

Who Are New Afrikan Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War?

During the past twenty years a very active theoretical struggle has unfolded around the New Afrikan Independence Movement's stand on New Afrikan citizens held in U.S. jails and prisons. A major subject of this struggle has been the evolving definition of New Afrikan Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War.

A tendency within the Movement has recently arisen which believes it necessary to make a sharp distinction between New Afrikan and non-New Afrikan (e.g.. "black") political prisoners and prisoners of war. Two reasons are put forth for making such distinctions: 1) the New Afrikan Independence Movement needs to strengthen its ideological and structural base; 2) the struggle to assert New Afrikan nationality is a form of the struggle between contending ideologies.

The Need to Assert New Afrikan Nationality

The struggle for an advanced, comprehensive and ideologically consistent political line within the New Afrikan Independence Movement is an expression of necessary theoretical debate which must occur in order that contradictions within the Movement and contradictions between the people and the oppressive state may be sharpened and resolved, and so that the Movement may hasten the realization of its goal of national independence and socialist development. Theoretical struggle is necessary because different ideas exist within the Movement – ideas which have their basis in the class forces which exist inside the nation – and it is thus an expression of class struggle within the nation and within the Movement.

For nearly thirty years the New Afrikan Independence Movement has led a revitalized theoretical struggle within the nation to further develop (and to make predominant), the line which asserts the strategic goal of national independence for Afrikan people inside present U.S. borders. This was not a new undertaking.

From the fifteenth century, at which time the colonial contradiction in the Western Hemisphere between Afrikan peoples and European settler-colonialists has its origins, the primary contradiction WITHIN the colonized nation has been expressed, on one side, by those who sought to regain some form of separate existence as a distinct and free people. On the other side of the contradiction are those who have sought to assimilate themselves into the U.S. as, in effect, partners in imperialist oppression and plunder.

This historic struggle between those who "want in" and those of us who "want out," is more than a mere strategic difference between sectors of a single movement. Those who pursue national independence embrace one ideology and belong to one movement, and those who oppose this movement clearly belong to another and embrace a different ideology.

The other major movement of Afrikan people inside the U.S. is most often referred to as the "black liberation movement." Whatever this movement may be about, it is not about NATIONAL liberation. If it were, then it would be described in terms of the nationality of the people pursuing their existence as a nation-state independent of the U.S.

It is extremely necessary that the New Afrikan Independence Movement assert, at every opportunity, its separate (national) identity from all movements which do not seek the establishment of a sovereign and independent state for Afrikans in the U.S., because the failure to do so WILL impede the national liberation struggle.

The question of national identity is uniquely important to Afrikans in the U.S., unlike most peoples who struggle for national liberation. The colonization of Afrikan peoples in the Western Hemisphere was facilitated by forms and techniques of oppression which were designed to undermine or destroy our original identities as peoples – peoples who shared similarities with each other, and who shared differences from the peoples of the oppressive settler-colonies.

So long as We maintain our sense of similarity between ourselves and the sense of difference from the oppressor (and the sense of dignity inherent in our sense of separate identity), then We will continue to resist oppression and fight to regain our independence as a people – a people separate and distinct from the oppressive state.

The distinctive national identity of New Afrikans, when expressed by us as a group/movement/people, characterizes the fundamental contradiction which exists between our nation and the U.S. settler-imperialist state. Our form of NATIONAL identification signals: 1) the actuality of our separateness; 2) our desire to be free of the culture of the U.S. and to be free of its political jurisdiction.

Conscious and Unconscious New Afrikan Citizens

The New Afrikan Independence Movement recognizes two basic classes of citizens: 1) Unconscious; 2) Conscious. The Movement recognizes three categories of New Afrikan citizens held in U.S. prisons and jails: 1) Captured Citizens (unconscious); 2) Political Prisoners (conscious); 3) Prisoners of War (conscious).

Our stand on New Afrikan citizens held in U.S. prisons and jails rests on our understanding of the different levels of consciousness and commitment among them, and upon recognition of the different kinds of activity that they were and/or are engaged in.

The formal distinction between “Conscious” and “Unconscious” New Afrikan citizens was made – and the importance of the distinction was emphasized – in the first Article of the **Code of Umoja**, our nation’s Constitution:

Article 1 New Afrikan Citizenship

Section 1 – Citizenship By Birth: Each New Afrikan person born in America is a citizen of the Republic of New Afrika.

Section 2 – Citizenship By Parentage: Any child born to a citizen of the Republic of New Afrika is a citizen of the Republic of New Afrika.

Section 3 – Citizenship By Naturalization: Any person not otherwise a citizen of the Republic of New Afrika may become a citizen

of the Republic of New Afrika by completing the procedures for naturalization as provided by the People's Center Council.

Section 4 – Pre-Ratification Citizenship Retained: Each person Who is a citizen of the Republic of New Afrika at the time of the passage of this CODE OF UMOJA is hereafter a citizen of the Republic of New Afrika.

Section 5 – Right To Choice Of Citizenship: Notwithstanding Sections 1, 2, 3, and 4 of Article 1, the right of any person to expressly deny or renounce his/her citizenship shall not be denied.

Section 6 – Citizenship Of Other Afrikans: Persons of Afrikan descent, wherever their original place of birth or domicile in the world, have a right to New Afrikan Citizenship, as provided by the People's Center Council.

Section 7 – Conscious Citizenship: All citizens of the Republic Of New Afrika who are aware of their citizenship are conscious New Afrikan citizens. As a result of an over 300 year-old policy of force and fraud used by the United States government and the governments of various American states against the New Afrikan nation, many citizens of the Republic of New Afrika are not aware of their human right to New Afrikan Citizenship and indeed are not aware of the existence of the New Afrikan nation in North America. The growth of a conscious New Afrikan citizenship is related to the success of the liberation struggle. The objective measurement of that growth shall be a consideration in the development and implementation of Provisional Government policy, programs and structure as determined by the People's Center Council.

One cannot fight for national independence if one is unaware of the very existence of the nation, i.e., if one's nationality is not New Afrikan. Unconscious citizens owe no permanent allegiance to the defined objectives of New Afrikan people, and they owe no allegiance to any organ of the New Afrikan Independence Movement, e.g., the Provisional Government, the New Afrikan People's Organization, the Spear and Shield Collective, or the New Afrikan Communist Organizing Committee.

Because New Afrikans are engaged in a struggle for national independence and socialism, and because of the Movement's relative weakness at this present, its aim with regard to the U.S. prison system is not to reform it. We plan to secure the release of all New Afrikan citizens from U.S. prisons – but We will do so only as a consequence of successful national liberation revolution.

We will continue to struggle to secure the release of certain prisoners, and We will struggle to improve the treatment and the living conditions of captured

citizens. However, the success of these efforts will themselves greatly depend upon our effective engagement in struggle in all spheres of the lives of the masses of New Afrikan people.

The Movement's major responsibility toward imprisoned unconscious citizens is, at this time, to promote New Afrikan consciousness, and to involve them in structured activity that will promote the further development of the Movement and its struggle for national independence.

New Afrikan Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War

New Afrikans held by the U.S. as Political Prisoners and those held as Prisoners of War, are Conscious Citizens of the nation, i.e., they are conscious fighters of a people struggling against colonialism and for national self-determination and independent state power. New Afrikan Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War have sworn a general allegiance to the nation and its objectives, and sworn a particular allegiance to one of the formations of the New Afrikan Independence Movement.

The primary distinction presently drawn by the Movement between New Afrikan Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War is that the latter are classified as the armed forces of the nation. New Afrikan Prisoners of war are armed anti-colonial combatants; they are members of structured military arms of political organizations; they are commanded by persons responsible for their subordinates; they adhere to international humanitarian law, i.e., they meet all criteria of said law, and they should be accorded Prisoner of War status and treatment by the U.S.

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