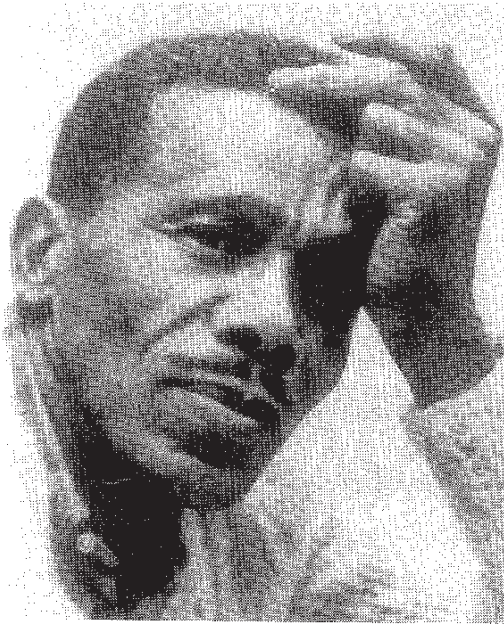


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If Nobody Likes Bad Cops, Why Does the City Continue to Protect Them?

Complaints of police brutality carried out by members of the Chicago Police Department have become more prevalent in Chicago recently. The Office of Professional Standards routinely concludes that over 270 instances of police abuse are committed every year by the Chicago Police. Currently, the City of Chicago Corporation Counsel is in negotiations with the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) to construct a new collective bargaining agreement, the current contract expires June 30th of this year. The contract that the FOP currently has, and the new agreement that they are trying to obtain, covers much more than the standard wage and benefit protections that all workers deserve. *The FOP contract also guarantees certain privileges for officers accused or found guilty of police brutality.*

FOP Contract Problem #1: Protected by Time

When a Chicago Police officer is accused of brutality or murder, days and often weeks pass before he/she is asked to make an official statement. (1) This allows the officer time to find out what other witnesses have said or what the forensics report states and provides the accused with information to construct a version of events that matches these reports. Civilians accused of a crime are questioned immediately, police officers should **not** be afforded these special privileges.

The Answer: Police officers accused of brutality should be questioned immediately!

Deaths or injuries in police custody should serve as a red flag to immediately initiate investigations. Accused officers should be prohibited from access to forensic reports, crime scene findings, and witness statements until they themselves have given a sworn statement. Don't allow delays to perpetuate the code of silence!



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FOP Contract Problem #2: Memory Loss

Chicago Police officers that have charges of police brutality sustained against them have these incidents removed from their records after 1-5 years. The timing of this removal of past incidents from records is ensured by the FOP contract.(2) Instead of tracking brutal police officers and monitoring habitual offenders, the contract instead perpetuates brutal behavior by concealing it.

The Answer: Track Brutal Police Officers and Fire Them!

Instead of concealing past brutal behavior, monitor complaints so that repeat offenders can be fired or prosecuted. Keep records intact and allow them to be used in later investigations. Establish an early warning system, to recognize potentially brutal officers before the public pays the price. Don't let more examples of officers like Rex Hayes, at least a four-time repeat brutalizer, slip through the cracks that the FOP has widened. Officer Hayes, who is still on the job, has cost the City more than 3 million dollars in law suit settlements.

Include Civilian Representation at all FOP Negotiations!

The FOP has a right to fair wages and benefits, they do not have the right to protect brutal police officers at the expense of public safety. The solutions suggested here are just the beginning of a dialogue that community representatives must be included in. It's obvious that the Corporation Counsel, guided by the Mayor, has not taken the peoples' side on this issue; they have consistently allowed our protection from police abuse to be bargained away. Only by including civilian activists concerned with issues of police brutality in the FOP negotiation process can our interests be represented.

- ***Don't bargain away civilian protection from police abuse!***
- ***FOP contracts should serve and protect all Chicagoans!***
- ***Call and let our side be heard. Tell the Mayor and the Corporation Counsel that We demand that community representatives be part of the FOP negotiation process! — Mayor Daley (312) 744-5000; Corporation Counsel - Labor Division (312) 744-5100***

For more information contact *Neighbors Against Police Brutality (NAPB)*, (773) 583-2753. NAPB was started in 1995 after a Humboldt Park man, Jorge Guillen, was killed by police. Guillen suffered from schizophrenia and his family had called 9-1-1 to have him taken to the hospital. Chicago police instead beat Guillen and asphyxiated him to death. Through our struggle for justice for Guillen We have learned that the problem of police brutality in Chicago is not simply a problem of "a few bad apples", the entire system of police accountability has to be changed. We honor Guillen's memory by continuing this struggle.

Notes

(1) The contract states that, "the interrogation of the officer, other than the initial stage of the investigation, shall be scheduled at a reasonable time" There is no further statement regarding the timing of the initial investigation. (pg 9) Officers required to make witness statements shall also have interviews "scheduled at a reasonable time," that "shall not be postponed more than forty-eight hours from the time the officer is informed of the request for an interview...interviews in shooting cases may be postponed for no more than two hours."(pg 14) There is no time limit stated for how long after a brutality incident has occurred that an official request for interviews must be made.

(2) The contract states, "A finding of sustained violation noted, no disciplinary action... may be used for a period of time not to exceed one year and shall thereafter be removed from the officer's disciplinary record and not used to support or as evidence of adverse employment action."(pg 19) "Unless the Superintendent of Police specifically authorizes in writing, no complaint or allegation of any misconduct concerning any incident or event which occurred five years prior... shall be reopened or re-investigated after five years."(pg 9)



A Message From Innocent People Who Have Been Freed From Death Row

There are innocent men and women on death row in this country. We know, for we were numbered among them. Many of us endured for years in the narrow and isolated confines of a barren cell designed to murder our spirits, as the State struggled to win final legal sanction to steal our lives.

Such is the case with Mumia Abu-Jamal, an award-winning journalist, an outspoken opponent of racism and police brutality, a militant champion of justice for Black people, a man who for decades has been the voice of the dispossessed and the disenfranchised — and an innocent man on death row in Pennsylvania.

We know Mumia's struggle, because no-one knows better than we of the lengths to which the criminal "justice" system will go in its relentless quest to take a life. Many of us are intimately familiar with the daily degradation of Mumia's seventeen years on death row: locked in his cell for 23 hours each day, forbidden to embrace or even see his family members, prohibited from being filmed or audio taped by reporters, slapped into punitive detention for writing and publishing his views, refused the right to confidentially communicate with his attorneys. We were sustained in our struggle for justice, as Mumia is, by the tireless support of our families, friends, and people of principle who organized to liberate us from the machine that tried to slay us. Above all else we were sustained, as Mumia is, by the only real certainty we were allowed on death row — the knowledge that we were innocent.

The State sought to poison us, electrocute us or hang us with the machine-like indifference it reserves for people it has determined to be worthless and therefore disposable — in this country, overwhelmingly poor people and people of color. If our murders could be used to enhance a political career or a partisan policy debate, then so much the better. But the State seeks to murder Mumia with a ruthless and relentless fervor that has publicly defied any pretext of fairness or decency. Let us be clear: the State's campaign to murder Mumia is designed above all else to silence a Black man who dares to speak truth to power. As Mumia himself has said, the State does not seek just his death, it seeks his silence.

It is for these reasons that we call on all people of conscience to speak out, to organize against this travesty of justice, and to demand Mumia's freedom. To allow Pennsylvania to murder Mumia is to allow the State to slaughter another innocent and silence a voice for the voiceless. We know that the State will not concede its wrongdoing without a struggle. We know that the authorities who have sought to murder this man will not submit to justice unless we, the people, organize to fight the State's abuse of power. Join us. Stand with Mumia Abu-Jamal, our brother and our friend, and demand that the State of Pennsylvania set him free.

Kirk Bloodsworth (Maryland, Convicted 1984, Released 1993)

Ronald Kleine (New Mexico, Convicted 1974, Released 1976)

Joseph Burrows (Illinois, Convicted 1989, Released 1994)

Carl Lawson (Illinois, Convicted 1990, Released 1996)

Perry Cobb (Illinois, Convicted 1979, Released 1987)

Wilbert Lee (Florida, Convicted 1963, Released 1975)

Gary Gauger (Illinois, Convicted 1993, Released 1996)

Bradley P. Scott (Florida, Convicted 1988, Released 1991)

Muneer Deeb (Texas, Convicted 1985, Released 1996)

Verneal Jimerson (Illinois, Convicted 1985, Released 1996)

Delbert Tibbs (Florida, Convicted 1974, Released 1977)

Troy Lee Jones (California, Convicted 1982, Released 1996)

Darby (Williams) Tillis (Illinois, Convicted 1979, Released 1987)

David Keaton (Florida, Convicted 1971, Released 1973)

Dennis Williams (Illinois, Convicted 1979, Released 1996)

**STOP
THE
DEATH
PENALTY**

Why Hip Hop Is Dead

by Lethal Wonder

Hip Hop is dead. i don't care what anyone says, it has absolutely seen it's last days. There used to be a time that everyone would come out and relish in the fact that they had conquered new skills or discovered a new technique. Kids couldn't wait to drop a new style of rhyming on their peers. Hip Hop was about creativity and to a lesser degree having fun.

Today all that has changed. All these big willie and wanna be gangster types have ruined it. i know everyone is afraid to say it, but i will be straight up and honestly say, hardcore bangers like Suge Knight and his Death Row affiliates along with Fake Ass Puffy and his Biggie collective of friends have played a major role in killing off hip hop. They help usher in the dope game and the whole gangster mentality that now plagues this music. It was bad enough that you had kids from all over the planet trying to be like NWA or the Ghetto Boys. But now the gangster crap they spoke on records has become a frightening reality in the real world of hip hop.

When i go around my block, everyone i see aspires to be the next Gangster Don. Everyone wants to be like a Suge Knight and intimidate people. Everyone wants to be like a Sean Puffy Combs and get paid lots of money with no real concern for the art form they are ruining. Now alongside the Sugues and Puffys We have Master P and Jay Z, Fat Joe and Big Pun and Ice Cube and Mack 10 and Jermaine Dupri. These are supposed top Dons in hip hop. They all look and act like gangsters. Some of them even have a few dollars in the pocket. Unfortunately, it's chump change compared to the real big willies of the world.

i don't see Fat Joe owning a skyscraper in Manhattan. Master P may be the big money shot caller right now, but he still has to go through Priority Records to get distributed. That means the owner of Priority is the real money maker and not Master P. Suge for all his worth and intimidation tactics is still locked away in some jail cell in California. You would think that will all the crap he and his Death Row affiliates talked that they would have had the whole Justice system in check for real. i guess when it comes down to it, it's Uncle Sam who has the last word.

Ice Cube and Mack 10 change with the wind. One minute Cube is a Muslim talking all this Black Power and righteous shit. Now he's back to calling women bitches and hoes and pretending he's a gangster... For all the money that guys like Puffy, Jay-Z and Jermaine Dupri have you would think they would own some sort of tv station. Perhaps a cable access station would do. None of these big ballers own a radio station or even a magazine.

Not one of them own the record companies that distribute their material. It sickens me to see these kids run around yelling 'money ain't a thing'. Some one needs to tell [them] 'money does mean a thing' if you don't own a goddamn thing. Instead of throwing away all those 20 dollar bills like they do in concert, maybe they should be stacking those dead presidents so they could save up and buy some stuff that they could own.

You would think that after 25 years of existence that hip hop would own something other than a bad reputation of violence-prone niggaz who pretend to be gangsters because they have a little bit of money in the pocket. Hip Hop is sadly misguided.

On the other side of the coin you have all these fake-ass 'underground', backpack wearing kids. They pride themselves on being broke and *keeping it real*, but like their hip hop gangster counterparts they too lack creativity. i would have to say guys like Mos Def and Talib Kweli [**Black Star**] have managed to shine through, but look at all these other kids who have fallen off in a big way. i don't need to name names. All you have to do is look around and you see these kids living in the underground bragging about how they are true to hip hop, but they have yet to step up and redirect the misguided flow of this beast. Hip Hop is lost and you definitely will not find it in the underground. All you will see is some buster ass rappers who will yell about how they are all about keeping it real. They will be sporting dreads even though they aren't Rastas. They'll have backpacks with nothing in them. They'll be chewing on a stick or smoking a blunt with a young impressionable white girl under their arm. The sad part is that young white girl will most likely have a lot more game than these underground cats. She's just using them as a momentary pit stop for experience while these underground busters run away from the challenge that is before them. That challenge is to take control and change the negative direction of hip hop.

Hip Hop is dead my friends. It's been overrun by gangsters and dope dealers and other unscrupulous motherfuckers who care nothing about the culture or the music. Hip Hop is dead because a bunch of motherfuckers stayed underground with their head in the sand. Hip Hop is dead.

(Lethal Wonder is a young man who has grown increasingly frustrated with Hip Hop in it's current form. He sent this piece to Davey D's Hip Hop Corner, which can be found on the web at <http://www.daveyd.com>. Responses can be sent to kingdave@sirius.com)



Going Beyond Black and White

*By Grace Lee Boggs
Episcopal Diocese of Michigan
Detroit, September 21, 1998*

Some years ago I attended a series of workshops led by Jim Perkinson in a small attic room at the Church of the Messiah in which he shared what his Biblical studies had taught him about Jesus' role as the leader of a social movement of the poor and oppressed against an exploiting elite. I have always been grateful to Jim for enriching my understanding of Christianity through these workshops. Therefore, I was glad to accept John Hooper's invitation to join in this celebration of his receipt of a Ph.D. in Theology from the University of Chicago by responding to his presentation on "Getting to the Core of Racism: Privilege, Power and Possibility at the Millenium."

I don't know how John expected me to respond. But because my own experience has taught me that real education in social struggle only begins after you get your Ph.D., I have decided that I owe it to Jim to explain how my approach to racism, based on many years of life and struggle in the African American community, differs significantly from his.

This difference comes through most clearly in our contrasting views of James Forman's 1969 Black Manifesto which demanded a half billion dollars in reparations from white churches for black projects. According to Jim, Forman's striding down the aisle and interrupting the May 4, 1969 Sunday Service at Riverside Church with his Manifesto was "the seminal moment of the Civil Rights struggle," because it brought "the question home to its point of origin" and framed it "in the terms in which it has always mattered... the issue of economic indebtedness and return on investment."

By contrast, I was appalled by Forman's Black Manifesto. To me it signaled the beginning of the end of the black movement precisely because it framed the struggle against racism in these economic terms. I was present when Forman presented his demands to a caucus at the National Black Economic Development Conference at Wayne University and have described the scene in my autobiography, *Living For Change*. "When the demand for a half billion dollars was projected to the fifty or more people gathered in a relatively small room, the audience

gasped, eyes popped, and someone said, '\$15 a Nigger.' I was horrified - into my mind popped the lines from 'The White Man's Heaven is the Black Man's Hell,' that called putting a price on a man's body 'the world's most grievous sin.'"

The main reason why Blacks in this country have been pivotal to the struggle to humanize our society is because they never forgot that their oppression had been rooted in a system which was fundamentally corrupt because it elevated economic values over human values. It was precisely because the struggle for civil rights in the 1960s framed the struggle against racism in human and not economic terms, that it burgeoned into a wide-ranging movement with the potential to transform American society. Thus, even though the civil rights movement was against segregation, it was not for integration into the values and institutions of this society. In the early days of the movement, black people used to say, "Who would want to be integrated into a burning house!" It was only as the struggle gained momentum that the economic and opportunistic values of the system began to penetrate and corrupt the movement. Instead of struggling to transform the society, blacks began to covet a piece of the economic and political action.

This contradiction came to a head in the rebellions which began to erupt in northern cities in the middle 1960s. On the one hand, the young people who rose up in rebellion in Watts, Newark, Detroit and 100 cities across the nation were challenging the values of a racist society which was using Hi-Tech to destroy a small nation in Southeast Asia and to make them expendable at home. On the other, they were looting and carting away cartons of TVs, guns and liquor as if freedom could be measured in consumer goods.

This contradiction and this street force, now called the underclass, have been growing since the 1960s. It achieved organized form in the Black Panther Party which struggled valiantly to develop a revolutionary solution. It exploded again in southcentral Los Angeles in the spring of 1992 over the Rodney King verdict.

Like most of us who lived through the rebellions, Martin Luther King was deeply troubled by this contradiction and in the last two years of his life struggled to develop a vision of a new kind of movement to resolve it. As a result, he realized that

it was no longer sufficient to struggle only against racism. What we now need, he said, was a non-violent revolution which would combine a revolution in values, against what he called the “giant triplets” of racism, materialism and militarism, with a revolution against the structures that doom millions to poverty and powerlessness. Recognizing the need to go beyond technological progress (“we have guided missiles and misguided men”), he struggled to envision a system that would go beyond both capitalism (which he said was too “I-centered, too individualistic, too thing-oriented”) and communism (which was “too collective, too statist”). Recognizing also that young blacks only made a historic contribution when they “threw off their middle class values and put careers and wealth in a secondary role,” he explored strategies that would involve young people in “direct self-transforming and structure-transforming” actions in “our dying cities.”

Towards the end of his life King was not talking about integration - let alone reparations. No longer willing to separate out the struggle against racism from the struggle against materialism and militarism, he was talking about transformation, the transformation in both structures and in values that all of us in this society, including African Americans, increasingly need to undergo. King was killed before he could develop and implement his vision, but today, thirty years later, we should be building on his projections rather than on Forman’s Black Manifesto.

I also have serious questions about Jim’s conclusion. In the last paragraph of the draft which he sent me, he recommends that “at this millennial moment in North American history,” we should “learn to follow a Jesus who, as surely as he was Jewish in first century Palestine, is black in contemporary North America.” Implicit in that recommendation is a black-white dynamic that has outlived its usefulness but that persists in many concerned individuals of Jim’s generation, black and white, whose identities have been shaped by the struggles of the 1960s. That dynamic, I am convinced, is now intrinsically unhealthy because it

- involves an uncritical acceptance of black male leadership by whites, especially white males, on the one hand, and on the other, an uncritical assumption by blacks, especially black males,

that they are the vanguard of the American revolution.

- glosses over the many conflicting tendencies in black leadership which are multiplying along with the growing gulf between the black middle class and the black underclass.
- reinforces some of the major weaknesses of most black leaders, especially the resistance to criticism and self-criticism and the continuing use of disabling myths on the grounds that they are needed by the masses who have been cruelly oppressed by white racism. For a critical look at these weaknesses I recommend *Joe Wood’s Malcolm X: In Our Own Image* (St. Martins Press, 1992), especially the essays criticizing Malcolm’s sexism by Angela Davis and Patricia Hill Collins and an insightful analysis by Marlon Riggs of why young blacks identify with Malcolm - because he is “the quintessential icon of black rage” and of “death as the inevitable price one gives to be free.”
- blinds us to the tremendous changes that have taken place since the 1960s, changes that have created new contradictions and new complexities, challenging us to make a tremendous leap in our concepts of struggle and possibilities and in the words of Angela Davis, to “rethink and reshape the contours of our political activism.” (“**Meditations on the Legacy of Malcolm X**” in *Malcolm X: In Our Own Image*, ed. Joe Wood, p. 46.

A lot of water has flowed under the bridge in the last thirty years.

In the first place, even though the movement of the 1960s did not end racism, it integrated blacks into the values of the system as they had never been before.

Second, since the 1960s there has been a tremendous influx of Latinos, Asians and people from the Middle East so that it is widely estimated that by the middle of the next century, Euro-Americans and African Americans will be among the many minorities that make up the American majority.

Third, the devastation of our cities and our

communities by global capitalism has increased the hopelessness and desperation of young people in our inner cities, but it is also giving rise to a new multicultural grassroots movement to rebuild our communities and our cities from the ground up. As a result, the time has come for us to make a paradigm shift, i.e., to go beyond thinking and talking in terms of the black/white struggle and to explore how we can empower young people in our cities by engaging them in this new movement.

The best example of what I mean is this document which presents the *17 Principles of Environmental Justice* adopted at the **First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit** in October 1991 by a gathering of African Americans, Native Americans, Latinos and Asian Americans. It is a multicultural, multinational Manifesto which establishes the foundation for a new movement, based on a new more holistic concept of citizenship, to take us into the 21st century.

For example, Principle No. 3 "mandates the right to ethical, balanced and responsible uses of land and renewable resources in the interest of a sustainable planet for humans and other living beings."

Principle No. 7 "demands the right to participate as equal partners at every level of decision-making including needs assessment, planning, implementation, enforcement and evaluation."

Principle No. 14 "opposes the destructive operations of multinational corporations."

Principle No. 17 "requires that we, as individuals, make personal and consumer choices to consume as little of Mother Earth's resources and to produce as little waste as possible, and make a conscious decision to challenge and reprioritize our life-styles to insure the health of the natural world for present and future generations."

I would like to conclude with a story from the Black Radical Congress told me by General Baker, one of the founders of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers. As some of you may have heard, the highlight of this Congress, which convened in Chicago in June, was the intergenerational dialogue pairing activists from the 1960s, including General, Kathleen Cleaver, Barbara Smith, Ahmad Rahmann and Angela Davis, with student activists of today. At the end of his dialogue, General asked the young woman he was interviewing what message she could give him to take back to his five children and eight grandchildren. Her reply was that "Anger will get you only so far; beyond that you have to depend on Love."

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I haven't been able to get out of my mind these words from a young woman who has grown up surrounded by the just anger of her peers, the anger which exploded in the rebellions of the 1960s and has continued to fester and manifest itself in the violence of young people against themselves and others. This anger is not going to be assuaged by reparations. Or, as Audre Lorde put it, you cannot dismantle the house of the master with the tools of the master. Our challenge is to build a movement based on "self-transforming and structure-transforming" activities that foster their love for themselves, for their communities and for Mother Earth by giving them opportunities to make a difference.

For example, we can organize and support programs like DETROIT SUMMER, "a multicultural intergenerational youth program/movement to rebuild, redefine and respire Detroit from the ground up," which recently completed its seventh season. Or, as the *Michigan Citizen* advocates in this week's editorial, we can begin to address the crisis in our schools and in our cities by making community-building activities a natural and normal part of the school curriculum. Thus, "classrooms from K-12 could take responsibility for planting community gardens, maintaining neighborhood streets, rehabbing houses, recycling waste, creating healthier school lunches, etc. Including these activities in the curriculum would give every child a stake in our communities and our cities. It would give children an incentive to study and an opportunity to learn the basics in a context that matters. At the same time, by making use of youthful energies, it would go a long way towards reversing the physical deterioration of our neighborhoods and establishing positive relations between young people and adults."

These are the kinds of activities we need to be initiating and supporting now to bring to our communities the Hope and Love needed to replace the sense of hopelessness, helplessness and desperation that has been mounting for the last thirty years. Through engaging our children in activities of this kind we can begin to transform ourselves and our cities to create the new, more holistic concept of citizenship that we urgently need as we move towards the 21st century.

*Grace Lee Boggs is a first-generation Chinese American who has been a speaker, writer, and movement activist in the African American community for fifty-five years. She has lived on the East Side of Detroit since 1953, most of that time in the same house. With her husband, James Boggs, she coauthored **Revolution and Evolution in the 20th Century**. Currently, as a volunteer, she is active with Healthy Detroit, Detroit Summer, Detroiters Working for Environmental Justice, and the Detroit Growers Support Group. She can be contacted through the **James & Grace Lee Boggs Center to Nurture Community Leadership (BCNCL), 3061 Field Street, Detroit MI 48214; (313) 832-2904.***

What is the Jubilee 2000/Chicago Campaign?

In the Jubilee Year, social inequalities are rectified; slaves are freed. land is returned to original owners, and debts are cancelled.

Jubilee 2000 Chicago is a local Jubilee 2000/USA group. It is part of a worldwide movement of concerned people and organizations seeking, as a first step, to have the international debts of the poorest countries cancelled by the new millenium.

Why is debt a problem for poor countries?

In order to repay foreign debts, many poor countries are being forced to divert scarce government resources away from health care, education, and other vital services. The result has been to deny many children the chance to go to school, women access to prenatal care, HIV-infected persons access to counseling and treatment, and small farmers access to credit and technical assistance. African countries now spend twice as much on average repaying foreign debt as on providing health care. In a letter sent to President Clinton in February 1998, the Ugandan Women's Network noted that, "Ugandan women have suffered the brunt of debt repayment and they continue to pay with their lives." The United Nations Development Program in 1997 stated, "Relieved of their annual debt repayments, the severely indebted countries could use the funds for investments in Africa alone [that] would save the lives of about 21 million children by 2000 and provide 90 million girls and women with access to basic education."

How much do these countries owe?

The 41 countries defined by the World Bank as "Heavily Indebted Poor Countries" (HIPCs) - 33 of them in Africa - owe about \$220 billion in foreign debts. Each African child inherits about \$379 in debt at birth. A child in Nicaragua is born owing over \$2000 while average yearly income there is only \$390. The US is also a major debtor nation, but unlike these poor countries its debt is not primarily foreign debt - it is payable to in its own currency, US dollars. Also the payments are manageable because of the size of the productivity of the US economy.

How did these countries get so indebted? Isn't it their own fault?

- During the Cold War, Western governments including the US often lent money to undemocratic or corrupt governments for political reasons and largely ignored how the borrowers used the money. Many leaders squandered money on badly designed projects, military spending or personal corruption.
- While some poor countries have suffered from ad-

verse weather and armed conflicts, virtually all have endured long term declines in world prices for their primary exports (e.g., items like coffee or cotton). As export earnings dropped, governments could no longer keep up interest payments which were added to the unpaid principal of the debt. This compounding of interest and rescheduling of loans has led to situations in many countries where, despite years of making debt payments, the level of indebtedness has not been reduced. Indeed for many countries the debt is higher now than ever.

To whom do Poor countries owe money?

The main creditors are the world's wealthiest nations, such as the US, Britain, Japan, France and Germany. Other important creditors include the large international financial institutions like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, which are controlled primarily by the world's wealthiest nations. Regional development banks, such as the Inter-American Development Bank, and many commercial banks also have outstanding loans to poor nations.

Why should US citizens care? How does it affect us?

- Unrepayable debt, and the austerity measures that accompany new loans, can inflame social conflicts. That can lead to civil war and even genocidal campaigns, as in Rwanda. Many of these conflicts result in costly humanitarian interventions by the US and other nations.
- A large debt burden motivates many poor countries to lower labor standards, as they engage in a desperate struggle to attract foreign investments and thereby earn revenues to repay foreign debt. That leads to lower wages and growing poverty around the world - and less job security in the US. American jobs are less secure when US companies seeking to pay lower wages relocate overseas.
- Debt harms the environment, encouraging rain forest destruction and pollution as poor countries use cheap but environmentally destructive ways to earn export revenues. To attract foreign investment to help pay the debt, countries often weaken enforcement of international and national environmental standards and regulations.
- Countries with major debt burdens generally are not good customers for US products or investment. As the Ugandan Women's Network noted, unrepayable debt "discourages foreign direct investment, affects commerce, stifles consumption and development of markets." That hurts US farmers, workers and businesses, as well as the people in poor, indebted countries.

Is debt cancellation really practical?

Most poor countries have tried very hard to repay these debts. In 1996 nations in sub-Saharan Africa paid \$14.5 billion on their foreign debt. But in 1995, they could only pay 57% of payments due. The reality is that the debt cannot and will not be repaid, and it is senseless for creditors to pretend otherwise. Countries cannot develop healthy economies when millions of their people are being denied basic health care and education and earn wages so low they can barely survive. A bold step to cancel poor countries' debts is the most practical way to restart their economies, protect the global environment and reduce poverty.

Who has the power to cancel these debts?

Governments of the wealthiest nations, including the US, have the authority to cancel debts. They can provide financial resources to international agencies like the IMF and the World Bank and direct that the funds be used to write off poor countries' debts. They should require, however, that the debt be canceled in a way that benefits ordinary people and without conditions that lead to more poverty and environmental destruction.

[The US] government and others together have the power, and the resources, to do it: the only thing missing is the political will. That must come from people like you.

Has debt cancellation ever been tried before?

Yes. Debt has readily been canceled for many nations in the past. In 1953, Germany was granted very generous repayment terms on its post war international debt. That helped Germany rebuild after the war. In 1991, the US canceled \$7 billion owed by Egypt. From 1989-1991, the US also canceled \$2.7 billion in debts owed by the poorest countries accrued through development and food aid loans. All of these cancellations occurred without doing damage to the US or global economy. Some countries are taking bold steps on the issue: Norway recently announced plans to unilaterally cancel \$180 million in poor country debt.

Won't debt cancellation cost a lot?

Because the world financial community knows full well that the official amount ("face value") of these debts will never be repaid, the market value of the debts is only a fraction of that amount. The contributions needed from wealthy nations to write off these debts would be based on this market value and, therefore, be relatively small. Haiti's foreign debt is a good example. Even though the official value of Haiti's debt to the US government was \$8.3 million, canceling it in 1995 cost only the debt's market value of \$377,000.

Won't debt cancellation just benefit corrupt leaders rather than help ordinary people?

While corruption remains a problem in many

places, a growing number of poor countries have more democratic governments and active civil groups and non-governmental organizations working to hold these governments accountable. Inaction is no solution. That penalizes ordinary people, not the corrupt leaders. The real challenge is to ensure that the resources made available from debt relief are used for reducing poverty. A key part of this process will be making sure civil society in poor countries plays a role in deciding how national economic resources are spent and in setting conditions for future loans.

Is the Campaign only for faith-based groups?

No. The Campaign was inspired by the Biblical concept of "jubilee" found in Leviticus 25: every 50 years all debts were to be canceled, land returned to its original owners and the oppressed set free. But member organizations include a broad range of both religious and secular groups who share a moral commitment to ensuring a debt-free new start for the world's poorest nations. The US Steering Committee includes national religious organizations, environmental and development groups and social justice organizations (a list is available). The Chicago campaign has a similar mixture of religious and secular groups.

What can we do?

You can make a difference by getting involved in the campaign. Jubilee 2000 resolutions from city councils, state legislatures and faith groups; letters to the editor, calls to radio and TV talk shows; visits to your elected members of congress; prayer vigils and other actions - all these can help build a chorus of concern that will force policy makers in Washington to address this issue. We can win this campaign! You can make a difference!

Start today! The millenium is just around the corner.

- Call a meeting of interested people in your church and/or community to discuss and take action.
- Distribute the Jubilee 2000 petition in your faith community, union local, school, or service club.
- Write opinion pieces and letters to the editor of your local paper; organize a public forum on Jubilee 2000.
- Organize a visit to the local office of your congressional representative. Raise your concern for debt relief for impoverished countries at town meetings held by your representative or at candidate forums.

To learn more about the Jubilee 2000/USA campaign call (202) 783-3566. Also, check out the website at <http://www.j2000usa.org>

Jubilee 2000/Chicago Campaign, 59 E. Van Buren, Suite 1400 Chicago IL 60605; 312-427-2533

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Book Review:**Prisoners of Colonialism: The Struggle
For Justice In Puerto Rico**

by Ronald Fernandez

(Common Courage Press: Monroe, Maine)

On Friday, March 12, Jose Solis Jordan was found guilty of bombing a military recruiting center in Chicago in 1992, solely on the evidence of police informant, Rafael Marrero, who had admitted to his own role in the bombing in order to receive immunity from prosecution. For anyone with even the slightest knowledge of Puerto Rico's 100-year struggle against US colonialism, this bombing has the smell of agent provocateurs and the FBI dirty tricks of J. Edgar Hoover's COINTELPRO program of the 1960s. With that program, the FBI used informants to disrupt the activities of the Independence Movement by exacerbating existing friction to help bring about factional splits. If We look at the recent trial of Jose Solis Jordan in the light of this history, We can see it as an attempt to divide the Puerto Rican Independence Movement in Chicago and disrupt the work of the "National Committee to Free the Puerto Rican Prisoners of War and Political Prisoners" and divert it from its goal of winning amnesty for the prisoners.

It is this demand for amnesty and its historical context that is Ronald Fernandez's brief in his book. It's written with the purpose of informing people in the US about the unacceptable colonial status of Puerto Rico and the injustice and violation of human rights evident in the length of sentences and appalling conditions of the incarcerated Independence Movement prisoners. Fernandez has set himself a very difficult task. How can you begin to explain colonialism to an audience for whom the word is merely an irrelevant abstraction — something the British did in Africa? Possibly, it is even more difficult than that. Cynicism and "double-think" leads people in the US to hold contradictory opinions that negate each other.

In the early 1980s, i asked someone to sign a petition to support the demands of an Irish political prisoner on hunger strike in a US federal prison. The explanation for his refusal to sign contained this revealing contradiction: that the US was the only free country in the world; but that he wouldn't sign the petition because the FBI might find out and tap his telephone. This attitude affects us all. If We are ruled

by unethical cynics who claim to be acting altruistically and in the best interest of the people they invade and exploit then We, too, become infected with the same arrogance, indifference and contradictory thinking. We can easily be lead to believe that the US has no colonies, while at the same time recognizing that illegal wire tapping and police brutality are common occurrences here. *Prisoners of Colonialism* presents us with a gripping and very readable account of the last 100 years in which the US government's dealings with Puerto Rico have been consistent in this one respect: what a succession of administrations have said publicly that they are doing is the absolute reverse of what they actually have done.

"On July 25, 1898, General Nelson Miles invaded Puerto Rico... he declared martial law, silenced the press..." and three days later presented his message to the Puerto Rican people: "We have not come to make war upon the people of a country that for centuries has been oppressed, but, on the contrary, to bring protection... to promote your prosperity and to bestow upon you the immunities and [blessing] of the liberal institution of our government." After two years of repressive military rule, the Puerto Rican people asked Congress for an immediate "redress of grievances." Congress responded with the Foraker Act. Now, "Puerto Rico was not only a colony, it was the first unincorporated territory in US history." Meaning that there was no promise of future statehood.

This duplicity continued with an enforced "citizenship" in 1917 against the will of the people. This was a special kind of citizenship, since it came without rights or representation. Puerto Ricans could then be drafted into the military by a government they couldn't vote for. In the name of economic development, Congress introduced a tax exempt "incentive for outside investment to establish factories that would put Puerto Rico to work." But since corporations could only bring their tax free profits home after liquidation, "new businesses only replaced the ones closing shop after a 'let's take the money and run' liquidation." In the name of economic development, Puerto Rico's economy was destroyed, leading to the enforced exile of thousands of Puerto Ricans who had to seek work in New York and Chicago.

While Fernandez is very clear and informative on the manipulation and duplicity inherent in the US government's rule in Puerto Rico, it is the history

of resistance to this rule, from Pedro Albizu Campos in the 1940s to Oscar Lopez Rivera in the 1980s, that is at the center of the book. "International law (e.g., UN General Assembly Resolution 33/24 of December 1978) recognizes "... the legitimacy of the struggle of peoples for independence, territorial integrity, national unity and liberation from colonial domination, particularly armed struggle." If the legitimacy of armed struggle to end colonization is enshrined in international law, then why, asks Fernandez, are there 20 Puerto Ricans serving an average of 70 years for simply exercising this right?

One reason lies in the US government's continued ability to prevail on friends and allies to ensure that any mention of Puerto Rico is deleted from the UN Decolonization Committee Report. Another reason is the constant emotive use of the word "terrorism." On "terrorism," Fernandez states: "It is hypocritical and inaccurate for US officials to call Puerto Rican political prisoners "terrorists." If the essential feature of modern terrorism is the severing of the link between the target of violence and the reason for the violence, the origin of modern terrorism is in the military establishment of England, Italy and the United States. It was Western soldiers who argued that the way to win World War II was to destroy "the enemy's will to resist." In practice, this included "paralyzing the organic industrial, economic and civic systems that maintained the life of the enemy nation itself," and this included "attacking the people themselves, especially those concentrated in the cities." This was openly called "obliteration bombing" because the deliberate idea was to systematically terrorize the civilian population. The thinking is that exposed to bombardment from thousands of planes, people would surrender rather than live under a fiery barrage. After WWII, obliteration bombing became an institutionalized part of American life." Fernandez goes on to point out that "obliteration bombing was an essential part of President Bush's Desert Storm campaign in Iraq. The American public even watched the 'live action' footage on CNN; meanwhile, many of the Baghdad civilians deliberately killed by US bombardment not only had nothing to do with the reason for the war, they were opponents of Saddam Hussein."

Having defined terrorism and pointed out its consistent use as a tactic of the US military since WWII, Fernandez turns his attention to the bombings

of the FALN, the armed movement for Puerto Rican Independence. By 1981, the FALN had assumed responsibility for 120 separate bombings in which a total of 5 people had been killed. "The bombings were generally 'symbolic', they focused on property." All five deaths had occurred accidentally. Nevertheless, the FALN was labeled a terrorist organization, because to have called it "revolutionary" would have been to confront the unacceptable truth of the illegitimacy of US rule and the legitimacy of an armed struggle to overthrow that rule. As one of the prisoners, Oscar Lopez, stated: "The evidence will show you that We have a deep respect for human life, that We care for human life." To Oscar, the proof was in the result of the bombings: how could the FALN violence be characterized as "indiscriminate" if, in 120 bombings, "very few people have died? Obviously, when it attacked banks, recruiting centers or military installations, the FALN could have slaughtered people if it chose to do so."

Maybe the most revealing aspect of this book is that it shows the exemplary ethics, self-sacrifice and integrity of the Puerto Rican Nationalist Prisoners. In contrast, the individuals of successive US governments have shown the very opposite traits: in place of exemplary ethics, We have immorality; for self-sacrifice, We see the pursuit of profit and personal gain; and for integrity, there is only treachery and lies. The hard fact for us is that so many independentistas remain in jail.

Fernandez ends his book with this statement: "The contradiction is ours. The United States owns the colony. The prisoners did their duty. and the President should immediately free them, not only for the sake of justice, but for the principles embodied in the Declaration of Independence."

(reviewed by *Bertha Husband*; reprinted from **Lumpen**, April 1999)



Controversy Surrounding the Film 'Belly'

In case you don't know there's been a bit of controversy surrounding the new movie 'Belly' which features Method Man, DMX, Nas and T-Boz of the group TLC. Long time video director Hype Williams takes his craft to the big screen by directing a New York style film of *Boyz In The Hood* and *Menace II Society*. The movie is about life in the fast lane for a group of guys and how they evolve. Some of them wind up going to jail. Some of them get killed and others figure it out — life in the fast lane leads to dead ends.

Hype attempts to put a serious message behind all the mayhem that gets shown on the screen. i won't go into great detail about it because i don't wanna ruin the plot in case y'all haven't seen it. One of the big questions at hand is whether or not folks who have seen the flick walked away peepin' the message that Hype was trying to lace them with. Incidentally, Hype not only directs this flick, but he also wrote the screenplay.

Now i spoke to Hype the other day and he emphatically claimed that he's been walking the streets and talking to movie goers and that most are really feeling him on this movie. He said he wanted to do a movie that was based around the type of lifestyles that were led by many of the folks he grew up with. He wanted to show the consequences of their wise and unwise choices and he wanted to put forth characters that viewers could relate to. DMX and Nas who are the main characters deliver some pretty good performances considering it's really their first time on the screen. And i think folks will find them compelling and quite believable. Folks can't help but try and compare hip hop's newest rebel DMX with the late 2PAC. Hype explained that he can see the similarities in both since he has worked with both. However, he feels that DMX is like a raging bull in exuding his emotions and is in fact actually more intense than 2PAC. Me personally, i think they both have their own styles, and both have a menacing presence on screen.

With all that being said, does Hype manage to hit the mark and deliver his message? Former basketball player and current movie theater owner Magic Johnson wasn't quite sure and hence wasn't willing to take a chance. He set off a firestorm of controversy

by refusing to allow the movie to be shown in his theaters. His initial concern was that he was tired of seeing "African Americans" depicted in such a negative light. He also feared that the movie had the potential to set off disruptions and violence. Word of Magic's position had gotten back to Hype before Magic could directly speak with him and folks from Hype's camp was saying the young film director was annoyed.

The public perception of things were divided. On one hand, you had people applauding Magic for taking a bold stance and putting his foot down. On the other hand, you had folks accusing Magic of censorship and bowing down to outside forces who were supposedly controlling his purse strings. The harshest criticisms accused Magic of selling out because he wasn't supporting a "Black" business.

Lee Bailey of the EUR Report [<http://www.eurweb.com>] caught up with Magic Johnson and got things clarified in an exclusive interview: "I'm in gang territory already. You have to realize that. Right now everything is going great. I'm not saying the film would have caused problems, but I'm trying to make sure it doesn't trigger any problems in our neighborhoods." Magic went on to add, "Hollywood told us our idea would not work, but we've been doing this for 4 years. Now when I make a decision like this it's made into a big news story. Theaters make decisions like this all the time. But when I do it, it's a big deal. If violence would have broken out at my theater the story would have been front page."

In my interview with Hype Williams he noted that he understood where Magic was coming from and wanted to set the record straight about his feelings. He stated that he wasn't angry or annoyed, just a bit disappointed. i shared with Hype my personal observations of reaction to his movie. At the Grand Lake Theater which is one of the nicer theaters here in Oakland, the 10 o'clock showing was not publicized in either of the newspapers or the 777-FILM, show time line. This was being done in spite of the fact that there was actually a 10 o'clock show. When i arrived at the theater there was a police car parked outside and two of Oakland's finest sitting inside the theater.

According to one of the ushers, the movie had a violent weekend at that particular theater. Brothers

were showing up drunk or high. People were lighting up blunts inside the theater and being totally disruptive by talking loud, setting off pagers, etc. On two of the nights big fights broke out inside the theater. Hence the police presence. Even with the police on hand and less than 20 people for the show i attended, there was some loud mouth sitting in the back trying to outdo DMX and Nas' performances. This knuckle head was soon silenced, so i can only imagine that 5-0 had stepped to him and made him chill.

i informed Hype of my experiences and told him i could see where Magic was coming from. Hype seemed a bit resigned and noted that there's got to be a way for us to reach some of these individuals who seem bent on behaving destructively. He asked Bay Area listeners to be cool and noted that bad behavior will serve as fuel for those who want to prevent these type of films from being made. Hype also acknowledged that he was in a catch-22 situation because these are the type of films that are appealing to people and the fact that he did indeed have a compelling message made it that much more important. However, if folks aren't gonna respect themselves or the film enough to sit through the movie and take everything in, then it's really going to leave a bad taste in everyone's mouth.

i get the feeling that so many of us have grown up and have just simply become addicted to foul situations. It's like We can't and really don't wanna escape the ghetto mentality which has become a marketable money making commodity right now. i watch how there's been all this publicity behind **Belly** and very little surrounding the excellent movie **SLAM**, which also deals with life in the hood. In **SLAM**, the messages are more pervasive. There is very little glamorizing of the fast life. Why is it that all the positive stuff seems to be downplayed? It's not like they were preaching at you; and even if they were, so what? What's wrong with having some positive stuff in our lives?

For what it's worth although i think Hype had good intentions, i honestly believe that far too many kids feel like their lives are meaningless and that they are gonna pass away before they reach 25 or 30. Hence many have adapted this kamikazee-type of mindset of 'get as much as I can while I'm alive to get it.' Dying in the fast life is equivalent to dying in the line of duty. Maybe that's why so many of us watched this movie 'Belly' and never got the underlying message. Who knows? Let me know what you think.

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The struggle of Afrikans in the US to regain their independence has always been characterized by two major trends. One trend has struggled against racial discrimination and for equal participation in US society, accepting capitalist hegemony. The other trend has struggled against their national oppression by the US, and to establish an independent, socialist state.

The existence of these trends is a matter of historical record. Despite the efforts of the US to suppress the struggle for Afrikan independence, the movement has a strong contemporary expression among all sectors of the Afrikan population, especially among Afrikan youth. A recent study conducted among Afrikan college students by Professor Luke Tripp showed that 34 percent of the students favored an independent Afrikan state.

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A Brief History of the Black Panther Party and Its Place In the Black Liberation Movement*

By Sundiata Acoli

The Black Panther Party for Self-Defense was founded in October, 1966, in Oakland, California by Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale. The name was shortened to the Black Panther Party (BPP) and it began spreading eastward through the Black urban ghetto-colonies across country.

In the summer of '68, David Brothers established a BPP branch in Brooklyn, New York, and a few months later Lumumba Shakur set up a branch in Harlem, New York. I joined the Harlem BPP in the fall of '68 and served as its Finance Officer until I was arrested on April 2, 1969 in the Panther 21 Conspiracy case which was the opening shot in the government's nationwide attack on the BPP. Moving westward, Police Departments in each city made military raids on BPP offices or homes in Philadelphia, Chicago, Newark, Omaha, Denver, New Haven, San Diego, Los Angeles, and other cities, murdering some Panthers and arresting others.

After I and most other Panther 21 members were held in jail and on trial for two years, We were all acquitted of all charges and released. Most of us returned to the community and to the BPP but by then COINTELPRO had taken its toll. The BPP was rife with dissension, both internal and external. The internal strife, division, intrigue, and paranoia had become so ingrained that eventually most members drifted or were driven, away. Some continued the struggle on other fronts and some basically cooled out altogether. The BPP limped on for several more years, then died what seemed a natural death.

History will be the ultimate judge of the BPP's place in the Black Liberation Movement (BLM). But in these troubled times Afrikan people in the U.S. need to investigate both the positive and negative aspects of the BPP's history in order to learn from those hard lessons already paid for in blood. In particular We need to learn the reasons for the BPP's rapid rise to prominence, the reason for its ability to move so many Afrikans and other nationalities, and the reason for its demise during its brief sojourn across the American scene. It's not possible in this short paper, on short notice, to provide much of what is necessary, so this paper will confine itself to pointing out some of the broader aspects of the BPP's positive and negative contributions to the BLM.

The Positive Aspects of the BPP's Contributions

1) Self-Defense: This is one of the fundamental areas in which the BPP contributed to the BLM. It's also one of the fundamental things that set the BPP apart from most previous Black organizations and which attracted members (particularly the youth), mass support, and a mass following. The concept is not only sound, it's also common sense. But it must be implemented correctly, otherwise it can prove more detrimental than beneficial. The self-defense policies of the BPP need to be analyzed in this light by present day Afrikan organizations. All history has shown that this government will bring its police and military powers to bear on any group which truly seeks to free Afrikan people. Any Black "freedom" organization which ignores self-defense does so at its own peril.

2) Revolutionary Nationalist Ideology: The BPP was a nationalist organization. Its main goal was the national liberation of Afrikan people in the U.S., and it restricted its membership to Blacks only. It was also revolutionary. The BPP theories and practices were

based on socialist principles. It was anti-capitalist and struggled for a socialist revolution of U.S. society.

On the national level, the BPP widely disseminated socialist based programs to the Afrikan masses. Internationally, it provided Afrikans in the U.S. with a broader understanding of our relationship to the Afrikan continent, the emerging independent Afrikan nations, Third World nations, Socialist nations, and all the Liberation Movements associated with these nations. Overall the ideology provided Afrikans here with a more concrete way of looking at and analyzing the world. Heretofore much of Black analysis of the world, and the society in which We live, was based on making ourselves acceptable to White society, proving to Whites that We were human, proving to Whites that We were ready for equality, proving We were equal to Whites, disproving racist ideas held by Whites, struggling for integration or equal status with Whites, theories of "loving the enemy", "hating the enemy", "they're all devils", spookism, and other fuzzy images of how the real world worked.

3) Mass Organizing Techniques: Another fundamental thing that attracted members and mass support to the BPP was its policy of "serving the people". This was a policy of going to the masses, living among them, sharing their burdens, and organizing the masses to implement their own solutions to the day to day problems that were of great concern to them.

By organizing and implementing the desires of the masses, the BPP organized community programs ranging from free breakfast for children, to free health clinics, to rent strikes resulting in tenant ownership of their buildings, to Liberation School for grade-schoolers, to free clothing drives, to campaigns for community control of schools, community control of police, and campaigns to stop drugs, crime, and police murder and brutality in the various Black colonies across America. For these reasons, and others, the influence of the BPP spread far beyond its actual membership. Not only did the BPP programs teach self-reliance, but years later the government established similar programs such as free school lunch, expanded Medicare and day care facilities, and liberalized court procedures for tenant takeovers of poorly maintained housing, partly if not primarily in order to snuff out the memory of previous similar BPP programs and the principle of self-reliance.

4) Practice of Women's Equality: Another positive contribution of the BPP was its advocacy and practice of equality for women throughout all levels of the organization and in society itself. This occurred at a time when most Black Nationalist organizations were demanding that the woman's role be in the home and/or one step behind the Black man, and at a time when the whole country was going through a great debate on the woman's liberation issue.

5) Propaganda Techniques: The BPP made significant contributions to the art of propaganda. It was very adept at spreading its message and ideas through its newspaper The Black Panther, mass rallies, speaking tours, slogans, posters, leaflets, cartoons, buttons, symbols (i.e., the clenched fist), graffiti, political trials, and even funerals. The BPP also spread its ideas through very skillful use of the establishment's t.v., radio, and print media.

One singular indication, although there are others, of the effectiveness of BPP propaganda techniques is that even today, over a decade later, a large part of the programs shown on t.v. are still "police stories" and many of the roles available to Black actors are limited to police roles. A lot of this has to do with the overall process of still trying to rehabilitate the image of the police from its devastating exposure during the Panther era, and to prevent the true role of the police in this society from being exposed again.

The Negative Aspects of the BPP Contributions

1) Leadership Corrupted: COINTELPRO eventually intimidated and corrupted all three of the BPP's top leaders: Huey P. Newton, Bobby Seale and Eldridge Cleaver. Each, in their own way, caved in to the pressures and began acting in a manner that was deliberately designed to destroy the BPP, and to disillusion not only Party members but Afrikan people in America for years to come. COINTELPRO's hopes were that Afrikans in America would be so disillusioned that never again would they trust or follow any Afrikan leader or organization which advocated real solutions to Black oppression.

2) Combined Above and Underground: This was the most serious structural flaw in the BPP. Party members who functioned openly in the BPP offices, or organized openly in the community, by day might very well have been the same people who carried out armed operations at night. This provided the police with a convenient excuse to make raids on any and all BPP offices, or members homes, under the pretext that they were looking for suspects, fugitives, weapons, and or explosives. It also sucked the BPP into taking the un-winnable position of making stationary defenses of BPP offices. There should have been a clear separation between the above ground Party and the underground armed apparatus. Also small military forces should never adopt, as a general tactic, the position of making stationary defenses of offices, homes, buildings, etc.

3) Rhetoric Outstripped Capabilities: Although the BPP was adept at the art of propaganda and made very good use of its own and the establishment's media, still too many Panthers fell into the habit of making boisterous claims in the public media, or selling "wolf tickets" that they couldn't back up. Eventually, they weren't taken seriously anymore. The press, some of whom were police agents, often had only to stick a microphone under a Panther's nose to make him or her begin spouting rhetoric. This often played into the hands of those who were simply looking for slanderous material to air or to provide possible intelligence information to the police.

4) Lumpen Tendencies: It can be safely said that the largest segment of the New York City BPP membership (and probably nationwide) were workers who held everyday jobs. Other segments of the membership were semi-proletariat, students, youths, and lumpen-proletariat. The lumpen tendencies within some members were what the establishment's media (and some party members) played-up the most. Lumpen tendencies are associated with lack of discipline, liberal use of alcohol, marijuana, and curse-words; loose sexual morals, a criminal mentality, and rash actions. These tendencies in some Party members provided the media with better opportunities than they would otherwise have had to play up this aspect, and to slander the Party, which diverted public attention from much of the positive work done by the BPP.

5) Dogmatism: Early successes made some Panthers feel that they were the only possessors of absolute truths. Some became arrogant and dogmatic in their dealings with Party members, other organizations, and even the community. This turned people off.

6) Failure to Organize Economic Foundations in Community: The BPP preached socialist politics. They were anti-capitalist and this skewered their concept of building economic foundations in the community. They often gave the impression that to engage in any business enterprise was to engage in capitalism and they too frequently looked with disdain upon the small-business people in the community. As a result the BPP built few businesses which generated income other than the Black Panther newspaper, or which could provide self-employment to its membership and to people in the community. The BPP failed to encourage the Black community to set up its own

businesses as a means of building an independent economic foundation which could help break "outsiders" control of the Black community's economics, and move it toward economic self-reliance.

7) TV Mentality: The 60's were times of great flux. A significant segment of the U.S. population engaged in mass struggle. The Black Liberation, Native American, Puerto Rican, Asian, Chicano, Anti-War, White Revolutionary, and Woman's Liberation Movements were all occurring more or less simultaneously during this era. It appears that this sizable flux caused some Panthers to think that a seizure of state power was imminent or that a revolutionary struggle is like a quick paced TV program. That is, it comes on at 9 p.m., builds to a crescendo by 9:45, and by 9:55 — Victory!; all in time to make the 10 O'clock News. When it didn't happen after a few years, that is, Afrikans in the U.S. still were not free, no revolution occurred, and worse, the BPP was everywhere on the defensive, taking losses and riddled with dissension, many members became demoralized, disillusioned, and walked away or went back to old lifestyles. They were not psychologically prepared for a long struggle. In hindsight it appears that the BPP didn't do enough to root out this TV mentality in some members, but did in others, which is an aspect to ponder on.

Although the BPP made serious errors, it also gained a considerable measure of success and made several significant new contributions to the BLM. The final judgment of history may very well show that in its own way the BPP added the final ingredient to the Black Agenda necessary to attain real freedom: armed struggle; and that this was the great turning point which ultimately set the Black Liberation Movement on the final road to victory.

Marion Penitentiary, 4/2/85

Today, you can write to Sundiata at this address:

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*** When Sundiata used the phrase, "Black Liberation Movement," We think he meant it in its' most progressive & revolutionary sense, i.e., a movement struggling for the independence of Afrikans here in the US. Check out his Some Solutions: Or Things To Do; Also see Vita Wa Watu, Book 8 for more on this discussion.**

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