johnson, now Akua Njeri, who was 8 months pregnant with Fred Jr., miraculously unscathed though she had shielded Fred's body with hers as bullets shook the mattress they lay on. The surviving Panthers were arrested, the dead were removed and the police abandoned the crime scene so rapidly they left the front door open; they also left word that [Bobby] "Rush is next."

Fred's funeral further personified the type of unity he engendered in the Movement. His Honor Guard was David Barksdale of the Black Disciples, Jeff Fort of the Black P. Stone Nation, Cha-Cha Jimenez of the Young Lords, Obed Lopez of the Latin American Defense Organization (LADO), and a representative of the Latin Kings. Jesse Jackson gave the main eulogy and united with Panther Bobby Rush, the NAACP, Afro-American Patrolmen League, Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights, legendary singer Chaka Khan, Oscar Brown Jr., and Dick Gregory to provide solid long term support to those seeking justice for Fred Hampton and the other victims of the raid.

The bereft parents of Fred and Mark, and the surviving Panthers asked The PLO for help and - despite their paucity of money and experience, plus the prospect of facing the combined might of the federal government's FBI, State Attorney's Hanrahan's office and the City of Chicago's Police Department - they voted to take the case...and the battle was joined!

The Assassination of Fred Hampton

"A riveting account of the assassination, the plot behind it, the attempted cover-up, the legal maneuvering and the lessons that we should draw from this shocking tale of governmental insanity."
-Norman Mailer, author and political activist



How the FBI and the Chicago Police
Murdered a Black Panther



Jeffrey Haas

Haas' story is also a lawyer's story (and partly a love story) as he makes the courtroom come alive with his blow by blow account of the arduous political trial he and Flint Taylor waged to trace Fred's murderer back to the highest levels of the Justice Department, and its attempt to cover its trail. He also makes the '60s come alive as he interweaves Hampton's case with his own coming of age and the political events occurring at the time in the streets,

in the halls of power and on the Viet Nam battlefield.

Haas is exceptionally good at breaking down complex legal issues and civil court procedures so they're easily followed by the reader and as a result his book is a gold mine of info for aspiring lawyers, jailhouse lawyers and anyone who likes courtroom drama with a running explanation of the forces at play and inside glimpses at the inner workings of all sides involved. But over time the combined weight of a biased judge, lying gay-bashing state attorneys, racist killer cops and the deep pockets of the government ground down Haas and Taylor to the point where they found themselves submitting 100-page handwritten sleep-deprived motions fueled only by coffee, cigarettes and outrage! And in the end, the Plaintiffs: the bereaved parents, surviving Panthers and PLO lawyers reverberated between losing everything and winning everything. Guided by Janis Joplin's song "Freedom is just another word for nothing left to lose" the result was among the most startling civil rights decisions ever rendered.

In short, "The Assassination of Fred Hampton" is a phenomenal book, an intriguing page turner that has the suspense of Whodunit wrapped in the political passions of the '60s. It's a brutally honest book that shows the good, the bad and even the embarrassing of all sides, its author included.

One comes away from this book much wiser about Fred Hampton, his death, COINTELPRO, the Panthers, their supporters and the Just-us system - and with a much clearer understanding of that much maligned yet mysteriously missing era in u.s. history, the late '60s going forward.

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Whatever Happened to the Black Liberation Movement? Is the Struggle Over? Can Assata Come Home Now?

BY BROTHER DEANDRE WILLIAMS

I find myself asking these questions as it seems that many of us are so caught up in the Obama Movement and blinded by "change" that we fail to recognize what exactly is going on. People seem to think that because we have a Black president but wait a minute...a biracial president, who was put into office to change the "face of America" and to make people think that America is really living up to its ideals of freedom, justice, and equality. That is why Obama talks of "our forefathers," those who are Black in America have to keep in mind that he is truly speaking of his ancestor's from his mother's side of the family, who at the time held Black folks in slavery.

I know and understand that a lot of us "Black folks" have forgotten the hopes and dreams of our ancestors with being so caught up in the American Dream. While following in the President's cries of "Change," they remind me of the fable "The Emperor's New Clothes" where anyone with a clear mind can see that whether it is the 1st or the 44th, all of the presidents are the same at this moment in time. Please tell me one policy of the present administration that differs from the past. Has the American government recognized "Political Prisoners?" Has the government stopped enforcing lugubrious laws against the poor?

What dramatic change has taken place in your own hood? Are the police still killing innocent people and getting away with it? Are the police still running guns and drugs in our neighborhoods? Has the criminal justice system done away with its centuries of racism and prejudice? And please tell me "why" if it's a War on Terror, the United States is creating more terrorists by their own military bandit actions against civilians. And I still fail to understand "why" racist terror organizations like the K.K.K., skinheads, etc. are not listed as "terrorist organizations." Makes one wonder what type of, "change" is really taking place.... that is why I ask: "Whatever happened to the Black Liberation Movement?"

We have these four Black Panther organizations and none are in agreement with the other. It is shameful. We have a New African Movement that teaches more on European culture and movements than on being Black. We have a bunch of old political prisoners (Prisoners of War) dying imprisoned and with no support or help from these same organizations that they gave up their freedom for.

So I ask.... It seems that we as a people are too busy pulling each other down to even think of advancing towards a common goal. But no, the struggle is not over. We just have to fight harder than before because while the oppressor has stepped up his game, a lot of us are still stuck in the past and haven't learned from the mistakes of those who went before us. For "A movement moves and is cohesive," it is not the glorification of individuals seeking to dignify their own hidden agenda that only deteriorates and depreciates the empowerment of a united front.

Thus, Can Assata Come home Now?.... I'll leave the answer open to you. My patience strong!

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What Says 'Nobel Peace Prize Winner' like the Escalation of a War?

BY JOVA EL-MANSA ASKIA

Recently, President Barack Obama was awarded the honors of being the recipient of the internationally renowned Nobel Peace Prize. This announcement not only surprised the world at large but also Obama, who bewilderedly admitted at a press conference shortly after, that he didn't even realize he was nominated.

Naturally (like all things regarding Obama) this drew swift and vitriolic criticisms from the right wing, fascist arch conservatives and their "ministry of propaganda and disinformation" (Fox News).

Although I find it not only funny but also hypocritical for the war mongering right wing and their minions to question the validity of Obama's Nobel Peace Prize when the reality of peace is something that's completely anathema to them, I do believe that in this matter "righteous criticism" is not only justified but called for from those amongst us who truly believe in universal freedom and peace.

Since taking office, President Obama has been experiencing a major credibility gap between what Candidate Obama promised during the campaign and what President Obama has actually been able to deliver. Progressive minded individuals and those on the left should be reevaluating their unwavering support for Obama and asking themselves why hasn't he done more to bring about a significant change away from the militaristic Bush doctrine and the imperialistic policies that's deep rooted in American politics.

To date, Obama has failed to shut down the illegal prison/concentration camps at Guantanamo Bay and release prisoners who are being held without reason or cause. Obama was weak and wavering when it came time to demonstrate to the world that no one's above international law. But because of increased pressure from the Right he was bullied into letting the likes of Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld, Alberto Gonzales, and (the man who contrived the legal hokum that helped the Bush administration to circumvent both United States and international laws) John Yoo of Berkley University, get away with blatant human rights violations and international war crimes.

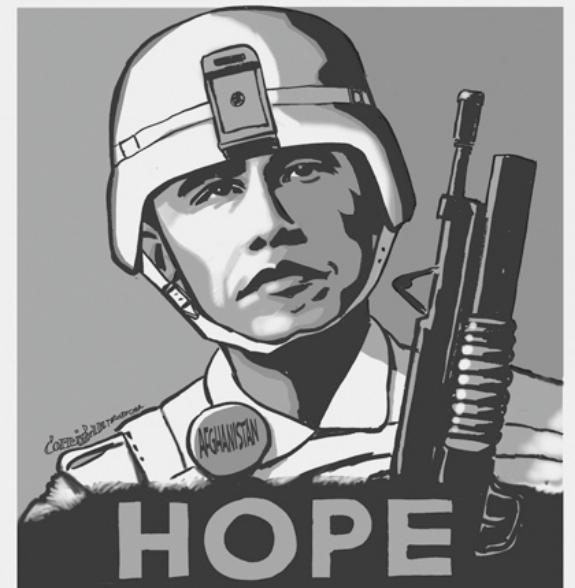
But, I believe that the most disappointing of all Obama's unfulfilled promises are the ones to bring an end to the war in Iraq to work on a viable exit strategy in Afghanistan. These were commendable goals but the reality of the situation is that not only are American armed forces still oc-

cupying Iraq (under a false pretext) but due to mounting exhortations from the reactionary right, Obama is now being strongly persuaded to escalate the war in Afghanistan.

Recently the Commander of the occupying forces in Afghanistan, General McChrystal, reported that he'll need at least 40,000 more troops to complete the conquer and subjugation of Afghanistan. And even though already facing a force of invaders numbering over 100,000, the Afghans have been able to launch a deadly effective offensive against coalition forces.

Also because of political ineptitude, a government rampant with corruption, a blatantly rigged election, and the ever mounting number of civilian casualties due to heavy air bombings, unmanned drone missile attacks, and soldiers firing indiscriminately, the occupying forces find themselves not just fighting a determined Taliban but also an increasing resistance movement of young and poor Afghans who see themselves as not fighting for the Taliban but fighting against imperialist foreign invaders. It appears that this resistance movement is gaining the support of the alienated and oppressed populace. And as history has shown us, once a guerrilla movement gains the support and confidence of the populace there's little to no chance that the oppressors will succeed in defeating it.

The war of futility in Afghanistan is quickly starting to show resemblance to another one of American's imperialistic follies: Vietnam. With its weak puppet government controlled by the West, a population that's growing more and more resistant to Western occupation, and a war with



list goes on. Many of the D.O.C. officials, not excluding some of high rank, are convicts themselves. In another twist of irony, it has become common to see homosexualities both promoted and facilitated, while prisoner's spouses, girlfriends, etc. are routinely harassed when visiting, to dissuade even the most rudiment modicum of civilized family interaction.

Moreover, in the sole interest of accommodating the influx of the already overcrowded state prisons, which has grown to almost thirty in under twenty years, prisoners are forced to live, slave ship-style, in tiny little cells barely fit for one person, and other similar living quarters, with other prisoners (some who are HIV/AIDS and/or Hepatitis C positive, mental patients, etc.) jeopardizing the health and safety of the prison populations, thus the community at large. This, among other related factors, have compelled many prisoners to resort to desperate behavior just to qualify for one man cell status. Some even spend years in solitary confinement, just to be alone, as there isn't any viable recourse or system by which prisoners can resolve such matters.

In fact, prisoners have uniformly iterated that such matters are rarely, dealt with (amicably), as the notion of simply covering things up has become the primary course of action taken, the apt preamble to the inevitable and eventual descent into full-on entropy! In a broader view, though seldom (openly) acknowledged, the cultural polarities between Whites and non-Whites is the bane of the age-old chasm, with white supremacy, in its many manifestations, being the most aggressive and prevalent social construct. And the laws, police, courts, media and prison opportunities, etc., though "categorically" and "unequivocally" denied, are the DNA of said (racist) construct. Therefore, cloaked, albeit in its many euphemisms, Blacks are, especially in the so-called "criminal" context, still the bete noire. This is the essence of the "America, Black-White, separate and unequal" axiom which accurately denotes this sad reality - which is none more evident than in its prison system. White Supremacy isn't concerned with *right and wrong*. It is primarily concerned with power; thus the ability to define *right and wrong* at its own (biased) discretion.

And until this fact is openly and fully acknowledged by the masses, primarily Black and other non-Whites, said group will continue to be not only victimized but complicit/compliant in their own victimization, even guised in incarceration /neo-enslavement, thereby subject to the ongoing experimentation one prisoner termed "cell-ing America's soul."

Let's face it, on the American socio-political landscape, the biased and iniquitous imprisonment binge, is the proverbial "elephant in the room." And while the myriad prisoner advocacy groups and related organizations, e.g., Human Rights Coalition (I-IRC), NAACP, ACLU, National

Black Legatee Assoc. (N-BLA), Red Heart Society, Prison Society, Amnesty International, American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), and a throng of others, not excluding the aunts & uncles, wives & girlfriends, grandparents & parents, friends & comrades, etc., have been at the forefront of the burgeoning PA prison reform movement, it has been argued that the prisoners themselves haven't necessarily been on par or as committed as those fighting on their behalf. For, within the prison environment prisoners have, in significant measure, been sucked into the asinine prison politics, relegated to squabbling over jail-house trinkets, sport & play and the like; often getting involved in the struggle (for their own survival), and a more general humane existence, belatedly - after the most flagrant human rights violations have occurred - as opposed to taking a more productive posture. This has to change!

It has become obvious, even to the casual onlooker, that the system is content with its current course, at the ostensible peril of the (growing) prison population. Therefore, within the scope of plain ol' logic - it is up to the prisoners to create and ultimately usher in more viable alternatives. Because as it stands now - in Pennsylvania - a LIFE SENTENCE is tantamount to death, as more prisoners, over the last twenty years, have died while serving LIFE than those actually sentenced to DEATH. Moreover, at the rate post DNA testing is exonerating (falsely) convicted Death Row prisoners around the country, The People should demand a moratorium on capital punishment altogether!

And finally - it has to be said that, for all the men and women trapped in the wretched "crime & punishment" morass, especially in Pennsylvania's prison system, you have to determine your fate.. The society (at large) is beginning to awaken from the slumber that the racist propaganda has put them in, in terms of the inhuman stigma and overall demonization of prisoners. The many progressive grassroots organizations are poised to further the agenda of not only prison reform but prisoner-reform, as applied to preparing them for re-entry into society, etc.

It is said that wherever you see slavery or any similitude of such, you're witnessing a conspiracy (of strange sorts), in that in order for a master to be a holder of a slave the slave has to be complicit, by compliance. The moment the so-called slave decides to not comply with his/ her enslavement, the master ceases to be such and the relationship is dissolved!

Also, in this vein, it is of paramount significance to realize that the CHANGE ticket President Obama rode in on extends to every level of society - even to its (estranged) sub-societies (prisons). However, and most important of all, the real question remains: What are the prisoners going to do? For therein is where the solution lies! The time is now!

BOOK REVIEW: The Black Panther is an African Cat - Poems of Exploration and Testimony

BY MICHAEL RICHARDSON, from the *Omaha Star*,
May 28, 2009

Autographed copies are not available. Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa has penned his sixth book of poetry from the maximum security Nebraska State Penitentiary where he is serving a life sentence.

Langa, formerly David Rice, has been behind bars for 37 years, convicted for the murder of an Omaha police officer. Langa has steadfastly maintained his innocence in the bombing ambush of patrolman Larry Minard in August 1970 and post-trial revelations of contradictory police testimony and withheld evidence suggest the prison poet was indeed framed for the crime.

Mondo, a twenty-two year old writer at the time of his arrest, was Minister of Information of Omaha's Black Panther chapter called the National Committee to Combat Fascism. Caught up in the then-secret COINTELPRO operation of the FBI against the Black Panthers, Langa and his co-defendant Ed Poindexter, also serving a life sentence, went to jail while the confessed bomber got off with a reduced charge.

The years of confinement have not dulled Langa's sharp observations on life in America for the descendants of African slaves and the predations of the dominant culture. The Black Panther is an African Cat is not an easy book to read; the angst is palpable and permeates the text while the wisdom goes deep.

"As David Rice, I was proud of being a Panther then and, as Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa I am proud now that I was a Panther....The poems and raps I selected for this book express what it means to me to be an African and how the meaning of this influences how I see and interpret things. At the same time, though, I'm an African who was born and brought up in the U.S. and continues to be influenced by its institutions, and I'm an African who's been locked up."

The book is illustrated with several photo collages assembled by Langa that are visual poems, telling their own stories.

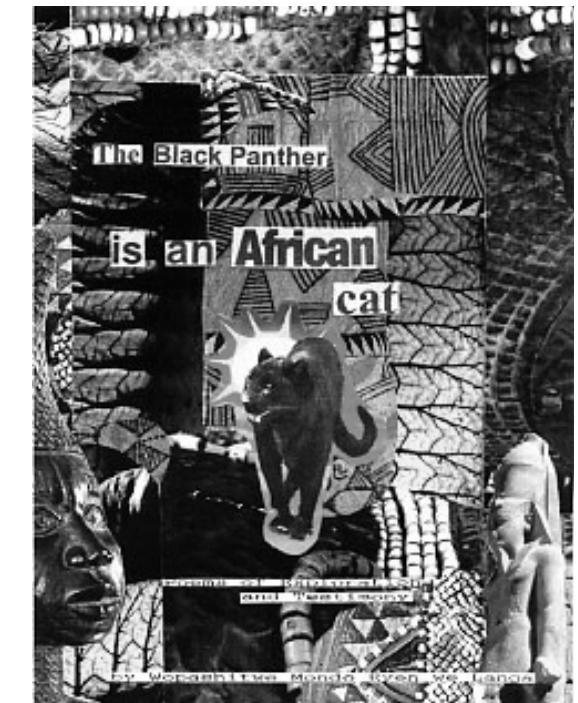
The opening words 'From the Ancestors' House,' "What were we but strangers to the land where we were born" caught "in a maze of Europeanisms" sets the tone for the

explorations and testimony to follow.

'Dressed in Black' is a requiem rap for the Black Panthers and notes the passage from "people needin defense and protection" to "communities of us that traded in black power for government jobs and mid-level-management window dressin positions under glass ceilins."

'The White Sea' is a poem written in Langa's youth, before his arrest. Langa explains its inclusion in the collection. "It is included because I wrote it while I thought of us as "black" while I was in the Party, and while I was still on the street. It's also included because it is a poem that wound up, for me, to be prophetic."

"and I was screaming and shaking
while the sky was corroding
tiny beads of blood rolling down my face
toward my neck down to purge me
so many chairs set up for us
to sit around and stare at each other
nd we recounting dreams in a nightmare showcase
with translucent windows
and a jury outside deciding a verdict
to bring us all to guilt
and send us out in a boat with stones
tied round our necks and throw us dead into
the goddam milky sea"



'Once the New Wears Off' explores Langa's own journey as a youth who would salute the National Anthem and who shared a "rainbow dream" of equality and a time to come. When 'We Shall Overcome' "would bring a tingling up my back and a warming to my head" before realizations "emptying my head of melting-pot dreams" would render the song "a meaningless melody" and "a crass, discount-store magician's trick to reward believers in this house of cards."

Several poems on the war in Iraq and George Bush are in the collection. In 'San Juan Hill, Iraq' Langa asks, "Why, George, do you want war so bad? Why are you so eager to quench the appetite of unfilled graves?"

Although the military and club-swinging policemen catch Langa's piercing prose Mondo's voice raises against those who have sold out as well. 'Runnin, Runnin' tracks O.J. Simpson "down and down you went." 'Electro-Dis Clap Baby' zeros in on both male and female pop celebrities:

"he and she too, and these other brothas and sistas who, knowin nothing and filled with self-hate, aint got they heads on straight, wanna go on talk shows to get some kicks, but end up bein perfect tricks, for talk-show hosts who playin the ratins game, will exploit their butts without an ounce of shame."

Langa tackles rappers with his own rap 'Hardcore' and evens the score. "As you sling the 'nigger' word around, like some dope in a hood that you claim to be loyal to, while poisoning homeys, and sendin them to the dug-out soil to, lie in some graves while, women who are yo sistahs you brand as 'bitches,' you really need stitches, to sew up the hole in your soul."

Sports celebrities, idolized by the media and fawning fans, do not escape Mondo's reach. 'To Bring the Boys Home' speaks of "these sporting men, with names that came, from bills of sale and deeds of ownership" and "these sons of Africa, who are known to say 'I love this game,' but are seldom heard to say, 'I love my people.'"

'Brother, What Are We Supposed to Do' takes on preachers and politicians with their platitudes without action "and we must point our finger, at you AND us, because we stand with you and follow your lead, are stuck in your confusion, and share in your impotence."

'Some Straight'nin' explores the possibility of Malcolm X alive today. Langa uses Malcolm X's African name of Omowale in the poem.

"do you think Omowale would be silent
and just be sittin' on his butt
while comedians who look like us
perform like house-negro clowns
in stand-up routines

puttin' our sistahs down
makin' jokes out of slavery
mockin' our struggles of the here and now
....
do you think Omowale would have nothin' to say
about these slaves in their master's house
and these singers and rappers sellin' out
for jewelry, limos, and fame
collectin' the money
while dodgin' their share of the blame
for the chaos and earth
their lyrics have helped maintain"

Prowess' is a beautiful poetic tribute to tennis champions Venus and Serena Williams, perhaps the best writing in the collection. However, Mondo's purity of African consciousness adds a critical footnote. "Written before these sisters lost an appreciation of the wooly hair that Mother Africa endowed them with, before they began mutilating (straightening) their hair and Europeanizing themselves in other ways."

Mondo's ninety year-old mother is the subject of the most poignant poem in the book. 'Maito, Walking With Me All This Time.' The poem speaks of a mother's love and loyalty while the poet "continue paying on a debt that I did not owe." The "sure caress of a mother's love" was there to comfort while "passing through dark halls where not knowing smelled like mildew and sounded like a muffled justice mumbling."

The slender volume also contains blues poetry, talks of Egypt and Africa, and longs for the company of women.

'I Don't Step in the Water' is the last poem.

"There is a place
between the building I'm caged in
and the one where the slop is served
where when it rains
two puddles form
....
puddles that form a map
of Africa
....
I do not splash through
but walk around
out of respect

The book of poems can be purchased by mail from Aframerican Bookstore, 3226 Lake Street, Omaha, Nebraska 68111, (402)455-9200.

The Black Panther is an African Cat is published by House of August Press. Langa's address is: Mondo we Langa, 27-768, P.O. Box 2500, Lincoln, Nebraska 68542
www.aframericanbookstore.com

such a myopic view, although denoting not only an ignorance but an (acquired) arrogance as well, is the prevailing mindset; especially among those in authority (over others). That is to say, for example, if a person (in authority) spits in the face of another person (deemed under authority) and the latter returns the same, the latter is insidiously regarded as the "lone" aggressor, as the formers' actions are somehow absolved by virtue of his position (of power) within the dynamic, leaving the latter holding the full blame, thus the full brunt of the penalty.

In Pennsylvania's prisons, this [ill] logic is pervasive. A mere cursory review of most of the misconduct reports that are responsible for a large majority of the men (and women) being locked down in the state's super max dungeons ad infinitum, could easily lead one to believe that these men (and women) just up and performed "senseless acts" minus any precipitation what so ever; that they are "naturally" inclined to the most vile behavior. However, what is almost always omitted is the often vile and despotic behavior that's initiated by certain rogue prison officials which, more often than not, have racial implications. So, while it has become an unchallenged (and often unchallengeable) custom of prison officials to point to prisoners' "aggression" or "hatred," the initiating hatred and aggression (by prison officials) is invariably left out of the equation, thus creating a culture of "us-against-them," whereby "Rehabilitation," "Reform" or what have you, becomes the consequent casualty.

And it is within this context that prisoners can be assaulted, starved, tortured and even outright murdered. This is what happened at Greene County, with the perpetrators merely being shifted to other prisons in the region, mainly SCI Forest, Fayette and Somerset, where, not surprisingly, the same violent abuses are on the rise. In fact, Greene County, Forest and Fayette are referred to, by prisoners, as the "triangle of terror." It should also be pointed out that S.C.I. Albion has recently joined the fray, with the recent appointment of Raymond Sobina as that prison's warden, who came from Forest.

Of greater significance, however, is the fact that the entire Department of Corrections, headed by Secretary Beard, has become a climate of fear, hatred, abuses and the like. It is rumored that Beard is quite fond of his infamous "Restricted Release List," a D.O.C. policy that gives him sole discretion (power) to keep prisoners locked on solitary confinement for as long as he deems "necessary" which, as it stands now, means forever - since he has had men (and women) locked down for many years - without any clear criteria or system by which prisoners can work their way back to general population. What is equally ambiguous is the fact that a fabricated story concocted by a prison guard (especially by a prison's respective security department), can arbitrarily land a prisoner on said "list" (for the rest of his or her life) without any independent oversight com-

mittee; and consistent with the trend of racial inequality, "the list" is disproportionately laden with Black and other non-White prisoners.

Many of the officials within Secretary Beard's own administration have, admittedly, become disillusioned. And this disillusionment is spurred by many factors - ranging from the course the whole PA D.O.C. has taken, in terms of the mounting disorder, wrought by utter derelict of duty and, quite frankly, the open racial and religious discrimination within the prison system - to the increasing recidivism rate - the cycle of hatred that is perpetuated by the wanton unprofessionalism of prison officials (with no accountability), the implementation of draconian rules and regulations used solely for punitive purposes minus any rehabilitative functioning. One high ranking official who wishes to remain anonymous revealed that "race, politics and the bottomline" which amounts to profits and power, "is the unspoken theme."

The well-being of the men and women warehoused in these new-age plantations, and the fact that many will (eventually) return to their communities just as - if not more - damaged than when they entered, has been pushed into the peripheral. Therefore, the PA D.O.C.'s professed mission statement of: "Our mission is to protect the public by confining persons committed to our custody in safe, secured facilities, and to provide opportunities for inmates to acquire the skills and values necessary to become productive, law-abiding citizens; while respecting the rights of crime victims." is merely an empty rhetorical proclamation, for public appearances only, far removed from the reality of the standing practices within the (invisible) sub-societies we call prisons.

A tour through many of the state's prisons, on any given day, will undoubtedly reveal the despair and hopelessness among the real, living, breathing men and women who are often spoken of in stoic, statistical language which tends to depict them as a non-people, which in-turn makes these prisons the perfect playground for neo-nazi types, skinheads and ilk, to come and unmask their hatred for Blacks and non-Whites, without any public notice. And, ironically, complaints of racially motivated abuses made by prisoners are pretty much always dismissed as absurd; even in the face of the discovery of the telling photographs of Greene County guards posing (in the prison's security office) with swastikas, confederate flags and other racist paraphernalia; or the racially motivated beatings of Black and Latino prisoners at Fayette's now defunct Long-Term Segregation Unit (LTSU); or Camp Hill's notorious Secured Management Unit (S.M.U.); or the "quiet as kept" sexual assault of a Black prisoner's wife by four White S.C.I. Somerset guards, while she was staying at a local motel during her visiting weekend; or Albion's racially slanted medical experiments and general sham of a healthcare service, as applied to treating Black and non-White prisoners. The

Pennsylvania's Perfidious Department of Corrections

Over the last 10-15 years, not only has Pennsylvania constructed and immediately filled, with great rapidity, a whole host of prisons, but the term "correctional facility," though originally replacing "penitentiary," for more mainstream public acclimation - has become a gross misnomer, a hyperbole even - given the raw and wanton antagonistic posture of today's prison officials, starting at the top administrative levels, under the auspices of PA D.O.C. Secretary Jeffrey A. Beard, who no doubt inherited a system pushed into decline by former Governor Tom Ridge, with the reverberations of his "tough-on-crime," anti-prisoner crusade still being felt under current Governor Rendell's administration.

There isn't even a semblance of "corrective" measures being promoted. It is ostensibly about profits and power. So much so that more brutal and inhumane "rules and regulations" are being implemented to force prisoner compliance. Toward this end, PA prisons are increasingly becoming, behind their whitewashed facade, torture chambers, insane asylums, sensory-deprivation control units and what have you, all rolled into one. The general sentiment is: "Work (for the State) or be locked down."

In recent years, the state has pretty much streamlined its lucrative operations. It is literally profiting off the misery and misfortune of the poor; with the commissary-store being centralized, and contracted with reputed prison-profiteer Keefee, who offers low grade products at marked up prices - a complete rip-off (by majority prisoner consensus). The same with the sale of radios, TVs, watches, boots, sneakers, etc. There was a time when such mundane items could be purchased from (approved) outside vendors. Not anymore. The PA D.O.C. has cornered the market. Even the local repair shops for the maintenance of said items are reported to be owned by family members of prison officials at each respective prison; in some cases owned by officials themselves. The cable company is purported to be owned by the Bush family, offering the most basic services for marked up prices. The telephone companies operate in the same vein, with its exorbitant prices, charging the (poor) families of prisoners excessively for the acceptance of collect calls. Even the calling-cards offered in the prison commissary-store is a rip-off. Yet prisoners are rendered voiceless; with their families, friends and loved ones being pulled into this systematic sham. I guess crime really does pay!

The Plot Thickens

In what many believe to be a deliberate plot to further attenuate the already tenuous ties between prisoners and their loved ones, prisoners are routinely placed in prisons in remote, rural areas, far removed from the urban centers from which they are extracted. And these prisons (espe-

cially in the western Pennsylvania region) are invariably staffed and run by racist whites, from the general area. Incidentally, this bears a strange irony worth mentioning here - because about fifteen or so years ago, rural whites would strongly oppose and protest the building of prisons in their little towns; with the rationale being that they simply didn't want "nigger," "spits" and the general "criminal element" in their (peaceful) towns. They reasoned "what if they get loose."

But, once they caught on to the economic opportunities of it all, especially in the wake of the closing down of the local coal mines, steel mills, etc. they had a change of heart. Now they bid and sign petitions to have them build in their towns. They in effect become, unwittingly, and in some cases, knowingly, local agents of the broader "social engineering" project that's being implemented, for ultimate social control. All that is required is a high school diploma/GED, and any tobacco chewing white racist can sign up. They comprise the bulk of the guards, culinary personnel, medical staff, construction contractors, maintenance crew, contracted vendors and other related profiteers.

Another related element worth mentioning is (in this post-9/11 climate) a lot of the "corrections" officers are military men (and women) who routinely rotate from active duty to their "regular jobs" at the states' prisons. And since a lot of them have been in combat in African, Middle Eastern and Latin American countries - and as a result, have a built-in bias, a hostility even, the ethnic discrimination and subsequent abuses of Latinos, Blacks (a lot of whom happen to be Muslims) and other non-Whites, are increasingly on the rise. The abuse that was exposed at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, at the hands of American soldiers, a large number of whom are prison guards and other related prison personnel back in the U.S., with one of the main perpetrators (Grainer) being a prison guard at the ultra racist and repressive Greene County State prison (in western Pennsylvania), may have shocked and awed the general public, but to the millions trapped in America's prisons, it wasn't surprising in the least, as it is a daily experience within the United States' (invisible) sub-societies. Again, "corrections" or "rehabilitation" has been effectively replaced by pure, unmitigated antagonistic hatred. This is especially evinced in the sham of a grievance system (with no oversight), the biased Prisoner Litigation Reform Act (PLRA), and even the small-town court houses in the jurisdictions of the respective regions of the many State prisons, who seem to be in cahoots with prison hierarchy.

Hatred Begets Hatred

Within the prison environment, much like the (American) society (at large), events and behaviors are erroneously projected as being disconnected from their respective social settings; as if human behavior occurs in a vacuum or out of thin air, devoid of any reciprocal rendering. Yet,

Lynne Stewart Ordered to Prison

REPRINTED FROM PLAIN WORDS, Fall 2009

On November 19, 2009, Lynne Stewart turned herself in at the Lower Manhattan federal courts to begin her 28-month sentence. In 2002, the United States Government indicted Stewart for conspiring to defraud the U.S., conspiring to provide and conceal material support to terrorist activity, providing and concealing material support to terrorist activity and two counts of making false statements.

Stewart's real crime? For 30 years, Stewart worked heroically to defend America's poor, underprivileged, and unwanted, never afforded due process and judicial fairness without an advocate like her. Where others wouldn't go, she defended controversial figures like David Gilbert of the Weather Underground, Richard Williams of the United Freedom Front, Sekou Odinga and Nasser Ahmed of the Black Liberation Army, and many more like them.

The charges and conviction of Stewart is based around her former client Sheik Abdel Rahman. At former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark's request, Stewart joined him as part of Rahman's court-appointed defense team. In his 1995 show trial, he was convicted and is now serving a life sentence for seditious conspiracy, solicitation of murder, solicitation of an attack on American military installations, conspiracy to murder, and conspiracy to bomb in connection with the 1993 World Trade Center attack despite evidence proving his innocence on all charges.

In addition to charging Stewart, the DOJ also charged a number of others: Mohammed Yousry, the Arabic language interpreter for communications between Stewart and Rahman; Ahmed Abdel Sattar, a resident of Staten Island, New York and described in the indictment as a "surrogate" for Rahman; and Yassir Al-Sirri, currently in custody in the United Kingdom.

The indictment alleges that Stewart allowed Yousry to communicate with Rahman in Arabic regarding nonlegal matters, and that she purposely made extraneous comments in English that would mask and conceal the Arabic conversation. She was also accused of violating U.S. Bureau of Prisons Special Administrative Measures (SAMs) that included a gag order on her client, Sheik Abdel Rahman. When imposed, they prohibit discussion on topics the Justice Department (DOJ) rules outside of "legal representation," so lawyers can't discuss them with clients, thus inhibiting their defense.

Her 2004 - 2005 show trial was a mockery of justice with echoes of the worst McCarthy-like tactics. Inflammatory terrorist images were displayed in court to prejudice the

jury, and prosecutors vilified Stewart as a traitor with "radical" political views. In addition, days before the verdict, the militant pro-Israeli Jewish Defense Organization put up flyers near the courthouse displaying her address. It threatened to "drive her out of her home and out of the state," and said she "needs to be put out of business legally and effectively."

It was part of the orchestrated scheme inside and outside the courtroom to heighten fear, convict Stewart, and intimidate other lawyers to expect the same treatment if they dare effectively represent unpopular clients. On February 10, 2005 (after a seven month trial and 13 days of deliberation) she was convicted on all five counts. Under New York state law, she was automatically disbarred, and the state Supreme Court's Appellate Division denied her petition to resign voluntarily. On October 17, 2006, she was sentenced to 28 months imprisonment, but remained free on bond pending appeal before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit.

Stewart Ordered to Prison

On November 17, the Appeals Court revoked Stewart's bond, upheld the verdict, until November 19 at 5PM to let her attorney file a motion for reconsideration. It was denied, so Lynne Stewart turned herself in to begin her sentence. The situation remains fluid, dire, and complicated by Stewart's health problems. She has surgery scheduled for December 7, unlikely now, but if done in prison or where authorities direct, it won't be the quality she deserves.

In its ruling, the three judge panel (John Walker, Guido Calabresi and Robert Sack) was firm, hostile and belligerent in upholding the lower court's conviction. Judge Sack accused Stewart of lying and called for a longer sentence. "We think that whether (she) lied under oath at her trial is directly relevant to whether her sentence was appropriate," he wrote, and directed District Court Judge John Koeltl to re-sentence her "so as to reflect that finding." Judge Walker was even harsher, calling the original sentence "breathtakingly low." Judge Calabrese said: "I am at a loss for any rationale upon this record that could reasonably justify a sentence of 28 months' imprisonment for this defendant."

They all said Stewart was "convicted principally with respect to (her violating) measures by which (she) had agreed to abide," namely SAMs. They rejected her "argument that, as a lawyer, she was not bound by (them), and her belated argument collaterally attacking their constitutionality." They also "affirm(ed her conviction) of providing and concealing material support to the conspiracy to murder persons in a foreign country (and) of conspiring to provide and conceal such support....We conclude that the charges were valid (and) the evidence was sufficient to sustain the convictions. We also reject Stewart's claims that her purported attempt to serve as a 'zealous advocate' for her client provides her with immunity from the convictions...."

"Finally, we affirm Stewart's convictions for knowingly and willfully making false statements....when she affirmed that she intended to, and would, abide by the SAMs. In light of her repeated and flagrant violation of (them), a reasonable factfinder could conclude that (her) representations that she intended to and would abide by the SAMs were knowingly false when made. We reject the remaining challenges to the convictions. (We) affirm the district court's rejection of Stewart's claim that she was selectively prosecuted on account of her gender or political beliefs....We therefore affirm the convictions in their entirety."

They redirected her case to District Court Judge Koeltl for re-sentencing. The DOJ wants 30 years. Koeltl originally imposed 28 months, let Stewart remain free on bond pending appeal, implied his decision might be overturned because of a gross miscarriage of justice, effectively rebuked the Bush administration at the time, and handed it a major defeat. Her fate is now in his hands, but justice has already been denied at a time we're all as vulnerable as she if we dare resist state policies, unchanged under an administration no different from its predecessor.

In a November 17 news conference, Stewart said:

"I'm too old to cry, but it hurts too much not to." In criticizing the Court's decision, she said its timing "on the eve of the arrival of the tortured men from offshore prison in Guantanamo" suggests that lawyers appointed to represent them may face the same fate as she. "If you're going to lawyer for these people, you'd better toe very close to the line that the government has set out (because they'll) be watching you every inch of the way, (so those who don't) will end up like Lynne Stewart. This is a case that is bigger than just me personally (but she added that she'll) go on fighting.

Please write to Lynne:
Lynne Stewart #53504-054
MCC-NY 150 Park Row
New York, NY10007 USA

Report and Update - Lynne Stewart

BY PAT LEVASSEUR, Lynne Stewart Defense Committee
December 3, 2009

On Wednesday, December 2, 2009, a status conference was held before Judge Koeltl to discuss the procedures concerning Lynne's re-sentencing.

The conference was held in a larger courtroom to accommodate all the people who came to support Lynne. Lynne was represented by Elizabeth Fink, Joshua Dratel and Jill Shellow. Although the "Mandate" (formal Order) hasn't issued yet from the 2nd Circuit, the question raised by the Judge was whether the resentencing should be de novo (which means that the Judge would throw out all the reasoning that went in to his previous sentence and start from scratch) or simply a clarification and update of the sentencing he already gave Lynne, of 28 months.

The Judge outlined a schedule; the update of the Presentence Report by the U.S. Probation Dept. is due on February 5, 2010. Any objections to that report are to be submitted by February 19, 2009 and the defense and government submission addressing the resentencing of Lynne by March 12th. Replies by March 29th. The formal sentencing is now set for April 22 at 4:30 p.m.

This is a time for the Lynne Stewart Defense committee to be alarmed and very concerned for Lynne. Lynne is a 70 year old woman and any additional significant time could mean that she could die in prison. No harm was caused to anyone by her actions. Lynne's life work as cited by the Judge in his previous sentencing stand as a testimony to her good intentions. Notwithstanding the verdict, Lynne Stewart had absolutely no terroristic intentions or political harmony with her client Sheik Rahman.

The issue of Lynne's health has been on all our minds. This is the situation to date: She has been receiving her medication. Her blood pressure has been extremely high. Initially the medical department of MCC/NY had suggested cutting Lynne's prescription for high blood pressure medicine in half but since Lynne's blood pressure was so high it is being monitored very closely. The main issue for Lynne right now is that surgery for a bladder problem had already scheduled before the 2nd Circuit decision and her consequent incarceration. Now it appears that she will undergo surgery for this condition which is not life threatening but increasingly uncomfortable for Lynne in the near future at a metropolitan New York hospital.

In the near future we will be working with others to plan a public event, and working in cooperation with others to fight for Lynne Stewart's sentence to remain 28 months. I will be sending out further notices of events and updates on Lynne's situation as news becomes available. Meanwhile you can write to Lynne Stewart, Reg. # 053504-054, MCC/NY, 150 Park Row, New York, NY 10007. Do not send stamps; this mail will be treated as contraband and discarded by the prison. Do not send anything that needs to be signed for. Lynne has been given a subscription to the *New York Times* and the *New Yorker*. If you would like to subscribe Lynne to a publication, please drop us a line first (email info@lynnestewart.org) just to make sure that you are not duplicating someone else's contribution. Photos are okay, cards postcards and letters. All mail is opened and read. Commissary can be sent to Lynne via Western Union using the registration number and address either via the internet or at a Western Union location. Thank you for your support for Lynne - it means the world to her.

PA D.O.C. in Disarray: A Failing System

BY SAFIR CHUMA ASAFO

Overview

Amid the hoopla and general hype over "crime and punishment" in America, some very pertinent elements have been drowned out. Perhaps the most essential elements are:

- a. Crime is a reflection of the society that creates it.
- b. Prisons are actually on-going experimentations,
- c. It's all politics, politics, politics.

In traditional African society, for instance, if a person stole something the society didn't necessarily deem that person the "lone" perpetrator per se, as the entire society would come under scrutiny. It reasoned that if one was compelled to steal within a society where the tenets of the social order are grounded in communal sharing, then what has the society done, in terms of the distribution of the resources (or neglect of same), to cause one to steal (in the first place). Seems logical enough.

However, American society doesn't subscribe to such logic. It is a society predicated on, at its very foundation, "Slaves and Masters" which has assumed more pabulum variations: "The poor and the privileged," "the haves and the have-nots," etc. Therefore, it isn't uncommon to see a group (class) of people having fluent privy to such human necessities as education, medical care, food, clothing and shelter, while another group or class of people doesn't (within the same society). These are the class contradictions that forms the axis upon which American-style "Law and Order" revolves, with the have-nots being portrayed as socially inept, thus "naturally" precluded from higher (class) ideals, thereby inherently prone to crime or social deviancy in general; a proclivity endemic to that class alone, void of any congenital nexus to its avaricious progenitor. Such is the hypocrisy. And to this warped line of reasoning, an 18th century poet once quipped that:

"The law will punish a man or woman who steals the goose from the hillside, but lets the greater robber loose who steals the hillside from the goose."

And since the invented racial factor is at the very crux of American-style social inequality, it should be little wonder then why Blacks and other non-Whites comprise the overwhelming majority of America's prisons and jails, while making up the minority demographic of the entire society. We often hear so-called social scientists, criminologists/penologists, and the like, engage in a prolix of word semantics, statistical jargon, and other forms of psycho-prattle to lend legitimacy to the mass criminalization of Black

and other non-White peoples, which has given rise to the spurious "Bell curve theory" wherein pseudo bio-social science is posited to portray Blacks as having a natural-born propensity toward crime, particularly violent crime; the anodyne for non Black public consumption, to absolve themselves of guilt for the "justified" mishandling of non-White peoples.

In fact, anywhere (on the planet) where a group of people are subjugated/supplanted by another group of people you can rest assured that the dominating group has manufactured a litany of pejorative titles and designations to stigmatize the subject group, thus justifying its eventual demise. Still, that's only half of it; the other is convincing the subject group that they are who they've been (falsely) portrayed/projected to be. The word "NIGGER" and the designation "three-fifths human," et al, are just a couple of the well known degrading and dehumanizing epithets contrived by whites to legitimize (in their own minds) the enslavement of African peoples. And the fact that over a hundred years up from plantation/chattel slavery, Blacks' persistence in referring to one another as nigger = nigga (no matter the variation), the very term used to degrade them, is proof-positive that they believe they are who the slave maker said/says they were/are. And since the prison industrial complex is most certainly the continuum of slavery, the terms: Criminal, Predator, Violent, Aggressive, Incorrigible and other related negatives are likewise the necessary "code words" that, when mentioned, invariably connotes non-Whites, thus the (legal) justification to usher Black and other non-White peoples, en masse, into America's prisons, the neo-slavery (of the 21st Century).

In this vein, it is significant to note that the January 1, 1863, "Emancipation Proclamation" issued by President Lincoln, didn't mean, as many people believed (and still do), that Blacks were "set free." Emancipate means etymologically, "transfer of ownership." This helps to shed some light on the fact that within the first few years after the Civil War, the percentage of Blacks in prisons went from zero to over 30 percent. An immediate transference from plantations to prisons, with the double-edged 13th amendment clause ratifying slavery within the "crime and punishment" context. And though the civil rights upheavals did yield some "tentative" benefits, it is no secret that American-style racism still prevails upon the society. And the elite are still addicted to slave labor, whether manifested in outsourcing or imprisonment. Prisons are regarded as the new plantations. This fact is becoming more -and more obvious as the once touted "rehabilitation" has given way to social engineering, socio-political repression, torture and the like. And while these neo-plantations are springing up throughout the good ol' U.S. of A, at great economic and political aggrandizement to the elite, we need only examine Pennsylvania's Department of Corrections (PA D.O.C.) to get an idea of the trends and currents that are on the rise.

my imprisonment but now I started to take what I read seriously. I became angry as I became more aware of the injustice around me and the feelings of anger and rage that at one time were directed at opposing neighborhoods and prisoners was now directed at the injustices of the state that imprisoned me.

It became impossible for me to play the script once aware of the injustice of my imprisonment and the criminal justice system in general. I also could not just sit still and rage and condemn the system. I had to challenge and confront it as best I could from within the confines of the prison. I decided to become involved in activism against imprisonment and the government's "war on drugs." My politics and activism would spring forth from an oppositional perspective. The state and I were opponents and the script was tossed out the window. This decision would give me a first hand experience to the response of the institution of government when its legitimacy is challenged and questioned by those it attempts to marginalize, define or ignore. Once again I embarked on a transformation based on a decision that led me on a collision course with a government campaign or policy. Overnight I went from "public enemy" to "Enemy of The State" in the eyes of the Department of Corrections.

The consequences of this shift in personal consciousness and institutional classification was substantial and a lesson in the art of institutional self preservation. Since tossing the script out the window that prisoners are expected to conform to I have remained misconduct free since 2001. The 11 years preceding 2001 I had been kicked out of 7 different prisons and done (2) tours in the state's Supermax Control Unit for incorrigible behavior and had incurred dozens of misconducts.

Normally the D.O.C would reward or encourage such a turn around in behavior but in the eyes of the D.O.C. the behavior I was engaging in was far more serious misconduct than if I was running wild in the system breaking every rule on the books. What was this serious misconduct I was engaging in? Networking with activists on the outside challenging the injustice of the so-called criminal justice system, writing articles and pamphlets exposing the injustices of prison and most serious in the eyes of the D.O.C articulating a perspective of prisoners and prisons in opposition to the false perception of prisoners and the need for prisons the D.O.C. is articulating to the public. I have seized control of my image from the D.O.C. and dared to define myself, fellow prisoners and the D.O.C. itself. No longer can the D.O.C at will define me as a gangbanger, murderer, public enemy, etc without a response.

The D.O.C's reaction has been a lesson to the fact that you cannot challenge or protest government injustice, repression, etc without suffering the foot of the state wherever you are. In the past couple years my custody level has been

upgraded to a "High Risk Prisoner" despite years of misconduct free behavior, all my mail is monitored and read due to "radical beliefs" and involvement with "questionable" publications i.e. publications critical of the government's war on drugs and terror. In 2002 I was placed in the hole for 14 months without charge because the prison thought I expressed sympathy with the terrorists the United States is at war with because of my grievances /complaints challenging institutional racism.

How was a connection to the "war on terror" made with prison activism? In response to a question I posed to a D.O.C. Security Captain about the need to monitor my mail I was candidly told "we live in a new world since 2001 and the government and the D.O.C. are concerned about this type activity." So not content with being on the front lines of the "war on drugs" the D.O.C. has found a way to muscle into the "war on terror hustle" by monitoring and containing prisoner activists and their supporters on the outside, just as the government has used the "War on Terror" to stifle anything outside of the "acceptable bounds of dissent" i.e. write or call your congressman, write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper, vent and get over it, etc the D.O.C. has manipulated the war on terror to suit its own means toward stifling internal dissent and criticism of its policies and practices.

Despite the repression and personal difficulties imposed by the D.O.C., in the end the transition from "public enemy" to "enemy of the state" has been worth it and I have no regrets other than I wish I had made the connection between the drug trade and the government's failed war on drugs and the transition prior to coming to prison as a juvenile offender. Life is about transitions and transcending one's limitations and sooner or later, for better or worst, we all make or miss the transition that will define who we are and most importantly choose to be. No longer will the state define me. I will dare to define myself.

"In any place in the world, anytime, any man or woman rebels to the point of tearing off the clothes that resignation has woven for them and cynicism has dyed gray. Any man or woman, of whatever color, in whatever tongue, speaks and says to himself, to herself "Enough is enough!- Ya Basta!" - Subcomandante Marcos

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For more writings, see
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Supreme Court Blow to Anti-Death Penalty Icon Mumia Abu-Jamal

BY WARREN RICHEY, from *Christian Science Monitor*

Mumia Abu-Jamal, whose death sentence for killing a Philadelphia police officer in 1981 has become an international cause célèbre for opponents of capital punishment, has suffered a significant setback at the U.S. Supreme Court. In a summary order, the high court reversed a 2008 federal appeals court ruling that had required a new sentencing hearing for Mr. Abu-Jamal. The Supreme Court action sends the case back to the Third U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Philadelphia to reconsider the issue in light of a similar decision handed down last week by the high court. In that case, with similar facts, the justices voted 9 to 0 to reverse an order that struck down the death sentence.

Tuesday's action by the Supreme Court likely moves Abu-Jamal significantly closer to execution. Abu-Jamal's writings about his legal plight have attracted widespread attention among human rights activists and capital punishment opponents in the U.S. and Europe. He has maintained that the police coerced witnesses to testify against him and that racial prejudice and discrimination played a role in his death sentence. This week, supporters began circulating a petition to President Obama and Attorney General Eric Holder calling for an investigation into the "long history of civil rights and constitutional violations in this case."

The case against Abu-Jamal

The case stems from a December 1981 traffic stop in which Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner pulled over a car driven by Abu-Jamal's brother, William Cook. Abu-Jamal was a passenger in the car. A struggle broke out between Mr. Cook and Officer Faulkner. According to witnesses, as the struggle continued Abu-Jamal ran back toward the car from a parking lot across the street and shot Faulkner in the back. The officer fell to the ground and returned fire, striking Abu-Jamal in the chest. Abu-Jamal then allegedly walked toward the officer, stood over him, and fired four more shots at close range. One shot struck Faulkner between the eyes. He was convicted and sentenced to death. The jury found one aggravating factor – killing a police officer who was acting in the line of duty. The jury considered one mitigating factor, Abu-Jamal's lack of a significant criminal record. It is the sentencing phase of the trial that was under consideration in the appeal to the Supreme Court.

Confusion in sentencing?

Both a federal judge and a federal appeals court had ruled that the jury that sentenced Abu-Jamal to death might have

been confused over how to properly assess mitigating evidence during the penalty phase of the trial. At issue was whether jurors might have thought that they had to unanimously agree on each piece of mitigating evidence being weighed against the aggravating circumstances justifying a death sentence. There is no unanimity requirement for jurors considering mitigating circumstances. They are free to consider anything that might weigh against a death sentence. In contrast, all jurors must agree on any aggravating factors. In addition, jurors must unanimously decide that the prosecution has proved beyond a reasonable doubt that those aggravating factors outweigh any mitigating circumstances.

The 'Mills standard'

In some cases jurors have been given faulty instructions by the trial judge that jurors must unanimously agree on the mitigating factors. Such instructions are inaccurate and unconstitutional under a 1988 Supreme Court decision called *Mills v. Maryland*. In the *Mills* case the high court ruled that a defendant must receive a new sentencing hearing whenever there is a "substantial possibility that reasonable jurors ... well may have thought they were precluded from considering any mitigating evidence unless all 12 jurors agreed." In the Abu-Jamal case, the federal appeals court ruled that Abu-Jamal should either receive a new sentencing hearing or have his death sentence be changed to a life sentence. Last Tuesday, the high court decided a similar case, *Smith v. Spisak*. The case was like Abu-Jamal's in that a state court had upheld the jury instructions and verdict form, but a federal appeals court overturned that ruling after concluding that there was a violation of the *Mills* standard.

Supreme Court's decision

In the *Spisak* case, the high court reversed the federal appeals court in a decision that will make it harder in future cases to argue possible juror confusion short of a judge actually giving the wrong instructions to the jury. "The instructions did not say that the jury must determine the existence of each individual mitigating factor unanimously," Justice Stephen Breyer wrote in the majority opinion last week. "Neither the instructions nor the forms said anything about how – or even whether – the jury should make individual determinations that each particular mitigating circumstance existed." Justice Breyer added: "In our view the instructions and verdict forms did not clearly bring about, either through what they said or what they implied, the circumstances that *Mills* found critical." It will now be up to the Third Circuit to apply this new, tougher test to the facts of Abu-Jamal's case. The case is *Beard v. Abu-Jamal*.

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My Blood is a Million Stories: On Being the Child of a Revolutionary, Dr. Mutulu Shakur

BY NZINGHA SHAKUR-ALI

Originally printed in the *SF Bayview Newspaper*

[Editor's note: This article was written before Dr. Shakur's parole hearing. Dr. Shakur was denied parole.]

My dad goes before the parole board Dec. 2. Thinking about my family and the families of other political prisoners and freedom fighters around the world. Thinking about you especially, Kamel. I am so truly blessed to come from the family I do. The Hearn clan. The Shakur clan.

It's a different way of life in many ways, being children of revolutionaries. Our parents fought, were imprisoned, were exiled and died fighting for basic human equality; and all the while growing us in the discipline and knowledge, love and respect for not only our people, but for all people. We think differently; we see the world differently.

I was thinking about the last time I saw Mutulu. It's a harsh reminder to me when I think about the fact that I've never known my dad in any other context outside of prison, even back to my first memory. His every entrance into my life since I can remember has always been the same ... coming from behind those steel bars, he stops so the officer can take off the chains.

I've never seen him for more than four or five hours at a time. You only get so many hours of visitation. I've never seen him standing in the sunlight, never seen him standing in grass; I've never seen him in anything other than a prison uniform.

We've never had a phone conversation that wasn't recorded, written letters that weren't read before they reached his hands or given hugs that weren't closely watched. I've shared every intimate moment with him, with someone else. He's never been able to see all of his children together at once, and now that Pac has passed away, he'll never be able to.

Now Mutulu is in Florence, Colorado, the No. 1 maximum security prison in the United States. "Also known as the Admax, Supermax or the Alcatraz of the Rockies, ADX



houses the prisoners who are deemed the most dangerous and in need of the tightest control. It is the highest level security federal prison in the United States and generally considered the most secure prison in the world. Individuals are kept for at least 23 hours each day in solitary confinement." That means he gets one hour, by himself, outside his cell in a heavily guarded area. All of our visits are behind glass and he is often handcuffed.

These things come to mind as his parole hearing draws near. They have and continue to do everything they possibly can to keep him in prison. Long and short: After denying him his first parole hearing in 1996 with no just cause – as stated by a court – the parole board ignored the recommendation to give him due process and waited six years to convene.

In 2002 the parole board finally convened, denied him parole and stated that they would not allow him to come before the parole board for another 15 years. Because his first parole hearing was legally set for 1996, a 15 year hit would mean he was able to come before the parole board again in 2011, but as the parole board refused to acknowledge the six-year false delay – again, as stated by the court – he will not be able to come before the parole board until 2017. His upcoming parole hearing is a fight for due process and his right to come before the parole board and fight for his freedom in 2011.

As "thanksgiving" draws near, I am humbled by those who, like Mutulu, saw their difficult path before them and even still chose to stand and fight, rather than lie down and continue to be enslaved. Freedom fighters all over the world. Many of them will not be able to sit down and have dinner with their families, will not be able to tuck their children in at night, and will not be able to hold the ones they love as they fall asleep.

Yet they are fighting for our right to do so. This Thanksgiving, I give thanks for the people who fought and are still fighting for freedom and equality. I give honor to the indigenous people of this country who are still fighting for their basic rights on their own land. I give remembrance to who I am and where I come from: a people whose blood runs deep in the earth of this country. And I pray, so very hard, that we continue to move forward as a global community, in love. My blood? Is a million stories. FREE 'EM ALL. Peace.

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From Public Enemy To Enemy of The State

BY ROBERT SALEEM HOLBROOK

When I was a child I used to often walk past the old Eastern State Penitentiary on Fairmount Avenue in North Philadelphia and stare in awe at its high walls and ramparts seemingly towering into the sky, believing naively that the old prison was an ancient castle from the days of knights and kings. There were times myself and other kids my age used to try and scale the walls to get a glimpse of what was inside, how ironic it is that now for the past 18 years I've been trying to figure out how to scale out of the numerous prisons I've been imprisoned in since the age of 16.

I've often sat in my cell in total isolation and solitude attempting to figure out what brought me to this point in my life where at the age of 34 I've been imprisoned for 18 years with the rest of my life destined for the same thing. During 3 years of confinement in the state's control unit (Special Management Unit) at SCI-Greene I had the unique opportunity to actually back track practically every poor decision I made in my life that eventually culminated in my imprisonment. When you are locked down for 23 hours a day 7 days a week you have the ability to engage in such personal adventures in discovery.

The pivotal decision that culminated in my imprisonment occurred when I was 14 years old hanging out with some friends on the corner admiring a car an older guy from the neighborhood had.

He sold drugs and seemed to have it all and that's what I wanted, i.e. the girls, the clothes, the respect, etc. It wasn't until years later while in my early 20s that I came to understand the distinction between my wants and needs but at that moment I suffered from "reckless youth" and could only see the benefits that selling drugs provided. That admiration lead me to compliment his car and we struck up a conversation that culminated in me agreeing to sell drugs for him. It was that decision, combined with a series of other poor judgment decisions and circumstances that resulted in a LWOP (life without parole) sentence 2 years later for being an *alleged* lookout to a drug-related murder. There was a time in this country when it was said that "youth were generally allowed mistakes." However that is not the case anymore unless we're talking about President George W. Bush who could blame his early cocaine addiction on "being young and a little irresponsible."

Little did I know but that decision to become involved in gangs and the drug trade put me on a collision course with not only other gang members and law enforcement but with the federal government's war on drugs. Overnight I had unknowingly transformed from a "kid" to "public

enemy" in the eyes and perception of the public and government. For in order for the government to wage a war on drugs it must define someone as the enemy, it must identify and create public enemies the public can vilify and fear in order to justify its war and multi-billion dollar budgets to the people and congress. The enemies were identified. The government had declared war on a substantial segment of its citizenry, in particular youth of color ie. gang bangers.

As a "public enemy" it was therefore easy for the state to impose a Life Without Parole sentence on myself and countless other juvenile offenders caught up in the street wars. Despite our age, we were the expendable casualties of the war on drugs. From my arrest, conviction and sentencing I was a statistic on the policy charts of law enforcement briefings to the media, politicians, government committees, etc., demonstrating law enforcement's "imminent" victory against street gangs and drug lords. Like the "body count" tallies in Vietnam, and now Iraq, my imprisonment was a slogan or prop for public consumption demonstrating the war is being won and the "bad" guys are losing.

Initially content with the government-imposed "public enemy" label, I unwittingly played into the stereotype while imprisoned, accepting and conforming to the dog-eat-dog environment of prison. I didn't care about anything and sought to adopt, hone, and sharpen the criminal and predatory traits that dominate the prison system and contribute to the criminality of its inhabitants. I saw no need to change or evolve beyond my perception. This was part of the game, and on another level beyond my perception, part of the government's script for young public enemies.

In the controlled environment of prison the script is even more predictable. Act out, break the rules, be "disciplined" via the hole, be released and replay script. Like the script on the streets, both sides pretty much accepted their roles in the script. Imprisoned, we were society's "public enemies" and in the eyes of the guards it was their patriotic duty to imprison, having been conditioned to believe they were/are manning the walls in the nation's war on drugs. The institution of justice in this country, from the police, to the courts, to the Department of Corrections is built on a war model and its target is youth of color, i.e. "gangbangers."

Somewhere in and around the 10th year of my imprisonment at the age of 26 I decided to stop playing out the script. No one single event or incident bought about this decision rather it was a culmination of events, maturity, and experiences. For one I started to question why the white kid received 5 to 10 years for the same role in a murder I received a Life Without Parole sentence for. Why did the whiteman that murdered a childhood friend of mine in 1989 by penetrating his skull with a tire iron receive only 5 years probation. There were a million of other "whys" that started to bombard my mind and subconsciousness that I could not escape by falling back into the script. I started to read to satisfy my questions. I had always read during

Heart of Justice is Missing

BY NAN GRAF, reprinted from the *Lincoln Journal Star*, June 29, 2009

A recent Nebraska Supreme Court decision denied former Omaha Black Panther leader Ed Poindexter the right to a new trial (June 19) and ignored violations of his rights that were often recorded in memos by long-time FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover and his agents or by Omaha Police Department reports. Of course, these recorded materials served as tips to investigate before Poindexter's legal team handed over volumes of documentation to the court.

Poindexter's arrest in August of 1970 for the suspected murder of an Omaha policeman, Officer Larry Minard Sr., and his short 1971 trial, along with fellow Panther leader Mondo we Langa (formerly David Rice), made front-page headlines in Omaha from the time of their arrest to their conviction. In fact, activists and journalists who have studied this ongoing injustice claim the two men were convicted by headline.

In April 1971, Poindexter and we Langa were convicted of first-degree murder and sentenced to life in prison. Now men in their 60s, they're still at the Nebraska State Penitentiary, partly because they refuse to say they're sorry for a crime they didn't commit and thus don't qualify for commutation or parole. They've always maintained their innocence, but learned early on that innocence isn't enough.

Support of their cause to win justice has come from Amnesty International in the United States and in Europe. On April 18, 1999, Amnesty International at a General Meeting in Minneapolis passed a resolution calling for the immediate release of Ed Poindexter, Mondo we Langa and other political prisoners.

I've followed this case since 1970 and have researched and written articles about it since 1974. In the summer of 1981, I took an eight-week graduate seminar on human rights and discrimination in the political science department at the University of Iowa. My project for the summer was to study the topic of political prisoners in the United States.

For my 35-page seminary paper, I focused on three incarcerated black leaders known worldwide (if not here in Lincoln) as political prisoners: Ed Poindexter, Geronimo Pratt (of California) and Mondo we Langa. At the time, I had access to 350 pages of FBI COINTELPRO memos, released through the Freedom of Information Act, that demonstrated how FBI Director Hoover orchestrated urban police departments into action against blacks.

In a memo dated Aug. 26, 1967, Hoover urged FBI agents to "discredit" black leaders and their groups. Memos dated March 17, 1970, and Aug. 24, 1970, specifically targeted

Poindexter and we Langa by way of discrediting and disinformation (Hoover's coinage for plain old lying) in an effort to dismantle their leadership. In the 1990s, the British Broadcasting Company produced a documentary on Ed Poindexter, Geronimo Pratt and Mondo we Langa that is available on DVD.

When I, as a lay person (not a lawyer), first read the Nebraska Supreme Court's 22-page printed response to Ed Poindexter's October 2008 filing, it seemed to me a superficial treatment of serious issues that would result in preserving the status quo rather than correcting injustices.

I realize that both British and American law is built on precedent, that is, on cases that precede a current case. So there is limited opportunity for progressive thought or change. This partially explains why our legal culture took so long to grow away from the infamous 1857 Dred Scott case that essentially meant blacks have no rights whites need to respect. (Privileged racists in control of judicial and legislative branches explain the rest of what happened.)

With this recent Nebraska ruling, it's as if the court cast blind eyes upon the failures of Poindexter's early defense attorneys and upon the misconduct of prosecuting attorneys. In addition, the court abandoned consideration of injustices against Poindexter inherent in the FBI's 911 memo (dated Oct. 13, 1970). Omaha's Assistant Chief of Police, Glenn Gates, in this memo advises withholding evidence until after Poindexter's April 1971 trial, evidence the police figured might help the defendant. The 911 memo offers all kinds of possibilities to explore, both subtle and overt.

Credibility of the state's witness? It mattered not. Lying under oath? Conflicting testimonies? These moral questions fester like open wounds. The court's recurrent refrain of agreement with shallow district court opinions predictably leads into this conclusion on the last page of the printed text: "We affirm the judgment of the district court denying Poindexter's motion for postconviction relief."

What I brought back home with me to Lincoln after the 1981 seminar on human rights and discrimination at the University of Iowa is that political prisoners seldom get justice in their own backyards. Nearly every nation in the world incarcerates political prisoners. It's a universal problem that could be solved, though, by courts throughout the world. It is especially disappointing that only the veneer of justice and not the heart of it emerges now from the Nebraska Supreme Court.

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A New Years Message to Revolutionaries Everywhere: Join the Black Panthers!! We Want You!!

BY CHAIRMAN SHAKA ZULU, NABPP

ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE! My name is Shaka Zulu. I am the Chairman of the New Afrikan Black Panther Party (NABPP), a revolutionary nationalist vanguard Party in the tradition of the original Black Panther Party. Our ideology is called Pantherism, illuminated by Marxist-Leninist-Maoism (MLM). Pantherism is the theory and practice of socialist revolution for all oppressed people across the world. Pantherism holds that in order to defeat our oppressors we must build base areas of social, cultural and political power in our own oppressed communities.

We see our Party as the 21st century embodiment of the original Black Panther Party (BPP). We have set up our Party Organization in a way that absorbs ALL who can help in the development of NABPP as a cutting edge proletarian vanguard Party. We are inviting you to put your talent and energy in a revolutionary vanguard Party. The many Panther formations that have sprung up across the country, while a good thing because it means that people are doing things to advance the national liberation struggle, cannot liberate the masses from the junk of bourgeois culture until we form a fighting party, an advance detachment of proletarian consciousness and activism.

We think that it is absolutely important for all of us to be united and together as Panthers, as one huge revolutionary family cemented with Panther Love. Panther Love is revolutionary love, liberating love, world changing love. We believe that Panther Love as a viable means of unity will enable us to better advance our strategy of "Turn the Iron Houses of Oppression into Schools of Liberation, and the Oppressed Communities into Base Areas of Cultural, Social and Political Revolution."

We have to be together to collectively deal the avarice vampire monopoly capitalist a final death blow. While we fight and divide at the bottom, the monopoly capitalist are cooperating locally and globally to maintain capitalist imperialism oppression and domination over places like Afrika, Central Asia, Latin Amerika, the Middle East, and the various oppressed nations in empireland. We cannot defeat them by being scattered and loose. We need a powerful force such as democratic centralism. Our struggle is not a race struggle, but a class struggle, an international struggle against capitalist imperialist structures which perpetuate the economic exploitation of resources, lands, markets, wage-workers, and the environment.

The Maoist Movement is international--which means that if we intend on sowing seeds of world socialist revolution--we should be proud to raise the Red flag from a position of unity.

In the Party's newspaper *Right On!* #1, we stated that "Understand-ing the role that the party must play is also understanding the role others must play and how these roles fit together to serve the highest interests of humanity. The Party cannot be all things. Its special purpose is to represent the future in the movement of the present and illuminate the path forward. It is a Black revolutionary nationalist party that recognizes that class struggle and socialist revolution is the path forward."

The solution to all of our problems come down to revolution, socialist revolution and the correct practice of Pantherism, which is the 21st century ideology of the New Afrikan Black Panther Party-PC (NABPP). So while the monopoly capitalist class oppressors remain united, our ranks exude the death of division and petty squabbles over who hold the principle political line. It comes down to really understanding the tricks the ruling class historically, consistently use to keep us divided.

Comrade Tom Big Warrior stated so eloquently in his forward to "Black Youth and the Criminalization of a Generation" that the oppressors have a strategy that unite neo-liberals and neo-conservatives all over the world. And in order to defeat them, we must develop our strategy--of building base areas of cultural, social, and political revolution--of going amongst the people and organizing and mobilizing them to take on the historic mission of making revolution.

Comrades! We have a marvelous role to play, an historic task to complete, a great opportunity to turn our single fingers into a fist of revolutionary unity by getting together under the leadership of the New Afrikan Black Panther Party (NABPP). We need you! We invite all sincere, honest, loyal Comrades to struggle with us to free New Afrikan people and all oppressed people across the world. Pantherism is the key here.

We leave you with these words from Comrade Huey: "But to achieve such freedom, we must all start at the bottom. We must fight as brothers [sisters], each in our own community or ghetto, but against the common enemy that deprives us of our identity, that is, that exploits us economically, politically, culturally. We are then both nationalist and internationalist. We fight for our freedom in our own terrain, but in alliance with everyone who fights: our enemy, not just because we need each other tactically but because we are brothers [sisters]."

All Power to the People!

10-Point Program and Platform of the New Afrikan Black Panther Party (NABPP)

1. We want Freedom! We want power to determine the destiny of Our Black and oppressed Community.

We believe that Black and oppressed people will not be free until We are able to determine Our destiny in our community ourselves, by fully controlling all the institutions which exist in our community.

2. We want full employment for Our people.

We believe that the federal government is responsible and obligated to give every person employment or a guaranteed income. We believe that if the american businessman will not give full employment, then the technology and the means of production should be taken from the businessmen and placed in the community so that the people of the community can organize and employ all of its people and give a high standard of living.

3. We want an end to the robbery by the CAPITALIST of Our Black and oppressed Community.

We believe that this racist government has robbed us and now We are demanding the overdue debt of forty acres and two mules. Forty acres and two mules was promised over 100 years ago as restitution for slave labor and mass murder of Black people. We will accept the payment in currency which will be distributed to Our many communities. The American racist has taken part in the slaughter of over fifty million Black people; therefore, We feel that this is a modest demand that We make.

4. We want decent housing fit for shelter of human beings.

We believe that if the landlord will not give decent housing to Our Black and oppressed community, then the housing and the land should be made into cooperatives so that the people in our community, with government aid, can build and make decent housing for the people.

5. We want decent education for Our people that exposes the true nature of this decadent American society. We want education that teaches us Our true history and Our role in present-day society.

We believe in an educational system that will give to Our people a knowledge of self. If a person does not have knowledge of themselves and their position in society and the world, then you will have little chance to know anything else.

6. We want completely free health care for all Black and oppressed people

We believe that the government must provide, free of charge, for the people, health facilities which will not only treat our illnesses, most of which have come about as a result of our oppression, but which will also develop preventive medical programs to guarantee our future survival. We believe that mass health education and research programs must be developed to give all black and oppressed people access to advanced scientific and medical information, so we may provide ourselves with proper medical attention and care.

7. We want an immediate end to POLICE BRUTALITY and MURDER of Black people, other people of color, all oppressed people inside the united states.

We believe that the racist and fascist government of the united states uses its domestic enforcement agencies to carry out its program of oppression against Black people, other oppressed people and poor people inside the united states. We believe it is our right, therefore, to defend ourselves against such armed forces and that all black and oppressed people should be armed for self-defense of our homes and communities against these fascist police forces.

8. We want an immediate end to all wars of aggression.

We believe that the various conflicts which exist around the world stem directly from the aggressive desire of the united states ruling circle and government to force its domination upon the oppressed people of the world. We believe that if the united states government or its lackeys do not cease these aggressive wars it is the right of the people to defend themselves by any means necessary against their aggressors.

9. We want freedom for all black and oppressed people now held in u.s. federal, state, county, city, and military prisons and jails. We want trials by a jury of peers for all persons charged with so-called crimes under the laws of this country.

We believe that the many Black and poor oppressed people now held in united states prisons and jails have not received fair and impartial trials under a racist and facist judiciary system and should be free from incarceration. We believe in the ultimate elimination of all wretched, inhuman penal institutions, because the masses of men and womyn imprisoned inside the united states or by the united states military are victims of oppressive conditions which are the real cause of their imprisonment.

We believe that when persons are brought to trial they must be guaranteed, by the united states, juries of their peers, attorneys of their choice and freedom from imprisonment while awaiting trial.

10. We demand bread, housing, education, clothing, justice, peace and people's community control of modern technology.

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bonds which have connected them with another, and to assume, among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind require that they should declare the cause which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that, whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly, all experience hath shown that mankind are most disposed to suffer, while evils areufferable, that to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But, when a long train of abuses and usurpation, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security.

All members and potential members must study and memorize Our Ten Point Program and Platform.

ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE!

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Urgent! Emergency Medical Support Needed for Tom Manning

Posted on January 24, 2010 by Denver ABCF

"On the medical situation, folks should demand that I be sent to Butner, NC, the Federal Medical Center for cancer treatment, monitoring, etc". –Tom Manning

Jericho has also spoken with his attorney who has already called and sent a request to get Tom moved and suggested we do the same. Here is the information needed to both call and write the Cumberland warden as well as other officials at the federal bureau of prisons.

1. Ask for Warden- However I received a reply by phone (1/22) and was told every request for a transfer for Tom must be in writing either by Fax or e-mail. So if you can please e-mail or fax this request. Follow the info below if you want to put vocal pressure on the Warden.

2. Have Tom's # ready "Thomas Manning 10373-016 recent transfer from USP Hazelton.

3. If you reach the warden or his/her secretary explain that Tom has recently been transferred from Hazelton and had not received the medical care needed for the growth in his groin area, lump under his left nipple or the growth under his shoulder blade. His records have been reviewed by an out side doctor who urgently recommended a biopsy to check for cancer in these areas. Tom asked you to ask for an immediate transfer to the Federal Prison Hospital facility at Butner, NC to get the necessary medical procedures done.

4. If you get a recording please leave your name and phone # for them to accept our seriousness regarding Tom's health.

5. If you fax either place a letter be sure to give your information as well as Tom's full name & number.

6. Please send us any information you are given so that we can put pressure on the correct dept.

If you know or are a doctor or Minister/Imam please fax a letter to both the warden and regional office using your letterhead and ask for a reply.

Thank you for your help.
Paulette (albq.jericho@gmail.com) & Anne (nycjericho@gmail.com)

Phone: 301-784-1000 ask for warden; Fax: 301-784-1008
E-mail address: cum/execassistant@bop.gov
Mid Atlantic Regional Office press #1 for inmate services & you will probably have to leave a message.

Federal Bureau of Prisons/ 302 Sentinel Drive/ Suite 200/ Annapolis Junction, MD 20701
E-mail: mxro/execassistant@bop.gov
Phone: 301-317-3100