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4strugglemag  
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Issue 20: Winter 2011/12

# 4STRUGGLEMAG

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



special twentieth issue retrospective

# Welcome to 4strugglemag

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

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

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

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

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

4strugglemag  
P.O. Box 97048  
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or via email to:  
jaanlaaman@gmail.com  
Jaan Laaman, editor  
anti-imperialist political prisoner

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**1 year solidarity subscription:** \$30  
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If you are one of our 500+ subscribers with a free prisoner subscription, one way to contribute is to **send us stamps**, which help off-set our huge mailing costs.

**Back issues**

Unfortunately, we lack the funds and resources to send back issues. You can print articles from our website, or have a friend do so, if you don't have internet access: 4strugglemag.org

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**Defying the Tomb**  
Selected Writings and Art of Kevin "Rashid" Johnson  
Featuring Exchanges with an Outlaw

**Defying the Tomb**  
Selected Prison Writings and Art of Kevin "Rashid" Johnson, Featuring Exchanges With an Outlaw  
ISBN 978-1-894946-39-1  
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This beautifully illustrated book includes a series of essays by Kevin "Rashid" Johnson, Minister of Defense of the New Afrikan Black Panther Party-Prison Chapter, as well as an intriguing and educational correspondence between Rashid and the revolutionary prisoner "Outlaw". Includes a foreword by Russell "Maroon" Shoats, introduction by Tom Big Warrior, and afterword by Sundiata Acoli.



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the re-biography of Harriet Tubman

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the re-biography of Harriet Tubman  
by Butch Lee  
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New Afrikan Revolutionary Writings  
by James Yaki Sayles

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New Afrikan Revolutionary Writings  
by James Yaki Sayles  
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\$20.00

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

# WWW.LEFTWINGBOOKS.NET



Oppression Is!!!

BY KAMAU TEBOGO ZULU DAMALI  
From Issue 11, Spring 2008

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

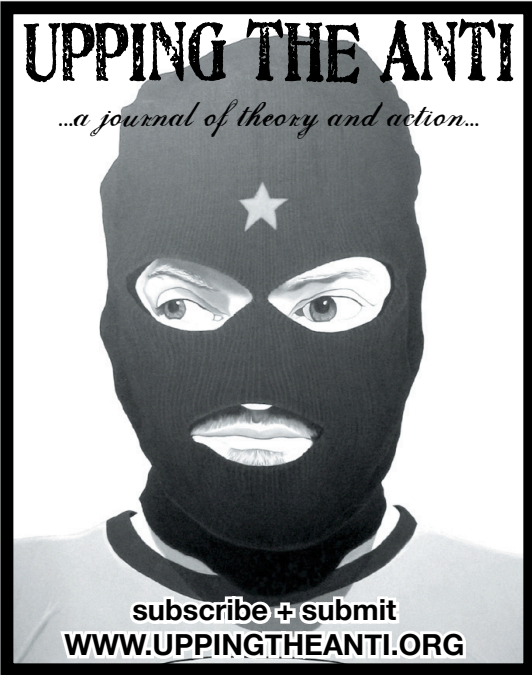
Oppression is the FBI and DEA who infest economically disadvantaged communities with drugs and guns to justify modern day slavery;

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

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

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

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



Cover image  
by Pete Yahnke,  
originally designed  
for the Critical Resistance  
10th anniversary portfolio

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# Introduction to Issue 20

Readers, fellow activists and revolutionaries, welcome to issue 20 (Winter, 2011-2012).

This issue is a little different. Most of it is a retrospective, a look back at some of the issues, information and dialogue 4sm has brought forward. We are reprinting select articles from issue 1 through 19. We also have a short reminder (with the name of the article, issue and page numbers), of some of the detailed and theoretical pieces, including entire booklets, 4sm has printed.

We think these writings have continuing value, especially for all the righteous activists and occupiers putting the issue of social and economic justice out loud and strong, to the country and the world. These longer pieces are worth checking out or checking out again.

We do have some new words, including material on the Occupy movement, an update of the struggle from Pelican Bay State Prison, and more.

This issue is coming to you about one month later than scheduled. When you read my words, “Death,” you will understand the delay.

Issue 21 will be coming out in March. Remember we welcome your ideas and insight — from prison cells to occupy sites and beyond — the Freedom Struggle is what 4strugglemag does.

RED Season’s Greetings, Kwanzaa Greetings, and positive and healthful New Year’s Greetings of struggle, to each and everyone of you! From 4sm and its People,

Jaan Laaman, editor

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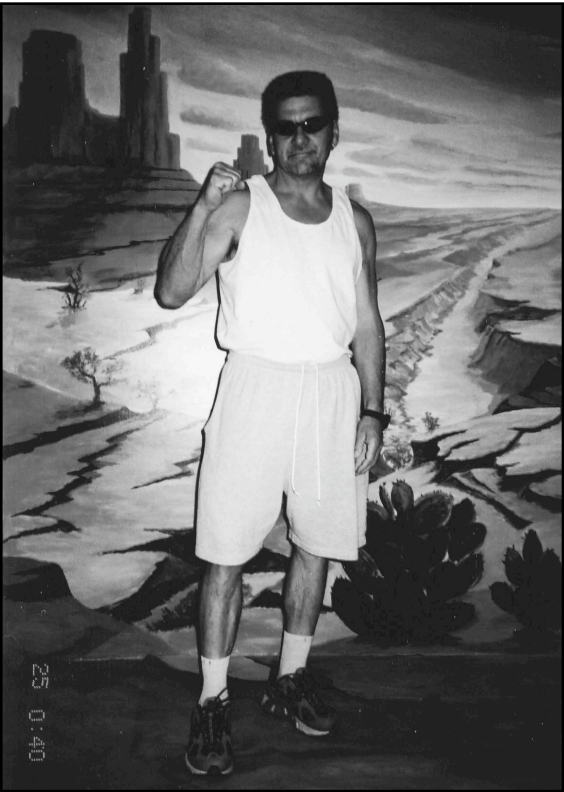
## Call for contributors

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

**Feature articles:** In-depth, analytical articles that critically examine a particular issue, historical occurrence, political idea, or current event.

**Book reviews:** Is there a book you’d like to review for 4strugglemag? Let us know.

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



## For the Martyr Marilyn Buck

BY RUSSELL MAROON SHOATS  
From Issue 17, Fall 2010

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!



## To Marilyn Buck

BY CHAIRMAN SHAKA ZULU, NABPP  
From Issue 17, Fall 2010

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

Marilyn Buck, oh Marilyn!

I heard you the other day on KPFA, all the way in New Jersey, as you left prison.

You said that we must continue our struggle to be free from capitalist imperialism, and that all oppressed people around the world deserve our support.

I was elated to hear you after 25 years in the belly of the beast sounding strong and determined.

I just cannot get over the fact that they somehow killed you by denying you medical attention early on.

Well, my Comrade, you are gone now, but how fitting to now be added to the list of freedom fighters that us young revolutionaries will honor every BLACK AUGUST.

What a fitting epitaph!

I must end this now before my tears stain the whole paper.

Love you Ms. Guerrilla. All Power to the People!



## Alternatives While Waiting: Self-Reliance

BY MARILYN BUCK  
From Issue 17, Fall 2010  
Originally written for Critical Resistance

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

A community's people, with their creative energy and labour, are the greatest resource it has, but an increasing number, mostly young, are MIA, in graves or prisons, into which so many rush obliviously when they act out Hollywood-constructed desires, images, and stereotypes to "make it" in the midst of still-white supremacist and hierarchical America.

Far too many have embraced the 30 years of culturally-contrived amnesia that has mis-educated them to believe in the very system that exiles them to the cages. Valuable human beings – community residents, who could have and should have been the teachers, nurses, doctors, mechanics, public servants, and builders of their communities are disappeared.

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

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

Alternatives? To re-imagine communities with the resources to educate children, to provide work with sufficient income, to get drugs and the weapons of collective suicide out, to make the streets safe again for children, elders and the young women and men. This is similar to the 10-point program the old Black Panther Party called for, a program that in slightly different manifestations is still understood world-wide as necessary for community and nations' health and well-being for peace and justice.

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

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

To be a builder, or to be a demolisher, those are the choices. It's easy to demolish, to destroy. You can be a one-man or a 100-man wrecking crew, but to build you have to become a bricklayer, willing to dig foundations, willing to take care of your neighbourhood and work with others. It means being humble and giving back because when you left you took a whole lot of human and community potential with you. It means learning what you need to know.

Find a teacher, no matter whether they wear your colours, are your colour, or are low on the ladder of that peculiar prison concept of "respect." (Prison culture doesn't really give any prisoner true respect, or better-said, dignity; the man is still pulling the strings.)

If you can't learn a skill you want where you are (like being a doctor or an environmental engineer), learn all you can about the world. Learn about other societies; learn about communities' fight for self-reliance and self-determination. Learn Spanish, or English, or Chinese. Or history. The more you study about the world, the better able you will be to see where you are and can go in the world. Choose to be on the side of the people who are not the greedy rulers and bosses.

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

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

## Death

BY JAAN LAAMAN

Readers will recall that from our earliest issues, 4sm has carried words and information on the deaths of political prisoners and noted revolutionary figures. Just last issue, we had words and remembrances of Geronimo Ji-Jaga. In issue 17, we had many thoughts and words on companera Lolita Lebron and sister Marilyn Buck. Back in issue 6, we spoke of and mourned the loss of my Ohio-7 comrade Richard Williams, as well as comandante Filiberto Ojeda Rios.

4sm has also had many words on the police shootings of young people, especially in Black, Latino and Native communities, and behind prison walls. We have also spoken about the ravages and deaths that drugs bring to our communities, especially to our youth.

Death in struggle, and in life under imperialism, echoes through the pages of 4strugglemag, as it does through our lives. I have left tears as I constructed words of remembrance, love and respect for our fallen warriors, my close comrades in particular. As revolutionaries and especially as political prisoners, we understand this reality. It's like Che said, "In revolution you win or you die." That is, until we win and usher in a new day of social and economic justice, equality, real freedom, hope and peace, we know there will be hardships we will have to endure and overcome, and some will fall before we see Liberation.

As a Turkish comrade said long ago, 'The point is not that you are in captivity, the point is not to surrender.' I feel confident saying that U.S. political prisoners carry it on in this manner. Being in captivity is our front or location for continuing the freedom struggle at this time, so we do just that.

All that said, all that done, allow me comrades, friends and readers, to inform you of the most horrific, devastating news and reality of my life. Thirty-nine days ago, early on Friday morning on October 21, 2011, my precious wonderful son, my heart, Rick, died. Rick Michael Emilio Curzi Laaman, od'ed by himself in his apartment kitchen in East Boston.

My son was 29 years old, almost 30. He was almost 3 when he was taken from my arms, a day long ago, on a November 4th. He was planning on traveling out here to Arizona to visit me, along with his fiancée Susan, this November 4th. They already had the airline tickets, and I was looking forward to really meeting Susan and to have a days long contact visit with my son. This would have been our first contact visit since 1999, when Rick visited me in Leavenworth. In 2000, I was sent to Walpole state prison in Massachusetts. For the next 9 years, even though I was in

the same state as my son, all my visits were one hour long through a glass window over a telephone.

In the beginning of 2009, I was transferred back to the federal system to begin a consecutive sentence. I was sent to this prison in the Sonoran desert, near the Mexican border. For most of the 27 years of my captivity, the U.S. government has intentionally kept me locked up thousands of miles from my son and family. Many other political prisoners face this same type of exile imprisonment.

One special reason for this November 4th visit, was so Rick and Susan could tell me about their plans to marry and hopes for children and their life together. I was so happy and hopeful for them and the thought of a new little Ricky chan - boy or girl.

Being the child of revolutionary activists, and especially in situations when parents choose or are forced into clandestine and underground work and life, will have a major life long impact on the child. When Ricky's mother, Barbara, and I and other Ohio-7 people were located and captured in November of 1984, Ricky and the other Ohio-7 children were actually locked up themselves in juvenile detention jails for weeks, until our families and lawyers finally forced the government to release them to grandparents and other family.

Ricky lived with his maternal grandparents in Boston, until he was 10, when his mother was released from prison.

My son was not a political activist, though he was involved in many events, conferences, gatherings from the time he was a teenager. He knew and worked with leaders and activists of the Jericho political prisoners organization, the Puerto Rican Independence movement, the New African Independence movement, and in anarchist circles. He attended many of these events as the son of political prisoners and sometimes represented me and delivered statements from me, as well as his own words, including eloquent



Rick at 3 years old



thoughts of what it was like to be a child growing up while your parents were in prison for their political efforts.

Just days before his death, Rick was at Occupy Boston and planned to write an article for this issue of 4sm, on this occupation. He had some notes, but said he wanted to wait

until our visit to talk about it, before he finished the article. When people at the occupy site found out Rick was the son of a political prisoner, they invited him to lead a workshop on political prisoners there, the following week.

My son was deeply aware of the realities of U.S. imperialism and capitalism, and the struggle against it. His young and too short life was directly impacted by the racist police state realities of imperialism, and of course by the decisions I made for myself, my family and my son, in my life.

Let me be very real with you readers, from that cold November day in Cleveland in 1984, when we were captured and I saw a black suited SWAT cop grab my son, till the night before his death when I talked to him on the phone, there is no one in this world I loved or cared more about, or wanted to be actually close to, than my son.

I've long been kind of amazed, but so very glad that Rick and I always maintained a close loving father and son relationship and bond. I kept in regular contact with him, even from seg and other lock down units, with lots of cards, letters and phone calls and the always too infrequent visits. Even over time and growing up transitions he went through, and of course the distances imposed on us, we were always genuinely close, largely honest and real with each other and we always expressed love - father to his son and son to his father.

All that said, my son needed and wanted me close in his life from the moment he was taken away from his mother and me as a tiny little boy, till the end of his life. He always expressed this, as a little boy, a teenager and as an adult, including in the past few years as he struggled with addiction issues and fears.

I believe my son was a very special, positive and true human presence here with us for just a short time. Of course you would expect me, as a father to say and feel something like this. But this was what most of the well over 200 people at his funeral were telling each other. I'm told, it

was an extremely diverse group of people. Of course family from all sides and distant locations. Close friends from computer school, college, rehab, as well as young muscle bound neighborhood guys who Rick worked out with. There were prominent revolutionary figures and former political prisoners. There were also some adult children of political prisoners, like Richard Williams' son and daughter, Netdahe and Henekis, who knew and loved Rick since they were children. There were old Italian women from the neighborhood who spoke about how charming, courteous and helpful Rick had always been with them and other neighbors. My son touched many people in many real, meaningful, profound, genuine and compassionate ways.

I'm not sure why I'm putting all these long words together. I guess I did want to speak to comrades and interested people directly. Maybe it is cathartic. So what. My son is dead. These are insane impossible words, that now frame my life.

A final thought: I've received many cards and words of shared sorrow and support from many friends and others. I haven't responded much, but I have appreciated all the thoughts and concern.

Try to take care of each other and the people you love.



Jaan and Rick visiting at Leavenworth, 1999

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

BY NZINGHA SHAKUR-ALI

From Issue 15, Spring 2010

Originally printed in the *SF Bayview Newspaper*

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

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

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

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

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

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

Now Mutulu is in Florence, Colorado, the No. 1 maximum security

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

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

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

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

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





ences to aid in education and dialogue. In the print edition of this section on women in the struggle, we are running two reflections on the subject from the history of the Black Panther Party and the Chicano/Chicana movement, as well as a more contemporary piece on the continued prevalence of sexism in anarchist and radical activist groups. We hope that our readers who are not in prison will seek these excellent books out too.

We know that many of you use 4struglemag in your study groups. We hope that you will explore these rich and complex readings in detail, and that you will begin or renew discussions on how men can challenge their own sexism and build stronger movements based on comradely respect and love. We are also interested in hearing about the ways in which gender identities/dynamics manifest themselves in prisons, where people are segregated by gender. We encourage you to share your responses with us in Issue 13, so that we can expand this “classroom” to include people who don’t have study groups in their institutions.

As for our female readers, we hope that you will raise your voices in this discussion and share your experiences and opinions with us. And that you will encourage others to join in as well!

These articles do not provide definitive answers, but we offer them as a starting place for this essential process of understanding that class struggle, anti-racist and anti-sexist work must be integrally united in any successful movement towards liberation. As Spider put it, “Not only do wimyn need revolution, but the revolution needs wimyn.”

See:  
“Chicana Feminism” by Anna Nietogomez. From *Chicana Feminist Thought: The Basic Historical Writings*. Edited by Alma M. Garcia. Routledge, 1997.

“‘No One Ever Asks What a Man’s Role in the Revolution Is’: Gender Politics and Leadership in the Black Panther Party, 1966-71. by Tracye A. Matthews. From *Sisters in the Struggle: African American Women in the Civil Rights – Black Power Movement*. Edited by Bettye Collier-Thomas and V.P. Franklin. New York: NYU Press, 2001.

## Statement on Richard Williams

BY RAY LUC LEVASSEUR  
From Issue 6, Winter 2005

The first time I met our comrade Richard Williams was in a safehouse, underground. For the next decade we engaged in a common struggle to provide whatever support we could muster to the downpressed—be they victims of apartheid in South Africa, or slaughtered in Central America—and to defend ourselves. It wasn’t until the last hour of the last trial that we were consigned by our enemy to different prisons. I would never see him again.

Richard, like many political prisoners, has never received the recognition and respect he deserves. He has been vilified in the media and ignored by the left—a shared experience by many political prisoners. But then, Richard never sought accolades. The brother I know is not ego driven nor laden with grandiose ideas about what others should march to. He has at his essence that uncommon quality of a revolutionary—feeling every injustice done to the poor and working people of this planet.

I know Richard well, having risked our lives together time after time. He never wavered when confronted with danger, and didn’t disappoint when demands upon us were critical. I’ve seen him act decisively when it took courage to step up, and step down in situations that required defusing. He’s all of that—a people’s soldier and friend.

A man of deep commitment and fiery passion, he dedicated his life to others. The fallout from that was not being able to see his own children during the most dangerous years. He made that sacrifice, but the longing for his kids was intense and it laid heavy in his heart.

Sacrifice. How deep the sacrifice for what we believe true and necessary? When the U.S. killing fields in Central America were littered with the bodies of compañeros and their children, Richard did not stand idly by. When apartheid drenched South Africa in the blood and suffering of African people, Richard chose to act. The lineage from prison and anti-racist activist to underground guerilla is not difficult to figure—Richard has the heart, consciousness, and political perspective to take it to a brutal enemy.

He did it in his time, when time was of the essence. When he knew he had the strength and endurance for a protracted and extraordinarily difficult struggle. That time has now past.

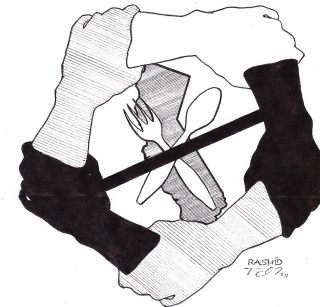
The brother I know, who withstood 50,000 volt stun gun assaults and the rigors of solitary confinement, has fallen. This brother of such infectious good humor, so respectful of elders, and without a cynical bone in his body, is dead. He chose to pass on in as dignified a way as possible given the inherently abusive conditions of his confinement. They never crushed his spirit.

Brother, I do not say goodbye, for there are no words for this in the language we know best. Until next time—among oak leaves, the feathers of a hawk, nurturing new life from a coral reef ....

I love you, Ray

## What is the Meaning of the California Prisoner Hunger Strikes? A Statement in Support of the Hunger Strikers

BY KEVIN ‘RASHID’ JOHNSON



“If there is no struggle, there is no progress.” – Frederick Douglass

Six thousand six hundred California prisoners participated in a 3-week-long hunger strike in July, seeking relief from unjust and inhumane conditions. In the face of California Department of Corrections (CDC) officials failing to honor settlement negotiations, the hunger strike resumed on September 26th, with nearly 12,000 prisoners participating in thirteen of that state’s prisons.

It is a truism that oppression breeds resistance. Indeed, the U.S. Declaration of Independence enshrines the right and duty of the oppressed to resist their oppression.

In this era of capitalist oppression on a global scale, the hunger strike exhibits the very same humyn spirit, courage and outrage that drove millions across North Afrika and the Middle East this year, to take to the streets in protest against oppressive governments. U.S. rulers, in the face of pretending to champion and support human rights, democracy, and the demands for basic rights by people half a world away, can’t admit they practice abuses just as vile against their own subjects – right here in Amerika.

Hosni Mubarak, the U.S. puppet and Egyptian dictator who was driven out of Egypt by mass protests this year, was notorious for torturing his own people. But so too are U.S. officials. Indeed, one of the key protest issues of the California prisoners is the acute psychological torture of sensory deprivation in the CDC’s Security Housing Units (SHUs) – Pelican Bay’s SHU in particular. This torture can’t be honestly denied.

It has long been the game of U.S. officials, especially since the 2004 Guantanamo Bay and Abu Ghraib torture scandals, to pretend that psychological torture isn’t really torture at all. However, they secretly know the exact opposite to be true. According to torture experts, psychological – or

‘clean’ torture – is the most destructive, sadistic and inhumane type of torture. Among the most proven effective methods is the very sort inflicted by design in the isolated cells of the SHUs, namely sensory deprivation.

Noted psychologist and torture expert, Dr. Albert Biderman, long ago found as to sensory deprivation, “the effect of isolation on the brain function of the prisoner is much like that which occurs if he is beaten, starved or deprived of sleep” [1]. The very same U.S. Central Intelligence Agency that employed Biderman as one of its torture researchers and experimenters, encoded these findings in its 1963 “Kubark Counterintelligence Interrogation” torture manual, confirming that:

1. The deprivation of sensory stimuli induces stress;
2. The stress becomes unbearable for most subjects;
3. The subject has a growing need for physical and social stimuli; and
4. Some subjects progressively lose touch with reality, focus inwardly, which produces delusions, hallucinations, and other pathological effects.

What’s more, over a century ago the U.S. high court found and denounced the same in U.S. prisons, in the face of *In Re Medley*, 134 U.S. 150 (1890) [2]. These findings have been repeated in U.S. courts today in response to the conditions of SHUs and super-maximum security prisons that have swept Amerika since the 1970s, alongside massive imprisonment of the poor and people of color. In one case concerning Pelican Bay’s SHU, the California federal courts found “many, if not most, inmates in SHU experience some degree of psychological trauma in reaction to their extreme social isolation and the severely restricted environmental stimulation in SHU.” *Madrid v. Gomez*, 889 F. Supp. 1146 (1995).

So it’s no wonder thousands of prisoners have been driven to starve themselves in desperate efforts for exposure and redress, and to show they are worthy of basic humyn rights and dignity.

But the typical response of officials is to discredit the resistance of those who suffer at their hands by villainizing (or “dirtying up,” as Johnnie Cochran used to called it), the victim. It was done to Civil Rights activists from the 1950s-1970s who opposed and exposed racism – U.S. officials projected them as fronts for foreign communists, and denounced as “Soviet propaganda” graphic photos of Southern lynching that appeared in world media.

Whatever happens to be the popular official enemy and bogeyman of the day, is the label used to discredit those who resist official oppression. During the Cold War, the ‘enemy’ was communists. Then it was terrorists. In the era of mass incarceration and ongoing persecution of Black and Brown youth, it’s gangs. These labels are used to provoke visceral reactions in the population at large of fear,

hatred and consequent disregard for and alienation against the oppressed. And true to form, the hunger strikers have been “dirtied up” as the work of prison gangs:

“The CDCR has continued to lie about the hunger strike – saying it was organized by gangs and attacking representatives of the strikers and others, depicting them as the ‘generals’ of the prison gangs and the ‘shot callers’ who order other prisoners to engage in gang violence.

“Dolores, whose son has been in the SHU for 10 years, said “If that is their [the prisoners’] way of thinking, then why did they just conduct a hunger strike willing to risk their own lives, to suffer on a daily basis in a nonviolent demonstration that spread across California prisons involving thousands and thousands of men crossing all racial lines? It’s because they are human beings. They do have dignity, and they want to be heard.” [3]

Not coincidentally, another of the hunger strike’s main protest issues is the CDCR’s labelling prisoners as gang members upon the flimsiest grounds, then confining them in SHUs until they “debrief” – that is, finger other prisoners as gang members to be thrown in the SHU. Thus the only way to leave SHU is as a known informant to be ostracized and targeted as such by others.

#### The Real Purpose of SHUs and Super-maxes

The true purpose of SHUs isn’t to control gangs and racial violence. In fact, the CDCR has long instigated and facilitated prisoner-on-prisoner violence. From the notorious ‘gladiator fights’ – where guards at CDCR’s Corcoran State Prison set up prisoner fights, gambled on the outcomes, and then shot the prisoners for fun, killing 8 and shooting

43 just between 1989 and 1994 – to massive numbers of prisoner-on-prisoner clashes instigated and manipulated by the notoriously corrupt California prison guards’ union, to generate public support for building more prisons to increase prison jobs and dues-paying membership.

In 1999, prisoners at the New Folsom Prison went on a hunger strike protesting being forced onto prison yards with rivals. CDOC Ombudsman Ken Hurdle rejected negotiations, stating “Then you’d have two groups normally aligned on the yard together. They would have only staff as their enemy” [4]. This admits officials deliberately facilitating prisoner-on-prisoner violence as a technique of prison control. This is what they fear in the unity shown by the hunger strikers. And it undermines the disunity they need to project them as animals.

Officials welcome and incite gang violence. It creates jobs, justifies their oppression, and enhances their ‘control.’ Even Crips co-founder Stanley ‘Tookie’ Williams, who was killed by the CDCR exposed this [5].

More revealing is that then-California Governor, Arnold Schwarzenegger, rejected massive international pleas to stay Tookie’s execution on grounds that Tookie dedicated his book, *Life in Prison*, to Black revolutionary George Jackson, who was murdered by CDOC officials in 1971. Schwarzenegger said the dedication “defies reason and is a significant indicator that Williams is not reformed.” Which brings us closer to exposing the real reasons SHUs exist.

The actual “leaders” officials fear, and who are the prime targets of SHUs and super-maxes are those who are politically conscious and prove able to unite prisoners across racial and other lines.

The proliferation of SHUs and super-maxes began with the Marion Control Unit, which opened in 1972, following the murder of George Jackson and the peaceful 1971 Attica uprising that officials ended with the coldblooded murders of 29 prisoners and 10 civilians, and systematic humiliation and torture of hundreds of prisoners, provoking international outrage. Like the brutal government responses to mass protests in Asia and Afrika this year, when the prisoners of Attica took to the yard in protest, with grievances articulated and represented by politically conscious prisoners, the official response was murder and torture, then high

It is always the womyn doing these things, reinforcing the idea that a womyn’s place is in the home, acting out her divinely sanctioned role as the man’s servant, the man’s accessory, the man’s slave. It is still considered as a “romantic” exception to the rule when the man cooks for the womyn. This mentally is also dominant in television shows like sitcoms, where the womyn is seen doing all the housework, where it is humorous how the man usually hates his wife (especially as they get older), where he usually hates to have sex with her, or when he does have sex with her it is a joking thirty-second ordeal.

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

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

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

But an isolated feminine movement can be just as reactionary as reverse racism. Wimyn must be their own liberators; however, that can only truly happen if their struggle is kept in the right perspective, within the broader focus of ending capitalistic exploitation of humanity, viewing every

specific liberation as a microcosm of the whole. We need wimyn in our ranks, creating revolutionary programs that serve to liberate themselves and at the same time promote the liberation of the international proletariat as a whole.

Wimyn, we need you! Rise up and throw off the millennia-old yoke of male domination; demand your liberation and your equality, and join the Panthers in the revolutionary movement to abolish all oppression and bring humanity from the epoch of exploitation to the epoch of freedom.

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

## Women in the Struggle

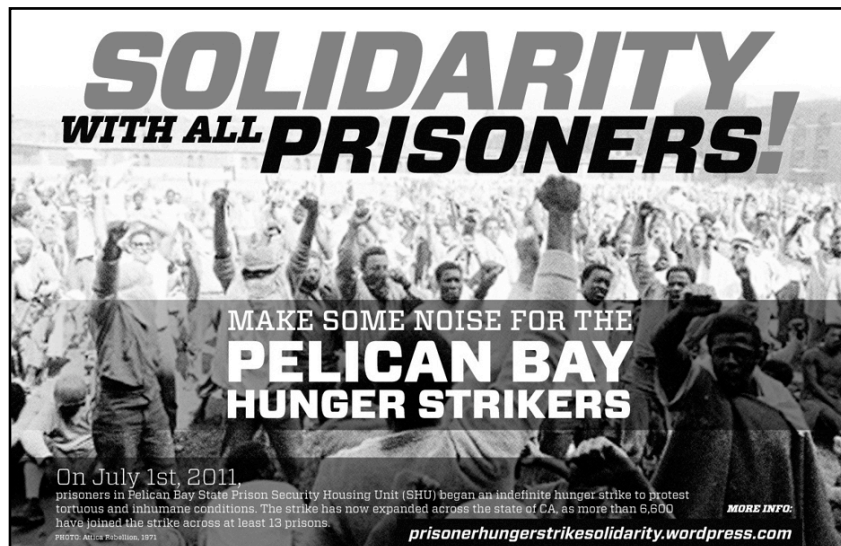
BY JAAN LAAMAN  
From Issue 12, Spring 2009

Just as our previous discussion on the “hip-hop generation” and political consciousness was sparked by one of our prison readers, a contribution by Comrade Spider of the White Panther Organization inspired this exploration of roles and challenges of women in the struggle. In Issue 11 of 4struggle, we printed “Free the Wimyn,” in which Spider presented a strong argument that women’s liberation is nowhere near complete, and that women “not only ha[ve] to deal with the crushing weight of capitalist exploitation, but also the double weight of gender oppression.”

Our editor, anti-imperialist political prisoner Jaan Laaman, liked the article and wanted to expand the discussion: “A young man who I’ve known for over a year – recent college grad and radical activist – was just telling me about his concerns about the level and widespreadness of sexist attitudes and practices in the activist communities,” Jaan wrote. “I guess I shouldn’t be, but I was kind of surprised and of course disappointed to hear this. Some of what he was describing sounded similar to shit that was real and also largely resolved in a progressive-revolutionary way like 30 years ago. Society itself is still so sexist, so I guess things have gone backwards in radical circles too.”

As Spider pointed out, despite the victories and concessions of the women’s liberation movements of the 1920s and 1960s (as well as LGBT movements), traditional gender roles for women and men are still very much embedded in mainstream societies. And our social justice movements unintentionally continue to replicate these patterns of repression in many cases. The common misconception that sexism in our movements is no longer an issue is as dangerous as the idea that racism is no longer an issue in contemporary society. It needs to be confronted head-on by men and women alike.

At 4struggle, we are committed to not only providing a space for these debates, but also reprinting important refer-





## Free the Wimyn!

BY COMRADE SPIDER (BILLY JOHNSON)  
Spokesperson, White Panther Organization  
From Issue 11, Spring 2008

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

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

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

I mean, think about it. Wimyn make up about 51 percent of

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

And all of this in spite of suffrage. Yet, does the right to vote signify that liberation has come? Did New Afrikan suffrage liberate New Afrikans? The first major wave of the wimyn's liberation movement took place in the 1800s, mainly as a response to the great economic and political changes brought about by the industrial revolution, a very significant parallel with the proletarian rebellions of that time (It is also no accident that many of the equal rights feminists were at the time leaders of the abolition movement). Wimyn's liberation peaked in the 1920s, and then declined after the primary goal of suffrage had been reached. The second wave occurred at an equally significant time, the revolutionary 1960s, when political and social changes were dramatically taking place all over the world. This second wave sought a greater equality for wimyn in the family, the workplace, and political life. However, while some concessions have been gained, wimyn are far from liberated. There is a dangerous trend within liberation movements to mistake concessions as liberation, and this trend quenches the revolutionary spirit.

Concessions quickly turn from stepping stones toward final liberation into a compromise made with the slavemaster, a pacifier. Polished handcuffs are still handcuffs.

Concessions, like religion, can be the opium of the masses. Reform can be one of the greatest weapons against revolution. And just as former colonies of Empires can be held in neo-colonialism – a state of being politically independent yet in economic bondage – so can voting wimyn still be held in neo-patriarchy – politically free (i.e. able to vote, hold public office, etc.) yet economically and psychologically held under the sway of the male gender.

To put it blatantly, wimyn are still considered as the man's slave. Suffrage has not effected liberation, for the capitalist system in which these votes are cast gorges itself on all kinds of oppression and exploitation, and cannot be voted into ceasing this ravenous trend. Consider the television commercials that are forced down our throats and into our minds. Of all the advertisements for cleaning products, grocery shopping, cooking supplies, and all the other things that have to do with the household, when have you ever seen a man doing the mopping, cleaning the toilet, buying the groceries, feeding the children (or the wife)?

security torture units. In one of the few admissions on record, Ralph Arons, a former warden at Marion, testified in federal court: "The purpose of the Marion Control Unit is to control revolutionary attitudes in the prison and in society at large" [6]. Yet U.S. officials deny confining or persecuting people for political beliefs.

In fact, Pelican Bay officials recently banned my own book, *Defying the Tomb*, as "gang material," a book of political writings and art, which many readers and reviewers have compared to George Jackson's writings, whose books CDOC banned in the 1970s as well. And with the resurgence of prisoners' political consciousness, they've recently begun confiscating this book as "gang material." Like Nazi book burnings and concentration camps, the object is to censor and persecute political consciousness and revolutionary culture amongst the most oppressed peoples. And 'gang' labels are used to "dirty up" the people, practices, and ideas they seek to repress.

Just as I am confined in a remote Virginia super-max, under 'special' conditions of a SHU because of my political beliefs and having co-founded the New Afrikan Black Panther Party as a Party of the oppressed, so too you'll find in these units across Amerika those who hold and practice revolutionary political views and affiliations that are supposed to be constitutionally protected, not persecuted. As the high court once proclaimed:

"Our form of government is built on the premise that every citizen shall have the right to engage in political expression and association. This right was enshrined in the First Amendment of the Bill of Rights. Exercise of these basic freedoms in America has traditionally been through the media of political associations. Any interference with the freedom of a party is simultaneously an interference with the freedom of its adherents. All political ideas cannot and should not be channelled into the programs of our two major parties. History has amply proved the virtue of political activity by minority, dissident groups..." [7]

But contrast these political ideals with the political reality that such parties face at the hands of officials, as admitted by Justice Hugo Black: "History should teach us...that... minority parties and groups which advocate extremely unpopular social or governmental innovations will always be typed as criminal gangs and attempts will always be made to drive them out" [8].

This is the function of the SHUs like those that California's prisoners are protesting, and the ones used as a weapon to censor and repress political consciousness.

Resistance to the oppression of these units is the meaning of the hunger strikes. Amerika's oppressed and disenfranchised victims of modern penal enslavement and the New Jim Crow, are struggling like those of generations past for

recognition and respect as humyn beings. As a Party of the oppressed, especially the imprisoned, the NABPP-PC stands in unity with the heroic struggles of California's entombed, and call on all freedom-loving people everywhere to take up their cause.  
Dare to struggle! Dare to win!

All Power to the People!

### Notes

1. Albert D. Biderman and Herbert Zimmer, eds. *The Manipulation of Human Behavior* (New York: Wiley, 1961), 29.
2. The court found under conditions of solitary confinement "A considerable number of prisoner fell, after even a short confinement, into a semi-fatuous condition, from which it was next to impossible to remove them, and others became violently insane; others still committed suicide, while those who stood the ordeal better were generally not reformed, and in most cases, did not recover sufficient mental activity to be of any subsequent service to the community."
3. "Hunger Strike to Resume September 26 – Support the Just Demands of the Pelican Bay Prisoners," *Revolution* #243, September 25, 2011.
4. Quoted from *Sacramento Bee*, December 8, 1999.
5. "Yes America, as unbelievable as it may seem, 'hood cops, with impunity, commit drive-bys and other lawless acts. It was common practice for them to abduct a Crip or Bounty Hunter and drop him off in hostile territory, and then broadcast it over a loudspeaker. The predictable outcome was that the rival was either beaten or killed on the spot, which resulted in a cycle of payback. Cops would also inform opposing gangs where to find and attack a rival gang, and then say 'go handle your business.' Like slaves, the gang did exactly what their master commanded. Had they not been fuelled by self-hatred, neither Crips, Bounty Hunters, nor any other Black gang, would have been duped: "The 'hood cops were pledged to protect and serve, but for us they were not there to help, but to exploit us – and they were effective. With the cops' Machiavellian presence, the gang epidemic escalated. When gang warfare is fed and fuelled by law enforcement, funds are generated for the so-called anti-gang units. Without gangs, those units would no longer exist." *Blue Rage, Black Redemption* (2004).
6. Stephen Whitman, "The Marion Penitentiary – It should be Opened-Up Not Locked-Down." *Southern Illinoisan*. August 7, 1988, p. 25.
7. NAACP v. Button. 371 U.S. 415, 431 (1963).
8. Barenblatt v. U.S., 360 U.S. 109, 150 (1959) (J., Black, dissenting).

## Conspire to Resist

From [conspiretoresist.wordpress.com](http://conspiretoresist.wordpress.com)

November 22, 2011 — As people across Turtle Island look towards the global wave of protests against the austerity agenda, the memory of the 2010 G20 protests in Toronto looms large as both inspiration and caution. We are seventeen people accused by the state of planning to disrupt the leaders summit — the prosecutors call us the G20 Main Conspiracy Group.

This alleged conspiracy is absurd. We were never all part of any one group, we didn't all organize together, and our political backgrounds are all different. Some of us met for the first time in jail. What we do have in common is that we, like many others, are passionate about creating communities of resistance.

Separately and together, we work with movements against colonialism, capitalism, borders, patriarchy, white supremacy, ableism, hetero/cis-normativity, and environmental destruction. These are movements for radical change, and they represent real alternatives to existing power structures. It is for this reason that we were targeted by the state.

Although these conspiracy charges have been a big part of



from top-left: Pat Cadorette, Erik Lankin, Paul Sauder, Meghan Lankin, Bill Vandrei, Joanna Adamiak, Julia Kerr, David Prychitka, Alex Hundert, Monica Peters, Sterling Stutz, Leah Henderson, Adam Lewis, Mandy Hiscocks, Peter Hopperton, SK Hussan, Terrance Luscombe

our daily reality for the past year and a half, we have been slow in speaking out collectively. This is partly because of the restrictive bail conditions that were placed on us, including non-association with our co-accused and many of our close allies.

In addition, those of us who did speak out have been subjected to a campaign of intimidation and harassment by the police and prosecutors. We are writing now because we have decided to resolve our charges to bring this spectacle to an end.

The state's strategy after the G20 has been to cast a wide net over those who mobilized against the summit (over 1,000 detained and over 300 charged) and then to single out those they perceived to be leaders. Being accused of conspiracy is a surreal, bureaucratic nightmare that few political organizers have experienced in this country, but unfortunately it is becoming more common.

We can't say with any certainty if what we did was in fact an illegal conspiracy. Ultimately though, whether or not our organizing fits into the hypocritical and oppressive confines of the law isn't what's important. This is a political prosecution. The government made a political decision to spend millions of dollars to surveil and infiltrate anarchist, Indigenous solidarity, and migrant justice organizing over several years. After that kind of investment, what sort of justice are we to expect?

We have not been powerless in this process; however any leverage we've had has not come from the legal system, but from making decisions collectively. This has been a priority throughout, particularly in the last several months, as the preliminary inquiry gradually took a back seat to negotiations for a deal to end it.

The consensus process has been at times a heart-wrenching, thoughtful, gruelling, disappointing, and inspiring experience, and in the end, we got through it together.

Of the seventeen of us, six will be pleading and the eleven others will have their charges withdrawn. Alex Hundert, and Mandy Hiscocks are each pleading to one count of counselling mischief over \$5,000 and one count of counselling to obstruct police, and Leah Henderson, Peter Hopperton, Erik Lankin, and Adam Lewis are each pleading to a single count of counselling mischief over \$5,000.

U.S. political prisoners do in fact exist. There is no denying their existence, yet progressive forces in the U.S. are so divided they have been unable to force the U.S. corporate government to adhere to the rule of law in the recognition and treatment of U.S. political prisoners. This is a failure of the overall progressive movement that the Jericho Amnesty Movement has sought to rectify. While the Jericho Amnesty Movement has gone through several transitions in the past ten years, it consistently calls for and petitions the progressive movement in this country to join and unite in support of U.S. political prisoners. In order to be successful, this is the ultimate goal of the Jericho Amnesty Movement.

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

Earlier this year, the Honorable Archbishop Desmond Tutu and six other Noble Peace Prize Laureates issued an international call demanding the charges against the S.F. 8 be dropped and that Herman Bell and Jalil Muntaqim (A. Bottom) be immediately released on humanitarian grounds. This is not the first time internationally renowned persons have recognized the existence of U.S. political prisoners demanding their release. Mumia Abu Jamal has a street name after him in France, and gain international support for his release, as have Leonard Peltier. Can we do anything less here today? We must build the kind of national organization and determination that ensure the names of U.S. political prisoners are household word, and streets are named after each of them in the course of demanding their release from prison. That is the kind of movement we need to build to ensure that the legacy of struggle that each of these

political prisoners represent is preserved for generations of activists to learn of their examples and sacrifices.

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

Remember: We Are Our Own Liberators!





of illness added to by the extremely poor prison health care system, while in a federal prison 2 years ago.

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

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

One important voice of U.S. political prisoners is 4struggle-mag (www.4struggle-mag.org). This primarily emagazine (hard copies are available) focuses the insights and experiences of U.S. political prisoners on major issues of the day. We welcome you to check out 4struggle-mag.

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

FREE ALL U.S. POLITICAL PRISONERS NOW!

## The Jericho Movement 10th Anniversary

BY JALIL MUNTAQIM  
Co-founder of Jericho Amnesty Movement  
From Issue 11, Spring 2008

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Jericho Amnesty Movement is historic in what it seeks to achieve in terms of forging a coalition of activist concentrating on the central issue of U.S. political prisoners. It has been established via a petition to the United Nations, tours by International Jurist visiting U.S. political prisoners, plus several International Tribunals recognizing that

We are expecting sentences to range between 6 and 24 months, and all will get some credit for time already served in jail and on house arrest.

Three defendants in this case had their charges withdrawn earlier and one has already taken a plea to counselling mischief over \$5,000 that involved no further jail time. This means that out of twenty-one people in the supposed G20 Main Conspiracy Group, only seven were convicted of anything, and none were convicted of conspiracy. The total of fourteen withdrawals demonstrates the tenuous nature of the charges.

This system targets many groups of people including racialized, impoverished and Indigenous communities, those with precarious immigration status, and those dealing with mental health and addiction. The kinds of violence that we have experienced, such as the pre-dawn raids, the strip-searches, the surveillance, and pre-sentence incarceration happen all the time.

The seventeen of us have moved through the legal system with a lot of privilege and support. This includes greater access to “acceptable” sureties, and the financial means to support ourselves and our case.

While the use of conspiracy charges against such a large group of political organizers is noteworthy, these tactics of repression are used against other targeted communities every day.

There is no victory in the courts. The legal system is and always has been a political tool used against groups deemed undesirable or who refuse to co-operate with the state. It exists to protect Canada's colonial and capitalist social structure. It is also deeply individualistic and expensive. This system is designed to break up communities and turn friends against each other.

Within this winless situation, we decided that the best course of action was to clearly identify our goals and needs and then to explore our options. Within our group, we faced different levels of risk if convicted, and so we began with the agreement that our top priority was to avoid any deportations.

Other key goals we reached were to minimize the number of convictions, to honour people's individual needs, and to be mindful of how our decisions affect our broader movements. Although we are giving up some important things by not going to trial, this deal achieves specific goals that we weren't willing to gamble.

Our conversations have always been advised by concern for the broader political impacts of our choices. One noteworthy outcome is that there are no conspiracy convictions emerging from this case, thus avoiding the creation of a dangerous legal precedent that would in effect criminalize routine tasks

like facilitation. Taking this deal also frees up community resources that have been embroiled in this legal process.

We emerge from this united and in solidarity.

To those who took us in while on house arrest, to those who raised money for our legal and living expenses, to those who cooked food, wrote letters, offered rides and supported us politically and emotionally throughout, thank you.

To those in jail or still on charges from the anti-G20 protests, to political prisoners and prisoners in struggle, we are still with you.

To communities and neighbourhoods fighting back from Cairo to London, from Greece to Chile, in Occupied Turtle Island and beyond, see you in the streets.

## Occupy Wall Street

BY JAAN LAAMAN

This Fall, we have witnessed the birth and development of a new movement in the United States. From the initial Occupy Wall Street gathering in Zuccotti Park, now known as Liberty Park, to dozens and dozens of other occupy gatherings and encampments around the country, a new movement of the people exists. A lot of words, questions and analyses, have come out of the occupations.

Recently, police/government attacks have been launched against this movement, and occupation encampments have been torn up in Atlanta, Boston, Burlington, VT, Denver, Oakland, Portland, OR, Salt Lake City, St. Louis and in New York City too. Information has come out that mayors' offices and police chiefs in these and other cities have been coordinating their attacks and receiving instructions from Homeland Security and other federal cops on when and how to attack the occupy movement.

The U.S. government and the ruling class of billionaires and corporate wealth it primarily protects and serves, recognizes the potential of real changes that the occupy movement represents.

As occupiers are being pushed out of many parks and losing their base of operations, it is of course necessary for people to come up with new ways to gather, communicate and continue the struggle.

4struggle-mag supports the occupy movement and we urge our readers to participate directly where possible, and to share your creative thoughts on tactics, strategy and how to sustain and push the struggle forward. We are printing several pieces on occupy and look forward to your responses and ideas for issue 21.

## A progressive dialogue: Occupy the future – A new generation reaches for the emergency brake

BY DAVE OSWALD MITCHELL  
From rabble.ca

“When students take to the streets of Paris or London today, it is no longer to bring about a better world, but to defend what they can of the world their parents took for granted.” –Dougald Hine, ‘Remember the Future?’, Dark Mountain II

If someone has compiled an Occupy Wall Street reading list, investigative journalist Matt Taibbi’s book *Griftopia* is surely on it. Taibbi argues:

“The financial leaders of America and their political servants have seemingly reached the cynical conclusion that our society is not worth saving and have taken on a new mission that involves not creating wealth for all, but simply absconding with whatever wealth remains in our hollowed-out economy.”

Taibbi is clearly dabbling in rhetorical hyperbole here, as he so memorably did when he called Goldman Sachs “a great vampire squid wrapped around the face of humanity, relentlessly jamming its blood funnel into anything that smells like money,” but the image of a kleptomaniac elite stripping the commons of everything that’s not bolted to the floor because they’ve lost hope for the future has a certain truthiness to it. The past three years of massive bailouts, deepening debt and vicious public austerity make a lot more sense if Taibbi’s right.

Capitalism has always been driven by naked self-interest, of course. Under neoliberalism, selfishness just has a lot more freedom to do its damage. So rather than seeking to change course to avert catastrophe, capitalists seek new ways to profit from the devastation by piling into the next speculative bubble, the safest hedge to hide behind, or the next commons to enclose and exploit. This high-class looting act is both self-fulfilling and self-defeating: slashing public revenues and looting public infrastructure only destroy the common resources needed to mitigate the damage, while

deepening inequality makes everyone, including the one per cent, more vulnerable.

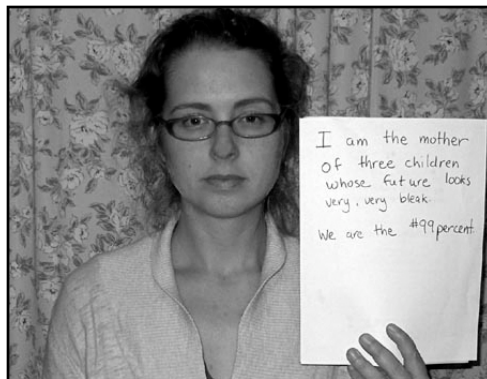
It’s the prisoners’ dilemma on a planetary scale. Walter Benjamin’s observation “perhaps revolutions are not the train ride, but the human race grabbing for the emergency brake” has never been more apt.

This is why the occupations springing up across North America, Spain, Greece and the Middle East are a genuine game changer: these predominantly young activists have seen the same storm clouds on the horizon that trouble the dreams of the one per cent, and have caught on to the heist they are perpetrating. The occupiers realize that for them, cynicism is a luxury they can’t afford, and they won’t surrender their future without a fight. As rabble.ca blogger Aalya Ahmad so pithily put it, “Let’s carpe fucking diem on this one, eh? The way this world is going, many of us may not get another chance.” With the cliff we’re careening towards in full view, hundreds of thousands are now in the streets and collectively reaching for the emergency brake.

### The nature of the beast

For all that has been written about the financial crisis, there have been precious few efforts to connect it to its shadow: the planetary ecological crisis. Over the past two decades, stagnating growth, ecological limits and deregulated finance capital have meant that private wealth comes increasingly from, and public wealth is increasingly destroyed by, speculative bubbles which have rapidly accelerated the destruction of the natural world while displacing more stable but slower-growth investments in infrastructure and productive enterprise.

We are now witnessing the unraveling of the latest and greatest bubble: credit, increasingly known by its four-letter synonym debt. Debt, in essence, is a gamble that the future will be more prosperous than the present: we defer payment today because we assume we’ll have more money tomorrow. This is not so different from how we’ve dealt with the climate crisis: future generations, we assume, will have the money to solve this problem, so we don’t need to. In both cases, our gamble that future prosperity will manage to pay for past excess is starting to look like an incredibly stupid one. (No wonder so many banks — both financial and fluvial — are getting washed out.) Without economic growth, financial debt becomes unmanageable; without ecological regeneration, ecological debt becomes unmanageable.



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

BY JAAN LAAMAN  
From Issue 11, Spring 2008

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

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

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

The U.S. government likes to deny that it holds political prisoners. This is a lie. The harsh punitive conditions of confinement, often in special control unit type super max prisons, that we political prisoners face day in, day out, decade after decade, exposes and refutes this government myth. Not only does America hold political prisoners, but we are being held under longer sentences than any kind of prisoners, anywhere in the world! Despite this, we remain committed to our communities, movements and most of all our principles. As best we can, through our voices and lives, we continue to uphold the politics of justice, equality and liberation, especially for the poor and working class people throughout the world.

In 1998, a very principled and politically conscious march and rally of over 10,000 people, gathered in Washington

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

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

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

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

Personally, I am in my 24th straight year of captivity. Along with my comrade Tom Manning, who is being held in the federal prison system, we are the last two Ohio 7 anti-imperialist political prisoners still in captivity. I will fully complete my Massachusetts state sentence at the end of 2008, and then I will be transferred to the federal system to begin a 53 year sentence.

Captivity takes its toll on human beings. My comrade Tom has and continues to deal with serious medical issues, as do many of the other aging political prisoners. I continue to miss and mourn my comrade Richard Williams, who died



torical 2008 election. Let's keep our eyes open and our independent activist voices heard — our anti-war voices, our voices of outrage at gas prices, food costs and police abuses. Our independent activism, our rejection of Bush and his corporate policies, our demand for peace and bringing all U.S. troops home now, might even help to push Obama and

his campaign in a more progressive direction.

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

The funds raised have been divided between the ABCF Warchest and the Prisoner Art Project — a fund designed to monetarily assist political prisoners with art supplies. In '02, the run helped the autonomous settlement of Maclovio Rojas in Mexico, which has faced considerable repression over the years. In 2006, RDTW helped raise funds for the Growing Healthy program sponsored by the New Panther Vanguard. In 2007, RDTW helped raise funds for the Black Riders Liberation Party and their Watch a Pig program. This year it went to El Centro Cultural de Mexico, a community center in Santa Ana dedicated to developing a cultural and educational bridge that brings together a variety of cultural projects from Mexico, Central and South America. Also this year RDTW helped raise funds for The Committee to Free Chip Fitzgerald, the support group dedicated to the release of Romaine 'Chip' Fitzgerald. Chip is the longest held Black Panther political prisoner in the United States.

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

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

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

## Why We Jog

BY LA-ABCF  
From Issue 11, Spring 2008



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

Sacco and Vanzetti were convicted and

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

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

Sacco and Vanzetti are well known political prisoners, but many political prisoners and prisoners of war in this country remain unknown and unsupported. These "unknown" PP/POWs are why the ABCF exists, and the reason we gather in the park today is to Run Down The Walls. Starting in 1999 in the hills of Griffith park in Los Angeles, and continuing with one small break to today, LA-ABCF has organized a 5k non-competitive run/jog/walk (and now bike ride) designed to raise funds for the ABCF Warchest and other programs supported by local organizations.

After years of underinvestment in the real economy, the three per cent compound growth that capitalism requires has stalled. Finance capital chases itself in circles, creating nothing. Economies sink under the weight of rising commodity prices — themselves a speculative bubble, though one rooted in real natural limits. The desperate and costly efforts of governments and central banks to restart growth by further priming the credit engine have created nothing but more debt. This is the endgame of finance capital in an age of ecological limits, dashing the dreams of a generation and threatening to bring down entire economies.

To stop this runaway train requires a recognition that the basic tenets of capitalism — everything has a price, competition trumps cooperation, scarcity is the natural state of humanity, material gain is the only motivator, the only agent of change is the consumer — are only true because enough people believe them to be true and act accordingly. There are other ways of relating, and through collective struggle, we can and must awaken to them. This is not utopian, but exceedingly practical: as philosopher Slavoj Žižek told the Wall Street occupiers, "The true dreamers are those who think that things can go on indefinitely the way they are."

Our fear of future scarcity cannot be resolved within the terms of capitalism, because capitalism thrives on scarcity and the fear of scarcity. Outside of the logic of that system, there remains an abundance of the very things that nourish us: the desire to provide for ourselves and our loved ones, the courage to approach an uncertain future with creativity and generosity, the ingenuity to pool our resources to create together what we could never create alone.

These are the seeds of the other world that capitalism tells us is not possible. They are being sown in countless individual and collective acts each day: a community raises funds for an integrated health centre that had lost government support, a bus drivers' union refuses to transport arrested protesters, 50,000 artists gather in the desert to participate in a gift economy, a group of activists blockade the highway to the tar sands, another group prepares meals from discarded food and gives them away to anyone who's hungry. And so on. Everywhere you look you'll find capitalism, and everywhere you look you'll find the seeds of its successor.

### 'Our one demand'

Occupy Wall Street, like the indignados of Spain who inspired their actions, has been criticized for the vagueness of its demands. But the occupiers and indignados have seen clearly what the politicians cannot: the situation is irresolvable within the frame provided, so the frame itself must be broken.

To limit their demands to minor reforms that leave the extractive structures of vampire capitalism intact would be a

terrible mistake. Those occupying the public squares know that we must think both bigger and smaller. To demand anything, we must demand everything. Each eviction, bankruptcy or new mining development must be fought in such a way that a victory builds momentum rather than dissipating it. Each demand formulated and won must propel the movement towards the point that it need no longer address its demands to the illegitimate power structures it seeks to displace, because it has already displaced them.

We will hear the same dismissals from respectable corners when thousands descend on Bay Street in Toronto and the public squares of many other cities on Saturday, but this next wave of occupiers must also refuse to take the bait. The enigmatic "one demand" of Occupy Wall Street was always only that, to occupy Wall Street. Shut it down. No more business as usual. No more profit from human suffering and ecological destruction, no more speculation on food and energy, no more sacrificing sound public policy to the growth imperative.

With its own demands sidelined until the economic crisis is resolved, the environmental movement faces a choice: either continue to work within the frame provided, hoping against hope that capitalism can resolve the crisis it has caused and get back to greenwashing itself, or construct an anti-capitalist politics that places solidarity, mutual aid, and the defense and expansion of the commons at the centre of its labors. The economic crisis finds its true resolution in the ecological realm, and vice versa.

The left in general faces the same choice: either try to save capitalism from itself by putting a human face on its worst excesses, or engage in the difficult work of theorizing and building an ecologically sound, anti-capitalist alternative. Eco-socialists like Joel Kovel and John Bellamy Foster have perhaps gone the farthest in articulating the contours of such an alternative, which is prefigured in countless local, indigenous, and commons-based initiatives. Such initiatives must be defended, supported, connected and multiplied.

So, in sum: capitalism is in the process of cannibalizing itself by devouring public infrastructure, personal livelihoods and the planet. Faith that the system can save us from itself is falling rapidly. Liberals and conservatives alike have abandoned any semblance of pursuing what Noam Chomsky long ago called "the vision of a future just society," and no viable alternative vision exists within the frame of respectable debate. This is a deep crisis of legitimacy, irresolvable within the current system. It's also a moment of immense opportunity, if we have the courage to seize it. The emergency brake is just within our reach. Occupy the market. Occupy the commons. Occupy the future.

Dave Oswald Mitchell is an independent editor, researcher and writer, last seen in Toronto.

## On Occupy Wall Street

BY MUMIA ABU-JAMAL

In Lower Manhattan's Zuccotti Park (renamed "Liberty Square" by the demonstrators), the cast of thousands swell in rebellion against the betrayals by the banks, Wall Street's relentless greed, the plague of joblessness and the craven servility of the political class—both Republicans and Democrats—to their moneyed masters.

In short, the central focus of their protest is capitalism—greed writ large, especially since the economic tumble of Fall 2008. Begun mostly by unemployed youth, it has drawn the presence and support of public workers, urban youth, students, teachers, and a considerable number of gray hairs.

That's because social discontent is so widespread that it is spreading like wildfire: Wall Street, and then, days later, Boston, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, and beyond. Demonstrations springing up like mushrooms after a storm, in protest to the crony capitalism brought to us by the professional sellouts called politicians.

And (speaking of), like vampires at a blood bank, politicians are descending on Wall St., to try to suck the life out of a movement that could threaten their monopoly on power. For, the politicians' only interest in this protest is to exploit it, to weaken it, while they continue to serve the very bosses the protestors oppose. You can count the number of politicians who truly oppose Wall St. on one hand—and still have a few fingers left.

Perhaps America's greatest white revolutionary, abolitionist John Brown, had little regard for politicians. He told his family: "A professional politician ... you never could trust; for even if he had convictions, he was always ready to sacrifice his principles for his advantage."

Think about that. Now think about every politician you know. See? This is People's Power, sparked, in part by the mass protests in Cairo and Wisconsin. Other sparks were the Troy Davis injustice, the assault on several demonstrators by New York cops, the repression on the poor and working class by the political class, and discontent with the long, wasted years at mindless wars abroad.

This is people's power.  
May it remain so.

## On Occupy Wall Street

BY OSCAR LOPEZ RIVERA

I'll be fasting on the 10th of December - International Human Rights Day. i'll start it the evening of the 9th.

i'm inviting every person who loves freedom and justice and believes that a better and more just world is possible to join me. The person can fast for as long as s/he can. The fast is in solidarity with the OWS movement and the celebration of international human rights day.

If we are indignados, who believe in the power of righteous indignation, we should be supportive of the OWS movement. This movement has been able to galvanize the people's righteous indignation and has successfully activated and mobilized a mass force that has shaken the foundation (Wall St. and Washington) of the one per cent that controls the wealth and the political power at the expense of the 99 percent that doesn't have any wealth or any control of the political power.

The one percent is already using its muscle to try to repress the OWS movement and to disorganize it. Our solidarity is crucial. If you aren't an indignado or occupier there is no good reason why you shouldn't share your solidarity with OWS. If you want a better and more just world then you have to dare to struggle to make sure it becomes a reality.

At this particular juncture OWS represents the possibility of a movement for a better and more just world in the usa. Show your solidarity and use the power of your righteous indignation to struggle for a better and more just world. Join the fast or be an indignado/occupier. En resistencia y lucha, OLR.

If you intend to fast, please let us know.

WE CAN FREE OSCAR,

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## Barack Obama and the 2008 Elections

BY JAAN LAAMAN  
From Issue 11, Spring 2008

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

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

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

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

Of course racism and discrimination against people of color is not dead. The Klan and other fascists are still out there hating, plotting and sneaking around. Killer cops are still shooting Black men and usually getting away with it. Obama's candidacy hasn't ended this, and even if he is elected the next president, these problems will continue.

Barack Obama is clearly an intelligent and dynamic person. His electoral success so far, is because he has tapped into the public's real desire to break with the pro-corporate, reactionary, warmongering policies of the Bush government. The people want an end to the war in Iraq and Obama is seen as the more anti-war candidate. The ever rising cost of gas and food, the tens of millions without health care coverage, while banks are seizing more and more homes, and the real estate market is collapsing, are all reasons why people are desperately looking for real change, and Obama

has presented himself as the candidate of change.

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

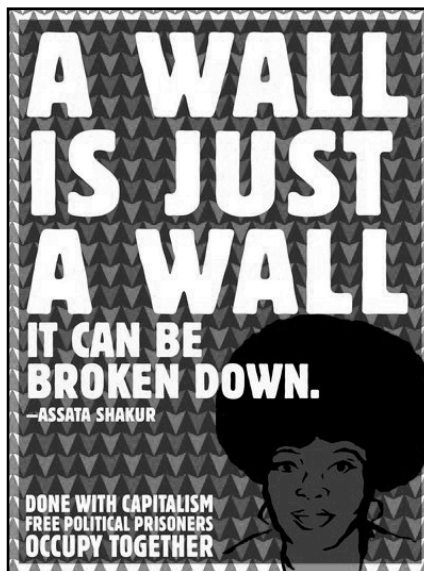
A President Barack Obama can reach out to countries, both governments and their people, like no one else could. According to the Pew Global Attitude Project, a very recent world wide survey, over one-third of the countries surveyed, see the U.S. more as an enemy than a partner. Many across the globe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

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

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

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

These are some of the realities of this interesting and his-





same crimes against Move- beating, shooting, bombing Move people since 1972, and keeping us in prison because we are Move Members. This is not just a Move issue this is an issue of injustice. If people let this government continue to do this to Move, the government will do the same thing to you, your children and all of those you love.  
To Quote JOHN AFRICA

WHEN A PERSON SEND INNOCENT PEOPLE TO PRISON, THOSE WHO THINK THIS VIOLATION STOP 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 IS SILENT ABOUT THE POSITION OF FREEDOM, WHEN INNOCENCE IS JAILED IT AIN'T JUST JOHN BROWN THAT IS JAILED, FREEDOM IS JAILED BECAUSE FREEDOM DOES NOT STOP WITH JOHN BROWN NO MORE THAN INNOCENCE STOP WITH JOHN BROWN'S MOTHER – END QUOTE, LONG LIVE JOHN AFRICA!

REMEMBER THE FIGHT THE MOVE ORGANIZATION IS WAGING IN THE COURTS AND PRISONS IS FOR YOUR SONS AND DAUGHTERS TOO, THE DRUGS, THE BEATINGS, THE RAPE OF MEN AND WOMEN BY PRISON OFFICIALS AND INMATES EXIST, THE MENTAL CRUELTY PRISONERS HAVE TO ENDURE EXIST, AND UNLESS YOU ARE RICH YOU AND YOUR CHILDREN ARE NOT IMMUNED TO THESE CONDITIONS... JOHN AFRICA

www.onamove.com

## Leonard Peltier Remembers Geronimo Pratt

From Issue 19, Summer 2011

Greetings to all my friends and compatriots,

Everyone it seems knows something about Geronimo Pratt. To all of us, to every human being on the planet, he was a beacon of principle that we should all aspire to emulate. To those directly involved in the struggle, he was one of those gifted, tough as nails warriors who not only had the vision to know what was right, but the strength and courage to stick to his convictions no matter the cost. When he had to be, he was a terror to his enemies.

To me, he was a friend and an ally. I met him in jail of course, so many years ago. He always had so much of my respect.

He gave his all to the fight for liberation, justice, and equality. His effectiveness as a man and a leader can be measured by the extent to which the enemies of justice and equality went in order to try and silence him. It wasn't enough to frame him for murder. It wasn't enough to flush twenty-six years of his life down a hell hole. No, they had to take those closest to him as well. But even the simultaneous losses of his freedom and the lives of his wife and unborn child could not break him. All the lies and injustice they could muster could not subdue such greatness. The combined resources of the FBI, Los Angeles police, and the L.A. District Attorney's office couldn't defeat him. What those in power did not understand was that Geronimo Ji Jaga Pratt was no ordinary man. He was a giant among men and remained focused during the most trying times. What they did not comprehend was that you can jail the warrior but not his ideas, not his strength, nor his effect on others.

No one would have blamed him if after twenty-six years in jail he wanted to live a private life and age gracefully. True to his nature he continued to be a light in the darkness, fighting for human rights until his death. He gave everything to the issues which he held most dear. In doing so he inspired generations of young people who carry on his legacy.

Perhaps it is fitting that this statement is being prepared on the anniversary of his false conviction being vacated. With that in mind, now that I think about it, this can and should be a time of celebration. Rather than mourn a loss of such magnitude, let us rejoice that we were blessed with such a presence to begin with.

The history of mankind is not written by corrupt governments or their shadow agencies; it is formed by greatness of spirit and strength of mind. This is why Elmer Pratt will always be remembered and honored as a prophet and perhaps even a saint to his people. I know wherever he is, he is speaking truth to power and rallying spirits to his cause.

This was not a spark that died! He was a fuse, igniting a series of events that we have yet to fully understand. I am certain in the fullness of time he will be celebrated while those who opposed him and their descendants will hang their heads in shame. It is this knowledge that makes me smile, and weep tears of great appreciation. So raise your hands, raise your hearts, raise your voices. Give thanks to Wankan Tanka that such a Titan walked amongst us. Never forget this incendiary spirit that opened minds and knocked down walls. Say his name with reverence, for he represents the very best of us all, and in that he will live forever. In the Spirit of Crazy Horse...Doksha.

## Are We An Occupation or Just a Gathering?

Text from a leaflet handed out by anarchists at Occupy events.

“Wall Street Protestors, Occupying Till Whenever”—recent New York Times headline

The “Occupy Wall Street” model has done what many have tried and failed — it has pushed past the apathy and created a venue for possibility.

In cities and towns across the country people are finding one another in situations into which few before dared to venture. Meetings are being held, food shared and ideas discussed. As one participant put it, “The fuzzy ultra-left ideal about forging new kinds of relationships through struggle and finding each other and such can't just be about meeting in space and time; otherwise we could start a bowling league and be done with it.” What the gatherings themselves lack is a coherent substance, a sense of self-understanding. Towards this end, we raise the following questions.

### Are We An Occupation or Just a Gathering?

In certain contemporary radical circles, the term occupation is often associated with a few things, namely the idea of disruption of or interference with the flow of goods or capital. When one asks for permission seeks a permit, the “occupations” become “camps” and the term becomes a catch phrase.

The original encampment, which has spawned many franchises in its wake, has been likened to other movements from around the globe, most notably the Tahrir Square occupations of January 2011. The major difference between the movement currently emerging in the United States and those of the square occupations throughout Northern Africa and Europe is strength. It was not merely the fact that 50,000 people took over Tahrir Square; it was the fact that they would not be forced to leave that made the difference. As a movement they were ready to physically defend the areas they had liberated and attack those trying to destroy it. To dogmatically cleave to a strategy of “non-violence,” we have cut our legs from under us. We did not hold Zuccotti Park, it was given to us under police supervision, and was taken away just as easily when the moment was deemed appropriate, that is when the police and the mayor had enough.

When Occupy Wall Street protestors took the message outside of the NYPD contained area they were attacked. Over 80 arrests occurred when the crowd marched near Union Square, 700 more when we tried to cross the Brook-

lyn Bridge, and hundreds more since. While the numbers swelled after those attacks, we missed a chance to sway the balance of power, even for just a moment.

That can change if the parameters of conflict are widened, if new avenues are opened to the possibility of physically holding space, not negotiating for its rental. Our individual refusals are small. However, a collective refusal is one of the last and strongest weapons we can wield together.

### Are we Anti Capitalists or just Anti Corporations?

There is a difference between being an anti-capitalist and being against corporations, or “corporate greed,” as some describe it. Anti-capitalists reach for a world free of the kinds of social relationships that require domination — landlords and tenants; bosses and workers; police and prisoners. These are relationships inherent to a capitalist system and to the democracy we live under. It is not indicative of a “broken” system for unemployment rates to soar, inflation to reign and wages to continually drop. The money cannot even out, congress cannot legislate its way to equality. From where we all now sit, our personal freedoms and any wealth we can accumulate is done on the backs of someone else or at our own expense.

Though it may have taken on new forms, none of the poverty or exploitation being protested is unique to the modern age of corporate dominance. Regulating or taxing corporations will not solve these problems, because those institutions are only one part of the vast structure of social relationships called State and Capital.

The future is wretched and marked with the poverty we all feel today. This in and of itself is cause for indignation. When that rage turns towards petitioning congress for a brighter tomorrow or demanding accountability of corporations, we have already lost.

### The Police are not our friends!

Capitalism, as a system, is based on a series of relationships between those who have power and those who do not. The police, whether they are a beat cop, a detective, or the Chief act as the enforcers of this economic system. They stand between us and the food we need to survive. They evict us from the homes we can no longer afford. Their job is to enforce the laws of capital, the ones created not to keep us safe but to protect capital and ensure the system works as smoothly as it can.

The police who enter our liberated zones, our occupations, are doing so as agents of the State. As individuals they may have families and problems. They may hate their jobs just like the rest of us, but that does not mean they will not do them. If we are to stand together as the proposed 99% we cannot allow the thugs and mercenaries of the 1% to enter.

## 20th Issue Retrospective: Major theoretical selections from past 4strugglemags

4sm has included entire essays and/or booklets, in some issues, that are definitely worth checking out or checking out again. If you are a new or more long time activist or a conscious prisoner or anyone seeking more insight into revolutionary thinking, then these selections might really be of interest to you.

Unfortunately, we do not have the financial resources to send back issues, but ask a family member or friend to send you a print out - they are all posted on our website - [www.4struggle.org](http://www.4struggle.org)

- **A Basic Introduction to Dialectical and Historical Materialism** (Issue 11, p. 38-51): Don't let the title scare you. This is a short but detailed introduction to real revolutionary analysis. It takes you, step by step, into how to examine any problem to really understand it, so you can then make your own best plan for action.
- **An Updated History of the New African Prison Struggle** (Issue 13, p. 22-41): A short but deep history of Black revolutionary struggle in the U.S.
- **The Dragon and the Hydra** (Issue 16, p. 33-42) Examines what type of revolutionary organizations are needed.
- **Foundations of Pantherism** (Issue 17, p. 40-42): This is partly a response to the 'Dragon and Hydra' and also presents a modern Black Panther organization's ideas.
- **Call of the Lumpen** (Issue 14, p. 12-14): A look at the revolutionary potential of the lumpenproletariat in the U.S. today.
- **Brown Riders Liberation Party** (Issue 18, p. 10-11): Presents a new Latino revolutionary organization.
- **Nationalism and Planetary Revolution** (Issue 18, p. 37-39): Argues for a non-nationalist basis for organizing revolution.

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## Move Update: Parole Hearing

From Issue 11, Spring 2008

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

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

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

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

There were 12 adults in the basement when the police attacked us on 8/8/78. We were all arrested, given the same charges, but 3 people were released when they said they were not Move members. The judge sent 9 innocent people to prison for what the judge claim one of us is guilty

of, overlooking the 3 other people in the basement of the Move house, when the cop was shot, who were tried separately from the 9 of us. Put the judge said everybody in the basement of the Move house when the cop was shot is guilty- meaning that 12 people should be in prison for murder instead of 9, according to the judge. Maimed's own statement and the release of the other 3 people who were in the basement that day proves that the Move 9 ain't in prison for committing a crime. We're in prison and being kept in prison because we are Move members committed to JOHN AFRICA.

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

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

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

The racist apartheid government of South Africa released Nelson Mandela after 27 years in prison. Even though the stand Nelson Mandela took against apartheid was seen as illegal, the U.S. government applauded his release, criticized and condemned the apartheid government of South Africa for the murder and unjust jailing of the people of South Africa but the U.S. government is committing the



it needs on the market and pass the cost on to consumers and workers. Within limits, high prices are not much of an impediment to business as usual. They even help “ration” those without the capital out of the competition by raising the barriers to entry to energy intensive markets. In the capitalist theory of purported economic efficiency, higher prices are seen to “allocate” resources to higher return enterprises. Access to the oil is thus controlled by the price (though the imperialists are setting up the conditions to change that to force) and price, at least in capitalist mythology, by a fair and free market.

Big oil knows, however, that whatever regime wins the power struggle in Iraq, its first need will be to massively increase the oil output to rebuild the country, whether or not that means a significant decline in the price per barrel.

An end to the war will also mean greater stability in the region, a further depressor of oil prices. And the oil faction of the business elite is ascendant in the Bush administration. Recognizing that its current and future reserves are finite, and being ideologically committed to the notion that greed is good, that faction will use that political influence to manipulate the price of oil into the superprofit range by pushing the war—as it has done since the invasion, and regardless of the consequences even for some other capitalists. So the war pressure will continue, as will chronically record-breaking profits of Exxon-Mobil, Chevron-Texaco, and the rest.

Lastly, the war is good for business as a tactic. In the words of Country Joe McDonald, “There’s plenty good money to be made/ Supplyin’ the army with the tools of the trade.” They need no elaboration, but their truth is an obscenity in this era of cut, cut, cut in already inadequate healthcare, education, housing, and environmental defense budgets.

There is also the spoiler role to the extent instability impedes the development of long term business relationships. The Chinese, for example, recently signed a \$100 billion long-term energy deal with Iran, a deal that can only be fraught with uncertainties under the circumstances. The probability is high that the U.S. is using its hypocritical pugnacity about Iran’s nuclear power program and dark (but as yet unproven) maunderings about Iran supplying munitions used in attacks of American soldiers in Iraq to pump up a *caus belli* for bombing Iranian oil facilities. Iran being a much larger and more rugged country with a populace more committed to its leadership than Iraq, and especially given the experience in Iraq, the U.S. does not want to put down a boots-on-the-ground invasion.

Such uncertainties will not only impede realization of the Iran-China deal, but will inhibit the development of similar ones. Business reduced to a smaller, ad hoc scale is not as lucrative or conducive to the establishment of long-term relationships and economic blocks that might adversely affect U.S. interests. Raising energy costs reduces the rela-

tive market advantage of cheap labor and preserves potential markets by pricing people in some areas out of them as well. And it is also an intra as well as an inter class redistribution of wealth: the oil faction plunders other economic sectors by pushing prices destructively past the limits the overall market can absorb without contraction.

This illustrates the U.S. plutocracy has particular interests it feels constrained to defend and advance, currently through the Iraq war. Over time, it needs to insure itself longterm access and control of access to middle-eastern oil. It also needs to protect itself against the vagaries of the looming economic and resource wars by implementing a homeland security state. In the shorter term, its politically dominant factions want to control the price of oil to thus reallocate wealth and its power to themselves. And the plutocrats want to take business advantage by destabilizing the prospects of their rivals by force and stimulating a global arms race.

That ruling class, however, can neither defend nor advance those interests as well (if at all) in any other way than by continuing the war in Iraq. It either arrogantly assumed the imperial road would be most profitable or lost confidence its capitalist model of resource allocation would guarantee it a place in the sun (and maybe both). No one, of course, believes its taurine excrement about weapons of mass destruction, spreading democracy, or fighting terrorism. But it cannot now say, “Sorry folks!”, and return to the status quo ante. Its hubris has alienated both friend and foe, and its shifting the paradigm to winner-take-all military supremacy has scorched the earth of negotiation and regulation. And it surely will not renegotiate the social contract with the proletariat at home such that it will share the pain of increasingly effective industrial competition from burgeoning economies.

The contradiction between these ruling class needs and what the people—i.e., the proletariat, us—are increasingly militantly demanding is driving the political machinations currently on display. Politicians—the operators of the government apparatus that serves as the executive arm of the ruling class—blather mightily about getting out of Iraq (as they do about universal quality health care and education, etc.), but they do not, cannot, and will not deliver an exit in real time. They may change the names some as in new generals and policies and plans, but the game remains the same.

Hence, instead of allowing Bush and Company (ies) to “stay-the-course” of imperialist adventurism, the task falls to “We, the people, of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility...” to make withdrawal the only possible course. And while we’re at it, we should, in the words of the Rolling Stones, make sure “we don’t get fooled again.

The future holds promise!

## War in Iraq: Imperialism in the 21st Century

BY JAAN LAAMAN  
From Issue 1, Spring 2004

Iraq, Winter 2004. There is much to be said, discussed and understood about the U.S. invasion, war and occupation of this ancient, oil-rich country.

The Bush government’s pre-war reasons for the invasion, disputed and disbelieved by millions immediately, have all been proven totally false. The latest U.S. government line about bringing democracy and freedom to the Iraqi people would be simply laughable, but since U.S. troops arrest, brutalize and kill Iraqi people everyday, it is no joke.

Late last year, Medact, a British Medical Human Rights group, released credible estimates of up to 55,000 Iraqi civilian casualties. The killing goes on daily. Human Rights Watch, also in December of 03, reported that the U.S. and British invasion armies fired approximately 13,000 cluster bombs at Iraqi towns and villages. Over 2 million smaller bombs were released from these cluster munitions. This kind of hi-tech death, war and occupation can never be seen as democracy or freedom, no matter how slickly the Bush government or the corporate media manipulate the facts and images.

While the dying is disproportionately Iraqi, well over 500 U.S. soldiers have died and about 2500 have been wounded in this invasion and occupation so far. It is a certainty that many more U.S. soldiers will die and be injured and crippled. This killing will only cease once the war and occupation ends and all U.S. troops are brought home.

There are almost no serious analyses of this war and occupation coming from the corporate media or bourgeois politicians, even those publicly opposing the war. From among the people though, especially from progressive political and opposition groups and individuals, explanations and analysis of why Bush really invaded Iraq and what they are trying to gain is being heard.

Identifying some of the main themes, first of all there is oil. The second largest known oil reserve in the world is now under George Bush’s control. The other huge reserves of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iran, etc., are now in easy gun range of a large U.S. occupation army in Iraq. However this develops, there is no doubt that the people and governments of these countries know that the U.S. is now poised to go further. This could be more invasions or political and economic strong-arming.

Control of Iraq and increased hegemony of the Middle East also gives the U.S. government and U.S. corporations a

greatly enhanced position in their ongoing competition with the European Union, Japan and Russia. Europe in particular is totally dependent on Mid-East oil. As the advanced capitalist countries coalesce into 3 or 4 blocs, the U.S. wants to control the economic lifeblood—oil—throughout the world.

The only Mid-East country that officially welcomed and praised the U.S. invasion was the Israeli government. Of course the U.S. had troops in and launched some of the war from Kuwait, Qatar and Saudi Arabia. In Israel the right wing Likud government still fully supports the U.S. occupation and compares it to its own decades-long occupation of Palestinian land. Now we are seeing the U.S. occupation army employing Israeli type tactics against the Iraqi public. Doors are kicked in during the middle of the night; men and boys are taken off to secret U.S. prisons. Families and children of fugitive resistance fighters are often imprisoned. Homes are being blown up. But the Israelis, even after years of occupation, have not been successful with these terror tactics against the Palestinian resistance. In Iraq, we are already witnessing even more deadly attacks against U.S. troops in the past few months.

Early in the government’s road to this war, some critics argued that President Bush’s war fever was fueled by his father’s personal hatred of Saddam Hussein and Iraq. We now know that George W. Bush planned to wage war against Iraq from his first days in office, long before 9/11 and any other pretext that was later raised. Former Treasury Secretary Paul O’Neil’s recent book lays bare that Bush wanted and meant to invade Iraq from his first days in office.

However much any of the above views were the real reasons for this war, now that it continues, two further realities drive it on. The war profiteers, those merchants who profit from death and destruction, are circling like hogs in a feeding frenzy. Well-connected corporations, especially Halliburton and its subsidiaries, are raking in billions of U.S. tax dollars off this war. Every American war has seen some corruption and profiteering, but this pillage and what appears to be actual theft is obscene.

Immediately after 9/11/01, conservative, right wing and police forces seized on the sorrow and worry of the public to begin implementing a massive “Big Brother” police state machine. This included federal and state legislation, executive orders and the creation of new intrusive police structures and practices. The war against Iraq strengthened and speeded up this process. We now truly live in a war and police state. U.S. society is now more militarized than it has ever been. Intrusive police presence and snooping is a daily reality. This is not temporary. Bush, in his 2004 State of the Union speech, made this clear when he called for even more police state powers, all at the expense of people’s privacy and rights. There is a direct correlation between the U.S. state of war and the growing police state all across this country.

What we are witnessing is the emerging new face of U.S. imperialism. The United States has been an imperialist power for a long time. What we are seeing now is a new drive and dynamic to imperialism. With no Cold War or major socialist bloc to contend with, U.S. imperialism has embarked on a more aggressive and dangerous course. The U.S. has essentially declared itself to be the undisputed empire of the world. The more it invades and occupies overseas, the more it will build its police state domestically. These may be stark terms for some to easily accept, but the reality of all this is happening around us right now. Shying away from understanding it or dealing with it only makes us less safe and less free.

The driving force of imperialism is economics. Its methods are economic and political and recently more and more military. There already is a sizable segment of the U.S. public that is opposed to this war. The question that all Americans need to be asked, is to they want to live in an empire? In this election year it's imperative and possible to ask these questions and to make opposition to this war very visible and powerful.

The fact that there are major anti-war candidates, Dean and Kucinich most clearly, reflects the ambivalence and worry of millions of Americans. Beginning with the March 20th worldwide anti-war mobilization, the Peace, Anti-War and Anti-Imperialist movements can tap into this worry of so many people. A building series of major rallies, as big and dramatic as possible, throughout this year is very feasible. Seriously opposing this imperialist U.S.A. war state and internal police state has its risks, but it is certainly possible and necessary right now. We can impact the short-term reality of the occupation and war in Iraq. More importantly perhaps, we can expose and resist the Bush government's plan to erect this 21st century U.S. war and police state empire. As a well-worn slogan puts it: FREEDOM IS A CONSTANT STRUGGLE!

## U.S. War and Occupation of Iraq

BY TOM MANNING  
From Issue 1, Spring 2004

My comrade has asked me to write something about "U.S. War and Occupation of IRAQ." The war has already begun. We could not prevent its occurring. So now we must endeavor to stop its continuing. It has evolved, as wars do, from Attack to Occupation. It has not reached the stage of conquest.

Looking to *Roget's International Thesaurus*, Occupation comes under the heading: TAKING!

There, I find a landslide of words that describe what is happening in IRAQ (and Palestine) today. Look it up. You will find words like: appropriation, taking over, takeover,... conquest, occupation, subjugation, enslavement, colonization.

Between Conquest and Occupation, we must insert the word RESISTANCE. Because that is also what is happening in IRAQ (and Palestine) today. Look it up.

Start with RESIST: counteract, hinder, oppose, withstand...Continue through RESISTANCE and RESISTER: opposition, reaction, ungovernable.... Yes, another landslide of words.

If plodding through all these words seems daunting, imagine, IMAGINE living under the realization of all these words. Day after day.

Stack these words in columns. Side by side. Now compare them. Where do you find yourself among them? Occupier? Resister? I find myself on the side of Resistance. Where do you want history to find you?

I was sent to Vietnam as a teenager. I have been both. Occupier and Resister. The former troubles me, to this day. The latter enlivens me. Day to day.

Here, with these last words, two things come to mind. "History will absolve me." Fidel's statement after an attack on Moncada barracks, 1953. And, "It is Right to Resist."

WORDS. Language. THAT moved me to think. To act, in my earliest days of becoming a Resister, a Dissident, an Activist, a Revolutionary. The Struggle Continues. Do the right thing!

## Truth and Resistance: U.S. out of Iraq

BY OSCAR LOPEZ RIVERA  
From Issue 1, Spring 2004

The plans of bush the lesser and his crypto-fascist clique for annexing Iraq went on smoothly as long as they successfully fabricated, disseminated, and sold their lies. The overwhelming majority of U.S. society, overcome with the fear and hysteria of post 9/11, chose to believe the lies, and gave its support to the war against Iraq. Armed with this support, the lesser and his clique refused to listen to the forces opposing the war (which comprised the majority of humanity), to its allies in the European Community, to the UN Security Council, or even to the most experienced military men in the Pentagon. As the imperium incarnate, they felt ready and poised to annex Iraq or any other part

its future oil, resource, and market wars requires the U.S. hierarchy to expand its homeland security state. Popular discontent with the small, precursor wars in Iraq and Afghanistan is already forcing the apparatus of repression to escalate its physical and psychological pressure against dissent—to escalate the class war at home. Witness the rising tide of "patriot act" type "security" legislation, terrorist scares, and drumbeats of nationalism. And that discontent is slopping into domestic issues as well. The news is a concatenation of closures and cutbacks and reductions of social services like health care and education and diminishing real wages. That is counterposed against ever more billions for "defense" (of ruling class interests!), growing corporate profits, and rising income inequality. People are noticing. They are noticing that the source of their privation is the same as the source of the war and thus the privation of others. So the ruling class feels compelled to go on the offensive before they do more than notice.

That hierarchy, however, is increasingly unable to buy off discontent and its organization with a more generous socio-economic contract. That is foreclosed by those same rapidly industrializing economies whose demand for oil is so challenging the U.S. rulers. Their people are capable of producing anything that can be produced in the first world at a fraction of the labor and environmental preservation cost. Verily, competitiveness in the global market will require that living standards of first world labor be depressed, if the current distribution of wealth continues. Maintaining the armies of imperial capital will also be expensive, further diminishing the social wealth, which the people will be expected to "sacrifice" for "the troops". The bourgeoisie certainly won't make up the profit deficit out of its already bloated side of the capitalist equation or permit a solution to that social problem that will. Instead, it will rely on the forces of "law and order" to bring the counterinsurgency currently being developed and practiced in Iraq home.

Maintaining the security of the bourgeois state thus in light of the unwillingness to pay off the populace for social and labor peace will also be costly in more than money. People will ultimately resist their impoverishment and oppression, and likely sooner than in already poor societies. Losing what one has is more inclined to elicit resistance than not getting what one wants. The system and its owners, however, have never and will not consent to any equitable redistribution of the wealth; that isn't the imperial capitalist way. Already, the U.S. gulag archipelago incarcerates more of its proletariat than any other country. It spends well over \$100 billion per year on its ever more militarized apparatus of repression: police, courts, prisons, prisons, more prisons, parole, and probation. Expanding and feeding this behemoth will take resources from libraries and roads and bridges and wages and benefits.

Given the unavailability of social bribery, the ruling class will have to use more Draconian and underhanded tactics, as the expansion of the gulag system illustrates. The cur-

rent war in Iraq is one such tactic. It allows the forces of repression to acclimatize people to "sacrifice"—if not for the war, for the troops who, it is well known, are sublime gods among humanity rather than perpetrators of imperialist tuggery. No privation is too great to insure they continue to do bourgeois bidding. The social conditioning is still such that raising the holy mantra of "support the troops" while they are "in harm's way" is still enough to get people to shut up and at least not oppose the imperialist program.

The propaganda apparatus is working hard to insure that effect will continue when the empire's holy crusaders become its repressive apparatus of domestic shock and awe, and use the war to portray the military and police in an unjustifiably rosy light. That apparatus is counting on "support the troops" to still work when it brings the counterinsurgency home to a police station (or is that a patrol base?) near you.

The elite further uses the war to pump up nationalist sentiments (as do other elites) of "us" versus "them". The propaganda apparatus inculcates the notion that the capitalist overlords of the U.S. and its poor and working class are the same "nation" and have common interests. It creates the impression that all "our" problems are caused by "foreign" nationals and nations because they hate "us" and want to destroy us for no more reason than that they are nasty and evil (when, in actuality, all but a few of them are our class brethren and sistren). It thus tries to create a false American "identity" in which exploiters and exploited, oppressors and oppressed are united against the freedom-hating "others". And it tries the same tactics at home, playing on ignorance and manipulation to divide racial, ethnic, and economic strata against their class brethren and sistren.

The captive media—read, means of creating public opinion, AKA propaganda apparatus—also uses the war to create fear and hysteria with a constant litany of real and imagined "terrorist" atrocities and threats. The war permits the apparatus to vilify dissent, as if anyone who so much as criticizes imperialism or "securing" the "homeland" is disloyal and a "terrsymp". It allows the promulgation of ever more rules and regulations and laws that slash and burn civil liberties and unleash the pigs of policeism. It conditions people to accept the intrusions into their and their communities' lives such restrictions represent. Even worse, it is used to reduce the systematic trampling of what tattered bounds remain for the agencies of repression from deliberate violations of human and constitutional rights to something minor like good-intentioned overzealousness in "protecting America". The FBI's recently revealed, massive abuse of "national security letters" to fraudulently obtain information about citizens is a case in point. And there are many others.

In the shorter term, the goal is to control not necessarily access to Iraqi oil, but the price of oil generally. In the usual capitalist scheme of things, business can buy whatever oil



Korea. Hence, the invasion was done in full conqueror, “shock and awe” mode to generate the appropriate TV impression. When that reaped bullets and bombs instead of flags and flowers, the wagons circled into impressive fortresses like the green zone. Unfortunately for the neocon vision, the fortress mentality operations from large bases tended to isolate the agencies of suppression from the targeted resistance (“a few dead enders and foreign terrorists”) and alienate them from any potential flag and flower wavers. Thus, the policy, mentality, strategy prevented the occupation from fulfilling the requisites of successful neo-imperialism.

Instead, the new policy appears to be to operate from smaller but more numerous “patrol bases” shared with Iraqi Army and police units. The “surge” (which grows ever larger as 6,000 are added here and untold support troops are cut from the count there) is supposed to make that possible by subduing the insurgent militias and other entities that could easily overwhelm such bases, in which struggles armor and aircraft would be less determinative. And imagine the media hay the resistance would make with American POWs! The new policy is also touted as designed to insure that the “clear” and “hold” phases will be followed by the “build” phase, seemingly reminiscent of “hearts and minds” in Vietnam lore and an acknowledgement that the institution-imposing necessities of imperialism were not being met. This suggests the traditional arrow of bribery for good lackeys will not be omitted from the new imperialist quiver. Given the time and cost constraints, though, the referenced building will only involve bricks and mortar as in schools and hospitals to the extent they can be used in conferring influence on the favored

toward building the police state. Critics argue it is too late for such a strategy and that its tactics will only prolong the misery and undermine U.S. interests. So does history.

All of that begs the question of why the ruling class would go to such lengths, expense, and risk and reap such opprobrium and not just dump the baggage, claim the win, and exit the entanglement—as it did in Vietnam and Lebanon. The superficial reason is obvious: the oil. Not so apparent is how the oil card plays out. Clearly it’s not just straight-up theft; less oil is leaving Iraq now than before the invasion and at substantially greater cost. The big issues are not short term possession of Iraqi oil, but instead, are controlling the longterm access to the oil, controlling dissent at home, controlling the price of oil, and controlling economic competition.

Making the first issue problematic for the U.S. corporate elite is that the large majority—some two-thirds of proven reserves—of the world’s oil and gas is in the Iran-Caspian Sea-Iraq-Saudi Arabia diamond. Though there is substantial coal more widely distributed, its lack of liquidity, dirtier combustion, and more difficult chemistry make it less valuable and strategic as an energy resource. Alternative sources are also not viable economically from the imperial capital perspective. To the east of the diamond, there is rapidly industrializing China, whose double-digit growth and oil poverty make it thirsty for middle eastern oil. To the southeast is India, similarly thirsty (and perhaps thirstier due to a smaller energy endowment) for the same reasons. Together, these countries comprize more than a third of the world’s population, a huge demand base. To the northwest is the European Union and its politico-economic hangers-on, another billion already highly industrialized people with a big oil thirst and few indigenous means to slake it.

And where is the U.S.? All the way on the other side of the world! Moreover, not only is it physically removed from the competition for dominance in the diamond, its rulers have been busily estranging it from even world capitalist norms of divvying up plundered resources. It is otherwise distancing itself from the rest of the world as well, making itself as culturally, socially, and politically remote as it is geographically with imperialist bellicosity, arrogance, and criminality. Feeling the lion, it has chosen the law of the jungle over the rule of law. Hence, its ruling class feels compelled to place its footprint on the face of the diamond and feels additional pressure to make that ground firm enough to stand on before the competition really heats up.

In addition to the conquest of foreign outposts, having chosen the path of empire and

of the world. For them the lies had worked – or so they thought.

Believing the lies had worked, the lesser, dressed in full military regalia, conveniently declared victory over Iraq within a few weeks after the u.s. invasion and occupation. Along with the defeat of the Iraqi military forces came the massive destruction of Iraq’s infrastructure, and havoc and chaos prevailed. Besides the dead and the maimed for life, the war victimized the whole Iraqi nation and its people. We were told that they were defeated and humiliated into submission.

The lesser and his clique had all but accomplished their goals. The Iraqi petroleum was in the hands of the u.s. oil industry, and u.s. enterprises were ready to start the rebuilding of the infrastructure. The u.s. occupying military forces were in their fortresses. And all of the military expenses and reconstruction costs were to be funded by Iraqi oil.

But one reality confronted them for which they couldn’t fabricate lies – the BODY BAGS with dead u.s. soldiers and the CASUALTIES inflicted by Iraqi Resistance. “Operation Iraqi Freedom” was succeeded by “Operation Desert Scorpion,” but the casualties continued to mount. There was nowhere in Iraq — not even in their fortresses – that the u.s. occupying military forces could feel safe.

Only two months after the lesser’s celebratory declaration, he and his clique found themselves stuck in the quagmire of their own lies. The lies about “weapons of mass destruction,” about “Iraq being a haven for Al Qaeda,” and about the Iraqi people welcoming the u.s. military invasion and occupation were catching up with them. The Iraqi Resistance brought home the war reality. The fabricated lies lost their power.

The reality struck the lesser and his clique like a bolt of lightning. They had put u.s. soldiers in harm’s way without a strategy for this situation. The Iraqi Resistance put in check the super mighty u.s. armed forces and stopped Iraq’s petroleum from being used by the u.s. government to finance the war. Since Iraqi petroleum wasn’t producing the money the u.s. government needed to fund the war, and the casualties kept on mounting, the lesser and his clique were forced to come up with a new plan.

The lesser had to tell the u.s. congress and the public he needed \$87.5 billions more. OUCH! This money will come from the pockets of the taxpayers – many of whom have sons, daughters, husbands, wives, or other family members in harm’s way in Iraq. Some are the same people who are demanding their loved ones be brought home now. These are among the people who are withdrawing their support for the lesser, and demanding not more military expenditures but a better economy. Besides money, the lesser and his clique are asking the UN Secretary General and the European Community to get behind the war effort in Iraq.

France, Germany, Russia and China aren’t going to support the u.s. government’s plan as is.

Unfortunately for the Iraqi people and the u.s. troops in Iraq, the u.s. government has no intention other than to maintain its military occupation. Because it’s the only way it can secure control of Iraq’s petroleum and other resources.

For the Iraqis who want peace, freedom, justice, and democracy, the Resistance must go on. Their struggle is going to be prolonged and protracted. It’s the only way they are going to force the u.s. out of Iraq.

Those of us who oppose the war must support the Iraqi people and demand that the u.s. government leave Iraq immediately. We don’t want any more u.s. soldiers or Iraqi citizens dead or maimed. Let’s expand the circle of compassion and stop the lesser and his crypto-fascist clique from their lies and destruction.

A BETTER WORLD IS POSSIBLE. LET’S MAKE IT SO!

## War in Iraq: September ‘03

BY SUNDIATA ACOLI  
From Issue 1, Spring 2004

Standing at the crossroads  
Yet the outcome is certain  
The invader will be driven back  
Unable to carry his burden  
Shortly if alone  
Longer if in coalition  
That rebounds worldwide  
With a turn of the tide  
Not of their own volition

But short or long  
The horseman is gone  
So the real question is  
What are you gonna do  
When the war comes home:  
Join the fascist last stand  
Or the host of hued and  
others oppressed mass demands?



## The Iraq War, Occupation Governments and U.S. Imperialism

BY ALVARO LUNA HERNANDEZ  
From Issue 2, Summer 2004

Oil Emperor Bubba Bush and his fascist ruling class clique have, again, imposed their “Texas-style” colonial war of plunder and occupation against the Iraqi people. The Iraq war has nothing to do with getting rid of a tyrant, nor in bringing “freedom and democracy” to Iraq. It has everything to do with the blood-thirsty military adventurism of U.S. imperialism and its hegemonic rule around the world, in order to privatize Iraq’s oil industry and to fatten the bank accounts of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and Halliburton and its corporate lackeys.

It is disgusting to see how U.S. imperialism and its ruling class have used the September 11th tragedy to whip-up its conniving “patriotic frenzy” amongst the American people, by playing out the devastation caused by it. The gross human rights violations that occurred at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, and the occupation government’s war crimes against those Iraqi people that resist the occupation, are criminal acts that must not go unpunished. Those who resist the occupation are now characterized as “terrorists” by the colonizers, to justify war crimes and to relieve them of any obligations they have to the colonized under international laws and the Geneva Convention on the treatment of political prisoners and prisoners of war.

How many years did it take the world community to break away from the tutelage of racist regimes that recognized Nelson Mandela as a “terrorist” and recognized him as the political prisoner, prisoner of war, that he really was? Such is the modis operandi of the colonizer – to “criminalize” legitimate actions of a resistance movement and its fighters, whose armed actions against the occupying force is justified under international law in that colonialism is a “crime against humanity.”

Hundreds of us are now imprisoned in U.S. prisons and jails as “Criminals” simply because of our ardent opposition to the policies of U.S. colonialism and imperialism and the fascist-like police state in the United States. Bubba Bush and his fascist clique want to make us think that the “incidents” at Abu Ghraib were isolated and coming from a few “bad apples” and does not represent the core values of what America is all about. What utter hypocrisy and lies!

The truth of the matter is that such practices are reflective of the true heart and soul of the criminal nature and history of a dying colonialism and imperialism that must search for its helpless victims in order to cripple them, to suck

their blood and to steal their country’s natural resources. Imperialism is a vampire-like system. When Bush was the Governor of Texas prison conditions were then, and continue to be to this very day, brutal torture chambers and warehouses of pain and murder, particularly in “administrative segregation” – a prison within a prison – where this writer has been confined for the last 2 years, for resisting the injustices and racism of the prison.

Under Bush’s Texas prison watch, these brutal and murderous prison conditions were declared illegal and the pattern of prison-guard brutality against prisoners was described as a “culture of violence” (Ruiz v. Johnson, 37 F.Supp. 2d 855). Almost all prison employees are military retirees, not only in Texas but in the United States as a whole. Charles Graner, Jr. who orchestrated the Abu Ghraib prison crimes in Iraq one half of the CIA, DIA and the military police worked as a state prison guard in Greene, Pennsylvania. Graners are the “war hero” scumbag darlings of these imperialist war gangsters who personally profit from these wars.

In the 19th century, U.S. colonialism annexed over 50% of the Mexican national territory in its colonial war of plunder and land grabs against the Chicano Mexicano people.

Monstrous war crimes were committed by the “military police,” the infamous terrorist police organized in the “Texas Rangers,” similar to what is now happening in Iraq, but under the fascist colonial cover of bringing “freedom and democracy” to the uncivilized savages, as they called indigenous people and natives of the original homeland. U.S. imperialism knows no “value system,” but the criminal subjugation of its victims into submission through brutal, murderous tortures and death. Such is what happened at Abu Ghraib prison. We refuse to be blinded by the “flowery” sugar-coated words of the colonizer.

The world community must demand that Bubba Bush and his gang of war criminals in the State Department and the Pentagon be put to trial under Nuremberg principles of international law before a world tribunal and be made to pay for their history of war crimes against the Iraqi people, and other historical war crimes against the Chicano Mexicano peoples, their massacre of indigenous tribes and nations, their plantation-slavery system imposed on African Americans and their history of enslavement of internal colonies they keep imprisoned through these same imperialist “values” and cultures of oppression and genocide within the domestic confines of the United States.

We must resist U.S. colonialism and imperialism and demand that the U.S. pull out of Iraq and that the troops be brought home immediately!

For more info on the case of the political imprisonment of the writer, please visit [www.freealvaro.org](http://www.freealvaro.org).

## Meet the new Boss(es), Same as the Old Boss(es)

BY BILL DUNNE  
From Issue 9, Spring 2007

The war in Iraq was a crime of imperialism from the invasion and has gone downhill ever since. The war has wasted some 100,000 Iraqi lives, maimed countless others, and impoverished all but the few indigenous imperialist lackeys. Tens of thousands more will die or be condemned to eking out a meager subsistence amid a needlessly devastated social and economic infrastructure. The war has sent some 3,300 U.S. soldiers home in plastic bags and wounded about 25,000 others. Many of those are so hideously damaged that “permanently disabled” is a gross euphemism. Plus, 25,000 is only those officially classed as wounded; of the 580,000 U.S. military participants in the first imperial incursion in Iraq, 30% were still on permanent disability from all causes (PTSD, “Gulf War Syndrome,” depleted uranium, other poisons, etc., ad nauseam) ten years later. Further, the war is currently bleeding the U.S. body politic of approximately \$8 billion per month and will cost \$2 trillion by 2010 if not escalated or ended by then.. But no such end is in sight, only the escalation, the clear demand by the U.S. electorate last November notwithstanding.

The position of and what is acceptable to the U.S. ruling class is indicated by the field of candidates already vying to be the next U.S. chief executive—i.e., the owners’ chauffeur of the ship of state, he or she who will steer the bidden course. Of the three leading contenders from each of the Republicrats and Democans, only Barak Obama is clearly and unequivocally opposed to the war. His candidacy, though, appears to be no more than a sounding board for how opposed the Dems must seem and advertizing for future attractions. Of the two likely nominees, Hillary Clinton refuses to repudiate her vote in favor of the war and has not articulated any plan or even intent for an expeditious exit. Verily, her position appears more a hand wringing (as opposed to zealous) stay-the-course than troops-out-now. Like the current administration, John McCain, despite his maverick facade, actually advocates more war, escalating the war so as to “win” and accepting nothing less.

Nor does the new Dem majority in Congress seem particularly inclined to end the war. Despite all the anti-war election rhetoric, it has so far managed only a jejune, nonbinding resolution disapproving of Bush the Lesser’s policy—and that only in the House of Representatives. They even financed the escalation. And when Bush called for expanding the U.S. military in this 2007 state of the union message, newly ascended Dem Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi led the ovation. Indeed, not a boo or a hiss was heard.

While the 2006 elections may not have told the U.S. ruling class anything it felt obliged to hear, however, the Iraqi resistance certainly has. It has put the imperialists on notice that the current war policy is a failure and that “staying the course” will make all their goals unattainable sooner rather than later. Unable to surrender any of those goals, rather than cut their losses, declare victory, and vacate the vicinity, the U.S. militarists have declared a “new” policy to “win” (essentially, more boots on the ground and one in Don Rumsfeld’s ass). The intent is apparently to delude the electorate that this new policy is a prelude to withdrawal and the resistance that it is a mere cosmetic response to political pressure, to substitute a few players and plays without moving the goal posts. The Bush cabal has succeeded in getting free reign to wage this war with lie after lie, the only lesson to it being that as long as the desired atrocity is a fait accompli by the time the lie is found out, there will be no adverse consequences. In fact, the new policy, hammered out only last fall by a secret panel convened by U.S. Joint Chiefs Chair Peter Pace is to “go long,” focusing on a long-term training, advising, counterinsurgency plan rather than a combat stance. That doesn’t sound like an exit strategy.

To implement this change of course, a military contingent with academic credentials has been summoned to replace the less successful, hammer-and-tongs occupiers. General David Petraes, himself a PhD who has written extensively on counterinsurgency and enjoyed a modicum of success in less hostile parts of Iraq, has been put in charge of implementing the new Iraq war policy. He’s surrounding himself with other PhD subordinates such as David Kilcullen, an Australian Army Lt. Colonel with long counterinsurgency experience; Lt. Colonel Douglas A. Oliphant, who won first place in a counterinsurgency writing contest sponsored by Petraes, and Achmed H. Hashim, a strategy professor at the Naval War College. These new dogs of war and their henchpeople will resort to the tested tools of imperialism: create a system of rats and surveillance and paramilitary police to divide the resistance from the people and kill its members and/or kill enough of the citizenry to get enough insurgents to undermine the resistance. They will try to get enough local people to do the dirty work to avoid human rights charges by easing the imperialist masters into the background. They will, of course, have a euphemistic description for the murder and mayhem this will entail like “spreading democracy” or “operation enduring freedom.” But the reality will be back to puppet imperialism.

The failed military policy stemmed from the U.S. political hierarchy, dominated by neoconservatives, apparently truly believing its forces would be welcomed as liberators by Iraqis with flags and flowers. The neocons thought that would enable them to readily install a grateful puppet regime that would not only raise a powerful army the U.S. could equip to do its bidding in the region, but would cede bases at which the U.S. could stash a few “tripwire” divisions as in post WW II Germany and Japan and even South



## Lawyers Guild Condemns Racist Arrests of Black Panthers

BY COMMITTEE FOR THE DEFENSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS  
From Issue 9, Spring 2007

### Evidence Against Men Obtained Through Torture

The National Lawyers Guild of the San Francisco Bay Area (NLGSF) condemns the arrests and prosecution of eight men believed to be former members of the Black Liberation Army as an attempt to validate political repression, retaliation and state torture...

The alleged crime, the killing of San Francisco police officer John V. Young, took place nearly three decades ago. In purposely removing the trial from the context of its time, the prosecution seeks to capitalize on the change in public consciousness surrounding the Civil Rights and Black Power movements and cast the defendants as violent militants. "There has never been any reliable evidence connecting these men to the alleged crime, but times have changed and prosecutors may believe this is the best shot they have," said Carlos Villarreal, Executive Director of the NLGSF.

"At the time people were more aware of the violence committed by law enforcement against African Americans and radical political movements." The state is also attempting to deny its involvement in torturing several of the defendants. As Stuart Hanlon, the attorney for one of the defendants, emphasizes, "people have to understand this is actual torture with cattle prods by New Orleans policemen, where San Francisco policemen were sitting outside the room, obviously knowing what was going on to get information – torture doesn't lead to the truth. It leads to what the torturers want to hear."

The Guild also sees the prosecution of these men as part of a renewed crackdown on activists that comes as law enforcement goes after environmental activists, animal rights activists, and real or perceived anarchists who rarely pose a threat to anyone.

"The government is attempting to prosecute these innocent men for crimes they did not commit on the basis of their political beliefs. We see this as part of a larger government campaign targeting social justice activists on the false premise of combating 'domestic terrorism.' Organizing against racism and police brutality should not make one vulnerable to state retaliation," said Mel Campagna, Chair of the National Lawyers Guild Anti-Racism Committee.

The National Lawyers Guild San Francisco Bay Area has

nearly 1,000 lawyer, law student, and legal worker members from Sacramento to San Jose. We seek to unite the lawyers, law students, legal workers, and jailhouse lawyers of America in an organization which shall function as an effective political and social force in the service of the people, to the end that human rights shall be regarded as more sacred than property interests.

## Comandante Filiberto Ojeda Rios – Presente!

BY JAAN KARL LAAMAN  
From Issue 10, Winter 2008

September 23, "Grito de Lares," marks the day when Puerto Ricans celebrate the 19th century Lares Uprising for Independence from Spain. Grito de Lares 2007 also marks the second anniversary of the FBI's cowardly assassination of Filiberto Ojeda Rios, leader and founder of Ejercito Popular Boricua (Puerto Rican Popular Army), commonly known as the Macheteros.

When Filiberto fell, he was 72 years old and he had a weapon in his hand defending his country, his people and his life. Filiberto devoted his entire life to working for justice for his people and for independence for his beloved island nation. He joins a sadly long but noble and righteous list of Puerto Rican Patriots, who have been imprisoned, exiled or murdered working for the Liberation of their Nation: Betances, Albizu, Lolita, Corretjer, Rafael, Camacho, Filiberto...

Comandante Filiberto worked hard for unity among Puerto Rican people. He would probably break into that warm smile he had, to know that in the 2 years since his death, many many Puerto Ricans have come together, even from varied political perspectives, in outrage at the FBI and U.S. government's action. The dream of Independence for Puerto Rico is alive and spreading, and the U.S. government's calculated assassination of this admired and respected elder leader has only helped to spread it more.

This September 23 and each one to follow will of course continue to raise the call and meaning of Grito de Lares, but it will now also raise the name and life of Filiberto Ojeda Rios and the Nation of Puerto Rico, surely, will come to be Free and Independent!

4strugglemag conveys it deep respect to Filiberto Ojeda Rios, his family and companeros and to the work of his life; Independence for Puerto Rico and revolutionary freedom and justice for all oppressed peoples. We stand in solidarity and support of these principles and goals.

UN PUEBLO UNIDO – JAMAS SERA VENCIDO  
LA LUCHA CONTINUA! VENCEREMOS!

## On Lynne Stewart

BY DAVID GILBERT  
From Issue 5, Fall 2005  
www.lynnestewart.org

[Radical human rights attorney Lynne Stewart has been falsely accused of helping terrorists. Now convicted, she faces 30 years in prison. On Tuesday, April 9, 2002, she was arrested and agents searched her Manhattan office for documents. She was arraigned before Manhattan federal Judge John Koetl. This is an obvious attempt by the U.S. government to silence dissent, curtail vigorous defense lawyers, and install fear in those who would fight against the U.S. government's racism, seek to help Arabs and Muslims being prosecuted for free speech and defend the rights of all oppressed people.]

You can't imagine how intense it was, the hurricane that swept into us, when we were busted in the notorious Brinks case of 1981. The lost of lives is always grim; in this case a shoot-out left a Brinks guard and two policemen dead.

On top of that, we were avowed revolutionaries, with an alliance of Whites and Blacks working under the leadership of a unit of the Black Liberation Army.

The police organizations and media were howling for blood; every court appearance was like walking into an armed camp during open hostilities; the one word used, incessantly, to define us was "terrorists." (Of course there was no mention of the government's illegal and murderous campaign, COINTELPRO, that had driven nonviolent



activists into underground resistance.)

With the tremendous demands on the handful of attorneys who would work with revolutionaries, we couldn't find a lawyer willing to defend me there in the middle of that storm and penniless.

Then Lynne Stewart stepped forward— doubly courageous because at that point she had little experience in high-stakes trials. Lynne was a staunch advocate and more. Her great warmth, her down to earth intelligence, her cheerfulness in the face of adversity helped us all get through the many tensions and crises we faced during two years of legal confrontations.

Lynne went on from that baptism of fire to take on some of the cases that most challenged government power—and to do a terrific job at it.

Her principles and success led to her being targeted. A decade ago, the government tried to disbar Lynne, picked her out to demand she reveal the sources of a client's payments, using a purported "anti-drug" law that was never used against lawyers who were regular counsel for big-time drug dealers.

When Lynne took Sheik Rahman's case, I was surprised because I strongly disagree with his politics. But when I thought about it I learned a lesson from her example: a defendant branded as a pariah deserves a vigorous defense. The government is completely disingenuous to feign indignation that Lynne went to the media; the prosecutor always has a high powered media strategy in cases like this, to create a pro-conviction jury pool and intense political pressure against any subsequent reversal on appeal.

They also use isolation to break down the defendant's will and ability to litigate effectively. The government is taking a playing field already heavily tilted in their favor and raising it virtually vertical with their gag orders and isolation.

Because she's a peerless defender of political prisoners, Lynne Stewart is now in danger of becoming one herself. As crucial as it is that we support and defend her, its even more important to understand that she's fighting for all of us.

Statements from U.S. Political Prisoners In Support of Palestine

From Issue 8, Fall 2006

On the Occasion of A Commemoration of Black September And Palestinian Political Prisoners, Boston, September 17, 2006

From Rafael Cancel Miranda:

The Palestinian and Puerto Rican people have a lot in common. We are two nations under attack, who face the same aggressor, though he may be called by different names.

Having spent 28 years of my life in the Anglo prisons of the United States, I can easily understand the plight of the men, women and Children of Palestine who find themselves in Israeli prisons. As we all know, Israel is an Anglo spawn. It has often been said that societies are judged by the way they treat their prisoners. If that’s the case, then we can conclude that the Anglo/U.S. and Israeli societies are extremely sadistic and demonic, given the crimes and tortures they’ve perpetrated against their prisoners. All the horror stories in the world are insufficient to convey the lack of humanity exhibited by these two aggressors, which are one and the same.

I admire the Palestinian people, because I know how much love and courage it takes to struggle with their determination. My people, the people of Puerto Rico are engaged in a similar struggle. I can say without fear of self deception that we will win; not only because truth and reason are on our side, but because we are ready to do whatever is necessary to secure the rights of our peoples. Receive my strong embrace and solidarity with our brothers and sisters imprisoned in Palestine.

Palante  
San Juan, Puerto Rico

From Russell “Maroon” Shoats, a New Afrikan/Black Political Prisoner, to the Palestinian Political Prisoners:

Having joined the ongoing struggle for self-determination for Afrikans born in the United States in 1967, i was then and still am now inspired by the valiant people of Palestine.

Since then i’ve clearly come to learn that both of our struggles are connected by our people’s equal desires to be free. So when you suffer, we suffer; when you make progress, we make progress; and when you win your freedom, we will also celebrate! Because in our hearts we too are Palestinians!

Ever forward to victory!  
“Straight Ahead,”  
Maroon

From Marilyn Buck

Greetings to all who stand for a fee, just, liberated Palestine. I was still an infant when Palestine was dismembered, hacked into pieces and driven off its land. It was 18 or 19 years thereafter before I heard that Palestine was alive, that there had not been the burial the imperialist and Zionist powers had hoped. Life coursed then as now through diaspora veins connecting the hearts of Palestinian people worldwide.

The will and resistance of the Palestinian people taught and inspired me along with other anti-imperialists and internationalists. I greet you and honor you who defend the Palestinian nation and its people. If only I could be present to embrace you, to stand beside you for your homeland.

Those who struggle for a lifetime are the bearers of the future!

From Albert Woodfox of the Angola 3

To my Palestinian brothers and sisters. Herman Wallace and myself greet you from the belly of the beast! (Prison.) We would so much rather be there in person, to honor your courage and determination against the Zionist state of Israel! For the last 35 years, we have watched the Palestinian people resist the genocide of Israel against the Palestinians while the western world and media tries to make the world see you as a people unfeeling, without love of family, or people of the world.

Your fight for the destiny and control of the Palestinian people’s future is both inspiring and courageous! The world must not rest until the Palestinian people has their own state, with sovereign rights and East Jerusalem as its capital! I salute your courage, I salute your sacrifice, I salute your determination, I salute your victory!

From Debbie Sims Africa of the MOVE 9

The MOVE 9 are members of the revolutionary MOVE organization imprisoned since 1978 after a police assault on their headquarters in Powelton Village, Philadelphia. In 1985 the government dropped a bomb on the MOVE house on Osage Avenue in Philadelphia, killing 11 people, including 5 children. Salute and solidarity to all our strong, loyal committed revolutionary sisters and brothers in Palestine. The committed example that you continue to set in your country is being felt by all of us here in the USA too. The Move Organization is generating a united, revolution-

Although Hip-hop has a strong influence over black youth, and has the potential to be a valuable medium in which to cultivate conscious thought, at the present moment, it’s not a garden from which blacks can harvest leaders. Therefore, I believe the juxtaposition of the roles of Hip-hop and the Hip-hop generation will be ineffectual. As leaders, it is incumbent upon us to find a way to use Hip-hop, since it’s one of many viable tools we can use in our struggle against oppression, as well as to educate not just the Hip-hop generation, but also the “Me Generation.” Therefore, the questions which ought to be asked are how can we get Hip-hop to influence conscious thought, and which role should the Hip-hop Generation be charged.

Starting with the latter, I suggest that Prisoners of Conscious be living examples of what we will command of the Hip-hop Generation. This means we will no longer stand on a soap box and preach the need for education and unity. Instead, we will educate and facilitate unity of will, and serve as ambassadors of the struggle. But before this is done, I believe Prisoners of Conscious should openly apologize to our community and Political Prisoners for whatever destruction we’ve caused before becoming conscious. Without this apology, we leave a wound we’ve inflicted to go without treatment. Hence, our walkin the path of righteousness will not be accepted as sincere since we’ve failed to acknowledge our short comings, and our followers will be unable to perceive us as being able to identify the needs of the community.

The Hip-hop and Me Generation ought to be charged with the responsibility of being self-reliant and self-determined through programs designed and developed by Prisoners of Conscious. Such programs should be based on economic and political growth within the community.

To effectuate conscious thought throughout the Hip-hop and Me Generation, Prisoners of Conscious and Political Prisoners need to start discourse with Conscious Rappers, who in turn could push for opinionated political columns to be added to Hip-hop magazines such as Vibe, Source and XXL. These columns will expose the Hip-hop and Me Generation to the hidden nature of politics, and make them aware of the social conditions that plague our communities. These columns, I believe, will also produce more dialogue amongst aspiring rappers, and as a result would produce more conscious rap without Hip-hop losing its flavor.

Furthermore, the Hip-hop and Me Generation, as loyal as it has been to Hip-hop, have to be shown the reality of their relationship with Hip-hop. This will cultivate ground so positive change can take place. For example, Rappers are immortalized as if they are demigods, without sin, and are creatures who could do no wrong. Therefore, the Hip-hop and Me Generation ought to recognize that the people they hear and see in music videos are entertainers, and not the voice of the Hip-hop community. For the Hip-hop and Me Generation are the voice of the Hip-hop community.

Akili’s suggestion was on the mark, since politically conscious prisoners like myself find it essential to dialogue with Political Prisoners before picking up the torch.

Black August

BY MARILYN BUCK  
From Issue 13, Summer 2009

Would you hang on a cliff’s edge

sword-sharp, slashing fingers  
while jackboot screws stomp heels  
on peeled-flesh bones  
and laugh  
“let go! die, damn you, die!”  
could you hang on  
20 years, 30 years?

20 years, 30 years and more  
brave Black brothers buried  
in US koncentration kamps  
they hang on  
Black light shining in torture chambers  
Ruchell, Yogi, Sundiata, Sekou,  
Warren, Chip, Seth, Herman, Jalil,  
and more and more  
they resist: Black August

Nat Turner insurrection chief executed: Black August  
Jonathan, George dead in battle’s light: Black August  
Fred Hampton, Black Panthers, African Brotherhood  
murdered: Black August  
Kuwasi Balagoon, Nuh Abdul Quyyam captured warriors dead: Black August  
Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Ella Baker, Ida B. Wells  
Queen Mother Moore – their last breaths drawn fighting death: Black August

Black August: watchword  
for Black liberation for human liberation  
sword to sever the shackles

light to lead children of every nation to safety  
Black August remembrance  
resist the amerikkan nightmare  
for life



sight as the rest. And even if the question were answered, it could still have undergone periodic review and adjustment when necessary throughout these long years.

So, let me start anew in response to the question: how can one support PPs? I believe it can be done effectively through an organized structure, one that has clearly defined measurable objectives and freedom of u.s. PPs ought to be a main objective. And in this regard I believe PP support work should include an international support component as a means by which socially conscious people in the global community can contribute support and resources.

This support should seek a forum before the world body (u.n.) to bring attention to the plight of u.s. PPs and the Black Liberation Struggle. It should aim at organizing a “Truth and Reconciliation Hearing” (TARH) similar to the one headed by Bishop Tutu in South Africa, thereby devising a mechanism through which u.s. PPs can be released. This organized structure should explore use of “dual-citizenship” for our PPs in foreign countries as another means of securing their release.

These support initiatives can serve as that “more involved” support work in setting our PPs free. Furthermore, everyone in this endeavor can find productive work that he or she can do. Once reorganized, which is now being done, Jericho can satisfy the requirements that I’ve outlined. In due course a Jericho update shall follow in 4strugglemag. These ideas are not exhausted; others will weigh-in with their own. Finally, as to Hip-Hop and its role in struggle, I defer my discussion of it to a later date. In solidarity...

## Response to Akili’s Letter

BY ROBERT PHILLIPE  
From Issue 8, Fall 2006

In Akili’s letter he asked how we – the hip hop generation – fit into the struggle to support political prisoners and prisoners of conscious? First, I believe we need to defend all political prisoners that have fallen victim of state repression. Whatever may be the facts of the political accusations against them, it is our moral and political duty to support them. However my feelings waiver when it comes to prisoners of conscious since most of them became conscious only after incarceration, and have not been tried and tested as political prisoners have.

Supporting political prisoners means we must defend their political ideas whether they were correct in principal, ill-timed, or even counter productive. Nevertheless, many of the hip hop generation have few illusions about political prisoners’ ideas of freedom from oppression and exploitation by any means necessary, and the concrete consequences they have. Yet, what matters, and what the hip hop generation fails to realize, is that political prisoners had

the courage to act on their ideas and convictions. In other words, they had the courage to defend the community and fight oppression. This courage is nowhere present in the hip hop generation.

Speaking from the perspective of a hip hop generationer and that of a prisoner of conscious, the hip hop generation is blind to the massive structural violence which mars our society and which they contribute to with their negative lyrics and materialist imagery, and they’re blind to those in power who use hip hop as a means to maintain their social positions and maximize their profits.

The hip hop generation is so caught up in the proliferation of gangsta rap that it has become our mentality and corrupted our youth. The conscious era of the sixties and seventies is lost on many of us who are concerned only with living the lifestyle portrayed by hip hop. Consequently, the message of conscious rappers is all but drowned out.

To concern ourselves with the issue of political prisoners means putting theory back on its feet. By this I mean taking on the responsibility of acting on our ideas and convictions just as our political prisoners have done. However, today’s hip hop generation is blind to how this can be done. Therefore, we remain ignorant to it by regarding consciousness as a taboo. Yet, today, as in the past, consciousness is the language of preparation and application. It is imperative to break through all the litanies and spectacular traffic of hip hop and reappropriate practical theory. Without social consciousness and its application, the advocacy and support of political prisoners remains rhetorical.

Our role in supporting political prisoners therefore begins with self since we lack social consciousness. This, of course, suggests that our role should be that of students, to facilitate forward movement in the struggle. Only with a conscious state of being and the political awareness of the world around us can we see what’s expected of us. Without this and the application of practical theory, the hip hop generation is destined for nothing more than continued booty shaking.

## Response to Akili’s Letter

BY LASYAH M. PALMER  
From Issue 8, Fall 2006

At a time when political prisoners are dying of old age and black leadership is increasingly moving away from the black community or working within the box of our oppressor, Akili’s letter, although formulated around Hip-hop and the Hip-hop generation is basically asking for a much needed medium in which Political Prisoners and Prisoners of Conscious can dialogue. A medium where the torch could successfully passed on to a younger generation, who shares the same fervent desire for freedom of the people.

ary vibration to you and all political prisoners around the world through our unending fight for freedom and justice. We are linked together as one to confront and expose the demon intimidation tactics the oppressor uses to beat down and kill off the fighting spirit in all freedom fighters. We must keep fighting back, no matter what or how things may seem. We are obligated to show others the urgent need for change and guide them in the direction of revolution. We must never let ourselves be divided despite any so-call differences, because finally, we have the most important thing in common our fight against the enemy, the oppressor, the enslaver, this system, and any difference among us is secondary to that. What this system fears most is unity because they know unity is power. Power of the people is the key to bring this system to its knees.

We have committed our lives to revolution. Our men, women, children, our infants have lost their lives, they were murdered by this system. We know all of you have lost family, loved ones, and comrades too. The MOVE 9 have been unjustly imprisoned for almost 30 years, we are innocent. But despite our innocence, we’ve been beat jailed and had family members murdered, not because we are guilty of any crime but because we stand up against this rotten, corrupt government and fight for what is right and because we expose these government officials, judges, and police for the diabolical monsters they are. We know all of you have suffered injustices there, the stories we’ve heard affect us personally and pushes us to fight harder, cause while we are located in different parts of the globe we understand and can relate to what you are going through. Stay strong my brothers and sisters and know that we will not let the lives of our family, your family, any freedom fighter be in vain. We will never stop fighting this system. The seed for this revolution is planted, and though we may not cross paths in our life time, our roots will be planted in the same soil. LONG LIVE ALL FREEDOM FIGHTERS LONG LIVE THE REVOLUTION!

From Bill Dunne

Salutations and solidarity to the participants in this commemoration of Black September, a landmark event in the history of popular resistance to exploitation and oppression!

The brutal suppression of the Palestinian people’s aspirations to self-determination by the Jordanian monarchy in September of 1970 is only incidentally an illustration of the inhumanity of the ruling class. History has shown us ad nauseam there is no limit to the murder and mayhem agencies of repression will inflict on the people in furtherance of their masters’ interests. Nor is the event more than incidentally a defeat. People were killed and injured and forced to leave their homes and communities and cast into poverty, and the objective of Palestinian liberation was not attained. The courage of the Palestinian people, however,

was indelibly written in blood and their will was not broken.

The point, then, of remembering Black September is not to mourn the losses and condemn the oppression, though doing so goes without saying. It is to celebrate the spirit of the Palestinian people who would rise up for freedom notwithstanding their long odds against armor and artillery and aircraft, who rise up in resistance to the depredations of king and capital, who rise up in continuing struggle against imperialist thuggery from one generation to another and yet another. Memory must not dwell on the price of pursuing life, liberty, and happiness. Instead, it must focus on affirmation of the indomitable consciousness that impels people to that pursuit and to accept nothing less. So acknowledge the tragedy of Black September, but commend and support the Palestinian commitment to justice and protracted struggle it represented. And let us hope it is contagious!

Moreover, we must extend that recognition and support to the Palestinian people’s current resistance to Israeli aggression. Their cause is our cause, ‘cause what is visited on them will eventually be visited on others of the oppressed class as soon as the oppressor class wants something they have. If we, through our silence, allow the visitation to be legitimized on Palestinians in Gaza and Lebanon and the West Bank and the people with and among whom they’ve made their homes, we will hasten the time when those tactics are used against us.

The Palestine plight is not some far-away issue affecting only some “foreign” group. Contemplating my first thunderstorm in years as it raged across the patch of sky visible from the federal transit camp’s hole 7500 miles west of occupied Palestine, I could not escape images of the human-made thunder and lightening raining down on the people of South Lebanon and the much bloodier consequences thereof. Just because they were only images and not reality to me did nothing to ameliorate the atrocity—induced anger and sadness—or the uncomfortable knowledge I was and remain in the hands of the same government of little Eichmanns that enables and supports the slaughter of Palestinians and Lebanese by the Israeli military whose signs and sounds disturbed me in that remote dark concrete corner. That discomfort is only the thin edge of the wedge.

And I must also recognize you, who took time from your lives and your own struggles with the vagaries of life under late capitalism to recognize and support Palestinian resistance to oppression. Such is the way to realizing our human commonality, our rights as humans and the deprivation thereof. Such is the path to building true international solidarity against exploitation and oppression. Such is the road to revolution.

The future holds promise!

### From Byron Shane Chubbuck

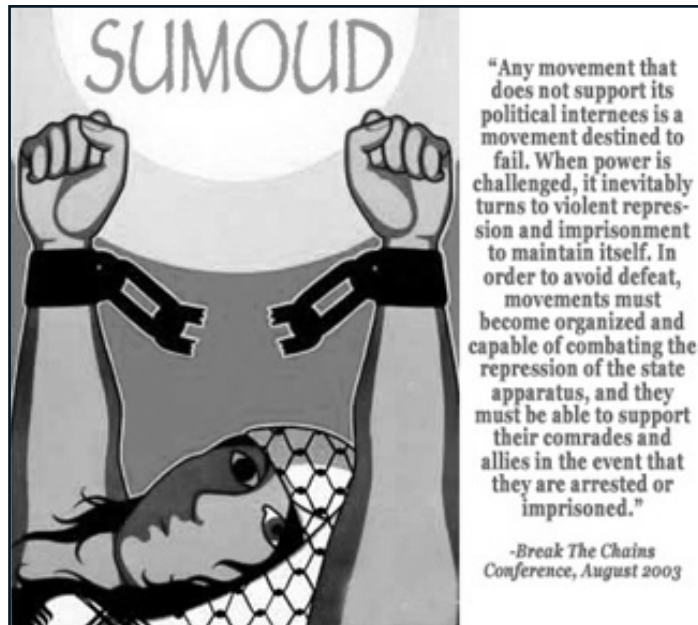
Greeting Brothers and Sisters of Earth  
we are all connected we  
are all related!

I love the Palestinian  
people because they have the guts  
and heart to stand up  
against the greatest source of lies  
on earth.

“The Zionist”  
Tribesmen of Cain.  
Those “brood of vipers” who  
Seek to destroy sovereignty  
on a global level. And fully  
intend on destroying the will  
of all arab peoples who refuse  
to obey the World Banks, Central  
Banking madness.

Stay Strong  
warriors!  
Fight tooth and  
nail like  
American Indian  
Movements always have.  
Stop at nothing  
Time is very  
limited now.

Love and respect  
Oso Blanco de Aztlan.



### From Jaan Laaman: Freedom for Palestine

Solidarity with Palestinian Political Prisoners. I salute this Benefit and all of you in attendance this Sunday night, in support of the thousands of Palestinian Political Prisoners, with real enthusiasm.

The Palestinian People’s heroic struggle for the right to exist, to end Israeli occupation, and to have their own independent nation has been going on for such a long time. As a young man in the 1960s, it was the liberation struggles of people in Vietnam, South Africa, Ireland and Palestine that inspired and informed me and many others then. Here we are in the 21st century, with all the multilayered changes and advances the world has seen, and still the Palestinian people live as occupied and oppressed people.

The over 10,000 Palestinian Political Prisoners, which includes dozens of young teenagers, at least 100s of women, as well as thousands of men, suffer the most of all Palestinians. The Zionist Israeli security forces have long been notorious for mistreatment and even torture against Palestinians.

The majority of Palestinian people today have only known of life under Israeli military occupation, and often living in refugee camps. For the past 4 decades, year in – year out, there have always been thousands upon thousands of Palestinians languishing in Israeli prisons. Presently there are over 10,000 in captivity. Israeli prisons are hard, but the spirit and strength of the Palestinian Political Prisoners, their desire to free their nation of foreign occupation, with all the injustice, humiliation, and terror that the Israeli Zionist state inflicts on all of Palestine, remains firm and brilliant.

Political prisoners in America have long supported and stood in solidarity with Palestinian Political Prisoners and we continue to do so today. We know that you will create an independent Nation of Palestine. We salute you. We hope for your survival and we encourage people here in America to support you and the Palestinian struggle for freedom.

Free All Political Prisoners in Palestine!  
Free All Political Prisoners in America!

### From David Gilbert

Israel’s apartheid-like occupation of Palestine is a most blatant and brutal violation of human rights. That reality combined with the courageous resistance there make the struggle a front-line in the world today. I urge everyone who is committed to humanity and to freedom

ger percentage of the buying market.

We should not forget that rap/hip hop is a profoundly global industry and art form. In the book, *The Vinyl Ain’t Final: Hip Hop and ‘the Globalization of Black Popular Culture* (London/Ann Arbor, Mi.: Pluto Press, 2006) [1]. Basu & S. J. Lemelle, editors], we learn that hip hop is both popular, resistant, and transformative also, in places like Cuba, Paris, Tokyo (Japan), Johannesburg (South Africa), Kreuzberg (a Turkish district in Berlin, Germany), London, Tanzania, Samoa, and beyond.

Black and Latino kids, playing with stuff found in attics, and the garbage, created an art form that rocks the world! That, is Power! And, given the needs of indigenous communities, to resist insidious forms of neo-colonialism, or cultural colonialism, many young people find a kind of freedom in hip hop that another generation found in the improvisation of jazz.

So, when we remind young folks of their creative potential, of their deep, hidden power, we remind them of their role, to truly spread the message of freedom, liberation, or loosening the bonds of oppression — for all! The hip hop generation does indeed have a role in struggle, especially if they are given the tools, the raw material from which true culture grows. It’s our job to teach, to reach, and to sow seeds.

3) Prisoners & other politicized persons should see it as our class, cultural, political duty to try to reach out to young folks, both here in the joint, and in the Outside Joint, to expand their frames of reference.

Also, we should communicate, to the extent we can, to those young artists of consciousness who are kicking it out raw, about the struggle. They need to know that their work it appreciated, for, if they are truly conscious, then, no doubt, they are suffering from the loss of capital that such consciousness entails.

Decades ago, the great Nina Simone broke new artistic ground with her pungent, combative “Mississippi Goddam.” The late alto/falsetto singer, Curtis Mayfield lifted hearts in struggle with his magnificent lead on the Impressions’ “Keep On Pushin’.”

As a young Panther on duty in the office, Mayfield’s music got me through more days than Marx.

When Public Enemy did “Fight the Power” they rocked it, and woke up a generation.

We can never underestimate the power of music to move people, and to light fires in the soul.

We should be ever ready, to pass the matches.

Ona Move! Fight the Power!

## On Bro. Akili’s Suggestion

BY HERMAN BELL  
From Issue 8, Fall 2006

Written as a letter to the editor in 4struggle magazine issue seven p.46, bro. Akili calls for dialogue to discern the responsibility of “prisoners of conscious” (POC) and the role of Hip-Hop in contemporary social struggle. He feels that the hip-hop generation — buried under a mountain of “illusory success, gold chains, big houses, endorsement deals worth millions is now the driving force of american commerce, and is now the driving force of everything else.” As members of the Hip-Hop generation, he frames this discussion by juxtaposing the role of (POC) and Hip-Hop in the struggle. He argues that our true leaders are aging and that new ones are indiscernable. He observes that: rallies, world-wide marches, petitions to the u.n. and all the “asking for justice” from an unjust system hasn’t been working.

While we defer to the advice of our seniors and elders and weigh their words carefully, our young people ought to feel it incumbent upon them to exercise “self-initiative” when exploring and developing new ideas. (Those were my initial thoughts as regards the role of POC). Chairman Mao says: We know the taste of fruit by eating it and that practice is the criterion of all truth. Imagine the state of Black affairs in the 1960s had our leadership acquiesced to the pressures and intimidation of southern white supremacist... Let us exercise faith in our talents and abilities. Let us be bold and steadfast in our beliefs and know that we can succeed at whatever we set out to do.

As regards to (POC) or political prisoner (PP) support work, over the years I’ve received letters asking how can one support PPs and I had no real answer to give. While it’s good to have “legal support,” whether one is starting, is in the middle or at the end of his sentence, some kind of legal support is helpful; though much of it depends largely on the legal strategy being pursued by the imprisoned individual. Some of our PPs have enjoyed support consisting mainly of fundraisers, legal counsel, minor investigative work along with some negligible press educating people about their case. This support also include “care packages,” periodic visits, letters and the like.

So when the question “how can I support you or support PPs?” was asked of me, I knew the question entailed far more than the above, because the kind of support PPs require and need is decidedly more involved than what I’ve described above. Yet, in the mind of supporters as well as in the mind of recipients of it, the aforesaid has defined PP support work over the years — at least that’s my take of it. Clearly, this suggests that the question of how can I support PPs has gone largely unanswered and that no collective effort was ever devoted to answering it. So what does PP support work actually entail? I am as guilty of this critical over-



## Akili's Letter: A Response

BY MUMIA ABU-JAMAL  
From Issue 8, Fall 2006

In 4strugglemag [Issue 7, Summer 2006], Bro. Akili addresses the challenges facing politically conscious, and politically active prisoners when it comes to hip hop, and its potential when it comes to reaching members of the hip hop generation.

Specifically, he raises 3 main questions: 1) How has hip hop influenced consciousness of the hip hop generation?; 2) Does the hip hop generation have a role in struggle today? (and, if so, what is it?); and 3) What should PPOC/POCs do, to utilize hip hop as a bridge (or vehicle) to support PP/POWs?

His letter is certainly timely, especially given the unique role which hip hop plays in everyday Black life and youth consciousness, and it therefore deserves serious thought and reply.

Briefly, I will seriously try to do so.

1) There is no serious question but that hip hop has seriously influenced and impacted Black consciousness, and youth consciousness today. The question is, to what end?

Initially, we should be clear in our terms, so as not to further confuse the issue.

This requires, I believe, that we differentiate between rap/hip hop which is broadcast over commercial TV/radio, and that which is often traded, distributed, or even commercially produced, but never given airplay.

Some readers may know that I was quite critical of Tupac (before his assassination) for the kind of stuff that he released after leaving prison. Being an RnB, Reggae and Jazz head, I was on the outside, looking, and listening in.

When I discussed this with a younger Brother, he actually gave me an in-depth education on the genre, and Pac's work, that those only listening on the radio (or viewing the tube) wouldn't get. He explained, and then sampled several of Pac's pieces that were profoundly militant, and anti-establishment, and that openly called for rumbling against the oppressor forces. I had no knowledge of these works. The Brotha explained that Pac's best, and hardest stuff never got aired, precisely because it was so hard-core.

I learned an important lesson.

We can't judge an artist by that which the capitalist culture vulture airs on its media. We have to investigate.

We also can't underestimate Tupac's profound cultural and even political impact, nor limit it to his music. Several books have been published, both by and about him, that young

folks who are true hip hop heads are reading, and in these works, they are being exposed to a true political thinker, who studied deeply into the nature of the beast, and whose work represented a cultural and political engagement.

For example, in his posthumously published *The Rose that Grew in Concrete* (New York:Pocket Books, 1999), Tupac's poem, "Liberty Needs Glasses", gives voice to the fundamental injustice of America:

excuse me but Lady Liberty needs glasses  
and so does Mrs. Justice by her side  
both the broads R blind as bats  
Stumbling thru the system  
Justice bumped into Mutulu and  
Trippin' on Geronimo Pratt  
But stepped right over Oliver  
And his crooked partner Ronnie  
Justice stubbed her Big Toe on Mandela  
And Liberty was misquoted by the Indians  
slavery was a learning phase  
Forgotten without a verdict  
while Justice is on a rampage  
4 endangered surviving Black males  
I mean really if anyone really valued life  
and cared about the masses  
They'd take 'em both 2 Pen Optical  
and get 2 pairs of glasses [p.136]

This is political poetry, as ornery and revolutionary as anything penned by Langston Hughes or Sonia Sanchez. It speaks not only of injustice as an abstract, but speaks of political prisoners by name, and also critiques the inherent injustice of the State (Ronnie Reagan and Oliver North).

If a hip hop head contacts a PP/POW/POC/PPOC, it would be well to recommend this work by Tupac, so that they can read their hero's work, and imbibe it deeply from the source.

2) The hip hop generations, like every generation of Africans in America, is drafted into the struggle, whether s/he wants to be, or not. I do not mean here to confuse the regular fan, or consumer, with the artist or 'producer.'

For the average fan, life here in the states is an unmitigated hell.

In his/her quest to 'keep it real', the materialistic, 'I got good shit/you ain't got nuthin' rap won't hold them for long, simply because it ain't 'real.'

We should remember that in the economic dynamics that drive the industry, some 70% of customers of hip hop are young white males. Many folks in urban, unresourced environments either boost their radio signals, tape one guys CD, or hustle to make it happen. It is telling that Black audiences, even with marked population deficits, are not, a big-

to make support for Palestinian self-determination, including full and fair provisions for the needs and rights of all Palestinians in the diaspora, a top priority.

### From Jalil Muntaqim

Bismillah Ir Rahman Nir Raheem:  
As Salaam Alaikum  
Revolutionary Greetings Friends and Supporters:

It is my prayer this message finds all of you in the very best of health and continued high fighting spirits. Today, the Jericho Movement Boston Chapter joins with other progressive people and groups to acknowledge and honor the Palestinian Independence Movement in all of its various forms of struggle. For Jericho to join in sponsoring this event is to essentially extend the solidarity and support of all U.S. political prisoners, many of whom have been in prison over 3 decades. This solidarity speaks to an understanding of our fighting a common enemy, extending this understanding there continues to be a need to struggle in our mutual self-interest and political determination.

When different peoples, different oppressed peoples are fighting against the same enemy, then we need to recognize that solidarity means struggle. I cannot truly be in solidarity with the Palestinian Independence Movement without being willing to engage and confront your enemy who is also my enemy. Our struggle is not divorced from yours, but rather our front line struggle is your rear front struggle, while your front line struggle is our rear front struggle. Hence, anti-imperialist and anti-zionist initiatives in the U.S. serve to free us from white supremacy and national oppression. Our fight against white supremacy and national oppression serves to free you of U.S. imperialism and proxy wars in support of zionism.

When we in North America fail to act, fail to confront and engage our common enemy we have betrayed you and our words of solidarity become empty and hollow. Therefore, it is the duty of political activist and progressive folks in this country to build a mass and popular movement that specifically challenges white supremacy and national oppression here. The struggle in the U.S. needs to grow and evolve in a consistent level of resistance that corresponds to—if not exceeds—the degree of oppression and reaction by U.S. imperialism.

Unfortunately, that is not happening here, and because of this failing, more Palestinians are dying who could have possibly been saved. Harsh truths, but truths none the less, and it is far time that progressive forces in the U.S. come to terms with this reality.

In this regard, and in terms of Jericho Amnesty Movement, I have recently proposed that for the 10th Year Anniversary of Jericho '08, that Jericho organize a national conference,

march and demonstration to be held in New York City. The theme of the national determination would be "When the U.S. Won't—The World Will Recognize the Existence of U.S. Political Prisoners". Ultimately, such a national determination will serve to demonstrate before the United Nations and the world the U.S. has political prisoners, and these political prisoners represent a legacy of struggle opposing U.S. imperialism, opposing white supremacy and opposing national oppression. By building and raising the issue of U.S. political prisoners onto the national debate and in the international community, we will be undermining and exposing U.S. imperialism and zionism, providing pragmatic support to those engaging U.S. imperialism around the world. Solidarity means struggle, and our struggle is united with those fighting our common enemy. But it will only be when we take responsibility, unite and fight for our own political prisoners, can we truly say we are in solidarity with any other peoples' fighting our common enemy. We are on the front lines, and our captured and confined are front line activists which Jericho has sought to represent in a national determination.

Therefore, I ask all those attending this event to join with Jericho in support of this proposal for the 10th Year Anniversary of Jericho, to tell the world we join them in solidarity by continuing the fight here, asking them to condemn U.S. imperialism for its inhumane treatment of U.S. political prisoners.

When we strengthen our resolve and capacity to confront U.S. imperialism here, we will in essence be unified with the Palestinian peoples in their war against U.S. imperialism and zionism in Palestine. Let our solidarity be more than words or financial gratuity, when failing to provide same support for our own U.S. political prisoners. Rather, when we fight to free and liberate our own, we will weaken our common enemy ensuring our comrades overseas are better able to be victorious in their many and varied battles. That would truly be solidarity in the meaning of struggle.

Mas Salaam—Remember—We Are Our Own Liberators!

### From Hanif Shabazz Bey

The recent Zionist aggression in which the world witnessed Israeli war planes drop cluster bombs on helpless Lebanese children was precipitated by the U.S. government's greed for oil, as the attack was actually staged so the U.S. and Zionist Israel can secure control over the Eastern Mediterranean coastline for the shipping of millions of barrels of oil, now coming out of the recently inaugurated "BTC" pipeline.

The Balfour Declaration in 1918 was invoked to quench the imperialist thirst for land and oil, as was the European incursion in 1948. The erecting of the Apartheid Wall in occupied Palestine, in an effort to stifle the economical livelihood of the Palestinian people is not seen as an emblem of

power, but rather as a harbinger of weakness. It also shows the Zionist fear and lack of confidence, and serves as a reminder of the strength and resolve of the spirit within the Palestinian populace.

All the freedom loving people of the world are inspired by the Palestinian Resistance to imperialist aggression for the past 100 years. In time the world Intifada will escalate and drive imperialism from the face of the earth.

We stand with you and we support your efforts.

#### From Herman Bell

To the Palestinian people, their political prisoners and detainees held in Israeli jails. To our brothers and sisters in struggle, we U.S. political prisoners and prisoners of war extend greetings and solidarity and commend you for your stout-hearted resistance to Zionist occupation of your land. Your dogged resolve to expel them is admired and respected more than ever. We recognize your plight and honor your historic resistance to this occupation and aggression.

Across the border from you—in Lebanon, in Iraq, in Afghanistan, in mother Afrika, and in the belly of the beast itself, the same war against U.S. imperialist designs and its quest for global domination wages on. And at every turn babies cry, and mothers grieve; and sons, daughters, husbands and wives are martyred. In Gaza, a family of beachgoers is cut down by Zionist tank shells as they recline on a lonely stretch of sand to catch some sun and much needed respite from the stress of bombs, tanks, and overflying warplanes. On a war-torn street in the West Bank, captured by television before a global audience, the figures of a father and son are riddled with bullets as they huddled desperately behind the shelter of a wooden barrel from withering Zionist firepower.

After a long train of abuses, people reject injustices and they eventually respond aggressively. This is what usually creates political prisoners and prisoners of war and is why we gather here at this time to honor and immortalize your implacable spirit in tenaciously resisting Zionist occupation of your homeland. Therefore, as you have ably demonstrated, we categorically reject the prescribed reality of long suffering and acceptance of our plight served up by the forces of power and greed. Our vision is one that dank prison cells, truncheons, electrodes, waterboarding and the like cannot hope to alter or forestall. To coin a phrase: “we claim no easy victories and tell no lies.” And we shall remain a vigilant and firm supporter of our Palestinian brothers and sisters, as we stay the course in our own struggle ‘til victory is won.

#### From Sundiata Acoli

Greetings, Bros, Sisters and Comrades,

It's good to see you all honoring Palestinian freedom fighters. They have long borne the main brunt of the fight against U.S. imperialism in the Mid-East. They are doing there what we who want freedom should be doing here—and one day will do here. Meanwhile I send my warmest solidarity to the Palestinian political prisoners and may we continue to struggle in solidarity until we and all oppressed people are free worldwide! In struggle and solidarity.

#### From Bashir Hameed

Bismallah ir Rahman ir Raheem  
As Salaamu Alaykum,

I would like to express my solidarity with my Palestinian sisters and brothers around the world in memory of both Black September and their continuous heroic struggle being waged by them around the world.

Their intifadas and ceaseless struggle against the forces of oppression are an inspiration to us all and all peace loving people the world over. I salute you all and I pray that Allah will continue to guide, bless and reward us all. Be well and continue to intensify our struggle.

In solidarity.



## A Letter from Akili

BY AKILI CASTLIN  
From Issue 7, Summer 2006

Dear 4strugglemag folks...

I just finished the last issue of 4struggle, and it seems the printed version is growing by leaps and bounds.

The purpose of this quick note is to make a suggestion. I noticed a couple of the articles hit on a common dilemma we politicized prisoners of conscious seem to have. The main questions are how do we fit into the struggle to support PP/POWs? What should our role be? What's expected of us? Also, How do we settle and come to terms with the new contradictions living and growing up in these times present? What I mean is for us, the “hip hop generation,” to use a catch phrase, the need for struggle or (better yet) the avenues for struggle have been somewhat buried under a mountain of illusory success, gold chains, big houses, endorsement deals worth millions of dollars, etc., etc.

The hip hop culture as screwed as it is by big corporations is now the driving force of American commerce, so of course it's the driving force of everything that goes with that: oppression, dope, capitalism, war, etc etc.

My question is, how would you feel about doing a hip hop issue, or section where we can juxtapose hip hop's role and our job as members of the hip hop generation and PPOC/POCs. You could set it off by asking 3 or so questions in the next issue. I would suggest something like:

1. How has hip hop influenced consciousness of the hip hop generation?
2. Does the Hip Hop Generation have a role in struggle today? What is it?
3. What should PPOC/POCs be doing, or how should we be using hip hop to bridge the gap and support PP/POWs?

That will give some of the brothers and sisters time to collect their thoughts and send in some articles, poems, etc. The point is that we are losing our true leadership. You cats aren't getting any younger, sitting in these hell holes and the system is constantly mouthing into new forms of keeping PP/POWs off the streets and out of the limelight.

For example here on the doc of the bay – they just implemented a system now where they've taken all the old solid cats like Hugo and others who've been struggling, fighting, and not bending, breaking, or cracking, for all those years under the worst conditions the state can offer, all while still educating the next generation like myself, and stuck

them in 3 or 4 units away from the rest of the population in the SHU. So now you've got isolation, in isolation, in isolation. They've created a super SHU, within the SHU to deliberately keep the older guys away from the younger ones. No guidance. No leadership. No experience. So what do you think will happen – all we have to do is look at our communities for the answer! Chaos, petty criminals pretending to be leaders, etc. etc.

Not to mention the fact that the rallies, the world wide marches, the petitions to the UN...and all the asking for justice from an unjust system, government...isn't going to, hasn't been working by itself. Someone...a group of someone's have to begin to take up the mantle of responsibility just as the PP/POWs did for us, and address the need for liberation of all illegally held prisoners of war and political prisoners, with direct action.

This is the type of direction the politicized prisoners of conscious and prisoners of conscious need to receive. This is the message hip hop must begin to send. I think a good place to start is with 4struggle, by opening up that dialogue...and a section on the role of hip hop and PPOC/POCs who are part of the hip hop generation will do that just fine.

Strength and continued courage,

Akili (Aron Castlin)

*Editor's note:*

*4strugglemag welcomes and endorses Akili's suggestion. Political prisoners are a very small part of the overall 2 1/2 million prisoners in America today. We of course continue to stand for the revolutionary principles, morality and struggle our lives are dedicated to, and we will continue to contribute as we can.*

*There are thousands upon thousands of revolutionary minded prisoners, “Prisoners of Conscious and Political Prisoners of Conscious (POC, PPOC)” as Akili names them, within prisons across America today. The majority of these people are young men and women of color and they are and will be, the leaders, thinkers and actors in the coming wave of survival and liberation struggle.*

*The three questions Akili proposed are a good starting point for a wide discussion, for both prisoners and people outside. 4strugglemag will help facilitate this dialog by printing material we receive. This material can be a letter or essay, graphics, poetry or rhymes. We will reserve a section in the next issue (to begin this discussion, and as it continues we can devote more space or an entire issue to this question.*

*Communicate to Educate-Educate to Liberate!*