

CROSSROAD

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Million Woman March Mission Statement

The Million Woman march is being implemented by Black Women who interact on grassroots and global levels. Black Women who understand the necessity of rebuilding our foundation and destiny as a people, and that we must in many respects begin at the origin (the root) upward.

Women of African Descent who reside, struggle and interact in grassroots communities have analyzed and assessed unlimited issues and problems. Many of which have resulted in the deterioration of African-Americans and African people overall. The Million Woman March is capable and ready to create and implement strategic methods of resolving such matters.

The Million Woman March provides us the opportunity to prioritize the human and environmental issues. It will collectively enable us to develop an assertive and aggressive movement to insure the participation and impact of people of African Descent.

It is our belief that it will require collective and comprehensive efforts to develop for determination the process and systems that will be utilized to regain the proper direction of our family structure. By acknowledging and applying the strength and resources that exist within the United



States and throughout the world, we will rebuild to strengthen our foundation. It will take the procurement of mechanisms that will bring about the appropriate solutions.

However, there has been various forms of disconnection.

As a result, we no longer bond as a family unit, we no longer teach and prepare our children in the way we wish for them to go. How do girls become women? Who is responsible for teaching morals and values of womanhood? Have we not been the moral sustainers of life? As teachers of life have we failed or are we just existing?

The Million Woman March will revive life as we once exemplified it:

- Great Grandmother taught Grandmother
- Grandmother taught Mother
- Mother taught Me
- I will teach You

We will no longer tolerate disrespect, lack of communication, negative interaction, antisocial and dysfunctional behavior and the denial that problems such as these affect our ability to progressively and productively move forward. Our focus is centered around the reasons why and what it will require to eliminate this DESTRUCTION.

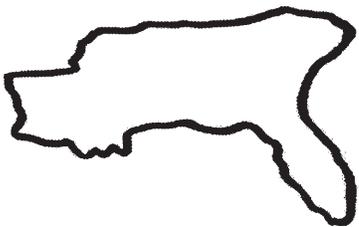


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Million Woman March Platform Issues

1. National support for Congresswoman Maxine Waters, in the efforts to effectively bring about a probe into the CIA's participation and its' relationship to the influx of drugs into the African American community.
2. The development and completion of Black independent schools with a 21st century focus from pre-k through 12th grade.
3. The formation of progressive mechanisms that will qualitatively address the development and advancement of Black women upon leaving the penal system.
4. The development of health facilities that can offer preventive and thera-

peutic treatment, and a major emphasis on alternative and traditional medicines.

5. The formation of Rites of Passage centers academies which provide continual programming in addition to assigned enrollment periods.
 6. The further development of Black women, who are or who wish to become professionals, entrepreneurs and/or politicians.
 7. The further development of mechanisms that will assist Black women who are "in transitional" experiences which will facilitate them more effectively and progressively.
 8. The examination of Human Rights violations of Africans in the Americas and their effects.
 9. The development of programming that will bring about a sincere and respectful environment that will foster the necessary interaction with our youth.
 10. The formulation of progressive mechanisms to combat homelessness and the numerous circumstances that attribute to the plight of sisters & brothers who are without shelter.
 11. The development of mechanisms to ensure that the gentrification of our neighborhoods as it relates to public and private housing ceases.
 12. The reclaiming of our elder's rights, who are entitled to the development of appropriate programs and support systems that will insure that their quality of life is maintained, enhanced and preserved.
- The solutions must come from us (Women of African Descent) and the manifestation is our responsibility. There is plenty of work to do, prior to October 25th, and beyond.

Million Woman March Interviews

The Million Woman March was held in Philadelphia on October 25, 1997. We went to Philly to get the flavor and to be in support of sisters who came from all over the empire. It was truly wonderful to be in the presence of so many New Afrikan women. The Mission Statement and Platform Issues were widely circulated before We came to Philly, so the turnout seems to indicate a high level of unity with a fairly comprehensive vision of what New Afrikan sisters want for their community, especially if We compare this to our experience during the Million Man March, where the official document was not available until *after* the march. We had the opportunity to interview a few of the women that day and subsequently. Here's what they said.

Our first interviewee was *India*, a six-year old who came to the march with her mother.

CR: What do you think about all these women coming together today?

A: i'm happy.

CR: Do you think that there's gonna be some change in your community because of the march?



**In-
dia**

A: Yes.

We next talked to a sister named *Bea*.

CR: How do you like the march today?

A: This is nice; it was very interesting. i for one have never really did anything with my people, so for me to come out & help support it today was... a blessing from god.

CR: Are you from Philly?

A: No, i'm from New York. i came down just for the march.

CR: Do you work with an organization in New York?

A: No

CR: Do you remember any of the speakers today?

A: i heard Sister Souljah, Elijah Muhammad's wife, but the closer you got, the less you could hear.

CR: So, when you get back home, is there anything in particular you plan on doing?

A: Probably just reflecting on today.

Next, We spoke with Sister *Yvonne Malaika*, the daughter of Delbert Africa.

CR: What did you think about the march today?

A: i loved seeing all the sisters, all the women. i'm here with my baby, my girl-friends. i've seen people from Chicago - the Ausar Auset Society. And... i really can't believe that We all came together so fast, so soon. It has to be about 2 million people out here. i heard Sista Safiya speak — She tore it up!

This Sister came from Chicago.

CR: *Did you get anything out of the march?*

A: If all those people came out, and We were not organized - just think what We could do if We were!

CR: What would you say to brothers about the men that day?

A: They treated us like dollar bills. All they saw was an opportunity to make money. They were selling everything but the kitchen sink! One brother even jumped on one of the buses and refused

to leave until he sold a t-shirt. i don't think many of the brothers had much empathy for sisters. It was nothing like the Million Man March where sisters greeted the brothers with fruits and juices when they arrived in D.C.

CR: What would you say to sisters about the women that day?

A: They looked beautiful. They came out and represented. Although i don't think that We were all there for the same reason; especially since they came out mostly because of word-of-mouth.

Sister *Loren* is a college student.

CR: Why don't you tell us a little about what you think about the march today?



Loren

A: i think it's real positive; it's really beautiful to see so many sisters together. i like the fact that there are different things going on — you have the speakers, you have the people doing community sort of activism, you have people trying to get other people involved in stuff.

Because of that something can come out of it; there's a real potential. i felt good about it because i came down with my sisters from my school (Brown University). We organized really well to come down here.

i think a lot of times on campuses like that you don't really see Black students really doing anything & trying to be involved in things outside of their immediate university or community. Also, the brothers at our school organized to help us get down here; they cooked dinner for us last night, and presented a lot of stuff to us. They took us to the bus and that was all really

positive.

What's most important for me about this day is that the idea that it's a day for me, a day for us to just reflect & think about what We need — that's something We so rarely do. You know, having our own moment, almost like a second to ourselves... i just think that's beautiful. When i say "ourselves", i mean our collective selves. We do it for the rest of us & not just for one individual person. So i feel positive about that & i feel a lotta love today.

CR: Yeah, that's how i felt at the MMM, and i feel it again today. So what would you say to people who didn't think it was important to come today?

A: i think that whoever feels that it wasn't important to come today just need to be straight with why they feel that. You know, have your ideas together, know what you think & know what you think in terms of Black people. Did you have something else you needed to do today for Black people that was more positive? 'Cause like if you had something that was mad productive to do today for Black people, then that's real, that could contribute a lot. But if you just don't think that it's important, then i disagree with that because it is important for us to see each other — to know that We're here because We're so divided in this country. It's painful, because so often We're alone & have nothing to call our own. At least here We can see that We can own ourselves and that there are lots of others struggling. Lots of people are building. i think that that's so important to see.

CR: i understand that you were in Cuba for the Youth Festival recently. Can you tell us about it?

A: i thought the Youth Festival was positive. What i got most though from the trip wasn't so much the festival; it was more just meeting the people & being in Cuba and just getting to see the collective energy. Just seeing the way the people view responsibility, the way people view race, the way people view so many things in just a completely different light.

You see, We can talk about, "oh, i believe in communalism", or "i believe in supporting each other", but when that's your life, that's what you do everyday when

you wake up. When you think about what you're gonna do & it involves everyone else — that's how you're living. i think it's very different than just having the idea in your head.

It was just amazing to see that; to compare Cuba to other places i've been in the Caribbean; to compare it to the u.s. — the lack of commercialism of everything there. Just the people — the way they organized for that conference was amazing. i stayed with a family that had a granddaughter who was thirteen. She stayed up all night one night working on this conference so that the participants were organized in their neighborhoods & in their families. That type of determination & support and the way you see your own agenda and your own quest as also part of the agenda and the quest for your nation. You see, i think We always feel detached from our nation in this country; We always feel detached from the united states — We have to! So the idea that you could be part of a nation where you feel attached, where you could have leaders; there could be people in power that you want to follow! That's just amazing to me. You wanna obey the laws — it's just a completely different sense of living & existing. So it was just really positive to see that.

CR: We appreciate this interview. What are you studying at Brown?

A: African Studies, Education and Environmental Studies. Basically, i wanna help build schools for Black people, that's what i want to do.

CR: Do you have anything else you want to say?

A: i don't have anything else to say. i love everyone. i love us. We're beautiful. i love **CROSSROAD**, keep strugglin' & stay strong.

CR: Right on!



Asia Coney (left) & **Phile Chionesu**, Philly-based organizers of the Million Woman March



Englewood Residents Protest Police Brutality

on saturday 11/15/97, at the insistence of Sister **Janice Pass**, the nkrumah-washington community learning center, Woodlawn East Community and Neighbors Inc. (WECAN), Hal Baskin of People Educated Against Crime in Englewood (PEACE), and a host of Englewood residents and business owners held a march on the ninth district police precinct here in chicago. the march was held to protest the fact that "police brutality has reached a level of epidemic proportions and an all-time high" in the englewood community. brothers & sisters are being harassed and brutalized by those who are supposed to "serve & protect".

the march began with a caravan through the englewood community with car horns honking and bright orange window signs and ended up at the police station at 35th and Lowe. marchers demonstrated and protested for about 45 minutes. the police were in the midst of a shift change, so many had to rush inside past marchers chanting, "No Justice, No Peace, No Racist Police!!!". in an act of arrogance & blatant disregard for the human rights of the marchers, one person inside the station (of course, they hid themselves) put up a crude sign to the window: "FUCK YOU".

all of this is in the aftermath of the nationwide protests on october 22, as well as the recent beating of a westside teenager, which has gotten a lot of publicity. as a matter of fact, the two policemen involved in this particular incident are being disciplined. At the teenager's hearing (for "*resisting arrest*!"), court observers witnessed approximately 200 officers come in and stand around the courtroom, showing support for the brutalizers.

finally, the **FOP** here is fighting the city's efforts to institutionalize *merit promotions*. why? white policemen (i.e. *north americans, united states-ers, settlers*), will get less promotions! for those of us in the know, none of this is surprising because We remember how the police threw a big fundraising party for jon burge & his co-torturers before the city finally caved in and fired him. just for the record, the first prize in a raffle that night was a handgun.

Pilgrimage to Cuba
by Michael Kurshan Emmer

About 900 residents of the United States, including myself, traveled to Cuba this summer for a trip less like a vacation and more like a religious pilgrimage. It was similar to a religious pilgrimage not because of any worship or prayer that was going on but simply because of the hope that it ended up producing. For many people, this was the most positive experience they have ever undergone. People wonder what we could have done on this trip for it to have produced such wonderful feelings. Why have so many youth, many of them people of color, returned to the U.S. so energized, so vibrant, and so ready to fight? One of the best gifts Cuba gave us was the reassurance in ourselves along with the reassurance that all our struggle so far has not been in vain.

For many of us who participated in this trip, it was the first time we had ever escaped the clutches of imperialism, United States style. To finally be liberated from the tyrannical, racist, land of the apathetic was a great feeling. We were living and working in a country that successfully pulled off a revolution, and although they are being badly punished for it through the blockade and other inhuman acts imposed by the United States, the revolution still lives! For many, this complete change of surrounding was energizing to the soul. It was a feeling of being delivered from captivity, of reaching the promised land. Knowing that for once, the police are actually on your side. This was the closest feeling to true democracy I have ever experienced. Completely different than our "democracy" which is based on nothing but rhetoric, and meaningless votes, their system of democracy seems to actually have the people of the land making the governmental decisions. In Cuba, when they speak, they actually believe in what they are saying. Not only do they

mean what they say but they follow through on their words with actions. It was a great lesson on how to accomplish a goal.

From July 19th through the 27th as part of the Venceremos Brigade, a group that travels to Cuba every year from the United States, I lived with 140 other people from the U.S. in a school in the countryside. We took a bus each morning to a work site in a community named La Guinera. It was there that we split up into work brigades, some going to work in the Yuca fields (Yuca is a root, like a potato, and is an important part of Cuba's economy) and some, like me, going to help with house construction.

While helping the Cuban workers with the construction we became good friends with many of them. They gave up many things in order for us to be there and we greatly appreciated it and tried to work our hardest. For instance, every day at lunch time, in a country full of shortages, the Cuban workers gave up half their food so that we would also be able to eat. In the U.S. we have a lot but give a little while in Cuba they have a little but give a lot. We learned that these workers were people who had insufficient housing and so had signed up with this work unit. They were actually being paid by the government to build the homes that they, the people of the community, would then move in to. This system seems so simple and so obvious yet at the same time amazing because of how different it is from the way we do things. Here in the United States if you're homeless or if your home is in bad shape, you're stuck. There is no way the government will fund you to build your own home. This is in contrast to Cuba where they really respect everyone's basic human rights, such as the right to decent housing and many other human rights that get government funding in Cuba.

Along our trip some people from the United States delegation got sick. One of the things that struck me the most

about Cuba was how easy it was, even as foreigners, to receive good health care. Not only is it easy, fast, and extremely thorough, but it is also free! This is another example of how the Cuban government really treats its people with respect.

The absolute friendship emitted by the Cuban people to everyone around them is another example I think the whole world could learn from. I have never felt so safe and so surrounded by love as I did in socialist Cuba. The two strongest feelings I had in Cuba were that of revolution and that of friendship. These feelings were highly contagious and it seemed as if they were quickly passed on to all the delegates participating in the Festival. It seemed as if a sense of friendship was constantly present whether in a room with the delegation from China, Israel or even with other delegates from the U . S . Practically everywhere I went I felt the cause of revolution combined with the cause of solidarity and friendship.

On July 27 we left La Guinera for Havana where about 12,000 other delegates from 137 countries worldwide were arriving for the 14th World Festival of Youth and Students. In order for all the delegates to have somewhere to stay thousands upon thousands of Cuban families opened up their homes and welcomed us in to their families.

Each day there were many activities such as conferences, round table discussions, specific country- to-country meetings, and many speeches were given by extremely interesting people. All this along with the countless activities Havana itself had to offer led to a very exciting trip.

One of my most memorable days in Cuba started out with a conference on racism, fascism, and anti-imperialism. The conference was highlighted by an incredibly moving speech by a member of the New Afrikan organization from

the U.S. who sparked a standing ovation from at least a thousand people that moved into a single united clap. That day I happened to be wearing a shirt that read "Free Sundiata Acoli" and had a picture of Sundiata on the front. I was sitting close by to the New Afrikan speaker and he saw my shirt and approached me about it. I told him I had visited New Afrikan prisoner Atiba Shanna many times and corresponded with Sundiata Acoli and he then explained to me that Sundiata was the one who had given him his name. But what made that day so memorable was later on while walking down the hallway after a Cuban-American

meeting. I noticed a very vibrant, strong woman sitting calmly on a bench to the right of me. I immediately realized that who I was looking at was Assata Shakur. After years of hearing the chant "Free Assata" I was now actually looking at a free Assata. Seeing that she was sitting there by herself I went and spoke with her and she was even more friendly than I could have imagined. I explained to her that I correspond with Sundiata Acoli and she asked me to tell him the next time I spoke to him that she loves him very much. Later on that day I saw her again with a line of about fifteen people standing there waiting their turn to speak to Assata Shakur living with freedom.

Another activity taking place at the Youth Festival was a speech given by a man named Pombo. Pombo had fought alongside Che Guevara in the Cuban revolution and Che was the one who nicknamed him Pombo. Pombo has now written a book about his experiences and his speech was full of many interesting insights into the life of Che.

The most intriguing and distinct thing I noticed about Cuba was that, unlike in the United States, they don't see everything through a prism of race. It is not so important there what color you are because racism isn't a problem

there like it is in our country. If racism is present in Cuba it is completely different than racism in the United States because it is not institutionalized, that is to say it is not present in their system of government. Unlike the United States government they have no need to keep their people divided and in fact they are some of the most united people I have ever encountered. Their strong sense of community is what ties them together and you are a part of the community whether you are brown, yellow, white, etc. It isn't really of much importance.

The most positive realization that many people underwent in Cuba was that revolution is not only something to be discussed in a meeting but is a practical possibility for the future. In Cuba they are actually living the revolution and for them to be willing to share the feeling of it with young people from all over the world was a wonderful thing to do. It was as if they were trying to show us that a positive future free of imperialism, free of colonialism, free of racist prison systems, free of underfunded city schools, and free of police brutality is real and is more than just a dream. They helped to make it clear that the way we live in the United States is not the only way and that a real revolution is possible in every corner of the world .

CROSSROAD Support Network
News, Announcements, & Updates

• We are sad to send many condolences this issue. All of these comrades suffered losses since the publication of our last issue: **Aminata Umoja** (Mother), **Khalfani Khaldun** (Mother & 2 brothers), **Tyehimba Jess** (Grandmother), and the family & friends of **Akil Al-Jundi**, who passed in August. • The home of **Ahmed Obafemi & Sanovia Muhammad** was seriously damaged by fire recently; Please send all donations to: The Obafemi/Muhammad Clan c/o MXGM, 1913 15th Street, SW; Birmingham, AL 35211 • Comrad-Brother **Sekou Kambui** has an upcoming parole hearing, and We're encouraging all who can make it to attend the hearing. Contact Raze The Walls! (Georgia), 2351 College Station Rd, Box 523; Athens, GA 30605. Sekou's new address is: (s/n William J. Turk #113,058), Bullock County Correctional Facility, P.O. Box 5107 (11/08); Union Springs, AL 36089. Sekou has also sent the following message in regards to a recent struggle We waged over his stolen mail:

(10/21/97) ...i thought i'd get word out of here to you to advise you that as of today's date, ALL outstanding newspapers, publications, pamphlets, books, and legal materials have been returned to me, including the illegally seized and censored "Tenth Anniversary Issue, Vol. 8#1, June 1997". Please let ALL THOSE who showed their solidarity w/us, and followed through w/protest letters to officials here in Alabakkkma, has resulted in small VICTORY!!! All materials censored has been returned from the commissioner's office and the officials at ECF where the incident originated... Anyway, all such materials are now in my possession!!! Thanks to all of them, for sure!!! The struggle continues...Until All R Free, Sekou Cinque

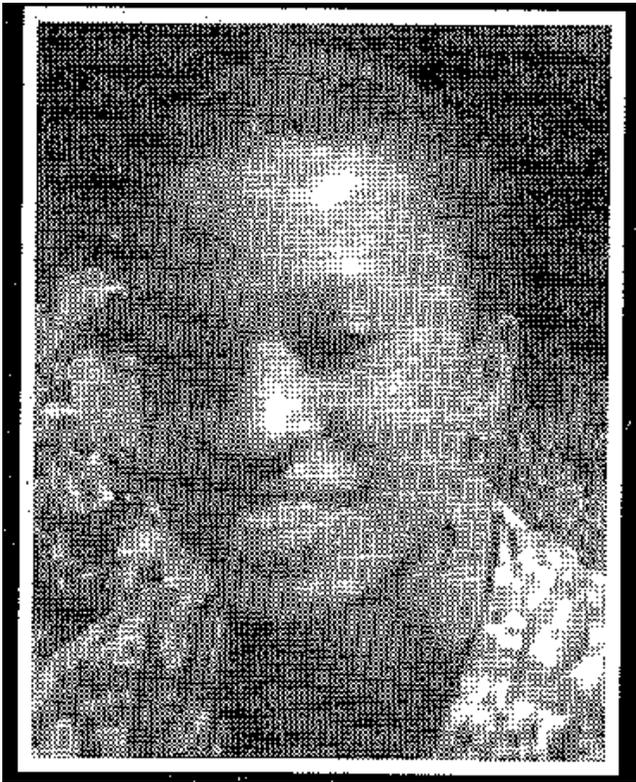
• We've done many a story on police terror, and We'll continue to do so, but We also want to be balanced, so We must also discuss violence amongst the people. The violence of capitalist/imperialism has the power to turn the victims into monsters who embrace individualism, greed, competition, and exploitation as operative values. We have heard horror stories (how can someone rape their own mother?); We have seen the little boy robbed by an older boy twice his age; We heard the working mother's early morning screams for help as she was accosted by some fool who threw gasoline on her & her daughter, threatening to set them on fire; We were the victim of a random attack as some brothers threw bricks through our windshield; what about the other day, when We heard the feeble cries of an old woman, "Somebody please, help me!", she had been left alone, but she was disoriented and obviously couldn't take care of herself. This is just shit We can speak on personally! How many other stories out there? How many are out there discussing how they can't work no regular job 'cause it "don't pay enough?", but they will turn around & talk about robbing or slanging or stealing? How can We build a new society with that kind of activity? **Re-Build!**

• **Sanyika Shakur** has a regular column which appears in the magazine, *Rap Pages*. Write to: **From The Kamps**, P.O. Box 17464, Encino, CA 91416 • Anti-imperialist political prisoner **David Gilbert** has a pamphlet now available called **AIDS: Tracking the Real Genocide**. Send \$3 to: *Cooperative Distribution Service*, P.O. Box 77452, Washington Capitol Station, Washington, DC 20013 • New Afrikan political prisoner **Jalil Muntaqim's** *On the Black Liberation Army* is now available. Send \$2 to New Jersey ABC-BG, P.O. Box 8532, Paterson NJ 07508-8532. Also check out *Vita Wa Watu, Book 12*. Send \$4 to **Spear & Shield Publications**.

Radicalism Beyond Boundaries: Interview With Joy James

*Joy James is the author of **Resisting State Violence: Radicalism, Gender & Race In U.S. Culture** (Minnesota Press) and **Transcending the Talented Tenth: Black Leaders and American Intellectuals** (Routledge Press).*

Larvester Gaither: Anyone who has read your writings will appreciate your attempt at bridging or demystifying the “gap” between intellectualism and activism. What would you say to young activists who are attempting to resist racism, and organize, those who are trying to make sense of their political surroundings — yet see no need to read and study, to study the works of Frantz



Fanon, C.L.R. James, Angela Davis, just to name a few?

Joy James: I can appreciate the sense of being overwhelmed by activity and the pressing need to respond to crises and atrocities that emerge; but having down-time for re-

flection is absolutely essential. It seems to me, if your actions are guided by any kind of awareness of history, theory and struggle (and the longevity of struggle), that you would study your predecessors and contemporaries. That’s what you’ve inherited, whether or not you’re consciously aware of it; your inheritance shapes your praxis and the social environment and political setting.

I would also ask young activists: What sustains you? There’s that raw energy of youth that’s good for about a decade but then it begins to disintegrate. The hope, that’s not a false hope, that keeps you going and the energy that’s not coming from pure rage — and pure rage is good up to a point — is definitely tied by your connection to community which cuts through time and space, and that’s found in the words of the people that you mentioned.

There’s a kind of wisdom that they have. You know they’re not perfect — but they’re definitely a power-base to work from. So I would say that instead of handicapping yourself by ignoring your tradition and also your lifeline, you would want to hook up with it.

Gaither: Do you see this lack of study as a problem within the movement at this period in history?

James: I’m very guarded or reluctant to talk about “the movement” with any authoritative voice because I don’t have an authoritative take on that. Having left the northeast corridor and being in Boulder, Colorado, I have a unique perspective (laughter). You know, like I need binoculars to see “the movement.”

But with my own students, my black students and also with my non-black students, I think the issue of reading is a problem. I’m not sure how much people read and I find that worrisome. On some levels I become a little suspicious and worried; and then, I look somewhere else and I see this incredible productivity around letters and critical thinking, so it’s a mixed bag.

School systems often foster a kind of ignorance or amnesia. If and when they promote black literature and black culture, it’s not really the radical contributions that get highlighted.

Gaither: That's right because that was my experience coming of age in Central Illinois. For us, the writings of Toni Morrison were never placed in the context of radicalism. However, it was interesting to read in *Resisting State Violence* the essay you included on her non-fiction writing. Today as I read Morrison's non-fiction, I realize that she offers a radical critique of language, domination and violence. She also speaks against the persecution of writers and censorship, whatever the form. I understand this even more from reading your work.

James: That's a really good point because my first encounter with Morrison was through her novel *The Bluest Eye*. Years later, I heard her speak in 1995, in San Francisco where she talked about how this book went out of print and the only thing that kept it alive was that Women's Studies teachers demanded that the publisher reissue it (some black male writers were very defensive about its strong portrayal of black male sexual violence against black females). You're reading that book as a young black woman/girl and the issues of beauty and violence — especially if you're a dark-skinned sister — are so striking; it alters your consciousness in a way, and gives you an appreciation of Morrison as an artist.

But it wasn't until I read *Playing in the Dark*, as well as other essays, and understood her relationship with Angela Davis — Morrison was largely responsible for getting Davis published at Random House — that I began to have an appreciation of Morrison. Not only as this gifted individual and talented writer, but also as a very sharp analyst of what's going on in terms of race, culture and domination in this state. Most people though might not read her this way.

The *Resisting State Violence* essay ("Discredited Knowledge' in the Non-fiction of Toni Morrison") first developed as a piece for the journal *Cultural Studies* which had a special issue on Morrison. I think I was the only person who wrote about her non-fiction. My back-ground is in political science not literature; when reading her I think, "Oh, she's a political theorist." But people usually don't approach Morrison's writings in that manner. That's an unfortunate lost

in terms of what we're reading and how we're reading it.

Gaither: Well, how difficult is it for black radicalism to show itself within the context of commodified intellectualism and or within a deradicalized academic context?

James: I used to torment myself with this question, ever since I got my first full-time academic job. And when I'm the most cynical, I call this my "post office job." You know how black people do the civil service thing, and that— from the perspective of a previous generation— used to be your bread and butter mainstay; who you were, intellectually and politically, you pursued after or around the job. The irony or the bad joke here is that what and who I am as a politicized intellectual is supposedly what I'm

being paid to do— teach in a middle class, corporate setting. And I'm always questioning that. I think it's very difficult to keep integrity about your politics, an integrity about your work and be in a corporate structure, because that's basically all universities are —

they're corporations.

In *Transcending the Talented Tenth*, I was critical of some black elites in their arguments that really deifies the black intellectual as academic. That argument is way off-base. It's self-serving when made by academics. It's like we're doing our own commercials, and promotional for the universities which are at best neutral sites with community enclaves that nurture radical thinking, and at worst, a pernicious kind of draining state.

Gaither: How and around what stage in your development did you begin to question the notion of a "Talented Tenth"? Were there some glaring moments of contradiction or was it a gradual, protracted struggle to-



wards political consciousness? Or perhaps both?

James: When I was a young teen, I began to question. I grew up in the southwest, in a middle-class military culture because my father was a career officer. I read E. Franklin Frazier's The Black Bourgeoisie when I was about thirteen; I was an alienated youth who didn't quite fit in with my family and this suburban black middle-class surrounded by a more affluent white middle-class. When I was seventeen, I met the only Communist in town. This guy had a garage where he sold books by Marx, Lenin, Cabral, Fanon, works on labor history and the then revolutionary African struggles.

So certain contradictions and intellectual/political communities made me think more critically about class. I also had strong personal dissatisfactions with the caste I belonged to and its relationship with this white middle-class. Maybe it would've been different if I had grown up in an all African-American, all-black context, with the black bourgeoisie intact and independent. But I was always in the context of a black middle-class juxtaposed with a dominant, privileged white middle-class. And through my experiences with the universities, that's what I see: the black academics are juxtaposed and contrasted with the normative academic which is white and bourgeois. So class is always filtered very strongly with a sense of race and these polarities of inferior/superior, and the contradictions of cross-over attempts and justifying your black (academic) existence.

After meeting cosmopolitan, urban radicals in New York, I learned a lot about how much I had assimilated into "the bourgeoisie." These black intellectuals and activists had a sensibility that was very different from that of someone raised on a military base, someone like myself whose acts of resistance consisted in not pledging allegiance to the flag, sitting down during the pledges/"Star Spangle Banner." Through New York City activism, I saw how much I had internalized in assumptions about "going up the ladder," "making it," the "successes of integration politics," and civil obedience or loyal opposition to the state. Do-

ing graduate school in New York, cutting classes to organize, were the finishing schools, the finishing lessons on my consciousness that still is taking shape.

Gaither: In the first chapter of Resisting State Violence, "Erasing the Spectacle of Racialized State Violence," you provided an interesting critique of Michel Foucault's analysis in Discipline and Punish of state punishment and violence. It's an in-depth analysis of the limitations of this particular book for those of us attempting to effectively resist US state violence, particularly the racialized context in which this violence has and continues to take place. But what theoretical resources would you recommend that are useful in bettering our understanding on this issue?

James: I would immediately suggest Live From Death Row. There's a real brilliance Mumia Abu-Jamal has that people recognize, particularly those focused on a stay of execution and a new trial for a man who anyone that has the capacity to reason could see was never accorded due process and framed by the Philadelphia police, DA and judiciary for the murder of the white policeman Faulkner.

In terms of other theoretical works, there are a number of authors that people could examine. I'm re-reading Fanon whose work is very helpful. Noam Chomsky's work, Ward Churchill's writings are important. Cedric Robinson has several new books on race and fascism; Chinosole's work on incarcerated peoples is essential reading.

Autobiographies are also important: Assata Shakur's autobiography, George Jackson's Soledad Brother.

If you really want to understand visceral forms of violence that are being experienced in the states today, you have to seek out this genre of writings that is being produced by what I call "prison intellectuals." It's in a category all by itself; it's a microcosm of hell exposed and critiqued. If you really want to see the flip side of the racialized democratic state without its cosmetic surgery, you have to look at these works.

Although Mumia's latest book Death Blossoms was smuggled out of SCI Green—

and he'll be punished for writing it — the work can't always come out in book form. The legislation coming down prohibits prisoners from granting interviews in about seven states, Pennsylvania and California included. It's becoming very difficult for prisoners to get access to writing or publishing. This is especially true for political prisoners (Amnesty International states that there are over 100 political prisoners in the U.S., a number of them are incarcerated for their organizing around black liberation). So their words are being disappeared from us because they offer some of the most critical and incisive analyses of the abuse of state power. Studying their works is indispensable if you're talking about truly progressive politics; but now you have to fight to even hear their words.

The written word is vital but the oral word has never lost its value, and it continues to appear in political ways in testimonies from family members, lawyers, religious leaders and journalists who still have access to the incarcerated. If you're lucky, you live in a place that has community radio. I'm not talking about NPR which canceled Abu-Jamal's commentaries after it was intimidated by the Fraternal Order of the Police and conservative officials such as former Senator Bob Dole, or Temple's radio station where the university President canceled "Democracy Now" before it could air Abu-Jamal's radio commentary. Stations like WBAI or the black radio station WLIB in New York, even Boulder's Pacifica station, KGNU, will air programs like "Democracy Now" so that you can hear these voices analyzing prison conditions, the so-called war on drugs, militarism, racial and sexual violence in the U.S.

Writing the chapter on Foucault which is very critical about how he erases racist violence in state domestic and foreign policies, I relied on information gotten from listening to these radio voices, reading the media through them. I also learned from street demonstrations and even partying taught you political lessons. For instance, In the late 1980s there were militant protests against NYPD racism and police brutality. One weekend my friends and I were checking out Brooklyn's labor day Caribbean Car-

nival, dancing, listening to the steel bands, watching the floats, and then we glanced up and there were NYPD sharp shooters standing on the roofs lining the parade route in this black neighborhood. We all have differences in our political experiences but we need to be able to hear those various experiences in order to collectively learn from them. You can't rely solely on published literature, not everybody's politics makes it into print that's widely distributed. In fact, black activists and radicals never solely relied strictly on published literature for their information and analyses; that seems to be more of an academic tendency.

Gaither: The issue of fascism is dealt with in Resisting State Violence.

James: There's an entire section in Resisting State Violence on "Cultural Politics: Black Women and Sexual Violence" which I want to emphasize because we don't always talk about organizing against sexual violence in connection with state violence and abuse.

The discussion you refer to on "fascism" appears in the first chapter where I speak about a number of issues including police violence against black women. Someone who reviewed Resisting State Violence took a section where I talked about fascism out of context. They suggested that I was exaggerating and basically wrote, "Well, this book is interesting but she sort of trips . . ." In fact, the chapter on "Erasing the Spectacle of State Violence" goes through a careful argument about when the term "fascism" is used without hyperbole; it pursues a careful analysis using the work of Chomsky, Churchill, Manning Marable, and the UN Convention on Genocide. I explain that the term is applicable to certain aspects of U.S. foreign and domestic policies.

Look at the misuse of police powers, the funding of terrorists in contrawars in Southern Africa and Latin America during the Reagan administration, the racist use of the death penalty, the links between drug-trafficking, rightwing politics and U.S. covert operations (Irancontra, etc), and the increase in police powers despite police abuses and brutality. Clearly, these are scary times.

Gaither: Particularly if you exist within the context of this incredible acceleration in policing and surveillance. Part of the community, particularly middle-class blacks, those who live apart from the poorer blacks (the so-called underclass), aren't going to see both sides of the coin, their view into this social context is through mass media. But the so-called underclass lives within this context.

James: If you look at these conditions and the devastating impact state policies have, the logical end product of racism has to be genocide as defined at the 1948 UN Convention on Genocide. Genocide not only means the complete elimination of a people, but also the destruction of them in part, the destruction of culture, of their sense of independence and autonomy, of their family structure, of their say over their children. It's a useful document which William Patterson and the Civil Rights Congress used in 1951 to petition the UN. It became a book which is now out of print called We Charge Genocide: The Crime of Government Against the Negro People.

If you look at the logical conclusion to racism, you have to demystify genocide, fascism and holocaust; you have to demystify them from being fixed in historical periods that we as a nation have supposedly transcended. Mystification has allowed the US to white-wash its own complicity in crimes against humanity.

We should remember that historic moment, the W.W.II era, where the U.S. blocked entry of Jews into this country and afterwards recruited Nazi militarists and scientists to work for the government. They did (and do) the same thing with other dictators and torturers in different parts of the globe. The US government has granted asylum to avowed fascists, some of whom it placed on payroll. We can talk about the creation of the CIA and its predecessor the OSS which worked with the Mafia, with organized crime and with fascism in order to break a trade union movement and communist activism in Europe. Most talk about racism/fascism in the US by pointing to extreme "fringe" groups —the (Ku Klux) Klan, Nazis, or Neo-Nazi Skin-heads; but we

should also talk about how this anti-human ideology around race has filtered into the national consciousness and national politics— both domestic and foreign politics.

One of the problems with the black political rhetoric that has the most credibility today is that it doesn't talk about state violence. In The Future of the Race, Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Cornel West offer a kind of free-enterprise, Protestant work ethic thing they're trying to jump-start for poor/working class blacks. Okay, fine. Everybody should work, we should build our communities but at the same time you have state policies that are destroying communities, incarcerating people unfairly. Cornel West notes this in other work, like his foreword for Abu-Jamal's Death Blossoms or his Pacifica radio introductions to Mumia's commentaries. But more people are going to encounter him through The Future of the Race and its liberal ideas.

We face a situation in which The American Bar Association, which is far from radical, has publicly issued a report expressing reservations against the death penalty because of its racist application among other things. But politicians— who more so than anyone else, know that the application of the death penalty is class and race biased (most of the people on death row are people of color, if you kill a white person you're eight times more likely to be sentenced to death)— do not. There is an inequity in sentencing where one of seven black men are incarcerated or in some way tied to the criminal justice system and consequently potentially cannot vote. Chain-gangs have reappeared; just as the people successfully bring a law-suit against this act, wardens devise the Hitching Posts where African Americans can be tied like dogs all day outside in the sun for refusing to work (for about 20 cents an hour).

Gaither: I'm generalizing, and that's something I don't detect in your writings, however, if you talk to any "American" socialist about race-relations, they will invariably point towards Cuba. Yet, in my view, even in a society where the state takes a position against racism and sexism, both appear to remain intact. How do black progressives

address these issues within the context of socialism in America? Or is the socialist model insufficient?

James: That's an interesting question, particularly at this time, because the socialist model has sort of gone through the wringer, it has been torn apart. I think that the interesting thing about Cuba is that it's so close to the states; only 90 miles south of Miami. It seems to be on some levels amongst one of the few successful socialist models. They've gone through this horrible period with the Soviet Union collapsing. It makes you want to ask how successful was the Cuban model if it was dependent on the Soviet Union? And the Soviet Union has its own contradictions, right? But Cuba is the only socialist state in this hemisphere. And we're talking about a hemisphere in which the US has undermined and funded the destruction of other socialist models such as Argentina, Guatemala, Nicaragua (Nicaragua was probably one of the most recent). Now you have Cuba that is on one level this source of immense pride on the part of a number of African American radicals for several reasons. In both books I reference Rosemari Mealy's Fidel & Malcolm X: Memories of a Meeting about Malcolm's encounter with Castro at the Hotel Theresa in Harlem. It's interesting to look at the decades old relationships between black radicals and Cuban revolutionaries.

The U.S. government refuses to allow an independent base in this hemisphere; it refuses to allow a sovereign country that it does not dominate and control to exist. So, on the sure level of having been able to withstand these pressures, Cuba is to be applauded. Now, that does not mean that Cubans have not struggled with what they've inherited. We've been poisoned over the last 500 years with this colonial mentality tied to white supremacy and racial superiority. Maybe Cuba has been able to make great inroads in terms of capitalism; some people would say they've made considerable advantages against racism. But there are vestiges of racism that continue and those vestiges have become a bit more virulent lately as Cubans have begun to rely on tourism. And when they're talking about tourism, they're not talking about anybody

much other than Europeans — meaning Canadians, people from Spain, people from Italy, Germany and others who come to encounter the islands; that means the beaches, the music, the culture but it also means the women. Prostitution is resurgent.

The poorest people in Cuba remain probably the darker-skinned sector. However, having said that, those poorer sectors are still—relatively speaking to a number of African Americans and Native Americans in the states—probably treated with more dignity, with free health care, subsidized housing, food, universal education; they have a stronger sense of community and have less overtly racialized oppression from their government.

I've been to Cuba five or six times and I appreciate Cuba every time I have the opportunity to see Assata Shakur. I don't kid myself, Cuba's like one of the few nations in the world that would protect her from the US government. Cuba has strong ties to the African American communities of resistance that probably are not recognized as such, are maybe more closeted given the national anti-Cuban rhetoric. Cuban exiles, based in Miami and parts of New Jersey, along with Congressional "conservatives" have put forward the reactionary mantra for US foreign policy towards.

Gaither: The question of Afrocentricity: "The belief of the centrality of Africans in postmodern history," is something you didn't talk much about in either of your two books.

James: I would say that an African lens is multi-faceted. That doesn't mean that there are no unifying elements or that there are no commonalities in terms of the dominion of culture or historical tradition. It just means that it's somewhat amorphous on different levels, and it's changing. The perspectives have changed on the continent. You can't have centuries of involvement with Europeans and not be altered. During the Berlin Conference, they re-mapped the continent, its geographical projection, divided people up, grouped them together, altered a trajectory of peoples' historical patterns of living and association. Having gone through a colonizing process, even

after a liberating revolution, both the (former) colonized and the (former) colonizer are transformed. So on the continent, in the diaspora, the Americas, the Caribbean, Latin America and Canada — what it means to be of African descent, what it means to be “black,” is a multifaceted reality fed by many currents. If you’re awake you recognize that one of those currents is a consciousness about sexism, class, the political economy of racism, the appropriation of culture, and neo-colonial hangovers in a so-called post colonial world. Another current stems from the ties to culture and community that all people have that resonate through family traditions, the oral traditions, through sensibility, through a sense of community and of integrity and values.

As Afrocentricity (in its multiple forms) tries to codify all of that, it has an incredibly ambitious task. It’s not always clear that progressive political agendas—dealing with sexism, homophobia, and classism— are central within its most popular forms.

Gaither: The Million Man March?

James: I’m glad that you asked this question because it allows us to look at the issue of gender which for me is there all the time, even when I’m not talking directly about it. The Million Man March was interesting. There was this incredible controversy and split around gender politics in the Million Man March. Some of the discussions I found useful, others I felt were too simplistic and polarized.

I vividly remember the October 1995 forum that Manning Marable organized at Columbia University. I was in NYC at the time doing research at the Schomburg library in Harlem. Charlene Mitchell, whose political activism I write about in *Transcending the Talented Tenth*, was the only woman on a platform with about six speakers that included New York’s Nation of Islam Minister Conrad Muhummad and journalist Don Rojas. Charlene was the only speaker to discuss the negative gender politics of the march and the long militant history of black women’s leadership in liberation movements. Charlene is a radical activist in her sixties who organized in the civil rights,

labor and antiwar movements; Conrad’s in his thirties and, to my knowledge, has not participated in a mass protest movement. So, his response is to silence her or delegitimize her voice. He refers to her as “his mother.” Supposedly this is a sign of respect for an elder, but his use of the term was very condescending and patronizing, with the implication that rational analysis existed for him as the young adult male and that for Charlene, there was the rocking chair. The most bizarre and perverse part of his rebuttal to Charlene Mitchell’s criticisms of sexism in the organizing for the NOI-led march as counter to the history and reality of black political leadership was his use of women’s activism in the civil rights movement.

He goes into a description of the repression of civil rights activists, talking about Bull Conner, about the use of cattle prods and water hoses against black demonstrators. Racist violence was pervasive as was sexual violence. But Minister Conrad graphically and luridly sexualizes the violence: he describes police dogs jumping up and biting into the breasts of black women, white racist cops thrusting, cattle-prods up the vaginas of black women. Then after we’re all shocked, but maybe not for the reasons he thinks, he says something like: “Well, maybe that’s what Sister Charlene might want to happen to black women and girls, but that’s not what I want.”

So, we, the audience, are supposed to understand that the only feminist on the platform wants to jeopardize black females’ physical safety while the counter-feminist wants to protect us. The so-called female “need” for the black male protector legitimized patriarchal politics inside and outside the Million Man March. It was interesting to sit in the auditorium and hear a number of women cheer Minister Conrad (in hindsight, they could have been his family members) while hissing when Charlene debated him.

That incident is illustrative of the pervasive and false notion that leadership is a male pursuit and that risk and confrontation with repressive state apparatus (the police, courts, military) is a male responsi-

bility. This is a romanticized superman approach to black struggle that depoliticizes and falsifies the specificity of mass, democratic movements. This debate shapes Transcending the Talented Tenth's strong message about the agency of black women radicals. If you want to be in the warrior mode, fine. I think that's absolutely essential for staying alive, at least in this country and culture. But often the conventional warrior mode fails to appreciate true warriors. Warriors are not determined by gender. It's a question of spirit and integrity, and speaking what's true regardless of the costs. On that panel about the Million Man March, the "truth" was warped around gender.

I did not fully support all feminist criticisms about the march. For example, the African American Agenda 2000 was formed largely by black women academics to critique the gender politics of the MMM. This female talented tenth offered some important insights but at the same time, it probably did not present a critique of race and class that led a number of African American, including black women, to support the march. Both groups raised questions about gender, struggle and radical politics for the 21st century. I don't think either group has a critique of capitalism or "revolutionary" struggle, but that might be because neither group was revolutionary or even radical.

Gaither: Your work embodies the best in a great tradition of scholarship and activism. Transcending the Talented Tenth: Black Leaders and American Intellectuals provides an effective critique of the class problem and the responsibility and irresponsibility of black intellectual leadership. But it also imparts ideas on what must be done. Likewise, Resisting State Violence: Radicalism, Gender, & Race in US Culture is so important because it addresses many of the unresolved racial and gender problems within the context of racialized state violence. Was it necessary for you to address the issues separately, in two books? Are you addressing two different groups?

James: They're different books but not directed at different readers. Both aim to reach progressive, critical thinkers; both books analyze state racial and sexual politics and resistance to same. Several years ago, when I was at the History of Consciousness program (UC-Santa Cruz) on a postdoctoral fellowship, I was disturbed by what I felt was a low level of discourse around black politics and black intellectual

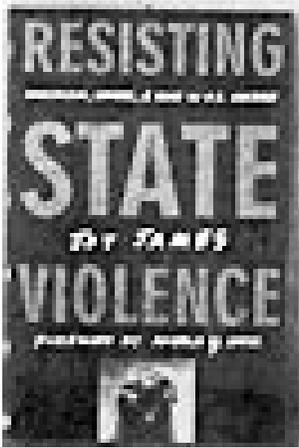
life. Transcending The Talented Tenth was my response; it situates the radical work of historical figures such as W. E. B. Du Bois, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Ella Baker, Paul Robeson with contemporary black progressives such as Toni Morrison, Manning Marable, Cornel West, bell hooks, Angela Davis and others. Looking at black political thought over the last century, I try to counter the sound bite approach to black intellectualism, which includes a denigration of black intellectualism, the masculinization of black leadership, and antiradicalism in black feminism. It's important to criticize black intellectuals; but the criticism is distorting if it doesn't encompass the full range of black intellectualism and its rich radical content. I'm writing about black intellectualism as I see its beauty, courage and vision at a time when the majority culture is interested in (or entertained by) black intellectualism, putting it on display. In writing the talented tenth book, I wanted to know: what about black women radicals?, what about communists? what about the limits of black feminism? what about anti-radicalism? How do we critique black academics who redefine radicalism to be what they happen to be doing at the moment, which is usually (and sometimes necessarily in order to stay employed) their publishing careers? It is written as a conversation about black political thought with black people.

Resisting State Violence is not so much about the internal contradictions of the black elite and black intellectuals but about what's going on with U.S. foreign and domestic policies. At the same time that black intellectuals are criticizing each other in the press, we should be asking what's going on with the prison industry? what's taking place on death row? what invasion or contra war or narco-war has the U.S. funded? what cultural wars have been put in place by the media and how have they progressed? who paid for the terrorist group FRAPH (Front for the Advancement and Progress of Haiti) to kill and torture progressive Haitians in order to undermine independence? who is the U.S. now training in terror techniques at the School of the Americas at Fort Benning, Georgia?

Looking back at these two books, I have to ask the question: How come more black people aren't talking about these issues concerning state violence and its relationship to racial and sexual domination.

The problem for intellectuals who are primarily academics is that we're university employees. As an employee, you are supposed to conform to corporate culture, the business culture of academia, of publishing in the "right" places, of institutional loyalty. That means promoting on some levels the myth of the U.S. as civilized and supporting that image with your civility and "professionalism." You're allowed to go off during visceral "aberrations" such as the police acquittal in the Rodney King beating; or, for a number of whites, the O. J. Simpson verdict in the criminal trial. At these moments of outrage, many people spew forth anger but don't really analyze the ways in which corporate wealth, the prison industry, the police and politicians capitalize off of racist violence and sexual

oppression. For most “respectable” or at least “agreeable” academics (and nonacademics), if the emperor has no clothes, you don’t call it out. Instead, you do your part in idealizing or acquiescing to this dysfunctional



democracy we inhabit. If you play your role, there are rewards. Some justify those rewards and benefits by being the “conscientious” and the conscience of the nation; yet, what does it mean to call out deficiencies without some form of political activism and confrontation with the state.

Paradoxically, some want to be a truth teller who can still say, while introducing us to elites invested in economic exploitation, prison slave labor, and institutional racial and

sexual violence: “Oh, and by the way, this is my friend.” I don’t know what political friendship means for certain black elite leaders under current conditions. President Clinton has a strong record of promoting monopoly corporate capital while dismantling support systems for poor people, he is also credited with increasing incarceration rates for people of color and the police powers of the state. Yet, during his re-election campaign, Henry Louis Gates Jr., traveled to the White House with other culture-shapers to strategize on how to rehabilitate Clinton’s image as a “friend” of African Americans and the working class. Later, Jesse Jackson hangs out with the right-wing, antiblack demagogue Newt Gingrich at Clinton’s inauguration speech. Who’s benefiting from these political friendships?

Systemic poverty, a racialized prison industry built on 1.5 million men and women laboring sometimes for .20 cents an hour in a nation’s whose Constitution legalizes slave labor in prisons, the trivialization of sexual violence— these are all issues which black radicals and intellectuals are confronting. Both Transcending the Talented Tenth and Resisting State Violence examine those confrontations while highlighting feminist, antiracist contributions to a democratic society.

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On Male-Female Relations

Weapon of Theory was presented by Amilcar Cabral to the first Tricontinental Conference of the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America in Havana, Cuba, in January, 1966. he opened the presentation by acknowledging the durability and accomplishments of the Cuban Revolution, and declared his belief in Cuba’s ability to withstand any counter-revolutionary blows thrown at it from the outside, or from inside Cuba itself. He then commented on the strides Cuba had made in creating:

... a new man, fully conscious of his national, continental, & international rights & duties. In every field of activity the Cuban people have made major progress...

(Amilcar Cabral, **Revolution In Guinea**, p. 90)

Not long ago, i would have read that and not given it a second thought. But second thoughts are realities now as a result of many “personal” and political experiences. The questions raised and the ideological struggle initiated by female comrades, has pushed me past some of the barriers and blindspots that had previously prevented me from questioning sexism in the movement. Criticisms made by Sisters which forced me to undergo severe self-criticism and changes in my practice and perception of male-female relations, the foundation of female oppression and exploitation, and the many forms they take in the world and in revolutionary formations.

The second thoughts center on the words “new man,” “his” and “people.”

It is **all** of the (Cuban) people who have made major progress in every field of activity. It is **all** of the (Cuban) people who must be conscious of their national, continental, and international rights and duties.

We must get away from the concept of a male-centered universe. The nation and the world are at all times the sum total of all children, women, and men.

Communism is not about the creation of the “new man” (and merely altering the phrase to “new men and women” doesn’t really destroy the concept), nor is communism about the creation of a “new humanism”. Communism for New Afrikans and for a majority of the world’s peoples is about the creation of new **people**. Even more correctly, it’s about the creation of new economic and ideological relations that will

give rise to material conditions that will allow the practice of social relations absent sexual, class, or racial oppression and exploitation in any form.

We have a right and a **duty** to stop using words and phrases that perpetuate out-moded and backward ideas. Revolutionaries have a responsibility to destroy concepts that help to sustain and legitimize oppression, as well as a responsibility to create new words, phrases, and concepts that express new visions and exemplify new needs and interests.

[Those who embrace the **nguzo saba** should also know their responsibility to move beyond a “value system” based solely on color. If We don’t move beyond color, We don’t move beyond amerikkka and the western world outlook.]

We should advance — in our political philosophy and propaganda, mass practice, and inner-party relations — the principle of active ideological struggle against all forms of sexism and male chauvinism, and the use of all practical means to prevent physical, psychological, social, political and economic oppression and exploitation of women — and children.

We should advance as a principle that women “take the lead” in the struggle against sexism and male chauvinism. No matter how sincere, principled, or well-intentioned Brothers may be, our perception of the oppression and exploitation of women (and children) will not be/is not sharp enough to allow for the practice and initiative required.

This is not to imply that Brothers should sit around waiting for Sisters to take the lead. It’s to say that Sisters should not restrain themselves for fear of “alienating” Brothers, or for fear that their initiative will cause Brothers to force them out of particular organizations or out of the movement, or that their initiative in raising righteous criticisms and ideological struggle will in some way harm the movement. If some Brothers get rubbed the wrong way — tough shit! Any organization that gets rubbed the wrong way doesn’t deserve the contributions of Sisters, anyway. Any movement that allows Sisters to be forced out of it is already dying or dead.

No concept, idea, or form of practice falls from the sky or exists without connections to other forms of moving matter. There are reasons for sexist practices and male chauvinist ideas, and it’s not always the appearance of such reasons that constitute their reality. **Ideas** and practices inside the nation are related to **mate-**

rial conditions inside the nation, and these, in their turn, are related to material conditions which exist between the nation and the imperialist state. Overturning sexism and male chauvinism inside the nation goes hand in hand with resolving the contradiction between imperialism and national liberation.

But it’s not a matter of waiting until the nation has won independence before We attack incorrect ideas and practices inside the nation. **People’s War** is not only waged against an external oppressive force, it’s also a war waged against internal enemies — both physical and ideological enemies. The struggle to destroy imperialist property relations is simultaneously a struggle to destroy relations of male domination and exploitation, male chauvinism and sexism.

Our focus has to shift from the **effects** of male chauvinism to its **causes**, as We search for solutions to problems of “survival” and national liberation revolution. That is, at present, We tend to focus on problems such as abortion, child and spouse abuse, female-headed households, etc., totally within the framework of the concepts, values, definitions and goals established by the oppressor nation and a eurocentric/bourgeois outlook.

It’s hard to establish new concepts, values, definitions and goals, because We don’t have (adequate) models. But some of the best help comes from the past, and from an understanding of the causes for the present set of conditions.

Put another way, Brothers and Sisters are running around trying to find a solution to “male-female relations” within the framework of capitalist relations, when it is these very relations which cause and maintain male chauvinism and all forms of unequal and oppressive relations both inside the nation and between the nation and the imperialist state.

The struggle against sexism and male chauvinism is the struggle for national liberation and socialist reconstruction.



geronimo ji Jaga Speaks

(These are excerpts from remarks made by geronimo at a July 26, 1997 "Welcome home" rally in Los Angeles after his release from prison)

Amandla! Free the Land! Revolution! Freedom! Uhuru Sasa — that means, Freedom Now! We come together as a united nation to fight against our problem. We're Africans, We can do anything. i want to give props to all our queens in struggle, and to my family, and to y'all, my extended family who sustained me through the years with your support. i've been out of the penitentiary a little over a month and a half, and i'm trying to adopt to y'all's way of living, but 27 years, it's a lot different. You know i'm not used to speaking. Most of you who knew me back then saw me on the streets, patrolling these police, trying to bring a message that We're ready to die for what We believe in. Now you all are trying to make a speaker out of me.

And i want to talk with y'all, because We got some ideas. i'm looking at you all. He was in Folsom with me, he was in Quentin, he was in Soledad with me. She used to help me feed the kids. We patrolled the police at night, and in the morning We were there to feed the children. Because that's something that's very important to understand — our struggle was based on love! That's what made us so strong, because love is the strongest force there is! We were so in love with our young children that We were ready to take bullets for them, We were ready to die for them.

But while We were keeping the police off our children, We were spoiling them. People said to me in the pen, look at them now, they're spoiled; they don't respect their elders, they don't respect the women, they don't respect themselves, they're listening to the police. You hear this crack shit is coming from the CIA, and yet you're still doing it! What the hell is going on?!

So We didn't realize that while We were giving our lives protecting the children, feeding you all, going without eating, We didn't realize that We were spoiling you. Then when you come in the pen, you get discipline. What We need is to discipline

ourselves. We need youngsters to understand that real war ain't no joke. A lot of people are talking bulljive and We don't want to hear it, because We've got to be serious about putting together the kind of forces it's going to require to liberate our nation!

i've been to DC, i've been to Philly, to New York, Atlanta, New Orleans; ain't been yet to Dallas or Houston — cities where We had Black Panthers. They're just like this; everyone is so receptive, not so much to geronimo, because We don't deal with personalities; everyone is receptive to the principle of revolution right now. So what do We do about that? There are certain principles We maintained for years in prison; and out here on the streets, with people that continued to struggle, the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement, the Nation of Islam, all of the groups that have been real in carrying on what We started. i cannot salute you enough, because i know the pressures that have been applied upon you.

In warfare, you have to know your enemy. Until you understand what your enemy is, you'll be killing the wrong person. If a guy sics a killer dog on you, a pack of dogs, you're going to defend yourself; but you don't turn around the rest of your life hating those dogs, going, "i'm gonna kill those dogs," and your whole life is consumed with those poor dogs, who only did what they were told to do. You have to know who your enemy is. Your enemy is not the dogs; your enemy is the pigs, the pigs sent the dogs! You take the dogs and put them in your column. You give them some meat, and you turn them and you out them over there, and you get at the pigs; you get at the real enemy.

But it's not easy to know who the real enemy is when you're embroiled in a psychological war. In a psychological war, everything is a lie. It's based on deception. You have various forms of war. We conducted armed struggle on these streets. Walter Pope, John Carr, Sandra Redd [ed. note: geronimo's first wife, apparently killed in internecine fighting fomented by COINTELPRO] — i can name many brothers and sisters who lost their lives conducting armed struggle.

We conducted conventional struggle, defensive struggle, and understood who the real enemy is and how he's coming at you. Right now, and for decades, the enemy has been defeating us through psychological warfare.

He's been tricking you, making you hate each other, making you turn on your brother, your mama, your own family. He's been doing through the media, through all sorts of avenues, and you've got to get hip to it. Lies, deception, gossip, slander, all this has been generated in the same place the crack is being generated — right in Langley, Virginia.

They come at you with the crack — you know, that's chemical warfare; AIDS — that's biological warfare. You have to understand the various forms of warfare by first understanding your enemy, who would stoop that low. They talk about Saddam Hussein — they've been practicing chemical and biological warfare for decades. Look at what happened at Tuskegee; look at what happened in San Francisco in the 60's [Army germ warfare experiments—ed].

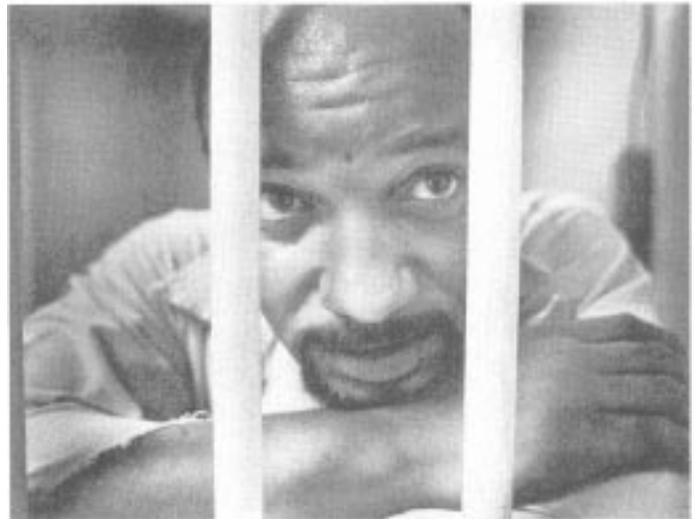
People of my generation know this, but our youngsters don't know this. We're not passing it along to them. You may say, "they never listen." No, they will listen, they do want to learn. We have to take the time. We have to take measures to get across to them, because that's the future, that's who the enemy is targeting; they're targeting our young soldier class.

i've been studying war for years — that's why they hate me. All these brothers you see around here patrolled the police. Geronimo didn't start the Panthers in L.A. i'm from the South; Bunchy Carter started the Black Panthers in L.A. Geronimo is not the longest held political prisoner from the Black Panthers. Romaine Chip Fitzgerald, who's still in prison, is the longest held political prisoner in those prisons. i don't want to take credit away from any of these brothers and sisters who fought and died before i came here.

i was in Viet Nam while they were getting killed out here on Montclair and Adams. i came here to help educate and to teach military tactics to the L.A. Panthers,

the San Francisco Panthers, the New York Panthers, the Chicago Panthers, all through the South where i came from, New Orleans, Dallas, Houston ... and i've got to go back to all those places, where they say "you are our homeboy," like i am a homeboy here....

i was in New York, with the New York Panthers, and i said, come in here and let's talk about what is going on. I said, "There is no unity here." They were beautiful brothers, but they allowed a rumor to divide them. i did 27 years, and here it's 1997, and



they are still allowing COINTELPRO type shit to do this? No, We understand better now. We can't let this happen. We have to set the example. We learn from our mistakes.

COINTELPRO wasn't no joke. They killed brothers. Putting us in prison ain't nothing. They took lives. They took Bunchy's life. They took Redd's life, Huey's life, my boy Fred Hampton's life, and i could name and name and name. They made us tell our sister Assata, "Well, We can get you out of this prison, but We have to get you out of the country for a while." We have to decriminalize all that, so Assata, and all those beautiful sisters, can come back not as criminals, but as heroes. Assata is a hero! Nehanda is a hero!

How are We going to do this? People who have done time say, what is the solution? We can't restrict the legal process within the confines of a foreign government — the United States — who are the descendants of our former slave masters. They're not our presidents, our Supreme Courts.

That's bull jive. That's been imposed on us! Our solution is to organize our nation! It's the same message that Marcus Garvey gave our people in the 20's; it's the same message that Malik el Hajj Shabazz carried on, and that We're still carrying on today. And it's a shame that We haven't done it yet. We thought We'd go into the next millennium as a free nation.

We have almost 50 million people; that would make us the ninth most populous nation. We have now almost \$600 billion going through our nation every year, that would rank us i think the fifth richest nation. We have the doctors, We have the professors, the technicians, We have everything! And We still don't call ourselves a nation. That's a damn shame.

i can't tell no gang member to respect you when you turn around and bow down to the same sons of bitches that put our ancestors into slavery, and call them our leaders. i'm sorry, i don't mean no disrespect to our elders and our sisters when i use those extreme words. But i want to drive the point home. After 27 years, how in hell We ain't free? We ain't got our own institutions, our own schools, our own doctors. When i went into the pen, there was a debate between integration and liberation. What did integration get us? Things are worse now than ever for most of our people. The proof of a theory is in the social practice. Liberation is the solution!

i tell them in the pen, "You want to sell drugs? When We liberate, i'm going to give you all the pharmaceutical companies. You all can make all the drugs you want, and you'll own the drug companies." You ask, do We really want to do that? Sure, because i know those brothers aren't going to put those drugs into their children. They'll see them as being medicinal like our ancestors did, as something from the spirit, as Imhotep tried to teach us thousands of years ago. We're going to turn it around and the brother and sister on the street selling that shit, We're going to put them in charge of the medicine. Don't put them in jail. Don't put anybody in jail! We shouldn't have any jails.

i don't do a lot of talking. i back up what i say. i want to bring out what some of the brothers told me in the pen, Mutulu

Shakur, Sekou Odinga, (other) Black Liberation Army soldiers; when they were busted, they told the pigs, "i am a soldier, this is my name, my rank, my serial number, and that's all you get." And they're still in jail today, even though they said everything that was required of them by the Geneva Accords, if you are arrested in a war, an insurrection. The U.S. does not recognize us as prisoners of war, and We have to make them. That's a reality. We are at war. Every time a soldier stands up in that war to defend you, if he is attacked, he is supposed to be attacked... We die for our people. We can do 27 years for our people and not come out and ask for nothing. Our struggle is for the liberation of our people, not to be treated Well in the prisons.

Prisons are only a small part of our struggle for liberation. There's other issues, crack in our streets, disrespect for our elders. We used to be able to walk down these streets, old folks 60-70 years old, at night, safely. You let anybody mess with them, We would have got them; if We couldn't have got them, some of the Muslims would have got them, or some of the US people would have, or the APP.

There's a difference now — they made you hate each other. We went through hell coming up from Louisiana, where they called you colored, Negroes; Kwame Toure, known then as Stokely Carmichael, Kathleen Cleaver, Rap Brown, struggled so hard to make you all understand, that We Were no longer Negroes, or colored, We were Black, and they called it the Black Power movement. Now, this is 1997, and We've grown, We've matured, and through those years some of the greatest minds among us have resolved that We have to cease calling ourselves by an adjective, Black, and We have to be called by a noun, Africans.

We have to get away from shame and fear, and be proud to call ourselves Africans, where life began, where everything evolved from. So We are Africans and We call ourselves New Afrikans, to distinguish ourselves from the mama-land, so this is the new term to identify our nation — New Afrika. Imari Obadele, Chokwe Lumumba, Dr. Mutulu Shakur, were very instrumental in bringing that about, and getting us to

understand ourselves, because just like We have to understand our enemy, We also have to understand ourselves. So that self-identification is very important. It goes into our historical personality, based upon our Africanity. It's not based on European-ness, other than this intrusion by slavery.

When you carry on the legacy of the slave-master, your doing our movement a great disservice. You turn around and give your child the name of this dog that raped your grandmother, you're giving that child an evil spirit. That's what our ancestors taught us, the power of nommo, the word. You're cursing those children. When they grow up, they may have a first name, Jamal, and the last name of someone who participated in slavery — that won't work. They're going to have that divided conscience, that social schizophrenia that you see so prevalent among us, because We are too scared to embrace our ancestry fully, to change both our names and give that legacy to our children so they can carry it on, and not the legacy of our slave-masters.

What a lot of the youngsters tell me is that when their elders did take time with them, they were giving them stuff that didn't make sense. So, you older brothers and sisters, when i say take time with the youngsters, you better give them the real, you better study yourself, come to these meetings, contact somebody and get the knowledge so you can pass it on properly.

Back then, Bunchy and them had to deal with the gangs and gangsters, to change the gangster mentality to a revolutionary mentality. And a lot We can't talk about. We have learned that in the 60's, We ran our mouths a little too much about certain things — but the word will be given to develop certain functions, not because i'm out of prison, but because it's a new trend, a new effort all throughout the country to liberate people, not only in the prison behind the walls, but in prisons on the other side of the walls. The coming together is sincere, because We know now who We can trust, and We now know who We cannot.

And We cannot do it without you. We understand ourselves as you all; you all understand yourselves as us. We can't see each other as anything apart — I am, there-

fore We are; We are, therefore i am. The contradictions people see, with people who are in different organizations, have to be understood — don't listen to gossip, rumors, one of our greatest enemies. Hitler started that — or it goes back to Sun Tzu — Hitler and Mussolini would send agents to mingle with the population, and they would tell the population that Malcolm X was no good, Elijah Muhammad did thus and so, and they got us killing each other. Among our people, i'm sorry to say, it works more often than not. We have to stop being so eager to hate each other. When We brought in the Black Power movement in the 60's, that was based on love. They said black was ugly; We said Black was beautiful. We began to define our own reality.

When We said Black was beautiful, you would not believe the pride and dignity that swept through our nation. That scared them more than anything. They knew of all the guns, all the breakfast programs, all the rhetoric, nothing hurt them more than Black people loving each other.

Now, when i went in the pen, i leave the streets, Black was still beautiful. I come back, Blacks hate each other — that trips me out. We even allowed them to come present the old European image — if you don't look like the white man, the white woman, you're ugly. We had made the Black woman, the Black man the standard of beauty. They put a lot of money into promoting that image.

When i left the streets in the 60's, you could ask anybody, We loved each other. So, We had problems — We struggled to resolve those problems. But our main contradiction was with the man. Now our contradictions are among ourselves. We didn't know L.A. to be all these sets fighting with each other. i don't even want to repeat these things, because it sounds rhetorical. People ask what you did in the 60's about drugs in the community? We shot and We killed drug dealers. i'm not copping to no crime. Those old dope dealers in the past, they didn't use their product, they had clear heads. First, We would go talk to them. We weren't trying to compete in no drug world, take their sack and make more money. We would take the dope — it was heroin back then — and We would flush it. But the ones who didn't agree to the principles that We were trying to lay down, that the community had agreed to, they were smoked. i'm sorry, but that's the reality of it. i'm not saying We're going to come out here and smoke nobody. But We had

to live our lives for the revolution, but I'll be damned, if I'm going to die, that I'm going to leave you selling crack to my kids; you're going first! You all know where dope comes from — and I can't say enough for the courage of sister Maxine for confronting them — the C.I.A. We were telling you for years from Folsom, from Q, from Death Row, but the bourgeois people get a little money, they don't want to listen. But now you're forced to listen—because it's affecting your family, your brother, your sister.

We've got a program that doesn't have a contradiction with any Black organization that's struggling. If you have contradictions, We have to resolve them. You've got to struggle and avoid vendettas. That can be handled. We have to regain the spirit of unity before We enter the 21st Century. It's a shame if We enter the next century still calling Bill Clinton our leader—it's a shame to Bunchy and to everyone who gave their lives for freedom.

We can't deal with personalities. We've got to deal with principles. We don't care about capitalism, We care about freedom. You have people pimping the revolution. Not once did the Black Panthers accept a dollar from the federal government — and they came with big money. They were offering billions of dollars and We would say, get your ass out of the office. I have never talked to the FBI — I'm too busy talking to my nation...(end)

Geronimo's speech Went on for almost two hours. His speech, along with remarks by dozens of supporters to a crowd of several thousand people at Leimert Park in Los Angeles, is available on videotape for \$10 from: *JusticeVision, 1425 West 12th St. #262, L. A., CA, 90015; 213-747-6345.*

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On Violence Against Women

Michael McCoy

Several weeks ago while rummaging through a pile of news papers, i spotted a copy of the DAILY TIMES. As with most papers that catch my attention, i leafed through it searching the columes for some worthwhile article to clip and pass on. Half way through the paper i noticed a picture of a young teen-age Sister

relaxing in a chair with a pleasant look on her face. Inwardly, i smiled, wondering what joys life could offer her at such a young and tender age. As i glanced up to learn more about her, a big bold caption read: "RAPE PROBE PROTESTED. BLACKS SEEK A SPECIAL D.A." i felt both anguish and hatred as i read of her rape by six hooded klansmen who, after they used her, left "KKK" marks etched in her chest with a piece of charcoal. Tawana Brawley was found four days later in a dazed state trembling inside of a large plastic bag. Excrement was spread over her body. As of December 6, Tawana was unable to walk and had difficulty talking. It is my hope that she will recover soon.

Unfortunately, there seems to be no let-up on such acts of brutality. The U.S. has a long-standing history of violence against women -- particularly "Third World women". Just the other day i read an article in BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY on "Violence Against New Afrikan Women." The author, Safiya Omari, told of how New Afrikan womens' unborn babies were often ripped from their stomachs by the slave planter in an effort to terrorize them into submission. Indeed, as Sister Safiya told, our oppressor has been persistent in their attempts to crush the fighting spirit of New Afrikan women.

Rape is not the only form of violence against women. It is perhaps the most extreme; but sterilization, wife battering, psychological abuse, and incest, are all forms of violence against women that can be as devastating as rape.

Are men who commit rape born criminals? Do they come into the world with a primordial obsession for power that cannot be satisfied unless they rape women into submission? Are all pre-existing societies characterized by a battle of the sexes because of the male desire for power?

In ancient societies the relationship between sexual oppression and violence, so familiar today, was unknown. By comparison with milleniums of social evolution, male supremacy may therefore have existed in only a small fraction of social history. So what, then, was responsible for the emergence of sexual violence against women?

According to Evelyn Reed, Julia Schwendinger, Afonja Simi and a number of other revolutionary writers, rape occurred under historical-social conditions where exploitive class societies appear. With the break-up of communal societies along militarist lines, the drive to raid neighboring villages for wealth subverted the leading role of women in society. The rise of private property and exploitive class

relations also reduced the status of women and children to private property.

Several years ago a number of studies were done on different Afrikan communities to compare the degree of sexual violence against women. One of the findings was that in communal societies where the status of men and women were relatively equal, sexual violence against women was rare. And, when it did occur, it wasn't treated as a crime against an individual or property, but viewed as a crime against "women and the community in general." In other Afrikan communities where exploitive class conditions exist and the role of women in production was marginal, there was a higher degree of sexual violence compared to communal societies. The point of the study was to show there does exist a direct relation between violence against women and sexual inequality. To one degree or another, the same general features are observable throughout history where class conditions exist.

Modern capitalist production didn't create male supremacy, but it did reproduce and heighten conditions for sexual violence against women. The commercialization of women as sexual objects for advertisement, lurid projections of women in magazines and books appearing to crave male domination, and the status of women in the labor market as cheap, exploitable labor, are just a few of the factors that contribute to the conditions of violence against women. The patriarchal institution of the monogamous marriage and the single family unit were born out of the exploitation and degradation of women. These arrangements were conceived not of love, but of the elite class need to perpetuate wealth.

Since the New Afrikan nation is an oppressed nation, a nation subject to the political, intellectual, and cultural domination of the Euro-American oppressor nation, the contradictions and social ills which exist in the oppressor nation also exist in our nation in "greater levels of intensities and proportions." Within our communities, New Afrikan women sometimes provide more stable sources of economic assets than men because of their own earnings, their access to welfare payments, or their role in extended family relationships where they gov-

ern the redistribution of whatever resources are available among sisters, brothers, in-laws, and children. Under these conditions, the importance of manipulating and controlling New Afrikan women, by violence if necessary, is elevated among New Afrikan men who accept the capitalist premise: "dog eat dog world."

Some New Afrikan men abuse New Afrikan women when they are drunk because alcohol strips away the shallow feelings of guilt which inhibit existing sentiments towards such acts of violence. Frustration is often evoked as an excuse for sexual violence against women, but in an exploitive class society violence is the result of socially learned behavior.

Another interesting point to note is the material basis for white supremacy in the white community reflects the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of white males. In the New Afrikan community, however, no such material basis exists. Out of a sense of powerlessness and insecurity, many New Afrikan men attempt to assert their male dominance over New Afrikan women through violence. White males have other options to use, like economic power over women to maintain their dominance.

A few of the points I wanted to make was violence against women is not innate in men and that there is historical-social roots to sexual violence. In an effort to liberate the nation and create a new society absent many social calamities that now exist, We must understand the material basis which gives birth to such ills. The current outrage which exists in our community over violence against women by New Afrikan men and women is important, but it cannot substitute for an adequate social theory. Without a realistic understanding of our colonial reality, outrage invites utopianism and eventually disillusionment. It is therefore imperative that We strive to continuously deepen our understanding of the social problems of the colony. Such knowledge will improve us politically and better prepare us to organize the masses around revolutionary politics.

My Revolutionary Greetings to all,
Michael McCoy
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