

***NEW* OBSERVATIONS**

**Let the Walls Come Tumbling Down:
Free Political Prisoners Now!**



**Guest Editors:
Paulette Dauteuil-Robideau
and the Jericho Movement**

Editor and Publisher: Mia Feroletto

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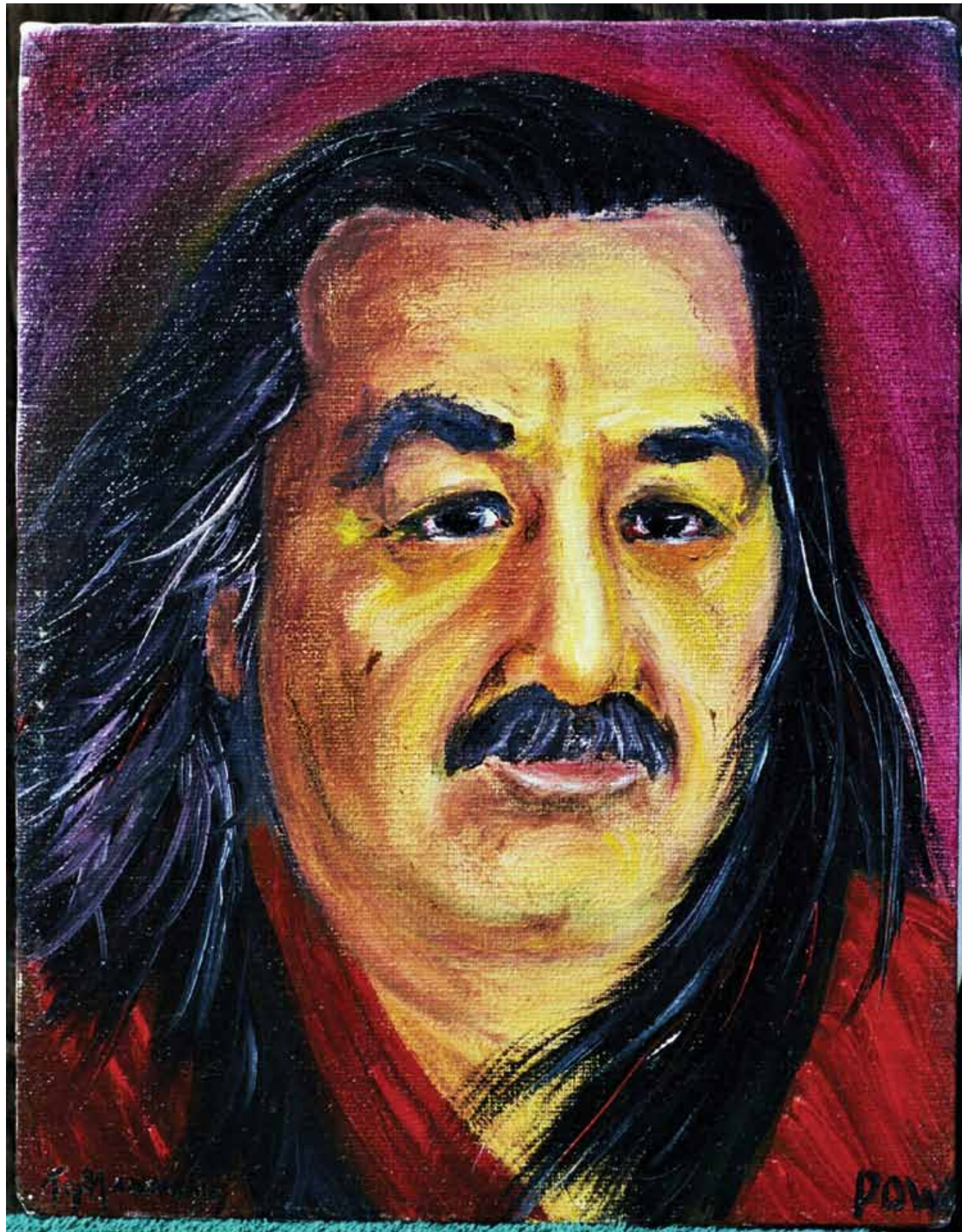
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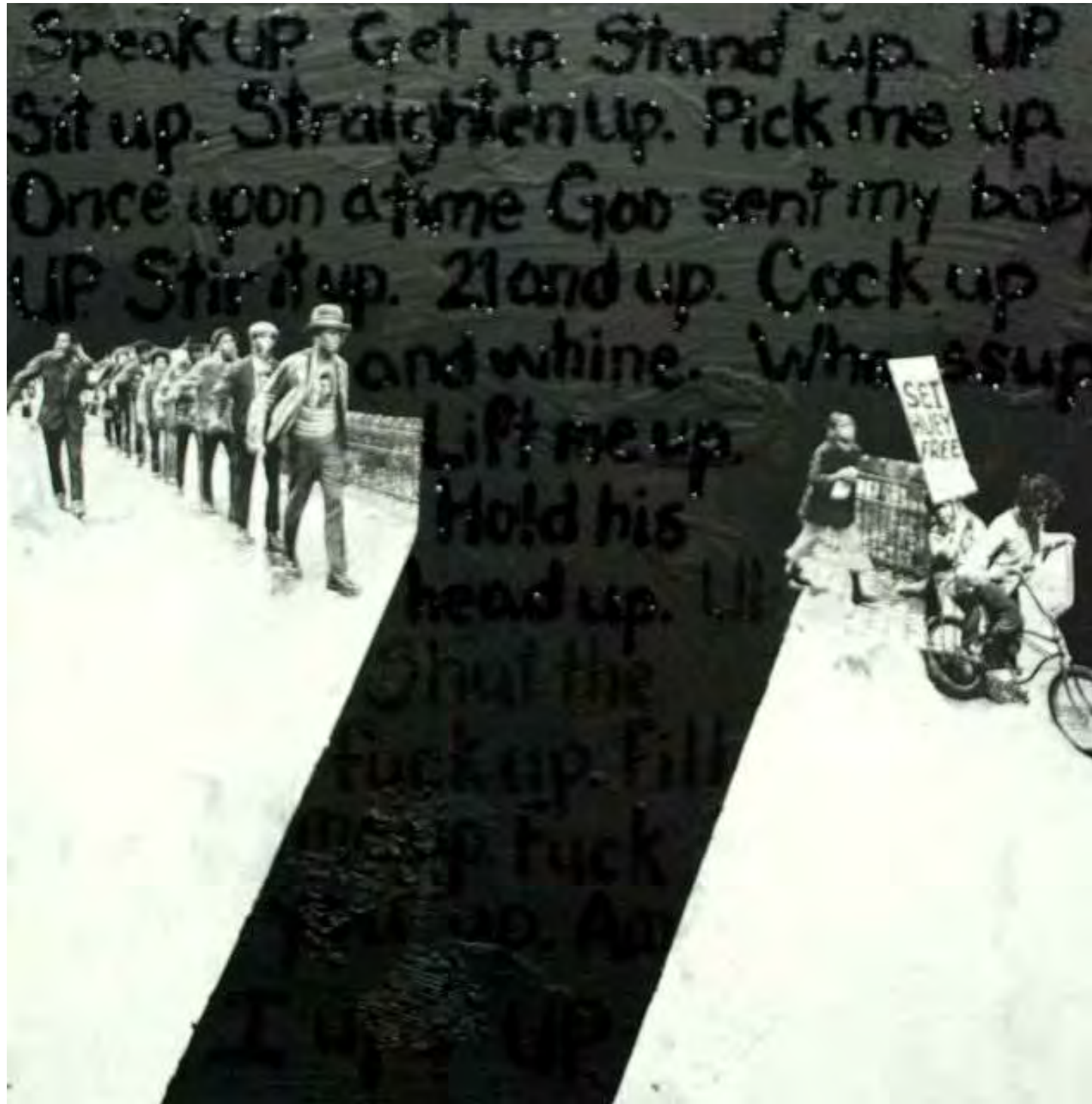
*For oppressed people everywhere.
Let freedom and peace reign.*



Leonard Peltier, by Tom Manning

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Art by Sophia Victor

BYE FELICIA! HELLO TO CONSCIOUS COLLABORATION (TOWARDS THE GOOD)

By Mia Feroletto

"It is fashionable nowadays to speak of a victim's agency. But one must be realistic about the constraints imposed on such agency by objective circumstance. Frederick Douglass could reclaim his manhood by striking back at a slave master who viciously abused him. Nelson Mandela could retain his dignity in jail despite conditions calibrated to humiliate and degrade him. Still, these were exceptional individuals and exceptional circumstances, and anyhow, even if he acquits himself with honor, the elemental decisions affecting the daily life of a man held in bondage and the power to effect these decisions remain outside his control."

Norman Finkelstein

The month of March, 2023 was a big month for our little magazine. On March 17th, The New York Times published their front-page story on the return of the Wounded Knee artifacts stolen from the dead at the site of the massacre in 1890. Along with my quote, The Times published an embedded link to the *New Observations* issue on Wounded Knee, which covers the Wounded Knee Massacre, the America Indian Occupation in 1973, and the return of the artifacts in 2022. The next day, I was interviewed for a story in the Boston Globe coming out in April on the return of artifacts in New England. If there is room, they will include a link to the Wounded Knee issue, just like *The Times*. *New Observations* has come a long way since it was founded in 1985 by the artist Lucio Pozzi. We have helped to legalize industrial hemp in America, inspire the return of sacred objects to the Lakota people, and showcase cutting-edge art and ideas while encouraging activism. Art and activism go hand in hand. The artist is the visionary of his society. He/she points the way for their people.

In the winter and spring of 2020, I had the honor of working with Paulette Dautueil-Robideau on Issue #135 of *New Observations Magazine*, focusing on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. At that time, Paulette was orchestrating the efforts to free political prisoner Leonard Peltier, who remains in Coleman Federal Penitentiary till this day. *New Observations* was the first publication to reproduce Leonard's paintings in depth. Through the process of working on the magazine together, I learned of Paulette's work with the Jericho Movement and her efforts to free political prisoners everywhere. It is fitting and good that we at *New Observations Magazine* have followed up our issue on

Wounded Knee with this double issue on political prisoners, the Black Panther Party, the MOVE Organization, and the struggle for freedom and equality faced by oppressed people all around the world.

Some may not know that the American Indian Movement, or AIM was influenced by the ten-point platform created by the Black Panther Party in the 1960s. The demands of that platform are as follows:

1. We want freedom. We want power to determine the destiny of our Black community.
2. We want full employment for our people.
3. We want an end to the robbery by the White man of our Black community.
4. We want decent housing, fit for shelter [of] human beings.
5. We want 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 the present-day society.
6. We want all Black men to be exempt from military service.
7. We want an immediate end to police brutality and murder of Black people.
8. We want freedom for all Black men held in federal, state, county, and city prisons and jails.
9. We want all Black people when brought to trial to be tried in court by a jury of their peer group or people from their Black communities. As defined by the constitution of the United States.
10. We want land, bread, housing, education, clothing, justice and peace.

These ten points list basic human rights that every person on this planet should be entitled to.

New Observations Issues # 142 and #143 together create a message which serves as a cry and demand for recognition and acknowledgment of the treatment, abuse, and genocide of people of color. Hundreds of years have gone by since the founding of America. The time has come for real justice, not lip service. This is happening at a time when, around the world, people are standing up for their rights. These explosive times require each of us to do our part and take action "by any means necessary."

Historically, the world has seen several examples of a political prisoner lead their country after decades of imprisonment. Vaclav Havel and Nelson Mandela are two examples. As psychiatrist Bruno Bettelheim states, "...only in conflict with itself can the human heart (or soul) attain what is truly great.[sic]" Czechoslovakia (now the Czech Republic) and South Africa released these two men, knowing full-well that massive change would come as a result. In my opinion, they had no choice.

Earlier this year, millions of people watched the video of five police officers from Memphis brutally beat a fellow Black man for no rational reason. He died a couple of days later as a result of his injuries. In editing this issue of the magazine, it was impossible to avoid the parallels between the death of Tyree Nichols and the 1985 bombing of the MOVE house on Osage Avenue by the City of Philadelphia on May 13th of that year. Eleven people, including five children, died in the ensuing fire and a total of 61 homes were destroyed when the authorities chose to "Let the fire burn." All this took place in the City of Brotherly Love, the home of our Declaration of Independence. Burning buildings is an image widely seen in the South throughout the history of America and the embers from those flames stoked the fire of freedom born in the 1950s with the death of Emmett Till.

Last year, MOVE members learned that the remains of two children who died in the fire were not resting peacefully but were being used for research and as a teaching tool at Princeton University and the University of Pennsylvania. This discovery is just another example of genocide perpetrated to this day on children of color.

It seems it is only in America that political prisoners are denied their freedom regardless of their circumstances which include extreme health issues or how many decades they have been locked away, often in solitary confinement.

For this volume of *New Observations*, I conducted six interviews and was inspired by the personal stories of all six men I had the privileged to speak with. They are exceptional individuals who have lived through exceptional times.

The Angola 3 fought for prison reform and founded a chapter of the Black Panther Party in Louisiana's notorious Angola Prison, spending decades in solitary confinement. Robert King, the only surviving member of the three, shared that it was a British couple, Anita and Gordon Roddick, founders and owners of the Body Shop, who championed their cause and financed their legal fees for appeals that facilitated their release after decades in prison. All three were innocent of the crimes they were convicted of, yet those years spent inside prison can never be returned. Robert is working to honor the memory of Anita through the creation of a center for democracy in New Orleans.

Black Panther Party Director of Communication and Minister of Culture, Emory Douglas, defined the look of the Black Panther Party and personified the concept of political art. At a time when Pop Art was gaining recognition in the

1960s, Emory combined commercial materials with his own unique design signature to create images that have reverberated around the globe and speak power to power. Understanding the print medium, he was able to capitalize on the use of black and white plus one color to create a range of colors and tones that speak to all of us and have left a lasting imprint to this day.

Listening to Mike Africa, Jr. describe his 40-year campaign to free his parents from prison galvanized my interest in the MOVE Organization and his work. Mike was born in prison; his mother, Debbie, was able to keep him a secret for two days before his presence became known. Mike is a testament to his parents and who they are as people. He is filled with the desire and energy to remain positive and effect real change in the world. Not easy given all that he has faced since birth but he is relentless while his enthusiasm is infectious.

Lenny Foster, a member of the Navajo Tribe and spiritual leader and advisor to countless Native American prisoners for over 37 years, including political prisoner Leonard Peltier, fought to bring traditional ceremonies and rituals to incarcerated Native people around the US. He has worked in 97 prisons and witnessed first-hand the psychological and spiritual growth made by Indigenous people who are given the opportunity to participate in their own culture and system of beliefs.

Doran Larson, author of soon-to-be-released "Inside Knowledge: Incarcerated People on the Failures of the American Prison," shared his thoughts and experiences teaching writing for 11 years at Attica Prison. As he so correctly states, "Incarcerated people know better than anyone how the prison system needs to be fixed."

My first interview for this issue of *New Observations* was with Jalil Muntiqim, Black Panther Party member and co-founder of the Jericho Movement with Safiya Asya Bukhari and Herman Ferguson. Having spent almost 50 years in prison and released in 2020, Jalil has a point of view that is unique and instructive for everyone he and his thinking comes in contact with. During the first few minutes of our talk, I understood that I was speaking to a man who had asked himself the hard questions and had conducted deep dives into human nature and spiritual dimensions. His knowledge is vast yet it is his desire for positive change and his willingness to work towards that end which is most impressive. This is a quality that all five of the men I interviewed share.

These conversations have been a gift to me. One of the perks of publishing *New Observations* is my ability to connect to my subjects in this way.

"Let The Walls Come Tumbling Down: Free Political Prisoners Now" is the issue which has brought together the largest number of voices expressed through the written word in any of our issues since the magazine was founded in 1985. There are too many names for me to thank indi-

vidually but I thank you all here for the time and effort you put into contributing to this issue of the magazine. We are delighted to provide a platform for your voices to be heard.

Thank you again, to Paulette Dauteuil-Robideau and to Jihad Abdulmumit, Karpani Burns, Anne Lamb, and to all the members of the Jericho Movement who participated in the production of this issue of *New Observations*.

New Observations is produced on a volunteer basis and requires countless hours to edit and design. I would like to thank Annie Wenger-Nabigon for her copy editing skills and Diana Roberts for her design expertise. In addition, I would like to thank King Downing for suggesting the topic of political prisoners as a focus for our magazine. And a special thanks to Chris Hedges for giving us permission to reproduce the text of his talk delivered at a protest on April 6th, 2023, calling for the removal of hedge fund billionaire Michael Fisch as chair of the Princeton University Seminary's trustee board. Fisch makes billions of dollars as the owner of the prison telephone communications system, getting rich off the misery of others.

Activists Sushil Rao and Ben Lewis have been on the front lines in Phoenix fighting for the rights of Indigenous people and the Black Liberation Movement. The fight to protect sacred land in Oak Flat from the development of a massive copper mine is of the utmost importance. We share their article here.

In early, 1979, I began working at New York University Medical Center in the Department of Psychiatry. My first boss, Veva Hampton Zimmerman, became my oldest and closest friend for 30 years. A psychiatrist, Veva was Associate Dean of NYUMC and a woman who played ball with the big boys better than anyone I have ever known. Her brother, Henry Hampton, owned Blackside Productions which produced "Eyes On The Prize: The History of Black America." This documentary series, along with "Eyes Volume II", which revisited the people involved in the 1960s Civil Rights Movement 20 years later, became my classroom in activism. I've watched both series at least 20 times and learned something new with each viewing. It saddens me that Veva and Henry are not with us now, yet their work lives on.

Free Political Prisoners Now!

This issue of *New Observations* represents a departure from the normal for us. It is a bit raw and focuses more on the written word and less on visual art. The writing is often visceral, based on the experience of years of incarceration for the contributor. We at *New Observations* support the release of political prisoners at home and abroad. Putting people in cages is not a solution.

To support our political prisoners, please go the section of advertisements at the end of this issue. One of these ads will tell you how to send donations to support commissary needs of political prisoners. We know a little bit of money goes a long way towards purchasing candy bars or cigarettes or a new pair of sneakers, or perhaps gas money for a relative to visit an incarcerated man or woman. PLEASE take ac-

tion and donate whatever you can. Any amount will make a difference.

One last important vignette. The other day, I talked to Henry and Gloria Red Cloud, dear friends on the Pine Ridge Reservation. May is the month for planting trees each year for Henry. He and his team have planted hundreds of thousands of trees in recent years. Leonard Peltier had put out a request for people to plant a tree as a prayer for his release. Henry and Gloria told me they were waiting for 48,000 tiny trees to be delivered that day. They planned to plant 1,000 trees for each year Leonard has been incarcerated. In Atlanta, trees are being destroyed in the effort to build Cop City but on the Pine Ridge Reservation one Native American is being honored.

Thank you!

Here's to a better world,
Mia



Safiya Bukhari, By Tom Manning

WHAT'S THE CALL!! FREE THEM ALL!

By Paulette Dautueil-Robideau

Greetings to all you wonderful people that have made *New Observations* the wonderful and enlightening magazine that it is for over 35 years. As the guest editor, I would like to introduce the Jericho Movement for Freedom and Amnesty for Political Prisoners (PPs).

The Jericho Movement emerged from a discussion between three political prisoners, Safiya Bukhari, Herman Ferguson and Jalil Muntaqim in the visiting room of NY's Eastern Correctional Facility in 1996. It had become clear to them that many of our political prisoners from the 70s and 80s (COINTELPRO PPs) no longer had defense committees or families that could support them in their legal struggles, or to help them with commissary or visiting issues, or bury them when they died inside.

Jalil Muntaqim, who was still inside at that time, asked Safiya Bukhari and Herman Ferguson to organize a committee that would meet those needs. He also suggested that Safiya and Herman organize a march to bring the Jericho prisoners to public awareness and build support for them both nationally and internationally. It took almost two years to organize this march and on March 28, 1998, the Jericho March took place in Washington, DC, with 15,000 supporters. The march was immensely successful and the work that followed has continued to today, 25 years later—and for some of our political prisoners is a stark reminder that they have been incarcerated for 50 plus years.

Many of us Jericho folks worked with these political prisoners as comrades and family within organizations and movements prior to their captures. For me, these PPs are women and men that I knew on the outside, before their capture, and people I have visited and written to and raised our children together over these last 25 years. They have become wonderful members of my personal and political family.

I think the best way to introduce these prisoners, those who are still behind the walls along with those who are back in society, is to share with you how, through their art and writing, they became Cultural Workers for those inside and out.

Some will recognize a few of these prisoners like Leonard Peltier, Oscar López Rivera (clemency by Obama) painters and Mumia Abu-Jamal, writer and commentator, who through their cases are now known and supported Internationally. Other prison writers, Susan Rosenberg, Bill Dunne, Marilyn Buck, Kathy Boudin, and Judy Clark have been recognized by the PEN Prison Writing Program (PEN.org/prisonwritings) for excellent poems and short stories.

Additional poets and political writers included in this edition are Jalil Muntaqim (co-founder of Jericho Move-

ment) and Jihad Abdulmumit (current chairperson of Jericho Movement), Laura Whitehorn, David Gilbert, Mutulu Shakur, Larry Giddings, Marius Mason, Russell Maroon Shoatz, Veronza Bowers, Sekou Mgobogi Abdullah Odinga, Iman Jamil Al-Amin (fka H. "Rap" Brown), Shaka Shakur, Ray Luc Levasseur, Leonard Peltier, Abdul Olugbala, Joka Heshima Jinsai, Efi Nwangaza, and MOVE women and men. Their writings cover the struggles of doing legal work inside, articles of raising children while incarcerated, becoming a member of the Black Liberation Army, a personal view of the Sweat Lodge Ceremony, the struggles of being the children of Political Prisoners and Ideas of Freedom, and poems of love, both personal and political.

One of our outside supporters, Susie Day, shared two of her interviews, one with dequi kioni-sadiki regarding her politics and her wedding in a prison visiting room, and her other interview with K'sisay Sadiki, "Growing Up Panther." King Downey's article discusses both Leonard Peltier and Mumia Abu-Jamal cases. Sister Tekla shared her personal and political journey with Mondo we Langa. Also included is an informative article from our comrades from the Anarchist Black Cross (ABC) and Anarchist Black Cross Federation (ABCF). Their critical work helps PP/POWs who are receiving the least financial support through the vital Warchest Program supported by donations and the yearly Running Down The Walls campaign to raise money for the Warchest.

You will also read some wonderful interviews/articles that were possible because of our dedicated publisher Mia Feroletto conversations with Emory Douglas, who shared his Black Panther Party newspaper covers with us, and my comrade, Lenny Foster, and spiritual leader to Leonard Peltier. Lenny Foster (Diné) worked for 30 years for the Navajo Nation bringing Ceremonies to all Native prisoners, including those on Death Row. When possible, he would include Jericho prisoners such as Sundiata Acoli and Ray Luc Levasseur in Sweat Ceremonies, "to help his Native boys learn about political prisoners from other cultures."

Editor Mia Feroletto spoke with Mike Africa, Jr. about growing up with both of his MOVE parents in prison. Feroletto also shares her conversation with Jalil Muntaqim about his time in prison beginning at age 19 and about his political growth as a Black Panther and member of the Black Liberation Army to becoming the co-founder of the Jericho Movement. Feroletto's conversation illuminates Muntaqim's vision of a better world and how to achieve it as discussed in his book, *We Are Our Own Liberators*.

Genuine bright spots in this edition of *New Observations* are paintings by Tom Manning, Leonard Peltier, and Oscar López Rivera. Also important to note that, while I don't have

a representation of his paintings, recently returned home, Sundiata Acoli, painted with Leonard Peltier while they were in Leavenworth Prison.

Paintings by some of our outside supporters such as, Sophia Dawson Victor's, "Mumia" (cover) and a painting of Veronza Bowers with his grandson also grace this edition. Sophia uses her art to portray our prisoners as bigger-than-life human beings. Emory Douglas has granted permission to use some of his poignant covers from the *Black Panther Newspaper* and we are grateful for Tom Manning's wonderful painting of my dear sister, Sofiya Bukhari. Dawson also talks with former Political Prisoner Robert King of the Angola 3, author and international spokesperson on the question of solitary confinement.

Jericho has been fortunate to have medical Doctors and an Acupuncturist, who have not only created articles and information that have helped us support prisoners on the inside and when they come home, but also wrote letters to various parole boards supporting prisoners' right to be freed through their medical analyses. Dr. James C. McIntosh's article addresses 4 Spheres of Stress, elder abuse and the "Day by Day Degeneration of the Soul." Dr. Joel Rene Morrissey said, "My work as a medical advocate and volunteer within and outside the carceral system has been motivated entirely by the healthcare iniquities and inequities crushing our non-incarcerated population, and amplified for those incarcerated." Dr. Kokayi Patterson presents his writing about his exposure to political education while learning about the development and use of Acupuncture by Dr. Mutulu Shakur.

The legal field is represented by two attorneys and to whom I give many thanks for their time and energies, Kevin Sharp and Jenipher Jones. Both have been, and are, working on behalf of some of the Jericho PPs. I have been a paralegal for some of the past attorneys such as Bruce Ellison, Thomas Ruffin, David Frankel and Larry Hildes and have come to realize and appreciate the incredible work that goes into a political/legal trial for our prisoners.

The centerpiece article of this issue by Ward Churchill ties together in graphic detail the Counterintelligence Program (COINTELPRO) devised by FBI director J. Edgar Hoover to destroy the American Indian Movement (AIM) ("Paramilitary Operations in Indian Country"), Chicano & Puerto Rican Movements, and the Black Liberation Movement, having singled out the Black Panther Party in particular. Hoover said the "The Black Panther Party represents the greatest threat among the black extremist groups to the internal security of the United States." The devastation of Panther lives is without a doubt the message that Hoover used to try and intimidate Black youth should they want to join the BPP or ride a Freedom bus from New York City to Jackson Mississippi. Churchill goes through each movement and details the trickery and lies that cost the lives of soldiers from each movement, in the streets and behind the walls of some

of America's harshest prisons. I hope that this article and those of the prisoners will go a long way towards a deeper understanding of Jericho's, Anarchist Black Cross, and New African Political Prisoners who all struggle for a world society with Equality, Freedom and Liberation for All through the dismantling of patriarchy, white supremacy and the end of settler colonialism.

Additional poets and political writers included in this edition are Jalil Muntaqim (co-founder of Jericho Movement) and Jihad Abdulmumit (current chairperson of Jericho Movement), Laura Whitehorn, David Gilbert, Mutulu Shakur, Larry Giddings, Marius Mason, Russell Maroon Shoatz, Veronza Bowers, Sekou Mgobogi Abdullah Odinga, Iman Jamil Al-Amin fka H. "Rap" Brown, Shaka Shakur, Ray Luc Levasseur, Leonard Peltier, Oso Blanco, Abdul Olugbala, Joka Heshima Jinsai, Efia Nwangaza, and MOVE women and men. Their writings cover the struggles of doing legal work inside, articles of raising children while incarcerated, becoming a member of the Black Liberation Army, a personal view of the Sweat Lodge Ceremony, the struggles of being the children of Political Prisoners and Ideas of Freedom, and poems of love both personal and political. You will read an outstanding article by a New African prisoner Kwame "Beans" Shakur discussing the role of organizing other prisoners behind the walls on how they can build a prisoner movement through Prison Lives Matter and the writings of former prisoners, George Jackson and Jalil Muntaqim. At the last minute I was able to talk to a defendant (Knuckles) in the Cop City case in Atlanta GA. And the resistance is being lead collectively with both national and international concerned people .

I want to thank Publisher Mia Feroletto for giving The Jericho Movement this *New Observations* issue devoted to Political Prisoners. I also thank my wonderful Jericho sisters, Anne Lamb, Karpani Burns, Verbena Lea and Aisha Mohamed, and others who edited and proofread the articles, helped me find lost poems, created ads and the completion of the myriad other tasks while doing their own work. Particular expressions of thank you go to all of the Political Prisoners, both inside and out, for sharing their stories and writings, especially to those inside, as it is challenging to receive their mail resulting from the new restrictions imposed on mail by the Federal Bureau of Prisons and the many state institutions that follow federal lead.

Love and Rage
Paulette Dauteuil-Robideau



A LEADER FOR ALL SEASONS: A CONVERSATION WITH JALIL MUNTAQIM

By Mia Feroletto

"The same things that we support in other places, people like Nelson Mandela, our prisoners were doing the same thing. They were captured and convicted of the same things. We should remember them and treat them as the heroes they are. They earned that respect."

—Former Political Prisoner Sekou Odinga

Jalil Muntaqim, aka Anthony Bottom, was the first interview I conducted for this issue of *New Observations*, "Let the Walls Come Tumbling Down: Release Political Prisoners Now." Jalil first set the stage providing me with the foundation from which to proceed with my other interviews, and also the vision to help assemble and space this issue in my own mind. Paulette Dauteuil-Robideau had asked if I could interview him and told me of his poetry and writing. I was intrigued and could not have anticipated the depth of dimensions I was about to meet.

My first indicator was that Jalil's mother was a student of African dance and taught him that he was of African descent and she would not allow him to accept being called derogatory names. He and his siblings were raised with a consciousness of Africa. Dancers understand the connection of the body to the universe and to different trajectories of energy. Jalil understands this fact.

At the age of 9, Jalil learned a powerful lesson that shaped his life. He took the bus to school and as was customary at the time, he rode in the back of the bus. This was during the time of Jim Crow and restrictions such as this were standard for people of color. One day, a white woman invited him to sit with her. When she got off the bus, he was told by the bus driver to move to the back. No other white person on the bus would stand up for him and make room.

Black people had to fight against the laws that came out of chattel slavery. These are the same laws that have created today's institutionalized racism inherent in white supremacy. People of color are used by those in authority and considered to be inferior to white people. Jalil stood against white imperialism and joined the Black Panther Party at the age of 16 and joined the struggle and the movement. He understood that in exercising our rights as human beings to be free of the conditions of white supremacy, the Indigenous community would need to join with the international community. His great-grandmother was a member of the Muskogee Creek Tribe. At the age of 18, he became part of the Black Underground and at 20 he was arrested and would not see the outside of a prison for 49 years. Jalil was captured on August 28, 1971, which happened to be his birthday. He continued to organize in prison and wrote two books: *We Are Our Own Liberators*, and, *Escaping the Prism...Fade to Black: Poetry and Essays by Jalil Muntaqim*.

In 1998, he, Safiya Bukhari and Herman Ferguson founded the National Jericho Movement, to ensure that political prisoners are not forgotten and are provided the support

they need in their struggle for freedom. His accomplishments from inside prison directly impact the population at large where he and his co-founders forge a pathway for people of color to remove themselves from future harm. The people have suffered for more than the last 400 years; Jalil worked on the goal of building alternatives to existing governance to serve and free the people. With the founding of their own organizations such as the *Spirit of Mandela* and *The Peoples' Senate*, new forms of leadership are being established and implemented.

With the Spirit of Mandela campaign, an international tribunal was convened to bring justice to the centuries of genocide inflicted on the Black population and other people of color. These five issues have been addressed by this tribunal and represent the systemic conditions of genocide:

1. Environmental Racism
2. Health Inequities
3. The Position of Political Prisoners
4. Mass Incarceration
5. Killing of People of Color: State Sanctioned Violence and Police Murders

Identifying the perversion of Citizens United where corporations are given the rights of individuals, the importance of organizing against the corporate structure became clear. There are 740 billionaires who own 6.9 trillion dollars in wealth. Greed and hoarding is not only permitted but held up as something to strive for. The average person is fighting for the crumbs off the table of the wealthy. People of all colors must join together to ensure the return of power back to the people. Boycotts, sanctions, and divestment must all be employed as part of a unified movement and organizations such as the NAACP, FDLC, the Urban League and other institutions need to form a united front in order to organize a broad coalition. We must understand our personal responsibility to achieve these objects and goals.

The founding of the Peoples' Senate is a critical step to creating awareness in the American population. The jurists assembled for the tribunal found the United States guilty of penal slavery. Black people continue to be ushered into a system of free labor in the "prison pipeline" to replace plantation slavery and thus ensure that government and corporate power structures continue to reap profits from free labor.

1865 ended chattel slavery. Currently, seven states have removed the language out of their state constitutions to reflect this ending. New York State currently has two bills up for a vote. The Peoples' Senate challenges mass incarceration by removing the monetary incentive of penal slavery. Prisoners should receive minimum wages for their work. If one can change the language one can change the narrative in the broadest sense. Prisoners need to be identified as "incarcerated workers." They should not be

labeled as “prisoners.”

The United States incorporated government is incarcerating workers who are forced to provide free labor. We need to call for an end to the punitive penal punishment across the country to ensure the rights of the incarcerated population of America.

There is a clarity of thought that Jalil personifies which made me ask him about his own journey of consciousness as a spiritual being living a physical existence. There is nothing that can stand up to true spiritual power and autonomy. He shared with me that he was baptized Catholic and attended parochial school. He made the point that Marcus Garvey, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Jr., all believed in God, divinity, something greater than themselves. In prison he learned there is another dimension to us as human beings which we define as spiritual. He spent decades studying various forms of esoteric science such as Buddhism, Hinduism, ancient, Indigenous Great Spirit, and came to a system of faith-based principles.

In 1972, Jalil became a Muslim of the Islamic faith and that became the foundation for his survival inside prison. “That is my foundation. It allows me to understand a universal code to live by.” Jalil identifies three dominant ideologies in our planetary sphere:

1. Christianity/Judaism – Capitalist Culture
2. Islam – Socialism
3. Atheist – Communism

These three hierarchical systems compete as systems of belief and dominance as a model for life. They act as competing forces against each other, causing great friction in the world. Islam is more holistic and similar to Indigenous peoples in some ways. Islam teaches we must maintain the planet and forego violence and warfare which are direct contradictions within all religious groups. Universal teachings show us the battle is on an individual basis as we work to achieve what is best within ourselves.

I asked Jalil his perspective on the influence of technology since, as an incarcerated man for almost 50 years, he is experiencing it everywhere all at once since his release. His response was that technology is an aspect of the material world, growing out of the capitalist corporate culture of the Christian/Jewish tradition:

“We are destroying the planet with our technology and misusing our resources for wealth building which divorces us from our own spirituality. All of these sects/religions state that hoarding wealth is a sin. We know that Jesus overturned the money changers’ tables in the temple. Capitalism in and of itself is in opposition to the spiritual growth of their own ideas within the Judeo-Christian reality and principles. Our resources are being misused. Our leaders would have to be environmentalists. They would have to be humanitarians. They would have to be lovers of life rather than progenitors of death. Martin Luther King, Jr. said in one of his speeches that the United States is one of the greatest progenitors of violence on the planet. The US steals resources from the people on the planet who are not white. We know in 1492 that Pope Nicholas VI issued a

Papal Bull to the Spanish and Portuguese to conquer anyone who does not believe in the Christian faith. This Papal Bull laid the foundation for white supremacists to rule the planet. From the Aztecs to the Incas, Indigenous People, Africans and people of color have been fighting against this ideology. Do your own research. Slavery has been institutionalized into a new form.”

We have no idea as a world what it feels like to live one day without bloodshed somewhere in the world. Our ignorance is the basis and foundation for our attitudes and behavior as we have absorbed critical race theory and fostered the mis-education of the Negro. We are a colonized nation and must move our minds towards freedom, providing a blueprint for a new way of thinking. The system we are living in is broken and will not provide for our needs. Housing, food, clothing, education, healthcare, and other forms of prosperity in America are a birthright.

The Civil Rights Movement made a critical error in its fostering of integration and assimilation. The Black population now finds itself assimilated into a broken system. At the time of his death, Martin Luther King, Jr. was rethinking his position and realized that Blacks were being ushered into a burning house. White supremacy has established an attitude of inferiority which has fostered passive and docile behavior within the Black community. Not all. Jalil asks, “The question is, do we become abolitionists, emancipators and liberators in order for us to become truly free?”

The 1960s and early 1970s saw a true revolution brewing. People of all colors were mobilizing and working together. Groups such as the Black Panther Party, the Young Lords, and poor whites were collaborating to form a Rainbow Coalition led by charismatic leaders such as Fred Hampton. Government led COINTELPRO used every tool in their tool box to crush and destroy the building momentum and replace growth with drugs, gangs, and illegitimate capitalism that lead to crime and poverty with the ultimate goal of mass incarceration. The Clinton Crime Bill ensured that young Black men are viewed as predatory. The worst of the worst. Bill Clinton and Joe Biden grew the prison system as money makers of a multi-billion-dollar industry.

Jalil rightly states that we must end penal slavery and transform the issue of crime and punishment in America. We must funnel the funds that support the prison system back into the communities where it should go to build positive futures for our children. Mass incarceration has been determined to be a form of genocide against Black, Brown and Indigenous people. The break-up of families with incarcerated fathers and mothers is in great numbers and is not a solution.

Restoration and reparations will be passed based on the people involved in the movement. United fronts need to be established and kept strong. It is up to us to make it happen.

For those of you who would like to contact Jalil Muntaqim, he can be reached by email at jalil.muntaqim@gmail.com.

“Standing on the shoulders of great men and women, if we cannot save ourselves, we cannot save the world.”



Spirit of Mandela Free All U.S. Political Prisoners PEOPLES’ SENATE

The Peoples’ Senate will be a national cohesive network reflective of poor and working-class communities across the United States, its colonies and territories; working together to protect, champion and uphold the human rights of Black, Brown, and Indigenous peoples, thus ensuring the human rights of all people.

The Peoples’ Senate – At a Glance

- The distinguished international panel of jurists that heard testimony and reviewed documents introduced at the October 2021 International Tribunal on US Human Rights Abuses Against Black, Brown, and Indigenous Peoples found the USA “Guilty of Genocide.”
- And yet we must do more than simply celebrate the International Panel of Jurists’ guilty verdict. Our job now is to organize a meaningful resistance to this genocide, rooted in the Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities themselves.
- There are many ongoing and vital organizing efforts across the country, many local, some focused on single issues, others broader. All could be assisted by a network linking the various efforts, informing the many forces of the work of others and amplifying the voices of all.
- Thus the Spirit of Mandela Coalition—which organized the International Tribunal—is calling for the formation of a Peoples’ Senate that can help to construct a network to link these efforts and, in the best case, become a platform through which the struggles of each might become the struggle of all—speaking out against genocide and other abuses with a collective voice and developing a program of action to address various issues/struggles that can unite and strengthen our collective voice. The Peoples’ Senate, over time, will be working to provide a model for an alternative to existing governance, show how a body might work that truly represents the people and strives to put decision-making in their hands.
- The goal of the Peoples’ Senate is four-fold:
 - a) Help publicize and promote all of the local work that everyone is already doing
 - b) Make links between individuals and groups and potentially organize common projects to assist in developing collaborative efforts
 - c) Develop new initiatives that can unite us on a national and international scale
 - d) Elect a Peoples’ Senate, bringing forward the leadership of Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities and providing an arena for discussion, exchange, and developing solutions to the problems faced by all.

• Our vision is a Senate which will be a representative body of the peoples and their organizations, elected by local meetings or gatherings – based on geography, or on constituency, or on groups of people engaged in common work. It will then meet on a national level to discuss how this goal of developing a united struggle might be pursued. Election meetings can be regular meetings of already established groups or collectives, or they may be ad-hoc caucuses created specifically for the purpose of electing senators.

• The project at this point is in its formative stages. We need more individuals and groups to get involved to help us think through and implement an organizing plan.

If you or your organization would like to participate, or just want more information, please be in touch with us. peoplesenate@spiritofmandela.org

Learn More! The Peoples’ Senate Explanation & Recruitment Manual
Watch the Feb 18, 2023 Peoples’ Senate Introductory Webinar on YouTube

Spirit of Mandela Campaign - spiritofmandela1@gmail.com

Poem by Jalil Muntaqim

Scream Black

Why must I scream to be heard?

Wilderson claims I am Incognegro - to be seen and not heard, towing the line of assimilation and cultural annihilation. Ellison claims I am an Invisible Man, not to be seen in centers of power, allowing recognition of tokens as a coin of exchange to represent my personal and political interest.

My words must become like bombs in a vest strapped on my aged aching consciousness to blow away the alleged eccentricity of my existence? The blackness of my vocabulary must refuse to hide your racism, an inconceivable miscarriage ill-form abortion of humanity.

No longer capable or willing to whisper - rather charge genocides from atop mounting graves of those who came before me – Nat, Marcus, Muhammad, Malcolm, Medger, Martin, and finally in full circle, Newton in self-defense.

Spewing molten volcanic ash of revolutionary ideas, casting pregnant black clouds of notions castigating white supremacy with the need to inoculate my descendants from your emasculation and dehumanization.

Why must I scream to be heard?

To call for Blackmen to stop gagging and choking on their silence, to spit from the pit of their sour stomachs, together scream for reparations and liberation – to end the slow death of internecine forced fratricide and genocidal incarceration.

You need not atone, you need only to explode, reclaiming your souls. Then, all else will come easy!

Remember: We Are Our Own Liberators!

(April 2, 2009)

Letter from Prison by Lynne Stewart - 3/4/2013

This is a cry from deep in my soul on behalf of my sisters—abused, forgotten, made marginal.

We are always aware of our place on the rungs of the ladder of oppression based on race and class and sex.

Since this needs be brief, I want to first talk about sisters Indian—Asian and Native American.

It is the most difficult concept to conceive of the evil predatory communities these women on different sides of the world live in.

Rape is VIOLENCE not sex. It has been routine for men to absolutely do as they will without any fear of retribution legally. There have been no courts to Prosecute, to PUNISH. My first rejoinder is always to urge self-defense—that will always get a woman to Court.

But she may be the victim again. Right now, the Congress has passed a “law” that we hope will protect Native Indian women here. But there have been many “Laws”. There is greater hope in India where there has been a righteous female uprising that cannot, will not be ignored.

Briefly I just want to mention—women who are not in the cruel world but suffer behind bars—cages, if you will.

Some of us are political—here because the Government has criminalized our actions or framed us—I call out to you to Remember and Cherish—Marie Mason, a “green warrior”, Aafia Siddiqui “a heroine in her own Pakistan for her brave resistance”, and also Me—Still fighting, Still Struggling. Still loving you all.

Love Struggle,
Lynne Stewart



The National Jericho Movement Today

By Jihad Abdulmumit

Chairperson, National Jericho Movement
02/2023

It becomes immediately clear to anyone who is familiar with the Jericho Movement, or who just happened to stumble across it while doing research or desiring to get involved with the struggles and initiatives to free political prisoners, that Jericho stands as a vibrant and strong vanguard organization. Started in 1998 by Jalil Muntaqim, and the late Safiya Bukhari and Herman Ferguson, the challenging, non-stop work of educating the public to the reality of political prisoners and campaigning to free them continues without exhaustion.

I joined the Black Panther Party when I was 16 years old and I was a Panther political prisoner for 22 years. In 1998, once Jericho was created, I became a Jericho political prisoner until I was released in 2000. During the brief, yet powerful, lifetime of the Black Panther Party and other similar formations and organizations, sisters and brothers were imprisoned for different reasons. Some were set up and framed by the FBI's counterintelligence program (COINTELPRO); others, like myself, committed direct actions fighting the state. Thus, the reality of political prisoners and prisoners of war in the United States, [is] like in any other country where people fight against systems of oppression and violence.

I was tethered to federal parole for 6 years, during which time I was prohibited from being in intentional contact with other Panthers and comrades who had been in prison themselves. I busied myself with establishing a family/community theater company and wrote and directed dozens of original movement and socially thematic plays. I eventually attended Jericho meetings and was asked to be the chairperson. In or about 2009, I served as interim Jericho chair for a year while Jericho went through a refortifying process. After that year I became the official chair. Jericho staff positions and elections are held every 2 years. I have been elected every 2 years till now. Being a political prisoner myself, and still having many comrades still in prison, it was only natural that I joined Jericho and work for their freedom.

As chairperson, I serve as spokesperson for the organization. As spokesperson I travel nationally and internationally to garner support for political prisoners. My travels have taken me to the United Nations in Switzerland several times, the United Nations in New York, the Basque country, Puerto Rico, South Sudan, and dozens of conferences in cities across the United States proper. I spend considerable time writing political prisoners directly, responding personally to scores of letters from prisoners in general who write to Jericho, attending interviews, calling parole boards and

governor's offices petitioning for the release of a given political prisoner, and maintaining the organization in general.

The Jericho membership consists of sisters and brothers from various walks of life, young and old, women and men. There are Chapters and members throughout the United States. Its larger chapters are located in New York, Boston, and Oakland. There are members located in many other states who often join with other organizations and activists who do similar work.

True to its original mission, Jericho supports political prisoners in the United States, as well as around the world. Support is rendered in a multitude of ways. Jericho -

- provides direct assistance to political prisoners by visiting them, financially supporting family visits, and giving food packages and commissary funds;
- organizes written support and phone calls to parole boards and governors' offices requesting that parole or commutation of sentence be granted;
- conducts educational forums about political prisoners, who they are, how to support them, and explanations and analyses of the oppressive conditions that political prisoners fought against;
- collaborates and builds sustainable networks with other organizations and formations doing the work to support and free political prisoners; and
- works to inspire and mobilize young people to carry the torch to free all political prisoners.

Any and all liberation struggles and movements to abolish systems of oppression, racism, and exploitation must place, in center piece, the struggle to support and free its activists and freedom fighters. The struggle in the United States is no different. In a 2023 world of Internet, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and other forms of social media, there is no excuse for anyone seeking to know to not be able to find the names of dozens of political prisoners in the United States, as well as around the world. If one does not access the Jericho Movement dot com, then do a Google search. And the blinders will be lifted. Jericho has lifted the blinders from the eyes of thousands of people so that they realize that political incarceration is a consequence of any struggle for freedom and justice.

For more information contact:
Jericho Movement
<https://www.thejerichomovement.com>
and
National Jericho
PO Box 2164
Chesterfield, VA 23832



Mike Africa Jr, age 13

just because it's legal, don't make it right

By Mike Africa, Jr., Age 13

First Verse

Hook -

just because it's legal, don't make it right.
 just because it's legal, don't make it right.
 just because it's legal, don't make it right.
 just because it's legal, don't make it right.
 I was 12 years old that's when I first heard it
 How could this government get away with murder?
 In the 1600s they slaughter the natives
 They burn them Mitch them kill their babies
 And call the natives the savage when they defended themselves
 They killed anybody to protect their wealth.
 Everybody should know who I'm talking about
 cause is the thing system that will kill you with no doubt
 No hesitation when they ready to strike
 and call you in a menace if you put up a strong fight
 legality, that's just another way to say
 That the system can you kill anybody any given day
 and to prove my point just let me explain
 follow me let me take you down to memory lane
 A man named Hitler killing Jews left and right
 Jewish kids wondering if they'll live to see the next night
 now how was that right little kids thinking damn
 I might not live to see tomorrow and where was Uncle Sam
 probably out playing golf knowing people being killed
 but he don't give a damn as long as his pockets are filled,
 and all this over some laws that ain't right
 and if you think they right, just take a look at your own fight,
 and you will clearly see that the laws are wrong a lot
 anytime a black mayor burning down city blocks
 killing black babies with no hesitation,
 but everybody know that was a Goode's occupation
 but you see the system don't even follow their own laws
 if they did, there would've never been a holocaust.

Hook -

just because it's legal, don't make it right.
 just because it's legal, don't make it right.
 just because it's legal, don't make it right.
 just because it's legal, don't make it right.

Second Verse

Slavery was legal and so was the holocaust.
 The government set them and then break their own laws.
 Talking about murder is an illegal issue.
 But killing people with raping people miss using you.

To cover up their filth, they tell you lies.
Like saying what you don't see with your own eyes
Saying MOVE is the cause of a bomb being dropped
But what about all the people killed by cops
MOVE ain't the cause of a May 13 all we want is a family released
11 of my family members are now gone.
They can't bring them back, all they can do is let us move on.
Let innocent MOVE people move people out of jail.
And if you don't you damn right, we're gonna give you hell
Hell on earth that we will never cease
May 13 Ramona came out in one piece.
Everybody was and still devastated.
Trying to stop move Goddamn I know the system hate it.
Trying to stop move is like trying to stop earthquake.
Destroying everything in our way and making a whole system shake.
And that with guns or bombs
Cause all we do is speak the truth and don't act blind
Cause if you act blind, they will destroy your mind convince you to drop a bomb on your own
kind
Yeah you know who I'm talking about, Wilson Goode?
The one that's always talking about that brotherhood.
Saying Black people need to stick together
Cute black move people you think you can stop us never
I wanna say one thing before I say peace
The MOVE fight against the system will never cease.
Hook just because it's legal don't make it right
Third Verse
I ain't say peace cause I am ready to stop.
So let me get back to the system and about the cops.
A black cop will kill you just as fast as a white one.
They think they got something cause of a badge and a gun.
I heard somebody say that blacks have come a long way.
To have all of this that we got today?
So if Black people have come this far
Why they killing each other and leaving deadly scars?
Like what Wilson Goode did when he dropped the bomb.
Mom's lost their kids and kids lost their moms.
Left burns on Ramona killed innocent black kids
You wanna know the truth? That's what a black man did.
Black people hate each other you know what I'm saying?
They put each other in jail and put cuffs on each other's hands.
Black cops called him Mona criminal when they bombed her
Hers and my family during the 13th massacre.
And put her in jail and convicted her for riot
They wanted to go further than that they didn't dare try it.
May 13th, blacks should've been outraged.
Ramona should've been free instead she got caged.

The people that saw this should've pushed for more.
The system should've gave justice like they claim they here for.
Do you want to know the truth? Listen up listen up
There is no justice in the system because the system is corrupt.
Let me give you some examples of how the system is wrong.
Slavery war, May 13 and sewing
Till the time frame with Mumia and beat Rodney King.
The people of the world should've made the system's heads ring.

Push and push and push until you finally
Reach the justice point until then you won't silence me
And every black person should think like that
Cause they'll kill you too and that's an actual fact.
It don't matter if you're black red or white you see
The words that I speak is the truth so follow me
Release all political prisoners is what I said.
And you shouldn't stop fighting until you're dead
And before I go, I wanna say to you
Keep fighting a system this rap is through and Ona Move.

ON THE MOVE!

This is Eddie Africa, minister of Defense for the MOVE Organization and one of the MOVE 9. I wrote this statement when I was being shuffled between federal prisons.

I live in an environment of ruthless brutality, physical and mental, a daily diet of bias, racism, and sadism that would shock the most jaded person. Locked in a tiny steel box 23 hours a day, sometimes 24 hours, fed thru slots like animals are fed in the zoo, treated as less than animals, inmates attempt all manners of ways to try and forget, ignore, block out the brutality and sadism surrounding them, hallucinating about being somewhere else, anywhere else, creating dreams that they attempt to use to carry them thru the day as well as the night. False laughter, jokes, criticism, exercises, anything to take their minds off of what's being done to them, new men brought in, handcuffed, stripped naked and then made to run to whatever cell awaits them while an officer holds the cuffs, pushing the cuffs up their backs, causing them to tip forward, sometimes falling face first on the concrete or steel steps.

The sound of nightsticks hitting flesh is a normal sound in these places, women and men, cursed, defiled daily while brutal sadistic staff members stand around with cold smiles on their faces, the medical staff right alongside to try and fix up what the cops have messed up. Niggers, Wops, Crackers, Spiks, Gooks, terms spit out like normal conversation as they practice their vicious trade, domestication thru brutality!

People on the outside shrug and mutter, so what, they're criminals, but when you accept this kind of violence on others, you encourage your own violent end, as violence officially spewed out doesn't stop at the prison gate. Laws are made to deliberately increase the prison population, all victims coming from the poor and middle-class levels, and so unless you are rich you are also in danger, guilty or not. It is your sons, daughters, husbands, wives, sisters, brothers, mothers, fathers who will fill these hell holes up!

The sound of running feet, boots stomping, tell you someone's turn has come and a quiet descends as each prisoner waits, hoping it's not them, praying it's anyone else. Then sticks, boots, electric prods, electric shields bring out the screams of pain, anguish, hurt. These prison issued tools of so called correction sometimes used whether you resist or not! Some inmates use laughter to cover their fear, apathy is rampant as even after being brutalized no complaints or very few are raised, encouraging the cops to continue, making them feel as if they have no worries about their sadism being exposed—demeaning men and women for amusement.

Another day as hearts return to normal, fear is put down and the future victims settle back to do whatever they can, to not think of what they will do when their turn comes, bragging about how they will resist, knowing when the cops come it will be in a mob, dozens of them, sticks, electric prods, electric shields and if needed, dogs! Screams of pain, shouts of helpless anger and fear, curses, then quiet, as the

medical department moves in with needles filled with drugs to further numb what the clubs and electric prods have left. Then quiet voices, "Damn, man, they fucked him up, that shit ain't right man. Hey anyone got a cigarette?"

This sounds like a story, a piece of fiction, but it's not! This is a day in the life of men and women held captive in these slave pens called prisons that squat like festering sores in the midst of our communities. The public tries to ignore them, telling themselves those inside these places deserve whatever they get, lowering their eyes in shame as they quote the party line given them by the political criminals who created and built these slave houses at your expense!

Hell holes designed to hold and crush the spirit of those who have learned and initiated the ways of the leaders of this system. Men and women locked up for stealing hundreds of dollars while those who steal whole countries are applauded. People jailed for rape while political leaders rape and ravage entire continents of life, health, freedom – and these rich crooks are looked up to! Poor folks jailed for killing while governments hire millions of killers, calling them police, army, navy, Air Force, marines and teaching them to kill anyone who disagrees and speaks out against that government while talking about how you have freedom of speech! These government killers are held up as examples to follow as long as they kill for the government. This system has created a twisted way of life where the teachers of crime are applauded but the poor students are graded on race, sex, class and then failed and locked away in concrete detention spots called jails! This is the kind of confusion this system pushes!

To quote JOHN AFRICA: "PLAYING UP UNSCHOOLED, UNPROFESSIONAL POOR FOLKS CRIMES FOR EVERYBODY TO SEE, AND PLAYING DOWN SCHOOLED PEOPLES CRIMES, GUARDING IT, SHADING IT, HIDING IT WHEN ALL THAT FILTH COMES OUT ABOUT YOU LEGAL PEOPLE, PROFESSIONAL PEOPLE, SCHOOLED PEOPLE, EVEN WHEN ALL THAT CRIME Y'ALL COMMIT IS MADE PUBLIC YOU TRY TO PLAY IT DOWN, COVER IT UP, ACT LIKE YOU'RE PERFECTLY INNOCENT, AND THE ONLY TIME Y'ALL ACKNOWLEDGE Y'ALLS GUILT IS WHEN Y'ALL JUST CAN'T GET AROUND IT NO OTHER WAY, AND YOU'RE STILL TREATED LIKE YOU AIN'T DONE NOTHING, BUT THE JAILS ARE FULL OF POOR FOLKS THAT AIN'T DONE NOTHING COMPARED TO THE STUFF YOU CRIME ORIENTED GANGSTERS DO, AND SOME AIN'T GUILTY OF NOTHING AT ALL BUT THE SUSPICION OF THE COPS, THE D.A.'s, YOU JUDGES, YET THESE ILLITERATES, THESE UNSCHOOLED PEOPLE, POOR PEOPLE HAVE BEEN PUT IN JAIL FOR 5 YRS. OF THEIR LIVES, 10 YRS. OF THEIR LIVES, 20 YRS. OF THEIR LIVES, PUT IN JAIL FOR LIFE BY JUDGES, JUST LIKE YOU, FOR DOING EVERY NOW AND THEN WHAT YOU THIEVING CRIPPLES MAKE A PROFESSION OF DOING LEGALLY." End quote!
LONG LIVE JOHN AFRICA!

by Eddie Africa



MOVE, by Rashid Johnson

This is Ramona Africa, Minister of Communication for the MOVE Organization and only adult survivor of the May 13, 1985 Holocaust. I was sentenced to 7 years in prison in 1985 for surviving the May 13 bombing of MOVE, not for committing a crime. I was charged with riot, among other charges, like disorderly conduct, resisting arrest and failure to disperse. The charge of riot carried a mandatory sentence of 2-7 years but the PA. Parole Board, headed by Herman Tartler and Fred Jacobs, prejudicially mandated that I serve 7 years even though I could have legally been released after 2 years. This is why MOVE's founder JOHN AFRICA taught us, "Just because it's legal don't make it right," LONG LIVE JOHN AFRICA!

I wasn't released after 2 years even though I had no infractions. I was never sent to prison for breaking the law, I was sent to prison to break me from my Belief in the teachings of JOHN AFRICA. LONG LIVE JOHN AFRICA FOREVER! What follows is a statement written by me after my first parole hearing to confront and expose these people. JOHN AFRICA has always taught us to confront wrong and expose it with the powerful teaching of JOHN AFRICA! I wrote numerous

letters exposing the prejudicial conduct of the PA. Parole Board and sent them all over the world. I received a lot of support from Paris, France, Germany, England, Morocco, S. America and Africa. The following is an excerpt from these letters exposing the prejudicial intimidation of the PA. Parole Board.

ONA MOVE! The purpose of this letter is to inform you of the recent decision by the parole board regarding my case. I know that the news media has commented that I was denied parole but none of the news media has said why I'm being denied parole. You see for twenty years—since the first MOVE person went to prison unjustly—we have been telling people that we are not in prison for committing any crimes; we have told people that we are in prison for committing ourselves to our religion, which is the teaching of JOHN AFRICA THE COORDINATOR, MOVE LAW, the principle of GOD. LONG LIVE JOHN AFRICA!

When MOVE told this to people though, some did not want to accept it as true but the God-powerful strategy of JOHN AFRICA has forced those politicians into a position where they have to admit it. LONG LIVE JOHN AFRICA THE

COORDINATOR! As you probably know, I had a parole hearing on August 22, 1986. I was interviewed by the chairman of the parole board, Fred Jacobs, who told me that he was recommending me for parole and that the prison recommended me for parole. Jacobs pointed out that I had no misconducts (and still don't) and he did not anticipate any problem with my parole plan since an attorney offered me a job as a paralegal while my mother offered me a home with her in Overbrook.

There was no problem with my parole plan but two months later, in October 1986, the parole board scheduled me for a re-hearing on October 24, 1986. At this hearing I was interviewed by a parole board member named Raymond McGinnis who told me that in order to be considered for parole I must agree to leave the MOVE Organization, which means abandoning my religion, the teaching of JOHN AFRICA. McGinnis said I must agree not to associate with any MOVE member, even if the MOVE member has never been arrested or convicted of anything, and I must agree not to even visit any MOVE house. I'm being told I cannot live my religion; that I cannot discuss MOVE Law with, or seek religious guidance from, naturalist ministers of the MOVE Organization, that I cannot revere God as my religion teaches.

This is equivalent to telling Christians, Jews, Muslims that they cannot associate with other Christians, Jews, Muslims (including ministers) or visit any Christian, Jewish or Muslim households—in other words, they cannot be a Christian, Jew or Muslim. Not only is this unjust, it is obviously unconstitutional, it's a violation of the very legal laws politicians claim we are in prison for violating because according to the constitution you are supposed to be able to live your religion freely.

I want you to understand clearly that the parole board is not saying I cannot associate with ex-inmates or convicted felons, which the parole board is known to do. I'm being told I cannot associate with any MOVE member, even if they have never been arrested or convicted of anything! Now ain't that religious persecution!? I'm being told that if my mother chooses MOVE Law as her religion and decides to live the teaching of JOHN AFRICA, I could not associate with my own mother—ain't that religious persecution!? I'm being told to divorce my husband because he is a MOVE member, his religion is the teaching of JOHN AFRICA, so according to the condition the parole board is trying to impose on me I would not be allowed to associate with my husband without being put back in prison. Now ain't that religious persecution!? I'm being told to abandon my religion just because my religion is MOVE Law, the teaching of JOHN AFRICA. Ain't that religious persecution!? Telling me that if I was paroled I could not live my religion because it would be a violation of parole and I would be put back in prison means it would be a crime to be a MOVE member, to follow the teaching of JOHN AFRICA or even associate with

a MOVE member, just like it was a crime to be a Christian or associate with Christians during the early Roman Empire. Ain't that religious persecution!? I'm being told that if I give up my religion I can go home, and if I stay in MOVE and continue to live the teaching of JOHN AFRICA I will stay in prison. That's official blackmail that's designed to make me choose between my religion, my family, or my freedom and crystallizes that I'm in prison because I'm a MOVE member, not because of any accusation of crime.

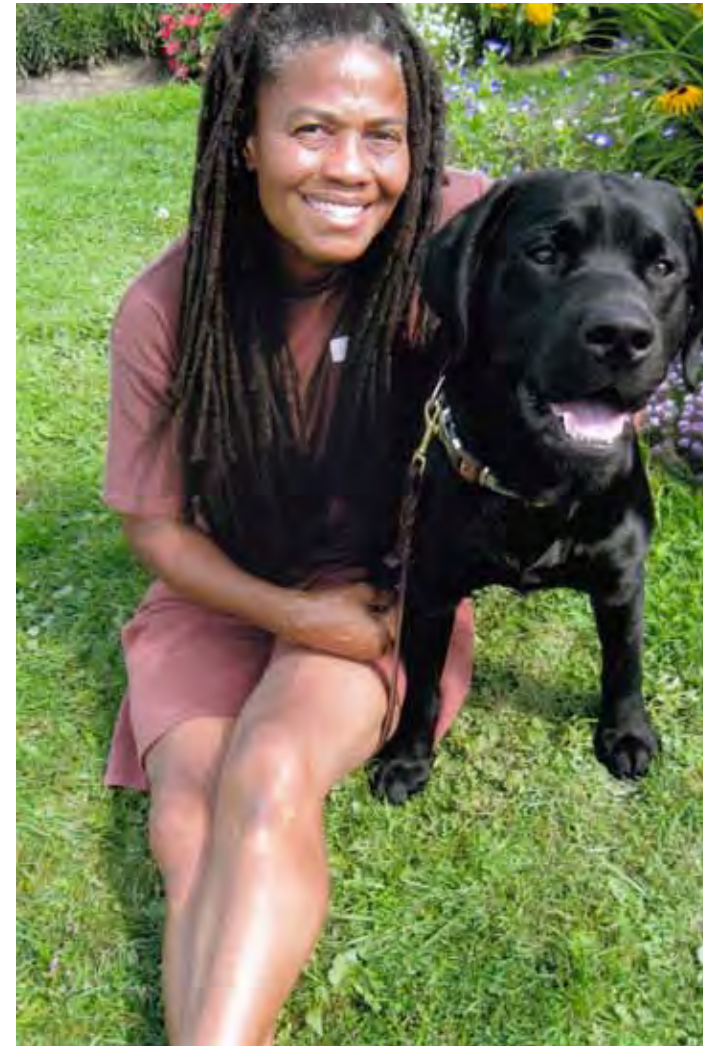
To quote JOHN AFRICA THE COORDINATOR, "When a person sends innocent people to prison, those who think this violation stops with the victim are as much a prisoner of the tyrant as those behind the prison wall, when an innocent person is sent to prison like guilty, the principle of innocence is under attack and the innocence of all the innocent is assaulted, an innocent example is a free example, those who are silent about the condition of the innocent are silent about the position of freedom, when innocence is jailed, freedom is jailed because freedom does not stop with John Brown no more than innocence stops with John Brown's mother!"

JOHN AFRICA!
IN MOVE LAW WE TRUST,
ALL PRAISES TO THE ORDER OF LIFE,
THE POWER OF TRUTH IS FINAL,
LONG LIVE MOVE,
LONG LIVE JOHN AFRICA'S REVOLUTION!
LONG LIVE JOHN AFRICA!
LONG LIVE JOHN AFRICA!
LONG LIVE JOHN AFRICA!

Ona Move
Ramona Africa
Revolutionary Disciple of
JOHN AFRICA

LONG LIVE JOHN AFRICA'S REVOLUTION
AND DOWN WITH THIS ROTTEN ASS SYSTEM

ON THE MOVE!



Janine Phillips Africa with Junius

This is Janine and Janet Africa, ministers of Education for the MOVE Organization. We are 2 of the MOVE 9 unjustly sentenced to 30-100 years in prison for a crime we didn't commit. On May 25, 2019 we were released from prison after 41 years. We were sent to prison for being committed MOVE members, committed to JOHN AFRICA's teaching. Judge Malmed, the trial judge, said, "They say they are a family so I'm sentencing them as a family."

This system tried to murder us on August 8, 1978 but LONG LIVE JOHN AFRICA, they failed! Since they didn't kill us with bullets, they tried to kill us with 100-year prison sentences! Prison officials had orders to do everything they could to break us. Especially the women. When the cops were transporting us from the police station to the county jail after we were arraigned and charged with murder, they pulled the paddy wagon over behind some trucks on the shipping docks. We could hear the cops arguing saying all of them had to do it or it couldn't be done. We knew they were planning on raping us or killing us! Two of our sisters in the van were 8 months pregnant. The rest of us positioned ourselves in front of them and said if they opened the doors we were going to fight to the death! But one cop wouldn't

go along with it. So after sitting in the van for hours, the cops finally took us to the county jail. When we got there the guards asked the cops what took them so long, they were expecting us hours ago!

We were locked in isolation and kept there until we exposed what they were doing to the public at our hearings and the jail was ordered to put us in population. The prison doctor would come to see us and he told us that he was being fired because jail officials wanted him to do something to us that was against all his morals! He never told us what they wanted him to do but he was fired!

Our trial, including the preliminary hearings, went on for 3 years! We were sentenced in August 1981 and sent to Muncy State Prison where the persecution continued! We were put in the RHU after being processed. Merle asked how long we would be in the RHU, the captain said "What is your sentence?" Merle said 30-100 years, and the captain said, "That's how long you'll be in the RHU." We called home and told our family what that captain said and JOHN AFRICA gave us a strategy to put on those prison officials! We went on a Hunger Strike confrontation to let them officials know how serious we are about our Belief and that they weren't going to break us! JOHN AFRICA said everybody knows how strong MOVE men are but he was going to show this system the strength of MOVE women! The hunger strike lasted 50 days! This was during the same time that the IRA prisoners were on a hunger strike and died after 40-45 days.

On the 45th day of the hunger strike 6, 250-300 lbs. male guards, a nurse and doctor came into our cells. They jumped us, held us face down on the mattress while the nurse raped us of our blood and injected something in us that had us heaving up foamy saliva and turned our tongues black! The prison did this because our family was exposing the prison for keeping us in the RHU and the prison lied and said we were in the RHU because we wouldn't give blood. So to cover their tracks and save face, they did this. During the hunger strike prison officials came into Sue Africa's (our white sister) cell in the middle of the night and took her to Mercer prison, a male prison, kept her locked in a cell in the medical facility where they tried to brainwash her by having a priest and her parents visit her and try to get her to leave MOVE but it didn't work!

When the hunger strike ended, they brought Sue back to Muncy but the persecution didn't stop. The month Alberta Africa was scheduled to see the parole board the prison gave her a misconduct for an incident she wasn't involved in. The tension had been building because the prison was mad that they had to put us in population after the hunger strike. They put us in cells with asbestos falling from the ceilings, they had a guard follow us around the prison grounds in a car and what they did to Alberta was the last straw! We held a demonstration in the dining room where we let the whole population and staff know what prison officials were doing. We took the demonstration to the super-



Eddie, Janine, Ramona, and Janet Africa

intendent's office and confronted her. They tried to lock the prison down but the women refused to get locked in. We told them the prison would call in the national guards and we didn't want none of them to get hurt. We knew when we decided to have the demonstration that we would be put in the RHU and we weren't afraid of going to the RHU. The women finally agreed to get locked in only after they saw that we weren't attacked by the guards.

After the prison was locked down, we were taken to the RHU and kept there for 3 years! We were put in a section of the RHU the staff called the "torture chambers." The doors were 8" solid wood that went all the way to the floor that a piece of paper could barely slide under them, with a 4" glass wicket! The windows were 2 layers of frosted banker's glass with 6 quarter-sized holes in them for air. We couldn't see out; you could only tell when it was day or night. There were no beds just a mattress on a cement floor, a toilet and a sink! They kept the lights on 24/7! We were kept in these cells for 6 months.

During our 3 years in the RHU, Philadelphia officials bombed and murdered our family on May 13, 1985. We had no access to newspapers, radios or TV's. We found out about the bombing from inmates who deliberately got misconducts and were brought up to the RHU, they smuggled an article up and gave it to us! Days later a lieutenant came to each of our cells and said "Sue your son is dead, Janine your son is dead, Janet your daughter is dead, Consuela your daughters are dead"! No explanation, no visit from the chaplain, no phone call, which is the procedure in situations like this! They tried everything they could to break us but our Belief, JOHN AFRICA's teaching carried us through it all! LONG LIVE JOHN AFRICA!

The prison eventually put us in population and backed off us. They had to respect the consistent example of strength, commitment, and family we demonstrated. Officials told us they misjudged us and mistreated us based on what they were told by higher ups.

In 1995 we were transferred to SCI-Cambridge Springs where we stayed until our release in 2019. In 1998 our sister Merle Africa died under "suspicious circumstances." She complained of pain in her stomach, they took her to an outside hospital in the middle of the night and we never saw her again! In 2015, Phil Africa died in SCI-Dallas under the same suspicious circumstances as Merle! Phil complained of stomach pains and was taken to an outside hospital and a week later he died! It was a very demanding activity but as JOHN AFRICA told this system, MOVE didn't make a mistake going to prison, they made a mistake sending MOVE to prison! Because people from all over this country and outside this country got to meet us, hear the truth about this system and see the strong soldiers JOHN AFRICA made us into. People respect MOVE because they know they can trust us to be loyal, strong, honest, and that we will never change or betray their trust!

LONG LIVE JOHN AFRICA! THE POWER OF TRUTH IS FINAL!
ON THE MOVE!

Janine and Janet Africa

Bearing Witness

By Jenipher R. Jones, Esq.

They call you a "prisoner," you are prophetic.
They call you a "terrorist," you are a freedom fighter.
They call it a "riot," it is a rising tide.

To be a prisoners' rights attorney is to glimpse the empty wilderness of Constitutionality and the machinations of the Empire. It is to look beyond the veneer of patriotism to practice. It is to know the vast difference and distance between Constitutionality, human rights, morality. It is to know righteous anger at what is promulgated, with little oversight or visibility, in the names of all of us. It is to be stunned at a nation whose populace identifies as overwhelmingly Christian, claiming to follow the mandate of Love professed by a Palestinian Jewish political prisoner, yet willfully proclaims punishment as salvation. It is a failure on the part of what many call a "Christian nation" to, as the late Dr. James Cone argued for decades, to connect the cross and American lynching tree. Indeed, I submit, as mass incarceration replicates the key features of Jim Crow, to be relegated to political prisoner status is akin to a form of systemic lynching.

Though the United States does not officially recognize political prisoners, they are as present in the U.S. as in any other country. Political prisoners in the U.S. face extreme isolation, such a classification in one of the most restrictive prisons in the world, ADX. Political prisoners face the consistent threat of torture such as sexual humiliation, religious discrimination, indefinite solitary confinement, placement in Stryker chairs and four point restraint beds, limited communication with family, even lawyers, and forced feeding upon hunger strikers when protesting inhumane custody.

The promise of the First Amendment rings hollow when one considers the historical treatment of political prisoners. It is a reminder that like the Second Amendment, the exercise of the First Amendment was only intended for a few. In sum, the U.S. carceral system is a death dealing one to all with whom it comes into contact—and it is rooted in slavery.

At wits with indefinite bondage, African, Native American, Irish, and English slaves, and indentured servants of Gloucester County in September of 1663 plotted an armed rebellion against the legal authorities of Gloucester County, also their captors.¹ The group of nine men convened, agreeing to gather weapons in the interim to ultimately negotiate and assail Lieutenant Colonel Francis Willis, a member

of the Governor's Council.² The group did not intend to demand immediate freedom, but rather, to release all indentured servants a year from the beginning of their service. The men, bound by secrecy, planned to reconvene the next Sunday at midnight, yet in their midst, was slave John Birkenhead. Birkenhead, owned by a former mayor and officer of the House of Burgesses, betrayed the plot (and his comrades) to the governor. The rebellion was foiled. Many were arrested. Four hanged.

Birkenhead, on the other hand, was *rewarded with his freedom* and five thousand pounds of his own tobacco. His act in undermining the righteous insurrection, resulted in a day, *statutorily codified*, that each September 13th, was "to be kept holy, being the day, those villains intended to put the plot in execution."³ The Gloucester County Conspiracy, the Servant's Plot, otherwise known as Birkenhead's Rebellion, spurred in America, slave rebellions for the next two hundred years.

In 1968, William O'Neal, a petty car thief, was caught stealing a car and absconding it across state lines by Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) agent Roy Martin Mitchell. Facing felony charges, in exchange for no jail and a stipend, Martin enlisted O'Neal as an informant to infiltrate the dealings of Black Panther Party Chairman Fred Hampton, then based in Chicago.⁴ For two years O'Neal assimilated into Party culture and ranks, notably security personnel. In a plot to permanently disable Hampton, it is reported that O'Neal drugged Hampton's drink during an event causing Hampton to fall into a deep sleep, thus an ensuing raid by the Chicago Police Department (CPD) less detectable. By two gunshots to the head, Hampton was assassinated by the CPD. Years later, O'Neal, beleaguered by guilt, ran into the highway, committing suicide. The Black Panther Breakfast Program was adopted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and to this day feeds millions of American children in poverty.

This the first of the slave rebellion movement involving

² Encyclopedia Virginia, The Gloucester County Conspiracy, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/gloucester-county-conspiracy-1663/#:~:text=The%20Gloucester%20County%20Conspiracy%2C%20also,in%20Gloucester%20County%20in%201663.&text=There%20they%20would%20demand%20that,release%20them%20from%20their%20indentures>.

³ William Waller Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large, Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia from the First Session of the Legislature, in the Year 1619* (Richmond, Va.: R. W. & G. Bartow, 1823), 2:204 citing *Laws of Virginia*, September 16, 1663. See also <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/5177-01cd5a5308092cf/>.

⁴ See generally Nick Pope, *The Strange True Story of William O'Neal in 'Judas and the Black Messiah'*, *ESQUIRE*, December 2, 2021. See also Henry Hampton, *Eyes of the Prize, PUBLIC BROADCASTING SYSTEM* (1990).

¹ Benjamin T. Jealous, *Don't Forget 1663 Slave Revolt*, *USA TODAY*, September 1, 2013.

political prisoners and the destruction of the Black Panther movement sheds light upon the oppressive machinations of our system in its very infancy, punishment, rewards, and the perversion of Justice. Ripe with multiple narratives, the Gloucester County story alone demonstrates why we must reverse this backward course to co-create a society grounded in liberation and freedom. The nature of this upside-down narrative is pathological and must be challenged at every juncture.

My personal faith practice includes the observance of Lent, which involves resisting the dominant storyline and temptations of Empire. It implores observers to refrain from empty, pious, patriotic and performative acts and to yield to the demands of Justice, to divest from anything that oppresses others and thus ourselves. It is in doing so, in bearing witness, that we may find our liberation.

And the walls came tumbling down. Free Them All.

Safiya Bukhari, Lioness for Liberation

By Mumia Abu-Jamal

Safiya, Lioness for Liberation! Presente! She had not long passed the half-century mark when her great and powerful heart gave out. Fifty-three years young with a spirit that was ageless in its love and courage. Sister Safiya Assia Bukhari has returned to the ancestors. She was many things to many people—daughter, mother, grandmother, teacher, disciplinarian, soldier and comrade, former Black Panther, former combatant in the Black Liberation Army, thinker, truth teller, activist, and organizer. These were some of the many things she did in her short yet extraordinary life. These things, while undoubtedly significant, do not really begin to tell those who did not know her who she really was. For many, especially many of the nameless and unknown soldiers from various movements still behind bars, she was a lifeline. They knew that she would do whatever was necessary to defend and, if possible, liberate them. They knew that her great loving Black heart would not turn away from them as they dwelled in bondage. She worked tirelessly for Black political prisoners, like the New York Three, like Dr. Mutulu Shakur, and others whose names may be little more than distant memories. She was herself a former political prisoner, and spent almost a decade in the dungeons of Virginia, and also spent several years on that state's notorious death row. When she couldn't get the medical treatment that she knew she deserved, she escaped to find a life saving treatment that Virginia denied her. But like her spiritual grandmother, Harriet Tubman, freedom was not hers alone. She worked long and strong for the liberation of her beloved Black people. What may surprise many, however, was her original political orientation. She came from a deeply religious and, she would hate the word, conservative family. As a bougie sorority sister, she came to Harlem to study the needs of the Black poor, while completing her studies. She thought people were poor because they were too lazy to work. What she saw in Harlem, the poverty and hopelessness of the people, as well as the deceit of the cops, radicalized her, and led her to the gates of the Harlem Black Panther Party. She who was once a conservative, became a revolutionary, and she never, ever stopped. It is in that spirit that I share with you the words of Safiya Bukhari, learned through the raw experiences of life. "The hard, painstaking work of changing ourselves into new beings, of loving ourselves and our people and working with them to create a new reality.

This is the first revolution, that internal revolution. I'm coming to understand what the Old Ones meant when they sang the words, "the race is not given to the swift, nor is it given to the strong, but to him that endures to the end." And what was meant by the fable of the hare and the tortoise. Some people declare themselves to be revolutionaries, members of one organization or another, i.e. "I was one of the first Panthers" or "I used to be a Panther," and only come out when there's some major celebration, where Panthers are on display, and live off their former glory; not understanding that it's not about what you used to be, but what you are doing now. They ran a quick race utilizing all for the moment and grew tired and gave up. It may take a little longer to do it the hard way, slow and methodical, building a movement, step-by-step and block-by-block. But doing it this way is designed to build a strong foundation that will withstand the test of time and the attack of the enemy." That's from Safiya Bukhari's unpublished manuscript called Reflections, Musings, and Political Opinions. I say to you, many who have known her and many who did not: Safiya Bukhari was a true revolutionary, patient, constant, disciplined, loving, and determined. Safiya was a revolutionary who, like the Cuban internationalist Che Guevara, was motivated by great feelings of love. It is truly a shame that she left this life so early. But it can be said with certainty that she lived her life with freedom in her rifle scope. She was a woman warrior, who should be an inspiration to us all. Remember her by making her dream reality.

From death row, this is Mumia Abu-Jamal.



Kamau, by Sophia Victor

The revolutionary Black Panther Kamau Sadiki with his daughter K'Sisay Sadiki, who grew up with strong Panther ethics and navigated childhood and adulthood visiting her father in varying states of incarceration and freedom, are portrayed in "Kamau."

Growing up Panther: An interview with K'Sisay Sadiki

By Susie Day

"As we left the courtroom, [a friend] was standing in the hallway with K'Sisay, Kamau's 2-year-old daughter. As Kamau walked near her, she held out her arms to him. Kamau took two steps toward her and the marshals jumped him and began beating him...I will never forget the haunting scream of that child as she watched her father being brutally beaten." — Assata Shakur, "Assata: An Autobiography"

That 2-year-old, K'Sisay Sadiki, is now in her 40s, with kids of her own. She has lived her life in two worlds. She's attended prestigious dance and film schools, holds down a steady job, pays taxes. And, as the child of Black Panthers, she's lived underground, raised by people dedicated to overturning white supremacy.

Her father, Kamau Sadiki, also has a daughter—K'Sisay's sister—by Assata Shakur, who famously escaped from prison in 1979 and now lives in Cuba as a "dangerous fugitive," hunted by the US government. Kamau is in a Georgia prison, serving a life-plus-10-years sentence for the 1971 fatal shooting of a police officer—a cold case, resurrected in the post-9/11 world.

K'Sisay tells me about how she's making sense of her life. "I need people to know who my parents are. Who I am, too, as a woman who has lived in the background, not feeling comfortable with sharing my father's story."

K'Sisay Sadiki performed her one-person show "The Visit"

at University Settlement in Lower Manhattan in January and February 2021. Part of an installation by the artist Sophia Dawson, "The Visit" is K'Sisay's work in progress, an exploration of her double reality as the child of Black Panthers—and a way to educate people about her father, Kamau Sadiki.

K'Sisay: I was born into activism. Both my parents were Black Panthers in the Queens branch of the party. When I was a baby, my father was arrested for a robbery and served five years in prison. He wrote me letters, like, "Oh, my baby's sick. When I get out, I'm going to be there for you."

My mom and I would visit my father when I was a toddler. Once we went to visit; my mom said he'd gotten his GED. So I thought we were there to celebrate something. They put my mother and me in a room and said he'd be out soon. But he didn't come.

My mother and I were there for hours, so long that I peed on myself and started screaming. Then they brought my father in. My mother didn't want him to react with anger: "This is my family—look what you did to them!"

She tried to calm him down, calm me down, make the best of the situation. My mom would always try to make things brighter. She'd pack picnic lunches. "We're going to see your father. Then we're going to the lake!"

But there are photographs of me as a little girl, and you can see the stress. Going to court and stuff, I experienced trauma. My grandmother told my mother, "You can't expose her to that. You have to make a decision."

So I was also raised going to art camps, being exposed to theater, knowing my family wanted the best for me: "Whatever your dreams are, let's cultivate them."

Susie: Is there a similarity between you as a Panther kid and kids growing up in the 1950s Red Scare, whose parents were Communists?

K'Sisay: Yeah, we definitely couldn't say certain things and we were taught a code. At school, I never stood up to say the Pledge of Allegiance. That was something my mom taught me as a little girl.

I went to a predominantly white school in Queens, and I thought, "Damn. Why are these teachers so mean to me?" Like they loved their little white girls, but they hated me. Then there was me not standing up to say the pledge.

My mother was comrades with this other woman from the Panthers. Her daughter and I were raised together. They would dress us up and take us to Broadway plays and stuff, and we'd wear these little pink dresses or whatever. They just liked dressing us up.

But I was raised around kids of Panthers and taught that we were blood cousins. It was like, OK, we know we're different.

Susie: Your father got out of prison in 1979. In an earlier version of your show, you talked about him training you as a kid in Panther drills and calisthenics.

K'Sisay: It's funny, my father did want me to be this soldier. But my mom said, "This is a little girl. She likes dancing school. Your approach has to be different."

Susie: Your dad was released about the time Assata escaped and went underground.

K'Sisay: I barely knew that; my mom and dad kept some things from me. I didn't know that my parents were being threatened. The FBI was telling my mom, "We're going to kidnap your daughter." I had no idea. I lived through a child's lens.

My mom did have a room where she kept old Panther newspapers and articles. I would look at them but they made me afraid.

Susie: A few years later, from Cuba, Assata published her autobiography. In it she wrote about your dad—and you.

K'Sisay: A lot of my friends on the block read Assata's book. They said, "K'Sisay, how come you didn't tell me you're related? What's your story?" I'd say, "I don't want to talk about that." Because I felt shame. Yeah, I felt like I was living two lives.

Susie: Tell me about your dad.

K'Sisay: He worked for the telephone company. He was a man of the community. He loves storytelling and reading, especially science fiction, parallel worlds and stuff.

He used to show up in his truck and gather the kids around him, "Come on, everybody!" And he'd tell the kids these stories. They were all [mimes amazement] "WOW!" He exposed me to Octavia Butler, like "Wild Seed": "K'Sisay! I got this book."

I moved to Brooklyn in fourth grade, but my father and I always lived close. He and my mother could never live together but he always lived in the neighborhood. I had a key. He just liked life simple. He loved his books. He'd be into Apple gadgets, the latest stereo system.

Susie: So, you grew up, went to school, got a job, got married, had kids. You're in your 30s, and suddenly in 2002 your father is arrested for child abuse. Then he's charged with the 1971 killing of a police officer.

K'Sisay: By now, he's a grandfather, thinking about retiring. I couldn't believe this was happening. To see my father in the newspapers—humiliated that way. Even for people who support the Panthers, to question whether that was true. I think that the woman he'd been seeing set him up.

Susie: The molestation charge didn't stick, but it must have made it hard for people to support his case. Your dad was convicted in 2003 of the shooting.

K'Sisay: Even though they had no direct evidence. They tried to get him to turn Assata in, but of course he wouldn't. I went to see him at court in Brooklyn.

My dad kept looking at me so very apologetic. He just put his head down, like, "I'm so sorry this is happening." The kids, we were all there. Then my mom and I went to see him at the Brooklyn House of Detention.

I had not been in that situation for years, going through security, being patted down. I never got to see him again in New York. It was more devastating for me as an adult to see him in prison than it was when I was a child. I was in denial. That took years to deal with.

Susie: Your dad is now turning 67 at the Augusta Medical State Facility in Georgia. Tell me about your last visit.

K'Sisay: I visited him last summer. It was wonderful to see him. But he has serious health issues and the conditions there are horrible.

Susie: What, above everything, have you learned from your father?

K'Sisay: Strength. Humility. He's my hero. He made a commitment to deal with injustice. He was that person even before he joined the Black Panther Party.

I couldn't always talk about this. I've been silent for a long time. Now, I am his voice. I may not be able to physically see him, but he's with me always. I dream about him and he's free—I never dream about him in prison.

OK, he's free—but he's WANTED. [Laughs]. I'm always looking for an Underground Railroad. "Come on, Daddy, we can go here!"

But he's always free.

Susie Day writes about prison, policing and political activism and is a columnist for New York's Gay City News. Her book *The Brother You Choose: Paul Coates and Eddie Conway Talk About Life, Politics, and The Revolution* was published in 2020. Email her at susie@monthlyreview.org.

FREE ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS AND PRISONERS OF WAR!

By Sekou Odinga

1. Urgent medical action is needed for veteran Black Panther political prisoner Kamau Sadiki!

Despite the fact that Kamau's name was legally changed from "Freddie Hilton" and despite the fact that the prison has sarcastically stated to some callers that, "He seems to be a real popular guy with all the calls that have come in," prison officials have sought once again to continue their plan to both medically neglect and ignore Kamau's request for a wound specialist.

"He needs a wounds specialist – not amputation!"

Augusta State Prison officials instead plan to cut off his foot, potentially killing him when you consider his other serious medical condition of Hepatitis C and the ongoing threat of COVID-19 throughout the entire U.S. prison system.

So, when calling the prison about his extreme medical emergency, please use his government name, "Freddie Hilton," and his Georgia prisoner ID No. 1150688.

2. From Kamau's daughter K'Sisay Sadiki

"Call now! Freddie Hilton aka Kamau Sadiki, No. 1150688: ASMP wants to amputate my father's foot at the ankle.

"Write: Augusta State Prison, 3001 Gordon Hwy, Grovetown GA 30813. Call: Chief Medical Facilitator Dr. Mary Alston and Warden Ted Philbin (706) 855-4700.

"He needs a wounds specialist – not amputation!"

3. Who is Kamau Sadiki?

Kamau Sadiki is a veteran of the original Black Panther Party. At the age of 17, he dedicated his life to the service of his people. He worked out of the Jamaica, Queens, office of the Black Panther Party. Having internalized the 10-Point Program and Platform, the *Three Main Rules of Discipline and Eight Points of Attention*, Kamau used his knowledge to guide his organizing efforts within the Black Community.

Kamau worked in the Free Breakfast Program, getting up every morning, going to his designated assignment and cooking and feeding hungry children before they went to school. When the Free Breakfast Program was over for the day, he reported to the office, gathered his papers, received his assignment and went out into the community to sell his papers.

While selling papers, Kamau continued to educate the people—all while organizing tenants, welfare mothers and whomever he came in contact with. At the end of the day, he reported to the office. He wrote his daily report and attended political education classes.

Kamau Sadiki was one of the thousands of young Black men and women who made up the Black Panther Party. The rank-and-file members of the party made the Black Panther Party the international political machine it was.

While the media followed Huey Newton, Bobby Seale and others, the day-to-day work of the party was being carried out by these rank-and-file brothers and sisters, the backbone of the Black Panther Party.

They were these nameless, faceless, tireless workers who

carried out the programs of the Black Panther Party, without whom there would have been no one to do the work of the Free Health Clinics, Free Clothing Drive, Liberation Schools and Free Breakfast for Children Program. It was to these brothers and sisters to whom the people in the Black community looked when they needed help and support.

4. COunterINTElligencePROgram

It was because of this tireless work in the community that then-FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover declared the Black Panther Party to be the greatest threat to national security and sought to destroy it. It was not because we advocated the use of the gun that made the Black Panther Party the threat: It was because of the politics that guided the gun.

An all-out propaganda war was waged on the Black Panther Party. Simultaneously, a psychological and military campaign was instituted.

We had been taught that politics guide the gun, therefore our politics had to be correct and constantly evolving. We had to study and read the newspapers to keep abreast of the constantly changing political situation.

But this was not the image that the government wanted to portray of the Black Panther Party. It preferred the image of the ruthless, gangster, racist gun-toting thug. Every opportunity that came up to talk or write about the Black Panther Party was used to portray this image.

When the opportunity didn't arise on its own, they created situations and circumstances to make the claim. An all-out propaganda war was waged on the Black Panther Party. Simultaneously, a psychological and military campaign was instituted.

The government's war of terror against the Black Panther Party saw over 28 young Black men and women of the Black Panther Party killed over a period of less than four years, hundreds more in prison or underground, dozens in exile and the Black Panther Party in disarray. Even though the Black Panther Party as an entity had been destroyed, the government never ceased observing those Panthers who were still alive.

Whether or not others believed it, the government took seriously that aspect of the Black Panther Party's teaching that included the 10-10-10 Program. If one Panther organized 10 people, those 10 people organized 10 people and those 10 people organized 10 people—exponentially, we would organize the world for revolution. The only way to stop that was to weed out the Panthers.

Not only must the Black Panther Party be destroyed, but all the people who were exposed to the teachings must be weeded out and put on ice or destroyed.

During this turbulent time, Kamau was among the members of the party who had gone underground. He was subsequently captured and spent five years in prison. While he was on parole, he legally changed his name from Fred Hilton to Kamau Sadiki.

In October, 1981 I became a Political Prisoner of war. What is a political prisoner? What is a prisoner of war? A political prisoner is one imprisoned for their political activity, speech or support of said activity or speech against a government. I think it is important to know that although oppressive governments often pass laws making it illegal to speak or act against them, that goes against international law. But international law (which is the highest law of the US if it has been signed/ratified by a duly elected or selected official of the government) gives the absolute right of oppressed people to fight against their oppression by any means, including with military arms. It is also the right of the oppressed to determine what is oppressive to them. A prisoner of war is someone captured while fighting in a war, and imprisoned for doing so. There are also other qualifications to determine how a people, group, army or government can claim the right to struggle against their oppressors, especially with arms. One of those qualifications is that they openly claim their right to fight their oppressor. The Black Liberation Army in the US claimed the right to demand their peoples' freedom and the right to struggle for that freedom by any means including arms.

In Oct, 1981, as soldiers in the Black Liberation Army, my comrade, Mtayari Shabaka Sundiata, who was with me, was murdered as he lay face down surrendering in the street. I was captured, tortured, spent three month in the hospital from that torture, thus making me a prisoner of war. I was then charged with multiple criminal offenses against the state of New York and later additional charges against the US government. This is the way the US continually criminalizes oppressed peoples' struggles here on Turtle Island (indigenous peoples name for this land that has been stolen and occupied by Europeans). I was asked what war did I consider myself fighting in. I told them that I was fighting in the war of national liberation for New Afrikans that started in 1619 when the first Africans were captured and kidnapped and brought to these foreign lands. We never accepted the Europeans right to kidnap us, or to enslave us or make us citizens of their country. In fact they never asked us if we wanted any of what they decided for us. I was sent to the federal court in the southern district of NY and charged with 11 criminal counts against the US. I pleaded not guilty to all criminal charges and exercised my right to be tried as a Prisoner Of War under the United Nation and Geneva accords. In spite of my right to be tried as a POW this was denied me, claiming that I was being charged with breaking US crimi-

nal laws that couldn't be heard in any international court. Completely ignoring that the law states that if a combatant claims POW status that his status should be determined by a neutral country. Mind you that the US government is a signatory to these international laws, agreements and treaties.

A lot of the so-called war on crime and mass incarceration can be traced back to Black (New Afrikan) liberation struggle. When Black, Brown, and Indigenous people started mass rebelling in the sixties, the US under the direction of then director of the FBI, J. Edgar Hoover, expanded its program to expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit, or otherwise neutralize the activities of Black Nationalist organizations, their leadership, spokesmen, membership and supporters. He also ordered that Black youth must be made to know that the only Black revolutionaries will be dead revolutionaries. Many Black youth fell victim to this upswing in the war against People of color, especially Black and Brown people. Of course this was not the first upswing of the war against people of African descent. During the civil war and especially after it, whites made it a point to target Blacks that they thought might have independent thought. The thought of Black folks having independent thoughts and ideas has always frightened White folks. Their fear comes from them knowing what they would do if they had been through what we have been through and then got a little freedom of thought and action.

And of course that is exactly what some of us did, decided that we wanted to be in control of ourselves, our own destiny. We declared that we would separate from the US and establish our own government, The Republic of New Afrika on the land known as the Black Belt South. Many organizations and groups bought into the concept of land and independence, even though most didn't bother to formally become citizens of the RNA (Republic of New Africa). But they decided to pick up their gun and demand that the occupying forces in our communities stop disrespecting, abusing and murdering us. We decided that there must be some consequence to the brutality and murder of Black people. Those who were captured and imprisoned for these actions are prisoners of war whether they claim it or never even heard the term. But many never claimed that status because of the harsher treatment meted out to those who did claim it. I claimed it and was immediately sent to the worst federal prison that the US had, at that time, Marion Federal Prison.

Out of the twenty-eight years that I did in federal custody, I did sixteen in Marion and another three in the one that

replaced it, the Federal Prison Complex in Florence Colorado. The government learned from Marion how to make its replacement more barbaric. There is no human contact, 22 hours a day in cells, cells enclosed in locked rooms so that you can't talk to or pass anything between cells, no friends only family visits, no touching on visits, and no religious service. That's what awaits political prisoners and prisoners of war if they survive capture with their life intact. PP and POWs also are usually given longer sentences than social prisoners. I was found guilty of two counts of a RICO conspiracy. I was given 20 years for each charge and told I had to do each charge separately. Usually those sentences would be run together making it only 20 years instead of 40 years as I was given.

In the NY state court I was charged and found guilty of six counts attempted murder of police for shooting back while being chased and shot at by them. Attempted murder usually carries a 15-year sentence, especially if no one is hurt as was the case in my capture. But I was sentenced to 25 years to life to be served separately from the federal sentence. Clearly neither judge intended for me to ever see the streets again. But thanks to the Creator, I found a legal technicality, a mistake that the two jurisdictions made. I took it to the NY appeals court and won on that technicality and forced my release. But there remain many political prisoners in the prisons and jails in the US, especially in federal prisons.

Freedom and justice loving people should find out who they are. They should support and demand their release. FREE ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS AND PRISONERS OF WAR!

Sekou Odinga

<https://northeastpoliticalprisonercoalition.wordpress.com/>

Marriage in a Prison Visiting Room

By Susie Day

Dequi Kioni-Sadiki, who married former Black Panther Sekou Odinga over the phone and in a prison visiting room, talks to Truthout about love, bus rides and the conditions that prisoners—and their loved ones—have to negotiate.

On New Year's Day, Lynne Stewart, the radical defense attorney sentenced to 10 years in prison, was flown from a federal prison in Texas, where she would have died alone of cancer, to her family, friends and competent health care in New York City. Lynne's husband, Ralph Poynter, had worked for years with thousands of supporters for Lynne's "compassionate release."

Watching *Democracy Now's* video coverage of Lynne's New York arrival, I caught a glimpse of my friend Dequi Kioni-Sadiki in the crowd waiting for Lynne. Dequi is a schoolteacher and grandmother in her early 50s, who's married to a former Black Panther serving time upstate. There, at La Guardia airport, was Dequi. And she was sobbing.

Dequi met her husband, Sekou Odinga, a few years ago, in the course of her activist work, visiting prisoners in New York State. Dequi and Sekou fell in love and were married almost three years ago.

You think something's wrong with Dequi for getting involved with a prisoner? Then please think the same of me. Twenty-five years ago, I went to the DC Jail to interview a political prisoner named Laura Whitehorn—and we fell in love. Like Sekou, Laura was facing decades in prison; like Sekou, she was not charged with killing anyone. But Laura and I were lucky; after 14 years, she was released. Sekou won't come up for parole until 2033. So I knew why Dequi was crying. And why we need to listen to her.

Susie Day for Truthout: How did you feel, on your way to the airport to see Lynne Stewart?

Dequi Kioni-Sadiki: Absolute joy. I thought, Yes, she does not have to die behind those walls! It wasn't until I got there and was waiting for Lynne to leave the plane that a wave of new emotion came over me. I thought about how many other people are not being released. So it was joy mixed with bittersweet.

Why bittersweet?

Because it made me think, of course, about Sekou and his 32 years in a prison cage. I wanted—not at the expense of anyone else—but I so wished that that could be him, that could be us, celebrating his return to family and community and loved ones. Him walking through those prison gates.

How did you and Sekou meet? When did you realize you had feelings for one another?

When I came to New York in the early '90s, I met the Black Panther Collective, folks who were original members of the Black Panther Party, who were still activists. In addition to studying and doing community work, one of their things was visiting political prisoners.

I didn't meet Sekou until shortly after he maxed out his federal time in 2009 and was transferred to New York prison. I went to visit him like I would any other political prisoner. I remember sitting there talking to Sekou the first time, and thinking there was something very special, unique, human, humane, gentle, easy, funny, sweet, thoughtful and caring in our conversation.

I've always kept prison visits strictly about the political work. I've been careful about what I say and my manners, and I try never to give anyone on the inside a wrong impression. But I started getting phone calls from Sekou, and I began looking forward to them. We would be in the middle of a conversation—you get that half-an-hour cut-off message—and I'd be, "Oh, we can't go now. Call me back." We just started enjoying each other's company and writing letters and talking more and more.

I was the first to say something. I told him that I was writing him a letter, different than any letter he'd gotten from me. So I wrote him about this evolution of my love for him.

He was really relieved. He said he'd felt that way too from the first time he saw me, but he wasn't going to say anything. He told me, 'I was giving you hints, but you weren't picking up,' and I said, 'Well, I'm a little slow.'"

Once he realized it was OK to express how he felt, it just grew. Finally, he asked to marry me. He said I didn't have to say yes right then, but that he would continue to ask me.

What was your wedding like? You had more than one, right?

New York State prisoners have to get permission to marry someone. That took awhile. I got a letter from Sekou's facility saying, based on his high-profile status, there were investigations and that a decision would be forthcoming.

Originally, we wanted to marry in March. It didn't come through. Then I wanted to do it on my birthday, June 6. We ended up getting married on the phone first, on June 17, which is Sekou's birthday. Sekou's a Muslim, so you have to make a contract about your expectations, so there's no surprises.

I'm not a Muslim, but I remember getting a call from the imam who asked questions like, "Are you marrying him of your own free will?" to make sure the contract was observed. And he ended up marrying us, believe it or not, on the telephone.

This, to me—even in the absence of us being able to be physically together—meant so much. Because, one, having an imam preside, even on the phone, meant more to Sekou than a state marriage; and, two, it was his birthday. Sekou doesn't pay attention to birthdays, but I said, "Well, now you have to pay attention because it's our anniversary."

We didn't get the marriage certificate signed until July 14th. So our anniversary is June 17, but the state looks at it as July 14.

On July 14, 2011, you went to the prison, stood together in the same room, and were married?

Yes. My friend Pam stood in with me, and Sekou's son. There was a woman guard who asked me questions—she wanted to make sure that I knew how much time Sekou had, what he was in for, that kind of stuff.

I'd had one of my sister artists make the most beautiful dress for me. It was from Nigerian fabric, in my favorite color, red. Sekou wanted to give me something, so I said the best gift you could give is to write what you feel and want for our being together. So he wrote me something and I wrote him something. And we shared that. I had him put my ring on my finger.

After the ceremony on the 14th, did you two get to spend time together?

No. It was just a regular visiting-room visit, over at 3 PM. We sat across a counter like we normally do. I left with Pam and Sekou's son, and Sekou went back to his cell.

Have you been together alone, in a trailer visit?

No. Right now, our application for the trailers is in court. They denied our request on the grounds that his having trailer access would undermine prison security. We have to fight to be with one another, just like we had to fight to get married.

What is it like to visit your husband?

In the prison where Sekou is now, you can't go outdoors. There's a big visiting room with a counter that runs the length of the room. Our knees don't touch because the counter is between us, and we're sitting across from each other.

Can you hold hands?

Yeah. They don't say anything about that. But you are only allowed to embrace each other when you come in and when you leave, and you can't do any prolonged kissing. This has been a growing process for me, 'cause I'm not one for public displays of affection. But I can only kiss Sekou in

public, and I can never kiss him the way I would like to. They would say that's too long.

How do you travel upstate to visit Sekou?

I take a charter prison-visit bus. It's grueling, because if I want to visit him on Saturday morning, I have to get on the bus at 9:30 Friday night. Then Saturday night, I don't get home until 10 or 11 o'clock.

Sekou's prison is the first stop. That's usually about 5, 5:30 AM—so there are people riding even further. They start processing the visitors at 8:30.

So if you get there at 5 AM, you have to sit around until 8:30?

Yeah. You sign a list when you first get there. They have something called a "hospitality trailer," where women can go to the bathroom and change their clothes, and they're offered stuff like English muffins, cereal. You should see it. The first time I went by bus I thought, "Why are people making such a mad dash to get into this so-called hospitality trailer?"

They're rushing to sign that list! They call you to visit in numerical order. People want to be up high on the list, so that at 8:30, when they start calling visitors, you go right in, or at least begin emptying your pockets, getting searched—you know, the processing part. When it gets really crowded, they cut visits short. This happened to me once, and it was awful. You take a 24-hour journey, and you don't even get the six hours, which is already not enough time.

If you're lucky, then your visit starts around 8:30 AM and lasts until 3 PM?

Yes. When I'm getting ready for the bus, I'm a mixture of excited and hesitant 'cause I also hate this. I'm thinking about how uncomfortable I'm going to be on the bus, because I have arthritis. I'm praying that it won't be crowded so I'll have a seat to myself. But I'm also looking forward to seeing Sekou because I've missed him.

I go on Friday nights because I like the driver. He's old school. He says a prayer; he's friendly; he doesn't treat people like they're prison families. This bus is not as bad as others because the driver doesn't play the music that is just noise to me. It's never rowdy because he sets a positive tone. It's as comfortable as it can be, sitting in a chair straight upright all night.

How much does this cost?

Fifty-five dollars, round trip. The whole prison experience is expensive because I try to go twice a month, and that's \$110. That doesn't include, say, \$20 for the vending machines—you have to eat—and taking the photos.

Sekou will turn 70 this year. How's his health?

Thankfully, good. Except the winters so far north are bru-

tal. These people invented cruelty. They put the phones outside. So when Sekou wants to call me, he has to come outside, even if it's minus-10. Yesterday, he called and he had his scarf wrapped around his face because it was so cold. And if you go outside, you don't get to go back inside until they say.

There are so many unfinished conversations between us. Like, when he calls, I'll forget to tell him something. I can't ever call him back and say, "Baby, I forgot to tell you . . ." Then maybe he'll call tomorrow, or the next day—and I've forgot by that time. We used to spend hours on the telephone before. We don't now, because they've restricted the phones to 15-minute calls. He can't call every day, because if he misses the call-out, that means he's in his cell for 24 hours.

Can you allow yourself to imagine what it would be like if Sekou were outside with you?

Believe it or not, I do, all the time. I imagine us walking down the street. I'm in a park and imagine sitting on a bench with him. I'm home, and I see him sitting on the living room couch. I imagine traveling with him. I do allow myself to dream those things in my sleep and in my waking moments. That's one thing the prison system can't take away.

It makes me see how much time people waste on things that don't really matter. How we look at people every day, and we don't really see them. I don't look at Sekou every day. But I see him. Every day.

How is this changing you?

I thought I knew about prison when I was doing prisoner-support work, but being married to Sekou, I know things on a much deeper level. The conditions these prisoners endure—not because Sekou or the others complain—but just being more intimately connected to him now, I see all they and their families have experienced. The sacrifices they've made during 30- and 40-year imprisonments. It is unfathomable.

NO human being deserves what these people are forced to endure. But it's invisible. Nobody sees what happens to families when a loved one is in prison. With over two million people in prison, imagine the pain felt by tens of millions of family members outside.

I speak publicly, and there's so much shame and stigma attached to loving someone in prison. Women will often come to me after I've spoken and say quietly, "I have a fiancé in prison." Or a son or boyfriend. There's a whole community of women who take the bus together; it's quite known that that's what we're doing. But people don't want that to be seen by the rest of the world. And that contributes to the invisibility around black women's lives.

I think that if people can look at me and say, "Damn. She can talk about these things freely—maybe I shouldn't be ashamed." Because we have nothing to be ashamed of; we just don't get a chance to tell our stories. And if we don't tell our stories, then we're not healing.

How do people respond when you say you've married a prisoner?

Actually, they don't say too much to me; I think they say things to other people. [Laughs] Cause people don't want to hurt my feelings. But it's come back to me, "She's so intelligent, does she know what she's getting into?"

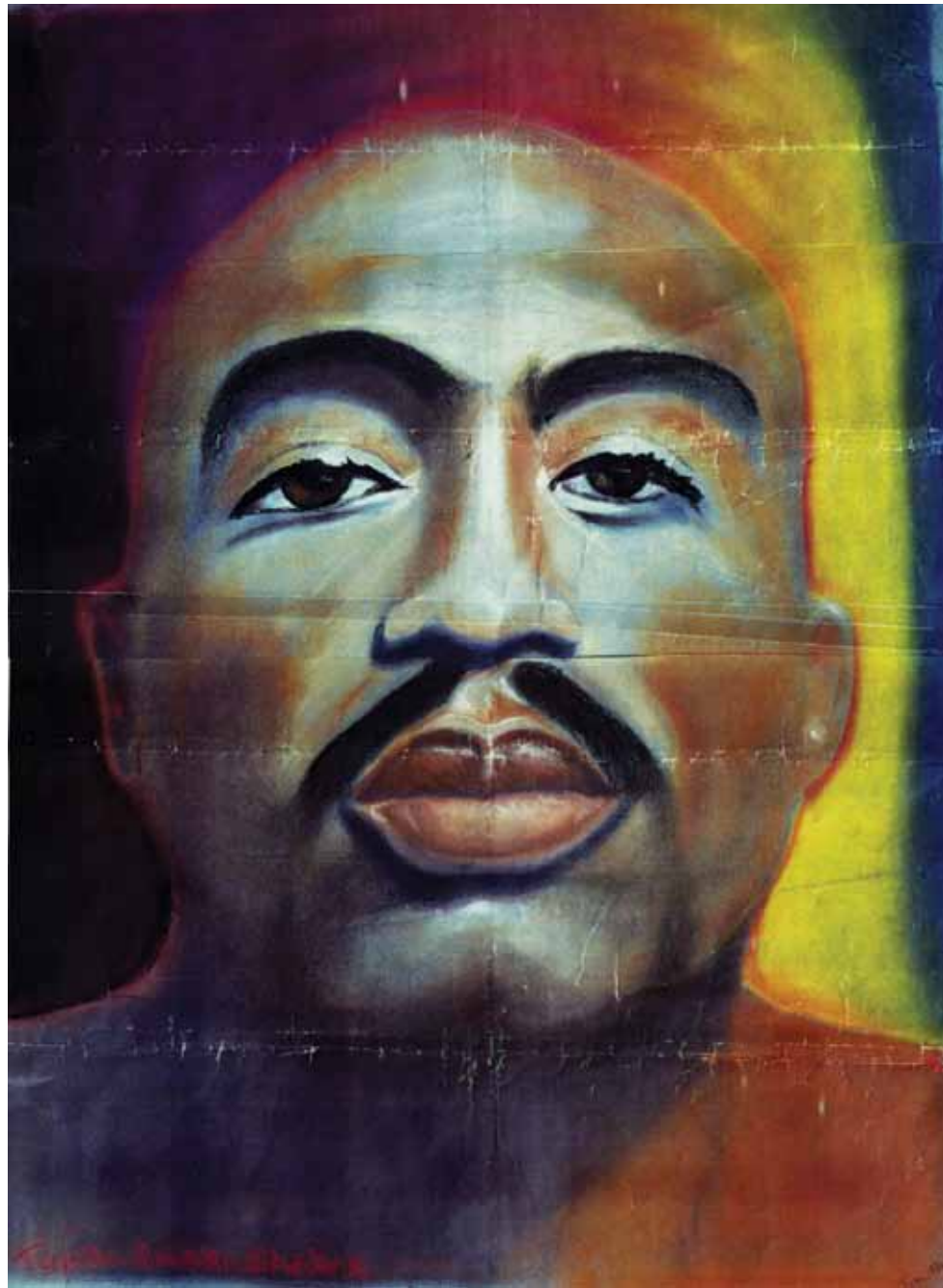
I've also met people who say, "Oh, you're Sekou's wife—Cool!" I'm like, "No, I'm still me." I've lived long enough and I've had enough relationships, and one of the things I had to tell Sekou when we started talking was, "I am not a groupie. I am not enamored with the history of the Black Panther Party."

People mean well. They say, "He's a lucky man." But I'm a lucky woman. I discovered the love of my life. I had no idea I would find that person behind the wall. But it's a journey. Sekou is not in prison because he was trying to get rich or harm his community for his own benefit. He's there because he dreamed of a better world.

The thing that helps me is that I know I love him and I feel so soothed and comforted and protected by his love. I've never loved a man like I love him. And I guess I'm like Ralph, when he kept fighting for Lynne Stewart's release. I believe that Sekou's going to come home. The alternative is just not worth considering.

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Tupac, by Tom Manning

TO MY SON TUPAC

By Mutulu Shakur

I love you whenever...forever. Tupac, so much I needed to say, so much you wanted to say. Many conversations between us within the ether, whenever...forever.

The pain inflicted which scarred your soul, but not your spirit, gave force to rebellion. Many couldn't see your dreams or understand your nightmares. How could they, Tupac? I know your love and understand your passion. But you knew of your beginning and saw your end...racing toward it.

You taught and fought through your songs and deeds RATT TATT TATT of words penetrating the contradiction of our existence. Whenever...forever.

Who cares? We cared, Tupac. The Shakurs have been guided by struggle, prepared or not, whenever...forever. We've exposed our existence, naked from fear, to those who would hear the positive. Who would witness the stress, wear, and tear of this lonely path. You couldn't have evaded the effect

or the changes. You inherited it, it was in your genes.

But still, you danced your dance, you lived your life. You forced loyalty on those who would fake and shake at the true vision. You were Tupac.

Like the four seasons, we come to this planet taking form, becoming elements of nature. Some of us are only one season and others, like you, were a part of many seasons. This dynamic will scare most anyone who realized the burden at such an early stage of life. You fought well. We love you. We understand ... whenever ... forever.

Please give my love to our family. Ask them to help you on the other side. Tell Zayd, Lumumba, Abu, Brother Leggs, Mtayari, Attallah that they are to continue to help us down here. Shakurs' love is strong. Whenever ... forever.

Friday the 13th didn't mean a thing. Life is for living and dying well. Whenever ... forever. Allah knows best.

We choose the quality of our life. You understood the pain of disappointment in the ones we love. You pushed so many away. Burnt so many bridges so they wouldn't follow you into battles against the demons you were facing. Knowing well to what lengths you would go. This battlefield of reality is littered with many meaningless casualties.

You never yelled out, "Somebody save me." You only asked for your soul to be free, whenever ... forever. You told us to keep our heads up, knowing the pain was coming. Knowing to look for the strength in the heavens. Set your soul free, Tupac Amaru.

We keep waiting in vain for their love.

Will your levitation be the awakening of us all? The division unsettling our dreams and goals. Your passing demanding repentance and resistance.

We keep waiting not in vain. We give you love. Give us love.

To my brother and son, these emotions are hell. I wish you well in the next journey. My soul aches for comfort. In our next life, we will finish our unfinished journey. Whenever ... forever.

For now, Tupac, we will hold our heads up. This journey is at an end, your ashes are in the wind. Friends and enemies will have to look to the stars. You are truly a Star. A star navigating through the dynamics of this, your path chosen before you arrived. Lessons we've gained will materialize after you're gone. Whenever ... forever.

Your family will keep the spirit high, for we are Shakurs. We are thankful for what life gives us. Through the pain and struggle we are blessed by the victory. Go forward, Tupac.

The victories—we will teach your mission; we are thankful for you. We love you, Tupac Shakur. We ain't mad at you—we'll be better because of you.

So now I give you my tears so that I might assimilate your loss and that I can live on in peace.

Knowing I will feed your spirit with my unconditional love, knowing you will need it on your next journey.

"Resistance" and "Thankful" ...One's name is the life's

program for its bearer. Tupac Shakur. We will help them to understand your mission and journey.

May Allah bless you for your deeds and forgive your errors.

Tupac come to me and give me strength.

Love always,

Your father, friend, comrade

Mutulu 1997

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Mutulu gave us permission to print this beautiful letter from him to his son Tupac, written in 1997, from prison. His new Home is in Los Angeles with his family because "on December 16, 2022, Dr. Mutulu Shakur was released from being imprisoned for over 36 years. Dr. Shakur has dedicated his life to the struggle of 'Black' liberation since the age of 16 years old. He is a 72-year-old grandfather, father, respected healer, and movement elder and is in need of our support to continue to live the rest of his life in dignity.

Dr. Shakur was at the forefront of healing america's first opioid epidemic in the 1970s, as heroin swept thru 'black' and poor communities. When Black Panthers and Young Lords in New York took over a Bronx hospital towards getting better healthcare for the community, Dr. Shakur brought leadership to this new dignified, revolutionary healthcare system, in particular, developing methods of using acupuncture and acupressure to detoxify and treat people addicted to drugs. Dr. Shakur had learned of the innovative practice of acupuncture to address a variety of human ailments and jumped in head first to learn the art and bring this holistic practice to successfully treat heroin addiction, trauma, and other ailments."

For more information on Mutulu's health and how to support his new life check out. <http://mutulushakur.com>

Spirit Moves Through and Around Us: Navajo Spiritual Advisor Lenny Foster

By Mia Feroletto

A member of the Towering House Clan whose Navajo name means, “One Who Walks Around,” Lenny Foster is originally from Fort Defiance, Arizona. He has made a mark on the lives of countless Native American prisoners by defending their rights to practice their traditional ceremonies and culture. Lenny has been the spiritual advisor to these men and since March 1985 he has served as the spiritual advisor to political prisoner Leonard Peltier. Working with the State Department of Corrections in Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado and Utah, he has served 2,000 incarcerated Native people in 96 state and federal prisons where he has provided spiritual counseling and support, brought the sweat lodge ceremonies and pipe ceremonies to these populations, and worked with five death row inmates since 1981.

In 2018, Lenny retired from the Navajo Nations Corrections Project, which he spearheaded and found most fulfilling. Each week, he traveled to prisons around the country. It was our own Guest Editor Paulette Dauteuil-Robideau who invited Lenny to meet with political prisoner Leonard Peltier and ultimately become his spiritual advisor. Peltier is considered to be one of the toughest cases Foster encountered in the Indigenous world in which the criminal justice system has locked Leonard in, keeping normal legal remedies from him by design. Peltier’s attorney, Kevin Sharp, acknowledges that in any other country, Peltier would have been paroled a long time ago. In this case, the FBI blames Leonard for the death of two of their agents and holds a vendetta against him, taking action each and every time Peltier is eligible for parole. This is a perfect illustration of the extreme racism that exists today in America, making it very difficult to overcome the lies and persecution directed at Native Americans and people of color. Lenny Foster advocates for Leonard Peltier to be released so that he can spend his remaining years with his family and friends including his grandchildren and great-grandchildren, some of whom he has never met.

The spiritual lives of political prisoners and revolutionaries is unique and vastly different in nature to that of the general prison population. Political prisoners want to make the world a better place and are willing to sacrifice their own lives in order to do so. The restrictions of prison life and isolation provide the exact conditions needed for spirituality to grow. In many ways it mirrors the abject poverty of a monastic life. Incarceration encourages people to develop their spiritual nature.

Leonard Peltier is a talented artist, well-read, humorous, intelligent and has transformed his spiritual practices and



Lenny Foster and Leonard Peltier

attitude during his 47 plus years of incarceration. His personal growth and development have allowed him to become a mentor to others through leadership and example.

Most Native American prisoners are in jail due to alcohol related crimes. Through their re-acquaintance with ancient rituals such as the Sweat Lodge Ceremony, the opportunity for spiritual wellness is returned. Lenny Foster took a leadership role in bringing these critical rituals to Native Americans behind bars.

The United States Government has failed to honor treaties made with Native Americans and in fact has broken every treaty ever made. The authorities could go a long way towards reconciliation with the release of Leonard Peltier and returning him home. Lenny believes that Peltier was railroaded. He is being used as a scapegoat. Seven US Senators have written to President Biden asking for Leonard’s release. I, personally, have corresponded with Ed Woods of No Parole Peltier, asking him how he would feel at the end of his life if he learned that he was wrong about Leonard Peltier. He was not able to provide me with an answer but simply flipped the script, asking me how I would feel if I found out that I was wrong about Leonard Peltier. Not a terribly strong argument, I would say. The FBI walked into a big mistake when they walked onto the Jumping Bull Ranch in Oglala in 1975. They have not been able to acknowledge their error and continue to make Leonard Peltier pay.

The younger generation carries a great deal of anger, frustration and antagonism against the government, which spills over and can be directed at others. Lenny has seen time and again the changes brought about within a person once they have had the opportunity to participate in their own expressions of spirit and culture. This opening up of

the soul is usually seen after about one year and allows for a more grounded and centered person to emerge who is then in a position to plan for their release in a positive way rather than stuck in negative emotions. Their energy improves and so does their quality of life.

Lenny Foster has been inside some of the toughest prisons in America, including the super-max prisons. By developing relationships with the prison chaplain’s office in each prison, he has established the importance of spiritual and culture practices needing to be part of prisoner rehabilitation. Talking Circles, Pow Wows, Sweat Lodge Ceremonies, Pipe Ceremonies, and the need each year to hold a traditional meal are important parts of healing. Through his efforts, Lenny has brought sage, cedar, tobacco and traditional ceremony to the Native American prison population. It is important to note that prison authorities have never hired a Native American to be a chaplain or counselor. This needs to change so that future generations experience the benefit of One Spirit.

Lenny has been able to visit Leonard Peltier four times a year. These visits have helped Leonard to maintain his sanity and humanity while experiencing abuse and humiliation on a regular basis. Incarceration is designed to break a man’s spirit. What is practiced on Leonard and other Native American prisoners is a form of sickness. Any form of abuse is a sickness of the spirit.

Lenny Foster spent the entire 71 days at Wounded Knee for the American Indian Movement (AIM) Occupation in 1973. He participated in Sun Dance Ceremonies with Lakota spiritual leader Leonard Crow Dog there, and on the Rosebud Reservation. He acknowledges that we are living in dangerous times and that we all need to come together in order to survive. It is time to hold what we know to be sacred in our hearts and heal ourselves and each other.

A Ceremony That Changed My Life

By Veronza Bowers, Jr.

I, along with a Comrade, attempted to escape from USP Lompoc, California on August 1st, 1979. We both were shot and apprehended.

Months later, after we got out of the segregation unit, we were running when a young Warrior from the Tribe of Five Feathers came over to the track, stopped us and told us that the Medicine Man, Archie Fire Lane Deer, wanted to see us. We knew that had to be something special for The Medicine Man to invite us over to the Sweat Lodge area. When we got there, Archie Fire stood up, smiled and said, "I heard about you Warriors. You need some healing. I would like to invite you into this Ceremony today."

So we accepted because it was a great honor. As I reflect back over these long years in captivity, I shudder to think how my life would have been had not I been introduced to that particular type of ceremony, to THAT particular Ceremony itself.

I remember back during the protests against the war in Viet Nam feeling the power of the people gathered in San Francisco marching in the thousands. That was a certain kind of a power. But sitting inside that little simple Lodge—they call it a *tukan tipi*, or *Inipi*. It's called a Sweat Lodge, but it is really a Purification Lodge...and not just a purification of the body. The Spirit, the mind, the body, the Soul: all those things become one with all other living things. Just sitting in that little structure made of willow...you sit in a Circle before some heated stones (we call them Grandfathers)...and they are glowing red-hot and actually give up their life in order for the Ceremony to take place. We see that rocks have been on Earth as long as earth has been Earth. They come from different places: riverbeds, volcanoes, etc. Those rocks are very, very old and thus have lots of stories to tell. Once they are in the fire for 3 or 4 hours and brought inside of the Lodge...THAT is when you feel the Power that radiates from them, when you are sitting there focusing as the Medicine Man (*Wicasa Wakan*) is offering (pouring) water, *Mini Wakan*, upon the Grandfathers. The Breath of the Grandfathers rises as the old Songs are sung and Prayers are said in different languages—it takes you on a journey—a journey inward, a journey back in time, and a journey ahead in time, as you sit there in that moment. And the Medicine Man says, "We are going into the Spirit World." It is black (dark) inside the *Inipi* except for the red glow of the Grandfathers.

That experience left such an impression on me! And everywhere I went afterwards—and I went to many different penitentiaries—I am always welcome in the Lodge. After many years of walking the Red Road, I received permission to conduct Ceremonies. And I am humbled and honored.

I say "A-Ho! Mitake Oyasin! Wanbli Sapa!

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Art by Sophia Victor

Shakuhachi

By Myron Francis

I had a friend who was named C. "T.O." Robinson who was also my cellmate that passed away. He was suffering badly with cancer and it had spread throughout his body killing him rapidly. About two months before he passed, T.O. was always outside playing basketball and dominating the courts. He was given that nickname because he looked so much like Terrell Owens, the football wide receiver.

Within a short time T.O. began to suffer so much pain and nausea that he quickly lost a lot of weight to the point he was nothing but skin and bones. Three days before his death, I had walked into our cell and he looked at me and almost yelled these words that I'll never forget, "Myron, I can't do this no more, I'm gonna die, Man!" That caught me completely by surprise and the first thing that popped into my mind was to go get Brother Daoud first thing in the morning. Brother Daoud had been teaching some Brothers and me about the Chi, and the Circulation of Chi/Life Force

Energy, and the Chakras that are located throughout our bodies. He taught us about the power we all have within yourself and how to tap into some of those powers through Meditation.

The next morning I was able to catch up with Brother Daoud and all I said was "Brother T.O. is dying, would you please go see him?" Without any hesitation Brother Daoud packed up his Bamboo flute (it's called *Shakuhachi*) and loaded it onto his walker that he uses to get about. When we arrived at the cell, T.O. was sitting in his wheelchair with his head down and probably riding the wave of some heavy medication for the pain.

I pulled up a chair at the foot of T.O.'s bed while Brother Daoud stood next to me. I said to T.O., "Brother T.O. I brought Brother Daoud to see you." T.O. looked up and said, "It's good to see you, O.G. I'm glad you came to see about me."

Brother Daoud seemed to know just what to say, and as he removed his flute from its case, he, in a soft voice, told T.O. about his own stay in the cell right across the hall from him while he himself fought for his life against cancer AND pneumonia. Brother Daoud told him, "Brother T.O., close your eyes and listen to the sound of this Bamboo flute and try to grasp it, hold on to it so you can fight for your life, O.K.?" T.O. lifted his head up, smiled and said, "Okay."

Brother Daoud played his flute for a good while and when he stopped he asked, "Brother T.O., what did you see?" T.O. replied, "Man, I saw a Blue color." Brother Daoud continued playing again and when he stopped he asked, "Brother T.O., what did you see?" "I saw the color Red," was his reply. Brother Daoud played his flute once more and when he stopped, he again asked, "Brother T.O., what did you see?" T.O. looked up, smiled, and said, "I saw yellow—a bright Yellow!"

Brother Daoud let a SILENCE fill the room and then began explaining, "Brother T.O., the red you saw is your connection to Mother earth. It is your Root, your foundation. It anchors you. Man walks between the Heavens and Mother earth. The blue that you saw is a healing color and also represents Father Sky. And the yellow you saw represents Grandfather Sun – that life-giving and life-sustaining Being without whose existence there would be no life. It also represents the place that helps you breathe, your solar plexus area."

Brother Daoud continued, "Brother T.O., I know you are in for Compassionate Release and you want to be with your Family and Loved Ones. Sooo, my Brother, IF Death comes knocking at your door, REMEMBER the Red and the Yellow

and the Blue you saw. Anchor your feet deep into the Red as you reach to the Blue Sky—and breathe deeply and feel the Yellow filling your Being. THAT way you can let Death know to stop knocking at your door! Do you understand what I'm saying Brutha Man?"

Brother Daoud and T.O., were looking deeply into each other's eyes. T.O. said, "Yeah, I gotcha, O.G.!"

When he said that, I was in a state of amazement and realized that tears were streaming down my face. I KNEW within my heart that my Friend T.O. would make it in this world until he could at least be with his Family as he had hoped for.

Death came knocking at my Friend's door. But the last thing Brother Daoud told T.O. was to focus on those three Colors and cling to them because they would help him tap into his Inner Strength long enough to make it to his Family.

This is a written observation of what I witnessed as Brother Daoud and Brother T.O. bridged a connection to live and fight Death for as long as it took to complete one more task in this realm of existence.

Brother T.O. was released on Compassionate Release two days later and released his last breath in the presence of his Family.

Note: Brother Daoud is Veronza Bowers, Jr., a Former Member of the Original Black Panther Party and long held Political Prisoner since 1973, and should have been released on Mandatory Parole on April 7, 2004.

(Veronza Bower, vbshakuhachi@aol.com)



Sculpture of Leonard Peltier by Rigo

Leonard Peltier

By Kevin Sharp

Leonard Peltier is a Native American civil rights activist and leader of the American Indian Movement (AIM), an historic political movement founded to promote Indigenous sovereignty and combat the oppression of Native American communities across the United States.

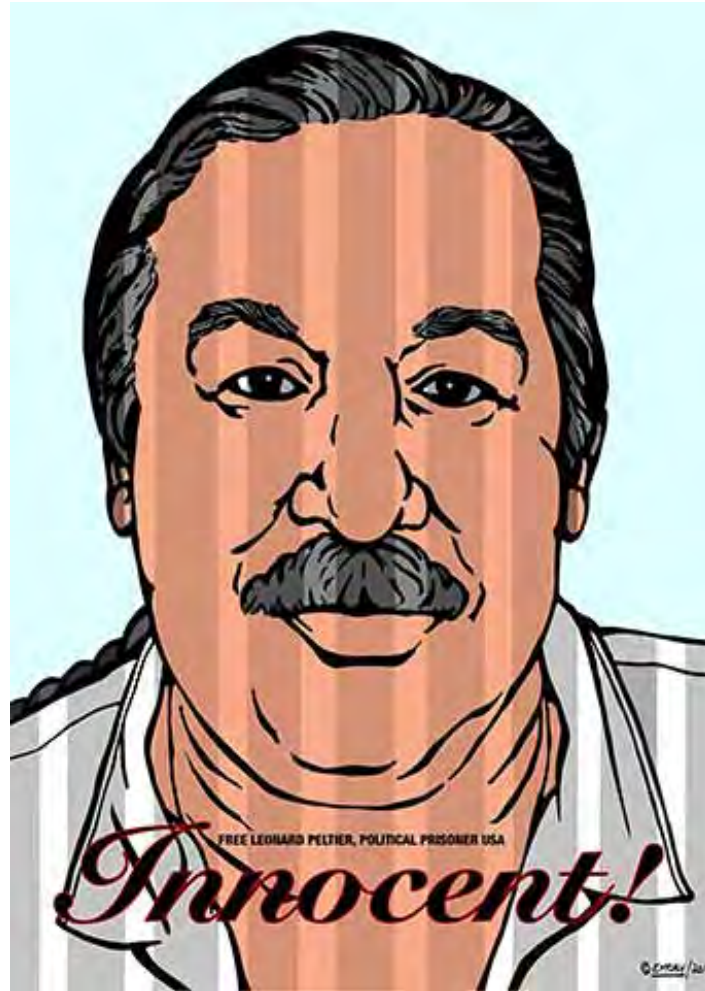
Throughout the 70s, the Federal Bureau of Investigation sought to disrupt AIM's activism through surveillance, infiltration, and severe crackdowns on demonstrations—part of a wider government effort that used illegal tactics to silence dissidence in the United States.

In 1976, Leonard Peltier and other members of AIM were asked by residents of the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation to provide support and protection to Pine Ridge residents following several years of severe violence on the reservation, including a string of over 60 murders of that the FBI did not adequately investigate. During the AIM members' visit to Pine Ridge, FBI agents trespassed onto the reservation. The situation devolved into a shootout during which two FBI Agents—Jack Coler and Ronald Williams—and a Native American man named Joe Stuntz were killed.

Mr. Peltier and his co-defendants, AIM members Robert Robideau and Dean Butler, were tried separately. The conditions and outcomes of the two trials differed drastically. Tried first, Robideau and Butler were acquitted by a jury on grounds of self-defense. Crucially, their lawyers had been able to inform the jury of the violent conditions on the reservation leading up to the shootout and the government's misconduct during the investigation of the agents' deaths. At Mr. Peltier's trial, however, Judge Paul Benson prevented the jury from considering this key evidence, even though the government's misconduct—which included several instances of witness intimidation and the suppression of exculpatory evidence—had been even more severe in Mr. Peltier's case. After this deeply flawed trial, Leonard Peltier was convicted of murder and given two consecutive life sentences.

Mr. Peltier remains in prison even though his conviction has been widely discredited, including by U.S. Attorney James Reynolds, the very federal prosecutor whose office handled the prosecution of Mr. Peltier's case. In a letter to President Biden, Mr. Reynolds acknowledges that Mr. Peltier was convicted “on the basis of minimal evidence” and describes his prolonged incarceration as “a testament to a time and system of justice that no longer has a place in our society.”

Mr. Peltier is now 78 years old, and after half of a century of incarceration, he suffers from several serious health conditions, including diabetes, hypertension, partial blindness from a stroke, and heightened vulnerability to COVID-19. While incarcerated, Mr. Peltier has not received adequate



Leonard Peltier, by Emory Douglas

medical attention for an abdominal aortic aneurysm that he suffered in 2016. He has also reported that he sometimes lacks access to basic needs, such as water. Despite his old age and poor health, Mr. Peltier is being held at United States Penitentiary Coleman I in Coleman, Florida—a maximum-security prison.

Despite his incarceration and failing health, Mr. Peltier has continued to serve his community as a leader, philanthropist, and artist. He has received numerous awards for his humanitarian work, and his paintings, which include vivid portraits of Sioux culture and Indigenous empowerment, were featured in *New Observations'* 135th issue.

Today, Mr. Peltier's best chance of gaining his freedom is through a grant of clemency from the Biden Administration. Since his imprisonment, human rights activists, public officials, U.S. judges, U.N. investigators, and dozens of tribal nations have all joined in calling on the government to release him. Mr. Peltier's supporters include his Holiness Pope Francis, the Dalai Lama, the late Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, the late Saint Mother Teresa, and the late Nelson Mandela, among others.

Support for Mr. Peltier's clemency has gained extraordinary traction over the last year:

- In an opinion released last summer, the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention called on the U.S. to release Mr. Peltier, attributing his prolonged incarceration to racist treatment and procedural violations during his parole process.
- On November 29, 2022, seven U.S. senators – including Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.), Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), Ed Markey (D-Mass.), Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), Mazie Hirono (D-Hawai'i) and Tina Smith (D-Minn.) – wrote to the President to express their support for clemency.
- On November 30, 2022, Jonathan Nez, President of the Navajo Nation, wrote a letter to President Biden urging clemency for Leonard Peltier.
- On December 1, 2022, over 200 Indigenous artists in the entertainment and fashion industries joined in calling on the President to free Mr. Peltier.
- And on December 3, 2022, Coleen Rowley, former FBI Special Agent and Legal Counsel to the FBI's Minneapolis Division, wrote to the President in support of clemency. In her letter, Ms. Rowley attributes Mr. Peltier's continued incarceration to active FBI opposition, stating that “[r]etribution seems to have emerged as the primary if not sole reason for continuing what looks from the outside to have become an emotion-driven ‘FBI Family’ vendetta.”

This support represents significant progress, but we need your help in order to build on this momentum. You can support the campaign for clemency by taking the following actions:

- Use your voice. Public pressure is the most powerful tool we have for putting clemency on the agenda of the President and elected officials.
 - Call the White House: (202)-456-1111
 - Email the White House: <https://whitehouse.gov/contact/>
 - Write a letter to the President expressing your support for clemency. Letters should be directed to:
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500
 - Write a letter to your members of Congress asking them to advocate for clemency.
 - Sign and share the petition in support of clemency for Leonard at <https://sign.moveon.org/petitions/the-time-for-justice-is-now-ask-president-biden-to-grant-clemency-to-leonard-peltier>

After nearly 50 years, it is time for Mr. Peltier to return to his family and community. His wish is to return to Turtle Mountain, his childhood home, where he can get to know his grandchildren for the first time.

We appreciate your help with making this wish a reality and ensuring that Leonard Peltier receives justice.

Thank you, Kevin H. Sharp



Love of Horse Nation, by Leonard Peltier

I am the Indian voice

Listen to me!
Listen!

I am the Indian voice. Hear me crying out of the wind, Hear me crying out of the silence. I am the Indian voice. Listen to me!

I speak for our ancestors. They cry out to you from the unstill grave. I speak for the children yet unborn. They cry out to you from the unspoken silence.

I am the Indian voice. Listen to me ! I am a chorus of millions. Hear us ! Our eagle's cry will not be stilled !

We are your own conscience calling to you. We are you yourself crying unheard within you.

Let my unheard voice be heard. Let me speak in my heart and the words be heard whispering on the wind to millions, to all who care, to all with ears to hear and hearts to beat as one with mine.

Put your ear to the earth, and hear my heart beating there. Put your ear to the wind and hear me speaking there.

We are the voice of the earth, of the future, of the Mystery.

Hear us!

Leonard Peltier
American Indian Movement
2 life sentences
Time Served 47 years +



Ina He'ca kta_One of Our Future Mothers, by Leonard Peltier

AND THEN THERE WAS ONE: ROBERT KING, THE LAST OF THE ANGOLA 3

By Mia Feroletto

“Our united quest is one thing: freedom and democracy.”
“Democracy Knows No color line. That’s the Promised Land.”

— Robert King, quoting Martin Luther King, Jr.

Herman Wallace, Albert Woodfox and Robert King are the men who make up the Angola 3, the three prisoners incarcerated in the notorious Angola Prison for a combined total sentencing of over 100 years. Herman Wallace was given compassionate release shortly before his death from cancer at the age of 71 in October of 2013. Albert Woodfox enjoyed six years of freedom upon release in 2016 when he traveled the world as a speaker on the issues of human rights and prison reform, returning to work with Robert until his death in August of 2022. Robert King remains to carry on their legacy.

At the age of 80, Robert lives in New Orleans, Louisiana where he is making plans to open a center for democracy, which focuses on his work with Herman Wallace and Albert Woodfox. The three men spent the majority of their time in solitary confinement for the duration of their incarceration where from inside they worked to institute change for prisoners. Angola Prison sits on the land of a former 18,000-acre slave plantation. Brutal treatment of prisoners continues to inflict cruel and unusual punishment to the men housed there.

As a teenager, Robert learned the difficult distinction between what is legal and what is moral. Convicted at 16 of a crime he did not commit, he experienced first-hand the fickle nature of our legal system when as one of four people convicted for a crime that was committed by two people, he found himself inside a prison cell. He began to question the legal system and explore other ideologies and philosophies. His interest in the Black Panther Party began with the death of Malcolm X and was expanded upon with the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. Christianity became a major influence as well.

The true history of slavery was overlooked for hundreds of years until the Black Panther Party began to articulate and educate in the 1960s. Robert King realized that he was being treated as a slave in prison and that the only right he had held onto once incarcerated was the right to rebel. He embraced the concept of rebellion to the point where he actually escaped, feeling freedom and liberation for the very first time. Together, he and Herman and Albert founded a chapter of the Black Panther Party and took on the role of reinterpreting the definition of the words “right” and “wrong.” Their struggle continued through isolation as they

enforced the need to keep dignity in their efforts to inform and educate other prisoners. All three men were innocent of the crimes they were convicted of.

Robert King’s history is entwined with his future. His vision for society is the same today as it was 50 years ago. He embraces everyone and acknowledges that we are all engulfed in how people look and feel. We are all connected and each of us play our own unique role in the unified whole.

Democracy is color blind, says Robert. It is not a conclusion but a process. Malcolm X saw it clearly when he went to the Holy Land and took on an ideology of inclusion rather than separation. In Mecca, there is no question of race. Martin Luther King, Jr. had a dream of democracy for all men and women. Malcolm and Martin are gone but we are left with their mandate of making democracy for all a reality.

Robert King owns a piece of property in New Orleans, which is the planned site for the center for democracy. This center will support the quest for democracy based on the struggle people have undertaken and died for in order to achieve. As Robert says, “This is not a done deal.” There is a distance yet to go and perhaps the destination is never reached. Democracy requires vigilance and constant watch in order to protect the rights and freedoms of others. Incarcerating innocent people for crimes they did not commit is not something found in a truly democratic society. As with the history of America, cherry-picking facts will not work. It is necessary for the facts of what our people have experienced to come to light so that the alchemical process of healing can take place.

Change is not a conclusion. Robert says that ten lifetimes may not be enough to institute this change. It is an ongoing process from one generation to the next. Robert says that we are creating ripples in the currents of the world and it is these ripples that will carry us forward.

The buildings that will house Robert’s center for democracy have been bought and the taxes are up to date. The two buildings are close to the river and will house the archives of the Angola 3 Prisoners as well as create a cultural institution where people can develop their own creativity and participate in that of others. There is a high school around the corner so programs for young people will be developed and encouraged through art, music and dance.

As Robert says, “I understand the significance of a cross

now. It is not a burden. It is a moral burden. It’s not an unbearable one. If I cannot accomplish it in my time I can leave a legacy where other people can do so.”

The center will be named after Dame Anita Roddick, the founder of The Body Shop, who in the late 1990s became involved in advocating for the Angola 3 Prisoners. She helped raise international awareness and the funds needed to finance their ultimately successful appeals of mishandled trials. Roddick died in September of 2007.

The full name of the center is:

The Angola Three Cultural Center
In Memory of Anita Roddick
Where the Quest for Democracy Continues

For those who would like to support Robert King and the development of this important institution, please contact him at:

Robert King
321 Blossom Court
Marrero, Louisiana 70094

Financial support is not the only way a person can contribute. There are many forms of activism and development work can be done such as grant writing, community development and public relations.

This is a project that deserves our support!

To Contact Robert King to Assist with This Project, Please call Him at 504 261 3454.

The Hypocrisy of the Christian Church

By Chris Hedges



Blessed Are The Protesters, by Mr. Fish

This is a talk I gave on April 6 at a protest at Princeton Theological Seminary demanding the removal of hedge fund billionaire Michael Fisch as chair of the seminary's trustee board.

We are not here to debate the moral squalor that defines the life of the hedge fund billionaire and chair of the seminary's trustee board, Michael Fisch. We are not here to denounce him for the personal fortune, reportedly worth at least \$10 billion, a fortune he built preying on the poorest among us, those families that went into debt to pay his prison telecommunications company's exorbitant fees which charge up to \$15 for 15-minute calls, fees that see families

across the U.S. pay \$1.4 billion each year to speak to incarcerated loved ones. We are not here to decry the pain he and his corporation ViaPath, formerly Global Tel Link, caused to hundreds of thousands of children, desperate to speak to an incarcerated mother or father, to tell them about school, or that they miss them, that they need to hear their voice to know everything will be okay, that they are loved. We are not here to contrast the lives of these children, bewildered at the cruelty of this world, living in dilapidated apartments in inner city projects, with the feudal opulence of Michael Fisch's life, his three mansions worth \$100 million lined up on the same ritzy street in the East Hamptons, his art collection worth over \$500 million, his Fifth Avenue apartment

worth \$21 million and his four-story Upper East Side townhouse. So many luxury dwellings that sit empty much of the time, no doubt, while over half a million Americans are homeless. Greed is not rational. It devours because it can. It knows only one word—more.

No, we are here today to call out the Pharisees that run this seminary, the ones who speak about loving the poor, the oppressed and the marginalized, in the abstract, but who really love the rich, including the rich who make their fortunes by exploiting the families of students in prison I teach in the Rutgers college degree program, students, many of whom should have never been imprisoned, who are victims of our system of neo-slavery. We are here today to call out the liberal church, so quick to wrap itself in the cloak of virtue and so quick to sell virtue out when it conflicts with monetary interests and requires self-sacrifice.

Is it any mystery that the liberal church is dying? Is it any mystery that its seminaries and divinity schools are contracting and closing? The church bleeds itself to death sustaining moribund institutions and paying the salaries of church bureaucrats and seminary presidents who speak in the empty and vague gibberish that Lee Walton, the President of Princeton Theological Seminary, uttered when presented with the fact that Michael Fisch, and all he stands for, is antithetical to the Christian gospel. This false piety, and the smug arrogance that comes with it, is killing the church, turning it into a museum piece.

Is Black Lives Matter a commodity, a piece of branding, or does it mean we will stand with those Black and Brown and Asian and white bodies in our prison gulags and internal colonies? This seminary may have removed the name of Samuel Miller, a slaveholder who used the gospel to perpetrate and defend a crime of Nazi-like proportions, from the seminary chapel, albeit only when students protested, but it embraces a billionaire who makes his fortune fleecing incarcerated men and women who work 40-hour weeks in prison and are paid, when they are paid, little more than a dollar a day. Prisons are modern day plantations, and not surprisingly, a multi-billion dollar a year business for oligarchs such as Michael Fisch.

The wealthy industrialists in the 1930s and 1940s poured money and resources into the church, including seminaries such as Princeton Theological, to crush the Social Gospel, led by Christian radicals and socialists. They funded a brand of Christianity—which today is dominant—that conflates faith with free enterprise and American exceptionalism. The church has gone down the rabbit hole of a narcissistic how-is-it-with-me form of spirituality. The rich are rich, this creed goes, not because they are greedy or privileged, not because they use their power to exploit others, but because they are brilliant and gifted leaders, worthy of being lionized, like Bill Gates or Jamie Dimon, as oracles. This belief is not only delusional, but Christian heresy. The word heresy comes from the Greek verb *hireo*, which means to grasp or to seize

—to seize for yourself at someone else's expense. You don't need to spend three years at Harvard Divinity School as I did, to figure out Jesus did not come to make us rich.

The liberal church committed suicide when it severed itself from this radicalism. Radical Christians led the abolitionist movement, were active in the Anti-Imperialist League, defended workers during bloody labor wars, fought for women's suffrage, formulated the Social Gospel—which included campaigns for prison reform and educational programs for the incarcerated—and were engines in the civil rights and anti-war movements. The socialist presidential candidate Eugene V. Debs spent far more time quoting the Bible than Karl Marx. His successor, Norman Thomas, was a Presbyterian minister.

These radicals were not embraced by the institutional church, which served as a bulwark of the establishment, but they kept the church vital and prophetic. They made it relevant. Radicals were and are its hope.

James Baldwin, who grew up in the church and was briefly a preacher, said he abandoned the pulpit to preach the Gospel. The Gospel, he knew, was not heard most Sundays in Christian houses of worship. And today with ministers wary of offending their aging and dwindling flocks—who are counted on to pay the clergy salary and bills—this is even truer than when Baldwin was alive.

This is not to say that the church does not exist. This is not to say that I reject the church. On the contrary. The church today is not located inside the stone buildings that surround us or the cavernous and largely empty houses of worship, but here, with you. It is located with those who work in prisons, schools and shelters, those who organize fast food workers, who serve the undocumented, who form night basketball leagues in poor communities, as my divinity school classmate Michael Granzen did in Elizabeth, and who are arrested at anti-fracking and anti-war protests.

Billionaires like Michael Fisch will never fund this church, the real church. But we do not need his money. To truly stand with the oppressed is to accept being treated like the oppressed. It is to understand that the fight for justice demands confrontation. We do not always find happiness, but we discover in this resistance a strange kind of joy and fulfillment, a life of meaning and worth, one that mocks the tawdry opulence and spiritual void of billionaires like Michael Fisch, those who spend their lives building pathetic little monuments to themselves. We must remain rooted in this radicalism, this commitment to the crucified of the earth. We must always demand, even at the cost of our own comfort and safety, justice. We may not always triumph over evil, but our faith means evil will never triumph over us.

Mike Africa, Jr.: A Child of the MOVE Movement Making Moves of His Own

"I live my life with positivity. I know the world's crazy. I know there are crazy things going on all around this world. I'm not oblivious. But man, listen, I survived. I came out of what could have killed me. What did kill some people. So I live my life with positivity. And I think people are surprised about that. Not only do I live my life with positivity behind the MOVE Movement, as being a move member, but Philadelphia is crazy. Philadelphia kills people every day. Crack is used and sold...every day. I grew up in West Philly. Not the part Will Smith is from. You know what I'm saying? He had a lawn and basketball court that wasn't drug infested. He had parents—two parents in the house. He had a driveway. He was Carlton Banks compared to where I'm from."

— Mike Africa, Jr.

By Mia Feroletto

My first introduction to Mike Africa, Jr. came through his discussion with King Downing following the screening of the film, "Forty Years a Prisoner," by Tommy Oliver as part of the 14th Annual Black Panther Party Film Festival in October, 2022. I was impressed by his positive attitude and determination to get his parents out of prison and make a contribution to society at large. His family story was compelling, inspiring, and combined with the history of the MOVE Organization and its treatment by the Administration of the City of Philadelphia, I was fired up to take some action of my own. Hence, this article.

There is so much ignorance in America caused by the desire of many to simply turn away from hard truths. The first time one decides to look away, there may be pains of conscience but the more it becomes a pattern to look elsewhere, social and community responsibility can become smaller and smaller until a time comes when it almost disappears and then no longer exists at all. The average American is in the dark regarding the extent of the violence and police brutality people of color face every day. The average American has no idea what happened to the members of the MOVE family in 1985.

To give a brief synopsis of events as they transpired, in 1978 the Philadelphia Police Department conducted a raid on the home of the MOVE Organization in Powelton Village, Philadelphia. Caught on tape, one MOVE member, Delbert Africa, is brutally beaten and kicked repeatedly by the police as he and eight other members of the household are arrested and ultimately incarcerated, receiving a combined

total of more than 1,000-year sentencing. They were convicted on the death of police officer James J. Ramp who was, in fact, killed by friendly fire. Mike's parents, Debbie Africa and Mike Africa Sr., were incarcerated at this time.

Mike was born in prison. Mike's mother Debbie hid her baby from the guards for the first few days of his life. He and filmmaker Tommy Oliver visited the prison cell where he was born in a segment of the documentary filled with pathos as the audience is left to ponder what it must be like for a newborn infant entering into the world in such a harsh environment.

Now a man in his forties, Mike is a father of grown children himself as he experiences his own parents as free for the first time in his life. As a man in his 40s, he had the opportunity to see his mother's feet for the very first time when she moved in with him upon being released from prison.

On May 13th, 1985, the Philadelphia Police Department returned once again to harass the MOVE members but this time on Osage Avenue. This tactical maneuver had been planned out in advance and included the dropping of a bomb on the roof of the MOVE residence there. The decision was made to "let the fire burn" which killed 11 people including 5 children, and destroyed 61 houses in the neighborhood. The devastation and loss of life and property is a blatant example of white supremacy in America. The heat of the fire reached 2,000 degrees which ensured a horrific death for those that perished there. All this happened in the City of Brotherly Love almost 40 years ago when Philadelphia gave permission to the police to conduct genocide.

The MOVE house on Osage Avenue, owned by Mike's great-aunt Louise James, was confiscated through eminent domain and used as a police substation for 35 years, then sold to a developer for one dollar. Currently a private home, the owner offered it to Mike for purchase because he was tired of the lack of privacy and the constant cameras clicking in his face. He and Mike have an agreement in place for Mike to raise the funds needed to reclaim Osage Avenue.

In 2023, it is easy to look back on the MOVE Movement and see that, in many ways, they were visionaries and ahead of their time in many areas of life which are acceptable and in fact lauded today. Animal Rights, raw foods, home births, hair extensions and weaves are just a few of the philosophical and lifestyle choices embraced by the followers of MOVE founder John Africa in the early 1970s. These ideas have been incorporated into current day thought and are commonplace today, however; we know that whatever is new and different can also be a source of fear.

Mike Africa, Jr. has a plan for his aunt's house. He intends to create a center for learning about MOVE, political prisoners and future generations.

"Reclaim Osage" is under development with fundraising beginning May 13th, 2023 on the anniversary of the 1985 bombing. A press conference planned for that day will announce the schedule of activities and events that will be held in 2025 surrounding the 40th anniversary of the bombing. Mike is in the process of assembling his team to lead and orchestrate this crucial remembrance. New Observations Magazine and I will be supporting Mike in this endeavor and for this reason are releasing our issue on political prisoners in tandem with his press conference. Stay tuned for this exciting project!

The bombing of the MOVE house has never had a true community resolution. Neighbors whose homes were destroyed in the 1985 fire never felt that they were adequately compensated for the loss of their property. As Mike says, there needs to be a rose that grows through the concrete. His project can provide the needed emotional and spiritual growth to those whose families are directly involved in this tragedy, and also to the extended Philadelphia community at large. The City of Philadelphia cannot prosper totally until this wound is healed.

To support "Reclaim Osage!" please visit their Go Fund Me page at <https://www.gofundme.com/manage/help-me-buy-back-6221-osage-ave>. To reach Mike Africa, Jr. please call 267 230 9337.

Prison Writings of Mondo we Langa

Mondo we Langa, also known as David Rice, died in the Nebraska State Penitentiary on March 11, 2016 at age 68 in Lincoln, Nebraska, after enduring 45 years in prison. Mondo was Minister of Information of the Black Panther Party of Omaha, Nebraska, a victim of the government's illegal Counter Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO), and wrongfully convicted in 1970 for the death of a police officer. His co-defendant, Ed Poindexter, was Deputy Chairman of the Omaha BPP Chapter. Ed remains in prison today, is wheelchair bound, and on daily dialysis to keep his kidneys functioning. Both men were eligible for parole for decades but were not released by the State of Nebraska.

In prison, Ed created an anti-gang program for young men and a self-esteem curriculum for African American youth. He taught in prison programs, earned a bachelor's degree, and acquired all of the course work for a Master's Degree. Mondo ran the Harambee African Cultural Organization for decades, aimed at reducing recidivism and creating self-knowledge among the men. He also joined the Native American and Latinx Prison organizations to forge solidarity between our peoples. He published several books of poetry, wrote plays performed around the country, wrote regular columns and guest editorials in various newspapers, and was a visual artist (see his portrait of Malcolm X [El Hajj Malik El Shabazz]). He also published the "Harambee Flame" up until his death.

—Letter, Mondo we Langa Wopashitwe Eyen We Langa (AKA David Rice) to Agbala N. O. Aziokwu
8-21-1991

U hali gani/how are you doing? Got your comments and so forth today. You been gone too long or something. You think I done got stupid? I know you're writing the screenplay out of love. Never been any doubt in my mind about that, and I know you are writing both as a historian and as an artist. This being the case, it is understandable and constructive that what you produce is a result of a creative process. I just want to help you ensure that important matters not mischaracterize this business of Norma. I was not having any relationship with her of an intimate sort during the time I was in the party. This had happened prior to my membership in the party. For most of the time that I was a member, I was going with a sister, Ellen. Norma did live with a party member for quite a while and messes around with another before that. As to the business about my mother, while your characterization of her and her relationship with me accurately reflects the way she has sometimes been over the past several years and the way she sometimes related to me, this was not the way things were while I was in jail

awaiting trial, nor during the next four or five years. Frustration and a sense of helplessness have taken their toll on her. When she first came to the jail to see me, I was shocked because she was someone who, as far as I was concerned, didn't particularly care for me. After all, I had left home at the age of seventeen. But when she came to see me, she was loving and fully supportive of me. We had no conflict.

Here's the deal on the basement. At the trial, the pigs testified they'd 'found' the dynamite in the coal bin/"cubby hole" in the basement. Shortly after the trial ended, my house was burned down. I paid that no mind, but in a 1974 hearing before Federal Court Judge Warren Urbom, the state produced a photo of the basement. The pigs were using this photo in their testimony about the seizure of the dynamite and were having trouble. The judge noticed this and had them be very specific in pointing out where in the photo was the spot where they had "found" the dynamite. Each of them pointed out a spot. During a recess, I got the photo and discovered that the coal bin was nowhere to be seen. Whoever took the photo had taken it from the foot of the stairs and had gotten a picture of the basement showing its length from north to south. The coal bin was cut into the wall at the northwest end of the basement and wasn't in the photo at all. Each one of them police lied when they identified any spot in that photo, or they lied during the trial when they claimed they'd discovered the dynamite in the coal bin.

I believe the police may have discovered this problem after the trial and had the house torched to destroy the evidence of perjured testimony.

— Mondo

Poem by Mondo we Langa

When It Gets to This Point

Michael Brown?
I had never heard of him
Had never heard of anything he'd done
Before the news of his death came
Whoever he might have become
Whatever he might have achieved
Had he lived longer
Not been riddled lifeless by
Bullets from Darren Wilson's gun
And crumpled on the pavement of a Ferguson Street
For more than four hours in
The heat of that August Day
And before
I'd never heard of Trayvon Martin
Had known nothing of who he was
Until I learned of his demise
And cause of death
A bullet to the chest
George Zimmerman, the shooter
A badge-less pretend police
With a pistol
And fear of the darkness
Trayvon's darkness
And after a while
The pictures, the names,
The circumstances
Run together
Like so much colored laundry in the wash
That bleeds on whites
Was it Eric Garner or Tamir Rice
Who was twelve but seen as twenty
Hulk Hogan or the Hulk
With demonic eyes it was said
Who shrank the cop in Ferguson
Into a five-year-old who
Had to shoot
Just had to shoot
And John Crawford the third
In a Walmart Store aisle
An air rifle in his hands he'd picked up
From the shelf
And held in the open
In an open-carry state
Was it John or someone else
Killed supposedly by mistake

In a dark stairwell
I know Akai Gurley fell
I hadn't heard of him before
Nor of Amadou Diallo or Sean Bell
Prior to their killings
Which of these two took slugs in the greater number
I don't recall
My memory is too encumbered
With the names
Of so many more before and since
The frequent news reports of
Non-arrests, non-indictments,
Non-true bills
And duplicitous presentations by "experts in the field"
The consultants put out front
To explain away
That which is so often plain as day
To coax and convince us that we're the ones
Who can't see straight and
Can't hear clearly
Who are the ones replacing facts with spin
To mislead and mystify
As the beatings and the chokings and shootings
Of our boys and men
By these wrong arms of the law
Proceed in orderly fashion
Before the sometimes sad
And sometimes angry faces of
Our uncertain
Our hesitant
Disbelief.

Prison Lives Matter: Liberate Our Elders (Continuing Our Charge of Genocide)

Reflections and Thoughts on the Organizing Committee

By Kwame “Beans” Shakur

“No one will undertake to aid us unless they sense the power of our movement. It is Blacks who must play not only the role of liberating the Black colony, but also the leading role in the liberation of the whole city/state. To expect that someone else will take the full responsibility for our own liberation is suicide.” – George Jackson, *Blood in My Eye*

As always, i¹ come in the vision for self-determination, national liberation, the release of all Political Prisoners (PPs)/Prisoners of War (POWs), and the abolition of legalized prison slavery. We are witnessing the manifestation and implementation of that vision through the concrete work and tangible infrastructure that is being laid down by a number of organizations/formations within the overall movement both inside and out.

The call to organize the “Prison Lives Matter (PLM): Liberate Our Elders” webinar and panel discussion for July 2023 is part and parcel of that work. These panel discussions are being put in place to help establish a national agenda/strategy as We turn theory into practice and action. On March 3, 2023, a Zoom call was held to develop an organizing committee for the panels. I believe i can speak for more than myself when i say that it was extremely motivating and encouraging for those in attendance to see/hear such a large number of our leading thinkers, organizers, and strategists come together in that space. Some of those sisters/brothers have been freedom fighters on the frontline in our struggle for far longer than i have been on this earth. It has long been understood that the (New) Afrikan Nation/Black community here in the u.s. isn’t monolithic. However, that call proved that We can overcome generational, ideological, geographic, and religious gaps or differences in solidarity, and a collective consciousness can move this struggle forward.

I want to further clarify what the aims and objectives are going into this webinar and panel for those who attended the first call, or those who will come on board in the coming months. We don’t want any confusion or misunderstandings that would limit the overall agenda and participation based on the title (PLM: Liberate Our Elders). PLM is a united front

¹ New Afrikan independence activist commonly use a lowercase “i” for first person (singular) and a capital “W” in “We” for first person plural based on the philosophy that, “the Community is more important than the individual” from the New Afrikan Creed.

for PPs/POWs, politicized individuals, and outside formations or campaigns who are working in unison to educate, organize, and establish infrastructure with the overstanding that there is no separate struggle between the prison movement and our overall movement against racism/capitalism/imperialism. This united front and its structure is the result of a concrete study and analysis of the past 50+ years, and in doing so We learned from those who led the struggle at the highest level during the high tide (1960s and ‘70s), where and how the revolutionary movement failed, due to a lack of cadre development, as well as knowing and maintaining a line.

PLM, while maintaining the aforementioned anti-racist/anti-capitalist/anti-imperialist line, is also not a monolithic body. The individuals, organizations, and campaigns that make up the PLM National Coordinating Committee (NCC) range from New Afrikan Revolutionary Nationalists, to inter-communalists, to anarchists.

As a united front, PLM and many organizations/individuals within the NCC, as well as general members inside and out, are part and parcel of (or do overlapping work with) Spirit of Mandela, New Afrikan Independence Movement, Front for the Liberation of the New Afrikan Nation (FROLINAN), Jericho Movement, The Peoples’ Senate, etc. At the same time, each individual/organization/campaign united under the PLM umbrella operates under their own autonomy and may have their own programs or initiatives. PLM is about strengthening the overall movement through unity, strategy, and applying the proper educational tools to the captives/masses to sustain ourselves moving forward.

PLM is not simply for/about the Prison Industrial Slave Complex (PISC). Here again We overstand that this form of modern-day slavery is only one of the many arms/functions of capitalism, colonialism, national oppression, fascism, white supremacy, and genocide that We are fighting as a whole oppressive body. Therefore, We use this united front in unison with the aforementioned outside formations that we are part and parcel of, to use our body as a whole to dismantle and decolonize from the above forms of colonial rule.

With all that being said, this webinar and panel discussion is not solely based on the issues around prisons or the Liberate Our Elders campaign. That is why on the March 3rd

Zoom call, Jalil Muntaqim [former PP/49+ years] spoke on the function and significance of The Peoples’ Senate; Sekou Odinga [former PP/33+ years] explained the purpose of the 2021 International Tribunal and how We can move forward with their guilty verdict of five counts of genocide against the u.s. Clinical psychologist, Dr. Amber Siler, spoke about the psychological effects and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) that We suffer from as a result of colonial violence.

The goal for each in-person webinar and panel discussion event in the Bay Area (Calif.), Chicago, and New York is to have individuals/organizations present from that specific region who are doing the work tied into infrastructure building. We need individuals on the panels representing our lawful committee, our clinical psychologist, members of The Peoples’ Senate, Spirit of Mandela/International Tribunal members, PP freedom campaign representatives (Mumia Abu-Jamal, Kamau Sadiki, Jamil Al-Amin, etc.), and PLM-NCC members in order to explain how We use the existing structure of inside/out coordinating to plant these seeds and connect the various initiatives across the country. These include The Nelson Mandela Rules, the HALT Solitary Confinement Act, the national campaign to secure minimum wage for captive workers, establishing members/structure for the Peoples’ Senate, uniting defense committees/freedom campaigns of political prisoners and elders, as well as our lawful counsel and clinical psychologist networking to bring others in their field on board.

It is important to talk about the subtitle for the event, Liberate Our Elders, making the connection between their campaign call for freedom and how it ties directly into our international struggle for independence and self-government. A large number of Elders identify as conscious citizens of the Republic of New Afrika and there are countless other Black, Brown, and Indigenous captives who are also members of oppressed groups or internal neo-colonies and victims of u.s. genocide. Who do We expect to Liberate Our Elders? The same courts and system that put them there? How can We make the charges against the u.s. for violating international law in regard to PPs as freedom fighters or members of a colonized nation if We are not operating like a nation/government, or national movement that is at war and establishing the proper structures to be recognized by the international community? The holding of international tribunals, developing The Peoples’ Senate, and organizing national strategy is how We gain our freedom. Anything short of that, We will not be taken seriously by the oppressor, potential allies around the world, or even our own people. These are mandatory steps in the decolonization process that cannot be ignored or bypassed from any neo-colonized group of people being held as an internal captive nation under the false jurisdiction of a colonial empire.

There have been many attempts and declarations over decades in the name of self-determination; however, We lacked the proper infrastructure to sustain ourselves. The

work We are talking about now is focused on building that infrastructure to concretize unity, trust, resilience and strength to move forward in growth, sustainability, self-governance and independence, here and internationally.

“We Are Our Own Liberators” – Jalil Muntaqim

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A Lot Is Riding On Stopping Atlanta's "Cop City"

By "Knuckles"

For close to two years now, a fight has been under way in the woods of southeastern Atlanta, pulling in a range of progressive forces to counter an extreme rightist agenda. Environmentalists, police accountability organizers, anti-racist activists and others from around the country, and even internationally, have come in response to local residents' outrage at a municipal land use proposal, joining various protest actions organized locally. These streams of people are mobilizing to oppose a city plan to clear-cut a cherished city-owned urban forest, and replace it with the largest tactical police training facility in the country, as well as a major Hollywood film industry soundstage.

Soon after the Atlanta city council approved this proposal in 2021, opponents dubbed the police training facility "Cop City," which caught on and spread quickly among people who had not long before taken to the streets demanding police reforms and defunding in the wake of George Floyd's killing in Minnesota. They then decided to rename the contested South River Forest as Weelaunee Forest, in honor of the Muskogee people who had endured a forced population transfer from this area in the 19th century. This has long been considered one of the most painful episodes among the series of atrocities comprising the genocide of Native people during the founding of the United States. With these actions signaling a radically different view of the responsible path forward, the battle was on between a loosely organized set of activists and powerful backers of the project, including some of the largest companies in the country.

The first year or so of the battle had followed a fairly predictable routine, with 'forest defenders' camping out and tree-sitting in the forest, and undertaking militant direct actions to halt destruction when bulldozers encroached. Other supporters from a broad range of interests in stopping this project began carrying out actions nationwide at offices of many businesses and agencies connected to financing or otherwise implementing the proposals, or spreading the word among sympathetic networks via social media or at in-person conferences. Police would occasionally arrest activists and raid the forest sites to evict squatters, whose efforts proved to be resilient and garnered increasing media attention. Mounting public pressure caused the project's general construction contractor to pull out, and emboldened opponents to focus on further corporate backers.

Over the last several months however, this battle has spilled into an international spotlight, first with the state of Georgia raising eyebrows by prosecuting several arrested forest defenders under a domestic terrorism statute. This was followed in January by the highly publicized killing of a forest defender, who had taken the moniker Tortuguita, by police conducting a large-scale raid, and another larger

round of arrests under these charges. The resulting storm of controversy served only to raise public focus on this project, while both sides dug in their heels.

It was in this context that I saw an open invitation from organizers to a week of educational, cultural and protest activities this past March, in support of the forest defense cause, and decided to check things out. In a disturbing echo of racist talking points from the Civil Rights era, Georgia leaders had begun justifying their arrests with speeches about outside agitators stirring up trouble. What I experienced upon visiting came as a shock.

I have been advised to remain anonymous for legal reasons, and to limit how much I say publicly about what followed. But in short, I joined some of the activities planned, though did nothing that could justify serious charges. For example, I took a forest tour and learned that clear-cutting had already begun in contravention of legal prohibitions given ongoing lawsuits and appeals, and that hundreds of loads of construction debris had been dumped into one area and was apparently being called "Michelle Obama Park." I took part in a range of organized activities from marching into the forest, to sharing meals cooked by volunteers, to camping overnight with many others. I was arrested a day later on March 5, during a police sweep of the forest and an adjacent field where organizers had set up a concert. Police reported that a few hours prior, some activists had set fire to construction equipment and thrown rocks and fireworks at them. However, I was arrested hours later, nowhere near the site of that action, along with 22 others, many at the music festival attended by hundreds of people including small children playing in a bouncy house. One arrestee told me this was the first protest he'd ever attended.

Intense media scrutiny followed the arrests, from as far away as the UK and Qatar. The sheer scale of the arrest and jaw-dropping charges grabbed headlines in all the major press. The rightwing echo chamber used the opportunity to make claims of arrestees being part of an "Antifa" conspiracy, and amplified Georgia leaders' narrative of outsiders causing mayhem in their quiet community.

However, the exact opposite is true: people coming from afar to protest were invited by local people requesting solidarity. Also, many Georgians, simply concerned about poor decisions being made about these ill-conceived projects in their names, were detained on the night of March 5, at the same site under the same circumstances. But I watched as maybe 15 Georgians were then separated from the out-of-state detainees, interviewed by prosecutors and police, and simply released—while everyone else was charged with domestic terrorism. I was detained in the Dekalb County Jail for three weeks and initially denied bond after fictitious claims

by the prosecutors that most of the detainees were holding "shields" when arrested, or, having mud on their pants and shoes, which supposedly indicated having crossed a riverbank near the site of the construction damage. Most of our group were eventually released on bond until trial, due in large part to the flood of support and public outrage our networks were able to mobilize.

There is ample common ground among Atlantans, Georgians and people all over the world about opposing these proposed projects on basic common sense and ethical grounds:

1. The \$90 million price tag for these projects is rising fast due to delays and insurance concerns stemming from public opposition, and represents a massive financial boondoggle, ensnaring taxpayers into subsidizing profits for a few wealthy corporate investors.

2. The projects force through a huge incursion on the quality of life of a local working-class Black community that has shown over and over they don't want it.

3. This is the very definition of Environmental Injustice: expecting a poor community of color to shoulder massive new environmental burdens, including toxic chemicals from

a planned burn facility and other police training activities, precipitous destruction of green space, dramatically increased noise and traffic, lower air quality, etc. Something like this would be absolutely unfathomable in the affluent Buckhead neighborhood of the city, for example.

4. Atlanta should be jealously protecting this precious forest ecosystem instead of clear-cutting it. There are better places for a project like this—and in fact, alternatives already exist. This is purely about profit and political gain. Companies like Home Depot, Dunkin Donuts, Waffle House, Bank of America and the Atlanta Journal-Constitution are leading the charge, and stand to gain significantly from the establishment of these facilities.

5. The tactical police training planned at the facility is an out-right assault on an entire working-class community of color. It also flies in the face of the national conversation we have been having for years about how best to de-escalate confrontations involving police, and increase non-violent responses to mental health crises or other situations that residents face on a daily basis.

The state's overreach here is a national embarrassment. Not only has this wild prosecution exposed the City to future



lawsuits, it's already causing loss of good standing and major business opportunities. Recently, the Democratic National Convention was awarded to Chicago, following much chatter about the decision being based on not wanting to associate the party with this fiasco in Atlanta, especially given the city's complicity in actions that probably violate legal prohibitions. In fact, the alarm bells are ringing so loudly that a national movement of constitutional scholars has grown in response: successful prosecution under a domestic terrorism charge would set a dangerous precedent, and would empower the most authoritarian forces in every state to attempt shutting down dissent and resistance work of all kinds, replicating or even improving on these neo-fascist statutes and tactics,

and removing even a pretense of adhering to fundamental constitutional protections.

The city government recently closed the park off to public access, to enable forest destruction to continue unimpeded. As a result, the pace of forest defenders' activity to stop the project has quickened, with plans for intensive national targeting of major corporate backers. These include Nationwide Insurance, whose subsidiary Scottsdale Insurance insures the Atlanta Police Foundation, which is driving the project. Encouraged by the earlier success of a campaign against Reeves Young, the original general construction contractor that pulled out after public pressure, opponents are also targeting Brasfield and Gorrie,



the new general contractor, which is vulnerable to public opposition given it is a major builder with projects around the country.

Another major area of learning for movement thinkers has been that despite the implications of this desperate attack on basic protections by the far right, the Cop City defendants have been fortunate and privileged to have ample legal and financial resources to wage this fight, as well as strong social networks that can leverage media attention and mobilize support of various kinds. In my interactions with defendants in jail, they have all been very clear that they see how our legal system exposes many poor people, and communities of color, to arbitrary and irrational "justice." They stand firmly in solidarity with those people and communities. The fight, therefore, doesn't stop at defeating just these charges; it MUST BE about confronting this entire corrupt "justice" system, which has failed, and actually makes all of us less safe each day.

Conditions in Dekalb are nothing new for 'regular' inmates. A friend I made inside told me one day about wanting to move away from Atlanta, because "next time I go to jail, at least it'll be a white jail." Such a conviction, that prison is inevitable for poor and/or Black people in the U.S., would be repulsive to any member of the middle class – and yet it is the norm for millions of poor people. In Dekalb, the majority of toilets were non-functional. Food delivered at arbitrary mealtimes was usually so bland and lacking nutrition that commissary day was the highlight of the week for those who could afford snacks. Daily breakfast might show up at 3:30 AM, but lunch and dinner could arrive together at 6 PM—all leaving a sea of Styrofoam trash following each meal. There was no TV, radio, internet, magazines, library, gym or yard time (I had a lawyer visit the one time my pod was invited to use the caged 'yard' for an hour). Predictably then, fistfights and even stabbings were not uncommon. In-person visits were canceled during Covid, and the same private company that runs the phone system at outrageous rates now provides a paid video terminal in each pod as the only option for friends and family visits. Mass incarceration simply wastes millions of lives that could instead be made productive and help build up their communities.

Another sure line of reasoning by the prison industrial complex is that poor conditions are the reflection of being underfunded. At the Fulton County Jail next door, guards just last week found an inmate dead with holes all over his body—he had been neglected for several days and was literally eaten alive by a severe infestation of bedbugs and other insects. The sheriff's response to this death in his custody was to blame it on crumbling infrastructure and to ask for huge public spending on a new jail. We cannot allow ourselves to fall into a trap of throwing more money at a clearly failed strategy. There is no shortage of evidence to back up common sense: prison populations grow with increased criminalization, and plummet when societies work instead

to eradicate poverty and ensure that basic needs are met.

The potential impact on organizing is stark. It feels increasingly like anyone taking actions based on concern about political malfeasance or corruption is a potential target and could wind up a political prisoner. Of course, intimidation is precisely the intent—but there are critical lessons here for all of us about how tenuous our freedoms can be once we decide to act on our principles, and our organizing begins to threaten those interests to whom the police apparatus is ultimately accountable. A successful prosecution here is sure to electrify the extreme right, and to launch the careers of people competing to take credit for tamping down the riff-raff. This fight involves a huge range of stakeholders—truly anyone who cares about protecting a way of life long held to be inviolable. It also forces observers to decide on which side of the conflict—with all the resulting implications—they are going to stand.

In my case, it has engendered a deep desire to build strong community relations as a strategy to defeat this creeping tide. Atlanta may well be a harbinger of national politics for years to come.



A Talk on “Inside Knowledge” with Doran Larson

By Mia Feroletto

Recently, *The New York Times* published a story about the 3,300 collected essays written by incarcerated people that now create an archive of material that is, perhaps, the most definitive work on the prison system gathered thus far.* *Inside Knowledge: Incarcerated People on the Failures of the American Prison*, by Doran Larson, New York University Press (forthcoming, 2024), emerged from the workshops on writing that he taught to prisoners at Attica for eleven years.

I had the opportunity for a conversation with Doran Larson, PhD, the Edward North Chair of Greek and Greek Literature and Professor of Literature and Creative Writing and Director of American Studies at Hamilton College, where we discussed this powerful witness of the collected voices of the authors of these essays.

These are Americans who have been incarcerated, and their essays clearly demonstrate that prison does not achieve its rationale for existing. The American penal system, in its current form, actively defeats the possibility of rehabilitation, containment, deterrents, or any meaningful retribution for crimes committed. With *Inside Knowledge: Incarcerated People on the Failures of the American Prison*, the public has been given a rich collection of work written from the inside. It can provide the foundation for a new structure to be instituted for the good of those living both inside and outside prison walls.

As Doran noted, prison has never worked. The people who conceived of the idea had come up with a revolutionary thought: as opposed to hanging them, they would maintain their rights to humanity without setting up their own checks and balances. Prison walls keep people out as much as they keep people in. Prison is a very secretive place. Inside practices are almost completely unchanged from the time of their first appearance in society.

Incarcerated people are learning that language is an integral part of their personal growth and development of their own personal power. The labels they have been given shape their thoughts. “Offender” and “convict” reduce the individual to their crime, allowing room for nothing more.

Prison life says that the only social service an incarcerated person can offer is to suffer. Suffering becomes their job. It represents a form of payment for something they’ve done in the past that can never be changed. It cannot be rectified.

The American prison system is entirely backward looking, with very little vision or consideration for the future. Incarcerated people say over and over that this prepares for more crime victims. The diminishing begins in language.

Language reduces a person’s human status by labeling a person negatively and cutting off everything except that which is what you decided that person represents. They are no longer workers, mothers, fathers, grandfathers and everything else. Prison represents a violently enforced contemplative life with a complete lack of accountability. Prisons use violence for control. In prison, horrible things happen between citizens and state employees without any accountability. These Archive essays provide written documentation and proof that they occurred.

People say, “I had to be here for 10 years;” “I had to be here for 11 years;” “I had to be here for 13 years, before I started working on myself.” Incarcerated people first need to let go of the enormous resentment that they carry and it takes time in order for them to do so. They believe there should be consequences for what they have done, yet this is helping no one at all except for as a symbolic lashing, or real lashing, that is going on inside the institution.

Doran’s writing class at Attica provided the opportunity for violent criminals to go through a process of breaking down every thought they ever had about themselves, and then begin salvaging pieces they can build from. By writing, they take their next step of making themselves into a human being that represents someone new, someone they did not know before. They abandon who they thought they were.

As Angela Davis, Michelle Alexander, and others have stated, prison reform does not work. Angela says that reform is how we got here. Incarcerated people need college programs. They crave education in order to succeed on the outside. Poverty and prison go hand in hand; combined with a lack of education, we have our prison system today. During the time of slavery, it was illegal for a slave to learn how to read and write. The power of the written word cannot be denied. Prisons benefit from volunteers such as Doran Larson and Chris Hedges who teach within the system and open the doors for a future in the outside world.

Currently, the thinking is that criminals deserve to suffer, that suffering created outside the law needs to be responded to as suffering inside the law. This can only create more suffering.

A cultural change is starting to show. There has been a sea change in recent years because of the progress made by LGBTQ Rights activists over a remarkably short period of time. The Black Liberation Movement experienced more resistance than the Queer Movement, which shows that

American society is more racist than homophobic. The average person has a friend or relative who is Gay, which is one explanation for the softening of attitudes. Angela Davis states that freedom is a constant struggle. For all of us.

Prison populations are going down in some areas. In New York State over the past fifteen to twenty years, the prison population has been cut in half. Nothing positive can happen in an overcrowded environment that does not value human life.

This extraordinary writing Archive in the broad sense transforms the public images of incarcerated people. It allows us to see them not as deficient or a drag on the world but as complex individuals at this point in history who are providing an enormous and almost inexhaustible resource for understanding what is wrong with the criminal legal system. It shows what it is that human beings need, not only in prison but also outside of prison—in their lives, in their communities, in their homes—in order to avoid the need for prisons in the first place.

They write about where they came from. They write about their homes, their communities, powerful advocates for changes in social organizations and cultural attitudes. That is the stunning thing about reading the Archives. There are now over 3,300 essays with a goal to triple that amount. Even among that many essays, there is a consistency of what people recommend and criticize. Of the countless facilities involved, they are on the same page with what is wrong and what is needed.

We need to mention that white-collar crime and corporate America continually rob the American public. A broker receives a bonus for making false promises on an investment while a person of color receives a sentence for stealing. Prison has become a repository for the poor because America has confused poverty with crime. As George Jackson said, most crimes are about getting food. Women need to feed their children.

The concept of a life sentence in Europe is 10, 12, or 15 years. It is the amount of time it takes for people to turn their lives around. This represents an attainable goal for incarcerated people to strive towards. It is not about suffering but about achieving freedom.

Doran and I discussed the importance of the arts and creativity in the rehabilitation process. Prisons are ironic test cases for what the arts can do for any human being. Quite literally, anyone can see their lives transform from a creative activity. Born into poverty, from a problematic neighborhood, with a lack of education, the art that comes out of prisons is not just the finished work of art but incredible ingenuity of the maker. Art teaches the “artist” to create from nothing. It teaches problem solving on a grand scale. In prison, people make sculptures or handbags out of folded potato chip bags in the tradition of Outsider Art.

In closing, I would like to state that the words in this article, as with the other pieces under my name in this issue

of *New Observations*, belong to the people I was given the opportunity to talk and share ideas with. I serve as the caretaker of their words.

I quote Doran Larson directly here:

“The real experts are the people least likely to get their words out. I want people to read the book (“Inside Knowledge”) but the book is just an infomercial to get people to come into the Archives. You don’t need anyone to comment when you just start reading their work. It teaches itself. Incarcerated people make their own case. Readers and incarcerated writers communicate directly. No matter what their personal or political beliefs are when they enter the Archive, the reader will become completely riveted and their ideas will either be confirmed or upended. It is the work of the incarcerated writers that is going to do that.”

* <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/17/arts/american-prison-writing-archive.html?searchResultPosition=1>

Will a Phoenix Rise Again?

By ben lewis and Sushil Rao

This system wants us dead. It wants us hungry, angry, lonely and tired—depleted and defeated, confused and conforming—to maximize its effect and profit. It is able to do so by valuing greed and dominance over that of love and compassion, keeping us in a never-ending loop of despair. From birth we are logged, numbered and indoctrinated into the State's system.

I tell you all this not to diminish hope, but to remind us of the level of resistance required—just enough to stay sane, and a little more to fight back. Here is a reminder—first and always, breathe, rest, and hydrate. These things are so fundamental to our existence as humans.

I want to tell you a story from so-called Phoenix, which is unceded Oodtham, Piipaash and Pima territory, where, within the state of Arizona, 22 reservations/nations exist. The water wars have finally hit the mainstream, and whole towns of people are at the stores scouring the shelves for access to water. The people of this land have been seeing the water diminish for a generation to serve the digging of mines, running of pipelines, and the depletion of the power and bounty of the place we've always known as home. These fights continue to this day as court rulings await the destruction of Oak Flat in Apache territory for copper. Already, rulings against the Havasupai tribe have solidified the continued mining of uranium from the Grand Canyon.

Arizona will often refer to itself as a god-fearing country, but Jesus said that whoever is dishonest with little, will be dishonest with much, and there has been dishonesty with so many things. It's hard to find an honest sliver of truth in the lies told to justify the exploitation of this land. Seeing through the veil of deceit is a constant battle of facing shame and hopelessness and defeat. Who could blame us for falling short? Our blamelessness won't save us either. The system thrives on our hopelessness and inaction. The best tall brave middle finger given to the things that are holding us down is to push back the veil of hopelessness and lean into our righteous rage. Things are being stolen from us as surely as we were also the ones doing the stealing. We can remain complacent and wallow in our own self defeat, or we can grab each other by the wrist and pull ourselves upright and say, "We don't stand for this endless pursuit of capital! We stand for water! We stand for the land—not OUR land, THE land. Not OUR water, THE water. Everyone's water. Water's water!"

In some cities the people have come together to grant personhood to water, which is an amazing shift in the fight against exploitation, which seems ridiculous on its face. It illustrates how incapable our system is of understanding and considering the things that matter most—the immea-

asurable, the collective and the vast. Do we have to have an address and a number to matter to society? What a foolish and self-defeating limitation of perspective! For instance, every individual in the 3rd largest incarcerator in America (Maricopa county) is identified within the system, and yet, when (if!) released, they are left with little to no paperwork forcing them to find survival outside of the strict constructs of legality.

And the lies continue down a well-worn path to further exploitation.

Lies and confusion are built into the design of the system, and in that design, the power (in this case, power to resist) is extracted from each of us and consolidated into a growing weapon. The system's weapon is physical in the seemingly endless forced labor, its police, its mental oppression (by paranoia and confusion), its emotional oppression by inculcating fear, is completely disheartening. It is spiritual in the self-defeatism as it revalues the land to the standards of the system, suppressing all life.

But these are broad perspectives on an infirm society. People rarely relate to the whole without a story about the individual or the few. Let's zoom in on the story of the war the city of Phoenix has been waging on its residents for far too long, and the swelling wave of resistance that hit the brakes in 2020. The same day that George Floyd was strangled in broad daylight in so called Minneapolis, Maricopa County hosted a similarly appalling disregard for black life. Dion Johnson, a young father, was exhausted driving home in the early hours of the morning. He made what seemed like the safest choice with consideration for his fellow residents and pulled his car over to take a nap. Not long after pulling over he was awakened by an armed Arizona State Trooper and executed in his car for simply sleeping. In the depth of the night no one was there to witness and amplify this tragedy. By the time the state release their video footage the press had moved on. The film was too grainy. The angle of the shot was imperfect. The twisted joy of the state enforcer was indiscernible.

It is violence to be told that our lives and the lives of our neighbors don't matter unless they clear an impossible bar of media viability or internet virality. That's another lie, a lie designed to keep us from fighting back. Because they know that if they beat us in our minds then they don't have to be defeated in the streets. Phoenix showed up for Dion. We didn't need to see the tape to know that his death was wrong. In our showing up the police kept up their violent practice of enforcement. (It is the only language they speak, beside the language of bureaucratic paperwork, which is a different language of violence.) They showed off their shiny



new tactical response unit, with their grenadiers. They showed off their tear gas and their Israeli special forces tactics, they showed off their special team of prosecutors to punish anyone who stood against the police—up charging a misdemeanor 3 (obstruction of a public thoroughfare) to that of a sentence of over 100 years by imposing multiple felonies, including felony 2—aggravated assault on an officer with a deadly weapon (for having an umbrella in hand while being violently dogpiled). The system focused the full power of the legal system at folks who stood against the system to say "Black Lives Matter" by charging them as a criminal street gang.

And that's a lot to bear, but as a community we were able to support one another. No one talked, and everybody walked. Local defense lawyers represented protestors to get technicalities removed. The news captured every fascist moment of it and asked residents if this is what they would tolerate from their own city employees. Cops were fired and demoted, reports were researched and released, and lawsuits are still holding the city accountable for the harm they have continued to cause. An all-out campaign to recall the county prosecutor who oversaw the weaponization of the justice system resulted in her stepping down. The cops got nervous and started covering their tracks with policy updates and training. The top brass put money into PR and told beat cops to mind their Ps and Qs around anyone with a camera; however, they are starting to settle back into their old ways of using a dehumanizing bureaucracy and applying violent enforcement.

Who are we to blame them for doing what we've asked them to do? What we as a society expect of police is violent. It's a bad job that doesn't need doing. The invisible "bad man" is the need to grow a bottom line at all costs. He is sitting in the conference room at city hall weaving webs of lies and false promises that this time, the jobs will really come, and the water will really be worth it. The only thing a cop can do is show up too late and write a report. When we recruit cops we underplay the report part, so they'll usually show up to the call hoping that this is the time they get to use the gun instead and that hope turns into mistakes. The wrong person gets shot, but saying that is wrong itself. Who is the right person to shoot? Who can the police be at war with other than the residents of the city they are sworn to protect? And who are we to call these violent enforcers into any situation at all? We let our internal fears get the best of us. We thought about Bernie Fife instead of Derrick Chauvin and we let half our money go to weapons, troopers, and enforcers. Of the 2 Billion dollars a year Maricopa county spends on the justice system, courts, prisons and enforcement, how much of it has changed a single person's life for the better? What dividends has it paid us? Where is our bottom line? It's together in the streets, in communities, in care. They are militarizing the police to take everything we have.

Let's not take it lying down.

To Be Thrillingly Subversive

By Laura Whitehorn

I was arrested in 1985 and indicted in 1988 with six other white anti-imperialists—Marilyn Buck, Alan Berkman, Linda Evans, Susan Rosenberg, Betty Ann Duke, and Tim Blunk—in what we called the “Resistance Conspiracy” case. We were charged with “conspiracy to change and protest policies and practices of the United States government by violent and illegal means”—political charges based on political acts, supporting liberation and human rights.

Our overt acts included bombing several government buildings, such as the office of the New York City Police Benevolent Association (supporters of cops who had killed unarmed civilians following the murder of Black grandmother, Eleanor Bumpurs), and buildings emblematic of U.S. foreign policy—most famously the Capitol Building—after the U.S. invasion of Grenada and shelling of Lebanon in 1983. We also targeted the offices of Israeli Aircraft Industries and the South African Consulate (during the Apartheid era). I spent my first five or so years in Baltimore City Jail, Washington D.C. Detention Center, and other lock-ups after being ruled too dangerous to release on bail. I was convicted and sentenced to 20 years, and transferred to maximum-security prisons around the country, landing in FCI Dublin near Oakland, Calif.

Because of the structure of federal sentences handed out before 1987, I ended up doing a few months more than 14 years in prison. I was fortunate to have comrades on the outside who were trying to build a movement supporting political prisoners, and I had the support and example of other political prisoners—my beloved comrades Marshall Eddie Conway (Dec. February, 2023), and Safiya Bukhari (Dec. 2003). From the moment of my arrest, Eddie, from inside a Maryland prison, made sure that guys he knew in the system sent me legal papers, letters and, as one said at Eddie’s funeral, “whatever Laura needed.” Eddie’s example of organizing was most valuable.

For years before my arrest I had organized against prisons and in support of political prisoners and incarcerated people in general. My own years inside didn’t just bring home the lessons of that work, they brought them into the core of my being, and helped me understand the direct relationship between the U.S. prison system of mass incarceration and political imprisonment.

Now, in May of 1985, as I sat locked into the stripped-down, cockroach- and mouse-infested cell inside my Baltimore jail, I quickly found that the community of women I landed in transformed my political theory and principles into love, grief, joy—emotions and gut feelings that created a lifelong motivation to keep resisting. Years before I had marched with Black liberation movements to the UN to sup-

port the cry, “We charge genocide,” but now I was witnessing it.

The glass in most of the windows in the women’s section were long broken, and, as the weather grew colder, the barred windows were covered by taped-on garbage bags. Prisoners received only a tiny bar of soap, a toothbrush, and one raggedy housedress. It was not uncommon to see, in January, women still dressed in the hot pants and tank tops they’d been wearing when arrested months earlier. There was no decent food, and no hot water. Hope and a future was actively being destroyed as these women were moved further and further from families, children, and their communities. Many were unable to pay their small bails for minor charges (petty theft, drug possession, sex work, simple assault, etc.). Those charged with higher-level, violent crimes were certain to be headed for life in prison, to be shipped hundreds if not thousands of miles from their families and communities. Usually, I was the only white person, guard or prisoner, in the jail.

This landscape continued to surround me as I was transferred to other jails, then to a series of prisons in the federal system. These prison populations reflected the colonialist reality of this country. I was witnessing genocide and when I say genocide, I want to be clear—I don’t mean massacres; I mean a kind of existential annihilation of a people and their capacity to resist oppression. I mean all of what international legal bodies describe as the destruction of a population’s ability to survive and maintain an identity.

The 1948 UN doctrine on Prevention of the Crime of Genocide states: “Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;” and, “Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group.” The women I was incarcerated with were mostly in their childbearing years. Incarceration prevented them from having children, or raising the children they already had. Families were fractured and disrupted.

This heartbreaking reality, strangely, gave rise to an inspiring resistance. One example came early on, just six months after my arrest, still in Baltimore City Jail. Vegetables there were rare. An exotic delicacy, tuna salad on lettuce, appeared only once during my ten months there. No surprise that every woman in that jail eagerly awaited Thanksgiving. “Turkey!” we reminded each other, “They have to give us turkey!”

Four o’clock on Thanksgiving Day, time for dinner and the big meal we’d been anticipating. Yes—turkey! Quickly, we formed an eager, obedient food line. And then we in the back started to hear loud thumps, as the women at the

front received their turkey. We quickly realized where the thumps were coming from: the food service workers were dropping on each passing metal tray one huge, hard, gristly, stringy turkey leg which might as well have been a rock.

We were hungry, yes—but even more, we were crushed. We’d made the mistake that incarcerated people can’t afford to make: hoping for decent treatment, for anything sensible or humane from a prison administration. A few days later, our impromptu “inmate council” gathered to talk about what we could do to improve our lot. We griped, then discussed the disheartening prospect of the same kind of meal come Christmas. What should we do?

Always the hothead, I insisted we should all take our trays and, at a given signal, throw the rock-hard turkey legs on the floor and march out chanting something defiant. Outvoted, I got with the program—we would boycott the prison meal and instead have our own Christmas party.

Using our monthly junk-food-package allotment of chips, pretzels, candy, and crackers, we arranged a calorie-heavy feast. We solicited donations from civilian workers (the medical staff, the traveling librarian, the nun), and a few friendly guards who had been neighbors of some of the incarcerated women, and arranged a calorie-heavy feast. Even better, someone from the civilian staff made us punch with an alcoholic kick. Another staff member brought in some leftover cold cuts and a boom box. And we partied!

I was amazed. Not only by how much fun the party was but even more by the spirit among us. Not just festive, it was resilient, rebellious, proud. Looking at each other, we realized we had won a round: the prison administration was shaken by our ability to pull it off, and by their realization that we didn’t have to depend on them. We had resisted, and gotten away with it!

Our Christmas rebellion at Baltimore City Jail expressed something profound. To pull off the party, we had to change. Accustomed to operating and surviving individually, we had to rise above our sense of self and become more empathic, connected beings. In our capitalist culture, competition is the default psychological mode for survival; in prison, there’s a system of scarcity even more profound. It creates the impulse to push ahead in line, grab and hoard—be the first or you end up with nothing. But this time, generosity and cooperation overtook competition and the fear. Trust supplanted suspicion. Sisterhood was not only powerful, it was transformative. Each of us found ourselves profoundly altered by the experience.

Women have little in the way of bargaining chips to use while incarcerated. We were generally far smaller and physically weaker than the male guards who watched us around the clock. We were worn down by the daily insult of sexual abuse, cloaked as the need to pat-search us. We had to learn skills of communication and negotiation. We posed little threat of hurting prison staff, nor of staging dangerous physical resistance. The few “riots” I experienced dur-

ing my years in federal prison consisted of sit-down strikes, faked fire alarms, a few actual trashcan fires, for which we suffered prison transfer, solitary confinement, and loss of “good time.”

In order to win demands like having hot water restored, or getting our visitors approved, or being permitted to conduct educational sessions and counseling on HIV and hepatitis C, or limiting male guards’ observation of women changing clothes, or using the toilet in privacy, we had only two things: our collective will to resist and our humane creativity. To develop collective resistance, several things needed to happen. One, of course, is solidarity—the building of trust, of robust relationships, and of effective means of negotiation. Thus, during the course of survival in prison, we women transformed from submissive victims to active, educated agents, and we developed a collective process of a shared subversion.

The process of solidarity is subversive not only to the prison system itself, which outlaws things like sharing (we are regularly charged with possessing or giving something “of value” to another prisoner), and loving. Even hugging another woman is a punishable act. The culture we developed is fundamentally anti-capitalist, embracing the leadership of the many. To be truly radical, to create that new world we hope is possible, we have to subvert the values of the world we inhabit now. That world, at least in the United States, is embodied by the prison system.

In the last half of my incarceration, I had an experience for which I thank the universe. I was incarcerated with other women political prisoners, Puerto Rican independentistas, and my anti-imperialist co-defendants and comrades from many years of radical struggle—Carmen Valentin. Dylcia Pagan. Alicia Rodriguez. Ida Luz Rodriguez. Marilyn Buck. Linda Evans. Susan Rosenberg. Silvia Baraldini. Donna Willmott. We insisted that our incarceration was political. (That alone was an act of resistance—the U.S. insists it holds no political prisoners.) Years later, we remain connected. We embrace a systemic analysis rather than an individual one to explain what is now called mass incarceration, and are all involved in working to undo the prison system.

I was released in 1999 and worked on several campaigns to win release of political prisoners. In 2013, with my much-missed late comrades Mujahid Farid and Kathy Boudin and with the support of Soffiyah Elijah, I helped to found Release Aging People in Prison (RAPP) Campaign. Our ranks include both political and social prisoners and their families. Our successes, in deep coalition with the broader national activist community and NYS, include the release of many long-term incarcerated people serving time for serious cases, including several political prisoners. RAPP’s analysis starts with that same understanding of the reason that prisons and mass incarceration exist in this stolen nation: to prevent effective resistance movements from arising as they did in the 1960s and 1970s. By connecting the realities

of the prison system with the reason that there are political prisoners, we are keeping on resisting. Let freedom ring!

Note: Parts of this essay are adapted from my introduction to *Resistance Behind Bars: The Struggles of Incarcerated Women*, by Victoria Law. For both that introduction and this essay, I owe thanks for the help of my partner Susie Day.

For more on Release Aging People in Prison:
<http://rappcampaign.com/>

For RAPP's NYS Clemency Campaign:
<https://newyorkersforclemency.com/>

For RAPP's People's Campaign for Parole Justice:
<https://www.parolejusticeny.com/>

For questions to Laura Whitehorn:
lwhitehorn@earthlink.net

PANTHER CUB

By Sharon Shoatz

Much has been written and documented about the evolution, rise, infiltration and fall of the Black Panther Party (BPP). There are hundreds of thousands of redacted FBI documents on East and West Coast BPP members. Under FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, according to FBI documents, one of the purposes of the COINTELPRO program was to "expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit, or otherwise neutralize the activities of the Black nationalists." Hoover called the Panthers, "The greatest threat to the internal security of the country." Hoover was in fear. His mission was to thwart the rise of what he termed a "Black Messiah," and said, "There will never be another Black Messiah unless we create him."

The Black Panther Party outlined a ten-point platform with an unapologetic display of self-defense and revolutionary swagger. Many people are familiar with Huey Newton, Bobby Seale, and other notables such as Afeni Shakur and her son, Panther Cub Tupac Shakur. For the most part, many are familiar yet not much is known or rarely touched upon regarding the children and offspring of the members of Black Panther Party and the Black Liberation Army (BLA).

I am a "PANTHER CUB." I am the daughter of Thelma and Russell "Maroon" Shoatz. My father Russell "Maroon" Shoatz was a founding member of the Black Unity Council, a member of the Black Panther Party and Black Liberation Army.

A "Panther Cub" is a term affectionately coined and used in recognition of, by, and for, the children and offspring of the sisters and brothers who joined the Black Panther Party for Self Defense and the Black Liberation Army.

Panther Cubs are the daughters and sons of parents who collectively dared to challenge the status quo, the tyranny of capitalism and racism, police brutality, joblessness, inadequate education, health disparities, and the lack of housing and economic opportunities for people of color in the United States.

Panther Cubs are a diverse group of individuals and activists spanning a wide range of professions living throughout the United States and abroad. Some single, some married, with and without children, living in personal obscurity. Others collectively and independently strategize and fight for the release and freedom of the remaining incarcerated BPP/BLA freedom fighters and Political Prisoners(PP's).

The movement is vast and some never came under organized names or groups that would resonate with the mainstream reader. Some organizations that have produced "Children of Struggle" are: Indigenous movements, The MOVE organization, The Rosenberg Fund For Children(RFC) and the United Freedom Front (UFF). This also includes individuals such as Yuri Kochiyama, a Japanese freedom fighter,



Russell "Maroon" Shoatz & Daughter Sharon Shoatz
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and countless others who have not been named. Yuri Kochiyama shared a birthday with Malcolm X and was also on stage when Malcolm was shot, and she held and consoled him during his last moments. Her family continues on in the struggle for humanity. One of the most important aspects is that "Children of Struggle" come from all walks of life and all races and ethnicities.

Many BPP/BLA freedom fighters, and PP's are still incarcerated. All are elderly and many are suffering from medical neglect. They have served well over three decades with repeated denials for release from parole boards for their lengthy sentences. Some have since transitioned and are now ancestors. Some are still languishing in the belly of the beast and others are living in exile. We have been able to celebrate the efforts which can be seen as a victory that culminated in the release and freedom of a few. Much work still needs to be done to free all Political Prisoners(PP's). The Struggle Continues! To learn more and see how you can support our Freedom Fighters visit: www.Jerichomovement.com

Growing up as the daughter of a revolutionary I can honestly and truly say that as a child, I struggled with my father's role in the movement. How would I be viewed by others as a result of my father's actions? Moving to NYC in 1990 would prove to be life altering in many ways. I would meet some 20th century revolutionary giants, the unsung Nelson Mandela heroes and sheros in the struggle for Black Liberation in the United States. Nelson Mandela was the leader of the movement to end South African Apartheid. In

June, 1990, I was in Los Angeles, Ca. and attended an event at the LA Coliseum commemorating Mandela's freedom. Later that same year, my father asked me to deliver his dossier to the Special International Tribunal on the Human Rights Violations of Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War in the United States, held at Hunter College in December of 1990. The tribunal highlighted the human rights abuses of more than 100 "political prisoners and prisoners of war" in the United States.

In 1990, I would also meet Safiya Bukari, a member of the Manhattan Branch of the BPP. Safiya was one of the fiercest revolutionary BPP/BLA shero trailblazers in the movement (Rest in Power). Safiya invited me to her home to discuss how she could help me with my father's case. She insisted on me taking off from work to attend the hearing which would determine freedom for Dhoruba bin Wahad, Field Secretary of the New York BPP. What a momentous and celebratory day. I and many others were standing in the hallway outside the courtroom when pandemonium ensued. Freedom for Dhoruba was at hand. It was my first time witnessing and experiencing the release and freedom of a BPP/BLA member from the US judicial system. Unbeknownst to me that day, I would later meet Tanaquil Jones and Dhoruba bin Wahad in Newark NJ after his 1990 release.

Dhoruba interviewed my father, Russell "Maroon" Shoatz, in 1996 at State Correctional Institution (SCI) Greene in Pennsylvania. At that time, my father was in solitary confinement. He would ultimately endure more than 22 consecutive years in solitary confinement until his release back into the general population in 2014. He was placed in solitary confinement in 1983 due to his work with the Pennsylvania Association of Lifers to abolish life-without-parole sentences. It would be the first time in over two decades that my father and I would be able to embrace one another in a Pennsylvania general population visiting room.

Some years later, I would meet Wonda Jones, the daughter of the late Safiya Bukari and Robert Webb. Panther Cub Wonda Jones has since transitioned. Over twenty years ago Wonda had her finger on the pulse and was instrumental in putting together an all-women's Panther Cub retreat right outside of NYC. I believe it was the first time I met Panther Cub K'sisay Sadiki and her daughter. K'sisay is the daughter of Pam Hanna and Kamau Sadiki, and the sister of KuKuya, the daughter of Assata Shakur. Kamau Sadiki is one of our freedom fighters still seeking liberation. A campaign for his release and freedom is ongoing. For more on how you can help visit the Website of the International Campaign to Free Kamau Sadiki. <https://freekamau.com>

Wonda's passing would be the catalyst that sparked the idea for me to plan the 2017 Panther Cub weekend of events in NYC. The weekend was designed to bring Panther Cubs and "Children of Struggle" together from every region of the US. I immediately began reaching out to various BPP elders and cubs.

Elder BPP members

Yasmeen Sutton, Corona Queens Branch of BPP,
Cyril Innis 'aka' Uncle BullWhip, Queens Branch of BPP,
Atno Smith, Member of the New York Chapter of the BPP,
Thomas McCleary 'aka' Blood, Member of the New York Chapter of the BPP,
Charles (Cappy) Pinderhughes Jr., New Haven Chapter of the BPP,
Sekou Odinga, Member of the New York Chapter of the BPP

Black Panther Cubs

Sharif El-Mekki, the son of Hamid Khalid and Aisha El-Mekki, Members of the North Philadelphia Chapter of the BPP
Sala Cyril, the daughter of Janet Cyril, Harlem Branch Chapter of BPP,
Allegra Taylor, the daughter of comrade Hugo "Yogi" Pinnell, San Quentin 6
Chairman Fred Hampton Jr., the son of Akua Njeri and the late Chairman Fred Hampton, Deputy Chairman of the Black Panther Party's Illinois Chapter.

Cub Chairman Fred Hampton Jr. agreed to attend the event and allowed the use of his Panther Cub logo to promote the event. His logo was inspirational for the design of



@Chairman Fred Hampton Jr.



@Chairman Fred Hampton Jr.

my Panther Cub Word Art that was created for the event. The weekend turned out to be an organic oasis of collective synergy. A time of reflection, legacy building, solidarity and Cub camaraderie. The children of struggle collectively all vibing together under one roof. Some of us have never met before baring our souls, taking the stage to reveal and share personal recollections and hardships. Connecting with stories of our upbringings that mirrored similar circumstances and situations and speaking some uncomfortable truths. Cubs nodded their heads relating to sentiments only a Cub or children of struggle could know, feel, laugh and even cry about. We shared some of our most sacred



@SharonShoatz 2017

thoughts and life experiences. Seeing us connect and relate to each other's childhood experiences was cathartic for all.

We are a generation of revolutionary activism and ideology guided by the commitment for the love of the people over some five decades preceding Black Lives Matter (BLM). Our parents' experiences mirror similar incidents reminiscent and synonymous with a knee on a neck, a no-knock warrant, a senseless killing of one in one's own home, driving while black or witnessing a savage beating at the hands of the police. Unfortunately it's still all too familiar and relevant today.

While some would like to erase or discontinue the study of African Americans throughout history, our history is an exquisite, important, beautiful and painful story. Name dropping is not my thing; but revolutionary name dropping is!!! I can truly say I have met, conversed with, and broken bread with some of the most committed, intellectual, revolutionary shero and heroes of the movement. The late Safiya Bukari, Janet Cyril, Nehanda Abiodun, Yuri Kochiyama, Geronimo Ji-Jaga Pratt, Herman Ferguson, Ali Bey Hassan, Albert Woodfox, Marshall "Eddie" Conway and my father Russell "Maroon" Shoatz just to name drop a few notables. Being the children of Russell "Maroon" Shoatz has taken my siblings Theresa and Russell Shoatz III and I on a journey of activism, enlightenment, self-awareness and sacrifice.

Panther Cubs, Children of Struggle, Keepers of the Flame, Solidarity Forever!

3 Haikus For Mumia Abu-Jamal

Young Panther, then bold
journalist. His crime?—speaking
the truth to power.

With huge heart, wry wit,
and ardent analysis—
a torch for freedom.

Sunny, slightly sly,
smile slips through barren bars to
sprinkle us with life.

david gilbert 10/1/94

Imprisoned Fatherhood

By David Gilbert, 1/30/23

This piece is an adaption of one published by Prison Focus Magazine in the Spring of 2006

It was the spring of 1984, and my son was a few months shy of four years old. After two years in county jails with terribly restrictive conditions for visits, we were finally in a regular visiting room with other families and where my son could move around a bit. He asked me to watch as he ran down the aisle as fast as his little legs would carry him, his face showing incredible effort and determination. He said, “Daddy, you can run that fast, right?” Then, just knowing that his fastest had to be good enough, he raised what was really on his mind: “Daddy, couldn’t you break the window and run real fast like that and get away?”

While the story sounds cute, it is just one of countless examples of his intense frustration that we couldn’t live together. Also, as I found out from discussions several years later, he simply felt bad for me, being locked up, and for his mother, Kathy Boudin, who was also incarcerated. Trailer visits helped a lot—44 hours in little trailer homes on prison grounds where we can play, cook, talk, tell bedtime stories together. (This invaluable program for families, which has been proven to reduce recidivism, has been eliminated from almost all prison systems. New York State still has it.)

My son always amazed me by how, at a very young age, he could be fully there and loving during visits and yet not fall apart when it was time to leave. Of course, it was not really that simple. In part, he was making the effort to be strong for me, to maximize our enjoyment together. The day after a visit he would often have an outburst of anger or crying at home.

Due to geography, time, and expense, there typically

was a six-month gap between our visits. And in those early years, phone access was very limited. We’d average 20-minute calls, once a week. That makes it hard to maintain much of a parent/son relationship, or much continuity at all. I would ask the typical questions like, “What did you do at school today?” But these would never generate much discussion. I think he found it boring just to report to me about past activities when what he really wanted was to be doing something with me.

Finally, he led the way for us to create a joint phone activity. We began developing serial adventure stories, with each 20-minute segment ending at a suspenseful point—“to be continued.” Usually the heroes were pseudonyms for him, his best friend, his mother and me, all rolling together. We engaged in adventures ranging from retrieving the beautiful singing voices stolen from the people on a mythical island by the turkey buzzards there, to taking on and dismantling (nonviolently) the entire apartheid South African army. He eagerly looked forward to our next call, as did I.

As much as we made of our visits and phone calls, they are no substitute for the intimacy and depth of a day-to-day relationship. I, and I think we, longed for the opportunities for me to regularly help him with his homework, to go on camping trips together, to be there for him to consult on his emerging sexuality and social life, to respond to and learn from his fresh and spontaneous questions about all aspects of life.

The most important thing I was able to do for my child over the years is to let him know, even when I could do no more, how very much I love him, that there was absolutely no fault on his part or lack of love on mine that caused this painful separation, that he was and is absolutely lovable. He in turn educated me, and many others on the harm incarceration does to the children of prisoners. That the U.S. has close to 2,000,000 human beings in cages is a scandalous travesty. What mass incarceration does to their families and communities is even many times more harmful. We need quality programs where people learn parenting skills and have healthy opportunities to bond with loved ones. Even more, we need to decarcerate so that families can be reunited.

On a trailer visit shortly after he entered teen years, my son enthusiastically showed me photos from the gorgeous camping trip he and his outside family had just taken. He paused and said, “I’m keeping track of all the beautiful places we visit so that when Mommy gets out—and if you do—I can take her, and hopefully you, there to enjoy them.” He did so, many times over, after Kathy was released in 2003. And, now that I’m finally out—due to the sustained and stellar efforts of my clemency committee, in the context of the advances our movements have made—I’m enjoying the beauties of nature with him.

My son, and now my grandson, are very special reminders to me of why we must make every effort to achieve a more humane and sustainable world for the children and for the future.

Poems by Susan Rosenberg

ISOLATION

Out of me
a bright hammered spirit pounded from stone.

A journey from dark caves (a soul) mine, transforming into a hierglyphic bird touching sandstone cliffs red from sun white with snow.

With the beating of wings
tyrants desires crumble.

Liberation

PROSE POEM PRISON TRANSFER WITH QUESTIONS

My generation will remember in an instant the photo of over 100 children piled in a ditch. Naked and bloody. A photo of an Asian forest made bare from defoliants, no leaves only bodies. The caption read REMEMBER THE MY LAI MASSACRE My generation will remember Lt. Calley and his defense “I was carrying out my superior orders.” Carrying out orders. And it’s true. He was.

This same generation never healed from the consequences of that unjust war. That war of aggression and intervention. No reparations were paid, not relations restored, no bilateral discussions held. Once the enemy always the enemy. And particularly if the enemy wins.

But monumnets went up to pay homage to the dead. (And even that was way too late). Marble to substitute for international law, in place of resources and respect. Apocalyptic movies made at great cost, and great profit text books written, history reworked to fit the current time. Who won? Why were we there? What is genocide? Doesn’t agent orange kill more than trees?

The generals learned too. Better than we.
Grenada
Panama
Nicaragua
Iraq

The Vietnamese people are suffering still, as they always will until someone takes responsibility
And we suffer, but they suffer more.

And yesterday while in transit in a prison van in shackles I sat, thinking of wars.
And beside me a woman sat. A woman born ten years after me in 1965.
A woman born in Saigon. A Vietnamese woman, a woman once beautiful and delicate.
This Vietnamese woman named Lynn was a prisoner too, only for her the black box to immobilize handcuffed wrists.
Her wrists were slashed and the cuffs made her scars stand out in bright purple. And as I looked at this woman from Vietnam who was born in Saigon but raised on McDonalds. I knew she was sick, I knew she was dying a victim of war.
This Vietnamese woma born in Saigon to an American father who left her while she suffers from AIDS dementia. AIDS dementia, which caused her to attack a white man and kill him with his own gun.
This once delicate young woman with AIDS demented, in chains, in route to her death, in a prison van, a victim of war.
Which war? I do not know.
Wasn’t Lt. Calley only following orders?

“Why Anti-Authoritarian?”

Essay by Larry Giddings

Previously published by: *Arm The Spirit*

Larry Giddings was born on October 6, 1952, and has been an anarchist revolutionary for his entire life. On August 21, 1971, Larry was wounded during a shoot-out and arms expropriation with four other comrades in Los Angeles. He was arrested and served 7 years in jail. After he was set free, Larry lived in a food and prisoner support collective in the Bay Area and soon resumed clandestine activities with the aim of helping to liberate jailed comrades. On October 14, 1979, Larry was again wounded and captured, along with comrade Bill Dunne (an anti-authoritarian POW in Marion federal prison), during the liberation of a comrade from a Seattle jail. Larry was convicted of aiding an escape, the shooting of a police officer, conspiracy, and bank robberies (to garner funds for clandestine activities). Despite serving two life terms, Larry has remained an inspirational anti-authoritarian political figure who continues to write and struggle for a better world. The following is an essay written by Larry, which describes his anti-authoritarian political outlook:

WHY ANTI-AUTHORITARIAN?

From within the primal ooze of social-political labeling I have, for a number of years, chosen “anti-authoritarian” as my own. Those that prefer specificity have argued that this term is not descriptive enough and does not declare a “particular” political evolution. Bandits, rebels, street gangs, “free speakers,” Jeffersonian constitutionalists, untutored and politically unsophisticated teenagers in rebellion, anti-communists, undisciplined rabble, counter-culturists, libertarian socialists, democratic socialists, social democrats, council communists, syndicalists, anarcho-syndicalists, Anarcho-Marxists, anarcho-communists, Anarcho feminists—and more, can all be considered “anti-authoritarian.” Oh, just so you think I forgot, anarchists, little ‘a’, and big ‘A’, are considered anti-authoritarians. “Why can’t I use one of the more ‘acceptable’ labels, one with a more distinctly ‘left’ connotation?” they ask.

Unfortunately, I found the term—anarchist—lacking as well. I’m not alone in this observation. The term “autonomist” has appeared in recent decades as a response to the perceived differences between “classical” anarchists, and younger more contemporary anti-authoritarian activists. In Europe, the original organizations of many thought to be extinct political ideologies are still alive. Small, they may be, but they are still around. So, younger anti-authoritarians/anarchists felt compelled to develop different organizational methods and their label. Similarly, having described myself as being part of the anarchist persuasion during the

early ‘70s, it has been a circuitous route to the term anti-authoritarian.

“Anarchist,” is generally accepted to mean: without authority, or without ruler. In that sense, especially—without ruler—I am, most certainly, an anarchist.

However, life isn’t nearly so simple, and, as with most other labels, the term—anarchist—has become “value laden.” Which means that when people read or use the term—anarchist—they readily identify it with particular ideological, social, and historical images they have carefully or unconsciously filed in their brains. For the unconscious, the greatest majority of people, it represents everything from bearded bomb-throwing radicals, to pipe-smoking armchair idealists. For those with some political and historical knowledge, those who carefully file their definitions, an anarchist is someone that doesn’t believe state power is the object of struggle with the dominant social order but a socially responsible and autonomous humanity—is—the object of struggle.

At this point, the waters become rather murky. There are nearly as many definitions of anarchy as there are anarchists! Laborists and syndicalists view the General Strike as the jumping off point in the creation of a classless, racismless society; to others, a commitment to the removal of technology, and anti-industrialism is the mark of a “true” anarchist. Any support for a national group or “nationalist” movement precludes one from being an anarchist, to others. Situationists, post-Situationists, social ecologists, social anarchists, anarcho-marxists, Christian anarchists, pagan anarchists—fill in the blanks. All definitions of “true” anarchists are based on good analysis.

Excuse—me!!! As a poor, mostly self-educated, imprisoned, non-dues paying member of any organization, or adherent to a specific anarchist “program,” I conceded. O.K.!! Maybe I am not really an anarchist. Maybe I should take a step backward and, dipping into the primordial ooze of labeling, find something not so insulting to true anarchists. So, I did. A friend, some years ago, suggested that I was an “eclectic” anarchist, since I do believe that good ideas can come from most anywhere and good people even more so. Then, there is the term “autonomous.” “Autonomous,” in the European sense, has been used to describe non-communist party dominated socialist and communist groups, as well as the ever more popular “autonomes” of Germany. The autonomes include many perspectives in its non-ranks. The term—autonomous—is still largely unknown in the u.s. So, anti-authoritarian was the term that seemed to work best.

Like most of us, my journey began as a “rebel,” pure and simple. Against family, against school, against “adults,” against most anything that got in my way of achieving some personal enjoyment and development in life. I left “home,” left school, and dropped-in to the world at a large, to find all the impediments multiplied. Firstly, I recognized “ageism” as a repressive cultural force. Secondly, I left the “family,” as an incubator of the state, was the most repressive institution. Thirdly, the state, the enforcer of economic disparity and manager of all other institutions, the inhibitor of change, was the target of my rebellion.

Within the structure of the state, I swiftly recognized the police and “criminal justice” system as the immediate arm of state authority. I was very clear on this when I was 14, 15, 16 years old. I had read lots of history, been active in street actions in Germany and preparing for armed action in the u.s. from 16 to 17 years of age. There was no doubt in my mind that armed revolution was needed to affect any real change in this system. I had learned, all too well, as the son of a career army sergeant, that force was the only thing that the state understood. Living near Washington, D.C., Baltimore and Annapolis, I witnessed—all too often—the results of “peace demonstrations” and sit-ins, and civil rights marches, not to mention anti-war demos. Discussion was out of the question. I wasn’t willing to lie down and let the state, or anyone else, beat me bloody, attack me with its dogs and shoot me, without fighting back.

My less than perfectly executed expropriation of arms, to pass out to liberated prisoners and a good number of 16-18 year olds, much like myself, in L.A., in 1971, landed me in prison for 7 years. I spent those years evaluating myself and my actions and my goals. I had recognized a youth movement, armed youth including Black Panthers, Brown Berets and American Indian Movement (A.I.M.) activists, and others, and headed in the same direction. But, I had not worked closely with any of them. Mistrust between groups of activists, separatism (political and cultural), active campaigns by various police agencies (including the F.B.I.’s COINTELPRO program), served to support our already deeply taught “need” to function as separate communities. Except for fairly isolated events, such as the occupation of Wounded Knee, this idea of the necessity of racial/cultural separatism remained a dominant theme, especially in the armed revolutionary communities. Ideologically, I proclaimed anarchism as a goal. In practice, I operated nearly as separately as nationalists. Still, I rejected dictatorships of any kind.

In prison from ‘71 to ‘78, I read, like a lot of prisoners. Amongst that mass of printed words, I began to read “feminist” literature. It was easy to identify with many issues raised by feminists. As the oldest son of working parents, I had been responsible for the care and keeping of house and brothers. Don’t you know, I hated being trapped, both as a servant and as a youth, with virtually no rights in this society. Children were, and still are, “property” of their parents,

genetic parents or otherwise. The “law” treats them equally shabbily. This study of women’s writings and political analysis led me to recognize “gender” as a special category of social/political relations, other than economic class and age. Likewise, feminists pointed out, correctly, that it had been women who have provided the backbone and sustenance of nearly all movements. In the anarchist community, ecological issues, childcare and education, healthcare, the anti-war/anti-nuclear movements, anti-racism and prison abolition have been issues fought for—daily—by women. As the numerically largest class of poor, single women with children—of all races—bear the brunt of the state’s oppression. They struggle with these issues, whether they are “popular” or not. While men often “struggle” for a short period of time, and then abscond, women, especially those with children, have no choice but to continue to confront the state in all its forms. Also the women’s movement of the ‘60s and ‘70s reaffirmed and expanded the concept of the “affinity group,” an anarchist form of organization, in which small groups of compatible people function in a largely egalitarian manner - without hierarchical “command” structures.

In prison, I swiftly observed racial separation as a constant source of misunderstanding, and felt all such “separatism,” national, or otherwise, as divisive. We could not change this society as anarchists, or anything else, while observing and participating in tacit agreement with social and cultural apartheid—u.s. style. It was in these years I rediscovered a favorite historical period of mine. Instead of just an isolated period of “history,” my experiences led me to realize the deeper social and political significance of the “Seminole Wars” of the early 1800s. This commitment to a consciously multi-cultural, non-nationalist struggle, rather than an amorphous anarchism, propelled me to enter a collective that reflected that commitment upon my parole in 1978.

This collective held property in common, supported prison abolition and prisoners’ needs, women’s struggles, and members were from a variety of cultures and races. Study of revolutionary political material was a constant and reflected the various origins of those involved. Anarchists, Marxists and socialists of several varieties, lived, worked and struggled for individual growth and with each other, as well as against the state. It was an “eclectic” community.

Twenty months after parole, I was captured in Seattle, for the attempted liberation of a prisoner. Once again, I was in prison. My time on the streets had gone much too fast. While recognizing other groups and struggles as necessary, I had focused on a fairly narrow spectrum of activity. No strong alliances had a chance to grow in such a short time. The continuing destruction of the small armed “left” groups in this country and my personal experiences caused me to look more closely at the relative isolation of many peoples and struggles. An anarchist, global revolution against the nation-state formation, must begin somewhere. It must survive to struggle. I began to re-evaluate my thoughts, actions

and focus. Once again, I returned to the study of the Seminole formations. In doing so, I found that a greater commitment to Indigenous, Native American, Indian struggles was necessary.

Recognizing genocide, colonialism and ongoing destruction of Indigenous People and their ideas as historical fact, is one thing; implementing that knowledge in a meaningful way is another. Rather than just acknowledging that genocide and colonialism exist, we need to actively struggle against it, now. Many Native Americans may not call themselves “anarchist,” but many are, clearly, anti-authoritarian in views and practice. Instead of relying on European historical example, they rely on their long Indigenous history. Recognizing that much of what modern and 18th and 19th century activists call “anarchism” is, in a large way, a result of interaction between European intellectuals and Native American societies, is of paramount importance in this process. Closer interaction with, and support of, Native struggles clearly added “self-determination and autonomy” for Native people to my list of goals, along with the recognition that they have historical reasons for wishing to organize separately.

Feminism, Women’s Studies, gender as a special category of oppression, led me to identify and accept struggle against other specific forms of oppression as valid. Recognition that Black/New Afrikan, Puerto Rican, Mexicano Peoples, and others also share specific and different historical, intellectual and social realities, swiftly followed. This recognition, in other than just an abstract way, is not “truly” anarchist, I have been informed on many occasions.

However, I would hold that the Seminole struggles were anti-authoritarian in practice, and perhaps even anarchist in reality. Rather than a mere ideological/philosophical position of “globalism,” or a theoretical “anti-capitalism,” or “alternative economy,” or “utopian” multi-racial/multi-culturalism, they actually practiced, lived, loved and fought with those principles in the real world. Unlike many European based anarchist, and anti-authoritarian, movements and struggles, which attempted to deny their own cultural imperatives, those that struggled in the Seminole way acknowledged and accepted their own special relations and histories. Rather than a false universalism, one that excluded those that sought autonomy within their own movement, they practiced a true one.

Rejecting a “romantic” view of Native American struggles is a requirement before learning the lives and struggles of People as real. If we tear away the mythology and romantic view of “Indians living with nature,” we find a revolutionary movement in the Seminole. A movement evolving out of the “Red Stick” movement shortly preceding it, as well as the social political struggles of Europe in regard to wars, growing industrialism and the social theories and movements in England and France, there can be little doubt that the Seminole knew of these struggles. Seminoles had alli-

ances with every class of people in the young united states, especially among the anti-slavery/abolitionist movements, allies in Europe, and the Caribbean. Furthermore, Florida was still a Spanish colony, though, in reality, the Spanish dominated only a few towns and some coastal areas. A number of Seminoles fought in battles and struggled with others as far north as Connecticut. Native Americans had been kept as slaves in Georgia and the Carolinas. At some points, it was considered “illegal” to have Afrikans enslaved, but “legal” to enslave Indians. Their legal status shifted back and forth. But, the link between the “cimmarones” (Spanish for “wild and runaway”), Maroon communities and others became stronger as they helped more and more people to escape from bondage and build a new society, one which might eventually be able to free territory in other areas, including Central America and Venezuela. Cimmarones became known as Seminoles.

De-centralized, participatory communities, multi-cultural and separatist communities, autonomous decision making and plans of action, caused the Seminole allies to be an incredibly committed and versatile foe to the u.s. The u.s. government’s actions against this grouping were the most costly ever fought here, except for the Civil War of the 1860’s. Some bands, ones that refused to submit, still exist. Others fled to the islands, migrated and mixed in with local populations, or were removed to Oklahoma, as members of the Seminole People. Still others escaped the reservation and fled to Mexico, where they waged a running war with the u.s. for decades more. Some bands still live in Mexico.

In my attempts to translate these events and my own experiences, I have observed the following: whether I recognize non-anarchist, nationalist, separatist struggles, or not, they are in existence. By ignoring their existence, because of some principle of pre-agreement, a requirement that these struggles reflect my own notion of a non-nation-state future and multi-cultural struggle, I am ignoring history and the reality of their day-to-day lives. By ignoring their existence, and ignoring their struggle against what are most often our mutual oppressors, I ignore my own desire for a non-nation-state future. “Globalism,” de-centralized social and economic systems, non-nation-state formations, will only come about through struggle. Through struggling together, trust and confidence in our ability and commitment to our dreams is communicated. “Globalism” must come about through mutual understanding. It will not be imposed. A culture of anti-authoritarian struggle is necessary.

Anarchism, as a body of literature and activity that opposes centralized state domination of social political life, is growing ever larger. In recognition of the vastness of the sea of material available and the swamp of views represented, I have used the label “anti-authoritarian” to keep the door, so to speak. There is every reason to allow people to grow and learn and make additions to anti-authoritarian theory and practice. If we narrow our movement to some narrowly

defined “true” anarchism, we have excluded many of those we wish to, or claim to wish to, communicate with. Young people, in particular, are much more open to the need for a multi-cultural practice than those of my own generation, for instance. It matters less to me that young activists understand every nuance of the struggles between historical anarchism and Marxism, in its intricacy and confusion, than their day-to-day practice of an anti-authoritarian nature. None of us, not one, were suddenly endowed with all of this information. To expect young, or old, activists, to suddenly understand what took many of us decades to compile, or even to agree with it, is ludicrous, to say the least. In fact, it is from this new generation of activists that a new language of global struggle will emerge. The assuredly “Euro-centric” language and practice of anti-authoritarian/anarchist theory, is in for a very healthy, and long-overdue, infusion of life.

In effect, I would rather be called anti-authoritarian and spend my time and energy struggling to build a non-nation-state world, than to argue to infinity about the definition of a “true” anarchist. Either “anarchism” has the ability to retain an evolutionary approach to problems, analysis and struggle, or it will be rejected by yet another generation of activists, in favor of quick-fix, short-term, pseudo-democratic and authoritarian alternatives. Those that wish to trap themselves in an ideologically suicidal classicalism may do so. I, for one, reject that crystallization of thought and practice, which would doom the fertile and living body of knowledge and experience we call anarchism, and, yes, anti-authoritarian.

Let us practice globalism. Let us be real, sincere, and effective allies to each other. Whether active in anti-nuclear, ecology, anti-racism, squatting, prison abolition, anti-colonialism, cultural movements, women’s movements or others, it is time to recognize each other. Practice the knowledge we have confidence in. Confidence. A lack of fear that contact with “others” who are somehow unlike ourselves, will destroy us, or take away our knowledge, or change us. Confidence will build flexibility. False confidence and fear creates rigidity. Can we reaffirm anarchism’s roots by becoming anti-authoritarian? I hope so.

Poem by Tom Manning

“Who is Mumia Abu-Jamal?
He is one of us...”

We are women and men who love and hope.
We are sisters and brothers who refuse to be limited by the false boundaries and parameters of those who would divide us.
We feel the music in words like Amandla and Venceremos.
And we struggle for ideas and histories embodied in these words.
When the word Libertad crosses our teeth it leaves the sweet taste of freedom on our tongues.
We have cried and sung these words.
Lolita Lebron and Nelson Mandela walked out through prison walls.

We laughed victorious as Assata Shakur flew
back into the whirlwind.
And we will sway with the dance of life when
Mumia Walks are in are with his family
We have heard Billie’s ‘Strange Fruit’
Nina’s “Mississippi God Damn”
and Abby’s ‘Freedom Suite’
Grooved to Coltrane and Mingus and Monk
Gil Scott-Heron’s ‘Grandma’s Hands’ and
‘Johannesburg’.
And Bob Marley’s “Get up, Stand up’ and ‘Redemption Songs’
These songs of freedom move us, move us to feel,
move us to act, and act we must.
We hope with all of our hearts, that you will too.
FREE MUMIA!!

January 1, 1997



No Allies, by Tom Manning

EMORY DOUGLAS: IMAGES OF A REVOLUTION

By Mia Feroletto

“What people are looking for is humanism. Human is a better word than any ‘ism.’ It’s about being human and treating each other with respect. With respect there’s the possibility of doing something that better the quality of life for everyone. But right now it’s about exploitation and corporate greed. It has nothing to do with just everyday folks.”

—Emory Douglas

An artist creates from nothing. In general and for this reason, artists make some of the best problem solvers. When tasked with creating an image of revolution and social change, an artist becomes the fulcrum point where many avenues of thought converge. The art and attitude of Emory Douglas is just such a fulcrum point.

Born in Grand Rapids, Michigan in 1943, Emory Douglas and his family moved to San Francisco in 1951 because the weather there was better in order to control his childhood asthma. As a young man, Emory found himself rotating in and out of the juvenile system and upon the suggestion of a counselor, he began to study commercial art at City College of San Francisco in 1964. Learning the tools of graphic design and printing techniques along with layout and photography prepared him for his future position as the Minister of Culture and Communications for the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense founded by Bobby Seale and Huey Newton in 1966.

In 1966, Emory Douglas was asked to create a poster for Betty Shabazz, the widow of Malcolm X, who was visiting the Black Student Union at San Francisco State University, one of the first in the country.

Emory drew a simple line drawing of Malcolm X for the poster, which led to his meeting Huey Newton and then Bobby Seale in February or March of 1967. At the time, the focus of the Black Panther Party was on police brutality. Point #7 states:

7. *We Want An Immediate End to Police Brutality and the Murder of Black People.*

We believe we can end police brutality in our Black community by organizing Black self-defense groups that are dedicated to defending our Black community from racist police oppression and brutality. The Second Amendment to the Constitution of the United States gives a right to bear arms. We therefore believe that all Black people should arm themselves for self-defense.

Timing had brought Emory Douglas to the right place at

the right time as the Panthers had decided to publish their first own newspaper to address the horrible conditions the Black community faced on a daily basis. When Emory met Bobby for the first time, he was working on their first issue of the paper, which was published on April 1st, 1967. It was legal sized with all of the layout and design done by hand. Emory went home to pick up art supplies and by the time he returned, the first edition of the paper had been designed. He was given a job on the spot as the BPP revolutionary artist and ultimately became the Minister of Culture for the Black Panther Party. His work personifies the tough reality of the lives of everyday people as they struggle to advance themselves and their children and has been exhibited around the world.

The site of Black House, a cultural center in the San Francisco Bay area, had for an upstairs tenant Eldridge Cleaver, who had followed Malcolm X in prison, and ultimately was asked to work on the paper.

Douglas was a master at cramming a great deal of information into one image, weaving ideological and philosophical perspectives with concerns about the community. His images focused on police abuse, poverty, quality of life, opposition to the Vietnam War, and sharing information that the community needed to know. His classic images began with the so-called “pig” drawing of the police abusing the Black community. His images became those of solidarity and, perhaps even more importantly, agents of change at a pivotal moment in the 1960s. Douglas and his art continually called for activism and conscious awareness for attention to and solutions for problems at home and abroad.

The Black Panther Party newspaper was a central tool used to communicate with the public. Ultimately it became a weekly publication with Emory creating the front and back covers. His focus was on designing “we” art, not “me” art, putting the emphasis on the collective. In the broadest sense, he covered current events, the Black Panther Party 10 Point Platform, and social justice issues. At the height of the life of the paper, 400,000 readers each week consumed and integrated the powerful message that was being shared. Like any publication, the paper had its own staff of editors, production assistants, and their own photography department.

My own degrees are in fine art with a master’s degree in printmaking. When I look at the art of Emory Douglas, I see the finished image but also the knowledge and talent that created that image. Emory was making this art in the 1960s at a time when commercial art was greatly affecting



Afro-American Solidarity, by Emory Douglas

contemporary art with the Pop Movement. I suspect that the Pop artists paid attention to what Emory was doing. Certainly those in New York City were aware of the Black Panther Party newspaper and their Minister of Culture. The use of commercial art materials and design techniques such as the Benday Dot pointillism pattern allowed for a greater sense of realism within a limited color palette of black and white plus one color. Emory shared that at times he would use up to 85% density saturation in order to create a screen tint. One longstanding supporter of *New Observations Magazine*, the Museum of Modern Art in New York City, has recently received as a gift 30 issues of the BPP newspaper and Emory has participated in two MoMA events organized to celebrate this addition to their collection. His work is widely exhibited and prized by collectors and major institutions both nationally and internationally.

We are currently living in a Fascist reality, with people of color being murdered in the streets on a regular basis. At times, it seems like the police can get away with anything. Will the punishment be meted out for the injustice of what they have done? Will the time meet the crime?

As Emory states, there is a stronghold on the media. It is our responsibility to do our own research, or will we believe the lie? We must venture out into the real world with its

natural disasters, our cities deteriorating, our infrastructure crumbling and not allow this reality to be sugarcoated. The distraction of constant war distracts us from the problems of homelessness and starvation. The power brokers are insulated from much of the trauma of daily life. The misappropriation of funds in Congress fails to consider the needs of families in crisis and we have been taught to believe the lie.

Our system is broken and it is only in solidarity with others—individuals and organizations such as unions, teachers, educators, and activists around the world—that change can occur. We must lead by example just as the Black Panther Party did beginning with their school breakfast program that at its peak fed children in 45 cities around the country. Their mandate was that anywhere there was a chapter of the BPP, there would be a breakfast program. The Panthers did what the government was not doing, that is ensuring that children had some solid nutrition in their bellies so they could learn throughout the day. No child can focus on learning when their belly hurts. Their free breakfast program is responsible for the free lunch program being introduced into schools.

The manipulation of authorities is designed to diminish the possibility that the spirit of the 1960s can happen again. We can be inspired by what the Black Panther Party did in the 1960s but we must find our own remedies to our current day problems such as brain entrainment happening through our dependence on technology and the threat of global pandemics and the fear instilled by them as only two of the challenges faced today.

We must always remember that there are many more of us, those people who want a fair and equitable life for everyone on the planet, than the authorities who focus on control.

“All Power to ALL the People!”

The famous artwork by Emory Douglas of the paperboy crying out the news of the day is an iconic and universal message for all of us. We need to become that paperboy, our own continuous crier of the news as we refuse to sit quietly in the face of control and abuse. That image represented Afro-American solidarity in the 1960s and now represents all races of people who make up the 99 percent post Occupy Movement reality. Emory’s image reverberates to the Māori in New Zealand, to the official Black Panther Party in South Africa, to the environmentalists calling for respect for Mother Earth, to name a few. It is universal and powerful.

“All Power to ALL the People!”

Emory and I discussed Universal Basic Income and what that could mean to people everywhere. It should be a birthright that at birth, we receive the funds needed to live. With Universal Basic Income in place, people would have the freedom to pursue what they truly love to do which provides an opportunity to create new solutions to 21st century problems.

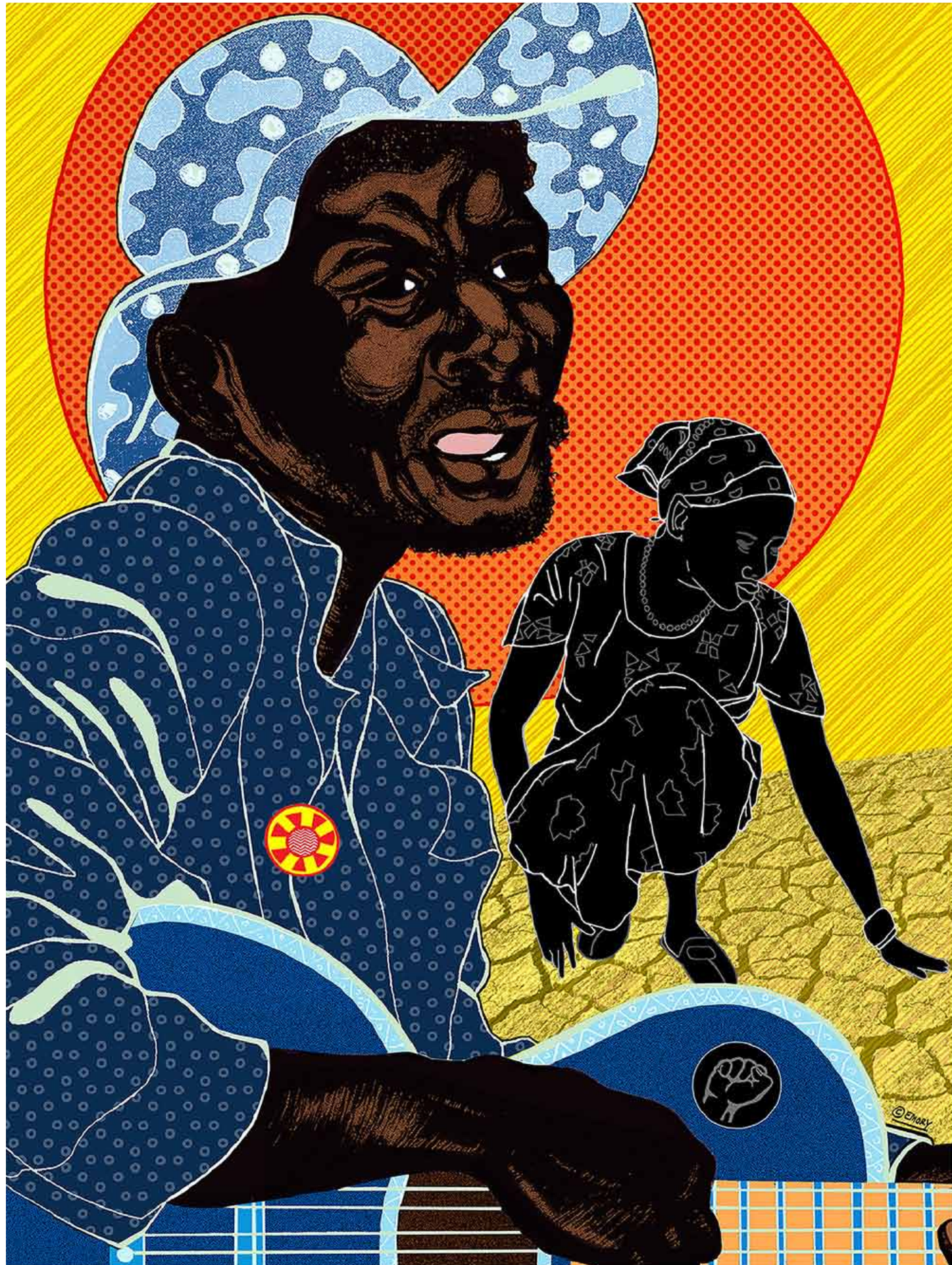
“All Power to ALL the People!”



We Are 25 Million, by Emory Douglas



We Shall Survive, by Emory Douglas



Global Warming, by Emory Douglas



Justice for Haiti, by Emory Douglas

The Prisoners of COINTELPRO

By Ward Churchill

It is with immeasurable sadness that I find it appropriate to begin this article by observing that on February 13, 2023, former Baltimore Black Panther leader Marshall “Eddie” Conway, joined the ancestors. He’d lived for 76 years, 44 of them—that is, well over half his time on earth—spent in Maryland’s maximum-security prisons following his conviction in January, 1971 of killing a cop, wounding another, and attempting to shoot a third the previous April. He was finally released in March 2014, but only after a Maryland appellate court ruled that the judge’s instructions to the jury—that that they were free to find him guilty even if they doubted that the charges against him had been proven—were patently unconstitutional. Glaring as it was, this grotesque violation of Eddie’s rights was merely the proverbial tip of a very large iceberg.

Among the abundance of “serious irregularities” marking the trial was the judge’s refusal to accommodate Eddie’s choice of being represented by either Charles Garry or William Kunstler—veteran political defense attorneys who’d each agreed to take his case, pro bono—appointing in their stead an inexperienced lawyer who conducted no pretrial investigation and never bothered to so much as meet with his “client” before the proceedings began. From there, the record is studded with examples of police “testilying,” perjury suborned from other witnesses, dubious ballistics reports, the withholding of exculpatory evidence, and so on. All things considered, it’s a wonder Eddie wasn’t sentenced to death, as rightwing commentators, local police unions, and an uncomfortably large segment of city’s “respectable” citizenry openly desired.

While many of those harboring such views may have been led to genuinely believe that Eddie Conway was a vicious “cop-killer,” the reality was something else entirely. As the highly effective head of the Black Panther Party’s (BPP’s) Baltimore branch, he’d been targeted for “neutralization”—and accordingly framed—as part of a then-secret FBI campaign, formally initiated in August 1956 and ostensibly halted in April 1971, to “discredit, destabilize, and destroy” radical opposition to the U.S. sociopolitical/economic status quo. Focusing on the Communist Party USA at the outset, the effort was steadily expanded to include the Socialist Workers Party, the civil rights movement, the Nation of Islam, and the Puerto Rican independence movement. By 1968, its scope had broadened to encompass the so-called New Left—a welter of entities extending from pacifist elements of the antiwar movement to the avowedly revolutionary Students for a Democratic Society (SDS)—and, most intensively, the Black liberation movement.

Known inside the Bureau as “COINTELPRO,” a cryptonym standing for domestic counterintelligence program, the effort involved a range of tactics including the infiltration of dissident organizations for purposes of reporting on and disrupting their internal functioning by, among other things, spreading rumors to foster distrust among activists and instigate or exacerbate ideological and/or personal conflicts within and between groups. In some instances, adapting a technique developed by British counterinsurgency specialist Frank Kitson, outright “pseudo-gangs”—groups of operatives masquerading as politically militant formations—were formed to attack bona fide dissident organizations and otherwise sow confusion. Disinformation also played a substantial role, as a stable of several hundred “cooperating journalists” around the country was utilized to showcase falsehoods designed to discredit those targeted in the eyes of the general public.

At the most fundamental level, the vital ingredient was intimidation. Agents were assigned to repeatedly “interview” and conspicuously surveil activists in order to convince them there was “an agent behind every mailbox” and thereby “increase their paranoia.” Local cops, especially those rostered to Red Squads, were enlisted to add both depth and muscle to the effort, systematically arresting activists on all manner of pretext charges, physically assaulting them, raiding and often wrecking their homes and organizational facilities, and sometimes killing them. Serious and often lethal violence was inflicted as well by fascistic outfits like the Klan, the Minutemen, and the Secret Army Organization with which both cops and FBI personnel colluded whenever convenient. High priority was accorded to preventing those targeted from acquiring the means to defend themselves, and those seeking to do so—notably, the Panthers and their Black Liberation Army (BLA) offshoot, as well as the Republic of New Afrika (RNA)—were routinely portrayed in the media as criminals belonging to “violence-prone hate groups.”

By and large, though by no means exclusively, the harshest modes of repression were reserved for individuals and organizations assessed as presenting the most serious challenges to the existing order. COINTELPRO personnel developed both an “Agitators Index” and a “Black Nationalist Photo Album” to identify and keep track of those who’d proven themselves most capable in galvanizing resistance to the status quo and thus subject to personal neutralization on an urgent basis. Similarly, organizations were ranked according to what the Bureau saw as their potential to compel radical change. In this regard, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover’s

public declaration on June 15, 1969, that “the Black Panther Party [BPP], without question, represents the greatest internal security threat to the country” explains the intensity with which the Bureau and its police collaborators set about destroying it.

Of the 295 major COINTELPRO operations the FBI admitted to mounting against the Black liberation movement from late 1967 through mid-1971, 233—each entailing a plethora of “COINTELPRO actions”—were aimed squarely at the BPP. A primary objective being to “decapitate” the Party by eliminating its leadership both nationally and locally. It is unsurprising that of the 28 Panthers gunned down by cops before the end of 1969, several were carefully selected for outright assassination—Illinois BPP leaders Fred Hampton and Mark Clark, to cite the best-known examples—in FBI-facilitated strikes by special police units. Others, including Los Angeles BPP leaders Bunchy Carter and John Huggins, were murdered by FBI infiltrators cum agents provocateurs, while still others were killed during internecine conflicts fueled by agents and infiltrators. Ultimately, the total body count attributable to anti-Panther COINTELPROs is, and most likely will remain forever, unknown.

While the neutralization of those killed was obviously permanent, essentially the same result was often secured in a nonlethal manner when key Panther organizers were framed on charges, typically murder, carrying life sentences. To be sure, such extralegal usage of the judicial system required the complicity not only of local Red Squad personnel but reactionary prosecutors and judges, the ready availability of whom is all too apparent in the records of relevant cases. Once convicted, penal authorities could be relied upon to ensure that COINTELPRO targets would be subject to such “special handling” as isolation in extended periods of solitary confinement—often for years, in some instances decades—and parole boards to guarantee that they would remain imprisoned vastly longer than “social prisoners” convicted of the same crimes.

Comparing the 44 years Eddie Conway was imprisoned to the average of a dozen-odd years served for murder in the U.S. at the time he was convicted offers a near-perfect illustration of the latter point, even without taking account of the fact that, absent the appellate court’s ruling, the state displayed every intention of continuing to hold him indefinitely. On balance, it’s fair to say that the goal was, and remains, that those framed under the aegis of COINTELPRO would be kept in maximum security facilities until they either died or had reached such an advanced age or state of infirmity that they’d be incapable of resuming any sort of meaningful political activity. Indeed, it has become fashionable of late for authorities to claim the “moral high ground” by granting “compassionate release” to elderly “politicals” diagnosed as having entered the final three months of a terminal illness.

The most recent example is that of Dr. Mutulu Shakur (Jerral Wayne Williams), age 72, who was released on December

16, 2022, after nearly 37 years in federal prisons. A self-described New Afrikan prisoner of war convicted in 1988 on highly contested RICO and murder charges, Shakur was held for six years beyond his mandatory parole date despite having been diagnosed as suffering an incurable form of bone marrow cancer. His codefendant, Marilyn Buck, reputedly “the only white member of the Black Liberation Army,” had been released in July 2010 after 25 years, dying of her cancer less than three weeks later at age 62. Similarly, Philadelphia Panther leader Russell “Maroon” Shoatz was released on October 26, 2021, after 48 years—22 of them in a single stretch of solitary confinement—and succumbed to cancer on December 17 at age 78.

Probably the worst such case is that of Herman Wallace, released on October 1, 2013, only three days before he died of advanced liver cancer that had gone undiagnosed until July. One of the “Angola 3”—New Orleans Panthers framed by what can only be described as kangaroo courts of killing prison personnel in 1971 while doing time for lesser offenses—Wallace had by that point been imprisoned for 44 years, a staggering 41 of them in solitary confinement because, to quote the warden, he’d continued “to subscribe to Pantherism.” Even then, although the federal district judge who finally ordered his release also ruled that he’d been unconstitutionally indicted and therefore vacated his murder conviction, Louisiana authorities announced their intent to retry the 71-year-old and in fact reindicted him on the day of his death.

The only example of a political prisoner or prisoner of war (PoW) beating the odds by living longer than expected after being granted compassionate release is that of Robert Seth Hayes, a New York Panther and BLA soldier sentenced to life for the 1973 killing of a transit cop. Becoming eligible for parole after 25 years, and already diagnosed with Hepatitis C and adult onset Diabetes, Hayes was denied parole 10 times before the latter illness had progressed to the point that he was in steep decline, frequently lapsing into diabetic comas (six such occasions are officially acknowledged, although there may have been others). He was finally released on August 9, 2018, after spending 45 years in the state’s high security prisons. With proper medical care, the 71-year-old survived until December 25, 2019.

In a few instances, age and nonterminal infirmities have become sufficiently advanced that they have resulted in release. In October 2020, for instance, the 69-year-old BLA soldier Jalil Muntaqim (Anthony Bottom) was released shortly after he’d contracted Covid. Convicted at age 19 of having participated in the 1971 killings of a pair of New York city cops, he’d spent more than 49 years in maximum security prisons. Another example is that of Sundiata Acoli (Clark Squire), a former New York Panther/BLA soldier convicted of killing a New Jersey state trooper in 1973. Having been imprisoned for just short of 50 years—many of them in federal super-max facilities—and eligible for parole for more than a quarter-century, Acoli was at long last released

on May 10, 2022, but only after the New Jersey Supreme Court ruled that any pretense that the 86-year-old, suffering from failing eyesight, hearing loss, and dementia, somehow posed a threat to public safety was simply implausible.

More often, even life-threatening or unequivocally terminal illnesses have failed to prompt the release of COINTELPRO targets. BLA soldier Albert “Nuh” Washington, one of Jalil Muntaqim’s two codefendants, died of liver cancer on April 28, 2000, still in prison. He was 59 years of age and had already spent 26 years in maximum security, but there was no hint that he might be released before he expired. On August 27, 2008, New York Panther/BLA soldier Basheer Hameed (James York), age 67 and long afflicted with a serious cardiac condition, died while undergoing triple-bypass surgery during his 27th year of confinement. He’d been convicted of the 1981 killing of one cop and wounding of another in proceedings marked by their sheer tenuousness—the case had to be retried three times in order for prosecutors to obtain the desired outcome—together with the usual raft of “irregularities.” Hameed’s codefendant, 67-year-old New York Panther, RNA citizen, and BLA soldier Abdullah Majid (Antony LaBorde), died of acute cystitis on April 3, 2016, after enduring 34 years of maximum-security confinement.

In Nebraska, former Omaha Panther leader Mondo we Langa (David Rice) died of chronic pulmonary disease on March 11, 2016, after 45 years in maximum security. Along Ed Poindexter, who shared we Langa’s station heading the Omaha BPP, he’d been framed in 1971 for a booby-trap bombing that killed a local cop a few months earlier. The trial was so transparently fraudulent that the verdict was vacated on constitutional grounds by a federal district judge in 1974. While the judge’s ruling was affirmed by the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals, the U.S. Supreme Court voided it by holding in 1976 that those convicted in state jurisdictions, no matter how wrongly, would no longer be entitled to appeal directly to federal courts for relief. We Langa and Poindexter were thus left at the mercy of the Nebraska Board of Pardons, which is on record as stating that under “no circumstances” would the pair ever be released.

As things stand, it appears that the Board fully intends to hold true to its word. Poindexter, now 78 years of age, remains in prison after 52 years although he’s severely diabetic, suffers kidney disease so acute as to require dialysis on a daily basis, and has been diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease as well. Unmistakably, Poindexter seems destined to meet the same fate as Romaine “Chip” Fitzgerald, an LA Panther convicted in 1969 of ostensibly killing a security guard and wounding a state cop in separate incidents. He died of a massive stroke on March 28, 2019, at age 71, having endured 51 years in California’s maximum-security prisons—including lengthy stretches in the state’s notorious Special Housing Units. He’d been denied parole a dozen times, despite becoming increasingly disabled over the preceding decade by a series of strokes that at times left him reliant upon a wheelchair.

Apart from Eddie Conway’s case, there have been a couple of other instances in which exposure of “official misconduct” resulted in the overturning of verdicts against those targeted for COINTELPRO neutralization. First off, there was the case New York Panther/BLA soldier Dhoruba Bin Wahad (Richard Moore), convicted in 1973—three trials were required to achieve this outcome—of wounding a pair of city cops in a 1971 drive-by ambush. Sentenced to life in prison, he filed an FOIA suit against the FBI, garnering upwards of 300,000 pages of COINTELPRO documents over the next 15 years. Bin Wahad was thus able to prove that the Bureau, in collaboration with the NYPD’s Bureau of Special Services (BOSS, as the Red Squad was then called), had, among other things, withheld clearly exculpatory evidence from his defense attorneys. On this basis, he appealed his conviction. It was voided on March 15, 1990, and Bin Wahad was immediately released from custody after 19 years. He then sued both the FBI and the NYPD for damages, with the feds paying \$400K to settle the matter in 1995, and the NYPD paying \$490K five years later.

The second case was that of Geronimo ji Jaga (Elmer Gerard Pratt), known as G, a member of the BPP’s central committee and successor to the slain Bunchy Carter as head of the LA Panther chapter. A highly decorated Vietnam veteran and reputedly among the founders of the BLA, G was framed in 1972 for the 1968 “Tennis Court Murder” in Santa Monica. He argued at trial that the FBI’s own electronic surveillance of BPP offices and officers in the Bay Area would prove that he’d been in that locale, some 350 miles north of Santa Monica, on the day the murder occurred. A Bureau representative, however, testified that there had been no such surveillance. When this was shown to be false in 1975, G, who’d been sentenced to life—his first eight years were spent in solitary confinement—appealed, only to have the FBI claim that the relevant surveillance records had been unaccountably “lost.”

Normally, this would have been enough to overturn a conviction, but this was no normal case. G remained in prison, and would continue to do so for decades, losing four more appeals while being denied parole 16 times, not because of his alleged crime but, as Los Angeles Assistant DA Diane Visani put it during a 1987 hearing, because he was “still a revolutionary man.” It was not until 1997, by which point he’d been imprisoned for 27 years, that his attorneys were able not only to document the FBI’s suppression of exculpatory surveillance material, but that Julio Butler, the key witness against G at trial, had been an infiltrator working for both the Bureau and the LAPD’s Criminal Conspiracy Section (CCS, the local Red Squad). It was thus a matter of record that Butler perjured himself by denying that he was or had ever been a paid snitch, as had the agents and CCS detectives who’d affirmed his denials. With that, G’s conviction was vacated and

he was freed. The Los Angeles DA appealed the ruling and quickly lost. Hence, in 1998, G sued the FBI and LAPD for malicious prosecution and false imprisonment, settling the case for \$4.5 million, with the feds paying \$1.75 million, and the City of Los Angeles paying \$2.75 million.

None of the three examples of COINTELPRO frame-ups being undone by appellate courts serves to validate the tired liberal adage about how, ultimately, “the [judicial] system works.” As G observed not long after his release, “If the system worked the way they say it does, I’d never have been convicted in the first place, much less done twenty-seven years as a result. In fact, if the system really worked, the people who framed me would have gone to prison for what they did, and so would those who went to such great lengths to keep me inside. I was a political prisoner or, maybe more accurately in my case, a Prisoner of War. And I wasn’t the only one. Not by a long shot. There are I don’t know how many others—there are probably hundreds, but I’ll just leave it at ‘many’—locked away in prisons just about everywhere around this so-called Land of the Free. If the system worked the way they claim, there wouldn’t be any.”

The cases already mentioned, to say nothing of those yet to come, readily validate the thrust of G’s observation on there being many political prisoners and PoWs in the U.S. Each of them represents a dubious or glaringly fraudulent conviction and, in aggregate, they represent scores of failed appeals. Instances in which bogus convictions of COINTELPRO targets have been overturned have thus been extreme exceptions and, to be sure, exceptions prove rules. Here, the rule is that the legal system does not work in anything resembling the manner described in high school civics classes and the mass media alike. On the contrary, it has worked to precisely opposite effect, at least where political radicals are concerned, and, on the whole, against people of color and other socioeconomically subjugated populations as well. In sum, the judiciary, or at least a substantial portion of it, has functioned as no less integral a component of the State’s re-pressive apparatus than have the FBI, police, prosecutors, and penal authorities.

G’s comment about those who committed perjury and other criminal acts against him during and after his trial having gone unprosecuted also points to a far larger truth. In its final report, issued in 1976, the Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, known as the Church Committee (after its chairperson, Idaho Senator Frank Church), concluded that COINTELPRO had in its entirety been illegal. Although the committee’s investigation, occurring as it did in the context of the Pentagon Papers and Watergate, was in many respects an exercise in containment, the resulting damage to governmental credibility—it studiously avoided exploring such areas as frame-ups and assassinations, for example—its findings nonetheless registered the fact that myriad crimes had necessarily been committed by FBI personnel in conducting COINTELPRO operations. The committee, how-

ever, made no recommendation that any such offenses be considered for prosecution.

Not a single FBI agent or official has ever spent so much as a moment in jail for a COINTELPRO-related act. Four Bureau officials—former Director L. Patrick Gray, former Associate Director W. Mark Felt, former Assistant Director for Domestic Intelligence Operations Edward S. Miller, and John Kearny, former head of the New York field office’s Squad 47 (its COINTELPRO section)—were indicted in 1978 for the relatively trivial offense of having authorized “black bag jobs” (burglaries) during the early ’70s, at the homes of relatives and friends of fugitives belonging to the Weather Underground Organization, in hopes of finding information facilitating the “WEATHERFUGS” capture. Charges were dismissed against Gray and Kearny—the former because he’d been too highly placed, the latter because his rank had supposedly been too low—but Felt and Miller were duly convicted in 1980. Both were pardoned by the newly installed President, Ronald Reagan, before their appeals could even be heard.

By way of an explanation, Reagan intoned that the pardons were appropriate because it was “a time to put all this behind us” and begin “a long overdue process of national healing and reconciliation.” Such remarkably forgiving views towards official perpetrators of COINTELPRO-era offenses did not, of course, extend to their victims. Former Panthers/BLA soldiers like Eddie Conway, Dhoruba Bin Wahad, Geronimo ji Jaga, Mondo we Langa, Ed Poindexter, Chip Fitzgerald, Abdullah Majid, Basheer Hameed, Maroon Shoatz, and the Angola 3 continued to languish in prison without so much as a sidelong glance from the President. Nor were they alone. Scores of others were doing time at that point, and some of them still are.

Among the latter is Philadelphia Panther Fred Muhammad Burton, who—along with Maroon Shoatz—was one of the “Philly 5” framed for the 1970 killing of a cop (the actual shooter wasn’t captured until 1996, and then acquitted three years later). Another Philadelphia Panther, Jo-Jo Bowen, sentenced in 1971 to 20 years for his involvement in a police-initiated confrontation that resulted in the death of a cop, remains in prison after 52 years—40 of them spent in the federal super-max at Marion, Illinois, and Pennsylvania’s squalid control units—due to his 1973 killing of the warden and deputy warden of the Philadelphia “Terrordome” (Holmesburg Prison), infamous for the largescale medical experimentation that had been carried out in violation of the Nuremberg Code on its mostly black prisoners for decades.

New Jersey BLA soldier Kojo Bomani Sabubu (Grailing Brown) was captured, along with his anarchist colleague, Ojore Lutalo, during a bank expropriation on December 19, 1975. Charged with that offense and a range of earlier BLA actions, he was convicted of seditious conspiracy in 1981 and sentenced to 55 years imprisonment. Then, in

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Zapatista,
by Tom Manning

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1988, Sabubu was convicted of conspiring with two other prisoners—Puerto Rican independentistas Oscar López Rivera and Jaime Delgado—to escape by helicopter from the federal maximum-security prison at Leavenworth, Kansas, and 15 years were added to his existing term of confinement. Although, of his various codefendants, all have been released—Lutalo was paroled in August 2009 (after 28 years, 16 of them in solitary) and López Rivera’s sentence was commuted by Barack Obama in January, 2017 (after 36 years, 12 of them in solitary)—Sabubu’s earliest release date is projected to be in 2046.

Bay Area Panther Veronza Bowers was found guilty in 1974 of having killed a park ranger the year before solely on the basis of testimony of two federally paid informers—he had an alibi, there was no other evidence against him, and even relatives of both star “witnesses” for the government took the stand to testify that they were lying—and sentenced to life imprisonment. His appeals having failed, Bowers spent three decades in federal prisons before becoming eligible for mandatory parole in 2004. This was duly granted on April 7, but his release was placed on hold due to interventions, first by the slain ranger’s widow, and then—unlawfully—by U.S. Attorney General Alberto Gonzales. This led to the parole board’s reversing its decision in October 2005. Bowers appealed to the federal courts and, although his originally mandated release was initially reinstated due to the clear bias of a parole board member and impermissible actions by the attorney general, the ruling was overturned by a higher court in 2011. Now 77 years of age and afflicted with both a degenerative spinal disease and non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma, Bowers has spent 46 years in prison and has no projected release date.

Ruchell “Cinque” Magee, the sole prisoner to survive 17-year-old Jonathan Jackson’s armed action at the Marin County Courthouse in August 1970, is now 84 years of age and has spent the past 60 years in California’s maximum-security prisons. Convicted in 1963 of a marijuana-related offense, for which an indeterminate sentence of seven years to life was imposed, Magee joined the BPP in San Quentin, after encountering Jackson’s older brother, George, a Panther field marshal facing the death penalty for allegedly killing a prison guard. The Marin County action, intended to free George Jackson, involved taking a judge, prosecutor, and three jurors hostage during a proceeding at which three Panther prisoners—Magee, William Christmas, and James McClain—were present, arming them, then swapping the hostages for George and two codefendants (collectively known as the “Soledad Brothers”).

As the group attempted to leave the courthouse in a rented van, however, they were fired on by a large contingent of police and San Quentin guards. Jonathan Jackson, as well as Christmas, McClain, and the judge were all killed. Magee and the prosecutor were badly wounded, and one of the ju-

rors less severely so. While recovering, Magee was charged with murder and aggravated kidnapping for his part in what he called the “Marin County slave rebellion.” Originally slated to stand trial with Angela Davis, who faced the same charges because she owned some of the weapons used at the courthouse, their cases were severed because of disagreements over how the defense should be framed. An accomplished jailhouse attorney, Magee defended himself pro se and was able over the next several years able to force a bargain wherein he pled guilty to kidnapping in exchange for dismissal of the capital murder charges, with the result that a life sentence was imposed upon him in January, 1975. His anticipated parole date is not until 2024, although he’s already the longest-serving political prisoner in U.S. history.

Finally, there are the “Virgin Island 3”—originally the “Virgin Island 5”—convicted in 1973 of perpetrating the so-called Fountain Valley massacre of eight wealthy whites and a black groundskeeper at a Rockefeller-owned golf course on St. Croix, one of the “U.S. Virgin Islands,” the year before. The attack prompted an immediate invasion by a strong force of FBI and military personnel which, over the next several weeks, conducted house-to-house searches of the island’s “low income areas” (i.e., the island’s Afro Caribbean communities). Upwards of a hundred black men, most of them known to be active in St. Croix’s increasingly militant anticolonial movement, were rounded up for interrogation. Of these, five of the more prominent—Ishmael “Ali” LaBeet, Abdul Aziz (Warren Ballantine), Hanif Shabazz Bey (Beaumont Gereau), Malik El-Amin (Meral Smith), and Raphael “Kwesi” Joseph—were charged, then documentedly subjected to extensive torture to extract confessions.

Their trial, in which they refused to participate, was a farce—the judge was formerly a Rockefeller attorney, for instance—and, upon conviction, each defendant received eight life sentences. In 1984, LaBeet, allegedly the primary shooter at Fountain Valley, managed to hijack an airliner on which he was being transported during a prison transfer, diverted it to Havana, was eventually granted asylum, and today resides in Cuba. Joseph was unaccountably pardoned by St. Croix governor in 1992, and died of a mysterious poison-laced heroin injection six years later. The remaining three remain in prison after 50 years, although all are now in their 70s and in seriously declining health. Hanif Shabazz Bey was diagnosed with Hepatitis C in 2000, and tests to ascertain the extent of resulting damage to his liver—court ordered in 2017—have never been performed. Aziz is afflicted with severe arthritis and a degenerative condition that has damaged his spinal cord as well as an advanced cardiac disease that has triggered two massive heart attacks since 2016. El-Amin, for his part, is suffering from a treatment resistant form of prostate cancer that has metastasized to his bones. They have no projected parole dates.

It’s important to understand that when J. Edgar Hoover officially “terminated” COINTELPRO after its existence was first revealed in 1971, all he actually required was that use of the cryptonym itself be halted. As he noted in the same directive, certain operations would be continued, albeit under much closer headquarters supervision than had prevailed during the late ’60s. Hence it’s unsurprising that in its 1976 final report, the Church Committee observed that during its investigation it had uncovered “at least four” unidentified “investigations” that, absent the telltale nomenclature, appeared to be new or ongoing COINTELPRO operations. The obvious implication was/is that COINTELPRO never really ended, but was simply recaptioned (as “counterterrorism,” for example).

Perhaps the most significant of the four operations referred to in the Church Committee’s report was that carried out by the FBI against the American Indian Movement (AIM), mainly on and around the Pine Ridge Sioux Reservation in western South Dakota, beginning in early 1973. Indeed, the Committee was planning to convene hearings on the matter when the deaths of two agents in a firefight with AIM members near the reservation town of Oglala on June 26, 1975, caused the senators to postpone the proceedings “indefinitely” and, as it turned out, permanently. The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights had already investigated the situation on Pine Ridge and had issued a report concluding that the FBI was subjecting AIM members and supporters on the reservation to an outright “reign of terror.”

At issue was AIM’s support of the traditionalist Oglala Lakota residents of Pine Ridge in their assertion of the rights to sovereignty and territory to which they were entitled under the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty. Given the extent to which the U.S. has usurped precisely those rights, not only of the Lakotas but of all indigenous peoples within its claimed boundaries, and the undeniable legal basis of the Oglalas’ position, this was viewed as an especially dangerous form of “radicalism” by the Nixon administration. AIM, moreover, had embarrassed Nixon himself by spearheading the seizure of the Bureau of Indian (BIA) headquarters in the federal district of Washington, D.C., on the eve of the 1972 presidential election, relinquishing the building only when the administration agreed to respond point by point to a 20-point agenda intended to redefine U.S. relations with American Indian nations in conformity with the 400 ratified “Indian treaties” on record.

Thus, the FBI received its cue to neutralize AIM even before it formed the backbone of defense during the Siege of Wounded Knee—a 71-day armed stand-off with federal forces—on Pine Ridge, beginning at the end of February 1973. In many ways, it appears that the Bureau was caught flat-footed by AIM’s momentum at that point, but had adjusted before siege had ended, as reflected in a policy document authored by senior FBI official and COINTELPRO specialist Richard G. Held. Held’s “Paramilitary Operations in Indian Country” is noticeably similar to a pair of “coun-

terinsurgency scenarios” prepared by Louis O. Giuffrida, a retired army colonel turned “security consultant,” at the behest of then-California governor Ronald Reagan in 1971. In turn, Giuffrida’s scenarios, code-named “Garden Plot” and “Cable Splicer,” leaned heavily on the thinking of the earlier-mentioned British brigadier, Frank Kitson, who was even then presiding over operations in Northern Ireland targeting the IRA, as well as CIA operations in Latin America and the Caribbean designed to quell insurgencies against various U.S. client régimes.

The usual COINTELPRO methods were certainly employed on Pine Ridge, beginning with the use of pretext arrests intended to tie AIM members up in court and bankrupt the movement by the need to underwrite their bail and legal defense. Hundreds of relatively minor charges were lodged against those who’d defended Wounded Knee, with the government securing only 15 convictions (a record low rate for the Department of Justice). An attempt to frame the most prominent AIM leaders, Dennis Banks and Russell Means, for conspiracy in 1974 was so plainly fraudulent that the conservative federal trial judge ultimately dismissed all charges with prejudice on grounds that the prosecutors had “polluted the waters of justice” and that he was stunned to find that the FBI, which he’d “so long revered,” would “stoop so low.” Still, other techniques, such as the insertion of provocateurs to sow discord within the movement, had the desired effect of propelling AIM along a self-nullifying trajectory of fragmentation and internecine conflict.

At another level, the FBI’s operation on Pine Ridge was not only a continuation but an escalation of COINTELPRO, amounting in part to the field-testing of Giuffrida’s scenarios. Targeted AIM activists were described not as extremists but rather as “insurgents” in the Bureau’s internal documents, indicating that a conceptual shift from counterintelligence—always a mis-nomer in the domestic context—to counterinsurgency had occurred. To counter the insurgents, a range of entities extending from the BIA police to white militias and vigilante groups were de-ployed as assets by a beefed-up contingent of agents rostered to the Rapid City resident agency, responsible as it was/is for exercising the FBI’s preeminent jurisdiction on the reservation. The vital ingredient in this arrangement was the “Guardians Of the Oglala Nation”—otherwise known as known as GOONs—formed in 1972 by the head of the Pine Ridge puppet government to serve as his personal enforcers and funded by his diversion of federal monies allocated for reservation highway improvements.

Most of the BIA police personnel on Pine Ridge doubled as GOONs, whom the FBI provided with intelligence on the whereabouts of AIM targets, military-grade weapons, otherwise unavailable types of ammunition, and, for all practical purposes, immunity from prosecution. Thus shielded, the GOONs were enabled to essentially function as a death squad. Between March 1973 and March 1976, at least 69 AIM members and supporters were murdered on Pine

Ridge, a rate more than eight times that in Detroit, then the supposed “murder capital of the United States,” and almost equal to the rate of political murder marking Pinochet’s decimation of Chilean leftists during the same three-year timespan. While the killers on Pine Ridge were known to be GOONS, and in that they were identified as such by eyewitnesses, not one of them was ever arrested by the FBI.

It was under those conditions that the 1975 Oglala Firefight occurred, leaving two agents and one AIM member dead. A large number of FBI and BIA police personnel were close at hand when the firing broke out, suggesting that the agents who died were assigned to provoke an exchange of gunfire with a small AIM security team, the need to rescue their colleagues necessitating an immediate and presumably lethal assault by the overwhelming force “coincidentally” assembled nearby. Not only would the AIM group be liquidated, but the clash could then be used to justify a major surge in the FBI’s campaign to finish off AIM’s hard core and the traditionalist Oglala resistance once and for all.

Self-evidently, things did not go as planned. There turned out to be more Indians in the AIM security camp than anticipated and, consequently, when initial elements of the FBI/BIA police assault force began to approach, they came under fire and beat a hasty retreat, leaving the first pair of agents to their fate. By the time the assault force, now reinforced by a large group of white vigilantes, finally decided several hours later that it was safe to move in, the two agents were long since dead, as was an AIM member, Joe Stuntz, killed at long range by a sniper. Meanwhile, all of the other Indians had escaped. The Bureau made the best of it, feeding the public a stream of fables about how the slain agents had been “lured into an ambush” by AIM gunmen firing automatic weapons from “sophisticated bunkers” and, in one version, “scalped.” This sensational—and utterly false—narrative afforded popular support for an FBI invasion of Pine Ridge on a much greater scale than originally intended, as some 250 militarily equipped agents arrived and began sweeping the reservation in search of the killers.

This massive effort was bestowed with the acronym RESMURS—for “reservation murders,” a term strictly reserved for the dead agents, not the scores of Indians murdered on Pine Ridge over the preceding two years—and Richard G. Held himself was dispatched to head up the investigation. A list of around 30 men believed to have participated in the firefight was compiled, but it was decided that it would be useful in terms of generating splits in the movement to focus exclusively on three “outsiders”—Bob Robideau, Darrell “Dino” Butler, and Leonard Peltier, all members of the Northwest AIM Group—while ignoring local Oglalas. Much ugliness attended the process, but Butler was soon captured, Robideau shortly thereafter.

Peltier, who’d found refuge in a remote Cree village in Alberta, was a more difficult proposition since it would be necessary to extradite him from Canada. This was eventually accomplished by U.S. attorneys introducing a fraudulent

affidavit provided by the FBI during a Canadian extradition hearing. In the meantime, unwilling to wait until Peltier was in U.S. custody, the Justice Department (DoJ) opted to proceed with the prosecution of Butler and Robideau. As in the Banks-Means trial, the result was “a real circus,” as the Bureau consistently overplayed its hand while trying to convince the all-white jurors of AIM’s inherent dangerousness. No less importantly, perhaps, the judge allowed the defense to fully present its case, calling witnesses like the Civil Rights Commission investigator who’d written the report detailing the FBI-orchestrated reign of terror on Pine Ridge. In the end, while neither defendant denied shooting at the agents, the jury found them not guilty by way of the right to self-defense.

That left Peltier. Stunned by the verdict, and now desperate to get a conviction, FBI officials and their DoJ counterparts met to assess what had gone wrong during the trial and what would be needed to correct the situation. They did a bit of judge shopping, found one who’d conduct proceedings in the manner desired, and contrived to have him replace the judge who’d presided over the Butler-Robideau trial (he’d been scheduled to handle the Peltier trial as well). Among the new judge’s very first rulings were that he would entertain no case for self-defense—only events on the day of the firefight would be considered relevant—and that the Butler-Robideau trial record in its entirety would be inadmissible. This allowed prosecutors who’d presented a case against Butler and Robideau to proposit that the agents had been killed by group acting in concert, and to present a fundamentally contradictory case against Peltier, one in which the agents had been “executed” by a lone gunman.

The ruling also enabled agents who’d testified to one set of “facts” against Butler and Robideau to offer a diametrically opposing set against Peltier, without worrying that the defense might impeach their testimony by comparing it to what that they’d sworn was true during the earlier trial. “Testilying” by FBI personnel was aplenty and, as with any COINTELPRO frame-up, no shortage of testimony suborned from others, falsified ballistics evidence, fabricated evidence, suppressed exculpatory evidence, and so on. To top things off, the lead prosecutor delivered an emotional recitation of a slain agent’s last words as part of his closing argument. Suffice it to say that Peltier was found guilty on both counts on April 18, 1977, promptly sentenced to “boxcars” (consecutive life terms), and, despite his meeting none of the criteria for such placement, sent directly to the federal super-max in Marion.

Peltier immediately appealed, and in September, 1978, while it acknowledged that multiple reversible errors had been committed during his trial, a three-judge panel of the Eighth Circuit Court upheld his conviction. By the time it was handed down, William Webster, the circuit judge who’d written the opinion, had already left the court to take up his new station as director of the FBI. Peltier appealed this outcome to the Supreme Court, which declined to consider the

matter in 1979. After discovering a document contradicting testimony given by a FBI ballistics expert concerning a crucial piece of evidence during the trial in a recently released mass of FBI material, Peltier again filed an appeal, arguing that the document was exculpatory and thus wrongly withheld during pretrial discovery, and that it might well have changed the verdict. In 1984, the Eighth Circuit Court reviewed the matter and remanded it to the trial judge for clarification. The latter then convened a hearing in which the same ballistics expert testified that there was no contradiction and, hence, the document was not exculpatory.

On cross-examination, however, the witness was forced to alter his testimony when confronted with the fact that he’d misrepresented an important aspect of his own ballistics report. Having corrected his testimony and assuring the court that it was now accurate, he was confronted with a second factual misrepresentation. The judge allowed him to gloss the matter by saying that he’d “misspoken,” but the witness’s credibility should by that point been in tatters. Nonetheless, he approved the expert’s “explanation” of the issues, and sends the results to the Eighth Circuit Court. In 1986, in further review of the case, the latter produced an opinion harshly critical of the many instances of the FBI’s misconduct on Pine Ridge, but concluding that it remained “hesitant to impute even more” to it. Therefore, while observing that it felt the Bureau was “at least as responsible” as Peltier for what had happened, the judges left his conviction in place. A year later, the Supreme Court once again declined to consider the matter.

And so it has gone, decade after decade. Other appeals have been filed, mostly on lesser issues, usually without success. In December, 2000, it briefly appeared that Bill Clinton would fulfill a promise to grant clemency to Peltier before leaving office. The prisoner was even notified by penal authorities that he should have his bag packed and be ready to go. Plans had been made for him to live with an artist friend in New York, where he could develop his talents as a painter. However, the prospect of Peltier’s release sparked an unprecedented street demonstration by FBI agents, an estimated 500 of whom picketed the White House on December 16, demanding that he remain in prison. It’s rumored that Clinton was quietly informed that he would be subject to relentless FBI investigations of his business affairs unless he dropped the clemency idea. For whatever reason(s) Clinton reneged, waiting until the very last night of his presidency to deliver the bitterly disappointing news to the waiting prisoner that he’d not be getting out after all.

Leonard Peltier has at this point spent 48 years in federal prisons—all but two of them in maximum security or super-max facilities—although he’s been parole eligible since 1993. On that front, he’s been repeatedly denied, most recently in 2009, and his next scheduled hearing date isn’t until 2024. Now 78 years old, he’s essentially an invalid, suffering an ever-lengthening list of maladies, including diabetes, hypertension, a chronic heart condition, partial blindness

caused by a stroke, and an untreated abdominal aortic aneurysm that could prove fatal at any time. All this being so, it’s impossible to avoid concluding that, as with several of the victims of COINTELPRO frame-ups discussed above, it is intended that Peltier be released only when officials believe that he’s within three months of dying.

There are a frighteningly large number of additional cases that could be usefully explored. Those of Resistance, Conspirator Susan Rosenberg and Independentista Alejandrina Torres, women subjected to the experimental Lexington Control Unit, spring readily to mind, as do those of the MOVE 9, Philadelphia Panther Mumia Abu-Jamal (Wesley Cook), New York Panther and BLA soldier Sekou Odinga (Nathaniel Burns), BLA soldier Herman Bell, BLA ally David Gilbert, Tom Manning of the United Freedom Front, Imam Jamil al-Amin (H. Rap Brown), and BLA soldier Kamau Sadiki (Freddie Hilton). The list is seemingly endless and, beyond a certain point, it becomes overkill, defeating its own purpose. And what, it might be asked, is the intended purpose of the present essay?

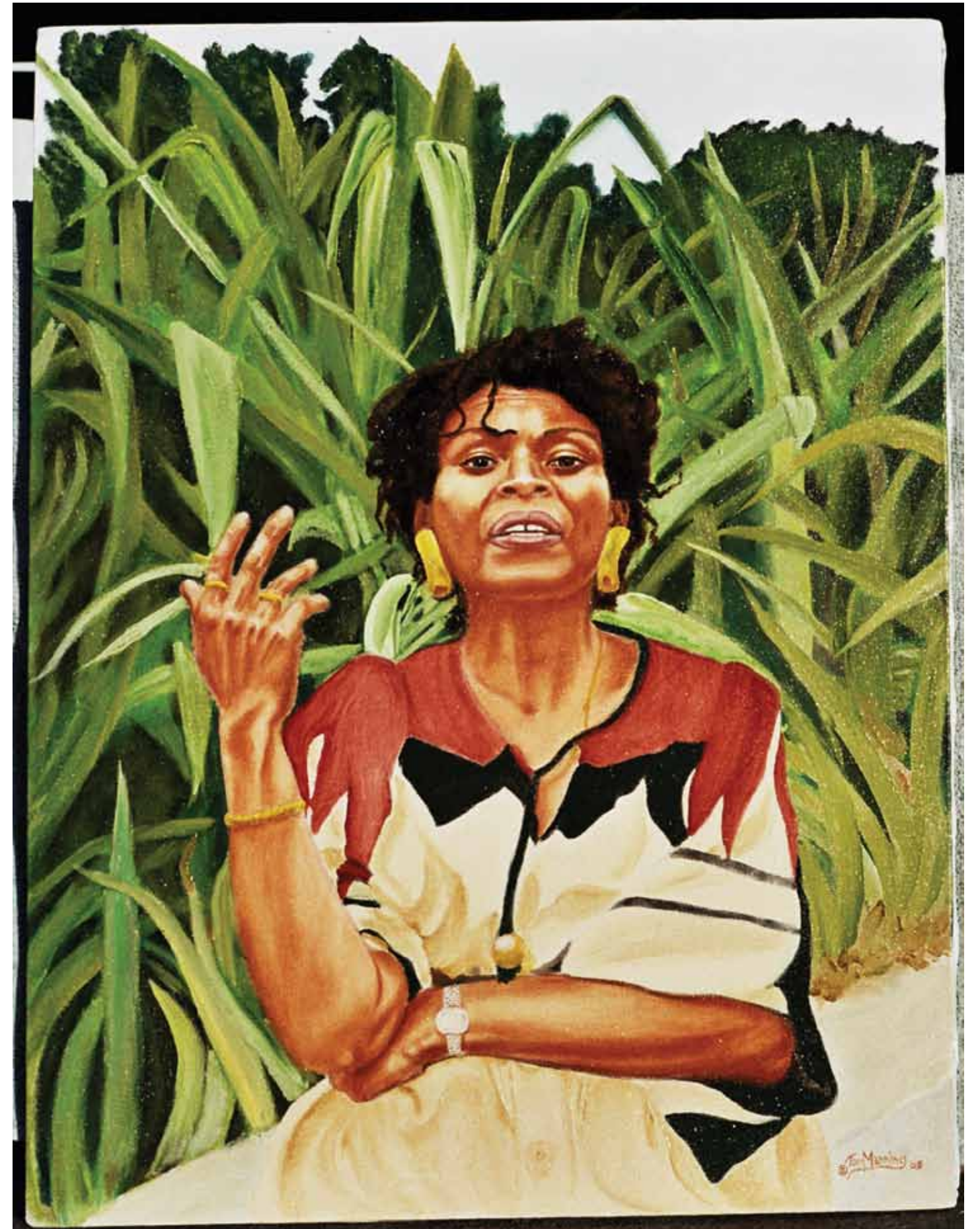
In a beautiful eulogy delivered during Eddie Conway’s memorial ceremony, Ta-Nahisi Coates recounted how when he was only four years old, his father, Paul Coates, Eddie’s successor at the head of the Baltimore Panthers, took him along on a prison visit with Eddie. When he later asked Paul why on earth he’d taken a child so young into such an awful place, the response was that he’d wanted his son to get an unfiltered look at what we’re up against, to confront its malevolence and sheer brutality, and thus gain an early understanding of the nature and necessity of our struggle to defeat it. The purpose of this essay is similar: to provide to activists and organizers of a generation far younger than that of the “Boomers” herein discussed, a glimpse of the costs and consequences of COINTELPRO as an ongoing reality, and thus appreciate the fact that, far from an historical artifact, COINTELPRO itself—under whatever name—has continued to exist and evolve over the past half-century.

Should this assist even a few younger radicals in recognizing what’s going on and help them to respond accordingly whenever they hear the FBI tossing around terms like: “Black Identity Extremist,” or that a group of Muslims in Virginia have been convicted of “terrorism” and sentenced to 85 years because they were caught playing paintball, or that an FBI infiltrator created a situation in which an ELF activist was convicted on charges of “ecoterrorism,” or that activists trying to prevent construction of a mass police training facility in Atlanta’s largest remaining forest are being charged with “domestic terrorism,” simply for being from out-of-state—the purpose will have been served.

One can hope.



Where's Liberty, by Tom Manning



Assata Shakur, by Tom Manning

“I Keep You All in My Heart:” Letter from Prison

By Marius Mason, March 1, 2023

Greetings to my outside family and community of resistance, rabble-rousers and healers of worlds! The time has gone by so full of the daily work that I had not stopped to consider how many years I have been in prison and how much has changed for me over those years. It is not much comfort to see how much the world has suffered from the environmental degradations that my eco-warriors warned us all about back when I was out there organizing in the 80s, 90s, 00s.

While I try to stay informed about the outside world, I have no access to the internet or most alternative news sources—and the mainstream news is a strange echo chamber of competing sinister interests. Mostly, I have taken to heart the advice given to me by an incredibly dedicated and insightful former political prisoner, Laura Whitehorn. I was never privileged to meet her, but I am grateful to her, nonetheless. The advice that was given to me before I entered the carceral state was to focus my attention and love towards my new prison community. It has helped me find meaning and purpose in my years inside. Most of what I can do in my days is to make sure that the people around me are given respect and care, that I share what I can with them and offer comfort and aid. I have been especially mindful of being a support to anyone who has felt marginalized by this system – often those people have been queer and trans prisoners.

Towards that work, I would like to ask for help from my community outside the walls. One of the most recent problems facing some of my trans comrades has been finding gender-affirming housing that satisfies the BOP’s requirements upon release from prison. A friend here is facing the prospect of going out to a halfway house where the showers are not private—just open showers. As a trans woman among a male-identified population, she has faced assault and discrimination already during her sentence, and is concerned for her safety at this vulnerable juncture, trying to re-start her life as a free person. It feels like we try as a community in my unit to make safe space for queer, gender non-conforming, and trans people. And this has been a place for those folks to feel safe, often after having experienced violence elsewhere in the system.

So, I have been trying to get some input from outside friends to find options for housing and recovery resources for trans and queer folks who do not have social networks

intact after their long sentences. Is there anyone in our extended networks who would be willing to help put together a list of places for trans folks to contact as possible release sites?

This is more than just a list of organizations; I need to make this clear. There have been some lists developed already, but they have been of no use at all to the people I have known trying to contact them as they will not take calls from prisoners. And the unit team staff here (and probably anywhere in the system) are not able to do this work. This is a big “ask” because it means a personal connection with ex-felons who need a social connection, resources (like job listings that will take felons and trans/queer folks) and housing that is sensitive to people outside the gender binary.

I am asking because this is not work that I can do alone, and it is very different from the peer counseling or material support kind of stuff that an individual can do. Right now, I am trying to identify housing and connections in Philadelphia, specifically for a transwoman who has only weeks to go before her release. And there are many others who come into the system and go out of it without a place to be safe.

Other than this work, I am preparing to be transferred to a new facility in Fort Worth, Texas, where I hope to be able to access gender affirming surgeries. I had been transferred to a male facility, FCI Danbury, some 16 months ago and have been doing my “real life” experience prerequisite time here.

I am gratified and grateful that I have been able to live as the man I feel myself to be, that I have been able to continue my education with paralegal classes and HVAC classes to prepare to do service work and be employed, and that I have been able to do group therapy with other men to engage on trauma and emotional management issues. It is a busy, full life and it feels like I have been able to be of service to others—which gives meaning to my days.

Thank you so much for being in solidarity with prisoners and doing the hard work of supporting them. There are way too many people in prison—as you know from your work—and every prisoner is one less person we have to include in the communities we are building from the ashes of the old broken system that threatens our environment and our connection to each other. Thank you for being out there for me and for all of us—I keep you all in my heart.

Love and Solidarity, Marius

Mental Health Stressors Experienced by U.S. Held Political Prisoners

By James C. McIntosh, M.D.

Political Prisoners in the United States and prisoners in general may have to address a number of issues which one might categorize as psychological upon reentry to the American Society. The intense pressure cooker of prison has caused them to experience stress in all 4 spheres of experience thought to be involved in mental illness. Those four spheres are the biological, the social, the psychological and spiritual levels. These levels overlap, intertwine and interconnect and operate all at the same time. For example, something as simple as overcrowding that one might think of as a social stressor creates the biological stressor of poor ventilation which makes incarcerated people more susceptible to infection and diseases caused by pollution such as second-hand smoke. At the same time overcrowding creates other social stressors such as lack of privacy, competition for space and resources. All of these stressors plus the physical diseases exacerbated by overcrowding impact on the mind and ultimately the soul of nearly all incarcerated people.

A Diet High In Carbs, Sodium and Germs and Low in Nutrition

Another biological stressor in prison is a nutritionally inadequate diet. An article in the April 12, 2022 edition of *These Times Magazine*, noted that “The abysmal quality of food in carceral settings is well-documented. High in sodium and sugar, the diet in our nation’s jails and prisons is severely lacking in healthy foods. More often than not, it’s carb-heavy and ultra-processed fare. It’s also frequently rotten, moldy, or vermin-infested. And there’s rarely enough of the food to appropriately nourish.” Impact Justice (IJ), a justice-reform nonprofit issued a report in November 2020 after researching and surveying 250 formerly incarcerated people in 41 states, family members, and prison employees. The report concluded that “the disordered eating and other effects of insufficient diets that people experience while serving time... can linger well after people are released.” Nutritional deficits and excesses can cause depression, anxiety and diminished intellect and even psychosis.

Why Would Anyone Change the Song to *Don’t Let the Sunshine In*

Inadequate Sunlight is another biological stressor experienced by prisoners. Former Florence Super Max warden Robert Hood actually boasted in a CNN interview that at the Federal Maximum-Security prison in Florence, Colorado, “We designed it so that the inmates can’t see the sky in-

tionally.” Many of the prisoners there get only 1 hour of yard time per day. The yard the prisoner gets is an individual yard separated from any other people. It’s actually underground with high walls that prevent the prisoner from seeing beyond the small space allotted them for exercise and generally prevents them from getting direct sunlight necessary for assuring adequate vitamin D levels. A good amount of mid-day sun several times a week is generally felt by scientists to be necessary for good health. Scientists agree that even more sun is needed by darker skinned people. Vitamin D deficiency is associated with many serious chronic diseases, including autoimmune diseases, infectious diseases, cardiovascular disease, deadly cancers and clinical depression.

Biological Warfare is More than Just Germ Warfare

Other biological stressors experienced by most prisoners include Inadequate Sleep, or sleep not in keeping with one’s own biological rhythms, inadequate exercise, chemical pollutants such as cigarette smoke, unsanitary conditions. Also in the category of biological stressors are aging and physical Injuries such as those acquired from assaults by other prisoners or by corrections staff. The limitations in the length of this article don’t permit fully exploring the psychological impacts of each of these stressors in detail. Suffice it to say they all can lead to psychological stress and illness.

From The Demon’s Own Words: “Far Much Worse Than Death”

On the psychological level political prisoners experience stress related to isolation. Prisoners at so-called supermax prisons often experience sensory deprivation in the form of forced silence and lack of human physical contact. Florence Supermax is designed and operated in a way that inmates housed there are never permitted to touch another human being and go through their day in complete silence without exchanging words even with their immediate captors the prison guards. Add to isolation other social stressors such as racism and these captor regulated social stressors can only be called Psychosocial Warfare. For example, prison officials often move prisoners thought to be too popular or who begin to wield too much influence on other incarcerated people. In the cases of political prisoners Jamil El Amin AKA H Rap Brown and Dr Mutulu Shakur, they were both subjected to this form of transfer when for so called security reasons they were moved from state facilities or less punitive facilities to the ultra-punitive Florence Super Max prison. Former

Warden Hood admitted that in his opinion incarceration there is “far much worse than death.” Perhaps not so coincidentally, both these political prisoners who were transferred to his prison for so called security reasons developed Bone Marrow Cancer which has only an 8/10ths of one percent chance of happening in one individual’s life time much less to afflict, the arguably 2 best known political prisoners, at virtually the same time in the same prison. Compounding this stress for both the prisoners and their supporters is the fact that no one is even questioning this unusual pattern of disease. No one is investigating whether it is the result of experimentation or radiological surveillance they may have been subjected to in the name of security.

If You Don’t Have Integrity Nothing Else Matters Except in Prison

Again, on the social and spiritual level, peer pressure is another social stressor with potential psychological consequences. There is a tremendous pressure to adhere to ostensibly peer generated norms in prison, sitting with one’s own racial group, not being too much of a loner, not offending gang affiliations, not snitching, minding your own business, adhering to the pecking order. The word ostensibly is used because corrections staff have been known to exploit and foster these “norms.” Spiritually, adherence to these norms sometimes causes conflict between the incarcerated person’s personal values and beliefs and the values of the prison culture. Something as simple as not having access to halal food or not having a chaplain of one’s own religion can create stress on the spiritual level and stress of any sort has the potential to create psychological problems.

If Unearned Suffering Is Redemptive...

Other psychosocial stressors include prolonged separation from family, immersion in an atmosphere with a gang Structure, threat of injury, loss of loved ones with no ability participate in group mourning rituals such as funerals, and the sensory deprivation of solitary confinement. And though prison provides insults to all four of these spheres for almost all prisoners that holds especially true for political prisoners who, as a whole, generally serve longer harsher sentences and in more secure and harsher prisons. Political prisoners even when known to have never perpetrated any violence, generally serve sentences of 3 to 4 times that of the average criminal who has murdered someone. The average murderer in the U.S. serves 16.5 years. The women of the Move 9 who never committed any violence and, who, at worse, could be said to have been present in a location where violence occurred, served 40 years before they were released. Justin Volpe the policeman charged with torturing /sodomizing Abner Louima with a broken mop handle was sentenced to only 30 years in prison with no need for parole. Injustice is the greatest psychological stressor of them all.

Cruel Unusual and Unconstitutional

Sundiata Acoli whose political prisoner experience is in no way atypical, recently spent 42 years in prison when the prisoner who was previously the longest incarcerated person in NY State Thomas Trantino had served only 37 years before getting transferred to a halfway house in the community. Trantino, a gangster, was convicted of luring 2 police officers to a tavern to be mercilessly tortured and killed. In addition, according to a PBA flyer Trantino forced these officers to commit sex acts on each other and eventually beg for death. Yet Trantino was released from prison 39 years after his initial incarceration. Acoli a mathematician who like the Move 9 women was at worst in a car with others involved in a police ambush/shootout that resulted in an officer’s death. Acoli certainly never did anything even remotely as calculated or demonic as the acts of Trantino, but was forced to stay in prison for 42 years before being paroled.

Solitary Hurts Prisoners To The Point of Suicide But Some Officials Still Say It’s Not Torture

With torture as the segue, many political prisoners have also had to serve years and even decades in prolonged solitary confinement which has been declared by Amnesty International, The United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture and many other agencies as torture. Yet prior to his release, US held political prisoner Albert Woodfox served 43 years in solitary confinement in Louisiana before being ordered released by a court. His comrades known as the

Angola 3 had similar experiences. With respect to mental health, solitary confinement is a form of sensory deprivation that can cause people to, among other things, hallucinate, and experience fixed false ideas not shared by others and not responding to reason and logic, which is to say delusions. It can cause depression and can be a precipitant to suicide. It is obviously torture but some prison officials believe that it is not. With respect to U.S. held political prisoners, however, it is almost a moot point whether solitary confinement is torture or not because almost all U.S. Held political prisoners have also been more conventionally tortured such as defined not only by Amnesty International and the UN but any thinking person.

This Can’t Be America No You Can’t Fool Me

Multiple studies have indicated that this sort of intentional stressor has more likelihood of causing serious mental illness than other trauma. Examples of the torture of U.S. held political prisoners range from practices as simple as threats of rape to which the women of the Move 9 were subjected when they were first arrested, to the severe beatings at the time of arrest experienced by Mumia Abu-Jamal and many other political prisoners. At extremes beyond all this is the case of the 5-year kidnapping, rape and torture in a secret U.S. prison in Afghanistan of Political Prisoner, Neu-

roscentist Dr Afia Siddique. Former US Attorney General Ramsey Clark described Siddique’s case as the worst case of injustice he has ever seen. This is a very high bar when we consider that Hanif Shabazz Bey and his comrades were hung by their feet beaten, shocked with cattle prods and had water forced up their noses on U.S. territory. So, among the mental health issues Political prisoners share are severe trauma and its consequences. These can include recurrent nightmares and reliving of past trauma as well as nerves on edge possibly for the rest of one’s life.

Treatment Delayed Is Treatment Denied

Less dramatic but no less traumatic in the long run are consequences of inadequate medical care in U.S. prisons. It can only be classified as criminal malpractice on the part of the state that political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal was forced to go years without treatment for his Hepatitis C when medication which is curative existed. His supporters had to go through a lengthy court process to force his captors to get him the medication he needed but by that time his Hepatitis had progressed to Cirrhosis of the liver with a very high chance of progressing to cancer of the liver. More recently telephone and email protests had to be organized to force the state to provide the hypertension medication that had been prescribed for political prisoner Kamau Sadiki. Again, these cases of medical neglect are the norm among political prisoners. Almost all have acquired, while in state custody, preventable chronic illnesses such as diabetes, ischemic heart disease, hypertension, and are at risk for all the sequelae of such illnesses that can affect the brain and consequently the mental health in the areas of mentation or thinking and feeling.

Elder Abuse

In conclusion there is a real elephant in the room when we talk about the mental health issues of political prisoners currently incarcerated or recently released in the U.S. That elephant is the issue of aging. Family Practitioner and Medical Consultant to Mumia Abu-Jamal, Dr Ricardo Alvarez calls the current state of political incarceration elder abuse. This is because nearly all the current U.S. Political prisoners are veterans of the civil rights and Black Liberation Movements of the 1960s and 1970s. They are elders such as the 69-year-old Kojo Sababu, the 69-year-old Kamau Sadiki, the 78-year-old Leonard Peltier, 79 year old Jamil Al Amin, the recently released 82-year-old Sundiata Acoli, the 84-year-old Ruchell Magee who is still incarcerated 60 years after his original arrest. How does one calculate the stress of an 84-year-old man having to submit to cavity searches? Remember these searches can be conducted in a variety of ways at the discretion of the authorities who can use such searches in a punitive way simply by declaring any given political prisoner an increased security risk. Prisoners undergoing such searches often feel sexually violated and can consequently experi-

ence the psychological symptoms common to rape victims and other victims of sexual trauma. Again the likelihood of later psychological symptoms is increased in these cases because this trauma is so calculated and deliberate. It can be said with almost a certainty that some of these political prisoners will end up with the much talked about syndrome of PTSD which is notable for the persons having symptoms of reliving trauma, such as nightmares or physical and emotional responses to things which remind them of past traumas. It can also lead to emotional numbing and withdrawal or shutting down and feelings of a foreshortened future. In general people with the full-blown syndrome may have trouble sleeping, angry outbursts, hypervigilance, meaning always having to be on point even when relatively unnecessary, and they may experience a heightened startle reflex or seem extremely jumpy. These are symptoms all too common in veterans and prisoners of war. Some of the people we call political prisoners actually are prisoners of a war against injustice and will unfortunately develop the symptoms common in prisoners of war and others who have been intentionally traumatized.

Day By Day Degradation of The Soul

Lastly, being a political prisoner is a spiritual assault. An assault perhaps best described by journalist and political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal who describes his incarceration as, “a day-by-day degradation of the soul, an oppressive brick and steel umbrella that transforms seconds into hours and hours into days.” Who would want that for anybody? What is the solution? Dr Alvarez has stated it concisely in a single sentence. The only treatment is freedom. People who support the 4th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution should support the call for the release of U.S. held political prisoners. People who believe in the United Nations Convention against torture, or the Geneva Convention should support the call for the release of U.S. held political prisoners. People who believe in the Bible, Koran, teachings of Buddha, Rig Veda or affirmations of Maat should support the call for the release of U.S. held political prisoners. In short any decent person should support the call to Free them all.

I Met Dr. Shakur in 1972

By Dr. Kokayi Patterson

Two years prior to 1972, I was entering a drug treatment program at age 17½ years old, after experiencing addiction to alcohol, heroin, methadone and cocaine. I entered a program called RAP, Inc. (Regional Addiction Prevention) run by Exec. Dir. Ron Adisa Clark in DC. I walked in for treatment and witnessed acupuncture being used on an elderly Methadone client. I thought this was insane and opted to leave but was convinced by some good brothers to stay and was exposed to political education. Our director was close friends with Jim Williams, head of the DC Black Panther Party Chapter. We worked with them as Panther Cubs and were exposed to the quotations from Mao Tse Tung (Red Book) and Chinese Culture, i.e., Barefoot Doctors, acupuncture, and serving-the-people philosophy. We were opposed to all the genocidal tactics that were being used against our people to combat drugs and crime and miseducation and housing issues, etc. We were a part of a National movement to address our issues.

Adisa Clark dispatched me and a cadre from DC to Gary, Indiana, for the 1st National Black Assembly to present our progressive community-based position on drug tx [drug treatment/therapy], police brutality, etc. I heard a young man speaking who had taken over the podium and was very critical about our leadership and the lack of response, and promoted acupuncture. I said then, “I like this Brother; he’s doing the same thing we are, fighting the powers that be and promoting the healing arts for our people.”

And now in his own words, taken from *SOULS: Critical Journal Of Politics, Culture, and Society Vol23 January-June 2013*, Dr. Shakur states:

“Speaking engagements ultimately led to the development of a strong national coalition of programs against methadone maintenance, and victimization by methadone; as well as promoting acupuncture and the need to stand up and take a humanistic approach to drug treatment. This work began when I presented at the founding convention for the National Black Caucus in 1972. There I met Kokayi Patterson, a former victim of heroin and methadone addiction who presented on the current state of drug abuse in the country, the position on methadone, the victimization of the Black community by the police, and drug-free residential treatment instead of incarceration. Ron Clark, Kokayi and I later formed Blacks Against Drugs (BAD) that recruited other programs committed to providing drug treatment to the Black community. These programs, including ones in Detroit, Philadelphia and others, used and promoted acupuncture as a necessary adjunct to treatment that pushed back against chemical warfare, its consequential criminal social

impact on families and communities, and the programs that organically developed to address, treat, and reorient them back to the community.”

Too many community programs, also too many grassroots drug fighters, are denied recognition for their creative and dedicated works.

Today, as depicted in the powerful documentary, “Dope is Death,” Dr. Mutulu Shakur’s legacy continues with the reestablishment of the Black Acupuncture Advisory Association of North America (BAAANA Inc.) and the Acupuncture Detox Specialist (ADS) Collective. The African Wholistic Health Association’s (AWHA Inc.) ADS Collective has been representing Dr. Shakur, promoting and providing Acudetox training to the inner-city communities for over 25 years, and has established Collectives in several major cities. It also represents the official training arm for BAAANA.

As we move forward, we can only thank Dr. Shakur for his insights that have helped millions of people around the world. On every continent there are now Acupuncture Specialists due to the SEED Dr. Mutulu Shakur Planted.

Straight Ahead,
Dr. Kokayi Patterson
AWHA Inc Founder
ADS Collective, Founder
BAAANA Inc. Collective Member

Editor’s Note: Now in 2023, after Dr. Mutulu Shakur’s release from prison, Dr. Kokayi Patterson has the honor of using his knowledge of acupuncture to help his mentor recover from 37+ years of suffering severe medical neglect throughout his incarceration. Asante

Advocacy in the Carceral Medical System: “We are all incarcerated”

By Dr. Joel Rene Morrissey

As I was escorted through the security apparatus of the penitentiary for the first time to lead my inaugural health education class, a disheveled man in medical scrubs was walking out whom the Re-entry Coordinator (“RW”) with me identified as the facility physician. I naively assumed that I would be introduced, but he made no eye contact with either of us. My escort said that the physician was “going to take a nap.” It was 10 a.m. in the morning.

Before arriving, and in collaboration with the Re-entry Coordinator, I had offered to lead a session for incarcerated individuals prior to their release, hoping to offer an overview of how to support their health and navigate the healthcare system upon release. My aim was simple: mitigate some of the greatest difficulties experienced with recently released individuals in the context of my work as an emergency medicine physician: overdoses, medication access, and establishing follow-up and continued care for their identified medical conditions. Sparked by this brief and superficial encounter with the individual responsible for health care in the facility, as well as the related experiences from my attendees, I quickly realized that there would be no smooth transition of care, and that any mitigation of difficulties would have to start before release.

RW explained to me that individuals requesting medical evaluation had to pay to go to medical for any non-emergency evaluation. What this meant in practice was that any condition not identified as needing emergency evaluation by the correctional officers was deemed not an emergency. This is an inversion of what happens outside the carceral system, where a medical professional evaluates all and any medical concern for the potential threat to life or limb or possibility for decompensation without treatment. Not infrequently, non-critical symptoms are discovered to be a sign of a serious underlying condition.

Once evaluated for a non-emergency medical concern, on a timeline determined by the system, further evaluation and treatment was determined by the medical professional. RW reported that the clinic was variably staffed with a broad range of nurse providers (often an LPN—high school graduate plus a minimum 12-month curriculum), whose plans were reviewed after the fact by the physician—the same physician that seemed to have no professional curiosity about another provider entering his facility and felt comfortable leaving the clinic during normal business hours; the same physician working in a system explicitly designed to limit costs and disruptions; the carceral medical system.

When I entered the hall where I was to lead my class, I

was greeted by more than 50 individuals, outnumbering the provided chairs, and ranging in age from young adults through geriatric-age men in wheelchairs. Clearly what they needed, and hoped for, was more than the bullet-point lecture and Q&A that I had planned.

The ad-hoc event that I created that day became a regularly scheduled two-hour session of which one hour was directed at my initial goal with added information on self-empowered health interventions that didn’t require a burdensome and often fruitless visit to the infirmary. The second hour was an open Q&A with an opportunity for direct patient examination. In essence, group therapy for medicine.

Many individuals would have questions that they didn’t want associated with them, but I knew would likely benefit others in the room. To ensure no topic was off-limits, questions could be submitted in writing and would be addressed as a general concern. Others weren’t so abashed, or were realistic about their likelihood of getting an appropriate medical evaluation, and I found myself examining them as I would have in the privacy of an appropriate medical context.

Every session and problem brought up was both unique and generalizable, with laughter, humility, and relief scattered throughout. What I came to realize was the incomparable benefit of shared experience, for both my “patients” and myself. Crowd sourcing medical problems and solutions was an experience new, and ultimately uplifting for me, in a way I have never been able to duplicate in a different context. I never could have envisioned the impact I could make, and undergo, for so little effort. Sadly, this was true as a consequence of the system in which these men were forced to participate without recourse or true agency.

Of particular concern to me were those individuals who, by virtue of their “special classification,” would never be allowed to attend these sessions. I knew intuitively that their restrictions were likely often arbitrary and affected by the political pressures within and outside of the facility. By virtue of the carceral system and the healthcare mechanics entrenched in it, these individuals would not only never benefit from individual or group “therapy,” but likely have much greater consequences from their incarceration than their compatriots.

Serendipitously, I found myself indirectly involved in care for those with “special classification” through a request to evaluate the medical records of an individual who was coming up for parole again after many denials in the past. The argument for his continued incarceration was the ongoing potential threat to society, though it was clear from his sen-

tence and conditions of confinement that the barriers to release were created rather by his threat to the optics and politics of the circumstances leading to his incarceration. Using a review of his medical records, which revealed an aged and medically-incapacitated individual, a compelling argument against continued threat could be made. More cases followed. Although my work directly in the prisons was suspended by COVID-19, and has not resumed, my work behind the scenes (and unfortunately behind a desk) advocating for individuals under *de-jure* and *de-facto* special classifications has continued.

All prisoners are, in some way, political prisoners. Although many Americans may think of political prisoners as those incarcerated because of, and sentences imposed related to, their political activism, politics is at the heart of the entire judicial and penal system. Furthermore, most Americans would not describe themselves as incarcerated, based on the fact that they are not involuntarily confined in the most literal sense. In fact, many people are barred from living their best possible life because of politically imposed restrictions on their most basic needs and activities. In the same way accurate for actual prisons, this invisible confinement is built from the interlocking bricks of politics and the “free market,” held together by the mortar of public participation in both. Although ostensibly freely available to all Americans, politics and the free market welcome participation mainly to those who do not challenge the integrity of the system and thereby weaken the mortar that keeps the walls standing.

As a physician, nowhere is this invisible incarceration more evident to me than with regards to healthcare. It is obvious and well documented, both historically and currently, that freedom of movement, expression, economic opportunity, education, and shelter has always been constrained by the ruling class's shared economic and political motives. Less obvious, for many reasons, is the restrictive involvement of the same invisible hands in what the United Nations considers a fundamental human right: the right to the highest attainable standards of physical and mental well-being.

We live in a country where for-profit entities wholly affect the healthcare industry (insurers, pharmaceutical companies, medical equipment manufacturers). The elected legislators regulating these entities are beholden to these well-funded special interests over their constituents. Under these healthcare conditions, we are all incarcerated within politically determined walls built around us without our consent and often without our knowledge. Regardless of our standing in society, most Americans who attempt to maintain any standard of physical and mental well-being are met with restrictions, obstructions, and in many cases complete lack of access.

Well-funded special interests want a return on their investment, whether it relates to their product development, distribution, or the politicians they contribute to. For the

healthcare industry accounting sheets, patients are necessary for profit and liability for loss. Maintaining a favorable balance between the two is complex and challenging. There are many corporations at all levels of the industry, and the targeted population's degree of engagement in the service is constantly fluctuating. Although it is illegal to control this balance explicitly using social determinants of health, it is implicitly controlled along these lines about conditions and medications covered, placement of access points, co-payments, patient education literature, government funding levels, and certainly medical forms and billing. Contacting the companies and politicians is a recourse that, although equally available, is only effective for the most determined or politically connected as defined by their socio-economic grouping.

Once an individual is incarcerated, all checks and balances, restrictions to unfettered profiteering, and political recourse for redress are removed. What was for the outside world intersecting spheres of influence balanced by competing needs and some degree of political transparency, now shifts to overlap completely into concentric circles of pure financial and political profiteering. The political prisoner lives in the center of these concentric circles of capitalist hell.

Healthcare facilities outside the carceral system depend on voluntary patient participation to generate revenue and compete with other providers within the catchment area for this business. Participation beyond that limited by the insurer or ability to pay, is selected by the patient's experience of the care provided and the option to obtain care elsewhere. Carceral health is governed by a patchwork of standards and cost models depending on the judicial strata (municipal, regional, state, federal). Whether carceral health is provided entirely by the facility or contracted out in whole or in part, it is based on a contractual or budgeted amount for a defined population without a unified standard for preventative or condition-specific care delivery within or beyond the facility walls. Increased participation is a drain to the bottom line and stress to the facility's function regarding staffing, transportation, and perceived security risk. Disincentives to participating are therefore built into the system. Cost to the patient, though in sum may be less than might be incurred outside, is an undue burden to a population with no income and without access to free/low-cost or alternative therapies they would have if not incarcerated.

Accessing care also involves significant disruption to the incarcerated individual's daily routine. A routine/straightforward visit to a provider within or outside of the system might require hours of travel and wait time, resulting in missed meals and wellness activities. During this time, the individual will be manacled and often shackled, and isolated from the general medical population and waiting rooms with seating and distractions to help mitigate the discomfort of waiting. The provider and location are determined

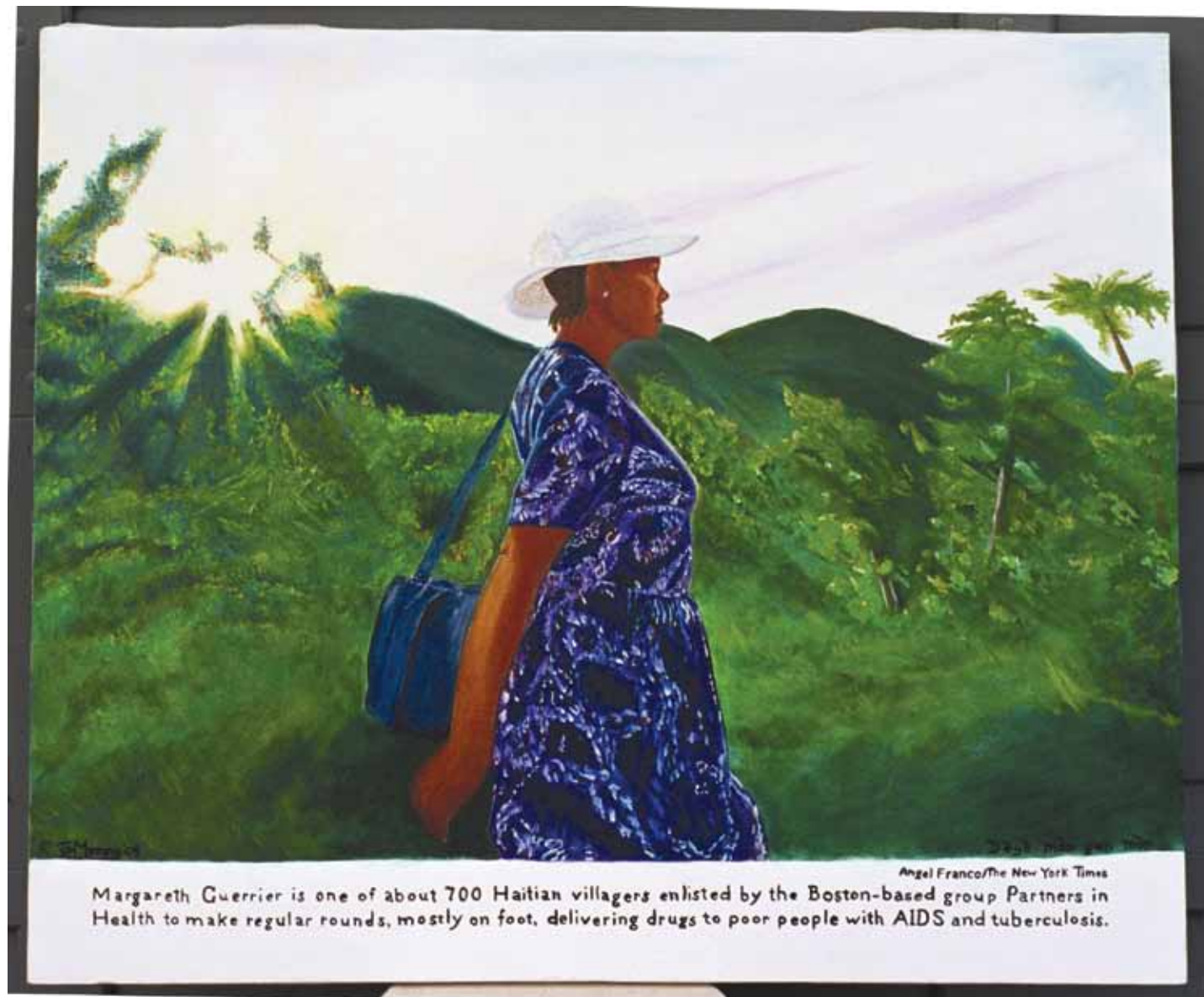
by the facility, without alternatives available. Ultimately financial and well-being costs, as well as an assessment of the quality of care, are necessarily factored into any individual's decision to seek care, and non-participation is the only expression of autonomy afforded incarcerated patients. The accrediting organization only requires statistics on the health outcomes of those who participate, described by a patient population whose complaints, if formally voiced, are unlikely to effect change.

For those incarcerated persons with medical conditions for which non-participation is not a sustainable option, and for whom the facility cannot ignore the active daily medical needs, much effort is put into providing care on-site, to minimize the financial and logistical costs. In some jurisdictions, decisions to release individuals are undoubtedly affected by these increasing costs. These decisions occur under the guise that the medical condition of individuals means they no longer pose a threat related to the reason that they were incarcerated or that they can no longer receive adequate care within the system.

All the factors above conspire against receiving appropriate medical care or compassionate release for political prisoners. They are likely to have received sentences beyond the standard for an equivalent offense, segregated from the general population, and transferred between facilities, undermining the benefits of continuity of care and inciting political opposition to release. Political prisoners will always be a threat to the system that incarcerates them. As they age, the conditions imposed on them accelerate their deterioration in a system that would like nothing better than for these individuals to be neglected and to die forgotten. The oubliette of the 18th-century carceral system lives on.

Although healthcare facilities with Bureau of Prisons (BOP) must meet the same accreditation as providers outside, this relates only to the facility and staffing or to patient safety/error prevention rather than the quality of or access to care other than in a few disease-specific areas. In fact, the only standard of care used by the BOP is circular and self-referential. As the presumed standard-bearer for carceral care, the BOP only requires that it provide care “... in a manner consistent with accepted community standards for a correctional environment.” Meeting standards acceptable to a community that supports the current judicial and carceral system's status quo is a low and tragic bar to meet.

My work as a medical advocate and volunteer within and outside the carceral system has been motivated entirely by the healthcare iniquities and inequities crushing our non-incarcerated population, and amplified for those incarcerated. Although my strengths and talents do not extend to the policy realm that could ultimately change the system, I have been fortunate to engage and make a difference at the individual and group levels. Ironically, because my work has been in the gray area not defined or restricted by the codified carceral and private healthcare system, it is this work that has most fulfilled my dreams of being a physician.



Margaret, by Tom Manning

He Said, She Said

By Tekla Ali Johnson (aka Agbala Aziokwu)

I was 17 years old in 1982 and an aspiring writer. I sent in poems for possible publication for a volume being published by David Rice. I was overjoyed when my poems were accepted. I agreed to read them at a Harambee African Cultural Organization meeting, which turned out to be a society that Mondo and Ed had created at the Nebraska state prison. Mondo and I became instant friends and grew close. I started visiting him in the prison once a week, a practice that would go on for about five years. We wrote scores of poems during this period – a great many on the topic of intimacy.

In 1983, I moved from Lincoln to Omaha, Nebraska, to restart his defense committee. For a few months I lived with his mother, Maito, and brother Kim. In 1984 Mondo changed both of our names to African names. In 1984-85 we co-created a radio program “African Synthesis.” I learned a great deal about national and international politics and music from this experience. Mondo and I were best friends during these days, but that could be tough; he refused to discuss his case, making my defense committee work harder, and he bitterly complained about my spelling (this angered me but led to me looking words up).

My daughter was born in 1987, and Mondo and his mother, Maito, both would feel that I betrayed them. I would console myself (and my shame) with the idea that I was not Mondo’s only girlfriend (which was true), even though everyone knew that he considered me his partner. Later, Mondo said that he viewed my children (a boy in 1991 and another in 1993 in addition to my daughter) as his children, since they had visited him when they were small, and since he had not been in a position to create any (damn the state).

Mondo and I would stay friends for the next 29 years, continuing to vet each other’s poetry (not that his needed it) but now, our subjects were invariably political.

Our beloved Mondo passed to the ancestors in prison in 2016.

Poem by Agbala

Shades

I do not see
 therefore nothing exists
 (at least not much).
 Prisons, you know,
 can inhibit growth
 because the walls block vision.
 But a prisoner can control some things
 (choosing to hear or ignore unwanted information
 From outside)
 and pretend that time stands still
 inside the lonely universe...
 This is one way
 to fool grief
 --that old devil.
 And Malcolm X
 --who got away--
 looked a star straight in the eye
 and was a shining exception.

WHAT HAPPENED TO H. RAP BROWN? IMAM JAMIL AL-AMIN? IMPRISONED COINTELPRO/Civil Rights Era Freedom Fighter, Human Rights Defender

By Efia Nwangaza

*“We’ve tried to get him for 24 years. Now, we’ve finally got him.”
— Paul Howard, former Fulton County District Attorney, March 9, 2002,
on the wrongful conviction of Imam Jamil Al-Amin (fka H. Rap Brown)*

Jamil Al-Amin, formerly known as H. “Rap” Brown, has been described as “a mentor, author, lecturer, theologian and thinker.” [2] In March, 2000, Imam Jamil Al-Amin was wrongfully accused, arrested, ceremonially tried and convicted for the shooting death of an Atlanta police officer. He has steadfastly maintained his innocence, filed years of appeals and petitions for new trials, and is still pursuing new avenues of release.

From H. “Rap” Brown to his conversion to Imam Jamil Al-Amin, he has been committed to freedom and justice. At the age of 15, he led a walkout of his high school in Louisiana in solidarity with college students protesting segregation. As a student at Howard University in 1964 he became the head of the Nonviolent Action Group (NAG), and that summer volunteered in organizing voting rights activism during the Freedom Summer.

Following the passage of the US Voting Rights Act of 1965, he joined the Greene County, Alabama Freedom Vote campaign. In 1967 he became chair of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and started touring the country. Brown gave a speech in support of civil rights activism in Cambridge, Maryland. Later, gun fire broke out in the city and a number of buildings were burned. He was arrested and charged with inciting a riot and with carrying a gun across state lines. Eventually, the charges were dismissed by the state prosecutor for a lack of evidence, but his political activities had been disrupted.[3]

After Al-Amin’s conversion to Islam, he became an Imam and served the Atlanta community. Today he is held in Tucson Arizona Federal Prison, under a gag order imposed by trial judge Stephanie B. Manis. Now he is far away from family, friends and counsel, although he is a Georgia state prisoner.

Extrajudicial Surveillance and Harassment: COINTELPRO

From the outset of his activism, Al-Amin has been targeted with extra judicial government actions. In 1967, at the time of Brown’s arrest in Cambridge, Maryland, it was learned that the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) had a secret memo that called for “neutralizing” him. He was a

target of the agency’s Counter Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO), designed to “disrupt and disqualify civil rights leaders.” COINTELPRO was discovered by anti-war activists who burgled a Pennsylvania military draft and FBI office (How Comrades Revealed the Existence of COINTELPRO | Black Agenda Report).

In 1968, the Presidential Kerner Commission was appointed to investigate the cause of mid-1960s multi city race rebellions in the U.S. It examined the Cambridge rebellion and blamed the incendiary language of the police chief, who “went on an emotional binge in which his main desire seems to have been to kill Negroes.” [4] The FBI compiled 45,000 documents on Brown/Al-Amin.[5]

In an official memorandum dated March, 1968, long-range goals of the COINTELPRO against Blacks were outlined and the Imam, then known as H. Rap Brown, was specifically named along with Martin Luther King, Jr. and other civil rights leaders.

In 1969, the FBI and local Chicago police agents were responsible for the pre-dawn assassination of Fred Hampton and Mark Clark as they lay asleep in their beds. Hampton and Clark were the leaders of the Chicago office of the Black Panther Party. None of the officers involved were ever charged.

Prosecutors’ offices and the courts were, and remain, complicit in the destruction meted out by the FBI and other law enforcement. Prosecutors routinely withheld exculpatory evidence as was the cases of Geronimo Ji-Jaga Pratt, Dhoruba Bin-Wahad, and Mumia Abu-Jamal. Although Pratt and Bin-Wahad were eventually exonerated after serving twenty-seven and nineteen years respectively, requests by Al-Amin, Peltier and Abu-Jamal for new trials have been frustrated at every turn by law enforcement and the prosecution.

In response to pressure from a broad spectrum of the American public, a Congressional subcommittee, popularly known as the Church Committee (1976), was formed to investigate and study the FBI’s covert action programs. The Church Committee concluded that the FBI had “conducted a sophisticated vigilante operation aimed squarely at pre-

venting the exercise of First Amendment rights of speech and association.” It found that “many of the techniques used would be intolerable in a democratic society even if all of the targets had been involved in violent activity.”

The Committee made factual findings which amounted to massive human rights violations based on race, political ideas, and political affiliations. In the final reports of the Committee, permanent means of congressional review were recommended. None of the recommendations addressed the human rights violations suffered by dozens of political prisoners, exiles, and human rights defenders who were victimized by the U.S. government’s political repression against African-Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Native American communities.

COINTELPRO/Civil Rights Era political prisoners, prisoners of war, and exiles still languish abroad or in prisons throughout the United States. Several have died in prison. Imam Al-Amin, like others, has endured excessive sentences, solitary confinement, poor diet and health care, various other forms of abuse, along with perfunctory parole hearings resulting in routine denial of release or release to die.

The politically punitive nature of their charges and lengthy sentences becomes readily apparent when compared to charges and sentences given to today’s right-wing offenders. Not one of the January 6th rioters has been prosecuted under the so-called Rap Brown Law which prohibits carrying arms across state lines to incite a riot. Not only did white, right wing vigilantes transport arms across state lines to overthrow the U.S. presidential election on January 6th, but they also set out to and did incite a riot.

Wrongful Conviction, No Meaningful Access to Justice [6]

In March, 2000, Imam Jamil Al-Amin was wrongfully accused and convicted for the shooting death of an Atlanta police officer. At that time Otis Jackson, a/k/a James Santos, informed his parole officer, Sarah Bacon, that he shot the sheriff for which Al-Amin had been charged.

FBI files from June 2000 documented Otis Jackson’s confession. Jackson had made numerous calls to the FBI, up the chain of command. Neither Jackson’s confession of the crime and related details, nor his matching the description of the shooter, would be presented at Al-Amin’s trial.

Later, in November, 2019, a video surfaced of Jackson, in an unrelated case, on Court TV. Under oath, he announced that he is the person who killed the officer for whom Imam Jamil Al-Amin was charged and convicted. To date, Jackson has been officially ignored. All of Imam Al-Amin’s appeals and writs for habeas corpus have been denied.

More than half of the wrongful convictions in the United States can be traced to eyewitness identifications, witnesses who lied in court or made false accusations, and/or government misconduct.[7] In 2018, a record number of exonerations involved misconduct by government officials.[8]

Conditions of Confinement: Incommunicado, Solitary Confinement

Upon conviction, Al-Amin was imprisoned in Georgia’s Reidsville State Prison. Soon after, Georgia officials claimed he was too high-profile for the Georgia prison system to handle. In October 2007, he was secretly transferred to ADX Florence, a federal Communications Management Unit (CMU: see below).

There he remained under the gag order imposed by the judge at trial, Stephanie B. Manis. It has prevented him from issuing statements, having interviews with writers, journalists, or academics.

In July 2014, after being diagnosed with multiple myeloma, Al-Amin was transferred to Butner Federal Medical Center in North Carolina, after a public campaign. As of March 2018, he is incarcerated at the United States maximum security penitentiary in Tucson Arizona—thousands of miles from family, friends, and his attorneys. At one point his eyesight was threatened by medical neglect of cataract treatment.

The U.S. has the largest prison population in the world and the highest incarceration rate of western nations [9]. In 2006 and 2008, the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) created CMUs, prison “supermax” units designed to isolate and segregate certain prisoners in the federal prison system from the rest of the BOP population.

At present there are two CMUs, in Terre Haute, Indiana and Marion, Illinois. These isolation units have been shrouded in secrecy since their creation as part of the post-9/11 “counterterrorism” framework implemented by the Bush administration. The Bureau claims that CMUs are designed to hold dangerous terrorists and other high-risk inmates, requiring heightened monitoring of their external and internal communications.[10]

Persons incarcerated in CMUs are fed through ports in the door of their cells. They are under constant surveillance, usually with closed circuit television cameras. Cell doors are usually opaque and the cells may be windowless. Furnishings are plain poured concrete or metal. Cell walls and plumbing are soundproofed to stop communication between people. They receive only eight hours of non-contact visiting time and two 15-minute calls per week, compared to the standard of four times as much contact visiting time per week, 300 phone minutes per month, and unlimited written letters.[11]

The CMU population is disproportionately Muslim. In 2014 when BOP last released data, 101 of 178 total CMU were Muslim. Forty-five of the first 55 prisoners sent to the CMU were there for terrorism-related convictions, but the other 10 were there due to “prohibited activities related to communication.” Of those 10, eight self-reported as Muslim.[12]

The BOP claims that there are broad guidelines determining who is eligible to be sent to these isolation

units—indeed the criteria are so broad that thousands of people in the general prison population are potentially eligible. It houses individuals with “unpopular” political views, e.g., human rights defenders, environmental and animal rights activists, jailhouse lawyers who organized for the rights of other prisoners, filed grievances based on mistreatment, participated in lawful social justice movements, or organized worship sessions.[13]

The CMUs cause severe trauma to both those held there and their families.[14] Conditions in such facilities violate the U.S. Constitution, especially the Eighth Amendment prohibition against “cruel and unusual” punishments and the UN Convention Against Torture.

A comprehensive 2011 New York Bar Association study suggested that supermax prisons constitute “torture under international law” and “cruel and unusual punishment under the U.S. Constitution.” In 2012, a federal class action suit against BOP and officials who ran ADX Florence SHU (Civil Action 1:12-cv-01570), alleged chronic abuse, failure to properly diagnose prisoners, and neglect of prisoners who are seriously mentally ill.[15]

Imam Jamil Al-Amin, a COINTELPRO/Civil Rights Era survivor, is a victim of this political and religious discrimination. His First and Eighth Amendment rights (U.S. Constitution) have been violated.[16] Following his arrest, he released a statement proclaiming his innocence and empathy for the family of slain officer, Kinchen. The trial judge, Stephanie B. Manis, placed a gag order on him to prevent him from further public communication.[17]

While incarcerated at the Georgia state facility, Imam Al-Amin accepted the invitation of fellow Muslims there to lead services and dialogue with the administration. The unit was forced to withdraw their invitation and asked Al-Amin to step down from his leadership role. He did so.

The Reidville intelligence unit investigated and released three reports that acknowledged that Al-Amin never “ordered other inmates at any prison to commit violence against prison officials” and was not tied, directly or indirectly, to any violence or unrest.

Two months later, June 2006, taking it out of local hands, the FBI prepared a report labeling Imam Al-Amin with the ubiquitous “radical extremist.” A year later, the Imam was secretly transferred to the federal ADX prison in Colorado. No notice was given to his family or legal counsel.[18]

United Nations Intervention: Permanent Forum on People of African Descent (PPPAD), Independent Working Group on People of African Descent (EMLER)

In light of the United Nations post-George Floyd murder interest in the treatment of People of African Descent by U.S. law enforcement, we have asked for: 1) a delegation visit, in-person or by video, USP Tucson[19] and interview with Imam Jamil Al-Amin (#99974-555); 2) a visit and interview of Imam Al-Amin’s Conviction Integrity Unit Case Man-

ager, newly elected Fulton County District Attorney, Honorable Fani T. Willis[20]; and, 3) a formal report of findings to the United States government with recommendations that:

- U.S. take immediate steps to use its presidential clemency powers and immediately commute the sentences of Al-Amin and all imprisoned COINTELPRO/Civil Rights Era political activists currently held in federal custody, and incentivize states to do the same;
- U.S. comply with Treaty Review Recommendations from 2010 to present and negotiate a Truth and Reconciliation Process to resolve all issues of this shameful era in USA history and compensate those who have been harmed and their beneficiaries and descendants;
- Immediately, in practice, end the use of COINTELPRO and similar programs;
- U.S. take immediate steps to close CMU prisons and grant all individuals previously held adequate opportunities to repair the harm done to them and the relationships caused by their years of isolation[22];
- U.S. take immediate steps to end solitary confinement, end over-and race-based mass incarceration, and end criminalization and carceral discrimination against Muslims.

Endnotes

- [1] Contributing Organizations
- Imam Jamil Action Network (IJAN). Founded in 2002, IJAN uses social activism and public awareness for the release and exoneration of Imam Jamil Al-Amin. Starting in the 1960 he was a pivotal figure in the U.S. Black Power/Self Determination movement. (https://www.imamjamilactionnetwork.org/biography/chronologyoflife_and_work)
 - Malcolm X Center for Self Determination. Founded in 1991, the center is a multi-issue, volunteer, grassroots, community-based resource and action center. It serves as a public space for developing, testing, training and implementation of approaches to community capacity building, popular education, strategic planning, technical, artistic and communications skill enhancement for self-determination and human rights advocacy; 202 Lavinia Avenue Greenville, SC 29601, USA, enushrnetwork@gmail.com / +1 864-901-8627 <https://www.wmxc955.org/>
 - Malcolm X Grassroots Movement for Self Determination/NAPO <https://freethelandmxgm.org/>
 - National Jericho Movement for Amnesty and Freedom of All (U.S.) Political Prisoners. <https://www.thejerichomovement.com/>
 - Human Rights-Racial Justice Center. Founded in 2008, H2RJ provides advocacy and technical assistance to organizations across the US on justice and education. kingnetic@yahoo.com
- [2] <https://time.com/6111614/h-rap-brown-jamil-al-amin/>
- [3] <https://harfordcivilrights.org/items/show/9>
- [4] <https://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/speccol/sc2200/sc2221/000012/000012/html/00120002.html>
- [5] <https://catalog.archives.gov/search?q=%22h%20rap%20brown%22>
- [6] For a detailed description of the multitude of inconsistencies and other problems with the Al-Amin case, see <https://muslimmatters.org/2019/05/02/potential-retrial-in-sight-for-imam-jamil-al-amin-h-rap-brown/>

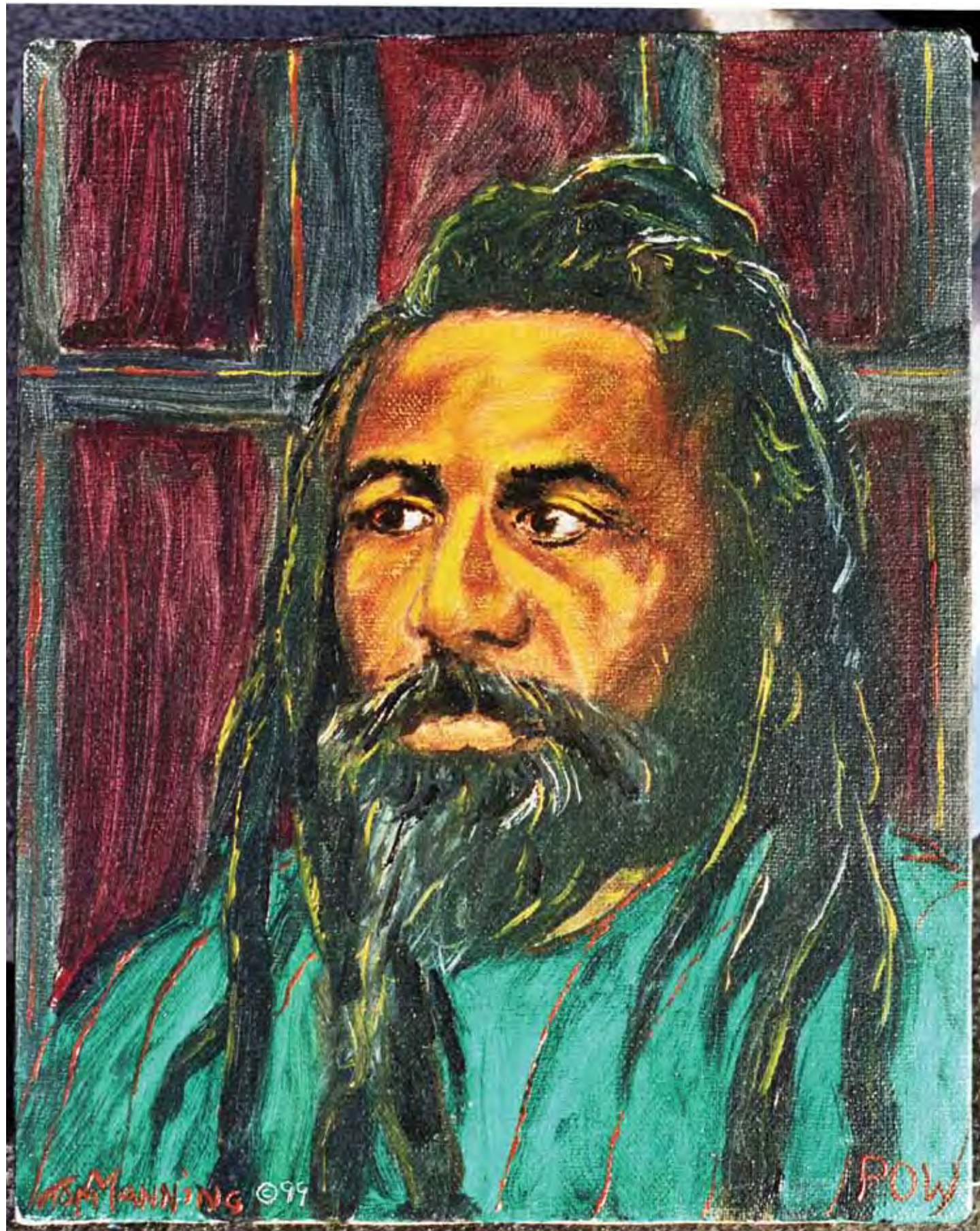
- [7] The National Registry of Exonerations, “Basic Patterns” (Nov. 2016).
- [8] The National Registry of Exonerations, “Exonerations in 2018” (Apr. 9, 2019), <https://www.law.com/innocenceproject.org/how-eyewitness-misidentification-can-send-innocent-people-to-prison/>
- [9] https://www.prisonstudies.org/highest-to-lowest/prison_population_rate?field_region_taxonomy_tid=All
- [10] <https://ccrjustice.org/home/get-involved/tools-resources/fact-sheets-and-faqs/cmus-federal-prison-system-s-experiment-group>
- [11] Shalev, Sharon Supermax: Controlling Risk Through Solitary Confinement (2009).
- [12] Ibid
- [13] Ibid
- [14] <https://www.commondreams.org/views/2019/05/10/what-i-lost-and-can-never-get-back-when-my-father-was-guantanamo-north>

- [15] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Supermax_prison#cite_note-4
- [16] <https://www.thestate.com/news/state/south-carolina/article223424995.html>
- [17] <https://www.theroot.com/the-unofficial-gag-order-of-jamil-al-amin-h-rap-brown-1826396693>
- [18] Ibid
- [19] <https://www.bop.gov/locations/institutions/flm/>; United States Penitentiary, Tucson, AZ. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Penitentiary,_Tucson
- [20] Fulton County District Attorney’s Office, 136 Pryor Street SW, Atlanta, GA 30303 / 404-612-4000 customerservice@fultoncountyga.gov
- [21] <https://www.bop.gov/locations/institutions/flm/>
- [22] https://ccrjustice.org/sites/default/files/attach/2021/09/09.20.21_Unconstitutional_and_Unjust_Memo.pdf

For more information contact:
www.imamjamilactionnetwork.org



Art by Rashid Johnson



Malik, by Tom Manning

HOWLING AT THE POWER: PRISONER LEGAL WORK

By Bill Dunne

From my experiences and observations through 43 years of imprisonment, the only forum in which the poor and oppressed can, in theory, utilize at least nominally guaranteed redress of grievances is in the courts. Courts are, in theory, bound by procedures prescribed to equalize everyone before the bar of justice and to include, in theory, impartial members of the public and judges in the decision-making process. Courts are also, in theory, designed so anyone can call anyone else who oppresses him/them/her before the law to allege the oppression and demand redress. Via due process, the court, a justice-seeking tribunal, will then grant (or not) a remedy for the grievance(s) before it.

Prisoners are the poorest and most oppressed members of the social hierarchy. As a class, they are reviled, disparaged, own few resources, and are socially, politically, and economically disenfranchised. Hence, the only rights they have are legal rights. These rights are determined by interpreting constitutions, statutes, regulations, rules, and the common law. Politicians do not just ignore prisoners, but also actively bash them to enhance their “tough on crime” credentials. Regulatory agencies turn a blind eye toward prisoners, where they could improve medical care, reduce exposure to toxic materials, increase food quality, etc. Those agencies treat prisoners as the enemy. Business seeks to exploit and oppress prisoners by selling incarceration, buying their labor on the cheap, and peddling them junky stuff at exorbitant prices. Society tends to treat whomever it relegates to “the criminal element” as savages beyond the pale. Ironically, only the courts have a door open to prisoners. Consequently, since prisoners are unable to vacate the vicinity, they do legal work to defend and expand legal rights, to seek redress for violations, to resist their own oppression.

A prisoner’s journey into legal work begins on the defensive upon arrest. From the minute before a nominally “free” person is made a prisoner by the state’s apparatus of repression (government entities, i.e., federal, state and municipal entities within the state with the power to arrest), he/she/they retain human and legal rights to humane treatment, due process of law, expression, and representation. The state apparatus immediately attacks these rights upon arrest of the prisoner, who must do the following:

- must try to remember events, names, times and details, while usually deprived of any means of preserving information and subjected to myriad distractions;
- must be aware of “the good cop” seeking to obtain incriminating information, the depredations of “the bad cop”

seeking to provoke incriminating actions, and the intrusions of “the slimy creature” seeking information to trade to the apparatus;

- must exercise the right to remain silent.

Even after appointment of counsel, paid or a PD (public defender), a prisoner cannot rest. Lawyers are sometimes overextended, disinterested, or just not very good. Lawyers seek to minimize time spent on cases because time is money to them. Prosecutors seek to capitalize on prisoners’ (and their lawyers’) ignorance and lack of diligence because convictions and big sentences are notches on prosecutor guns. Judges want to sweep cases through their dockets, often at the expense of prisoner defendants, in the name of efficiency of justice or judicial economy. More investigation and consideration of potentially mitigating to acquitting circumstances for the prisoner is time-consuming and expensive. Prisoners are, to the system, here-today-gone-tomorrow members of the underclass and not members of the class stratum inhabited by prosecutors/judges/lawyers, etc., who have been and will remain in the courthouse milieu for years. Prisoners, conversely, generally have extremely limited resources, especially so in pre-trial detention facilities, where management tends to feel they are already represented, and that if they gain from their legal work, they are “workin’ the system” or “gettin’ over.”

The apparatus of repression wields the system like a weapon against mostly proletarian defendants and prisoners who lack the resources to bail out and/or are victimized by the police/prosecutorial/judicial class bias and not deemed as fully human. Many prisoners are found guilty of, or forced to plead guilty to, false or exaggerated charges, regardless of a good lawyer, resulting in excessive prison sentences.

The post-arrest phase of legal work brings appeals and collateral attacks and challenges to sentence execution and requests for reduction in sentence. This so-called nation of laws consists of men, women, and gender-nonconformists who interpret the laws. There are literally thousands of fat tomes interpreting laws and the interpretations themselves. The law is a malleable instrument.

Nor is contesting the legal rationale for one’s (or anyone’s) imprisonment the only legal work prisoners face. The rights to humane treatment, due process of law, access to the courts, proper medical care, nutritious food, recreation, expression, communication, religion, etc., etc., are under constant pressure by the agencies of repression and their minions, who find those rights inconvenient “coddling” of

prisoners. Challenges to infringements on these rights are not considered steps in the criminal process and so must be contested via administrative remedy prior to seeking relief in court. Even habeas corpus related to execution of sentence issues, such as sentence computation or rescission of good time credits, has an administrative remedy exhaustion requirement (though the court may waive it in habeas cases). Dealing with outstanding warrants and detainers, that may increase both custody levels and sentence lengths, may also require significant time and effort, especially as related to child support, probation violations, and immigration issues. For (hypothetical) example, an unpaid traffic ticket from Maine may prevent a Southern California prisoner from being released through a private halfway house, which may make that release much more difficult.

Prisoners also find that predatory prosecution, ineffective lawyering, rubber-stamp judges, lazy and vindictive bureaucrats, and trails of legal loose ends leave many people with outstanding sentences, plus warrants and detainers that also, by de facto, extend their sentences. Past often becomes present when an ancient probation violation or ticket pops up as a warrant or detainer. This very week, 40 people were released from this facility because the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) had miscalculated the federal First Step Act early release credits granted in 2018—apparently deliberately—to keep prison populations up and prisons open.

There is more demand than supply for the services of prisoners who can obtain requisite legal information, write coherently, find appropriate forms and know where to send them, and sometimes decipher arcane statutes, regulations, rules, and court decisions. While there may be charlatans among prisoners representing themselves as providers of such services, bent only on profiting from the misfortunes of their class brethren/sistren/gender-nonconforming, there are some (too few!) prisoners who feel that if they can credibly challenge an injustice, they must. But there are just not enough hours in the day to fulfill the need, especially when movement schedules artificially and incessantly waste time precisely for the reason of wasting time.

Filling out administrative remedy forms sounds simple, but it is greatly complicated by staff making them unavailable from just saying “no” to hanging out in areas inaccessible to prisoners, to saying they are “out” of the forms. Responses to the forms often never come back, or come back so long after the date on the response that any appeal is rendered untimely. Cops refuse to write delivery dates on forms they deliver, and counselors, etc., tell prisoners they will not write a “delay memo” acknowledging the late response on the grounds that the prisoner cannot “prove” the response was delivered late. Since courts generally require exhaustion of administrative remedies, that puts the prisoner in the hands of a judge as to whether the prisoner may bring the issue to court. The government will claim the defense of failure to exhaust; while the prisoner will usually

have only her/their/his claim that she/they/he did exhaust administrative remedies.

Research is difficult and time-consuming, and access to materials is constrained in most prisons. In this one, for example, about 1,600 prisoners have access to an electronic law library (ELL) with 15 terminals, seven of which do not work properly. The ELL here offers a LEXIS read-only legal database that is infrequently updated—less often than advance sheets and other flow of updates when books reigned in prison law libraries. Access to this law library is limited to about 90 minutes per weekday (if one does not have a job), and frequently shortened, with one or two approximately one-hour periods on Sunday (but not this Sunday), and an occasional hour on Tuesday evenings (but not this Tuesday)—and this is AFTER a return to “normal operations” from COVID-modified protocols. Being able to spend some hours to follow legal threads through the database is not happening, and printing out numerous cases relevant to a particular action is prohibitively expensive.

Meeting up with other prisoners to discuss an issue on which one may be helping can also be difficult – unless one lives in the same unit. Visiting other units is generally forbidden (and absolutely so here), and there are often scheduling conflicts between the units where one or both prisoners cannot get to the library or the chow hall at the same time. This is especially vexing where deadlines loom. There may also be language barriers, not only between prisoners who speak English, Spanish or Ukrainian, but also between people who will be doing the writing and others who read the law as they want it to be rather than how it is. Meeting of the minds can sometimes be more elusive than meeting of the bodies.

Staff interfere in legal work and retaliate against it. They make obstructive rules. For example, that one cannot have the envelopes in which legal mail comes, even from the court or prosecutor, and one prisoner may not possess a document that has the caption of another prisoner’s case on it. Staff call prisoners assisting others “legal beagles” as a term of disparagement, rifle their paperwork for no reason, make getting copies and addresses difficult, and will not permit word processor access. Instead, staff insist on junky typewriters that do not work well and are not provided in sufficient numbers to meet demand. Staff harass prisoners about having too much paperwork and too many books in their cells. They interfere with legal mail to the extent that courts have adopted the “mailbox rule” by which prisoner filings are deemed filed the day the prisoner places them in the institution’s legal mail system. But the delays and disappearances, and uncertainty injected into the process of handling litigation, are still damaging.

The courts themselves frequently exhibit anti-prisoner bias. Congress made, and the courts enforce, exorbitant filing fees on prisoners that non-prisoners do not have to pay in non-habeas civil actions, to discourage prisoners from us-

ing such actions. Instead of construing prisoner pro se legal actions liberally, as they are bound to do, judges often treat them stringently or make bizarre rulings, apparently confident that the rulings will not get around the legal fraternity and make the judges look like boobs.

Courts also commonly act as lawyers for the government where prisoners are contesting government actions (and inactions) that violate the Constitution or laws. A federal district court judge in California ruled that federal prisoners have no right to ANY answer to an administrative remedy request because the system is entirely discretionary with the FBOP (Federal Bureau of Prisons)—notwithstanding that such answers are prescribed in mandatory language in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), which has the force of law.

The future holds promise.

*Bill Dunne #10916-086 at FCI Victorville Medium I,
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Art by Rashid Johnson

Anarchist Black Cross Support for Comrades Behind Bars

Anarchist Black Cross (ABC) chapters around the world autonomously support people who are imprisoned for their thoughts and actions for justice and freedom from oppression, also known as political prisoners or prisoners of war. It is an extension of the work begun by the Political Red Cross in the late 19th century supporting political prisoners in Tsarist prisons or labor camps providing aid including assistance in planned escapes from prisons or places of exile. During the Spanish Civil War and WWII, ABCs were composed mostly of Russian Jews aided anarchist comrades fleeing from fascist persecution, as well as those arrested in the resistance movements throughout Europe.

Fast forward to the present—hundreds of autonomous ABC collectives around the globe continue to organize for freedom for all political prisoners and prisoners of war from social justice struggles. As anarchists, we support a diversity of tactics and aim to support current political prisoners as they see fit. Most chapters on Turtle Island (so-called North America) prioritize support for Black and Indigenous liberation struggles in addition to people from anarchist and other anti-authoritarian movements.

Worldwide Roots and Branches

Since the beginning of the Twentieth Century, the Anarchist Black Cross, also known as the Anarchist Red Cross (ARC), has been on the frontline in supporting those imprisoned for struggling for freedom and liberty. The year of origin has been a nagging question regarding the history of the ABC. According to Rudolph Rocker, once the treasurer for the ARC in London, the organization was founded during the “hectic period between 1900 and 1905.” However, according to Harry Weinstein, one of the two men who began the organization, it began after his arrest in July or August of 1906. Once released, Weinstein and others provided clothing to anarchists sentenced to exile in Siberia. This was the early stage of the ARC. Weinstein continued his efforts in Russia until his arrival in New York in May of 1907. Once he arrived, he helped to create the New York ARC.

Other accounts place the year’s origin in 1907. During June and August of 1907, Anarchists and Socialist-Revolutionaries gathered together in London for two conferences. It is believed that Vera Figner, a Socialist Revolutionary, met with Anarchists to discuss the plight of the political prisoners in Russia. After this meeting, the ARC organized in London and in New York. It is known that members of the organization were on trial in 1906-1907 in Russia. Therefore, the most accurate dates of origin for the ARC are likely late 1906-early 1907 for the Russian section, and June or August

1907 for the creation of the International section.

However, the reason for the creation of the ARC is not in dispute. It was formed after breaking away from the Political Red Cross (PRC). The PRC was controlled by the Social Democrats and refused to provide support to Anarchist and Social Revolutionary political prisoners, despite continued donations from other Anarchists and Social Revolutionaries. As one former political prisoner and member of the ARC stated, “In some prisons, there was little distinction made between Anarchists and other political prisoners, but in others, Anarchists were refused any help.” The newly formed ARC considered these actions criminal and vowed that any prison where Anarchists were in the majority, the ARC would provide support to all Anarchist and Social Revolutionary political prisoners.

Because of their support for political prisoners, members of the group were arrested, tortured and killed by the Tsarist regime. The organization was deemed illegal and membership was reason enough for arrest and imprisonment in Artvisky Prison, one of the worst hard labor jails in Siberia. ARC members and prisoners who managed to escape from prison fled from Russia creating chapters in London, New York, Chicago and other cities in Europe and Turtle Island.

The 1917 Revolution caused a celebration throughout the Socialist, Anarchist, and Communist communities. The ARC liquidated and members began to make plans to return to Russia in hopes of participating in the new society. Sadly, their return was met by Bolshevik repression, similar to that of the Tsarist era. After a few years of hibernation, the group was forced to resurface to assist the political prisoners in the new Bolshevik society. Once again the organization was made illegal and membership meant imprisonment and/or death.

During the Russian Civil War, the ARC’s name changed to the Anarchist Black Cross to avoid confusion with the International Red Cross, also organizing relief in the country. It was also during this period that the organization organized self-defense units against political raids by the Cossack and Red armies.

During the next several decades, the group would continue under various different names but has always considered itself part of the ARC/ABC formation. ABC’s support for political prisoners spread to the four corners of the globe. What was once a typically Russian-Jewish organization, now had many faces and ethnicities. In addition to roughly a dozen chapters across Turtle Island, there are chapters in Abya Yala (so-called South America), Europe and Asia working on a wide variety of prison issues.

What is the ABCF and How Does it Support Political Prisoners?

In May of 1995, a small group of ABC collectives in Turtle Island merged into the Anarchist Black Cross Federation (ABCF) whose aim was to focus on the overall support and defense of Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War. PPs/POWs are not in prison for committing social “crimes,” nor are they criminals. Different PPs/POWs participated in progressive and revolutionary movements at varying levels. Some in educational and community organizing, others in clandestine armed and offensive people’s armies. All are in prison as a result of conscious political action, for building resistance, building, and leading movements and revolution.

Many of us in some way or another are part of these very movements, part of that resistance that PPs/POWs helped to build. As people continuing to struggle for revolution, we are obligated and it is our duty to support those people who are in prison as a result of struggling to make change.

Making sure PPs/POWs are a part of their own support is crucial and one of the greatest strengths of the Federation. We directly communicate with as many PPs/POWs as we can. A large part of this communication is working together with them to find out what they need and how we can practically provide this support.

The ABCF also works to build alliances with the communities and the movements the prisoners participated in prior to their incarceration. Through these alliances, we work toward increasing awareness about various liberation movements and the political prisoners associated with the movements. It is through these coalitions that we continue to ensure that imprisoned comrades are not forgotten by their movements or our own.

We also produce information about PPs/POWs, the struggles they came from and the movements they represent. Raising material support is also crucial. It is not uncommon to find that PPs/POWs are left with no financial support to pay for phone calls or postage stamps to communicate with their families, friends, and supporters; not enough money to pay for a news subscription or buy books; no funds to get proper footwear or summer/winter clothing. If we call these prisoners our comrades, we can not allow this to continue. And we don’t.

We raise these funds mainly through the Warchest Program. Through the Warchest, we collect monthly donations from our own ABC groups and monthly or one-time pledges from other ABCs around the country, supportive groups and individuals. With these funds, we send out monthly checks, year after year, to PPs/POWs who are receiving the least financial support to our knowledge.

Still, financial support and communication are but two forms of direct support needed to demonstrate to their

keepers PPs/POWs have not been forgotten. As enemies of the state, they serve the hardest time. The government often attempts to lock them far away from their families, friends and supporters. We must not allow them to be isolated. When geographically possible, we go into the prisons and visit PPs/POWs. This also brings the harsh reality of political imprisonment much closer to supporters. It reminds us that PPs/POWs are not only names and figures, pictures on our T-shirts and leaflets, but people with personalities and personal needs. And if we forget this or neglect to include it in our work to defend them, our foundations will soon become weak.

In the words of Ojore Lutalo (former New Afrikan anarchist political prisoner who was instrumental in the formation of the ABCF): “Any movement that does not support its political internees is a sham movement.”

We do not leave our comrades behind when they are prosecuted by the state. We continue to envelop them in the love and support of the community and engage in mutual aid. Repression is expected when one is resisting oppression, so our aim is to strengthen the work in the face of a crackdown.

On a broader level, anarchists are inherently abolitionists. We believe that the abolition of prisons and police is necessary for free communities, and do not engage with or cooperate with law enforcement. Many of us work in building alternative justice structures through systems such as restorative and transformative justice. We are building community support structures from the bottom up to replace authoritarian structures as they crumble.

To plug in, see abcf.net or the wiki database of worldwide political prisoners at prisonersolidarity.com.

A PETITION FOR INSTITUTIONAL-RESTITUTION 2020

By Abdul Olugbala Shakur

We understand that Prisoners from all racial/cultural backgrounds were victimized by the California Department of Corrections (CDCr) long term Solitary Confinement/Isolation campaign, and by no means will we ever diminish their unjust suffering, but we represent a class of New Afrikan political Prisoners who have been fighting this fight since the 1960s when no one else was, and they have sacrificed more to this prison struggle than anyone. Their leading roles in the Hunger Strikes and Campaign to shut down the Control Unit Prison/Security Housing Unit (SHU) (i.e. solitary Confinement) is just another example of their collective effort and consistent dedication and commitment towards combatting racial oppression/persecution, not to mention fascism. We ask of you to understand our campaign, and the integrity of our intentions. This Petition for Institutional-Restitution is designed to bring Justice to those New Afrikan imprisoned activists who have been persecuted and tortured for their political beliefs and activities since the 1960s; if they don't deserve to be compensated, then who does? These Brothers have sacrificed their lives to this just cause for the last 60 years.

Support or Call for Justice

The following is what we believe to be a just, fair, and reasonable request for the inhumane treatment that many New Afrikan Politically Active Prisoners were subjected to on a regular basis while they were being held in Solitary Confinement/Isolation both at Pelican Bay and Corcoran State Prisons.

The Amerikan Judicial System strongly claims that they believe in the full restoration of those who have been victimized unjustly, and being in prison does not negate the rights of Prisoners to receive restorative justice from a system that has (and continues to) commit crimes against them (us) under the manufactured cloak of combatting prison-gangs. Via the Ashker v. Government settlement the Prisoner-Class proved their case beyond a reasonable doubt; even the Judge in this matter had strongly recommended that the CDCr and Government settle this matter out-of-court.

Note: The CDCr had criminalized the political beliefs, activities, and their history of the New Afrikan Politically Conscious Prisoner-class, explicitly qualifying this Class of Prisoners by international law and international standards/definition as Political Prisoners/POW. This Class of Prisoners (i.e. New Afrikan Political Prisoners) were being denied release from solitary Confinement, as well as Parole as a di-

rect result of their political beliefs and activities, and thus, becoming imprisoned as a direct result of those political beliefs and activities. Even a Judge ruled that she had concerns that the CDCr may have taken a race-based short-cut and assume anything having to do with Afrikan-Amerikan History and Culture would be banned under the guise of being gang activities. This New Afrikan class of Political prisoners held in solitary confinement at both Pelican Bay and Corcoran State Prison was often unjustly penalized for their political activities, including their writings and reading literature. Many of them were also penalized for saying "Hello" to one another and given disciplinary reports for rule violations; manufactured violations just to justify their continuous confinement in Isolation. This is why this Petition for Institutional Restitution is requesting restorative justice for this particular class of Prisoners, because it is evidently clear that their persecution (i.e., Long-Term Isolation, Torture, Racial Discrimination, Censorship, just to name a few) was directly based on their Political beliefs/activities, and their racial and cultural background as New Afrikans.

Restorative Justice Request

1. While spending decades in Solitary Confinement/Isolation. i.e. The Security Housing Unit (SHU), this Class of New Afrikan Political Prisoners for the most part was not allowed to participate in a number of Educational/Vocational, and/or Self-Help programs, and as a result many of them were unable to attain the necessary criteria to become suitable for parole. These New Afrikan Prisoners that fall under this class should not be held to the same standards of the general population, especially since the CDCr illegally denied them that opportunity to attain their suitability by keeping them in Solitary Confinement/Isolation for decades.

2. It is Restorative Justice that the New Afrikan Political-Prisoners Class be determined suitable for parole based on the following the criteria:

- a) How much time they have served on their sentences.
- b) Family Support.
- c) A source of legitimate and legal financial support.
- d) Job opportunity if applicable.

*Those who do not meet these criteria should be entitled to be housed in a prison such as San Quentin State Prison where programs are available that will help them become suitable for parole.

3. Many of the New Afrikan Prisoners who fell under the above stated class while in Solitary Confinement received a number of questionable Rules Violation Reports (RVRs: Disciplinary Reports) for allegedly engaging in promoting prison-gang activities, when in fact the CDCr had reduced Black History Books/Literature to gang material and gang political activities to justify keeping them in Isolation. Many of these New Afrikan Political Prisoners received additional time in Solitary, more time in prison, as well as denied parole as a direct result of the CDCr illegal scheme of transforming Black History/Literature to gang-activity, which made having possession a serious rule violation.

4. The above stated New Afrikan Class of Prisoners had served 20 to 50 years in Solitary Confinement/Isolation. They were released into general population without any consideration for the damages the CDCr caused them, and then they were treated like all other Prisoners. They are not like just any other Prisoner; they are a rare and unique Class of Prisoners: They were subjected to decades of both psychological and physical torture, which includes sensory deprivation: they should have the option to serve their time in a prison like San Quentin State Prison, providing them with the opportunity to heal.

Note: We understand that many Prisoners had served long-term confinement in Solitary/Isolation within the CDCr, but this Class of Prisoners was the only Class specifically targeted for their Political beliefs and activities, not to mention their race.

5. We are requesting a hearing before a panel that is made up of the following proposed individuals:

- a) A Federal Magistrate.
- b) CDCr Secretary or Director.
- c) Board of Parole Hearing Commissioner.
- d) Prisoner Rights Attorney.
- e) Civil Rights Attorney.
- f) NAACP-Rep.
- g) Black Community Activist.

People, this is only a proposal, it is not set in concrete. The proposed panel should not entirely consist of government or law enforcement officials. Each New Afrikan Political Prisoner will be provided an opportunity to tell their personal experience and why they should be released/or given a parole date. This will not be required. Each affected Prisoner who represents this particular Class will have the option to speak to this panel. We believe the opportunity should/must be made available; a public hearing tends to discourage the Government from covering up Human Injustices that are being committed in their name.

6. This small Class of New Afrikan Political Prisoners meets both the state and federal low-risk assessment. For example:

- a) They are all above the age of 50
- b) They all have served over 30 years of imprisonment.
- c) They all have outside support.

We request their immediate release!

Abdul Olugbala Shakur (James Harvey)
C48884 B-2-128U
Kern Valley State Prison (KVSP)
P.O. Box 5102
Delano, CA 93216

Joka Heshima Jinsai (Shannon Lemar Denham)
J38283 B-2-128L
Kern Valley State Prison (KVSP)
P.O. Box 5102
Delano, CA 93216

How Political Prisoners changed my life: Geronimo and Freeing the land

By Akinyele Umoja

During my 10th grade year, the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) raided the main Black Panther Party (BPP) office in Los Angeles on 41st and Central Avenue. Young people my age and a little older fought the LAPD soldier cops (police) and snipers from the Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) for hours after a pre-dawn raid and finally surrendered. This was the first time in history SWAT was deployed. These young Panthers were trained by the legendary revolutionary freedom fighter Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt). I had come to revere the name Geronimo Pratt reading the *Black Panther* newspaper in high school.

The presence of the BPP declined in our community after the December, 1969 LAPD raid. The next few years the local Panther house in my neighborhood was abandoned and it was rare to see Panthers selling the *Black Panther* newspaper in our community. During this time, many Panthers like Geronimo were captured and jailed on trumped-up charges. Geronimo went underground and was captured in Texas in 1970. A decorated U.S. Army Ranger with special forces military training and experience, Geronimo was teaching Panthers and other Black defense groups across the U.S. empire, including the Alabama Black Liberation Front, De Mau Mau, and the Black Legion of the Provisional Government of the Republic of New Afrika. He envisioned a national ministry of defense for the Black nation and saw his role to prepare Black freedom fighters to defend our people. Because of his training and vision, Geronimo was a threat that the FBI wanted to eliminate.

When other charges proved ineffective to convict him, prosecutors manufactured a case falsely accusing Geronimo of murdering a woman named Caroline Olsen in Santa Monica, California in 1968. In his defense, Geronimo stated during the time of Olsen's murder he was hundreds of miles away at a BPP meeting in Oakland (California). The colonizers used infiltration, initiated rumors, and divide and conquer tactics that created dissension within the BPP and made it difficult to communicate to grassroots, community people like me who would have supported them through their legal ordeals. A major factional split occurred in the BPP due to the divide and conquer tactics of the FBI and the political immaturity within the leadership of the Panthers. The FBI also promoted media reporting of the division and fighting within the BPP to confuse and demoralize the community, which weakened the grassroots support for Geronimo and other defendants.

Weeks after my high school graduation in 1972, I heard an

announcement that Panther leader Kathleen Cleaver was scheduled to speak at a hall in South Central, L.A. Cleaver traveled from the International Chapter of the BPP in Algeria, North Africa to testify at Geronimo's trial and to rally people in L.A. around his defense. I was excited to hear Kathleen Cleaver speak at the rally and took the bus from Compton to the Elks Hall on Central Avenue. The hall was packed with hundreds of people to hear what Kathleen had to say. After the official close of the rally, I quickly rushed to the stage to find out how I could get involved. Kathleen directed me to two brothers and one sister, and I got their phone numbers. The brothers never returned my calls. The sister, Njeri (aka Christy Farlice), called back. She was a young mother and Black liberation activist. She invited me to her home and informed me that the brothers didn't return my call due to fear of infiltration and they did not know me. She didn't have political work for me to do but provided me, a 17-year-old, eager potential activist with a political and cultural education. Sister Njeri introduced me to the music of Gil Scott Heron. She talked to me about revolutionary nationalist movements and politics while breast feeding her baby daughter Oshun. Sister Njeri then shared copies of the New York BPP newspaper *Right On* and the Provisional Government of the Republic of New Afrika's organ, *The New Afrikan* and also introduced me to comrades in Los Angeles, like revolutionary musician-vocalist and BPP member Peaches Moore (aka Somayah Kambui)—the first BPP member to emerge from the building after the December 1969 battle on 41st and Central.

Sister Njeri enlightened me but did not have political work for me to do. I soon had an opportunity to get more involved after starting college as a freshman at UCLA. I began my first published writing as a staff writer for UCLA's Black student publication NOMMO. One day in the NOMMO office, I received a call inviting a representative of our staff to a city-wide Black student meeting and to work to form a defense committee in Southern California for Muhammad Ahmad (formerly known as Max Stanford). I had begun reading Ahmad's essays in the journal *The Black Scholar* and his revolutionary nationalist ideas resonated with me. I attended the meeting, joined the Muhammad Ahmad Defense Committee (MADC) and was later recruited into his organization, the Afrikan People's Party (APP) and a revolutionary secret society, the House of Umoja (HOU), both successor organizations to the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM). Ahmad and other revolutionary nationalists founded RAM in

the early 1960s. I identified with the objectives of the APP and HOU to establish a Republic of New Afrika (RNA) as a vehicle for Black Power and self-determination. We believe our people would be able to fulfill our potential in our own sovereign territory and government. The homeland (or national territory) of the Republic of New Afrika was the historic Black majority counties of the deep South, particularly in the states of Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama, Georgia and South Carolina.

One of the most impactful experiences in my earlier days in MADC was meeting Queen Mother Moore. Considered an elder of our Movement and popular speaker, Queen Mother Moore supported the MADC defense effort by speaking engagements at California colleges to raise money and promote support for the release of Muhammad Ahmad. I escorted Queen Mother Moore to her southern California speaking engagements providing transportation and security. Queen Mother always emphasized reparations and supporting our political prisoners during her presentations.

I was given specific responsibility to organize and mobilize youth in colleges and high schools related to not only the Muhammad Ahmad case, but also Louisiana youth Gary Tyler, California prison activists Ernest Graham and Eugene Allen, and American Indian Movement political prisoners. Connecting with Yuri Kochiyama and the National Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners, we also gathered petition signatures and organized solidarity demonstrations in Los Angeles in solidarity for the defense of Assata Shakur and the Republic of New Afrika 11.

In 1973, Mamadou Lumumba, one of our APP and HOU political veterans and teachers, asked me to accompany him to a South-Central, L.A. church to meet a couple visiting from New York. The couple was Dr. Mutulu Shakur and his partner, Afeni Shakur. They were joined at the meeting by my friend and mentor, Sister Njeri. Years later, Mutulu and Afeni would come to L.A. to educate us about COINTELPRO—the FBI's program to destroy Black resistance in the 1960s and '70s. The Shakurs also recruited our Los Angeles group to lead the local effort to support their project, the National Task Force for Cointelpro Litigation and Research and its campaign to free Geronimo from captivity. The Task Force was a network of legal workers and activists to gather information on the FBI's program to be used to free political prisoners, develop best practices to resist political repression, and to reveal the truth about the u.s. government's secret war on our people. The Task Force, particularly the Shakurs and their comrade Yasmin Fula, presented the legal argument that COINTELPRO surveillance on Geronimo would prove that he was in Oakland, California, 500 miles away from the time of the Olsen murder. The COINTELPRO documents also confirmed that the major prosecution witness against Geronimo, Julius Butler, was a paid FBI informant. Butler perjured himself on the stand when cross-examined by Geronimo's trial attorney, Johnny Cochran.

Under oath, Butler denied being in the employ of any police agency when Cochran questioned him. Another informant was embedded in Geronimo's legal defense team and provided information to the prosecution. The Shakurs also recruited lawyers to pursue Geronimo's appeal, particularly Bay Area Attorney, Stuart Hanlon.

I met Geronimo in 1979 when Mutulu needed me to transport him from Los Angeles to the California Men's Colony prison in San Luis Obispo (California) for a meeting with the captured freedom fighter. I found Geronimo to be a sincere, down to earth, and loving brother. After this trip, until I left California in 1984, I would make periodic trips to visit Geronimo, in the Men's Colony or in San Quentin. My visits with Geronimo were educational. He taught me movement history and shared his perspectives of the resistance of our enslaved ancestors.

We began the effort to educate people in California to the role that COINTELPRO played in falsely accusing and convicting Geronimo. We produced and distributed literature on his case and mobilized people to appeal hearings in his case. We organized a major benefit for Geronimo at L.A.'s Washington High School, where Minister Louis Farrakhan spoke. Hundreds attended and the National Conference of Black Lawyers, the Us Organization, and the Nation of Islam all supported the benefit.

Important developments occurred after I left California in 1984 to move to Georgia with my wife, Aminata, and my 1-year-old daughter, Tashiya, to organize the work of the New Afrikan People's Organization (NAPO). The mobilization and support for Geronimo's release picked up momentum. Geronimo's original trial attorney, Johnny Cochran, re-joined the defense team. Cochran was always a respected figure in Los Angeles, becoming nationally known from the OJ Simpson trial. He would publicly state that freeing Geronimo was his most important case. Artists like the cast of the popular television show *A Different World*, including Jasmin Guy, Jada Pickett, and Lou Myers all lent their celebrity and talents towards a fundraiser for Geronimo's defense. The work to free Geronimo always included white anti-imperialist comrades, particularly from the Prairie Fire Organizing Committee. Comrades from the Puerto Rican, Chicano-Mexicano, and American Indian Movements also showed solidarity and made connections with the political prisoners and prisoners of war from their respective movements.

A California judge vacated Geronimo's conviction in 1997, which released him from captivity.

Geronimo's release was a victory for our movement! He went on a national victory tour, which comrade and movement brother, Watani Tyehimba took the lead in coordinating. Within weeks of his release, Geronimo spoke at our Malcolm X Center for Self-determination in Decatur, Georgia. Hundreds packed the center, standing room only, with at least another 100 waiting in the parking lot to see him.

Geronimo made it clear on the victory tour that he was an abolitionist committed to New Afrikan independence and the fight to free all political prisoners.

His lawyers filed a suit against the FBI and L.A. officials for malicious prosecution and false imprisonment and settled for \$4.5 million. Besides supporting his family, Geronimo used the financial settlement to form a foundation called the Kujichagulia (Ki-Swahili for self-determination) aka Kuji Foundation. The Kuji Foundation supported youth programs in his hometown of Morgan City, Louisiana, and development projects in Ghana and Tanzania. I beamed with pride when visiting Ghana in 2004. I saw that the Kuji Foundation contributed the sign at the home of W.E.B. DuBois in Accra, now an international museum and historic site. Geronimo joined the Ancestors in Tanzania on June 2, 2011. We salute him for his sacrifices and for the lessons he taught.

I have met some amazing people in my journey and hope to share with future generations their lessons and contributions to our people and me personally. My political history is filled with the struggles and victories of captured comrades. One example is Dr. Mutulu Shakur, who introduced me to Geronimo and recruited my comrades and me to join the defense work in the 1970s. Dr. Shakur was captured in 1986 for involvement in a conspiracy of revolutionaries to build our capacity to resist and win the liberation of New Afrikan people. After 36 years of captivity, months ago, Mutulu received a compassionate release due to his compromised health. Another victory, but the struggle continues.

New activists are being charged as domestic terrorists and the FBI profiles our resistance as “Black Identity Extremists,” like COINTELPRO-era “Black Nationalist-hate groups.” The struggle continues. I still believe it will not be won without our people being free and sovereign and self-determining. Let us continue to support our freedom fighters and continue to organize and resist.

Free the Land
Free ‘em all

For the Martyr Marilyn Buck

The oppressors say you were the only white in the Black Liberation Army:
They seek to sow confusion and division
But you were more than that!
In Ireland you would have been in the Irish Republican Army
In Africa the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique
Or the Southwest African People’s Organization,
In Vietnam the National Liberation Front.
You were the Vietcong!
That’s why the oppressors hated & feared you:
You were the “Enemy of the State”
An oppressive state.
But you were always on the side of the oppressed, a dependable ally and friend,
Our Sister,
The “New Woman” that Che hoped for,
An anti-imperialist Freedom Fighter:
That’s why we ALL LOVED YOU!
Rest in peace my Sister
A job well done!

Russell Maroon Schoatz
Oct. 28, 2010
4Struggle Magazine

Poem by anarchist political prisoner Eric King

Every day sucks
and things are ok also
Today could end up in tears
screams and dreams of revolutionary retribution
or weeping over “young Sheldon” throwbacks
cheering United, laughing w/ “it’s always sunny”
Either way no one will hear it
Either way I’ll over feel it
All the sorrow held captive by these walls
the bodies may get out, everything else stays
what you do in here, is owned by you
what is done to you, who will ever know?
My scrubbed toilet, swept floor, daily fitness
all for me, no one else will ever see, or care
any meaning, is the meaning I give it
Either a nihilistic nightmare
or the ultimate test of rebellious resilience
“A wall is just a wall” + suffering isn’t a straight line
neither is strength, neither is victory
I’ll win + lose twenty times today
then bounce back to fight tomorrow
Finding + savoring
million meaningless victories

supportericking.org



Oscar Lopez Rivera, by Pedro Alblzu Campos

Campaign to Free the Puerto Rican POWs

By Luis Rosa

The Campaign to Free the 14 Puerto Rican Prisoners of War, members of the Armed Forces for National Liberation, captured on April 4th, 1980 gave fruit in 1999 when President Bill Clinton commuted the sentences of 12 of these men and women after they had served 16 - 19 years of their sentences, which originally ranged 35 - 90 years. He did so because, in his words, "They were serving extremely lengthy sentences...out of proportion to their crimes." Two other nationalists—Carlos Alberto Torres and Oscar López Rivera—did not accept the terms, and were not released. Carlos Alberto was eventually paroled in 2010. And in May 2017, Oscar López' sentence was commuted by President Obama.

It was a campaign fought on many fronts, nationally and internationally, touching every sector of society and exploring creative techniques of organizing, personifying and educating around the prisoners. It was necessary to make the names and faces, through murals, poster and artwork, and a understandable language, a common fixture our communities. It was also necessary to win over those who would normally not get involved and/or those who were opposed. Solidarity, that magical and necessary weapon of

any and every movement, was cultivated and fortified at every chance. Internationally, the case of the captured and imprisoned combatants became issues of denunciation for countries who identified with the cause. Human Rights Tribunals were held in the U.S and internationally.

All these ingredients, necessary and essential to successful campaigns, were complimentary to the emotional campaign created simultaneously. If there is no passion in the movement, if those imprisoned are not seen as family or needed community members with much to contribute to the betterment of society and the world, the campaign will be short lived. We should, and must, be emotionally invested in our campaigns.

Since our release in 1999, we continue to engage on the various fronts of our movement, culturally and politically, remaining true to our principals. We continue to act in solidarity with struggles around the world, and we continue emotional investment in freeing our sister and brother, our best representatives from the repressive U.S. gulags.

https://www.ucc.org/ucc_lauds_obama_decision_commuting_sentence_of_oscar_lopez_rivera/

GUILTY OF NO CRIMES

By Ray Luc Levassuer

On March 12, 1985 the U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of New York announced an indictment: United States of American versus Raymond Luc Levasseur, Thomas W. Manning, Carol Ann Manning, Richard C. Williams, Jaan Karl Laaman, Barbara Curzi and Patricia H. Gros. The indictment charged that the seven formed a conspiracy under the name United Freedom Front, which executed ten bombings and one attempted bombing against military facilities and multinational corporations in the New York metropolitan area between 1982 and 1984. The following day's media referred to the UFF actions as a "political terror spree."

I was flown from Maine to New York on a government aircraft, then driven to the Metropolitan Correctional Center, marched to the high security section 9-South and placed in a segregation cell. This was the standard method of dealing with us—isolation. Richard and Jaan joined me in the hole while Pat and Barbara were placed in the women's section. Tom and Carol remained fugitives until the following month.

Five lawyers agreed to serve as temporary counsel for the arraignment until we picked a permanent team. The day prior to the arraignment we met with them for a strategy session in an overheated and drab cinder block cubicle.

One of the lawyers: "Its cut and dry. A formality. Each of you will be asked to enter a plea, guilty or not guilty. Then the judge will set a trial date and we're out of there."

I didn't like her matter-of-fact attitude. The odds I considered were that in one of three appearances before a federal judge I'd get my ass kicked. "Look," I said, "these pigs are hard-wired for a confrontation with us and it won't take much of an excuse to turn them loose."

"So don't provoke them."

This lawyer, I thought, will not be around for the long haul. "Fuck's sake, man, our very existence is a provocation to them. All I did in Cleveland was attempt to read a statement for the court record and they pounced on me. And the judge didn't stop them, either. He sat up on the bench looking like my mere presence twisted his hemorrhoids."

"Alright," replied the lawyer, "but this isn't Cleveland. Those Cleveland marshals are cowboys. This is New York City. They're accustomed to political trials and high-profile cases here. They know how to handle themselves like professionals."

"Right, professional thugs. We're going to be reading a statement for the court record. Best be ready if those marshals start swinging. Did you make up copies of our statement?"

"Yes. Here's a copy for you all to look over now. I'll give you each a copy in the courtroom and defense committee

will distribute them to the media. Sit down and relax, will you."

"I'll relax after the arraignment," I said. "I got a bad feeling about this."

Jaan, Richard, Pat, Barbara and I agreed that we'd refuse to enter the courtroom unless all restraints were removed from our wrists and ankles, and we were allowed to wear street clothes. After initial resistance from Jann, Richard and me, we agreed with Pat and Barbara's demand that we not physically resist an attack on us by the marshals. They insisted that if we fought back it would play into the media image of us as extremely violent. It was a difficult tactical pill to swallow, but it made sense. "If they come at us, cover up as best you can."

"There really won't be any drama," said one of the lawyers.

"Well if there is, you better cover up too. They don't like radical lawyers either."

We knew from the order of our names in the indictment that I would enter the first plea and Barbara the last. We agreed that when Barbara entered her plea, she would read our prepared statement for the court record. If she was prevented from doing this Pat would pick up from where Barbara was cut off, then Jaan and so on. Our plea—"guilty of no crimes."

On March 25, thirteen police vehicles transported us from MCC to the federal courthouse in Brooklyn. Gunslingers were ubiquitous. Large concrete barriers were added to the courthouse perimeter for our trial, projecting a message that the republic was in grave danger. The courtroom was filled to capacity, with marshals lining the walls and front and rear benches. The media was present in force and about two dozen of our supporters.

The proceeding was called to order by U.S. District Judge Israel Leo Glaser, whom we immediately dubbed "I Leo." Glaser was a Reagan appointee, a short, slight bespectacled man in his early 70's who maintained a dour expression.

We prevailed on the issues of street clothing and removal of restraints before entering the courtroom. But the marshals were amped and projecting hostility. One marshal wore a cap bearing a New Jersey State Police logo above his glare. I told Jaan and Richard, "That cap is a message. They're going to move on us today. It ain't if or when, but where."

After the proceeding began, the judge directed me to stand before his elevated throne where he called the shots. Peering over his eyeglasses he asked me, "Do you understand why you're here today?"

I hadn't expected this question, but my response was a succinct rebuke of criminal proceedings: "Because I'm an anti-imperialist."

Our supporters responded with loud applause.

The judge banged his gavel and threatened to clear the courtroom if there were further "outbursts." "I will not tolerate a lack of decorum in my courtroom."

His courtroom? Glasser dispensed with asking the other four the same question.

The judge then directed all defendants to stand before the bench to enter our pleas to the charges: conspiracy, ten bombings and one attempt. As we assembled before the bench a squad of marshals moved directly behind us. Glasser began reading the indictment aloud. When he recited the first UFF bombing targets—South African Airways and IBM corporation—there was jubilant support from our supporters. He again threatened to clear the courtroom.

After reading the indictment, the judge directed us to enter our pleas, beginning with me. Ray: "Guilty of no crimes." Jaan: "Guilty of no crimes." Richard: "Guilty of no crimes." Pat: "Guilty of no crimes." Barbara: "Guilty of no crimes."

After Barbara announced her plea she began reading from our prepared statement. "There is no justice for oppressed people in America..." Judge Glasser cut her off at the word "America" with a sharp rap of his gavel while the marshals grabbed her by the arms and whisked her towards a side exit.

We each had a copy of the statement and Pat continued. "... Not when killer cops murder with impunity..." She was quickly grabbed by marshals and pushed towards the same exit. Jaan picked up from there. "... There is no justice..." At the word "justice" an undercover cop in street clothes rushed from the front row, through the gate at the bar and jumped on Jaan's back, cutting off his words with a choke hold around his neck. As they tumbled to the floor, chaos erupted.

Marshals grabbed me from behind and threw me to the floor. A marshal then drew a stun gun and struck me repeatedly along my back and right leg. Richard was also thrown to the floor. Richard, Jaan and I were dragged along the floor and through the side exit while our supporters shouted at the cops to stop their assault. The judge disappeared. In the hallway beyond the exit, we were spread-eagled on the floor. As I looked up, I saw a marshal rear back and kick Richard in his face, sending blood spray across his nose and forehead. Another marshal stepped up behind him and struck him on his neck with a stun gun, causing his head to spasm.

They were on a roll, with the judge's blessing. A pig kicked me in the ribs then removed my wristwatch and crushed it beneath his boot. The boot then came down on my neck. He leaned over and growled, "How'd you like to have this blackjack up your ass." Brandishing the sap an inch from my eyes he added, "You fuckers are going to get the same thing those niggers in South Africa get."

Alright then, so much for the "formality" of an arraignment in a political trial.

As our police convoy lurched out of the courthouse garage, it looked like the entire New York City police force was in the streets brandishing rifles and shotguns. The marshals had their weapons protruding from the windows of convoy vehicles as our supporters gathered on the courthouse steps for an impromptu protest.

The streets adjacent to MCC in Lower Manhattan were closed to traffic for our return. This orchestrated military drama was on a scale I'd not seen before. Back, in chains and cuffs, we were led single file into the jail. As the others were led to holding cells I was pulled aside and led down a separate hallway posted, "No inmates beyond this point." Oh shit. I couldn't back-peddle from this one.

I was brought into a room crowded with marshals and several jail guards. I was cuffed behind my back and a second pair added. A cop was on each arm as a third approached from my rear. He grabbed my hands and bent them in towards my forearms, igniting flashes of pain up my arms and forcing me to my knees. A marshal stuck a blackjack under my nose and threatened to stick it up my ass.

When the cop behind me eased the pressure on my wrists I rose to my feet but the moment I stood erect he reapplied the pressure with renewed force, dropping me to my knees again. I screamed in pain. Flushed with hate, the blackjack wielding marshal said, "No one's gonna hear you down here shithead."

I didn't want to scream. I didn't want to show any weakness. I kept trying to rise, but with each effort the pig put more pressure on my wrists, digging into nerves at the base of my thumbs and forcing my head to the floor with a rush of colored spots jittering inside my eyelids. I let out one fucking loud scream in pain.

My knees and forehead to the floor I heard the door open. I turned my head slightly and see a large pair of shoes step towards me and stop inched from my eyes.

"Straighten him up."

I was yanked up to my knees. Before me stood a very tall, stout man in a suit. Captain Humme, who 25 years later capped his Bureau of Prisons career by brutalizing 9/11 detainees at a federal detention center in Brooklyn. He looked down at me, Tarzan pounded his chest with his palm and proclaimed, "MCC is my fucking jail, you understand! And in my jail, I don't let a piece of shit like you come in here and stir things up. Get this through you're fucking head now or you'll feel a lot more pain before this is over."

I stayed silent. He didn't appear interested in dialogue.

"Lieutenant, stick Mister Fucking Levasseur here in the hole on a 3-man watch." (Meaning my cell door would not be opened without 2 guards and a ranking officer present.)

I was taken to the segregation unit and placed in a cell next to Richard's. We counted the stun guns burn marks we had on our bodies as if this would one day mean something.

The shot to the back of Richard's head left him with a vicious headache and nausea.

"Hell of a day, eh Richard?"

"Yep, hell of a day."

"That judge is going to screw us."

"No doubt."

"Look brother, they'll probably split us all up tomorrow. It could be a couple months before we're back here for trial. It'll be difficult to communicate before then and we'll have a fight on our hands to meet together as a group when we're back. So, let me run something by you now.

"I'm listening."

"From here on out I'm going to represent myself, *pro se*. You know, be my own lawyer, speak for myself in court, give my own opening and closing statements. By representing myself I mean to represent our political lives, our principles, and defend the UFF actions. We need a political voice in this trial. The lawyers can help and we need them, but they can't fill this void. A *pro se* defendant can try to turn a trial intended to criminalize us into a political trial that places the government and corporations in the criminal docket where they belong. Put the real terrorists on trial. As *pro se* I could try to be our collective voice that reaches the jury and beyond.

"I hear ya. Speak truth to power. Rebut their legal fictions. The truth of the matter is more important than the fact of the matter. I like it. It'll help to humanize us, too. Every time the media runs something on us, they paint us as mindless psychopaths."

"Okay, think some more on it and think about what kind of info-leaflet we want to put out around the trial and related issues. Think guerrilla tactics and strategy retooled for the courtroom."

"I will. I already got an idea for a slogan."

"Shoot."

"The government calls it conspiracy; we call it resistance."

The following day Richard was returned to New Jersey. As I awaited return to Maine, a lawyer brought me the latest news clippings about the arraignment. The marshals' assault on us was characterized as a "brawl" for which we were responsible. We were unrepentant "terrorists" about to be slam-dunked in court proceedings largely controlled by a rabid prosecution and an acquiescent judge.

Postscript

The New York trial gave birth to the handle "Ohio 7. (Five captured in Ohio. Two later captured in Virginia). The seven went to trial charged with militant actions opposing the racist apartheid system in South Africa and murderess U.S. interventions in Central America. UFF communiques also called for the release of political prisoners and an end to killer cops. The communiques cited the connections that linked American corporations, government and military to widespread violence against and exploitation of some of the world's most oppressed people.

A second major trial of the Ohio 7 took place in Massachusetts. The seven were charged with UFF militant actions and those of its predecessor, the Sam Melville-Jonathan Jackson Unit, covering the period 1975-1984. The indictment charged Seditious Conspiracy and Racketeering Influencing and Corrupt Organization (RICO). Boston political activist Kazi Toure was also added as an eighth defendant but his case was subsequently severed and he was tried separately.

The charges in the Sedition/RICO trial added actions supporting independence for Puerto Rico and supporting the ongoing struggle of prisoners' resistance in the gulag. The charges also alleged that the groups funded its underground activities through bank expropriations and defended themselves against police apprehension.

There were other trials involving Ohio 7 defendants. The seven spent many years in court battles. The results were some acquittals, many dismissed charges due to jurors failing to reach a verdict, but enough convictions to keep most of us in prison for decades.

Richard Williams died imprisoned in 2005. Tom Manning died in prison (2019).

Patricia Gros was released from prison in 1988, Carol Manning (1993), Jaan Laaman (2021), Barbara Curzi (1991), Ray Luc Levasseur (2004). Kazi Toure was released in 1991.

The price for resisting the depredations of capitalism and the malignancy of white supremacy is steep. The sacrifice born for doing so should be neither underestimated nor undervalued. Despite the risks and challenges, resistance to oppression will continue, the methods and means changing with time, place, and conditions.

To paraphrase the revolutionary poet Roque Dalton – strong hearts will keep hauling up the morning.

For more on the United Freedom Front, Sam Melville-Jonathan Jackson Unit and Ohio 7:

scua.library.umass.edu

Search: Raymond Luc Levasseur papers

ANCESTORS

Merle Africa: 1951-1998. Time Served: 20 years. Move 9 Political Prisoner

My name is Merle Africa, disciple of JOHN AFRICA and Minister of Administrative Coordination. I am a 45-year-old woman of color living in the US. I've been a member of the MOVE Organization since 1973 and these 22 years have been the most satisfying and happiest, I have ever experienced despite the 18 years unjustly spent in prison.

Albert “Nuh” Washington: 1941-2000. Time Served: 29 years. Black Panther Party & Black Liberation Army

After 20+ years as a prisoner, the memory of being with the people still brings a smile to my face and it is something I share with my fellow prisoners: the concept of unity, movement, and love. I am a prisoner of war as well as a political prisoner because of the historical and contemporary acts of war carried out against Blacks/New Afrikan people inside and outside these United States by the government and those who believe in white supremacy.”

Teddy Jah Heath: 1946-2001. Timed Served: 29+ years. Black Panther Party & Black Liberation Army

“Teddy Jah Heath was active in the black liberation and civil rights movement in the 60s: as part of the BPP & BLA.”

Safiya Asya Bukhari: 1950-2003. Timed Served: 8 years. Black Panther Party & Black Liberation Army & Co-founder of the Jericho Movement

“I became a Muslim before I went into prison. I became a Muslim in 1971. It was in the Quran that said it was incumbent upon a Muslim to wage a struggle against tyranny and oppression wherever it may be found. That gave me the license to be a revolutionary and a Muslim at the same time.”

Richard William: 1947-2005. Anti-Imperialist

Richard Williams stood up to some of the worst that the rulers' courts and prison system could inflict and never wavered. He never repudiated his road taken, and more than 20 years in prison hellholes could not break him. Honor Richard Williams! Free Jaan Laaman and Tom Manning!

Bashr Hameed (aka James York): 1946-2008. Time Served: 26 years. Black Panther Party, Black liberation

Longtime Black Liberation Political Prisoner Bashir Hameed died August 30, 2008 at the age 67, from complications of a triple bypass surgery at the New York prison system. In almost three decades of incarceration, Bashir, a devout Muslim, applied his religious and political principles to the struggle against injustice and racism behind the walls, gaining wide respect among prisoners.

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Eddie Hatcher: 1948-2009. Time Served: 23 years. Native American Resistance.

Eddie Hatcher was a Tuscarora Indian from Robeson County, NC, who was active in social reform movements throughout the 1980s. He belonged to Concerned Citizens for Better Government, a multi-racial organization working towards economic, environmental, and legal justice.

Dr. Alan Berkman: 1945-2009. Timed Served: 7 years. Anti-imperialist

Dr. Berkman was a longtime advocate for social justice in health care, sneaking behind government barricades to provide medical care to Native American freedom fighters at Wounded Knee, South Dakota, and treating prisoners injured during the Attica Uprising in New York. When he was arrested for removing a bullet from an activist's leg, Berkman refused to testify before a federal grand jury and spent years in prison.

Marilyn Buck: 1947-2010. Time Served: 33 years. Anti-Imperialist

Marilyn served a total of 33 years of an 80-year prison sentence for politically motivated actions undertaken in support of self-determination and national liberation and in opposition to racial injustice and U.S. imperialism. Throughout her years in prison, Marilyn remained a steadfast supporter of fellow political prisoners and an advocate for the women with whom she was imprisoned.

William “Lefty” Gilday: 1918-2011. Timed Served: 41 years. Anti-Imperialist

Gilday was a 60's radical serving a life sentence for his involvement in bank expropriation (which ended with a police officer killed) in attempts to finance the anti-war movement during the Vietnam war. Lefty passed away on September 9, 2011, while held captive in prison at MCI Shirley in Massachusetts.

Herman Wallace: 1942-2013. Time Served: 41 years in Solitary

He had been one of the “Angola 3,” convicts whose solitary confinement at the Louisiana State Penitentiary in Angola, an 18,000-acre prison farm on the site of a former plantation, became a rallying point for advocates fighting abusive prison conditions around the world.

Herman Ferguson: 1921-2014. Time Served: 5 years. Organization of Afro-American Unity-Republic Of New Africa, Founder of Malcolm X Commemorative Committee, & Co-founder of the Jericho Movement.

He started out as a Merchant Marine seaman; became an influential member of Malcolm X's Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU), and rattled sabers as teacher and assistant principal in the New York City public school system (e.g.; Ocean Hill-Brownsville); became a target of COINTEL-PRO.

Phil Africa: 1956-2015. Time Served: 37 years. MOVE

“JOHN AFRICA exposed how this system can be made to do what's needed when it is pressured to. Pressure—massive pressure is what the people must put on this system to save Mumia, end the death penalty, Free the MOVE 9 and all P.P.s and P.O.W.s”

Hugo Pinell: 1944-2015. Time Served: 44 years

Hugo wrote: “It's sometimes hard for me to believe I've been in these holes for 44 years straight! But it is. My Mom has kept me focused, too. In the 90s, when I was supposed to be getting released, she kept saying, “I'm proud of you, son, the way you've been working it, but I want to see you out here, all grown up, responsible and earning your ways of living.”

Mondo we Langa (aka David Rice): 1947-2016. Time Served: 44 years. Black Panther Party.

“I was known as ‘David Rice.’ I chose a [new] name ‘Wopashitwe MODO EYEN WE LANGA,’ which in the African languages of KwanYama, Gikuyu, Ibibio, and Hausa means: ‘Wild (natural) Man Child of the Sun.’ I chose a name that would, among things, reflect my African heritage. This choosing of a name is part of the process of growth.”

Luis V Rodriguez: 1956-2016. Timed Served: 35 years. Aztlan Political Prisoner

Luis was a politically active father. His contact with the Brown Berets helped Luis to place these events into proper perspective and to bring about his political and social awareness. He also interacted with the League of United Latin Americans (LULAC), the G.I. Forum, and other socio-political organizations.

Abdullah Majid (aka Anthony Laborde): 1949-2016. Time Served: 33 years. Black Panther Party. Black Liberation Army, Republic of New Africa.

“I believe the only real guarantee we prisoners of war and political prisoners have of staying alive and surviving these prisoner of war camps is by keeping our conditions and status before the public both domestically and internationally. Insha ALLAH (ALLAH willing) we will get relief (freedom) denied us the last 400 years in Babylon

Mohamman Koti (aka James Johnson): 1926-2016. Timed Served: 66 years. Black Panther Party.

“Next year I will be going to the parole board for the 5th time. I have done the time. Why does the parole board keep hitting me and other brothers? I will be 87 years old on Oct 11, 2012. I am the oldest brother here. As a Black man I am very strong, a fighter in the struggle for freedom and justice. Thank you for your help. Long Live the Struggle.”

Oscar Washington: 1950-2016. Black Panther Party, Black Liberation Army

Authorities seize a cache of arms belonging to the BLA. Oscar Washington was arrested and charged with robbing a bank as well.

Richard Mafund Lake: 1946-2016. Time Served: 35 years. African Peoples Survival Committee & Afrikan National Prison Organization (ANPO)

Well aware of the oppression in the outside African community, the horrors of life inside the prison walls are a gruesome reality—no medical care, guards murdering and torturing inmates, gutter food, and absolutely no rights to speak of in the fields of the prison plantations. In response to these conditions, Mafundi organized Inmates for Action (IFA), one of the first and most effective prison organizations to come out of the Black Revolution of the sixties.

Lynne Stewart: 1939-2017. Time Served: 4 years. Anti-Imperialist.

Believing that the American political and capitalist system needed “radical surgery,” as Ms. Stewart put it, she sympathized with clients who sought to fight that system, even with violence, although she did not always endorse their tactics, she said.

Robert Seth Hayes: 1947-2019. Time Served: 45 years. Black Panther Party, Black Liberation Army.

While in prison, Seth was diagnosed with Type II diabetes. He was often extremely ill, had great difficulty procuring the necessary healthcare and needed the help of his lawyers and some state political leaders in order to get adequate treatment. He also suffered from Hepatitis C and congestive heart failure.

Thomas Manning: 1946-2019. Time Served: 34 years. Anti-imperialist

“The People must fight for their own system in all ways—one of those being armed clandestine struggle. We have a long way to go, but we are getting there. I am accused of being a part of the Sam Melville/Jonathan Jackson Unit in the 1970s and the United Freedom Front in the 1980s. I am proud of the association and all it implies.”

Delbert Orr Africa: 1946-2020. Timed Served: 42 years.

MOVE Political Prisoner Delbert Africa, a member of the radical group MOVE, who spent more than 40 years in prison after being convicted in a 1978 confrontation with the police in Philadelphia that left a police officer dead, died on Monday at his home in Philadelphia, only months after his release. He was 74.

Romaine Chip Fitzgerald: 1949-2021. Time Served 51 years. Black Panther Party.

“The prison administrators and their advocates within the state want to create fear in the minds of the public in an effort to persuade the people to give state authorities carte blanche in the inhumane treatment of convicts, and allow the prison administrators to operate without oversight and accountability.”

Chuck Africa: 1959-2021. Time Served: 41 years. MOVE 9 Political Prisoner.

I met MOVE in 1973. It was a cold winter night. Me and a few of my gang stepped in my mother’s house and in the middle of the floor sat numerous men and women with long un-combed hair. The things that I heard stayed with me for the rest of my life. I had never heard anything like it. They talked about the court system, educational system, religion, news commentators, they spoke on science, prayer and time.

Russell Maroon Shoatz (Harum Abdur-Ra’uf): 1943-2021. Time Served: 49 years.

“Russell Maroon Shoatz was a dedicated community activist, founding member of the Black Unity Council, former member of the Black Panther Party and soldier in the Black Liberation Army. Maroon was released in a medical transfer to hospice care on October 26, 2021, so he was able to spend his last days surrounded by his loving family. Unfortunately, he went to the ancestors on December 17, 2021.”

Kathy Boudin: 1943-2022. Time Served: 23 years. Anti-imperialist

In 1981, trying to raise money to support Black revolutionary organizations, Kathy and her partner David Gilbert participated in the robbery of a Brinks truck in Nyack, NY. Though Kathy and David were not armed and did not personally hurt anyone, three men were killed. Kathy and David were arrested and sentenced to decades in prison.

Marshall “Eddie” Conway: 1946-2023. Time Served: 44 years. Black Panther Party.

“Prisons are the place where society dumps those who have become obsolete, and at present there are perhaps no other people who have become more dispensable in this country than African-descended people. The minute that we began to stand up and hold this country accountable for the many wrongs done to us, the prisons began to swell with black women and men. It is as if the entire justice system is a beast that consumes black bodies, and prisons are the belly.”

**Former National Jericho Co-Chairs
Who Have Joined the Ancestors**

Abdul Jabbar Caliph served as Co-Chair of the National Jericho Movement until his transition on October 8th, 2018 and was Chair of the Maryland State Jericho Amnesty Movement (MSJAM). Comrade Jabbar was constantly on the move, presenting at speaking engagements, fundraising, collaborating with allies, supporting Political Prisoners, writing and creating petitions and political documents, as well as helping those in need in the community. During his last days in the hospital, comrades would hear him say, “I’m not going anywhere until our last Political Prisoner is free.” Rest in Power, Comrade!

Francisco “Franky” Velgara served as Co-Chair of the National Jericho Movement until his transition on August 25, 2022. He embraced an internationalist perspective while maintaining the everyday work of campaigning to free political prisoners, community organizing, planning sessions, and managing organizational contradictions. From the Pro-Libertad Freedom Campaign to the National Jericho Movement, his leadership moved us forward. His keenness in keeping the focus and not allowing the perspective to be lost in meetings was essential. We thank him for his guidance on so many issues. Rest in Power, Comrade!

RESOURCES

PRINT

Black Maled
The Imprisonment of Iman Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin: Is a Government Conspiracy
Die Nigger Die: Political Autobiography
Revolution by the Book
by Al-Amin, Iman Jamil-AKA H. Rap Brown – Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee

Live From Death Row
We Want Freedom
Death Blossoms
All Things Censored
Jailhouse Lawyer
Have Black Lives Ever Mattered?
by Abu-Jamal, Mumia – Black Panther Party, Political Prisoner

Arm the Spirit: A story from the underground and back, Clandestine Occupations: An Imaginary history
by Block, Diana – Anti-Imperialist, Abolitionist and feminist

Wild Poppies: A Poetry Jam Across Prison Walls
by Buck, Marilyn – Anti-Imperialist, Political Prisoner

The War Before: The True-Life Story of Becoming a Black Panther, Keeping the Faith in Prison & Fighting for Those Left Behind
by Bukhari, Safiya, – Black Panther Party, Black Liberation Army, Republic of New Africa; Laura Whitehorn, Editor

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by Caliph, Abdul Jabbar

Love Me Rebel Love Me,
The Blue Agave Revolution: Poetry of the Blind Rebel,
by Chubbuck, Byron Shane (Oso Blanco) – First Nation Prisoner of War

Agents of Repression
COINTELPRO Papers: Documents from the FBI’s Secret Wars Against Dissent in the United States
by Churchill, Ward & Jim Vanderwall

Struggle for the Land: Native North American Resistance to Genocide, Ecocide, and Colonization
by Churchill, Ward and LaDuke, Winona

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by Churchill, Ward and Ryan, Michael

Marshal Law: The Life and Times of a Baltimore Black Panther
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If They Come in the Morning...: Voices of Resistance (Radical Thinkers)
by Davis, Angela Y.

The Brother You Choose: Paul Coates and Eddie Conway Talk About Life, Politics and the Revolution
by Day, Susie

An Unlikely Warrior
by Ferguson, Herman – Republic of New Africa-Political Prisoner

Love and Struggle
Looking at the White Working Class Historically
by Gilbert, David – Anti-Imperialist, Political Prisoner

Comrade Sisters: Women of the Black Panther Party
by Huggins, Ericka – Black Panther Party, Political Prisoner

Imprisoned Intellectuals: American Political Prisoners Write on Life, Liberation and Rebellion
by James, Joy

From the Bottom of the Heap: The Autobiography of a Black Panther
by King, Robert Hillary

We Are Our Own Liberators
Escaping the Prism – Fade to Black
by Muntaqim, Jalil – Black Panther Party, Black Liberation Army, Political Prisoner

Total Liberation
by Pellow, David

Prison Writings: My Life is my Sun Dance

by Peltier, Leonard – American Indian Movement, Prisoner Of War

EMETIC – Peg Millett’s case

by Pickering, Leslie

Green is the New Red

by Porter, Will

An American Radical: A Political Prisoner in My Own Country

by Rosenberg, Susan – Anti-Imperialist, Political Prisoner

Maroon The Implacable

by Schoatz, Russell Maroon – Unity Council, Black Liberation Army

The Soul Journal: A Critical Journal of Black Politics, Culture and Society, Volume 23, 2021: *Free the Land, Free the People: The Political Significance of Dr. Shakur’s Legacy* Issue 1-2

We Will Shoot Back: Armed Resistance in Mississippi

by Umoja, Akinyele Omowale

All Power To The People

by Washington, Albert Nuh – Black Panther Party & Black Liberation Army

Solitary: A Biography (National Book Award Finalist; Pulitzer Prize Finalist) by Woodfox, Albert
Praise for Solitary: Named One of Barack Obama’s Favorite Books of 2019

FILM/VIDEO

“**Cointelpro 101**” from and available at Freedom Archives; based on the book *Agents of Repression* by Churchill, Ward & Jim Vanderwall
Cointelpro 101 on Vimeo

“**Incident at Oglala: the Leonard Peltier Story**” a documentary directed by Michael Apted, narrated by Robert Redford, based on *In the Spirit of Crazy Horse* by Peter Matthiessen

“**If A Tree Falls,**” a documentary by Marshall Curry, directed: Marshall Curry and Sam Cullman; a film about Daniel McGowan and the Earth Liberation Front Academy Award ® Nominee, Best Documentary Feature, Documentary Editing Award, Sundance Film Festival, National PBS Broadcast, “POV”

“**Igniting a Revolution: Earth Liberation Front (part 1)**” – an introduction

“**In the Land of the Free**”.narrated by Samuel L. Jackson
This documentary tells the story of Herman Wallace, Albert Woodfox and Robert King, three black men incarcerated in Angola, the Louisiana State Penitentiary.

“**The Angola 3: Black Panthers and the Last Slave Plantation**” – narrated by Mumia Abu-Jamal
The Angola 3

“**The Jeffrey Luers Story,**” a short film (Earth Liberation Front)
The Jeffrey Luers Story (Short 2005) - IMDb

OTHER

Anarchist Black Cross Federation (ABCF)
People We Support | Anarchist Black Cross Federation
To plug in, see Anarchist Black Cross Federation abcf.net or the wiki database of worldwide political prisoners at Prisoner Solidarity.

Bandung Books
Part of Eastside Arts Alliance and Cultural Center
2289 International Blvd.
Oakland, CA 94606
Bandung Books | eastside

Bluestockings Cooperative Bookstore
116 Suffolk St.
NYC 10002

Bound Together Anarchist Bookstore
1369 Haight St.
San Francisco, CA 94117
boundtogether.org

Burning Books

420 Connecticut St.
Buffalo, NY14213
Outstanding quality of books and Comrades who have invited many former political prisoners to share their stories, and authors from across the spectrum of their books.

City Lights Booksellers & Publishers

261 Columbus Ave.
San Francisco, CA 94133

Eastside Cultural Center (temporarily closed)

2277 International Blvd.
Oakland, CA. 94606

General Baker Institute (GBI)

15798 Livernois
Detroit, MI 48238 United States
generalbakerinstitute.com
GBI/Facebook

George Jackson University

“The Theoretical concept of the George Jackson University was developed by Dr. Donald Evans Jr. and Abdul Olugbala Shakur in 2000, while Abdul Olugbala Shakur was still in Solitary Confinement . . . [and at its] start had over 30,000 registered students, not just in Amerikkka, but around the world.”
georgejacksonuniversity-gju.com

Keys, Beats, Bars

Audiovisual music programming for underserved youth in Oregon including incarcerated youth.
www.keysbeatsbars.org

Lucy Parsons Center

358A Centre St
Boston MA

Malcolm X Grassroots Movement

“. . . an organization of Afrikans in America/New Afrikans whose mission is to defend the human rights of our people and promote self-determination in our community . . .”
freethelandMXGM.org

Marcus Books

3900 Martin Luther King Jr. Way
Oakland, CA 94609
For and by Black People

Prison Pipeline Collective

Volunteer-run radio collective for weekly programming about prisons and mass incarceration. All programs catalog online.
Prison Pipeline | KBOO

Social Justice Action Center

Community space in Portland, Oregon, offering affordable, low-income housing, community kitchen, affordable, sliding-scale space for meetings and events, storage for political organizations and houseless advocacy programs.
Social Justice Action Center

The Spear & Shield Collective: An Introduction

“. . . founded by a nucleus of New Afrikans who inherit, guard, and continue the tradition of revolutionary nationalist and communist activity for the realization of national liberation revolution.”

The Real News Network (TRNN) makes media connecting you to the movements, people, and perspectives that are advancing the cause of a more just, equal, and livable planet – Executive Producer Eddie Conway, Former BPP/Political Prisoner

Rebuild Collective

The Rebuild Collective is a New Afrikan Independence Movement Formation founded by New Afrikan Nationalists inspired by the thought of Movement theoretician . . .
rebuildcollective.org

The Shed

11530 Flanders
Detroit, MI 48205 (Detroit Eastside)
313-285-8450
The Shed is a primary Detroit place that carries works by Political Prisoners and also hosts events centering PPs.
The Shed / Facebook



Jericho Movement Chapters

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<https://www.facebook.com/oaklandjerichowritingssessions>
 IG: Oakland.Jericho Official
 Twitter: @oaklandjericho
<https://twitter.com/OaklandJericho>
 LinkTree: <https://linktr.ee/Oaklandjericho>

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Virgin Islands 3



Malik El-Amin/ Merel Smith, Hanif Shabazza Bey /Beaumont Gereau, Abdul Aziz/Warren Ballantine

Abdul Aziz/Warren Ballantine #5161422
Hanif Shabazza Bey /Beaumont Gereau #5161331
Malik El-Amin/ Merel Smith #5161387

Citrus County Detention Facility, 2604 West Woodland Ridge Drive Lecanto, FL 34461

“By the 1970’s the economy of the Virgin Islands began to crumble. Young natives, some of whom served in the Vietnam war and returned to unemployment, became resentful of the millions of tourists. Awareness of Black Power movements and a movement for independence surged.

After the 1972 shooting at Fountain Valley Golf Course, dozens of Black youth in St Croix were rounded up and tortured, resulting in statements from five young men in

their early twenties. After the trial, three jurors reported coercion that led to their guilty verdict. They were sentenced to 90 years and three of the defendants—Abdul Aziz, Hanif Bey, and Malik El-Amin— are held in prison over 50 years later. Due to their advanced age, they have a variety of chronic health conditions that are difficult to manage in prison, particularly in the private prison system far away from their families.

Of the other two, Ishmael LaBeet hijacked a plane and is in exile in Cuba. A movie of his exploits has been released The Skyjacker’s Tale. And Raphael Joseph had his sentence commuted by Governor Alexander Farrelly. He died of an alleged drug overdose a few years later. It was said that he had information that would exonerate at least one of his co-defendants.”

For more information VI3.org

Mumia Abu-Jamal

Mumia Abu-Jamal was arrested (December 9, 1981) for the murder of white Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner. He was convicted and sentenced to death in a trial rife with perjured testimony and manufactured evidence which Amnesty International found does not "... meet the minimum international standards for a fair trial."

None of the physical evidence supports the prosecution's case. Mumia did legally own a gun, but it wasn't tested to see if it had been fired. His hands also were not tested, and the bullet in Faulkner was not matched to Mumia's gun.

Prosecution witness original statements did not match their trial witness. Cynthia White changed her story five times; Robert Chobert first told arriving officers, "the shooter ran away," yet crime scene photographs (disclosed to defense in 2007) show Chobert not parked where he reported; four other witnesses reported someone running from the scene.

After Mumia discovered officer Gary Wakshul's report that, "The male negro made no statements," his defense attempted to bring Wakshul to the witness stand. Prosecution claimed Wakshul was on vacation and unavailable. Trial delay was refused. Defense later learned that Wakshul had been told by the DA to be ready for testimony at trial and had been available.

Mumia's court appointed lawyer did not have funds to investigate witnesses or do ballistics investigations. The presiding judge was Albert Sabo, a former Sheriff, and member of the Fraternal Order of Police. (He also came out of retirement to preside over Mumia's PCRA hearings.) He had presided over multiple death sentence trials. During the original trial a court stenographer, Terri Maurer-Carter, entered Sabo's chambers and overheard him criticizing the prosecution, saying, "I'm gonna help them fry that n----r." He quashed most of the subpoenas brought forward by the defense. He later did not find that Mumia deserved a new trial, and issued a finding which mimicked the prosecution's closing brief of the original trial.

In 2001, District Judge William Yohn overturned Mumia's death sentence. On March 17, 2006, the state of Pennsylvania filed an appeal seeking to reinstate the execution order. On March 27, 2008, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit upheld Judge Yohn's 2001 opinion but rejected Abu-Jamal's attorneys' claims of racial bias on the part of the jury. On July 22, 2008, Abu-Jamal's petition for reconsideration by the full Third Circuit panel was denied. Late in 2018 a judge reinstated Abu-Jamal's right to appeal, noting that one of the justices should have recused himself, having previously worked



as a district attorney; raising questions of racial bias.

On March 31, 2023, Judge Clemons denied the issue of constitutional violations in Mumia's case. This ruling dismissed the core issue in Abu-Jamal's appeal: fundamental damage done to his defense by prosecutors withholding evidence, undermining Mumia's defense for decades. Prosecutors misled judges, claiming all information had been released. Judge Clemons claimed that Brady evidence, withheld for 36 years, would not have convinced the trial jury to find Abu-Jamal not guilty, and further claimed that the withheld evidence of Batson issues by the trial prosecutor was not a violation she could address. Her ruling perpetuates a pattern of willful participation in institutional animus against Abu-Jamal by judges.

Mumia's defense team is currently working on an appeal. He is ill, suffering from cirrhosis, experienced Covid-19, and has had heart surgery after being diagnosed with congestive heart failure (March, 2021). His wife, Wadiya, passed away December 27, 2022, a great loss to him.

Imam Jamil Abdullal Al-Amin



Imam Jamil Abdullal Al-Amin #99974-555
USP Tucson/ P.O. Box 24550 Tucson, AZ 85734
Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee

Imam Jamil Al-Amin was born Hubert Gerald Brown in Baton Rouge, Louisiana/USA, on October 4, 1943.

In 1967 Imam Jamil was elected Chairman of SNCC, succeeding Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Ture); guided the organization to focus on human rights issues. During this time the state and federal governments began their collusion, through the FBI's Counter Intelligence Program, COINTELPRO, of harassment and false charges against him as part of their campaign to disrupt and destroy the Black Liberation Movement.

In November 1976 Imam Jamil traveled to Saudi Arabia for his hajj and returned to Atlanta, Georgia to organize a Muslim community in the southwest part (West End) of Atlanta.

From the late '70s to 2000 the Imam organized and maintained a neighborhood Clean up of drugs, prostitution and crime; worked with youth and street organizations; participated in initiating the establishment of the "National Jamaat," (Al Ummah) comprised of approximately 40 masajids in various cities in the United States and the Caribbean.

In March of 2000 there was a shooting outside the Imam's store in Atlanta. And on March 20, 2000 Imam Jamil was arrested in White Hall, Alabama, and subsequently charged with the murder of one deputy and the wounding of another. During the capture, the Imam was beaten and spat upon by an FBI agent who has a history of misconduct.

His trial in March of 2002 ultimately lasted for just three weeks, and despite contradictory factual and circumstantial evidence, the jury took less than 10 hours to reach a guilty verdict on all 13 counts. District Attorney Paul Howard called for the death penalty.

March 11, 2002, Twenty character witnesses, including Andrew Young, civic, academic, and religious leaders, and human rights activists, testified on his behalf to prevent imposition of the death penalty. On March 14, 2002, The jury announced a sentence of life without the possibility of parole on the two counts of murder and felony murder, while the judge imposed an additional 30 years to the sentence as punishment on the remaining 11 counts. Imam Jamil was moved immediately to Jackson, Georgia, and then to the Reidsville State Prison.

After being held in Georgia prisons for 6 years, on August 2, 2007 Imam Jamil was moved, without notice to his attorneys or family members, to Oklahoma City, and then to the infamous Supermax federal prison in Florence, Colorado. He will be held in a Federal Facility paid for by the Georgia while maintaining his status as a Georgia State Prisoner.

In December 2015, After requesting to move to a warmer climate in the South, Imam Jamil was moved to USP Tucson, approximately 1,700 miles from his legal team, family, and supporters. Imam Jamil remains in the USP Tucson federal prison while waiting for his federal habeas to be argued.

The work of Imam Jamil Al-Amin (formerly known as H. Rap Brown) during the late 1960s, 1980s and '90s, with community-based and gang organization leaders and the development of an urban peace treaty and policy initiative resulted in a 10% drop in crime nationally and a 25% reduction in homicides among Black and Brown youth in the 1990s. Imam Al-Amin's work in this area also gave him the opportunity to assist in initiating the national hip hop peace treaty and rappers pledge signed in Chicago which created peace between east coast and west coast rappers.

The work of the urban peace and justice movement has continued in many cities throughout the country. Imam Al-Amin was one of the architects and sustaining influences of this movement. Community organizers relate that Imam Al-Amin's dedication to bringing peace is attributed to "saving thousands of lives."

For more information contact:
<https://www.imamjamilactionnetwork.org/>

Joseph “Joe-Joe” Bowen

“Joe-Joe” Bowen is a Black Liberation Army (BLA) Prisoner of War, serving two life sentences for the assassination of a prison warden and deputy warden, as well as an attempted prison break which resulted in a five-day standoff after his initial arrest.

Personal Background

A native of Philadelphia, Joe-Joe was a young member of the “30th and Norris Street” gang, before his incarceration politicized him. Released in 1971, his outside activism was cut short a week following his release when Joe-Joe was confronted by an officer of the notoriously brutal Philadelphia police department. The police officer was killed in the confrontation, and Bowen fled. After his capture and incarceration, Bowen became a Black Liberation Army combatant, defiant to authorities at every turn.

Warden Assassination

In 1973, Bowen and Philadelphia Five prisoner Fred “Muhammad” Burton attended a meeting with the warden to advocate for religious rights for Muslim prisoners. It was at this meeting, that the warden threatened to instigate a gang rivalry against Bowen and Burton. Taking this as a direct threat, Bowen then assassinated Holmesberg prison’s warden and deputy warden as well as wounded the guard commander. At the trial, Bowen claimed sole responsibility for the murders.

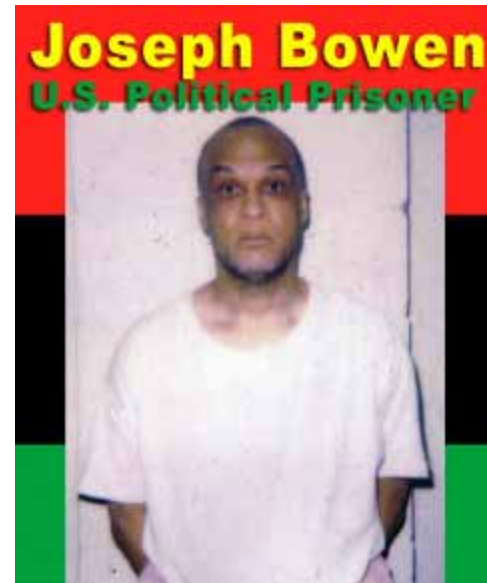
Prison Standoff

In October 28, 1981 Joe-Joe led a mass liberation attempt from the state’s largest prison at Graterford, after arming other prisoners with two shotguns and two revolvers. Bowen and three others attempted to scale the prison’s 40-foot wall and were stopped by a rifle shot from a guard tower. After returning fire, they captured three guards and retreated into the prison kitchen where they captured three kitchen employees and 29 inmates. Three other prisoners joined in the action.

Bowen and the six others held off the prison’s guards, State Police and FBI for five days until an agreement was struck. In the end, the men were charged with assault, attempted escape, kidnapping and one other offense. Joe-Joe was sent to the Federal Prison in Marion, IL where he met up with other political prisoners and prisoners of war such as Sundiata Acoli, Hanif Shabazz Bey and Ray Luc Levasseur.

Life in Prison

Much of Joe-Joe’s time in prison has been spent in and out of control units, solitary confinement and other means of being isolated from the general prison population. However, he is legendary to many prisoners as a revolutionary. “I used to teach the brothers how to turn



their rage into energy and understand their situations,” Bowen told the Philadelphia Inquirer in 1981. “I don’t threaten anybody. I don’t talk to the pigs. I don’t drink anything I can’t see through and I don’t eat anything that comes off a tray. When the time comes, I’ll be ready.”

During his time in prison he has raised the consciousness of thousands of Pennsylvania prisoners through his powerful history and political/military education classes. Many of these prisoners become aware of his story just by arriving at Curran-Fromhold Correctional Facility, named after the warden and deputy killed in 1973.

40 Years in Segregation

As of 1 August 2017, Joe-Joe was finally transferred into general population. This is important because Joe-Joe had been in control unit segregation for nearly 40 years.

Mail Regulations

In 2018, the PA Dept of Corrections instituted a restrictive mail policy where all mail to prisoners must be sent through a mail processing facility in Florida where all correspondence is scanned, copied and then the copy is mailed to the prisoner. There is an active campaign to get Gov. Wolf to repeal the restrictive policy so that friends and family member can send mail such as greeting cards again.

Mailing Address:

Smart Communications/PADOC -
Joseph Bowen #AM-4272
SCI Fayette
P.O. Box 33028
St. Petersburg, FL 33733

Veronza Bowers



Veronza Bowers 35316-136
FCI-2
Box 1500
Butner NC 27509
Born February 4, 1946
Time Served 46 years

Veronza Bowers Jr. is an inmate at the Federal Medical Center in Butner, North Carolina. He is a former member of the Black Panther Party incarcerated in federal prison for over 46 years.

In the more than four decades of his confinement, Veronza has become a “model” prisoner. He is an author, musician, a student of Asian healing arts and has a strong interest in Buddhist meditation, as well as “hands-on” healing techniques which he practiced at the various facilities in which he has been incarcerated. Veronza is also an honorary elder of the Lompoc Tribe of Five Feathers, a Native American spiritual and cultural group. He is a mentor and founder of the All-Faith Meditation Group, a non-denominational spiritual organization devoted to healing meditation using the traditional Japanese shakuhachi flute, which he has been blowing for over 30 years. Veronza is a member of the International Shakuhachi Society.

In 1973, Veronza was convicted in the murder of a U.S. Park Ranger on the word of two government informers, both of whom received reduced sentences for other crimes by the Federal prosecutor’s office. There were no eyewitnesses and no evidence independent of these informants to link him to the crime. The informants had all charges against them in this case dropped and one was given \$10,000 by the government according to the prosecutor’s post-sentencing report. Veronza has consistently proclaimed his innocence of the crime he never committed—even at the expense of having his appeals for parole denied—for which an admission of guilt and contrition is virtually required—he insists on maintaining his innocence.

For More information: www.Veronza.org

Grailing Brown (Kojo Bomani Sababu)

Grailing Brown
#39384-066 USP Canaan
P. O. Box 300
Waymart, PA 18472

Kojo Bomani Sababu is a New Afrikan Prisoner of War. He entered the carceral system at age 22, along with anarchist Ojore Lutalo, following a bank expropriation, death of neighborhood drug dealer and actions with the Black Liberation Army, resulting in a 55-year sentence. Kojo was charged with conspiracy to escape Federal Prison at Leavenworth with Jaime Delgado (veteran independence leader), Dora Garcia (prominent community activist) and Puerto Rican Prisoner of War, Independista Oscar Lopez Rivera, and which alleged plan included rockets, hand grenades and a helicopter.

Born in 1953, Kojo's childhood brought early tragedy when his father died coming home from work in 1962, and again two years later when his mother was murdered – a double devastation on a young boy. His mother's influence and guiding presence in his life held fast as "he continued to live out the lesson[s]he taught him, that education is a tool with which to change society." – newafrikan77

"... we must make great strides, reorganizing ourselves to embrace the difficulties we face. I have no solutions but I will say this: There are some great political minds contained in America's prisons, which are growing old as their era of life departs, this resource needs to be tapped before it expires. Do not abandon the political prisoners and POWs, they are still insightful with their knowledge and experience." – Kojo Bomani Sababu

U.S. Prisoner



Kojo Bomani Sababu

Fred Muhammad Burton



Fred Muhammad Burton
Smart Communications
PA DOC Burton,
Fred "Muhammad" AF 3896
SCI Somerset, Post Office Box 33028
St Petersburg, FL 33733
Black/ New African Liberation

Fred is one of the Philly 5, a group of men accused of an alleged attack on a police unit that left one officer killed. The case stems from a highly racially charged period in Philadelphia history while the infamous Frank Rizzo served as Police Commissioner.

Personal Background

Prior to his incarceration, Fred worked for a phone company, was a well-respected member of his community and his wife was preparing to have twins, his third and fourth child.

Legal Case

In 1970, Fred was accused and then convicted of participating in the planning of the murder of Philadelphia police officers. While the plan was allegedly to blow up a police station, what occurred was that a police officer was shot and killed allegedly by members of a radical group called "the Revolutionaries."

The Commonwealth intentionally struck every African-American from the active jury. The all-white jury unanimously convicted Fred after being purposefully misled by the Commonwealth and Marie Williams. Fred was sentenced to a life term for murder. Burton has maintained his innocence since his arrest.

<http://www.advocateforjustice.net/SupportFreedomFor-FrederickBurton.html>

Oso Blanco

Oso Blanco (Bryon Shane Chubbuck)
First Nation Political Prisoner

THE CASE

Oso Blanco became known by the authorities as “Robin the Hood” after the FBI and local gang unit APD officers learned from a CI that he was robbing banks to send thousands of dollars to the Zapatista Rebels of Chiapas regularly during 1998 and 1999.

He is now serving 55 years in prison for bank robbery, aggravated assault on the FBI, escape and firearms charges. Oso Blanco defended himself from federal agents in a gun battle on August 13th 1999 at his home in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Although he escaped, he was arrested later that day and sentenced to time in New Mexico’s state Penitentiary. After serving just over a year in New Mexico, he escaped from a prison transport van and almost immediately began robbing banks. He was recaptured a short time later.

Oso Blanco never used a gun in any bank robbery, but he has a long history of living by the gun and will not hesitate to use it on the agents of repression or the occupiers of Aztlan whom force false laws on the true people of this land. He is not asking for monetary support—he’s only asking that people become aware of indigenous people’s issues. In an interview he expressed “I am still able to hold my head up high and feel the gratification for my work in a world where money, power and destructive industries are regarded far above humanity, indigenous and impoverished peoples and cultures. I cannot help that I got deeply into my work....”

We shall no longer kill Mother Earth and everything else just to have modern technologies and pay for death as tax slaves. We shall rise up refusing to be slaves to commerce and political lies, in our own Land.

“We shall be High master” – High master of the heart
Realm of Higher Consciousness.

Please support the Brown Berets

Please send aid to the EZLN

I AM OSO BLANCO de Aztlán

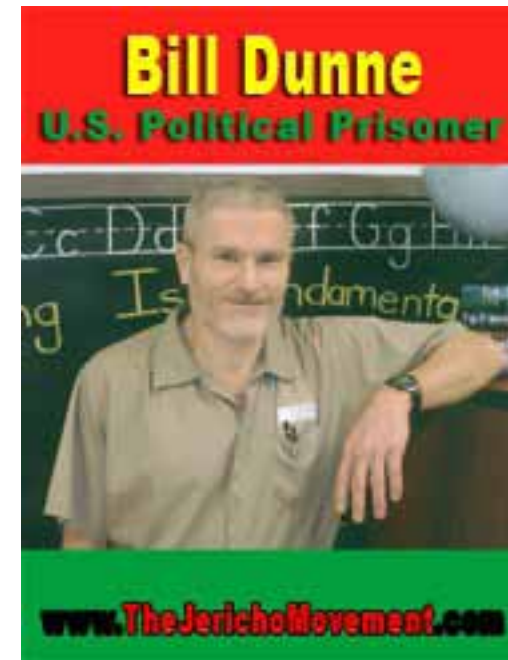
FREEOSOBLANCO.ORG



Oso Blanco



Bill Dunne



Bill Dunne anti-authoritarian #10916-086/
FCI Victorville Medium I
P.O. Box 3725, Adelanto, CA 92301
Time Served 40 yrs.
Release Date 2043

“I am a collectivist, long having recognized that in numbers there is strength and capability and security and satisfaction. There is more humanity in cooperation than in isolation... With mutual struggle, we can forge the diverse elements of our side of the barricade into a powerful weapon against the depredations of imperial capital. It can be the tool of emancipation from exploitation and oppression of that class enemy that afflicts us all.

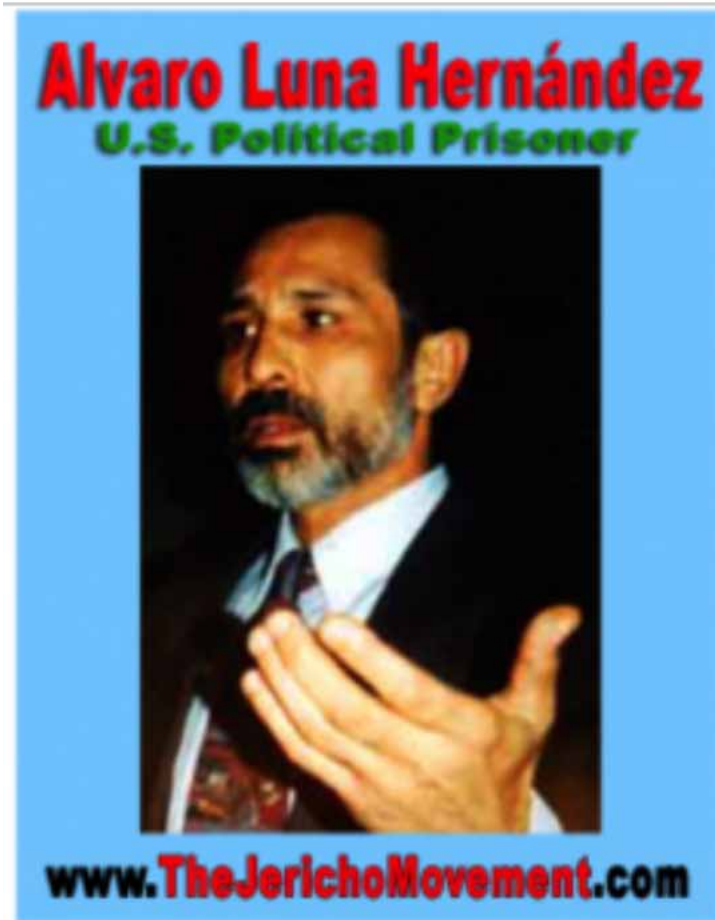
Legal Case

Bill Dunne was arrested in 1979 when he and Larry Giddings attempted to free fellow revolutionary Artie Ray Dufur. The two successfully freed Artie, but were arrested after an exchange of fire with police as they were fleeing the scene. Bill and Larry were charged with auto theft and aiding and abetting the escape, for which Bill received an 80-year federal prison sentence. And In 1983 Bill attempted to escape prison and was given another 15 years in prison.

Life in Prison

Bill spent seven and a half years in lockdown at the infamous maximum security Marion prison for his attempted prison break. During his time in Marion he helped social prisoners pursue their education, both politically and academically. In one case he helped prisoner Ernesto Santiago receive his GED.

**Alvaro Luna Hernandez
(Xinachtli)**



Alvaro Luna Hernandez (Xinachtli)
#255735
McConnell Unit
3001 Emily Drive
Beesville, TX 78102

Alvaro Luna Hernandez (Xinachtli) is a political prisoner of the State of Texas and the U.S. government. He is nearly 26 years into a 50-year prison sentence for an “aggravated assault” conviction stemming from a July 1996 incident in which he disarmed a Brewster County Sheriff, who was attempting to shoot him. Alvaro vehemently denies the charge that he assaulted the Sheriff. To Mexican-Americans in the cities, slums, plains, deserts, and prison cages of the Southwest, he is a civil rights hero, a Chicano freedom fighter true to his barrio roots and eternally fearless in the face of injustice. For years, he has been internationally recognized by amnesty movements and human rights lawyers and experts as a U.S. political prisoner, yet inside the United States, the name Alvaro Luna Hernandez remains largely elusive on the lips of progressives and social justice advocates.

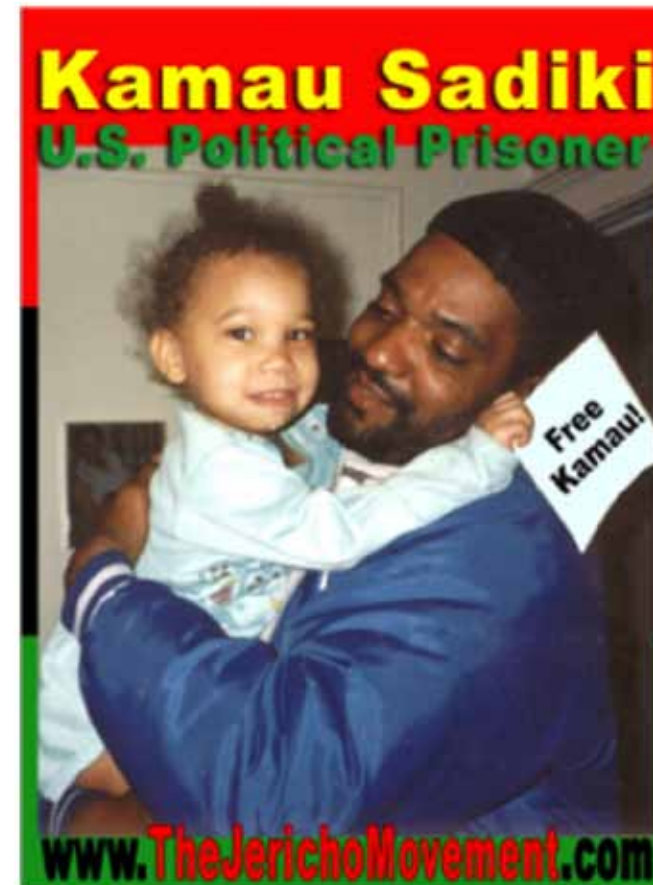
Xinachtli (Nahuatl, meaning “seed”) is an anarchist communist community organizer and Chicano movement revolutionary, currently imprisoned in Texas. Formerly known as Alvaro Luna Hernandez, he worked diligently in the barrio on civil and human rights issues, known widely for his legal skills. Gaining international recognition as the national coordinator of the Ricardo Aldape Guerra Defense Committee, Xinachtli was instrumental in helping to free Mexican national Aldape Guerra from Texas’

death row, where he had been framed for the murder of a police officer.

While imprisoned, Xinachtli continues to write frequently, has helped to organize multiple prison strikes, and has been held in solitary confinement for the last 19 years and counting. Xinachtli is a prolific jailhouse lawyer, as referenced by Mumia Abu-Jamal in his book *Jailhouse Lawyers: Prisoners Defending Prisoners v the USA*. Xinachtli assists many prisoners in seeking new trials, and filing suits against the repressive, inhumane Texas prison system.

Xinachtli is an elderly person and his life is in danger. In September 2021 following his first parole hearing, Xinachtli was denied parole and given a 3-year hit.

Chicano U.S. Political Prisoner
FREE ALVARO NOW



Freddie Hilton (Kamau Sadiki)

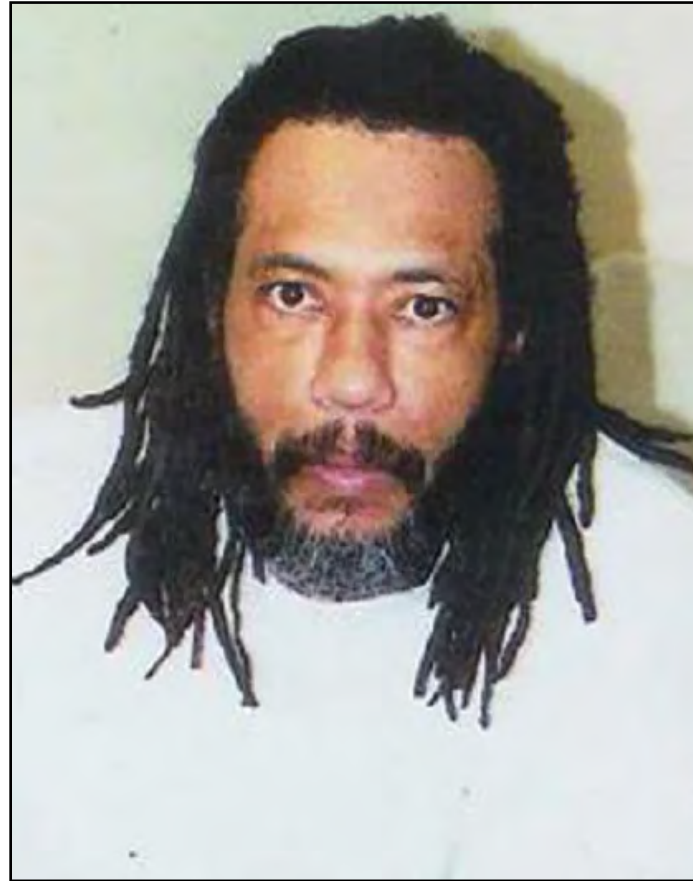
Freddie Hilton (Kamau Sadiki)
#0001150688
Augusta State Medical Prison
Bldg. 23A-2, 3001 Gordon Highway
Grovetown, GA 30813

Kamau Sadiki is a father, grandfather, and Political Prisoner. He is also a veteran of the Black Panther Party, wrongfully convicted when the FBI, in their efforts to recapture Assata Shakur, convinced Atlanta police to reopen a 30-year-old cold case murder of a Fulton County police officer, and charge Mr. Sadiki. The police told Kamau that if he worked with them and “got Assata to leave Cuba” and go to some other country where they could apprehend her, they would not prosecute on the false police killing charge. The police offer was rejected and Kamau, now serving a Life plus 10 years sentence, has always maintained his innocence.

Kamau Sadiki is now 79 and in poor health with Hepatitis C, Cirrhosis of the Liver, blood pressure issues, open infectious wounds and Sarcoidosis. Every day is a struggle for him, and for his two daughters and grandchildren, who are devastated by the absence of their loving, hard-working father, who supported them by working for the telephone company in New York for over eighteen years. Today Kamau’s daughters work tirelessly in their efforts to release him.

U.S. Prisoner
Free Kamau Sadiki

Larry Hoover



Larry Hoover

Larry Hoover
#86063-024
Florence/ADMAX,
P.O. Box 8500
Florence, CO 812
Political Prisoner
Time Served 46years

Larry Hoover was a member of the Pontiac Brothers and developed his political analysis. While inside, he was indicted for the alleged activities of Gangster Disciples.

“We suggest that Larry Hoover and the other members of Growth and Development weren’t targeted and indicted for their involvement in the drug scene, but rather, that they were indicted because they were trying to get out of that scene and enter an arena that the U.S. feels that it must control at all costs: electoral politics, particularly in oppressed communities.

Everyone in the Afrikan community with eyes and ears knows that Hoover was indicted because, over the past ten years (at least) he’s led the “Gangster Disciples” in a process of transition into an organization to become

known as “Growth and Development.” This new organization was inspired by a new concept, which had been well on its way in a process of political, economic, and social transformation that had begun to present a serious challenge to the power of the local political machine and its lackeys within the Afrikan community.” Excerpt from the 1993 *Call For Peace*: “...and finally, in my sincere appeal for peace and unity: those of us that have experienced being our brothers’ keeper—we must educate our members around us. Education brings about awareness. Awareness generates the ability to think. Our youth must know the end result of crime is shame, disgrace, and imprisonment to themselves, as well as the community. We must come to the point of outlawing those who willfully disrupt our communities and our call for peace and unity. “

Malik Abdullah Ka’Bah (Jeff Fort)



Malik Abdullah Ka’Bah (Jeff Fort)
Muslim Political Prisoner
Time Served 33 years

By the early 1980s, Abdul Malik and the El Rukns had begun to take new initiatives in their program of progressive political transformation, and they had already seen what crack cocaine was doing to the Afrikan communities in places like New York and Los Angeles. The El Rukn policy against the entry of crack into Chicago was intended to prevent the inevitable devastation of the Afrikan community that was sure to follow its sale and use. Therefore, We believe that it was no accident that the entry and rapid spread of crack cocaine in Chicago coincided with the attack by the U.S. and Chicago authorities upon the El Rukns in the mid-1980s!

“We believe that Abdul Malik was indicted because of the new vision that he had acquired and which he was trying to share with other street organizations not only in Chicago, but throughout the U.S.! He was indicted because, for example, he (and others) had worked and were continuing to work to maintain a peace among street organizations, so that they could begin to redirect their energies in ways that would ensure the survival of their people, and the development of their communities.”

For more information: 404-981-0431

Eric King



Eric King
#27090-045
USP Florence ADMAX
P.O. Box 8500
Florence, CO 81226

Eric G. King, a 34-year-old vegan anarchist political prisoner and poet, was arrested and charged with an attempted firebombing of a Congressperson's office in Kansas City, Missouri in September 2014. As part of his plea and sentencing, Eric publicly and proudly acknowledged that his intent was to take direct political action in solidarity with the community of Ferguson, Missouri following the August 2014 police killing of Michael Brown, Jr.

Eric was charged with throwing a hammer through a window of the building, followed by two lit Molotov cocktails. The criminal complaint states that both incendiary devices failed to ignite. Eric was identified as a suspect by local police because he had previously come under suspicion for anti-government and anti-police graffiti.

On March 3, 2016, he accepted a non-cooperating plea agreement to one count of using "explosive materials to commit arson of property used in or affecting interstate commerce." Almost three months later, on June 28th, Eric was sentenced to 10 years, the statutory minimum and maximum for the charge he pleaded guilty to.

Since his arrest and subsequent incarceration, he has

been extremely isolated from his loved ones and has repeatedly been targeted by the guards, who have regularly put him in jeopardy. At CCA Leavenworth where Eric was held in pretrial detention, he was kept in segregation for 6 months at one point and was often subjected to stints in solitary confinement after the guards targeted him. Despite these struggles, he continues to maintain his good spirits and resolve to see this situation through to the end. He is also maintaining his dedication to struggling for a world free of domination and oppression.

Eric is currently facing one count of assaulting a government official for an incident that occurred in August 2018 at FCI Florence. Eric has been housed in a segregation cell at FCI Englewood since August 2019 fighting this charge and is on 'restricted general correspondence'. He can only receive mail from his wife and mother for a 6-month period minimally and cannot receive books and magazines. He faces a maximum of 20 additional years in prison and is fighting his case under very bleak circumstances and harassment by Bureau of Prisons staff.

Ruchell Cinque Magee U.S. Political Prisoner



IN PRISON 59 YEARS

Ruchell Magee was born an only child on March 17, 1939 in the small town of Franklinton, Louisiana. Across the Deep South, Jim Crow laws, white supremacist lynchings, KKK terror, segregation, and legal bias against Black people were common. In 1955, at the young age of 16, Ruchell was accused of aggravated attempted rape due to his relationship with a white girl in KKK territory. For context, Emmett Till was lynched, mutilated, and murdered in August 1955 for allegedly whistling at a white woman. Magee was given a completely bogus trial with an all-white jury who sentenced him to eight hard years in the notorious Angola State Prison, a former plantation. In 1962, the state deprived him of his inherited property and ordered that he leave Louisiana and go to Los Angeles.

Ruchell was finally allowed to leave Louisiana's dungeons in 1963, so he headed to Los Angeles for a fresh start. Only six months later, Ruchell and his cousin Leroy were arrested as they sat with a man named Ben Brown in Brown's car. Brown told police a far-fetched tale that Ruchell and his cousin had kidnapped him in a dispute over a \$10 bag of weed, even though the cousins didn't even have the car keys.

As the police arrested him, they beat him so badly that he had to be hospitalized for three days, but the injustices were only beginning. The racist Superior Court of Los Angeles County railroaded him with the trumped-up charge of kidnapping to commit robbery. There was extreme malpractice from both the prosecutor and the defense attorney, which came to a head with Magee's lawyer pleading him guilty without his consent. Ruchell was unjustly imprisoned with a seven-years-to-life charge for this alleged crime.

Ruchell strived to develop his mind in prison, where he learned the rich traditions of African history and libera-

Ruchell Cinque Magee

#A92051, #T 115 California Medical Facility
P.O. Box 2000
Vacaville, CA 95696-2000
Birthday: March 17, 1939
Capture: 1963

tion struggles. He took on the name "Cinque" because he felt a connection with the African freedom fighter Cinqué, who led a rebellion on the slave ship La Amistad. Magee won himself a second trial by pointing out that his indictment was improperly joined with his cousin's case (among other improper acts). In 1965, Magee unfortunately faced the same judge that bound and gagged him in the first trial for making lawful objections. In Ruchell's own words, the second trial "used fraud to hide fraud", upholding the conviction and shooting his trial down.

Magee had gained a reputation in the prison system as a people's lawyer by doing work like filing a lawsuit for the wrongful death of prisoner Fred Billingsley, who was beaten and tear-gassed to death in his cell in the San Quentin prison in February 1970. Ruchell's work helped lead to a large settlement for the Billingsley family.

After seven years of torture in California's prison system, he took an opportunity for freedom when it came to him. On August 7, 1970, Ruchell Magee and William Christmas were among the witnesses for the trial of James McClain, who was on trial for assaulting a guard after the brutal Billingsley murder. Jonathan Jackson, the younger brother of prisoner and Black Panther Party Field Marshal George Jackson, attempted to free his brother and the rest of the Soledad Brothers by taking control of the courtroom in Marin County Courthouse. Jonathan announced that he was taking over and offered weapons to Magee, Christmas, and McClain. Even though he wasn't aware of the plan at its start, he knew that this could be his last chance to escape slavery and get the world's attention on his unjust conviction. The prison guards opened fire on the group as they left the building, killing Jackson, Christmas, McClain, and a judge and critically wounding Ruchell and a prosecutor.

Ruchell urgently needs public support in 2021, especially because of his factual innocence, his age of 81 years old, and the risk of COVID-19 in California's wretched prisons. He currently has two motions in the legal system - a request to Governor Gavin Newsom for commutation in California and a hearing in the Supreme Court. Ruchell is scheduled for a parole suitability hearing in July 2021, where he has the possibility of getting parole.

In Ruchell's own words, "Slavery 400 years ago, slavery today. It's the same but with a new name." Whether it was Africans fighting captivity in Africa, or Africans fighting captivity in California, oppressed people have the right to rebel!

Marius Mason

Marius Mason,
[Address mail to Marie Mason]

EARTH LIBERATION FRONT
Prison Address
#04672-061
FCI Danbury, Route 37
Danbury, CT 06811
Birthday: January 26, 1962

Affiliation: Anarchist and Earth First!

Captured: March 10, 2008. Sentence: 22yrs.

IN PRISON 12 YRS

Marius Mason is a transgender environmental and ani-



mal rights activist, anarchist, and artist currently serving a twenty-two-year sentence for an action in the name of the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) in which no one was harmed. In 1999, he set fire to a lab at the University of Michigan that was conducting research on genetically modified organisms (GMOs). After Marius's husband turned state's evidence, Marius pleaded guilty and was given an extremely long sentence with a "terrorism enhancement." Marius came out as transgender in 2014 and is believed to be the first person in the federal Bureau of Prisons to begin therapy to transition from female to male. He and his supporters also initiated the annual International Day of Solidarity with Marius Mason and All Long-Term Anarchist Prisoners on June 11. supportmariusmason.org

Marius was an extended care assistant at a small Cincinnati school when arrested on March 10, 2008 by federal agents. Marius was convicted of involvement with a December, 1999 arson at a Michigan State University office in which GMO research was being conducted and a January 2000 arson of logging equipment in Mesick, Michigan. Both arsons were claimed by the Earth Liberation Front.

<https://supportmariusmason.org/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marius_Mason

U.S. Prisoner

Leonard Peltier



Leonard Peltier (Anishinaabe-Lakota)
89607-132 USP Coleman 1
Box 1500 Coleman Fl. 33521
America Indian Movement Political Prisoner

a sniper's bullet. Mr. Stuntz's death has never been investigated, nor has anyone ever been charged in connection with his death.

According to FBI documents, more than 40 Native Americans participated in the gunfight, but only AIM members Bob Robideau, Darrell Butler, and Leonard Peltier were brought to trial. Mr. Robideau and Mr. Butler were arrested first and went to trial. A federal jury in Iowa acquitted them on grounds of self-defense, finding that their participation in the shoot-out was justified given the climate of fear that existed on the Pine Ridge Reservation. Further, they could not be tied to the close-range shootings.

During oral argument, the government attorney conceded that the government does not know who shot the agents, stating that Mr. Peltier is equally guilty whether he shot the agents at point-blank range, or participated in the shoot-out from a distance. Mr. Peltier's co-defendants participated in the shoot-out from a distance, but were acquitted.

Mr. Peltier has served over 47 years in prison and is long overdue for parole. He has received several human rights awards for his good deeds from behind bars which include annual gift drives for the children of Pine Ridge, fund raisers for battered women's shelters, and donations of his paintings to Native American recovery programs.

Leonard suffers from diabetes, high blood pressure, and a heart condition, and has struggled with the prison officials to be taken to an outside hospital for medical assessment and treatment.

(Info taken from "quick facts: Case of Leonard Peltier.")
For Information:

Leonard Peltier Official AD Hoc Committee Limited-
Orangevale, CA.95662-0462

www.Freeleonardpeltiernow.com

Leonard Peltier is an imprisoned Native American considered by Amnesty International, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, National Congress of American Indians, the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Center for Human Rights, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Rev. Jesse Jackson, among many others, to be a political prisoner who should be immediately released. Leonard Peltier was an AIM leader and was asked by traditional people at Pine Ridge, South Dakota, to support and protect the traditional people being targeted for violence. Mr. Peltier and a small group of young AIM members set up camp on a ranch owned by the traditional Jumping Bull family.

On June 26, 1975 two FBI agents in unmarked cars followed a pick-up truck onto the Jumping Bull ranch. The families immediately became alarmed and feared an attack. Shots were heard and a shoot-out erupted. More than 150 agents, GOONS, and law enforcement surrounded the ranch.

When the shoot-out ended the two FBI agents and one Native American lay dead. The agents were injured in the shoot-out and were then shot at close range. The Native American, Joseph Stuntz, was shot in the head by

Ed Poindexter



Ed Poindexter
27767 Nebraska St. Penitentiary
Box 2500, Lincoln, NE 68542
Black Panther Party
Time Served: 46 years

Edward Poindexter and Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa (David Rice) were convicted and sentenced to life in prison in 1971 for the murder of Omaha Police Officer Larry Minard who died when a suitcase dynamite bomb exploded in a vacant house in North Omaha on August 17, 1970. Officer John Tess was injured in the explosion. According to an unpublished 1970 article written by radio journalist Michael Amdor (who would go on to become a lawyer and a judge) the police immediately assumed the Omaha Black Panthers (called the National Committee to Combat Fascism) were responsible for the bombing. Police wanted to raid their headquarters hours after the blast, but were dissuaded because there was no probable cause to accuse the NCCF.

Ed has diabetes and receives dialysis six days a week. He underwent triple bypass heart surgery in 2016. After several falls, he chooses to use a wheelchair. He has a cataract in one eye that makes it difficult for him to read. If you would like to write him a letter, it must be typed with 18 point or larger font. The Nebraska Department of Corrections does not plan to allow him to have surgery because "he has one good eye."

Rev. Joy Powell



Rev. Joy Powell 07G0632
Bedford Hills CF Box 1000
Bedford Hills NY 10507-2499

Community Activistst.

As a pastor and a consistent activist against police brutality, violence and oppression in her community, Rev. Joy Powell was warned by the Rochester Police department that she was a target because of her speaking out against corruption. On many occasions, from 1995 to 2006, Rev. Joy had held rallies and spoke out against the police brutality and "police justifications" in Rochester NY. In 2006, she was accused and convicted of 1st Degree Burglary and Assault. Joy is sure the prosecution was politically motivated based on her activism through her organization, Equality and Justice For All.

An all-white jury tried her; the state provided no evidence and no eyewitnesses. Rev. Joy was not allowed to discuss her activism or say that she was a pastor. The person that testified for her was not allowed to tell the court that he knew Rev. Joy through their activist work and the church. Furthermore, Judge Francis Affronti promised he was going to give her a harsh sentence because he was biased against her. While serving a 16-year sentence for the conviction, a cold murder case was pinned on her. The trial was fraught with misconduct, yet she was convicted and sentenced to 25 years to life. She is currently seeking counsel to file an appeal.

FreeJoyPowell.org

Jessica Resnecek



Jessica Resnecek 19293-030
FCI Waseca Box1731
Waseca MN 56093

Water Protector

In 2017, Jessica and another person took direct action and disabled construction machinery in order to protect the land. No one was injured by their actions, and the land was protected from the flow of oil for an additional six months.

Jessica has worked with the Catholic Worker and the homeless populations of Duluth and Des Moines. She has worked on third-party accompaniment work in Palestine, and as an organizer during Occupy Wall Street, both at Zuccotti Park and in Des Moines. She has campaigned against weapons contractor Northrup Grumman in Omaha and protested the drone base in Des Moines. She also protested the construction of a U.S. Naval base on Jeju island, South Korea so as to save the sacred Gureombi Rock in the village of Gangjeon.

On February 6, 2021, Jessica pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to damage an energy facility and on June 30, 2021, was sentenced to 8 years in prison. She received the 'federal crime of terrorism' enhancement and was ordered to pay over 3 million dollars in restitution and three years of supervised release. She reported to federal prison on August 11, 2021. Jessica has a deep love for nature, camping, swimming, hiking, theology, music, gardening, laughter and eco-sustainability, as well as a commitment to self-discovery through deep relationships cultivated in intentional faith-based community living.

<https://supportjessicareznicek.com> <https://www.facebook.com/freejessrez> <https://twitter.com/FreeJessRez> <https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/protecting-water-is-never-terrorism-repeal-jessica-rezniceks-terrorist-enhancement>

Shaka Shakur



Shaka Shakur 1996207
Beaumont Correctional Center
3500 Beaumont Rd.,
Beaumont, VA. 23014
New Afrikan Political Prisoner

By: Shaka Shakur Legal Defense Committee

Shaka Shakur has been held captive by the Indiana Department of Correction since 2002. Shaka's conviction on a trumped-up charge of attempted murder of a police officer was precipitated by politically motivated harassment by the Gary, Indiana police and the State of Indiana. During his first period of incarceration, beginning when he was 16 years old, Shaka embraced New Afrikan revolutionary politics.

Mentored by figures such as Zolo Azania and James "Yaki" Sayles, Shaka became an active organizer while incarcerated at the notorious Indiana State Prison (ISP), Indiana's death row, run by a good ole boy network of white supremacist guards and administrators who routinely beat, tortured, and lynched black prisoners in their custody. Shaka was highly influential in bringing resistance to this reign of terror, actions which would lead him and five other organizers known as the "Indiana 6" being transferred to the Westville Maximum Control Complex, Indiana's first Supermax and the second in the U.S.

<https://chuffed.org/project/support-the-shaka-shakur-legal-defense-fund>
<https://www.idocwatch.org/blog-1/2020/2/10/shaka-shakur-on-the-struggle-against-organized-white-supremacists-in-the-idoc>

Shaka's reputation as a revolutionary and principled organizer would lead to constant harassment following his release from the IDOC and brief stint in Wisconsin. He was improperly tried as a habitual offender on a false charge of attempted murder and has been held captive ever since. He is currently the co-founder and political consultant to the New Afrikan Liberation Collective, a contributor to Prison Lives Matter, and active organizer with the abolitionist organization IDOC Watch. In 2019, Shaka was made a "domestic exile," being sent to Virginia in exchange for Kevin "Rashid" Johnson in an attempt by the respective DOCs to stifle their political activity and cut them off from their support. That attempt has failed, and Shaka continues his efforts for human rights in the IDOC, VDOC, and the struggle for New Afrikan Independence.

The Shaka Shakur Legal Defense Committee is currently raising funds to fight the charges which keep Shaka incarcerated. We are asking supporters to donate to the legal defense fund and for people to reach out to Shaka and learn about his work.



SEND COMMISSARY MONEY TO INCARCERATED PERSONS

To send commissary money to incarcerated persons in the various State Prison Systems, check the persons' prison websites, or call their prison to get the information.

To send commissary money to incarcerated persons in the Federal Bureau of Prisons, use this link: <https://www.bop.gov/inmates/communications.jsp> or Commissary Money

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TUESDAY, APRIL 18, 2023
"The true meaning of the instant motion to pardon the Killer Cop in Texas by Gov. Abbott !"

SAVE THE DATE
 Black Worker at the Center of the Storm:
 A May Day Program
 Monday, May 1, 2023 | 7:30 PM
 To Register Visit: <https://fb.me/wbaitv>

ANNOUNCING: RECLAIM OSAGE!

Mike Africa, Jr. is taking back the MOVE Home that was bombed by police in 85. This issue of New Observations Magazine will be released on May 13th, 2023, the 38th anniversary of the bombing of the MOVE Family home on Osage Avenue.



Mike Africa, Jr.

Mike has plans underway to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the bombing in May of 2025 with a series of events that include the unveiling of a cultural learning center in the Osage community and supporting children whose parents are incarcerated, all to be announced on May 12th, 2023.

Please support this historic project through making a donation of money and time.

Get involved! We have gone through the grieving process now it's time for the healing process.

For additional information and to support the "Reclaim Osage" campaign email: reclaimosage@gmail.com.



The Politics & Poetry of JAZZ

RALPH POYNTER
 HOST



STANLEY BANKS-BK JAZZ HALLOFFAME



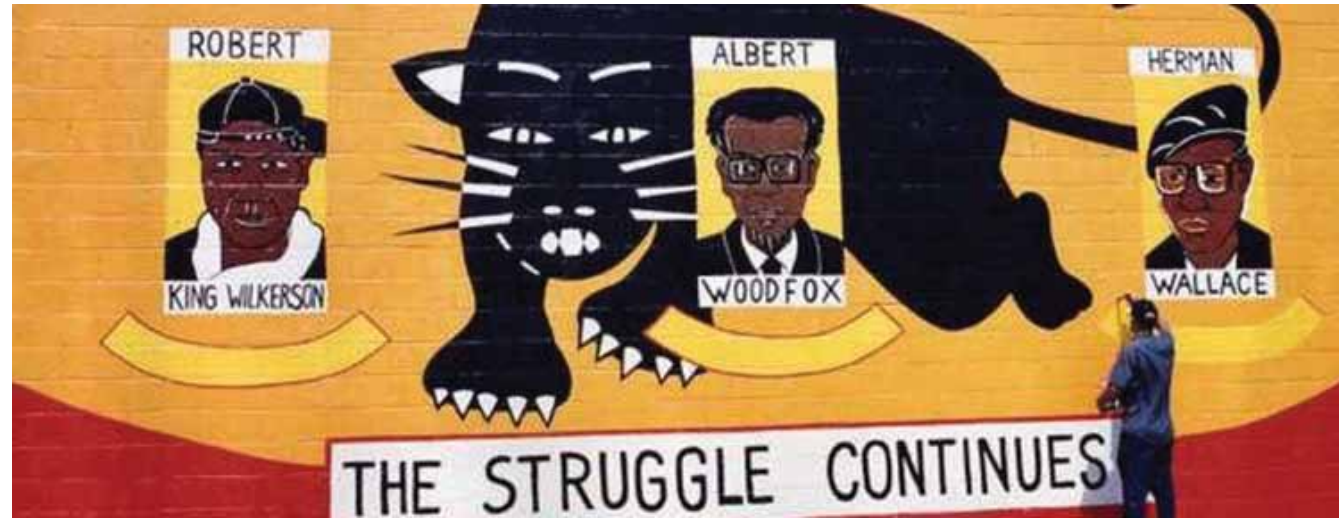
RAYMOND NAT TURNER
 BLACK AGENDA RPT-POET

What's Happening
 Wednesday, April 19, 2023/8pm/est 99.5 fm
WBAI.ORG



BETTY DAVIS-CO
 HOST

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The Angola 3 Cultural Center
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To make a donation please contact

Robert King at

Robert King
 The Angola 3 Cultural Center
 321 Blossom Court
 Marrero, LA 70094

Robert King can be reached at
 504 261 3454



Save Black Grassroots Media Archive!



We urgently need your support to move and save the grassroots media archive of Ms. Efia Nwangaza, a SNCC Veteran and Director of the Malcolm Center for Self-Determination and WMXP 95.5 Community Radio in Greenville, SC!! Covering over thirty years of televised broadcast media and grassroots organizing, Ms. Nwangaza's collection represents an archive by and about Black people for Black people. It provides a historical account of global African American representation, life, and media. It's emphasis is on the U.S. Black Freedom Struggle, political prisoners/POWs./exiles, Reparations, life in the South and South Carolina. Ms. Nwangaza is currently working to have this collection institutionally placed, digitized and made publicly available, but to do so, she needs your support. (
<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#search/tekla.johnson%40eagles.usm.edu/FMfcgzGslbBIWLHkqHPPQdVT>
[hrvKrdnM?projector=1&messagePartId=0.1](https://www.gofundme.com/f/save-black-grassroots-media-archive))

Due to a rent increase, Ms. Nwangaza must urgently move this collection from the location where it is currently stored. The goal of this fundraiser is to raise \$2,500 to support 12 months of storage costs and costs associated with moving the materials to their new temporary home until they can be relocated permanently and digitized.

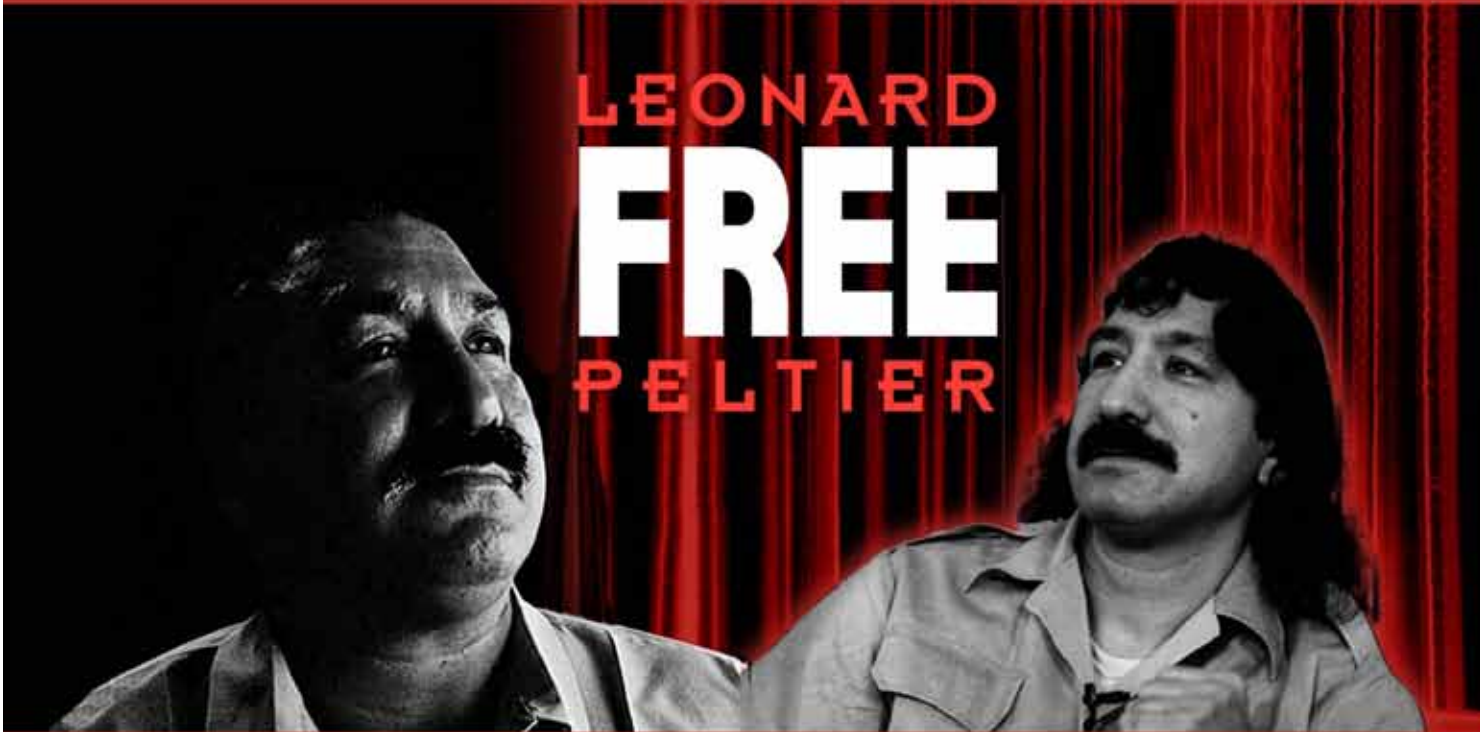
Formerly a member of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), Ms. Nwangaza is a co-founder of the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America (N'COBRA) and the National Malcolm X Grassroots Movement for Self-Determination (MXGM). In Greenville, South Carolina, Ms. Nwangaza founded the Malcolm X Center for Self-Determination and WMXP Community Radio. She has served as the lead organizer for the city's annual Malcolm X Festival and Kwanza events for over thirty years.

DONATIONS, placement inquires may be made at: wmxp955.org ; PayPal: wmxp955@gmail.com ;
<https://www.gofundme.com/f/save-black-grassroots-media-archive> , mxcentergv1@gmail.com



Lakota People's
LAW PROJECT

Take action at LakotaLaw.org

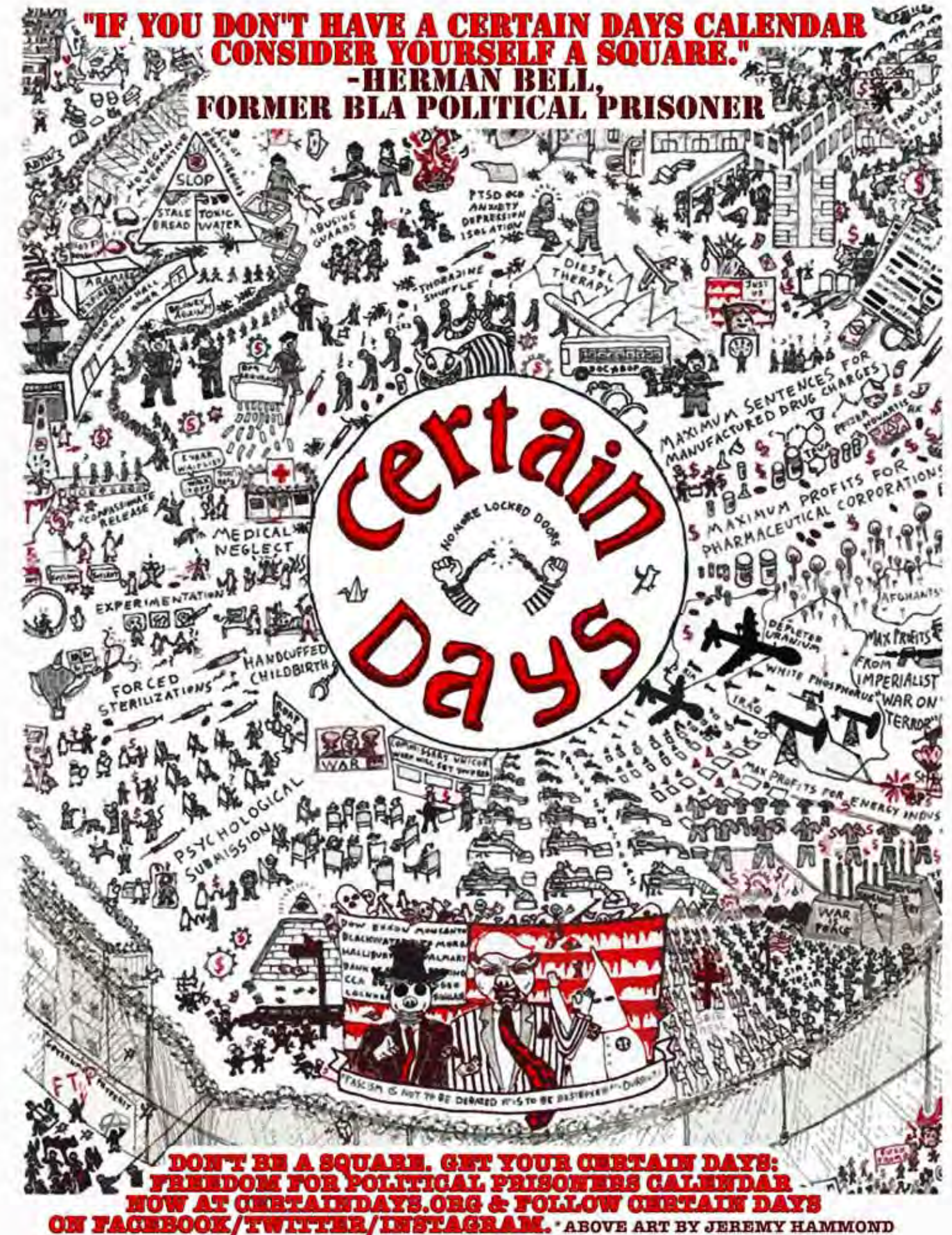


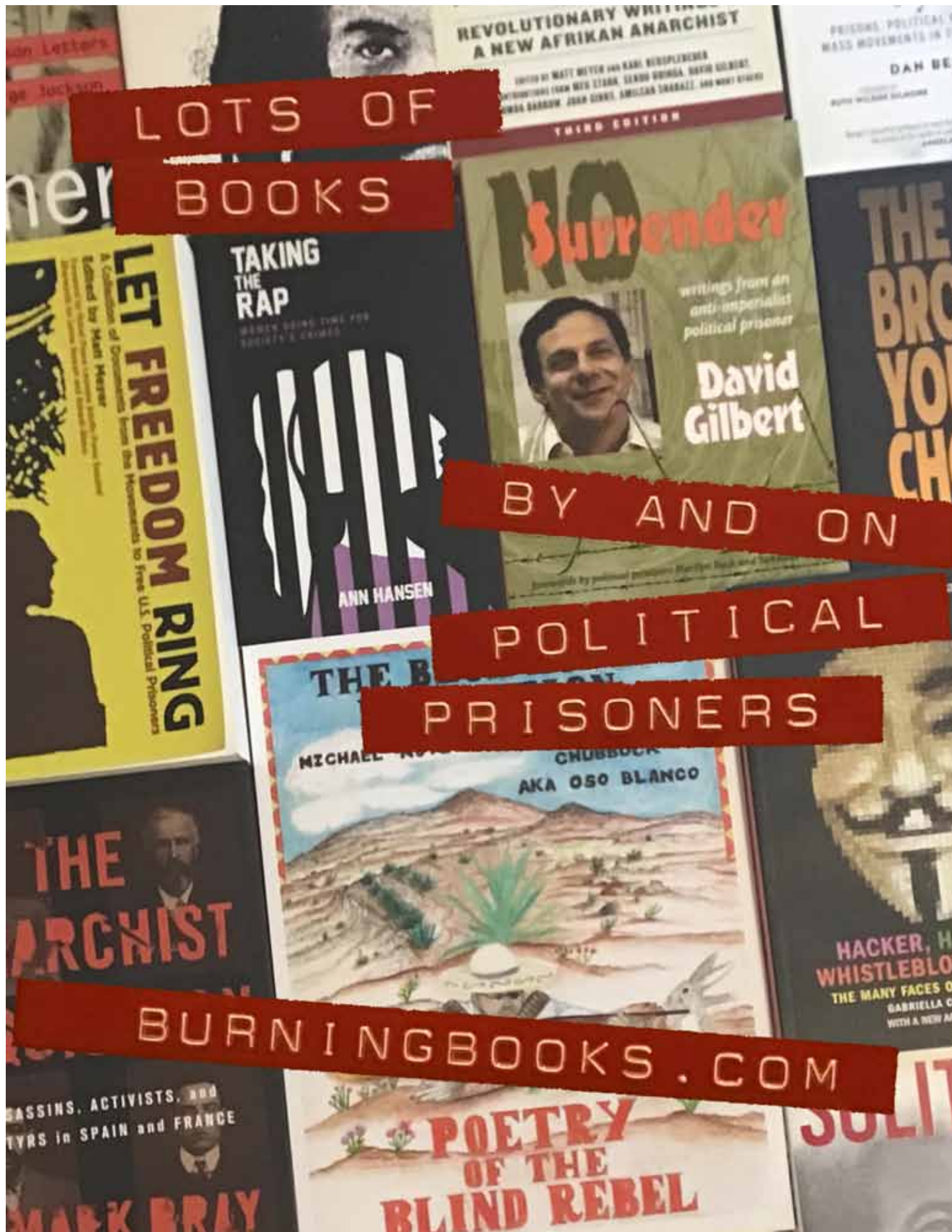
Join the movement for Native and environmental justice

[Facebook.com/LakotaPeoplesLawProject](https://www.facebook.com/LakotaPeoplesLawProject)

[Twitter.com/LakotaLaw](https://twitter.com/LakotaLaw)

[Instagram.com/LakotaLaw](https://www.instagram.com/LakotaLaw)





About Lynne Stewart by Ralph Poynter



Lynne was born October 8, 1939 and came of age in the 1950's, which she recognized as a period in America when women were perceived and treated as the lesser of the sexes. Her excellence and success in academic, cultural and physical arenas made her aware of recognition differences between white men and white women.

When Lynne began teaching in Harlem as a licensed librarian in 1962, she became aware for the first time of the reality that there was another America. She became aware that in communities of color everyone was a victim of discrimination. Her history of a victim of discrimination as a woman enabled her to better understand the emotional damage being done to children. She was appalled by the false concepts that children of color were mentally inferior. As a teacher/librarian in communities of color, she fought against this erroneous and treacherous concept.

The struggles of the 60's, 70's and 80's for justice found Lynne totally immersed and in the forefront of the more progressive and radical movements. She became embroiled in the struggle for Black community of control of schools. As an attorney, Lynne continued her lifelong struggle for equality by defending of the various liberation movements and the poor underclasses (more often than not pro bono). Her successful defense of Larry Davis represented the right of self defense for people of color. Her defense of Richard Williams and the Ohio Seven represented the rights of the people to protest against imperialist, corrupt governments.

Along with Chokwe Lumumba, she defended members of the Black Liberation Army who were protecting the Black Community against police terrorism. The New York community was a recipient of her legal skills as an attorney in the struggle to defend the rights of the LGBTQIA resistors.

In addition, she fought against Islamophobia in her defense of Sheik Omar Abdul-Rahman, commonly known in the U.S. as the 'Blind Sheikh'. We must also remember her service to the communities of color in the courtrooms of both New York and New Jersey. In this regard, to do justice to the legal career of Lynne Stewart would require a book and indeed, some have been written, including a book by Michael Smith, another attorney and a comrade.

In 2005, after a trial in which prosecutors invoked the spectre of the 9/11 attacks, Stewart was convicted of providing "material support to terrorists" merely for releasing a statement to the press from her client, Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman – an act prosecutors maintained was "passing messages" to her client's followers in Egypt. She was sentenced to 2-1/2 years in prison, but prosecutors appealed the sentence as "too lenient." In 2010 a Federal appeals court ordered the sentencing Judge to review and re-sentence Stewart. Her new sentence, imposed at age 70 with one bout of breast cancer behind her, was ten years in Federal Prison. Family members called it a de facto death sentence.

Three years later, Stewart's earlier cancer returned and spread to several other organs, and in August 2013, after lengthy delays in getting proper care at the federal prison in Texas that held her, the prison doctor estimated her life expectancy to be 18 months.

For 9 months in 2013, we led a relentless international campaign to win compassionate release for Lynne. There were many protests, vigils, and statements of support from attorneys and activist organizations. An online petition received 40,000 signatures, and the support of such prominent voices as Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Noam Chomsky, and Dick Gregory, who initiated a hunger fast in solidarity. Even the prison warden indicated her support, but it took several more months before Stewart's application was approved by the Bureau of Prisons and quickly signed by Judge Koeltl. Stewart was granted compassionate release on New Year's Eve 2013. That night Bob Lederer called her husband Ralph Poynter in Ft. Worth, Texas to get an update and was surprised to speak with Lynne.

On Monday March 13, 2017 WBAI NEWS – SALLY O'BRIEN / BOB LEDERER announced: On March 7th at 7PM radical human rights attorney, Lynne Stewart, died after a long battle with cancer complicated by recent strokes. The 77 year old died at home with her husband of 56 years, Ralph Poynter, at her side and surrounded by grandchildren and other family and friends. Lynne was celebrated in an hour-long service Saturday morning at the historic St. Mark's Church and the ample sanctuary was overflowing, with hundreds filling in the standing room only spaces in the back. In the end Stewart succumbed to cancer after successfully fighting the disease for more than a decade.

Her work with and for political prisoners started before she became a lawyer and continued while she herself was a political prisoner, as she wrote briefs in prison for many of her fellow inmates. This area of her life work was a way of life and nearest and dearest to her heart. As co-founder of the New Abolitionist Movement, her influence continues today. More important and above all else, she was a wonderful human being and joy to be with.

For more information about her life and her contributions to the freedom struggles contact ralph.poynter@gmail.com / 917 853-9759 or listen to (<https://www.blogtalkradio.com/humanrightsdemand>) or What's Happening on WBAI 99.5 FM Radio 8pm/ET.



Native American Prison Art Project

This project was founded in 2007 as a unique opportunity for bridging prison with community.

Native men and women incarcerated in Oregon prisons donated their artwork for public display.

This successful project helps promote public awareness and education on incarceration and barriers to re entry.



Red Lodge Transition Services

Friends of Red Lodge

www.redlodgetransition.org/services

With your help this is our Mission

- To prevent incarceration and reduce recidivism primarily among Native American women and men.
- To provide assistance for individuals released from jails, prisons and treatment centers, who are working on creating a better life for themselves, their children, and communities.
- To supply transition information, guidance and support, to Native American individuals, families and communities.
- To prevent and reduce incarceration by breaking the cycle of chemical addiction, violence, abuse, hatred, hopelessness and neglect.



The Red Lodge Transition Center for Women

Opened in 2017, the Transition Center provides culturally-focused, gender-responsive programming, substance abuse aftercare, case management (housing, employment, mentoring, and money management) for Native and non-Native women returning to Clackamas County from local treatment centers, jails and prisons.

Our holistic model promotes wholesome values, and responsible earth practices.

As a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, your monetary donation is tax-deductible. Your donation will help us continue to develop and implement culturally specific programs to help prevent incarceration and recidivism and empower individuals, families and communities.



RED LODGE TRANSITION SERVICES

503-245-4175 | P.O. Box 55157, Portland, OR 97238

LEGACY OF TORTURE

The War Against The Black Liberation Movement





No other Black Power Movement organization fed as many children, provided health care to as many residents, educated as many adults and clothed as many people as did the Black Panther Party, all while being attacked, killed by police and imprisoned by the government. The National Alumni Association of the Black Panther Party would like to recognize 7 Panther Political Prisoners. Some have served more time than Nelson Mandela:

Veronza Bowers Jr, Ed Poindexter, Mumia Abu-Jamal, Kenny "Zulu" Whitmore, Joseph JoJo Bowen, Imam Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin (formerly known as H Rap Brown), Kamau Sidiki (aka Freddie Hilton)

Dare to Struggle /Dare to Win

Black Panther Party Commemoration Committee NY

blkpanthercommemcomite@gmail.com

Help us in the campaign to free them. Donate: www.naabpp.org



15th Annual Black Panther Party Film Festival!



Save the Dates
September 28, 29, and 30 and October 6&7, 2023
MAYSLES CINEMA 343 Malcolm X Blvd Harlem NY

Remembering our Political Prisoners The purpose our festival is to give a true education of the 60's, the Black Panther Party that was destroyed by COINTELPRO and our Political Prisoners who have been held captive in US prisons for decades, some in solitary confinement for 25 years and more, because of COINTELPRO. Proceeds from our festivals are used for commissary for our Political Prisoners and aid to their families when needed



Produced by the Black Panther Commemoration Committee, NY
in conjunction with Maysles Cinema

411: blkpanthercommemcomite@gmail.com

Your generous tax-deductible contribution will help

www.naabpp.org

"The story of the Panther cannot be told truthfully as long as it is told by the Oppressor"

Contributors

JIHAD ABDULMUMIT is former Black Panther/Black Liberation Army political prisoner held in the federal system for 23 years. He is presently the National Chairperson for the Jericho Movement (www.thejerichomovement.com); a representative of the Jamaat of the Shehu Uthman dan Fodio; and sits on the Coordinating Committee of the Spirit of Mandela's 2021 International Tribunal which successfully charged the United States government and its States with the crime of genocide against Black, Brown, and Indigenous people (www.spiritofmandela.org). Jihad is a playwright and has written and produced dozens of original plays. He is also an adjunct professor in the African American Studies Department at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond. Jihad is married to Magdalene Moonsamy, a jurist and human rights and criminal defense attorney in South Africa. Finally, he works as a Senior Community Case Manager at Health Brigade, a community health clinic (www.healthbrigade.org), servicing the needs of HIV positive individuals being released from incarceration. He has a master's in business and a minor in Public Health.

MUMIA ABU-JAMAL Please see the Political Prisoners Section, page 142.

EDDIE AFRICA On the Move! This is Eddie Africa. I came to MOVE in 1972. I was a street person at the time trying to find some meaning to my life, in and out of jail, on drugs. Then I was introduced to MOVE. At first I resisted cause I didn't wanna believe anyone had the solution to all my problems, but JOHN AFRICA does and I have committed myself to JOHN AFRICA ever since. On the Move! Long Live JOHN AFRICA!!!
Eddie Africa, Minister of Defense for the Move Organization.

JANET AFRICA On the Move! I'm Janet Africa. I've been in MOVE following the teaching of JOHN AFRICA, fighting this system for 50 years and am one of the MOVE 9, unjustly imprisoned for 41 years. The city of Philadelphia dropped a bomb and murdered 11 of our family members and many animals on May 13, 1985. I have committed myself to this cause and will keep fighting for ALL of life. I will never let the lives of our family members be in vain or ever be forgotten.

JANINE PHILLIPS AFRICA On the Move! This is Janine Africa, one of the MOVE 9 released in 2019. I joined MOVE because of the strength I saw in MOVE women; I wanted to be like them! I came to MOVE in 1976 and, since living JOHN AFRICA's teaching, I am now a strong MOVE woman too! JOHN AFRICA's teaching has sustained me through all the treachery this system has done to try to break MOVE! This system will never break MOVE! I am a committed MOVE member and I will always be committed to JOHN AFRICA! LONG LIVE JOHN AFRICA FOREVER!

MIKE AFRICA, JR. is a member of The MOVE Organization, and the Black Philly Radical Collective. He is a motivational resilience speaker who pushes his "Never Give Up" message with his dynamic stage performances mixing music in his orations. Mike is the focus of the feature-length documentary, "40 Years A Prisoner," directed by Tommy Oliver which chronicles four decades of his life fighting, successfully, for the release of both of his parents from prison.

RAMONA AFRICA On the Move! This is Ramona Africa, Minister of Communication for JOHN AFRICA'S MOVE OR-

GANIZATION and sole survivor of the May 13, 1985 bombing. I planned to become a lawyer until I saw the MOVE 9 represent themselves in court when I attended the federal trial known as JOHN AFRICA vs. the system. Despite the desperation of this system to convict JOHN AFRICA, he walked out of that federal courtroom acquitted of all charges. Needless to say, between the August 8 trial and the federal trial, I decided not to become a lawyer. Instead, JOHN AFRICA pulled me into his revolutionary family. I've been in JOHN AFRICA'S revolutionary family ever since 1979, and will always and forever be part of JOHN AFRICA'S revolutionary family.

VERONZA BOWERS Please see the Political Prisoners Section, page 145.

WARD CHURCHILL was a member of the Leadership Council of Colorado AIM from 1980-2009 and a national spokesperson for the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee during the mid-90s. The author or editor of more than 20 books and well over a hundred articles, he was professor of American Indian Studies and chair of the Department of Ethnic Studies at the University of Colorado/Boulder until his retirement in 2007.

PAULETTE DAUTEUIL-ROBIDEAU I have been involved in revolutionary politics since the mid-'60s. I was a member of Venceremos Brigade from Chicago in 1976 and an organizer of the Prairie Fire Organizing Committee chapter in Los Angeles, Calif., (1976-1979). I became part of the International Leonard Peltier Defense Committee (ILPDC) in L.A. and, with Robert Robideau, organized the Los Angeles defense trial of Leonard Peltier after his escape from Lompoc Federal Prison, 1979. We

put together three defense houses and raised enough money to feed all the Native People and activists, who participated during his trial. In 1990-1993, I was the Office Manager & Editor of the "In the Spirit of Crazy Horse" newspaper at the International Leonard Peltier Defense Committee in Lawrence, KS, and Director of ILPDC in Fargo, ND and Tampa, FL, from 2017-2020.

I am a member of the Plaid Dragon Collective (1985 - present). I am also the former Co-Chair (2010-2012), former National Secretary (2012-2014) and now serve on the Advisory Board of the Jericho Movement for Amnesty for Political Prisoners (PP) and POWs. I have worked within the Jericho Movement since its founding in 1998. Part of my responsibilities included visiting our prisoners and I have been cleared for visitation in Federal Prisons and New York and Nebraska state prisons. Doing international work for Jericho since 2000, I have spoken for my comrades at international conferences: in the Basque Country in 2004, KALERA-Political Prisoners in the XXI Century International Conference of Solidarity; and at Symposiums Against Isolation and Torture regarding U.S. political prisoners in Paris, London, The Netherlands, and Beirut, Lebanon in 2015. In 2017, Jihad Abdulmumit and I represented Jericho at an International Abolitionist Conference in the Basque Country.

As a high school teacher, I received my Master's Degree from The New School in New York City. I worked as a Paralegal for many of Leonard Peltier's and other political prisoners' lawyers.

I am committed to help bring about revolutionary change through social, political and cultural work in the people's struggles for a new and better world for ourselves and future generations throughout the world.

SUSIE DAY writes about prison, policing, and political activism, a career that

commenced the day she interviewed Laura Whitehorn, along with the rest of Laura's "Capitol Bomber" defendants, in the DC Jail in 1988. Her book, *Snide-lines: Talking Trash to Power*, a collection of mostly political satire, was published by Abingdon Square in 2014. *The Brother You Choose*, her book about the lives and friendship of Paul Coates and Eddie Conway, was published by Haymarket in 2020.

EMORY DOUGLAS (born May 24, 1943) is an American graphic artist. He was a member of the Black Panther Party from 1967 until the Party disbanded in the 1980s. As a revolutionary artist and the Minister of Culture for the Black Panther Party, Douglas created iconography to represent black-American oppression.

Douglas became the Revolutionary Artist and Minister of Culture for the BPP in 1967. He redesigned *The Black Panther* and switched it to web press, which allowed for colored printing and graphics. Here, Douglas developed iconic images that branded the BPP: the depiction of policemen as bloodied or hanged pigs, as protest against police brutality of African Americans, and imagery in line with the Party's 10-Point program. Douglas illustrated BPP's social services and decent housing. In addition, Douglas aligned the BPP with "Third World liberation struggles" and anti-capitalist movements in the edition of January 3, 1970, which shows an impaled pig dressed in an American flag with guns pointed at it, saying things like "Get out of the ghetto" and "Get out of Africa". In 1970, the BPP shifted their stance to emphasize survival programs as opposed to violence. With that, Douglas's imagery changed as well, showing African Americans receiving free food and clothes. They promoted free breakfast programs, free health clinics, free legal aid, amongst other things. These programs were considered part of their revolutionary tactic. In response, the

FBI cracked down on the cause even more, until it inevitably brought it to an end in 1982. However, their ideology is still alive today.

In 2007, the *San Francisco Chronicle* reporter, Jessica Werner Zack, wrote that "he branded the militant-chic Panther image decades before the concept became commonplace. He used the newspaper's popularity (circulation neared 400,000 at its peak in 1970) to incite the disenfranchised to action, portraying the poor with genuine empathy, not as victims but as outraged, unapologetic and ready for a fight." In addition to the paper, Douglas designed postcards, event flyers, and posters that were meant as recruitment tactics as well as a method of spreading the BPP ideology and creating the impression that there was mass support of the cause. Douglas recalled, "After a while it flashed on me that you have to draw in a way that even a child can understand to reach your broadest audience without losing the substance or insight of what is represented."

BILL DUNNE Please see the Political Prisoners Section, page 149.

MIA FEROLETO has used her spiritual life as a means to guide her work since childhood. Even in grammar school, Feroletto wrote letters to the editors of the local newspapers on key topics such as poverty and animal abuse that were published. Her lifelong commitment is to be part of the solution. She has been known to ruffle a few feathers in the process.

Feroletto is a well-known art advisor, activist and artist who divides her time between Vermont and South Dakota. She was the creator of A SHELTER FROM THE STORM: ARTISTS FOR THE HOMELESS OF NEW YORK and ARTWALK NY, an annual event for Coalition for the Homeless that has been copied all around the country since beginning in 1995. Feroletto has organized numerous

benefit auctions and large-scale special events at major auction houses such as Sotheby's and Christie's and has served on the board of directors of such organizations as Dance Theater Workshop and Sculpture Center. She most recently joined the board of directors of the Tatanka Ska Institute, the Indigenous school being founded by Paula Looking Horse, wife of Chief Arvol Looking Horse, the keeper of the sacred White Buffalo Calf Woman Pipe. She is the publisher of *New Observations Magazine*, the producer/creator of HEMP NY CITY, a partner in the founding of the Thunderheart Center for the Arts in Wasta, South Dakota and the creator and producer of the Consciousness and Contact conferences that have received world-wide recognition. She is the host of the *New Observations* podcast on Unknown Country, the channel for all things Whitley Strieber.

Feroletto is a committed animal rights and animal welfare activist. She is determined to maximize visibility for the arts and our cultural world and is currently developing the Adopt An Artist Program to send artists to destinations around the globe in order to create and develop their art. She can be reached at mia.feroletto@gmail.com.

LENNY FOSTER DINÉ Lenny grew up in Fort Defiance, Arizona, with his mother and his father, a Navajo code talker during World War II. Lenny attended an Indian school as a day student and lived with his grandparents on a traditional Navajo sheep camp over the summers. After trying out unsuccessfully for the Los Angeles Dodgers' farm team, Lenny went to Arizona Western Junior College and then to Colorado State University. In college, he had his first exposure to the civil rights movement. "People were talking about riots in Detroit and Malcolm X and Martin Luther King," Lenny says, "and I was wondering—where do I fit in?" Lenny joined the American Indian Movement.

In 1970, he was involved in the occupation of Alcatraz and, in 1972, in the Trail of Broken Treaties Caravan and the Bureau of Indian Affairs take-over in Washington, D.C. He took part in the 71-day protest at Wounded Knee in 1973. In 1978, he participated in the Longest Walk, a seven-month journey from Alcatraz to Washington, D.C., to protest proposed legislation that would eliminate the federal government's fiduciary responsibilities to American Indian nations.

Recognizing the importance of traditional Native American religious practice as a source of strength and a necessary means of cultural preservation, Lenny has spent the last 30+ years fighting to ensure that incarcerated Native Americans have the right to worship with access to their traditional ceremonies. In 1983, the Navajo Nation tribal government began to support his efforts to provide spiritual counsel to incarcerated Native Americans. As the Spiritual Advisor and Director of the Navajo Nations Corrections Project, he was responsible for the traditional spiritual guidance of 1500 inmates in 89 state and federal penitentiaries. "Many prison administrators don't want Indian people to succeed. They are threatened by the return to spiritual beliefs and want to deny Indians the right to rehabilitate themselves through spirituality," he says. He is troubled by the high rate of suicide among Native American prisoners, especially juveniles. "We've been made to feel ashamed—our long hair has been cut, our sweat lodges have been bulldozed, our eagle feathers have been broken—this results in so much pain and anger."

Lenny has authored and co-authored legislation protecting the rights of incarcerated Native Americans in four states in the Southwest. He has testified before the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs on several occasions. He has been a board member of the International Indian Treaty Council

since 1992. In January 1998, Lenny's testimony on the overlooked rights of American Indian prisoners was accepted by the United Nations Human Rights Commission. Later that same month, the Association of State Correctional Administrators accepted his proposal to develop standards for American Indian religious freedom within all correctional facilities.

A member of the Grand Council of AIM since 1992, a member of the Native American Church and an active Sundancer, Lenny is concerned that today's American Indian youth are less exposed to the traditions that gave him strength. "The responsibility we have as Indian people to teach our children and youths is great—alcoholism, drugs, broken homes are everywhere—you don't have the role models my generation had." By offering those most in need of support, the kind of spiritual guidance he had as a boy, Lenny Foster shoulders his responsibility to pass on tradition and, in so doing, to pass on strength.

LARRY GIDDINGS On October 14, 1979, Larry Giddings anti-authoritarian prisoner was wounded and captured, during the liberation of a comrade from a Seattle jail. Larry was convicted of aiding an escape, the shooting of a police officer, conspiracy, and bank robberies (to garner funds for clandestine activities). Imprisonment didn't stop Larry from making important contributions to the anarchist/ anti-authoritarian movement. Supplementing this activism, while in Leavenworth Federal Prison Larry completed BA degrees in Sociology and Psychology with the University of Kansas. After serving 25 years Larry was paroled in 2004, and lives and struggles in the Pacific Northwest.

DAVID GILBERT became active during the Civil Rights Movement in 1960, and later organized against the war in Vietnam, going on to be a lifelong anti-imperialist. In 1981, working in solidarity

with the Black Liberation Army, David and others were captured after an effort to take funds from a Brinks truck went terribly awry. David was released from prison in 2021.

CHRIS HEDGES is a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist who was a foreign correspondent and bureau chief in the Middle East and the Balkans for fifteen years for *The New York Times*. He previously worked overseas for *The Dallas Morning News*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, and NPR. He is host of the Emmy Award-nominated RT America show *On Contact*. Hedges, who holds a Master of Divinity from Harvard University, is the author of numerous books, and was a National Book Critics Circle finalist for *War Is a Force That Gives Us Meaning*. He has taught at Columbia University, New York University, Princeton University, and the University of Toronto. He has taught college credit courses through Rutgers University in the New Jersey prison system since 2013.

JOKA HESHIMA JINSAI is a New Afrikan Revolutionary Nationalist, Conscious Citizen of the Provisional Government of the Republic of New Afrika, Artist, Martial Artist and Poet. He was illegally housed in the Security Housing Unit (SHU) for 20 years for his political beliefs as a New Afrikan Revolutionary Nationalist in the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. Elder Joka has served 30 years in prison where he has authored numerous books that can be found on Amazon, has art that can be found online, and wrote various articles for San Francisco Bay View National Black Newspaper. He founded organizations geared towards changing the condition of New Afrikan People, one being AIM (Autonomous Infrastructure Mission) and another, Amend The 13th. Elder Joka fights for the release of fellow New Afrikan Political Prisoners.

Joka Heshima Jinsai (Shannon Lemar Denham), J38283, Kern Valley State Prison (KVSP), B-2-128L, P.O. Box 5102, Delano, CA 93216

Brothers Abdul Olugbala Shakur and Joka Heshima Jinsai are both in the 60-65 age group and have each served at least 20 years incarcerated. The Brothers continue to create programs for New Afrikan People while inside the penal system. (Article/co-author: Petition for Institutional-Restitution)

KEVIN "RASHID" JOHNSON (born October 3, 1971 in Richmond, Virginia) is a revolutionary, writer, artist, social activist, founding member of the New Afrikan Black Panther Party, founding member of the Revolutionary Intercommunal Black Panther Party (which split from the NABPP in December 2020), member of the Incarcerated Workers Organizing Committee, and prisoner in the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction. Johnson was convicted of murder in 1990, and sentenced to life in prison. He maintains that he is innocent and was wrongfully convicted.

TEKLA ALI (JOHNSON) AKA Agbala Nwany Ocho Aziokwu, was born in Omaha, Nebraska, birth place of (El Hajj Malik El Shabazz) Malcolm X; and the "Omaha Two" Ed Poindexter and Mondo Wopashitwe Eyen We Langa (AKA David Rice). In 1970, Ed and Mondo were (respectively) Deputy Director and Minister of Information of Omaha's Black Panther Party Chapter (AKA the NCCF). These local leaders of the BPP were framed for the death of an Omaha police officer and sentenced to life in prison through the corrupt government program COINTELPRO. Their case would shape Tekla's life towards resistance. She served as the Chair of the Calvin Memorial Legal Defense Fund (1983-85); as a member of the Omaha Justice Committee (1988-95), as Co-Chair of the Lincoln

Justice Committee, and or as a member, (1995-2000) (1995-2000), and was founding member of Nebraskans for Justice in 2000. In 1997, she became affiliated with the Jericho Movement and helped to send a Lincoln Justice Committee representative to the Jericho 98 March in Washington, DC. That year Baba Herman Ferguson appointed Tekla Regional Co-Chair of Jericho for the Midwest Region. She left political organizing for graduate school in 2003, earning a Ph.D. in History and African American Studies in 2005, and a MLIS with a specialty in Archiving in 2015. After graduation, she had the honor of hosting the National Jericho Movement in Nebraska, facilitating a visit by Jericho's National Committee with Mondo and Ed at the Nebraska State Prison. From 2014-16 Tekla served as Co-Chair of the National Jericho Movement, and in 2018-19 she served as a founding member of the Advisory Board for Jericho. Tekla served as lead researcher on the Academic Committee in the study phase of the Spirit of Mandela "We Charge Genocide" Tribunal. She currently serves as acting secretary of the Black Power Archive Collective and is a member of NCBS, and the Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations, Women Against Genocide, the Union County Community Remembrance Project, and other organizations. She published *Free Radical: Ernest Chambers Black Power and the Politics of Race* (2013), and has two forthcoming works: *Forgotten Comrades: The Omaha Two* (with Charles E. Jones), and *African American* (Urban) Removal.

JENIPHER JONES ESQ. is a civil movement and human rights attorney. Jenipher is a Partner at A People's Law Firm, LLC, a movement law firm based in Denver, Boulder, and South Dakota. She is also the Assistant Director for Community Initiatives at the Animal Activist Legal Defense Project (AALDP)

at the Stur姆 College of Law. Jenipher began her career in the New Orleans office of the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) and the New Orleans Office of the Independent Police Monitor. Her work challenging the system of mass incarceration has resulted in binding affirmative federal law regarding the constitutional rights of prisoners in the U.S. Jenipher litigates complex civil litigation cases involving the rights of political prisoners and incarcerated activists. Jenipher also Chairs the National Lawyers Guild Mass Defense Committee, helps to lead the NLG's Mass Incarceration Committee, and has been recognized as one of Denver's 2023 40 Under 40 young professionals. Jenipher R. Jones, Esq. (She/Her/Hers) Partner, Director of Litigation, Strategy, and Advocacy O'Connor Jones: A People's Law Office, LLC Tel.: 720.380.4408 (Direct) Email: jenipherj@dolawllc.com Denver Office: 110 16th Street, Suite 1400 # 1001

ERIC KING Please see the Political Prisoners Section, page 154.

ROBERT HILLARY KING (born May 30, 1942), also known as Robert King Wilkerson, is an American known as one of the Angola Three, former prisoners who were held at Louisiana State Penitentiary in solitary confinement for decades after being convicted in 1973 of prison murders. Initially held at Angola after being convicted of armed robbery, King served a total of 32 years there, 29 of them in solitary. His conviction was overturned on appeal in 2001, and a new trial was ordered. The state indicted him again and he accepted a plea deal for lower charges, in exchange for time served, rather than go through another trial. He was released in 2001. King has consistently maintained his innocence in the prison murder. He was among the co-founders of the Angola chapter of the

Black Panther Party. With Albert Woodfox and the late Herman Wallace, also former Black Panthers, he is known as one of the Angola 3, men who were held for decades in solitary confinement at Angola. With the death of Woodfox in August 2022, King is also the last surviving member of the Angola 3.

"KNUCKLES" One of 23 people arrested on March 5, 2023 and facing Domestic Terrorism charges in Georgia, in connection with protest activities to defend a forest in Atlanta.

DORAN LARSON teaches courses in prison writing, witness literatures, the history of the novel, and other subjects. He taught a creative writing course inside Attica state prison from 2006 to 2016. He has also organized two college programs inside New York State prisons. Larson's essays on prison issues have been published in College Literature, Radical Teacher, English Language Notes, The Chronicle of Higher Education, The Atlantic Monthly (online), and The Washington Post, among other venues. He is the editor of two volumes: *The Beautiful Prison*, a special issue of the legal-studies journal, *Studies in Law, Politics, and Society*; and *Fourth City: Essays from the Prison in America*. His book, *Witness in the Era of Mass Incarceration*, appeared in 2017; his current book project will appear with NYU Press. He has also published criticism on Herman Melville, Theodore Dreiser, Henry James, popular film, as well as two novels, a novella, over a dozen short stories.

ben lewis An Alabama bred, cornbread fed, black liberation organizing led; prison abolitionist whose purpose has been to bring healing to the community through localized sustenance. Beginning with his creative designs in art and music, ben has moved hearts and minds with his wisdom and reverence. ben is currently homesteaded in

coronado, phoenix with his expecting wife Chelsea. We look forward to seeing more of how ben and his organizing family bring change to the systemic challenges facing all of humanity.

RAY LUC LEVASSEUR b. 1946 Working class, Quebecois blood.

Labor history: Farm worker, construction laborer, forklift operator, tannery worker, janitor, soldier, logger, factory worker, plumber, carpenter, et al. Political activism: Southern Student Organizing Committee, Vietnam Veterans Against the Way, SCAR/Red Star North bookstore, Maine Prisoner Advocacy Coalition, Jericho, et al.

Underground resistance: 1974-1984 Imprisoned: 1969-1971, 1984-2004

TOM MANNING 6/1946-7/2019

Class war prisoner, freedom fighter, man of the people, man for the people, long held political prisoner Thomas William Manning died on July 30 of a heart issue at the federal penitentiary in Hazelton, Kentucky. Tom—Tommy to his many comrades, family friends, people who knew him—was a lifelong revolutionary freedom fighter. From the early '70s, Tom was a public activist and organizer and later a quite successful armed militant in the anti-imperialist underground. Captured in 1985, he and some of his comrades became known as the Ohio 7-UFF (United Freedom Front) defendants. Tom has risen beyond the gulag's attempt to strip his humanity. You can feel the dignity and spirit of resistance in his paintings. He is one of those carrying heavy burdens, be they the 'sans-culottes' of the world, a Haitian health care provider, or a victim of police bullets. Tom published his artwork in *For Love and Liberty: Artist Tom Manning: Freedom Fighter, Political Prisoner*

FROM MANY OF HIS COMRADES "UP THE REBELS!"

MARIUS MASON Please see the Political Prisoners Section, page 156.

DR JAMES C. MCINTOSH is the host of the radio program Mind Field on Radio WBAI 99.5 FM. He currently serves as the Surgeon General of the UNIA-ACL, the organization formed by the Honorable Marcus Garvey. He also serves as Chairman of BEPAA, The Board for the Education of People of African Ancestry, and Co Chair of CEMOTAP, Committee to Eliminate Media Offensive to African People. He retired as a Physician after a 40 year career in Public Psychiatry. He is a graduate of New Jersey Medical School, now known as Rutgers Medical School. He completed 3 years of Residency at Columbia Psychiatry Program at Harlem Hospital and 1 year of joint Residency and Fellowship at Montefiore Hospital of Einstein Medical School with a clinical assignment at Rikers Island. He is the former President of CIR the Committee of Interns and Residents, the nations largest union of salaried Physicians. He has received numerous awards including the Health Activist of the Year Award from Family and Friends of Dr. Mutulu Shakur and the Imhotep Physician Award from UNIA ACL.

DR JOEL RENÉ MORRISSEY was raised overseas by a Canadian public health nurse and American Foreign Service Officer. He completed training in Internal, Emergency, and Dive medicine at Charity Hospital, New Orleans. He has worked exclusively in public hospitals in Houma, Louisiana; western Newfoundland; Seattle, Washington; Richmond, Virginia; and now in Gainesville, Florida. When he has the chance, he enjoys reading the New Yorker and rattling around in his antique postal jeep.

JALIL A. MUNTAQIM was released from prison to parole on October 6, 2020, after being confined for almost 5 decades. Jalil is a veteran member of the Black Panther Party and the Black Liberation Army, the co-founder (along with deceased Comrade Sister Safiya

Bukhari (d. 2003) and Baba Herman Ferguson, (d. 2014) of the National Jericho Movement to Free All Political Prisoners. Founding Jericho in 1998 was just one of Jalil's many significant achievements. During his time in prison, Jalil received certifications in Office Management and Architectural Drafting, and college degrees of Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and Bachelor of Science in Psychology. He mentored other prisoners and resolved numerous prison beefs. He stood by his principles and maintained the highest level of discipline, integrity and self-respect and respect for others. Jalil's activism never ceased and is unquestionable. He has consistently provided movement leadership and guidance under the worst of conditions behind concrete and steel bars. Jalil is the author of "We Are Our Own Liberators," "Escaping the Prism - Fade to Black," and his essays have been published in several books, magazines and newspapers.

Jalil continues in human rights activism and movement building in the fight for the release of the remaining national liberation and civil rights era Political Prisoners (www.thejerichomovement.com) While in prison Jalil called for the establishment of the "In the Spirit of Mandela Coalition" (www.spiritofmandela.org), a major historic initiative which convened the International Tribunal and Jurists, and on October 25th, 2021, found the U.S. corporate government guilty of five charges of Genocide against Black, Brown, and Indigenous peoples. The struggle continues!

EFIA NWANGAZA, ESQ., is a SNCC Veteran, Civil/Human Rights Attorney, Scholar-Activist, Talk Show Host, and Author. Mama Efia is the Founder/CEO of the Malcolm X Center for Self Determination (MXC) and WMXP Community Radio. She is a founder of the National Malcolm X Grassroots Movement for Self Determination (MXGM) and the National Coalition

of Blacks for Reparations in America (N'COBRA). She succeeded National Jericho co-founder, Republic of New Africa Vice-President, and former political prisoner Safiya Bukhari as national co-chair. Mama Efia designed and implemented the first United Nations campaign for U.S. Political Prisoners/POWs/Exiles, "Putting Incarcerated U.S. COINTELPRO/Civil Rights Era Political Activists on the Global Human Rights Agenda," 2010 - 2016. She delivered a powerful series of well received and officially adopted United Nations treaty review stakeholder reports; Universal Periodic Review (UPR) 2010 and 2014, Convention for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and Convention Against Torture, Cruel, and Inhumane Treatment (CAT).

Mama Efia continues UN treaty review, report preparation, and human rights training and advocacy. She provides direct and technical support to the Black Belt Human Rights Coalition (BBHRC) and Imam Jamil Action Network (IJAN). CONTACT: Efia Nwangaza, Esquire mxcentergv@gmail.com

SEKOU ODINGA was a member of Malcolm X's Organization of Afro-American Unity, a founding member of the New York chapter of the Black Panther Party as well as the Black Panther International Section, and was a member of the NY Panther 21. A citizen of the Republic of New Afrika and combatant of the Black Liberation Army, Sekou was captured in October 1981, mercilessly tortured, and spent the following thirty-three years behind bars—a prisoner of war and political prisoner of the U.S. empire. Since his release in November 2014, he has remained a stalwart fighter for justice and for the release of all political prisoners.

DR. WINSTON "KOKAYI" PATTERSON is a Native Washingtonian; he has a daughter, two sons, three grandsons and a granddaughter. Dr. Patterson attended D.C. Public Schools at Charles Young Elementary in N.E., John Phillip Sousa Jr. High in S.E. and Eastern High School in N.E. Washington, D.C. He completed U.D.C.'s Adult Education/College Prep program and went on to several local colleges and institutions becoming certified in many areas and subjects involving health. He chose the Wholistic lifestyle in 1972, became a Vegetarian, Martial Artist, and Physical Trainer to live a healthy and long life. Dr. Patterson decided to show others how to develop a Wholistic lifestyle and live healthier. Dr. Patterson is a registered Naturopathic and a Certified ADS, practicing the Art of Acupuncture Detox since 1978 and was one of the first Certified Addictions Counselors (C.A.C.) in the D.C. Metropolitan Area. Now a CACII (Supervisory Level) and a Consultant for many CBOs, Public Schools, Wholistic Health Organizations and Treatment Centers, etc., he currently Teaches, Trains, and Certifies Acupuncture Detox Specialists. He is also a Trainer for TACS (Training and Consultant Services, Inc.), which trains and Certifies future Counselors wanting to help in the field of Addictions. Dr. Patterson Specializes his training in the Wholistic Approach to Addictions and Behavioral Health and Treatment, Anger Management/Conflict Resolution, HIV/AIDS, a Special Youth Wholistic Health Rights of Passage and Developing a Wholistic Healthy Lifestyle. Dr. Patterson provided Community Service for 37 years at RAP Inc., the oldest residential drug treatment facility in D.C., providing Counseling, Education, Management, and responsible for Training of staff, Management/counselors and clients. He has worked in and provided training in Outpatient Treatment, Residential

Treatment, Medical models, Women's Tx Facility, Men's Tx Facility, Faith Based models, Youth Centers, D.C. Public Schools, Local Penitentiary, Wholistic Health Treatment models, Halfway Houses, Detention Centers, Private Retreat Centers, and Treatment Resorts.

In 1985 Dr. Kokayi Patterson Founded AWAHA Inc., The African Wholistic Health Association whose Mission is to Educate, Train and Promote Wholistic Health Philosophies, Concepts, Treatment, Programs, and Services to the Community, and to-date has served thousands of D.C. and local residents. Dr. Patterson was nominated and appointed by Mayor Anthony Williams to the Washington, DC, HIV/AIDS Community Planning Committee, serving a 3-year term and responsible for the planning and distribution of HIV/AIDS Services for D.C. and Training those responsible for implementation. He currently holds a position on the D.C. Citywide HIV/AIDS Planning Committee.

Dr. Patterson currently teaches a course entitled, Wholistic Health: A Community Perspective and Acupuncture Detox for Health/Social/Behavioral issues, Drug Ed./Prevention at several local schools, group homes, programs and organizations, locally and Nationally and provides Training on a number of topics. 240-744-2256 or Email at Wpkokayi1@yahoo.com

PHILLY ABC COLLECTIVE

LEONARD PELTIER Please see the Political Prisoners Section, page 161.

RALPH POYNTER 1070 Dean St. 1st FLR/ Brooklyn, NYC 11216 ralph.poynter@gmail.com -917 853 9759

"I am Ralph Poynter and many of you know me as the fiery and uncompromising leader of the

successful Free Lynne Stewart campaign. After organizing thousands in her support, we won and now I am back to fighting what I consider our other most important struggles. None is more important than having a progressive media outlet like WBAI. Born in Western Pennsylvania I am one of six children of a union organizer when Pittsburgh was the steel capital of the world. I arrived in New York City in 1962 and began teaching elementary school in Harlem.

I became a loyal and progressive member of the UFT remaining true to the principles of unionism. When the UFT joined management by supporting the racist central New York City Board of Education against the legitimate demands and struggle of Black communities, I founded Teachers' Freedom Party and became a leader in the struggle for Community Control of schools. My political activism spans over 60 years and was always focused on the improvement of Black public education. During the late sixties and seventies my leadership was able to place the first Black and Puerto Rican principals in the NYC system. In order to accomplish this and other reforms which are still present today, I had no choice but to confront the Army of Occupation (NYPD) who were placed to protect the tremendous financial and ideological control of the schools. Acting in self defense and always in defense of my community I naturally was convicted and served time in Rikers Island. While there I organized my fellow prisoners and we took over the jail (one of the first successful prison rebellions) and wrested concessions from the administration.

After returning home in 1969 I was no longer, as a convicted person, allowed to teach. I worked in a Drug Free Therapeutic community and then opened my own business -- a motorcycle shop on Avenue B and later in the West Village.

I had seven kids (now complimented by 12 grandchildren) and I mostly worked to keep us going but we was always ready to answer the call of a righteous cause. As the years passed I became Lynne Stewart's investigator partner in her many cases. I was able to enhance her great talent as a fighter of the double standard injustice system by my ability to communicate with everyone on every level.

It was the Larry Davis case in the Bronx where we championed the right of self defense, that gave me great satisfaction. Now my primary focus is the political prisoners who are serving unconscionable sentences and whose sacrifices were responsible for the moderate advances in civil rights in the sixties.

I have formal education from my university studies on the master's degree level i.e. close to a Masters in Physics, as well as Music and have been a Professor of American Literature at Columbia Univ. I also am fortunate that I got an education by the people while running my local neighborhood businesses.

I have also been active in Black is Back Coalition, a national organization dedicated to the freedom of Africans and those of African descent everywhere. I also co-founded with Betty Davis, the New Abolitionist movement. Now I want to be able to use my strength and experience in an effort to save WBAI and to FREE ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS."

SUSHIL KRISHNA RAO is a self-led organizer of information, minds, and people. He grew up on unceded Lenape land, currently organizes across unceded Tohono O'odhom and modern Pee Posh, Apache, and Pima communities. Sushil is a weaver of words and a producer of experiences. Find him locally enjoying plant-based food at vegan haunts or planning and enjoying celebratory events centering

music, art and food. He works to resist the expansion and sustenance of violent state programs and towards a free future for land, animals and people.

RIGO 23 (born Ricardo Gouveia, 1966) is a Portuguese-born American muralist, painter, and political artist. He is known in the San Francisco community for having painted a number of large, graphic "sign" murals including: *One Tree* next to the U.S. Route 101 on-ramp at 10th and Bryant Street, *Innecity Home* on a large public housing structure, *Sky/Ground* on a tall abandoned building at 3rd and Mission Street, and *Extinct* over a Shell gas station. He resides in San Francisco, California.

OSCAR LÓPEZ RIVERA is the longest held Puerto Rican political prisoner in the history of Puerto Rico. After he served more than 35 years of his 70-year sentence for seditious conspiracy and related charges, and over 12 years in solitary, President Obama commuted his sentence in 2017 as the result of a broad, human rights based international campaign.

Living in Puerto Rico, he has continued his work on decolonization. He is working to establish Fundación OLR Libertá, to organize community organizations in marginalized, invisible and excluded communities in San Juan and Loíza, to self-actualize and to struggle for radical transformation of society.

SUSAN ROSENBERG is a human rights and prisoners rights advocate, adjunct lecturer, award-winning writer, speaker and a former prisoner. Her memoir, *An American Radical*, details her 16+ years in federal prison and her conclusions about her prison experience. She was released from prison in 2001 through executive clemency by then President Bill Clinton. Susan has worked in

nonprofit communications on human rights and in defense of prisoners and the abolition of prisons. She is a member of the Family and Friends of Dr. Mutulu Shakur, and involved in other political prisoner release efforts. She is an adjunct lecturer at Hunter College, in the Women and Gender studies Department. She has been on the board of directors of Thousand Currents, an international development organization and a former member of the Board of Ladies of Hope Ministries, a women and girls re-entry organization. She is on the board of advisors of Alliance for Families for Justice She is a member of the PEN prison writing committee at PEN America. She is a contributor to the revised edition of the PEN America Prisoners Writers Handbook. She lives in Brooklyn, New York and continues to write.

ABDUL OLUGBALA SHAKUR is a New Afrikan Revolutionary Nationalist, Conscious Citizen of the Provisional Government of the Republic of New Afrika, Black Panther Party Cub and former member of the youth faction of the Black Liberation Army. He was illegally housed in the Security Housing Unit for 32 plus years for his political beliefs as a New Afrikan Revolutionary Nationalist in the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. Elder Abdul has served 42 years in prison, where he has authored numerous books, that can be found on Amazon, Co-Founder of George Jackson University (GJU), wrote numerous articles in the San Francisco Bay View National Black Newspaper, and various zines published by ABC Zine Distro. He is a poet and fights for the release of fellow New Afrikan Political Prisoners. Abdul Olugbala Shakur (James Earl Harvey), C48884, Kern Valley State Prison (KVSP), B-2 128U, P.O. Box 5102, Delano, CA 93216 (Article/co-author: Petition for Institutional-Restitution)

KWAME “BEANS” SHAKUR I, Kwame “Beans” Shakur am a prisoner, Chairman and Co-Founder of the New Afrikan Liberation Collective (NALC), and National Director of the Prison Lives Matter Movement (PLM). I am being held captive at the New Castle Slave Camp in Indiana. I am serving a 110-year sentence for a crime I did not commit and have become politicized on the inside. My work is why I have been held in solitary confinement for 23-24 hours a day for the past six years. I have also pursued a music career in spite of my imprisonment. I fight daily for the self-determination of New Afrikan people and all those oppressed.
Kwame Shakur #14967
New Castle C.F.
1000 Van Nuys Rd. P.O. Box E
New Castle IN 47362

DR MUTULU SHAKUR (born Jeral Wayne Williams; August 8, 1950) is an American activist and former member of the Black Liberation Army, sentenced to sixty years in prison for his involvement in a 1981 robbery of a Brinks armored truck in which a guard and two police officers were killed. Shakur was politically active as a teen with the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM) and later the black separatist movement the Republic of New Afrika. He was the stepfather of slain actor and rap artist Tupac Shakur. Mutulu Shakur is a New Afrikan (Black) man whose primary work has been in the area of health. He is a doctor of acupuncture and was a co-founder and director of two institutions devoted to improving healthcare in the Black community. Mutulu was born on August 8, 1950, in Baltimore, Maryland. On November 10, 2022, the United States Parole Commission granted Shakur’s release on parole, effective December 16, 2022.

SHAKA SHAKUR Please see the Political Prisoners Section, page 165.

KEVIN SHARP ESQ. is Co-Vice Chairman of Sanford Heisler Sharp and Co-Chair of the firm’s Public Interest Litigation Group. Prior to joining the firm, Judge Sharp was nominated to the federal bench by President Barack Obama, confirmed unanimously by the Senate, and received his commission as a federal district court judge on May 3, 2011. Judge Sharp served on the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Tennessee from May 2011 to April 2017, including service from 2014 to 2017 as the court’s Chief Judge. Since serving on the federal bench, Judge Sharp has been involved in several projects related to criminal justice reform. In 2021, he helped secure Executive Clemency for Chris Young, a young man who Judge Sharp was required to sentence to life in prison due to draconian mandatory minimum sentencing laws. Judge Sharp is currently representing Leonard Peltier in his petition for Executive Clemency. Peltier is a 78-year-old Native American civil rights leader and activist who was wrongfully convicted of killing two FBI agents at Pine Ridge Reservation in 1975. In 2019 and 2020, Kevin also represented Tennessee death row inmate Nick Sutton’s request to the Governor to commute his death sentence to life in prison without parole. He is an Advisory Board member to the Tennessee Innocence Project and the Nashville, Tennessee Chapter of the American Constitution Society.

RUSSELL MAROON SHOATZ Please see the Ancestors page 140.

SHARON SHOATZ is the daughter of Russell “Maroon” Shoatz and is a retired NYC Educator, active member within the Panther Cubs, and an advocate for the release and freedom of all Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War.

LYNNE STEWART For much of her career as a lawyer, Lynne Stewart represented a number of economically

disadvantaged clients as well as more high-profile cases. Stewart was a self-described “movement lawyer” who took a wider interest in promoting the general political interests of those she represented, rather than only dealing with the specific charges against them. Stewart defended Weather Underground member David Gilbert, who was found guilty for his role in the 1981 Brinks armored car robbery in which two police officers and a security guard were murdered.

In 1991, Stewart was subpoenaed to explain alternative fee arrangements with a gang member whom she had been defending on a drug trafficking charge. Stewart refused the subpoena and eventually pleaded guilty to criminal contempt in the second degree, a misdemeanor charge that would not result in her disbarment.

Another high-profile client was former Black Panther member Willie Holder, who hijacked Western Airlines Flight 701 on June 2, 1972; he claimed to have a bomb and demanded the release of Angela Davis and \$500,000.

Along with William Kunstler, Stewart represented Larry Davis, who had been charged with the attempted murder of nine NYPD officers during a shootout, as well as the murder of four Bronx drug dealers. Stewart and Kunstler secured Davis an acquittal on the more serious murder and attempted murder charges, but Davis was found guilty on a lesser felony weapon possession charge. After the trial, Stewart ended her relationship with Kunstler, feeling marginalized by Kunstler hogging the publicity of the case and not giving her due credit. Even Davis believed that Stewart was more instrumental in his acquittal, stating that “everyone thinks Kunstler beat the case. Lynne Stewart beat the case.”

Stewart said that all her high-profile clients shared the distinction of being revolutionaries against unjust systems or were people whose cases expose

those injustices. However, unlike most movement lawyers who found communications with prosecuting attorneys to be repugnant, former assistant US Attorney Andrew C. McCarthy found Stewart to be “eminently reasonable and practical” and commented that “when she gave her word on something, she honored it—she never acted as if she thought one was at liberty to be false when dealing with the enemy.”

AKINYELE UMOJA is a scholar activist and founding member of the New Afrikan Peoples Organization and the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement. Affectionately known as “Baba AK,” Umoja is currently a Professor of African Studies at Georgia State University. He is the author of the award-winning book, *We Will Shoot Back: Armed Resistance and the Mississippi Freedom Movement* (New York University, 2013). Umoja has been an activist and organizer in the New Afrikan Independence Movement for well over five decades, primarily as an advocate for reparations, the freedom of political prisoners, and solidarity with people across the globe fighting for human rights and freedom from oppression.

SOPHIA VICTOR, 35, is a Brooklyn based visual artist who has dedicated her life’s work to exposing the stories and experiences of individuals who are striving to overcome the injustices they face both individually and collectively. By raising awareness of these individuals, she aims to humanize social justice issues and to prevent such experiences from being repeated in the future. Some of the individuals featured in her work include mothers who have lost their children to police brutality, both past and present, the Exonerated 5, and political prisoners from the Black Liberation Movement that are still incarcerated within the United States. Sophia holds a Bachelor’s degree in

fine arts from the School of Visual Arts and a Master’s degree in visual arts administration from New York University. Her work has recently been exhibited in Rush Arts Gallery and the Bronx Museum for the Arts, as well as the 2020 US Open. She is a recent participant of the Whitney Museum’s Independent Study program and a recent resident of the Bronx Museum of Art’s first residency program. She is a 2020 PAIR Artist fellow working with the Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice. She facilitates art workshops at Rikers Island through her company, I Am Wet Paint, and also became a member of the faculty of the Fine Art Department at the School of Visual Arts in 2020.

Also in 2020, Sophia was one of three artists selected to design the “Black Lives Matter” street mural for Foley Square in New York City. Throughout the spring and summer of 2020 her public art for the movement was featured in *Forbes Magazine*, on *New York 1* and on *ABC Nightline*. Sophia is currently in pursuit of a Master’s degree in art therapy from the School of Visual Arts.

LAURA WHITEHORN spent 14 years in federal prison for the “Resistance Conspiracy” case, which included armed actions against the U.S. Capitol after the invasion of Grenada and shelling of Beirut; the New York PBA (police benevolent association) after the murder of Black grandmother Eleanor Bumpurs; the offices of Israeli Aircraft Industries in solidarity with the Palestinian struggle; and the South African Consulate in NYC during the era of apartheid. Since her release, Laura has engaged in work to free political prisoners, including the Jericho Movement, the NY State Taskforce for Political Prisoners, the Northeast Political Prisoner Coalition, and other groups. She edited “The War Before,” by the late Black Panther political prisoner and organizer Safiya

Bukhari, and helped organize the 2014 exhibit, “Self-Determination Inside/Out” at Interference Archive in Brooklyn, showing how the struggles of incarcerated people from the Attica rebellion to the present have affected and led social movements on the outside, with an emphasis on the role of political prisoners. She worked for ten years as an editor at *POZ* magazine. With her late comrades Mujahid Farid and Kathy Boudin, Laura co-founded Release Aging People in Prison/RAPP (<https://rappcampaign.com/>), a grassroots abolitionist organization led by incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people and family members, dedicated to dismantling the racist structures of permanent punishment. She participated in a prison, labor, and academic delegation to Palestine, led by Dr. Rabab Abdulhadi, in 2016.

Lautsänger

Living Sound

The Lautsänger is a result of cymatics. After intensive research the artist and cymatics researcher Atmani found a way to transform audio speaker technology. In playback the live forces of speech and music become perceptible. In the Lautsänger Manufactory in Germany we build headphones and speakers with unique properties.

Euphony for body, soul and spirit

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Adopt an Artist Program

THE ADOPT AN ARTIST PROGRAM

Background

The Adopt an Artist Program is a new organization created and produced by Mia Feroletto, the originator of ARTWALK NY and other groundbreaking events in the New York City contemporary art world. Feroletto has now conceived of the creation of the Fresh Art Fund for artists. Creator of The Adopt An Artist Program, Mia Feroletto, was trained as a painter and holds an MA in lithography. She feels that her art education was the most important gift of her life in that it taught her to create from nothing each and every day. Whether it be working on a blank piece of canvas or envisioning a project such as ARTWALK NY, or The Adopt An Artist Program, the same principles apply in terms of combining the seeds of creativity with the practical needs of developing a project in the world. The Adopt An Artist Program re-configures the present-day art world and brings it home to the daily lives of all of us. It holds the possibility of supporting creativity in each and every one of us.

Objective

Stimulate creativity and create a catalyst for the growth of the art industry.

Strategy

Create a domestic and international exchange program for artists and the public.

For more information contact Mia Feroletto at mia.feroletto@gmail.com

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