

CROSSROAD

A NEW AFRIKAN CAPTURED COMBATANT
NEWSLETTER

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NEW AFRIKAN DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

WE, Black People in America, in consequence of arriving at a knowledge of ourselves as a people with dignity, long deprived of that knowledge; as a consequence of revolting with every decimal of our collective and individual beings against the oppression that for three hundred years has destroyed and broken and warped the bodies and minds and spirits of our people in America, in consequence of our raging desire to be free of this oppression, to destroy this oppression wherever it assaults humankind in the world, and in consequence of inextinguishable determination to go a different way, to build a new and better world, do hereby declare ourselves forever free and independent of the jurisdiction of the United State of America and the obligations which that country's unilateral decision to make our ancestors and ourselves paper-citizens placed on us.

We claim no rights from the United States of America other than those rights belonging to human beings anywhere in the world, and these include the right to damages, reparations, due us from the grievous injuries sustained by our ancestors and ourselves by reason of United States lawlessness.

Ours is a revolution against oppression—our own oppression and that of all people in the world. And it is a revolution for a better life, a better station for all, a surer harmony with the forces of life in the universe. We therefore see these as the aims of our revolution:

- To free black people in America from oppression;*
- To support and wage the world revolution until all people everywhere are so free;*
- To build a new Society that is better than what We now know and as perfect as We can make it;*
- To assure all people in the New Society maximum opportunity and equal access to that maximum;*
- To promote industriousness, responsibility, scholarship, and service;*
- To create conditions in which freedom of religion abounds and the pursuit of God and/or destiny, place and purpose of humankind in the Universe will be without hindrance;*
- To build a Black independent nation where no sect or religious creed subverts or impedes the building of the New Society, the New State Government, or achievement of the Aims of the Revolution as set forth in this Declaration;*
- To end exploitation of human beings by each other or the environment;*
- To assure equality of rights for the sexes;*
- To end color and class discrimination, while not abolishing salubrious diversity, and to promote self-respect and mutual understanding among all people in the society;*
- To protect and promote the personal dignity and integrity of the individual, and his or her natural rights;*
- To place the major means of production and trade in the trust of the state to assure the benefits of this earth and our genius and labor to society and all its members, and*
- To encourage and reward the individual for hard work and initiative and insight and devotion to the Revolution.*

In mutual trust and great expectation, We the undersigned, for ourselves and for those who look to us but are unable personally to affix their signatures hereto, do join in this solemn Declaration of Independence, and to support this Declaration and to assure the success of the Revolution, We pledge without reservation ourselves, our talents, and all our worldly goods.

AN INTERVIEW WITH ASSATA SHAKUR

In the past two issues of CROSSROAD We featured parts one and two of An Interview With Assata Shakur conducted by Matt Meyer, of the War Resister's League and Meg Starr, of the Free Puerto Rico Committee. An uncompromising revolutionary, critical thinker, and a clear representation of modern-day resistance, Assata Shakur was one of the primary targets of the FBI's counter-intelligence program, COINTELPRO. On May 2, 1973, Assata, Sundiata Acoli, and Zayd Malik Shakur were attacked by state troopers on the New Jersey Turnpike. The ambush led to the murder of Zayd, and the severe wounding and capture of Assata. Though Sundiata was able to escape capture at the time, he was later arrested and is currently one of our longest held combatants. After spending six years in prison, Assata was liberated by New Afrikan and anti-imperialist forces in 1979. She received political asylum from the Cuban government and currently resides there. Assata has documented her experiences with struggle, the u.s. government, the Black Panther Party, and "coming of age" in amerikka, in her book ASSATA: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY (Lawrence Hill Books). Having survived COINTELPRO and numerous realities of amerikkka, Assata remains grounded in liberatory principles. The following text concludes An Interview With Assata Shakur.

Matt Meyer: You've spoken about the need for a whole new work style on the Left; and that presently there are no recipes to follow.

Given these two dynamics, what are your thoughts about future work in general: how do we go through the process of figuring out what to do — in that we need to re-haul and there are no recipes to follow?

Assata Shakur: Well, i don't think there were ever any recipes to follow. There was an idea and many people went around acting like they had the recipe; acting like socialism was something like red paint. You can just paint it on anything and it will come out socialist. Each specific country, each specific situation, each specific people have their own specific needs, requirements, desires, aspirations, etc. that fit into a worldwide movement. That's the kind of dialectic between the national reality of people, and the international reality of a world revolutionary movement — and the need to struggle against imperialism. i really don't think there was ever a recipe. It's not like you took two cups of Marx and a cup of Engels, throw in three drops of Lenin, and you've got freedom forever. That's silly. The reality of struggle is that you have to think, invent and create. You have to work and learn from experience what works, and what doesn't; what makes sense, and what doesn't. You have to learn to get along. i mean to get along in terms of progressive people working together — whether you agree on everything or not. You have to learn that it's not a luxury to form working unity, it's a necessity. People need to find ways of working around common issues that they share. That's an absolute necessity and simple logic. It's like, if there were eight monsters attacking me and 20 people in the room. Now, if my attitude is that

i'm just gonna fight against these monsters by myself, and i'm not gonna try to deal with these 20 other people to help me fight these monsters, then i am not dealing with a sane and rational mind. Then, if i do deal with these 20 other people and i say, "you just do what i say, you listen to me," that is also irrational. Those 20 people might have some very good ideas about how we can deal with the monsters. Let's get together y'all, let's exchange ideas let's deal with the monsters. As long as we keep the focus on the monsters, we'll be alright. But i think we've got to get away from the idea that one party is going to be the vanguard to lead us to some salvation. i mean, that does not fit with the reality of the 1990s. It might fit in some places — i don't want to absolutize or apply one experience to everybody. There may be places where one party might lead a people to liberation, but in the majority of situations, especially in multi-national places like the United States, that's very unrealistic. So, forming the leadership has to be thought of in collective terms and the vanguard has to be thought of in collective terms. In order to do this, we have to develop the skills necessary to deal collectively. We have to develop the respect to deal collectively. We have to learn by doing. We're in an electronic age. We have to find new ways of organizing people, new ways of educating people -- creative ways. It could be revolutionary folk operas, [laughs] i don't know. We have to find and deal with people where they are — not where we think they should be. i think a lot of the young rap artists are setting a great example. i think they're more in touch with people and more actively involved in

changing people's ways of thinking than many of the so-called revolutionaries with long histories, who just talk to themselves. We have to deal with that fact. It's o.k. to talk to yourself, and it's o.k. to talk among yourselves, but when you start doing that exclusively, then you start acting crazy. When all you do is talk to yourself, then you have got a problem. And many revolutionaries have got a problem. They are not only talking to each other — to themselves, but when they deal with people who have nothing to do with their movements, they talk at them. They don't listen to what the people are saying, they don't learn from them. So, it's a problem when you just talk to yourself and talk at people. That, you know, is a category of mental illness! i think that the movement has got to deal with being sane, being logical, being concrete and setting priorities — realistic priorities — not fantasizing, not trying to apply the experiences of other people mechanically. We really have to analyze what damage has been done, and make a sincere effort not to repeat those same kind of mistakes.

MM: *Speaking of future work, you've spoken on the role of guns as almost the least important piece of struggle, can you share your reflections on this?*

AS: *The 1960s were very important in terms of the world liberation movement; in Afrika, in Asia, and in Latin America, there were many processes and people struggling for political independence. They were struggling against colonialism and imperialism. Many of those processes had elements of armed struggle. But*

in many cases, people romanticized the aspect of armed struggle without understanding that at the same time Vietnam was involved in armed struggle, there was also political struggle, diplomatic struggle, a struggle of the unions ... i mean, there was a whole process of struggle that was going on. Many people conceived of the Cuban revolution, for example, as Fidel, Che and Raoul going to the mountains. But they did not understand that there was a whole political struggle that had been going on, that continued to go on, all the way back from before Cuba received its "independence." The July 26 movement was a political movement that was waged on campuses, had links with the unions and other Leftist movements, and was able to forge a unity — a political unity. It wasn't just a simplistic matter of going off into the mountains. In the 1960s the whole idea of armed struggle was a romantic one, was prevalent because of the objective conditions during that time. In many countries, whether it was in Brazil, or Uruguay with the Tupamaros, wherever, the revolutionaries were dealing with the idea of urban guerilla warfare and rural guerilla warfare. In most cases there was an emphasis on armed struggle, and not on other aspects of the struggle. In most of those cases, there was a failure of people on the Left to unify. In the majority of those cases, those movements were destroyed and defeated. i think the reason for the defeat was (a) a lack of unity on the Left; and (b) many of those movements failed to analyze the objective conditions in their specific countries. In relation to the United States, obviously revolutionaries in the 60s and early 70s were very

much affected by what was going on in Afrika, Asia and Vietnam; those were very inspiring revolutionary struggles that we were all affected by. In some instances, we tried to apply the experiences of other people mechanically to our struggle. In the specific case of the Black liberation movement in the United States, the question of armed struggle had a very specific and a very important significance. The question of armed struggle took on added significance because all during the civil rights movement — because of direct action and non-violent resistance — many people interpreted "non-violence" as the only framework Afrikans in the United States could struggle in; morally, realistically, etc. Instead of being dealt with as a tactic, direct action and non-violence was dealt with as an ideology. There was a need to combat on different levels: on the level that Afrikans in the United States have the right to self-defense, and that that right was an absolute; whether we defended ourselves or not, in a given situation, depended on what we decided — what our tactics were; what our strategy was. That was important for us to deal with as a people. So, the question of armed struggle within our movement was even more important because there was a whole national media that was saying "look, you don't have any right to (a) defend yourself and (b) you must struggle under these terms and the terms we dictate. If you go outside of these terms — that framework — then you're crazy, you're terrorists." So it was important, in terms of the 1960s and 70s, to say (a) we have the right to self-defense and (b) that we have the right, as Malcolm X said, to struggle "by any means

necessary.” Those were key ideas that we had to struggle around during that period. And in the course of that struggle there was an emphasis on armed struggle; an emphasis on self-defense that may have, in some instances, minimized other aspects of the struggle. But that was a necessary time, it was a necessary experience, and it was necessary for Afrikan people to realize that we, as a people, are going to have to free ourselves. That’s a reality. That’s an objective reality. Hopefully we will not have to do it alone. It does not make sense for us to try to do it alone. For example, the experiences of the Soviet Union clearly shows what happens when different people work together to bring a huge country to a halt, within that process there were different people with different goals; different ideas of what self-determination is, but only by bringing the monster down is self-determination possible. Now, i’m not equating bringing down the United States monster with the bringing down of the Soviet Union. One is/ would be a revolutionary process, as in the context of the United States. In the context of the Soviet Union, i don’t know what the hell that is. i mean, there were people who sincerely wanted to reform socialism, who wanted to make it better, more human. There were other people who wanted to destroy it. Within the whole process of Glasnot and Perestroika you have people who were interested in making socialism better, others who were purely interested in personal power. That’s my analysis. And it remains to be seen whose ends those changes are going to serve. Right now, it looks like the workers are the people who are going to suffer the most. i

think it’s a shame that the conditions of Stalinism and the kind of model that was constructed by Stalin was so negative that many people are manipulated by it today. But there is a lesson to be learned for anybody in what looks like a huge, great power; in that that huge, great power can be broken down to obtain self-determination — not by one people, but by many people who are struggling within that structure to gain self-determination. It would be very difficult for us to determine our destiny without bringing the United States down, without a true revolution — and it doesn’t have to be a violent revolution, it just has to be a change; a total change by a variety of people because revolutionary change now can happen in any way. There’s no formula for it and the reality is our politics have to say that we don’t like violence. Anybody whose politics say I love violence, I like to kill — i mean, that’s a crazy person. Our politics have to be i hate violence, i don’t want to deal with it. If i am forced to deal with it, if there’s no other way around it, i will be violent against those who are violent against me. But clearly, the question of armed struggle, the question of can i be an isolated thing; there cannot be any such thing as a narrow arrow type of struggle that is just armed struggle. In every political process there must be struggle on all fronts — whether it’s in the electoral arena, on a community grassroots level, in a union level, political parties ... whatever. There must be coordinated political struggle on all levels involving different groups of people: students, workers, farmers, what have you. You have to deal with all kinds of elements of society that are experiencing oppres-

sion. And that's a lesson that just has to be learned.

Meg Starr: What do you think about the over 100 political prisoners and prisoners of war held in the United States? What do you think the Left should be doing about their cases right now?

AS: What do i think about???

MM: The first tribunal, the first tribunal ...

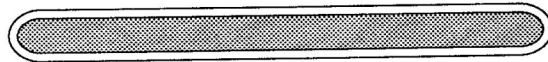
AS: i think it's a damn shame, that's what i think about it! [Laughter] i think it's horrendous. The fundamental reason there are so many political prisoners in the United States is because the United States government's policy is to destroy anybody who poses a threat to the policies of its government. There's a secondary reason why those political prisoners are still in prison — so many political prisoners are still in prison. There are a lot of people in the United States who are brainwashed; there are a lot of people on the Left who are brainwashed and who claim to understand that COINTELPRO was real and that COINTELPRO under another name, whatever they call it now, is still real. Even though people claim that they understand the history of the United States, that they understand McCarthyism, the problem of AIDS, the repressive role of the FBI, the police agencies, etc., there still seems to be a kind of mind warp in terms of supporting and freeing political prisoners. Because a lot of people, even though they claim to understand all that, they claim to see all that, but they are not actively

supporting political prisoners. There's this kind of double psychology, "they must have done something." i think it has to do with the way that many of us are not conscious to the extent which the media shapes and forms the way we conceive of a given event. So you have 100 and i don't know how many, political prisoners — some of who have been in prison for more than 20 years. And you have a Left that claims to be opposed to government repression, but has not done the job it should have been doing to free political prisoners. You have the case of Dhoruba bin Wahad who, after 19 years in prison, the government finally admitted that they played with the evidence, withheld evidence that would serve to free him and proved his innocence. And after 19 years, the government said, "yeah, well, you know..." Can we deal with a reality where those who are victimized by the government are going to have to go to the government files to prove that the government victimized them? And when that same government, through the Freedom of Information Act, sends blank pages, half or three-quarters, or all of the pages blank, now how can you prove — how can political prisoners be forced to prove they're innocence? How can they prove that their acts are political acts made in the valid struggle for self-determination and the liberation of their people? i think that the only way we can principally deal with the question of political prisoners and prisoners of war in the United States is to demand amnesty for all political prisoners and struggle around that. It's important to work in defense committees, but as a movement, we have got to make decisions. We have to agree on cer-

tain basic things: a) That oppressed people have the right to struggle for their liberation, to struggle to end their oppression, and they need to be supported — whether we agree with their particular line, organization, whatever; and b) That it is in fact true that the United States government frames people, sends them to prison, kills people etc., and we have to be conscious that anybody who poses a threat, imagined or rude — is subject to that kind of repression. So that it is key to not deal with the specifics of the cases, but to demand amnesty for all political prisoners, period. And also to realize, as political activists, if i do not struggle to liberate those who have been in prison for so long, then i am creating a situation where the government feels freer and freer to come after me. If we do not struggle to liberate those political prisoners who have been in prison since the 60s; since the beginning of 1970, then what are we saying to our youth? Are we saying: "alright you struggle, if the FBI frames you, well, it's your problem. We're not going to defend you, we're not going to fight for your liberation. We accept the propaganda. We accept the right of the poor to be used as a repressive instrument, we accept that. We accept the position of the government. We accept the accusations of the government." Is that what our movement is truly about? Whose definitions are we willing to accept? And, the facts in the particular cases, say in the case of Geronimo Pratt, the New York Three, the Queens Two, i mean, the facts are overwhelming. The government actively conspired, is actively conspiring to imprison activists. So, i mean, it's a question of un-brainwashing ourselves, and un-racisizing

ourselves. Because part of the reason, i think, so many Afrikan and Third World people have been in prison so many years is also due to racism on the Left. If white people want to know what they can do in terms of struggling, one of the things they can do is to struggle on a much more intense level to liberate political prisoners.

Please note: This interview was received as transcribed copy and has been slightly edited for clarity. It is not verbatim text.



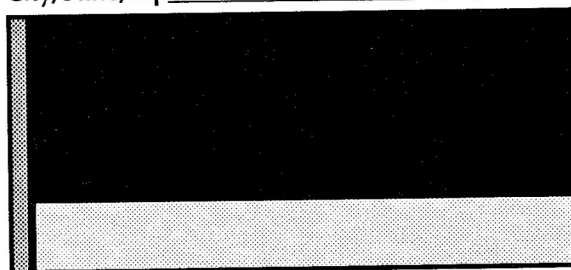
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**FRAMED ON DEATH ROW:
PLEASE HELP**

By Zolo Agona Azania

**"If you are afraid to tell the truth, why,
you don't even deserve freedom!"**

Malcolm X

To All It May Concern:

i'm a conscious New Afrikan artist-painter-writer. On August 11, 1981, i was arrested in Gary, Indiana by city and Lake County government officials, because of my social and political activism and the message expressed in my artistic endeavors. i was framed on charges of murder and bank robbery. On May 25, 1982, i was sentenced to the death penalty. They know full well i am completely innocent because a paraffin Gunshot Residue Test (GSR), taken by police shortly after they arrested me about noon, showed that i hadn't fired a gun! No one ever claimed it was me who shot the policeman. They intentionally withheld this vital information and material exculpatory evidence from my original trial in 1982.

The U.S. government of North Euro-Amerikkka uses their death penalty laws, among other things, to murder political prisoners and prisoners of war. They force slave-labor in the prisons. The U.S. always accuses other nations around the world of human rights violations to take attention off their bloody hands in violation of international law. Some of those nations are afraid to speak out

on behalf of the poor and oppressed in the U.S.

The U.S imperialist police, prosecutors, politicians and those in their political circle are accusing me for the wicked things they are doing! For example, they make money on the side through official corruption; racketeering; gun running; drugs; murder; bribery; gambling; sexual harrassment; extortion; robbery; and withholding, tampering and falsifying evidence against people. They even investigate their own crimes and blame it on someone else. The police that framed me also acted pursuant to orders of higher government officials and superiors in gross violation of the "Nuremberg Principles" and the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights."

They want to silence me, both here and abroad, and they hope to discredit and destroy me personally, as well as the entire New Afrikan Independence Movement. My work is based on a higher moral cause, the ultimate liberation of my beloved people here and worldwide, including the demand for reparations. The colonial masters make mockery of our culture. They disrespect our names and manner of dress that aren't Euro-Amerikkan fashions. They deprive us of our national origin and heritage.

For example, New Afrikans are ill-treated, persecuted, land confiscated, exiled, framed and murdered, because we reject the historically false, abusive labels put on us by them.

Although i have no choice at present but to exhaust the so-called "remedies" allegedly available to me in the colonial court, i am asking all readers and supporters to write the following on my behalf demanding that i am

safe, unharmed and granted a retrial to prove my innocence:

Mr. Peter J. Visclosky

Mr. Frank McCloskey

Member of Congress

420 Cannon Building

Capitol Hill

Washington, D.C. 20515

and

Rep. Anita Bower

804 State Office Building

100 North Senate Avenue

Indianapolis, IN 46204

To make a financial contribution to my legal defense, send donations to:

Sister Urbi Orleaner Averhart

Equal Justice Committee

P.O. Box 4079

Gary, IN 46404

For more information please contact my attorney:

Brother Isaiah Skip Gant

Capital Case Resource Center of Tennessee

1225 17th Avenue South

Nashville, Tennessee 37212

FREE ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS!

Our Struggle Continues,

Brother Zolo Agona Azania #4969;

Indiana State Prison

P.O. Box 41

Michigan City, IN 46360

Zolo has a pamphlet entitled Who Is The New Afrikan?, available for \$2.00 from the Equal Justice Committee (see above address).

**Free All
New Afrikan
Political Prisoners
and
Prisoners of War!**

If you haven't been reading **CROSSROAD**, you've missed many excellent articles; these are just a few :

"The Revolutionary Art of Rap Music"
"The Legacy of Malcolm X: Carry It Forward By Taking Up His Political Stand"
"On Captured Citizens, Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War: A New Afrikan Perspective"

And Many More!
Won't You Subscribe Today?



Zolo A. Azania

**PEER ADVOCACY, WOMEN, PRISON &
AIDS**

by Susan Rosenberg

Women in this society are forgotten and invisible.

Women in prison are feared and stigmatized, left to live with all the oppression that women in exploitive society face.

Women in prison with AIDS are feared, invisible, and left to die early and painful deaths.

Women in prison with AIDS are denied the right to fight to survive in order to live as long as possible.

Prisoners are denied decent and adequate care and denied the most elemental of needs — human dignity.

A woman with full blown AIDS who is dying in a segregated facility in one of the seventeen states that manditorily segregates all HIV-positive prisoners has no human rights and is losing what little constitutional protections exist.

Women in prison, whose children, husbands, lovers and friends have AIDS, are faced with the imposition of restrictions that deny contact with the community.

This is a crisis. It is a medical, economic, political and social crisis. It is a societal freak-out; a public policy nightmare, where human suffering is at a premium. While the following facts are known, they bear repeating:

The overwhelming number of women in prison with AIDS are Black and Puerto Rican

women.

The leading cause of death for Black women between the ages of twenty and forty-five in all major urban centres is now AIDS.

In San Juan, Puerto Rico the rate of HIV-positivity is the highest in the United States.

While behavior (not race, class or gender) determines who gets the AIDS virus, the statistics on AIDS — who gets it and why — cannot be analyzed outside of the system of white supremacy that governs much of this society. The AIDS epidemic expands the experience of genocide that the Black community faces, and that the colonization of Puerto Rico has created.

Women in prison, who are HIV-positive or with full-blown AIDS, are on the frontline of this crisis. We live in an isolated, enclosed and very particular form of hell. I have been in prison for almost seven years. In that time the AIDS virus was identified and named. Before that, it was simply a disease that afflicted gay men and not of any particular concern to the government, health officials or those policy makers in the prison system.

I have seen AIDS as it has travelled through various jails and prisons. I have witnessed sero-positivity become opportunistic infections, and inexplicable gynecological ailments transform into full-blown AIDS through Theresa and Joey, Janet and Kay, Cecilia and Lisa.

I have carried women from their cells on stretchers to jail infirmaries, knowing they will not return. I have called families collect from pay phones with news of illness and then death.

I have written messages for funerals and raised money for flowers. Sentence reduction motions and early medical release papers have been written, and letters sent to outside community organizations have fallen on deafening silence.

PEER ADVOCACY IN DC JAIL

After spending a year in the DC Jail and witnessing the treatment and conditions that women with HIV and AIDS lived within, I became an AIDS prisoner peer advocate. My co-defendants and I (all of us political prisoners), because of our educational background and our access to resources on the outside, began doing legal and medical advocacy for the women we were incarcerated with.

The work involved writing letters to the DC Parole Commission, writing legal papers about sentencing reductions, and taking depositions for legal action against the jail for its lack of medical treatment and discriminatory policies.

When we first arrived in DC Jail in 1988, anyone who was known to be HIV-positive was red-flagged by the medical department. They were sometimes segregated, as well as fed from special diet trays served by other prisoners who were told to wear gloves. As a result of this complete violation of confidentiality, they were brutally stigmatized and bitterly harassed. There was no counseling or organized psychological treatment. Mood depressants or elevators were dispensed without any medical analysis of possible effects on the virus or the person's state of health.

Out of the population of 500 women, 98 percent of whom are Black, 40 percent are HIV-positive. This figure is from a blind study conducted by the DC Department of Corrections (DC DOC). This study was never released. In 1990, from September through December, eight prisoners died while in custody — all from AIDS-related infections.

The increase is staggering. The death of one woman prisoner in the DC Jail, due to a complete lack of medical care, counseling and social neglect, caused a panic inside the population. The staff (which itself has an enormously high rate of sero-positivity), was ignorant and dysfunctional in dealing with this set of problems. They participated with prisoners in creating a climate of vicious gossip. The greatest insult is to be labeled an "AIDS carrying bitch."

One woman, when it became common knowledge that she was HIV-positive, was beaten up and had her fingers broken for having shared a cigarette with another woman.

Another woman was diagnosed HIV-positive while in the DC Jail. She began to suffer severe gynecological symptoms. Because gynecological problems and illness are not recognized as opportunistic infections [based on the current Centers for Disease Control definition], she was classified by the Department of Corrections as asymptomatic. Only months later she was diagnosed with having a two-year life expectancy.

When she applied for a sentence reduction based on her diagnosis (she had a five-year sentence), the DC Jail would not verify their initial classification/diagnosis of her. Under the current parole and release guidelines of

the DC DOC, there exists no form of compassionate or medical release. This woman has since died. She was in custody at the time of her death.

Another woman died in the DC General Hospital prison ward attached to a respirator while shackled to the bed. The stories go on and on; the suffering goes on and on.

The DC Jail may be considered extreme in the numbers of those who are HIV-positive, but it is not qualitatively different than other urban jails or detention centres. As the numbers of prisoners increase, and the length of time that people are incarcerated increases, the problems associated with People With AIDS (PWA) in prison will increase. San Francisco, Dallas, New Orleans, Miami — they are all very similar. Like I said, it's a particular form of hell.

As a result of these experiences, we contacted the legal department of Whitman-Walker Clinic for help. We also contacted and referred women to DC Prisoners Legal Service (PLS). As a result of these discussions, we proposed to the clinic administration that they provide education and counseling for the women in the jail.

We talked with Ms. Eisenberg, then legal director of PLS. The administration at the Clinic agreed, and then met with the Chaplains of the jail to work under the Chaplains' auspices. Once there was agreement on this point, the medical department was approached and their support enlisted.

The jail administration was agreeable to our proposal because it meant that they did not have to take responsibility for creating policy towards women and AIDS. They agreed

because prisoner advocates and outside organizations would do the work, leaving them free of any financial obligations. They were agreeable because the proposal helped stem the severe crisis in management they faced.

Two women street outreach workers and AIDS counselors from Whitman-Walker, Sheila Burt and Beverly Fleming, began a pilot project in education for the women's units at the jail. This project consisted of weekly educationals in the units. It also included group discussion and individual counseling. While we were still in the jail, we acted as recruiters for the program. The program is still functioning today.

The program was a small step, a beginning at the most basic of levels. The DC DOC, at the level of medical care, mechanisms for early release, and strategies for community participation, has yet to be seriously addressed. Orientation; education; treatment; participation in clinical trials; legal protection; staff training; parole and release; reintegration into the communities — are all part of a minimum program. But, the DC DOC (like all prison systems) is more concerned with how sex in prison is an illegal act, than the usage of condoms [and dental dams] to stop the spread of AIDS.

The DC DOC and its health program are stretched to the limit and incapable of performing triage medical care. The only way to change this is through a complete policy overhaul, from the bottom to the top — to allow community input and contact, especially when the community is willing to do so.

Without the intervention of outside organizations, what happened at the DC Jail would

never have been possible. The DC PLS commissioned Dr. R. Cohen, head of medical services at St. Vincent's Hospital, New York, to examine the DC DOC system with regards to all aspects of care for HIV-positive and AIDS prisoners. In his findings, the DC DOC was ranked among the most inadequate in 14 different areas.

The lesson of this experience is that only when the community is willing to take responsibility for its incarcerated members and bring real organized pressure on the prison administration and officials (as well as working in conjunction with the prisoners themselves who understand best what the problems and needs are), does change begin. It is only a small beginning.

FEDERAL POLICY CRITICIZED

The Federal Bureau of Prisoners (FBOP) and its policy towards HIV-positive prisoners and prisoners with AIDS, has recently come under severe criticism from the National Commission on AIDS. This presidential commission found that the counseling, treatment and all AIDS engendered issues, are not being adequately addressed. The Commission stated that FBOP policy is so vague that it is unaccountable and does not help. They called for an examination of policy and its implementation. They also castigated the BOP as the leadership of prisons in America, for its woefully inadequate and excessively harsh treatment of prisoners with AIDS.

The testimony from federal prisoners about life in the Feds when one has AIDS, is equally as horrible to the State prisons. In the federal

prison system, once diagnosed with AIDS-related complex (ARC) or AIDS, men are sent to the Springfield Hospital Centre (now famous for its terrible medical care), and the women are sent to Lexington FCI to the prison hospital. Prisoners who advocate as PWA's are retaliated against, isolated and given inadequate care.

One main way this attack occurs is through what is called "diesel therapy." This is when a prisoner is lost in transit; when a prisoner is moved by bus from one segregation unit to another. Sick prisoners are forced to travel on BOP buses separated from their families, their medication and all forms of treatment. The BOP denies that this is done, but hundreds of prisoners have experienced this. By the time they arrive at Springfield or Lexington, they are that much sicker than they were, and removed from the institution where they were involved in advocacy work.

MARIANNA EXPERIENCE

In December 1990, I was transferred to the maximum security women's control unit in Marianna, Florida. This is a unique unit within the FBOP for women. Control units are the result of years of experimentation by the Feds as the preferred form of incarceration. It is the most effective means they have developed to silence militant prisoners and bury political prisoners; to deny that there is opposition to the [u.s.] government and to the conditions inside prisons. There are ninety of us here. There is a small turnover in population and the women, for the most part, are serving very long sentences: ten, twenty,

thirty years and longer. It is a unit where high-risk behavior landed people here. It is a population that needs to be educated about AIDS.

Women here are affected both physically and psychologically in ways that are particular: the long sentences, the controlled life and the state of health that people entered this institution with create very specific and very severe health situations. Sickness is one of the main reactions to our life here.

At the same time, this is a population where AIDS, and the crisis that it produces in peoples lives, is just one more thing. Many women here, who have been in federal custody, have suffered from various forms of cancer. Many women have had complete or partial hysterectomies. Many women suffer from gynecological problems that range from excessive yeast infections to Pelvic Inflammatory Disease. This does not begin to address all of the psychological manifestations.

When a woman arrives here she is medically screened. This includes mandatory testing for HIV. No permission is obtained. The test results are placed in the medical "jacket," and any medical person or prison administrator has access to one's medical records — but not the prisoner.

There is no pre-test counseling. In the admissions and orientation program there is a video available on request, but it is outdated, inaccurate and male-defined. If someone tests positive, the psychology department is notified and it is up to that person to come forward for help. No one here is public about her status. No one here is visibly sick. Many people know people, or have family members

who are HIV-positive. Little general information is understood about this disease. Again, the staff is as ignorant as the population about all of this.

Upon arrival, I proposed to the administration that we begin an AIDS workshop to educate and give out information. For various reasons the team responsible for running this unit agreed. In February 1991, under the auspices of the counseling program, we began an AIDS information and awareness workshop. It ran for six week as with 15 women, and had a hundred percent attendance record. It was the first for this unit and the first for the women in the FBOP. The struggle to create this group was a struggle against maximum security conditions and the entrenched and fearful bureaucracy.

Ground rules had to be established from the beginning. Our position was that if we could talk about methods of prevention, without intervention, and if confidentiality was not to be respected, then there was no point in doing it. We needed to know that we could discuss sex and drugs and condoms and dental dams and bleach, without the administration fearing that a discussion of these issues was promoting that behavior.

At first the administration wanted to use me to find the HIV-positive women, thereby compromising my role as an advocate. But we fought it out in several planning meetings and ended up agreeing that as long as I didn't do medical work, and a counselor sat in on the group and monitored the sessions, we would go ahead. Groups on the outside, particularly the NPP/ACLU, sent us information and videos. Again, like in DC, without the active

support of AIDS workers and organizations on the outside, this never would have been possible.

We started the group by asking how many people would feel alright with a cellmate who was HIV-positive. In the beginning two people raised their hands. When we finished the group we asked the same question and everyone said they were alright with it. I believe they were being honest.

We have now began a new group that is in all Spanish for the Latina population here. Two of the women that were in the first group are now translating and helping to lead this Spanish language group. They will be able to do AIDS advocacy and education when we complete this group. It is a successful project and one that is needed. Yet, like in the DC experience, it is only a baby step — a beginning. The needs are so great and there is a split between the administrations' willingness to have education and effective medical care.

Being involved in this educational work, understanding how to break down information and build trust in order to challenge behavior, is not easy. Out of this effort, I believe that programs like ACE in NY, the one here at Marianna and others that are beginning (in Pleasanton FCI and other state prisons), need to share their experiences.

We need to communicate with each other because advocating and educating from the inside is different from doing the same work on the outside. I hope that people on the outside involved in prison work will help make this kind of dialogue and network possible.

Without active outside support, we cannot

overcome the conditions and repressive restrictions. Without united pressure and struggle, we cannot force backward administrations into expanding the limits imposed. The racism, misogyny, homophobia and anti-lesbianism; the demonization of third world people, criminalization of addiction and substance abuse and lowered expectations that are a product of an unjust and unequal society, are all internalized by those of us in prison. Doing this work can be one way to take back what is ours —our fullest selves.

WOMEN'S TREATMENT AGENDA

The women's caucus of NY ACT-UP has put forward a women's treatment agenda. It is based on an objective assessment of various needs in women's State prisons. It is an agenda that, as a peer advocate prisoner, I fully support. However, I believe that any program is only as good as its implementation. The challenge that AIDS in prisons pose is fundamental to the society's ideas on punishment and justice. For the reactionary Right-wing elements who are currently in control of the criminal justice system, AIDS in prison is viewed as "population control," a form of natural selection: the ultimate solution to the problem of what to do with the excess of Black, Latin, Native American and poor people who make up the over 1,000,000 prisoners in the United States.

OUTSIDE SUPPORT

Segregation, isolation, control and punishment of prisoners is the equivalent to a policy

of quarantine for "High-Risk" groups on the outside. That the society finds this policy, and the treatment that goes along with it, acceptable for prisoners is an indicator of how successful the [u.s.] government has been in creating a whole exiled community. Buried and exiled. Medical release, parole release, compassionate release — mechanisms for release from prison and strategies for reintegration into the communities from which we come — are the most programmatic demands that can be made by those on the outside.

When people in prison are incarcerated members of the community, and not stigmatized as the "other," the wall between the inside and outside comes down, if only a small bit. The civilians demand to monitor the prison is a beginning towards holding the prison system accountable for its treatment and mistreatment of those in prison. The idea that outside medical personnel be responsible for the administration of particular treatment for PWA's; that PWA's participate in clinical trials with third party control, are again, the only way that those concerned can break the unnecessary punitive elements that define the current prison system.

The lower life expectancy for prisoners with AIDS, compared to PWA's on the outside, is due to quality of care and treatment: what one has access to medically, nutritionally, psychologically (and the stress created by the loss of freedom) can most effectively be worked with on the outside.

Reintegration into the communities implies involvement in the lives of prisoners while in prison. It implies the building of buddy-

systems and community contact. It means that both prisoner and those on the outside are responsible for changing behavior and therefore also responsible for one's own life.

One can fight to live and survive in prison, and one can show great courage in the face of enormous adversity. But one cannot exert control over conditions that are disempowering, both by definition and design, to live under. If the challenges posed are fundamental, then the solutions must be as well.

Susan was a defendant in the Resistance Conspiracy case; after conviction, she was sent to the notorious Lexington isolation/control unit, along with Sylvia Baraldini and Alejandrina Torres. Susan is now held in Marianna, Florida. Write to Susan Rosenberg, #03684-016

*FCI Marianna
PMB 7007
Shawnee Unit
Marianna, FL 32446*



Susan Rosenberg

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NJ POLITICAL PRISONERS DO HARD TIME IN SOLITARY

By Bill Sanderson

Since 1986, Ojore N. Lutalo has been in solitary confinement at New Jersey State Prison, locked alone in his cell 22 to 24 hours a day. He isn't being treated this way because he broke prison rules — if he had, he would have been returned to the general prison population years ago.

Instead, in a nation that venerates freedom of thought, Lutalo is a political prisoner — one of 77 inmates segregated from other convicted criminals because prison officials fear their political and religious ideas could foment trouble.

Because Lutalo broke no rules, prison officials say his placement in the management control unit, or MCU, isn't punishment. But inmates say life is hard enough in New Jersey State, the state's most dangerous and secure prison, without enduring the MCU's enforced isolation and idleness.

"A lot of the prisoners can't cope with the constant lockdown," said Lutalo, who is serving a 20 to 44 year sentence for a 1975 armed robbery. "They deteriorate mentally."

Inmates also complain that being in the MCU adds years to their sentences, since they can't hold prison jobs or accumulate education credits they need to win early release. Ask anyone in the prison what MCU inmates do to pass the time, and the answer is: "Not much."

"You sit in your cell all day," said Clifford

Roberts, an MCU inmate serving 10 to 14 years for armed robbery. "You do absolutely nothing."

All but a few MCU inmates are Black — a fact that has led to a federal lawsuit accusing prison officials of discriminating against inmates who appear to adopt Black radical political beliefs.

Some, like Lutalo, hold ideas far from the mainstream, advocating violent revolution against what they view as white-dominated society. Others believe that Blacks must educate themselves, return to Africa, and build a society apart from white oppression.

Prison officials don't differentiate among the varying ideologies. They say the MCU is needed to prevent violence — even though the inmates sent there are not themselves troublemakers.

"Those inmates housed in the MCU are not the inmates who do the assaulting," said W. Stanley Nunn, the prison's chief guard. "They are the ones who are behind such actions by other inmates."

MCU inmates aren't getting the harshest treatment possible in New Jersey prisons. Those who break specific rules or laws can be placed in one of the prison system's administrative segregation units, where visits and activities are even more strictly curtailed.

But while inmates in administrative segregation serve fixed terms up to a year — and can, of course, have their sentences extended if they are convicted of crimes — inmates are put in the MCU for indefinite periods. Prison rules say inmates can be placed in the MCU if they pose a "substantial threat" to the safety and opera-

tion of the prison. There are no criteria that can lead inmates to be returned to the general population.

"An inmate, if he is placed in there by committee, can actually spend a lot of years, or his whole prison life, in that unit," said Howard L. Beyer, the prison's warden.

"If they don't like you, you can wind up here for a long time, for doing absolutely nothing," said Willie Williams, who is serving 12 to 14 years for armed robbery and has been in the MCU since 1988.

"They are making these allegations that you can influence people. To me, that borders on George Orwell's thought crimes."

"It's like triple jeopardy," said Ajamu Kafele, who says he was in the MCU for all but a few months between 1986 and 1990. He was paroled on armed robbery charges in August, four years after he became eligible.

Kafele is a founder and leader of the Afrikan National Ujaama, which he describes as an educational movement. ANU literature urges Blacks to strengthen their family relationships, complains that whites have oppressed Black society, and offers an Afrocentric view of world history.

Prison administrators say they have confidential information that the ANU is a terrorist organization. Guards have seized its literature, and sent alleged ANU members to the MCU on grounds that the group is "involved in the disruption of the orderly running of New Jersey State Prison."

Kafele says allegations that the ANU is a terrorist group are "ridiculous," and adds that the prison didn't really consider the ANU's non-violent views when its members were

sent to the MCU.

But after a series of disturbances, culminating in an August 1990 attack in which three guards were nearly beaten to death, Kafele and other ANU leaders were among those blamed — even though many were isolated in the MCU at the time.

"We were scapegoats," Kafele said. After the disturbance, prison officials sent him to New Mexico State Prison, under a multistate agreement allowing prisoners to be transferred between states for security or other reasons. Kafele spent a year in New Mexico before being paroled.

Audrey Bomse, a lawyer in the state Office of Inmate Advocacy, said none of the seven inmates indicted in the assault had any connection with the ANU, and she noted that the indictment does not allege any conspiracy.

MCU inmates are allowed hearings every 90 days on their status. But the allegations that put inmates in the MCU are often backed up by anonymous sources — preventing the accused from responding to the evidence against them.

U'bay Lumumba, the plaintiff in the federal suit that says Blacks are singled out for placement in the unit, was placed in the MCU after the August 1990 attacks and was accused of being an ANU member. "His placement in the management control unit will promote the safe, secure, and orderly running of New Jersey State Prison," a report on his case says.

Lumumba, serving 30 to 98 years for killing a security guard, denies being involved in the attack or the ANU. Prison officials claim to have confidential information saying otherwise — but because officials won't disclose

their information to Lumumba, he can't challenge it.

"It really is a Kafkaesque situation," says Bomse, who maintains that racist paranoia by prison internal affairs investigators is the real reason inmates are placed in the MCU. "They are afraid of any kind of consciousness being raised among Black prisoners," she said.

Corrections officials deny that racism is a factor in placing inmates in the MCU. They also say they aren't afraid of the inmates' ideas, and point out that at other New Jersey prisons, a wide variety of inmate groups are allowed.

But at New Jersey State, disputes about religion and politics have a history of leading to trouble.

The MCU was established after a fight between two rival Black Muslim groups in October 1975 in which one inmate died and several were seriously injured. For the following month, all inmates in the prison remained locked in their cells. After the lockdown ended, classes and group activities among prisoners remained curtailed.

Upset about the change in conditions, about 200 inmates met in an exercise yard to consider a protest. Though the inmates said they reached no consensus, the meeting led prison administrators to counter the chance of further trouble by segregating their leaders.

Alan R. Hoffman, then the superintendent of the Trenton prison, said the unit was established to thwart a "minority of people who are going to stir the pot all the time." In October 1976, the inmates lost a lawsuit challenging the fairness of the establishment of the unit when a federal judge said the MCU was a

legal way to keep order in the prison.

MCU's have existed at other prisons. During the 1980s, Cubans who came to the United States in the Mariel boat lift and were later convicted of crimes were placed in MCUs in Trenton, at Bayside State Prison in Leesburg, and at East Jersey State Prison in Woodbridge because officials feared they planned violent demonstrations.

"Other states have similar units," said Robert B. Levinson, special projects manager for the American Correctional Association. "This type of management of disruptive inmates is not unusual," Levinson said.

But human rights groups are worried about the spread of "prisons within prisons" such as the MCU. Human Rights Watch, a group that monitors prison conditions around the world, calls this trend "Marionization," after a federal prison in Illinois where more than 300 inmates live in solitary confinement.

Today, New Jersey's only MCU is at New Jersey State, a prison that houses 2,200 of the state's most troublesome inmates — those with severe mental problems, the severely ill, those considered escape risks, and those starting long prison terms. The emphasis is on security and order. After the 1990 assaults, Beyer ordered all guards to wear riot gear when they deal with groups of inmates.

The MCU's four cellblocks are of standard prison design: each has two levels of 12 cells, arranged in an L shape. The cells face a large open area with tables.

One noticeable feature is that the table area is enclosed by chainlink fencing. Beyer calls these "multipurpose activity modules." The inmates call them cages, and they have re-

fused to use them for group meals or recreation, which they would be allowed one or two evenings a week.

"It's degrading," said Lumumba. "It's something for dogs." So the inmates eat in their cells, and forego the chance to leave the cells for socializing or playing cards or chess.

MCU inmates are allowed five hours of outdoor recreation and two visits each week. Like other inmates, they are allowed to have radios and TV sets in their cells; some have typewriters or personal computers, which they use to write political pamphlets or to prepare appeals of their convictions.

Inmates say the MCU is much quieter than other prison housing. Reading is a popular pastime. Roberts said he's had time to read books he wouldn't have gotten to outside of prison, including political tracts by Thomas Hobbes and Adam Smith, as well as Sidney Sheldon novels. "Generally, the men they commit to this unit have pretty good minds," he said.

The inmates' mail, magazines, and books are censored for ideas prison officials deem dangerous. Lutalo, who does not belong to the ANU, has had copies of Soldier of Fortune magazine and books on firearms and paramilitary training confiscated. Other censored materials seem more innocuous — such as an ANU pamphlet on African history, and newsletters of radical political groups.

What's wrong with segregating violent criminals on the basis of their political and religious beliefs?

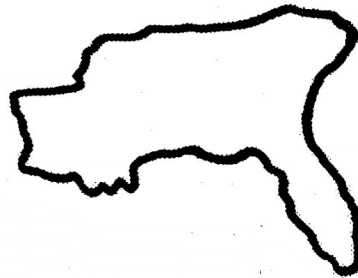
"I think it is a central threat to human rights," said Bonnie Kerness, who works in the New Jersey office of the American Friends

Service Committee, the social action arm of the Quaker church. "It's arbitrary state power, and there is nothing anybody can do about it. There is something fundamentally wrong with that."

"A good number of these guys are going to be let out, and we are going to have to deal with them," said Bomse. "If you treat somebody like an animal, does it surprise you that he doesn't treat people like humans when he gets out of prison?"

Beyer said that since the MCU curbs violence, he is not worried about complaints of inmate advocates. "We will keep it open and filled as long as the need is there and continues to exist," he said. "Just like out on the street, there are a few bad apples that have to be dealt with."

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LEST WE FORGET

AUGUST

- 1 — First UNIA Convention, NY, 1920**
- 2 — Eighth UNIA Convention, Toronto, 1938**
- 5 — Burkina Faso independence, 1960**
- 6 — U.S. experiments; drops atomic bomb (uranium), Hiroshima, 1945**
 - Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party founded, 1964**
- 7 — Ivory Coast independence, 1960**
 - SWAPO leaders jailed in independence fight, Namibia, 1967**
 - Jonathan Jackson attempts courtroom takeover, San Rafael, CA, 1970**
- 8 — Kwame Nkrumah and Patrice Lumumba pledge mutual support; call for United States of Afrika, 1960**
 - Rhodesian troops attack refuge camp; 670 killed, 1,000 wounded, 1976**
- 9 — Experiment continues: U.S. drops atomic bomb (plutonium), Nagasaki, 1945**
 - 20,000 Afrikan women march protesting passbooks, Pretoria, 1956**
- 10 - Race riot, Cincinnati, Afrikans decide to emigrate, 1829**
 - Josina Machel, organizer FRELIMO women's wing born, 1945**
- 11 - Chad independence, 1960**
- 13 - New Afrikan soldiers revolt, Texas, 1906**
 - Fidel Castro born, 1926**
- 14 - South African troops napalm Angolan villages, 1983**
- 15 - Kongo independence, 1960**
 - Sinn Fein, political arm of the IRA addresses Congress, 1975**
- 17 - Marcus Garvey born, 1887**
 - Gabon independence, 1960**
- 18 - Nasser leads overthrow of British puppet, Egypt, 1952**
 - Republic of New Afrika's Provisional Government residency attacked by FBI/Jackson, MS police; one soldier-pig dead, one wounded, 1971**
 - New Afrikan Freedom Fighter's Day**
- 19 - Hannibal invades Roman Empire, 218 B.C.E.**
 - CIA overthrows Iranian government; installs Shah, 1953**
- 20 - Afrikans brought to Jamestown, VA, 1619**
- 21 - George Jackson, Black Panther and Revolutionary, slain in San Quentin, 1971**
- 22 - Haitian revolution begins, 1791**
 - Henry Highland Garnett calls for general slave strike and violent overthrow of slavery, 1843**
- 23 - 20,000 Azanians strike in solidarity with the Soweto uprising, 1976**
- 26 - 16 Afrikans lynched, Tennessee, 1874**
 - Armed struggle begins in Namibia, 1966**
- 27 - W.E.B. DuBois dies, Ghana, 1963**
 - March on Washington, 1963**
- 30 - Gabriel Prosser and 1,000 Afrikans rendezvous for revolt; unable to attack due to tactical reasons, 1800**
 - Over 60 Afrikans murdered, Louisiana, 1874**
 - Fred Hampton born, 1948**
- 31 - Nat Turner leads revolt of enslaved Afrikans, Virginia, 1831**

SEPTEMBER

- 1 — *Nazi's invade Poland; "WWII" begins, 1939*
- 4 — *U.S. opens western territories for settlement, Native's land unprotected, 1841*
 - *Salvador Allende, President of Chile, overthrown and murdered by CIA and military coup, 1973*
- 5 — *Crazy Horse assassinated, 1877*
 - *Afrikan leave OK, emigrate to Canada, 1905*
- 6 — *J.A. Rogers, author and historian born, 1880; died, 1966*
 - *Swaziland independence, 1968*
- 9 — *William Parker leads revolt of enslaved Afrikans, PA, 1851*
- 10 - *Guinea-Bissau gains independence after 12 years of war, 1974*
 - *Neto, first President of Angola, dies in 1979*
- 11 - *UNIA issues "Declaration of Independence for Africans," 1920*
 - *Salvador Allende elected President of Chile, 1970*
- 12 - *ANC of Zimbabwe founded, 1957*
 - *Steve Biko killed in South Afrikan prison, 1977*
- 13 - *Haile Selassie overthrown, 1974*
 - *Attica uprising, 1971*
 - *Provisional Government of the RNA holds first national elections, 1975*
- 14 - *Committee for a Black mayor, Chicago (DuSable City) interviews potential candidates, 1974*
- 15 - *KKK bombs church in Birmingham; four little girls die, 1963*
- 17 - *Ethiopia breaks ties with Rome; Jesuits*

- expelled under penalty of death, 1632*
 - *"Fugitive Slave" law passed by U.S. Congress, 1850*
- 19 - *United Native nations declare war against U.S., 1790*
- 22 - *Mali becomes independent, 1960*
- 24 - *Amilcar Cabral born, 1924*
 - *U.S. sends troops to secure Afrikan children's entry into all-white school, Little Rock, 1957*
- 25 - *Gabriel Prosser betrayed by two negroes, Norfolk, VA, 1800*
 - *Armed struggle begins in Mozambique, 1964*
- 28 - *David Walker born, 1785; Walker's Appeal published, 1829*
 - *Guinea votes "no" to French colonialism, 1958*
- 30 - *Philadelphia Augustine Society for the Education of Negroes founded by "free" Afrikans, 1818*
 - *Botswana independence, 1966*

OCTOBER

- 1 — *Nigerian independence, 1960*
 - *New Afrikans and North Americans crash courtroom in Syracuse, N.Y. and rescue fugitive slave, 1851*
 - *Victory of Chinese Revolution, 1949*
- 2 — *Nat Turner born, 1800*
 - *Guinean Republic formed, 1958*
- 3 — *Namibian armed struggle against Germany begins, 1904*
 - *Mau Mau rebellion, 1952*
- 4 — *Lesotho independence, 1966*
 - *Chicago BPP office raided by pigs, 1969*
- 5 — *Fifth Pan-Afrikan Congress, 1945*

-- *San Quentin 6 indicted on murder and conspiracy charges, 1971*

6 — *Trial of Gabriel Prosser, 1800*

— *Fannie Lou Hamer born, 1917*

7 — *Gabriel Prosser and 15 others hanged, 1800*

— *Morant Bay rebellion, Jamaica, 1865*

— *Elijah Muhammad born, 1897*

8 — *Haitian independence, 1804*

— *Che Guevara murdered, Bolivia, 1967*

10 -- *Jesse Payne taken from Madison, Fla. jail and shot by mob, 1945*

11 - *Solidarity Day with Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War in Azania (South Afrika)*

12 -- *Beverly Lee, 13, shot and killed by Detroit police, 1947*

13-- *Angela Davis arrested in New York, 1970*

--6 *New Afrikans mysteriously murdered (found with their hearts cut out) in Buffalo, New York--1980*

15 -- *BPP organized, 1966*

-- *Thomas Sankara, President of Burkina Faso, assassinated--1987*

16 -- *John Brown attacks Harper's Ferry, 1859*

17-- *Dessalines assassinated, 1806*

18 -- *BPP member Walter "Toure" Pope murdered by L.A. pigs, 1969*

19 -- *Maurice Bishop and New Jewel Movement leadership of Grenada revolution overthrown, 1983*

-- *Samora Machel killed in Azania, 1986*

20 -- *BLA leads an expropriation attempt on armored truck; Mtayari Shabaka Sundiata killed, Sekou Odinga subsequently captured, 1981*

-- *Britain declares "State of Emergency" to put down the Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya, Jomo Kenyatta arrested, 1952*

22 -- *More than 225,000 students boycott Chicago Public schools in Freedom Day protest of de facto segregation, 1963*

28 -- *Huey P. Newton attacked by Oakland police; one officer killed, one wounded, 1967*

29 -- *U.N. Security Council resolutions to expel South Africa vetoed by France, Britain, and the United States, 1974*

30 -- *Nat Turner captured, 1831*

NOVEMBER

1 - *Afrikan Free School founded, 1787*

2 - *Three slaves found guilty of conspiracy to rebel in Virginia; planned to establish a New Afrikan state, 1722*

4 - *Carlos Marighela ambushed and killed by Brazilian police, 1969*

6 - *Roland Price, 20 years old, shot 25 times by six police in Rochester, N.Y., 1947*

7 - *New Afrikans on slavetrader "Creole" overpower crew and sail ship to freedom in Bahamas, 1841*

9 - *Maroons, under the leadership of Mingoe, attack plantations and capture weapons in Rapahannock County, Va., 1691*

10 - *Riot in Wilmington, N.C. leaves 8 New Afrikans dead, 1898*

11 - *Angolan Independence Day*

- *Nat Turner hanged - Jerusalem, Va., 1831*

12 - *Jackson Fee, 48, allegedly takes his own life in Marion Federal Prison's infamous "control unit", 1973*

13 - *Spurgeon "Jake" Winters murdered by Chicago pigs; 4 pigs killed and 7 wounded, 1969*

14 - *Twyman Fred Myers, 23, member of the Black Liberation Army, ambushed by f.b.i. and N.Y. police; was sixth BLA member killed in this fashion, 1973*

20 - *Five New Afrikans executed for killing two slave traders and escaping, 1829*

29 - *Five of an original 77 slaves who overpowered and killed 5 white slave traders while being exported South, executed, 1826*

CROSSROAD SUPPORT NETWORK **PRINCIPLES AND PROGRAMS**

CROSSROAD (CR) is a non-sectarian newsletter produced by and for New Afrikan Prisoners of War and Political Prisoners--captured combatants who were and are engaged in protracted people's war against the colonial domination of the United States, for national self-determination and independence of the Republic of New Afrika.

CROSSROAD also provides a perspective on the repression of the mass movement and genocidal/colonial violence waged against the masses of New Afrikan people.

Although **CROSSROAD'S** primary focus will be on the independence struggle of New Afrikan people, We won't neglect the struggles of Native Nation, Caribbean, Puerto Rican, or North American and other Prisoners of War and Political Prisoners. The "crucial point" for **CROSSROAD** is the common struggle against all forms of oppression inspired by U.S. and world capitalist-imperialism, and for self-determination and socialism.

CROSSROAD has a strategic objective to:

- 1) increase awareness and active support inside of the geo-political borders of the U.S.
- 2) to increase awareness and active support among the community of nations--for the release of captured combatants; and for the struggle of the Republic of New Afrika for national self-determination.

CROSSROAD is not in opposition to, nor in competition with, other vehicles or organizations which serve the nation and its captured combatants.

Because **CROSSROAD** is produced by POW's, there are many things that We can't do by ourselves. However, We are confident that others will commit themselves to helping us go where We can't, and to helping us do and say what We can't, i.e., the eventual development of a **CROSSROAD** Support Network.

INTENSIFYING STRUGGLE ON TWO FRONTS

There are many things that need to be done. There are many things that We want to help do. None of these things will be easy or realized overnight.

Inside Present U.S. Borders:

- We want to increase communications between the captured, as well as assist coordination efforts made by them and on their behalf.
- We want to encourage networking by and between the families and friends of the captured.

- We want to encourage greater financial and socio-cultural movement support for the captured and their families.
- We want to "lobby" all relevant legal organizations on behalf of the captured (e.g., Amnesty International, National Lawyers Guild, national and state bar associations, local human rights organizations, law students, etc.).
- We want to "lobby" and initiate various campaigns on behalf of the captured, directed toward U.S. and New Afrikan media (e.g., national, state and local associations of newspaper publishers, editors, journalists; letter and petition campaigns to the same; continuous letters to individual owners, editors, journalists, and the public forums of newspapers and magazines).
- We want to direct similar campaigns toward unions and national, state and local associations of professionals (e.g., social workers, doctors, educators); clergy, students, politicians, etc.
- We want to make our presence felt by grassroots community organizations of all kinds.

On the International Front:

- We want to make our presence felt at the United Nations by its: Human Rights Committee, its sub-committees, and each of its individual members; the Decolonization Committee and each of its individual members; the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and each of its individual members; the Secretary-General; all Missions to the U.N.; all Embassies; and all relevant Non-governmental Organizations and Observers.
- We want to make our presence felt among all national liberation movements.
- We want to have a consistent presence among the international media representatives and their services (print, audio, video).

In a previous issue of **CROSSROAD** (Vol. 1, No. 4), Comrad-Brother Atiba Shanna made the following suggestions which We have since incorporated into our **Principles and Program**:

- Informing the people of the occurrence, causes and probable consequences of armed actions.
- Exposing the people to lines and theories on military matters.

- Informing the people of the general tasks confronting the New Afrikan Independence Movement and of our collective responsibilities in fulfilling them.
- Exposing the people to views and analyses on the nation's development ("History"), the promotion of revolutionary artistic culture, and the presentation of the components of revolutionary science (i.e., philosophy, political economy, etcetera).
- Generally assist in the processes of agitation, education, organization and mobilization of New Afrikan people toward the realization of national liberation revolution (i.e., independence and socialist development).

Over the years, steps have been taken in nearly all of the areas listed above by the **CR** collective and those who support and embrace the **Program** as their own. During this same period, the international and local awareness of the plight of Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War held by the U.S., has grown along with its level of active support.

Even more rewarding results can be achieved if We all commit ourselves to greater collective and individual efforts on behalf of all Political Prisoners, Prisoners of War, and the struggles We've dedicated our lives to.

We plan to increase our efforts in each programmatic area. We encourage other organizations and individuals to join and to take up one or more of the programmatic objectives on their own, in coordination with **CR**.

For example: In September, 1987, copies of **CROSSROAD** (along with letters) were sent to over two hundred thirty (230) embassies, U.N. Missions, national liberation movements, and locally based international human rights organizations. The letter is re-printed here in hopes that it will serve as an example for those who will write similar letters to family and friends; media representatives; community organizations; U.N. and O.A.U. member states, etc.

Revolutionary Greetings:

Enclosed are three copies of **CROSSROAD**, a captured combatant newsletter published by cadres of the New Afrikan Independence Movement. Our Movement continues a centuries-old struggle to end the colonial domination of the United States over our nation of more than twenty-five million people, and to build a socialist society.

CROSSROAD provides a voice for the growing number of Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War held in the prisons of the United States. Its aim is to provide information to people, inside and outside the U.S., on these captured combatants and to secure support for them and the struggles they represent.

The United States government would quickly deny that there are Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War inside its borders. Yet, the historical character of the struggles of New Afrikan people, the people of Puerto Rico, Native Nations ("American Indians") and North Americans who have struggled in solidarity and for socialism in the U.S., undermines any attempt by the U.S. government to distort or deny reality.

Moreover, the treatment of captured combatants by the U.S. and the construction of special "control units" to house captured combatants in state and federal prisons throughout the U.S., demonstrates that it doesn't view these comrades as "common criminals," but rather as members of national liberation movements in resistance to colonialism and other violations of international law.

For example, Sundiata Acoli, a former member of the Black Panther Party and a member of the Movement's armed forces, was originally captured in 1972, with Assata Shakur, and sentenced to New Jersey State Prison. He was later illegally transferred into the federal prison system, ending up in the "control unit" of the infamous Marion federal prison--although he has never been convicted on any federal charges. His transfer was clearly for **POLITICAL** reasons. The purpose of the Marion "control unit" can't be expressed any better than by Ralph Aron, a former warden of that prison: **"THE PURPOSE OF THE MARION CONTROL UNIT IS TO CONTROL REVOLUTIONARY ATTITUDES IN THE PRISON AND IN SOCIETY AT LARGE."**

The imprisonment of freedom fighters won't stem the tide of anti-colonial struggles inside U.S. political borders. The contradictions inherent in colonialism and capitalist exploitation will only give rise to more revolutionary "attitudes" and swell the ranks of the independence movement. Those of us in the Movement know that We have the responsibility of struggling with our people to achieve our objectives. However, We require the assistance of the international community and human rights organizations. We know that the oppressed New Afrikan nation is a colony of the U.S., but We must struggle to secure the support of other national liberation movements, progressive states, and recognition from the U.N. of our colonial status.

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We know that our captured combatants are entitled to the protection of the Geneva Convention of 1949 Relative to Prisoners of War, as well as the protection of the Additional Protocols of 1977. But, We must also struggle to secure similar recognition by the international community. We seek the release of our captured combatants; or the granting of political asylum in countries that will accept them; or their exchange for prisoners held by progressive states.

The treatment of our captured combatants is also in clear violation of several international covenants, resolutions, and the Minimum Standards on the treatment of prisoners. We also call, therefore, for an international investigation of the treatment of our captured combatants by the United States and of the conditions inside U.S. prisons.

Respectfully,
Atiba Shanna
for **CROSSROAD**

How will We meet all of our objectives? We will need involvement and financial assistance from those of you who believe in us and in what We're trying to do. Let us hear from you.

Re-Build!

Owusu Yaki Yakubu
for **CROSSROAD** and
the Spear and Shield Collective

Using Sham Rituals to Boost Sports Teams Belittles Native Americans' Culture

Isn't it amazing when things I have been writing about for years suddenly are given a national focus and reporters from around the country jump on the issue like a dog on a fresh bone?

Using Indians as mascots has been a point of contention for many years among Native Americans. Most of our ranting and raving has fallen on deaf ears to these many years.

Suddenly, as the Atlanta Braves fought their way to the World Series, other voices picked up our indignant shouts and the issue has taken on national stature.

As a columnist and newspaper editor, these are things we have struggle to get on the front pages of the national media for years and we are pleased to see it become a national issue.

As an American Indian writer who has spent much of his life "covering the coverage," it does my heart good to get this kind of support, support vitally needed by the Indian people if we are to see change.

The media have centered attention whether the sham rituals and painted faces in the stands at Braves baseball games border on racism. In our minds (Indians) they do, but there is another side of this coin I have written about that needs to be expanded at this time.

The sham rituals, such as the wearing of feathers, smoking of so-called peace pipes, beating of tom-toms, faked dances, horrendous attempts at singing Indian songs, the so-called war whoops, and the painted faces address more than the issues of racism; they also are direct attacks upon the spirituality (religion) of the Indian people.

Suppose a team like the New Orleans Saints decided to include religious rituals in their halftime shows in keeping with their name. Would different religious groups feel insulted to see these rituals on national television?

For instance, suppose the Saints fans decided to emulate Catholicism as part of their routine. What if they carried crosses, had a mascot dressed up like the pope, spread ashes on their foreheads, and displayed enlarged replicas of the Holy Communion sacramental bread while drinking from chalices filled with wine?

Would Catholics consider these routines anti-Catholic?

Eagle feathers play an important role in the spirituality of Native Americans. Faces are painted in a sacred way. The pipes that became known to the white man as "peace pipes" are known to most Indians who use them as part of their spirituality as Sacred Pipes.

Because the treaties signed between the sovereign Indian nations and the U.S. government were so sacred and so important to the Indian nations, the signing was usually attended by the smoking of a Sacred Pipe. This spiritual gesture was intended to show the white man that the document just signed was a sacred

one and would be treated by the Indian people as such.

Since most of the treaties were intended to bring about peace between white man and Indian, the white man (white man) called the Sacred Pipe a peace pipe. To most tribes of the Great Plains, the pipe was, and is, their Bible.

The point I hope to make here is that there is a national insensitivity when it comes to the religious beliefs, traditional values and the culture of the American Indian.

It is bad enough that America sees nothing wrong in naming football teams after the color of a people's skin. Jack Kent Cooke considers the name Washington Redskins as complementary to the Indian people.

Would he consider a team called the Minnesota Whiteskins as complimentary to the white race?

The Christian Bible says, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Would God-fearing Christians use sports mascots that would insult the Jewish people, Muslims, Buddhists, Shintoists, Hindus or any other minority religious group?

If not, then why in the world would they do this to the indigenous peoples of the Western Hemisphere, the American Indian?

As we approach the quincentennial of Columbus, it is important that America take a long, hard look at itself and its dealings with Native Americans over the past 500 years.

Most foreigners, particularly those from countries that have been colonized by others (African nations), look upon America as a nation with two faces. One face shows to the world as a land of democracy and freedom, the other it shows to its indigenous peoples as uncaring, greedy, dictatorial and oftentimes racist.

By the time Dec. 31, 1992 rolls around, most of us will be sick of Christopher Columbus, revisionists and politically correct thinkers, but that doesn't mean there is not a whole lot of truth in the things Native Americans are complaining about.

Stop insulting the spirituality and the traditional beliefs of the Indian people by making us mascots for athletic teams. Is that asking so much of America?

Tim Giago is the publisher of the Lakota Times in Pine Ridge, South Dakota. This piece appeared in the St. Paul Pioneer Press on October 22, 1991.



Letter to the Editor

Greetings Comrad,

In previous correspondences, i've supported the idea of a "structured program" undertaken to help support and raise the consciousness of prisoners, and to in this way help them prepare for active roles in the movement, and productive, morally righteous roles in the nation as citizens, members of our communities and models to emulate in our families. In this regard i think it would be a good idea if a program was designed that would include the study of the lives and works (ideas) of Malcolm X and George Jackson.

All brothers and sisters in prison can relate to something in the early (street) experiences of Malcolm and George. Malcolm himself said that he was a parasite on the Afrikan community, but he turned his life around while in prison and became not only a leader/servant of the Afrikan community, but an inspiration for oppressed people all over the world. George Jackson popularized the phrase "to turn the criminal mentality into a revolutionary mentality," which symbolizes what he did with his life while he was in prison, and shows what others can do while they are in prison.

Malcolm X and George Jackson both believed in the need to base the struggle on the needs of the masses in day to day survival issues. Reading the words of both of these men will show it's not hard to imagine that if they were alive today, they'd be leading struggles to "redirect the energy" of the gangs in our communities; they'd be struggling on college campuses, and educating and organizing in the grade schools and high schools; they'd be fighting for homes for the homeless and for proper medical care. Both of these men were revolutionaries, but they knew that to make a revolution, We must serve the needs of the people.

Lastly, both Malcolm X and George Jackson believed that Afrikans in the U.S. are a captive, colonized people, and that We need to fight for socialism as well as national independence, by any means necessary. Changing the way We think is part of the struggle to change the way We live...

Name withheld by request

Prisoner of War and Political Prisoner UPDATE

After the recent lockdown at USP Leavenworth, **Leonard Peltier** was found guilty of inciting a riot by prison officials. Procedures were begun to transfer Peltier. An international outcry ensued; members of the European Parliament, Amnesty International, the Princess of Belgium, U.N. Delegates, and delegates to the Democratic National Convention (u.s.) all raised their voices in protest. The transfer was cancelled; prison officials decided that they had no case. Leonard's third appeal is set for November, 1992; Ramsey Clark is his lead attorney.

Sundiata Acoli was put in the hole recently for refusing to take an AIDS test. Sister Shiriki Uganisha, of Kansas City, quickly led a phone campaign in protest to the prison, and Sundiata was released.

Despite an excellent work record, and exoneration from accusations of organizing a work stoppage at USP Lewisburg,

Kojo Bomani Sababu

has been transferred to USP Marion. A petition is being prepared to have this action rescinded.

Tim Blunk has also been transferred to USP Marion.

Re-Build!

