

We Are All Palestinians!

Solidarity against Massacres and Occupation!

By Michael Novick, *Anti-Racist Action-Los Angeles/People Against Racist Terror (ARA-LA/PART)*

It is one of the odd conceits of US mythology that history is measured in presidential administrations (or occasionally in decade-long “generations”). The unleashing of the Israeli onslaught on the Palestinians in Gaza during the interregnum between Bush-43 and “Agent of Change” Obama makes it clear that this demarcation serves only the interests of the Empire. The convenient use by the Zionists of the “Who’s watching the store?” period between the election and inauguration of Obama allows Bush and Obama alike to pretend that their bloody fingerprints are not all over the bombing, invasion and massacre. The Israelis have several weeks to create the “facts on the ground” while this pretense of U.S. non-involvement continues.

The Israelis and their Zionist apologists in the US profess to be outraged by comparisons of Israel to the nazis and fascists, because, as one opined in the LA Times, there are more Palestinians today than there were when Israel was founded. As if complete extermination were the only definition of genocide, or as if Hitler’s genocide of European Jewry took place overnight without historical antecedents or a process of development. Of course, Hitler, too, started small, nurtured by US Klansmen, encouraged by the silence about Turkey’s massacres of Armenians, educated by Germany’s decimation of the Herero people of Namibia (‘German’ South West Africa), emboldened by the inability of the League of Nations to stop the Italian invasion of Ethiopia. This month marks the 72nd anniversary of the Abraham Lincoln Brigades, volunteers recruited from among working and oppressed people in the U.S. as one of several International Brigades formed to fight the nazi-supported Franco counter-revolution in Spain, in which, as in Gaza, (not to mention during “Shock and Awe” in Iraq), air power was used against civilian targets in violation of international law. These “premature anti-fascists” who later faced red-baiting and persecution in the US if they survived their engagement against Franco and Hitler in Spain, provide a sterling example today of the true meaning of solidarity.

Thankfully, we are beginning to see some glimmers of the kind of direct action that is needed against the fascist onslaught by Israel in Gaza (as well as the ongoing occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan by the US). One such is the Free Gaza Movement, which has challenged the Israeli blockade. On January 7, they declared, “Today the Free Gaza Movement put Israel on notice that we are sending another emergency boat to Gaza. We will announce our exact departure date, time and route in the next few days. We will travel from Cypriot waters, into international waters, then directly into Gaza territorial waters, never nearing Israeli waters. The ongoing Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip have killed over 640 Palestinians, including many children and women, and injured thousands. These acts by Israel are severe and massive violations of international humanitarian law ... The United Nations has failed to protect the Palestinian civilian population.... Therefore, we concerned citizens from Belgium, Columbia, France, Canada, Great Britain, Greece, Ireland, Jordan, Kuwait, Scotland, Spain, and the United States, feel that it is our moral duty to try to do just that.”

The Israeli military violently attacked an earlier attempt by the Free Gaza Movement to send an emergency boat filled with doctors and medical supplies to Gaza. In the early hours of Tuesday, December 30, the Israeli Navy rammed their boat, the DIGNITY, in international waters. Among the 16 passengers on board, whose lives were endangered by the three rammings by the Israelis, was former US Rep. Cynthia McKinney. While Obama broke his silence to blame Hamas for the violence, McKinney was putting her life on the line and her money where her mouth was to defy the unlawful US-backed Zionist embargo of the Palestinians. Despite death threats received by the organizers warning them not to repeat their attempt, they intend to try again. You can reach the organizers at these contact points:

Free Puerto Rican Political Prisoner Carlos Alberto Torres

Puerto Rican Political Prisoner Carlos Alberto Torres is going before the Federal Parole Board on Monday January 19, 2009! Now more than ever, we need to show the Parole Board that he has international support. We need to send the Parole board thousands of these letters! We must flood their mailboxes with our demands for Carlos Alberto’s parole! WE CAN MAKE FREEDOM HAPPEN! The National Boricua Human Rights Network, El Comité de Derechos Humanos de Puerto Rico (The Puerto Rican Human Rights Committee), and The ProLibertad Freedom Campaign, are calling on all supporters of the Puerto Rican Political Prisoners to sign the letter attached and mail it to:

Jan Susler (Lawyer) 1180 N. Milwaukee Ave. 3rd Fl. Chicago, IL 60622

TO THE UNITED STATES PAROLE COMMISSION:

Carlos Alberto Torres has spent 29 years in prison for his struggle for the self-determination and independence of the people of Puerto Rico. His conduct in prison has been exemplary, earning a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Wisconsin, and working at various prison jobs, helping his fellow prisoners. He has become an accomplished painter and ceramic artist, and hopes to support himself and his family working as an artisan, teaching his craft and selling his work.

In 1979 and 1999, two U.S. Presidents released a total of 16 Puerto Rican political prisoners, who are all living successful, productive lives, supporting themselves and their families and making positive contributions to their nation.

Carlos was not convicted of hurting anyone or taking anyone’s life, yet he was sentenced to 78 years in prison. While he continues behind bars, police officers convicted of the premeditated murders of two young Puerto Rican activists in 1978 in Cerro Maravilla were just released on parole in August 2008.

Carlos will appear before the Parole Commission to seek release on parole. I add my voice to the broad support for his release, in Puerto Rico as well as in the U.S.

Signature: _____

printed name: _____

street address: _____

city, state, zip: _____

BIOGRAPHY of CARLOS ALBERTO TORRES

Carlos Alberto Torres was born in Ponce, Puerto Rico on September 19, 1952. His parents moved to New York, finally settling in Chicago. He studied in the University of Illinois in Carbondale and Chicago. He studied sociology at Southern Illinois University and the University of Illinois at Chicago. Carlos Alberto was involved in the struggles to recruit more Latin@s to the University, against racism, and police abuse. Carlos was one of the founders of the Rafael Cancel Miranda Puerto Rican High School now known as the Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos Puerto Rican High School and participated in the Committee to Free the 5 Nationalists. In 1976, Carlos was forced to go underground and was on the FBI’s 10 most wanted list. He was captured along with other comrades and sentenced to 78 years on charges of seditious conspiracy, among other charges. Although the Clinton Administration offered clemency to 12 Puerto Rican political prisoners in the fall of 1999, no leniency was granted to Carlos Torres. Prosecutors described him as a leader of the Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional (FALN), an underground organization which fought for Puerto Rico’s independence in the 1970s and ‘80s. His release date is 2024. He is currently in prison in Oxford, Wisconsin.

LETTERS AND RESPONSES TO TURNING THE TIDE: "THE PRISON ISSUE"

In response to your 'Editor Replies' to my 'New Afrikan Community Emergency Response Network Manifesto':

As a New Afrikan revolutionary, I appreciate constructive criticism, but I equally detest ambush criticism, which is self-serving. Initially I had no intention of responding to your ambush criticism, because it did not pertain to the laws of dialectical materialism. For example, the first stage is the unity of struggle of opposites. This means, one must obtain all relevant information concerning that which one opposes. That was not done. You equally neglected the second stage, transforming quantity to quality and went directly to the third stage, negation to negation, and then the fourth stage, final interpretation. Being that your ambush criticism has the potential to perpetuate the fallacy that we in prison are incapable of comprehending the realities that face our people without outside interpretations or paternal guidance, as if we are infants in the struggle, do I detect left-wing elitism?

For the sake of clarity, I am obligated to respond and challenge that notion that we don't understand the principle of concrete analysis of concrete conditions. Let's analyze those conditions as they apply to Hurricane Katrina. This government don't give a damn about poor people, New Afrikan (Black) people in particular. It's willing to let us suffer and die. We can no longer afford to rely on this government to do what we should be doing for ourselves. Yet we as a people lack the capacity to survive on our own during a natural disaster. We must develop programs independent of this government to serve our needs and interests. Help me understand, where am I wrong in this analysis? This manifesto was a direct response to the above conditions, written a week after Katrina and before Rita. The conditions were ripped into the minds of the people, and if it had been distributed at that time, would have been more acceptable as the pain and tragedy was fresh in the minds of the people. When most so-called revolutionaries was stuck on anti-capitalist/KKK government propaganda, our concern was trying to save our people. Now we are three years removed, and not one New Afrikan community is prepared for a crisis/natural disaster. Do you realize how much could have been achieved in three years?

You also stated, "The institutions... in this plan are far beyond the current... capacities of our movements to implement." Now, I ask you, how do you define our capacity as a people or movement? Who are you to impose limitations on our capacity to build socialist institutions on our own behalf? Are we as New Afrikans bound by your ignorance? My comrades, do you really believe we are completely out of touch? Well, contrary to this myth, we communicate with a number of community activists and grassroots groups, we understand the need to stay connected with the people in the trenches and maintain a consistent flow of information from the inside to the outside and vice-versa. Your question should have been two-fold: Why is this manifesto significant given the current conditions? How can we implement it?

If you truly comprehend concrete analysis of concrete conditions, you would not have been so premature in your ambush criticism. The manifesto may not be considered a priority in California, but those New Afrikan communities that face a potential Katrina every year will be more receptive, because their reality makes such a proposal a necessity. I guarantee that the New Afrikan communities in New Orleans, Mississippi, Georgia, Florida and the Carolinas would disagree with you. You can't define their priority – you are the one out of touch. It was hurricane season again, the perfect condition to reintroduce the manifesto. I agree it's not a priority for our communities in CA, the midwest or northeast. Each community shares common realities, but they often have different priorities as well as different levels of consciousness or activism.

I have always been critical of those who reject a vision because they are blind to it. I am aware the New Afrikan community lacks the **organized** capacity to implement my manifesto. I say "organized" because we as a people have the capacity and resources, but it is a matter of mobilizing it. Because you don't see it, has nothing to do with us; we have a practical plan. Let me elaborate: the manifesto was never designed to be implemented all at once; we will take the most practical aspects and mobilize our community around them. For example, the most crucial and simplest aspect you did not print, but it will be the first element we implement. That's the emergency response survival kit: first aid kit, water, non-perishable food, lights, flares, flint, matches, radios, blackberry, whistle, shovel, blades, batteries, bags, life raft, etc. We will develop a non-profit group to raise money to buy these supplies and give them to New Afrikan families in those areas prone to hurricanes, along with an instructional manual on their use and evacuation instructions applicable to their specific area. This may be irrelevant to you in Culver City, but would be deeply appreciated by those New Afrikan families that experienced Katrina and Rita. We will use this program as a platform to consolidate these New Afrikan families around other issues, a similar strategy to that used by the BPP. They used the Free Breakfast program, mobile clinic and community patrols to politicize and mobilize our communities. I learned about Chairman Mao as a child (Black panther cub) eating in the Free Breakfast

program; I learned the significance of self-defense while walking community patrol with my father. The program is an incentive and catalyst to connect the people to our socialist revolution.

How do we expect to finance this program? Along the southern and gulf coast there are a number of successful Hip-Hop/Rap artists that have been active in the communities impacted by Katrina and Rita. I have no problem asking these brothas and sistas for financial donations. I have no doubt they will support this project if they are presented with the opportunity. Cash Money Records gave us a shout out in their movie and song, they are very wealthy and they were born and raised in New Orleans. They have been generous in donating to relief efforts; their old neighborhoods were destroyed by Katrina. I have no doubt when the time comes to call on them to financially support this manifesto, they will be there, along with Master P, Scarface, Ludacris, Outkast, Ciara, Little Bow Wow, Flo Rida, Bradford Marsalis, to name just a few. So you were wrong to conclude we don't have the capacity, and wrong to make that public proclamation as if our capacities are determined by you. Comrades, we know the capabilities of our people, and refuse to allow you or anyone else to impose restraints on it. You were out of line trying to tell New Afrikans that we don't have the capacity to implement my manifesto; you are only qualified to define the capacity of ARA. You ignored where I clearly wrote the manifesto is a discussion paper designed to facilitate dialogue toward developing a working blueprint. This negates your ambush criticism, and reduces it to opportunism. I am a little surprised to see this coming from you.

I do agree that the inside and outside must establish a clear line of communication, but not on the premise you implied. Our imprisonment does not impede our ability to accurately analyze the concrete conditions. We are not going to engage in rhetoric and ignore the needs of our people. We can't feed our hungry, house our homeless, employ the jobless or protect our communities with rhetoric or propaganda. If you look around the country, the so-called revolutionary movement has been reduced to a propaganda machine. Nobody is providing the people with concrete service; they think sounding revolutionary is being revolutionary. The BPP was effective because when they presented the 10-point platform they simultaneously implemented community-based survival programs to support the revolutionary rhetoric. We can't name one group out there that has replicated that approach.

One of the functional goals of my manifesto is to promote the idea of our community developing our own institutions to serve our interests. Then we can cultivate the seed in the consciousness of our people to evolve into a breathing reality in the hearts of our people. These programs are a basic blueprint to construct future institutions designed to disconnect the people from dependency on this fascist KKK-government. Comrades, I trust you will print my response in its entirety. I now bid you a genuine revolutionary armed salute! – Abdul Olugbala Shakur, s/n J. Harvey, #C-48884/D-4-112 (SHU), PBSP, PO Box 7500, Crescent City CA 95532.

Reply: *TTT* printed what we could of the manifesto because of its merits. The response was not meant so much as a criticism as a lament of how far it was from realization. We take your criticism seriously and hope this further coverage will hasten implementation.

Dear Editor:

Please inform your readers that there are dedicated members of the New Afrikan Maoist Party (NAMP) who would definitely volunteer in helping to respond to the needs and aspirations of those prisoners you alluded to. Refer them to the New African Maoist Party, P.O. Box 40799, San Francisco, CA 94140, attn: Makamu Kiongozi, or e-mail him at namp@nym.hush.com. Although the NAMP's immediate focus is their three people's goals of combating Imperialism, Racism and Sexism, they have been successful in assisting individuals here in the East coast and combating repressive conditions. I respectfully request you to continue strongly in your work. In solidarity, Mutota Vitayam'tu #98A1398, Five Points CF, State Rte. 96, PO Box 119, Romulus NY 14541

Revolutionary greetings!

My name is Kijani Tashiri Askari, a New Afrikan Black political prisoner of war. In the editor's note to the "New Afrikan Emergency Community Response Initiative," you spoke about the need for a material connection with the captive class of freedom fighters and those out in Babylon for purposes of working together on a number of issues. I firmly agree with you! However, with you being on the ground in Babylon as a soldier for the people, it's imperative for you to compose a list of organizations or people willing to work with the captive class of freedom fighters. We have several projects developed towards rebuilding community, reclaiming the people's minds from the oppressors, but the primary contradiction is not having any committed soldiers on the ground to put these projects in motion and make them a material reality.

There are several prison organizations out in Babylon that profess to work to support the rights of prisoners, but when one makes a critical assessment of that material existence, one concludes that most of these organizations are mired in idealism. We need organizations that can advance ideas are practical and concrete action. These organizations must have some type of concrete relationship of struggle with the captive class of freedom fighters in order to advance the idea of being a prisoner rights group. Please make a list of such organizations available. To learn more about me, log onto www.myspace.com/dare2struggle or e-mail tashiri@gmail.com. You may also write for some pamphlets of mine to Anthony Rayson, P.O. Box 721, Homewood IL 60430. Ask for Kijana Tashiri Askari's pamphlets "the series, volume #1 through #4."

All power to the people who do not fear real freedom!

Resource List of Prisoner Rights and Solidarity Organizations:

Here are some organizations that work with prisoners, ex-cons and their families. This list doesn't constitute an endorsement or evaluation of their politics or program:

The Jericho Amnesty Movement
PO Box 1272 New York NY 10113, 718-949-5153,
www.thejerichomovement.com

All of Us or None c/o A New Way of Life
PO Box 875288, Los Angeles CA 90087,
323-563-3575, www.allofusornone.org

Critical Resistance
1904 Franklin #504, Oakland CA 94612
510-444-0487, www.criticalresistance.org

Education Not Incarceration
2940 16th St. #209, San Francisco CA 94110,
415-595-8251, iolmisha@cs.com

Innocence Project
100 Fifth Ave. 3rd floor, New York NY 10001,
212-364-5340

Justice Denied
PO Box 68911, Seattle WA 98168,
206-335-4254, www.justicedenied.org

Legal Services to Prisoners with Children
1540 Market St. #490, San Francisco CA 94102,
415-255-7036, www.prisonerswithchildren.org

Anarchist Black Cross Federation (Los Angeles)
P.O. Box 11223, Whittier CA 90603, la@abcf.net
StopMAX c/o AFSC

1501 Cherry St., Philadelphia PA 19102, 215-241-7137
CURE, PO Box 2310 National Capitol Station,
Washington DC 20013-2310, 202-789-2126

Center for Constitutional Rights
666 Broadway 7th floor, New York NY 10012,
212-614-6481, www.telephonejustice.org

Native American Prisoner Rights Advocacy Coalition
c/o Len Foster, Navajo Nation Corrections Program,
PO Drawer 709, Window Rock AZ 86515

Malcolm X Grassroots Movement
PO Box 471711, Brooklyn NY 11247, 718-254-8800,
www.mxgm.org, National: 877-248-6095

Prisoner Solidarity
PO Box 4337, Canton OH 44705, www.prisonersolidarity.org

Asheville Prison Books Program c/o Readers Corner,
31 Montford Ave., Asheville NC 28801, 828-254-3025

Sometimes You Wake Up and It's Different: Statement from Austin, TX on Brandon Darby, the Informant/Provocateur in the "Texas 2" RNC Case

by The Austin Informant Working Group

As part of the wave of government repression against activists protesting at the Republican National Convention in St. Paul, MN in September 2008, the FBI arrested two men from Texas, Bradley Crowder (22) and David McKay (23), and indicted them for allegedly possessing Molotov cocktails. Crowder and McKay have been in jail since the RNC. They have not been granted bail and their trial has been postponed indefinitely. They are facing 7 to 10 years in federal prison.

As outlined in the affidavit against Crowder and McKay (http://media.houston.indymedia.org/uploads/2008/09/090808_mckay_affidavit.pdf), the case was built almost entirely on the statements of two informants covertly working with the FBI, identified in the affidavit as "Confidential Human Sources" or just "CHS".

One of these informants was working in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area ("CHS 2" in the affidavit) and has been previously identified as Andy/Panda by people familiar with the situation and the informant. This statement ends speculation and anticipation concern about the identity of the other informant who was operating in TX and MN. Using FBI documents previously unknown to us, but recently provided by one of the defendant's defense teams, we have positively confirmed the identity of the unnamed informant ("CHS 1" in the affidavit) as Brandon Michael Darby of Austin, Texas, based on the following evidence:

1) The FBI documents detail private conversations between Darby and several individuals named in the documents, including Scott Crow and Lisa Fithian, who have closely reviewed the documents and confirmed that they had the conversations in question with only Darby. In addition they can confirm his participation in events reported in the documents.

2) In verbatim reports from the informant to the FBI, the language, personality, skills, and interests of Darby are readily apparent to those who know him.

3) Cross-referencing the time line provided by the FBI in the documents with people familiar with the situation and course of events shows that Darby was in a position to have the incriminating conversations with McKay referenced in the affidavit.

4) In all of the documents Brandon Darby's name is conspicuously absent from any and all meetings and events which he attended and was involved in. In fact Darby's name only appears at the end of all the documents in a confession made by David McKay upon his arrest in Minnesota.

Numerous people familiar with both Brandon Darby and the legal situation of Crowder and McKay have verified this information.

Over the years Brandon Darby has established strong ties with individuals in many different radical communities across the US. While it is not yet clear how long or to what extent Darby has been acting as an informant, the emerging truth about Darby's malicious involvement in our communities is heart-breaking and utterly ground-shattering to those of us who were closest to him.

Darby operated in and around the Austin community for about 6 years, and this is the same Brandon Darby who participated in the Common Ground Collective in New Orleans during 2005-2006. Based on the evidence we have, Brandon has been giving the state information since at least November 2007, but there is also information that suggests his informant activities may go back further, at least to 2006 or earlier. In the documents, Darby makes numerous remarks that are inflammatory and often untrue or grossly taken out of context. There is also compelling evidence to suggest that Darby, more than just reporting on Crowder and McKay's activities, was actively encouraging, enabling, and provoking the two men to take illegal action.

We recognize that suspicions and accusations of Darby have been circulating for some time now, including one corporate media article by David Hanners in the St. Paul Pioneer Press on October 29, 2008. Our aim in releasing this information is to clear the confusion that has circulated in the last few months.

We want to point out that while the conclusions of these suspicions and accusations turned out to be correct, these conclusions were not based on any verifiable facts, and thus, their public airing was inappropriate and irresponsible. When these accusations surfaced, we did what we could to quash them, trusting what we believed to be true about people in the absence of any compelling evidence to the contrary. Having been presented with new evidence, we are acting on it promptly and deliberately.

Through the history of our struggles for a better world, infiltrators and informants have acted as tools for the forces of misery in disrupting and derailing our movements. However, even more dangerous to our communities than setting people up, turning them in, or gathering information, informants sow seeds of fear,

paranoia, and distrust that fester and grow in paralyzing and destructive ways. We must be forever vigilante against deceptive, malicious and manipulative actors, while we defend the trust and openness that give our communities cohesion and power.

Now we must get on with the work of supporting the "Texas 2". In light of these revelations and what we know about Brandon Darby, we believe they were set up and that the charges should be dropped. We urge you to join us in a campaign to "Free the Texas 2"

The New York Times reports: "Mr. Darby provided descriptions of meetings with the defendants and dozens of other people in Austin, Minneapolis and St. Paul. He wore recording devices at times, including a transmitter embedded in his belt during the convention. He also went to Minnesota with Mr. Crowder four months before the Republican gathering and gave detailed narratives to law enforcement authorities of several meetings they had with activists from New York, San Francisco, Montana and other places. ... The F.B.I. reports mentioned dozens of people, most of whom have not been accused of any crime. In addition to listing biographical and physical particulars, Mr. Darby frequently offered observations on the motives, attitudes and states of mind of activists with whom he dealt."

For more information:
<http://grandjuryresistance.org/>
<http://rnc8.org/>

Editor comments:

Long before achieving notoriety as a snitch, Brandon Darby got a lot of media attention and coverage as a "movement star" (check Google Images for Brandon Darby). I'm wondering to what extent he ever got called or checked on his elitism or sexism before he made what he calls the "choice" to be a snitch for the Feebs.

There's an even grimmer recounting of protracted infiltration/snitching from New Zealand at <http://indymedia.org.nz/newswire/display/76563/index.php>

The questions we need to start asking ourselves are about the role of liberalism, white and male supremacy in this kind of deviation. By "liberalism," I mean people in the movement being liberal with each other, 'cutting each other slack,' seeing problems in others or experiencing problems in ourselves but not confronting them. This is not exclusive to any nationality, class or gender, but in my experience in the so-called "white left," it's related to white and male supremacy, class privilege, elitism, etc. People who'd rather not be held accountable for change in our own individualism, attitudes and practices are unlikely to challenge others constructively about them.

Because I doubt Darby was a plant in the first place, but instead much more likely someone who flip-flopped and then dug deeper into a state-mole role. History is replete with people who moved right from the left, naming names and justifying it, becoming staunch reactionaries in the process. This is not unheard of among Black, Mexicano, Native, Asian and Puerto Rican radicals (all



Self-confessed FBI 'informant' and suspected provocateur Brandon Darby, in a photo taken during his days in New Orleans with Common Ground.

of whose movements have suffered from infiltration and turncoats). But it's widespread in the white left, going back to the CPUSA and Trotskyists, but also in the "new left" (SDS et al), and more recently has plagued the militant environmental movement. The whole green scare phenomenon has been replete with people ratting each other out, to the point where those who stood strong almost seemed to be the exceptions in some cases.

Why are we only now hearing about women 'fleeing' Common Ground because Darby was a sexual predator? To the extent ARA people were involved in TX or Louisiana, we need to ask ourselves why we weren't more on top of such a dynamic, why we weren't applying or expressing some of the lessons of ARA's own struggles with sexual predation in other related arenas of the movement. In NZ, the informant also had multiple sexual relationships with movement women, and engaged in other suspicious behavior, but people didn't feel enough trust in their own instincts until he was exposed. Not a witch-hunt of accusations that such-and-so is an agent, but an atmosphere in which we struggle with ourselves and each other about elitism, privilege, white and male supremacy is a less conducive to infiltration or treason.

Self-criticism is vital because from long and sometimes bitter experience in radical and would-be revolutionary movements it's clear that all of us are in struggle at all times with aspects of ourselves that pull us down and back towards complicity and compliance with the system. It's not one or two deceitful bad apples who in their secret hearts are willing to betray their ideals, their friends, whole movements. Revolutionaries develop out of the social, emotional, and psychological makeup of people created in a dog-eat-dog, me-first system that infiltrates all of psyches. The class struggle goes on not only between classes, but also within oppressed and exploited classes, and within individuals in those classes. The inducements and seductions of the system, the affinities we feel for the system, the attractions of male bonding, white-skin privilege, identification with the oppressor, neo-colonialism, elitism, careerism, are not only bombarding us 24-7, but they live inside us consciously and unconsciously. Unless we sustain and persevere in pretty open struggle and acknowledgment of them, they are going to win out. There were literally millions of people in the 60s who spent time street fighting, engaging in various illegal forms of protest, and certainly tens if not hundreds of thousands who styled themselves revolutionaries. They did not all become snitches, but far too many made their separate peace, found a niche at a non-profit or surrendered in some way to the Empire.

The occasional glaring snitch or traitor like Darby obviously does a lot of damage, but the larger substrate of 'liberalism' that allows people en masse to backslide and sell out is more dangerous, and is the context in which the Darbys operate.--MN

At the recent Anarchist Book Fair in Los Angeles, brother Dedon Kamathi of the All-African Peoples Revolutionary Party raised a struggle with anarchists, anti-racists and anti-imperialists of European descent to pay closer attention to, develop fraternal relations and solidarity with, and learn lessons from the struggles heating up in Greece and elsewhere in Europe. ARA has had long-standing connections with anti-fascist forces in Europe, and several members of ARA are now in Greece, learning from, participating in, connecting with and reporting on struggles there. ARA has also solidarized itself with anti-fas in Germany, Russia, and other countries. Here are some pertinent reports and accounts emerging from Greece, Sweden and Russia.—*Editor*.

Insurgent Workers Occupy Labor Bureaucracy Headquarters in Greece

DECLARATION: We will either determine our history ourselves or let it be determined without us. We, manual workers, employees, jobless, temporary workers, local or migrants, are not passive tv-viewers. Since the murder of Alexandros Grigoropoulos on Saturday night we participate in the demonstrations, the clashes with the police, the occupations of the center or the neighborhoods. Time and again we had to leave work and our daily obligations to take the streets with the students, the university students and the other proletarians in struggle.

WE DECIDED TO OCCUPY THE BUILDING OF GSEE

to turn it into a space of free expression and a meeting point of workers.

To disperse the media-touted myth that the workers were and are absent from the clashes, and that the rage of these days was an affair of some 500 “mask-bearers”, “hooligans” or some other fairy tale, while on the tv-screens the workers were presented as victims of the clash, while the capitalist crisis in Greece and Worldwide leads to countless layoffs that the media and their managers deal as a “natural phenomenon”.

To flay and uncover the role of the trade union bureaucracy in the undermining of the insurrection -- and not only there. GSEE and the entire trade union mechanism that supports it, for decades and decades undermine the struggles, bargain our labor power for crumbs, and perpetuate the system of exploitation and wage slavery. The stance of GSEE last Wednesday is quite telling: GSEE cancelled the programmed strikers' demonstration, stopping at the organization of a brief gathering in Syntagma Square, making simultaneously sure that the people will be dispersed in a hurry from the Square, fearing that they might get infected by the virus of insurrection.

To open up this space for the first time -- as a continuation of the social opening created by the insurrection itself -- a space that has been built by our contributions, a space from which we were excluded. For all these years we trusted our fate to saviors of every kind, and we end up losing our dignity. As workers we have to start assuming our responsibilities, and to stop assigning our hopes to wise leaders or “able” representatives. We have to acquire a voice of our own, to meet up, to talk, to decide, and to act. Against the generalized attack we endure. The creation of collective “grassroots” resistance is the only way.

To propagate the idea of self-organization and solidarity in work places, struggle committees and collective grassroots procedures, abolishing the bureaucrat trade unionists.

All these years we swallowed the misery, the pandering, the violence at work. We became accustomed to counting the crippled and our dead -- the so-called “labor

Nazis tried to kill Swedish Syndicalist union activists and their child

by SAC's working committee

In November, Nazis firebombed the Cyclops, the autonomous social center in southern Stockholm. Two days later, on the 1st of December, the build up of Nazi activity in Stockholm took another violent turn as Nazis poured in gasoline through the mail slot into the apartment of a young couple and their child, and set it on fire. The couple is active in the Syndicalist union. All three survived. We urge everyone to join the counter demonstration against the Nazi march in Salem, a suburb south of Stockholm this Saturday, 6th of December. If we let the Nazis stand unchallenged we never know whom they'll attack next.

In 1999 Nazis killed the Syndicalist Björn Söderberg. Now two Syndicalists from Stockholm -- one of them the former chair of the Stockholm chapter of the Syndicalist union - and their two year old daughter were forced to climb down from the balcony of their third floor apartment when Nazis set fire to their flat. Half a year ago, our union members were exposed on the Nazi web-site Info-14. The Nazis behind Info-14 are the same people who call the annual Nazi march in Salem.

Just before nine p.m. on Monday night, 1st December 2008, our members heard a splashing sound from the hallway. “I saw someone pour a clear fluid through the mail slot and understood from the scent that it was gasoline”, one of them says. “I shouted so loud that they can't have missed it: We have children in here! Only seconds later they lit the fire.” In the hall hung the family's winter clothes and in a

Russian anti-fa defends self against nazis, faces charges

November 22, two nazi boneheads attacked anarchist anti-fascist activist Yura M. in Vladivostok (Russian Far East). The Nazis met Yura on a bus, recognized him, and knew that he is an active anarchist and antifascist, so after he left the bus they attacked him and hit him a couple of times. Yura used a knife to defend himself and stabbed both of the attackers, who were bigger than him. The Nazis started running away -- one of them soon fell and died, and the other broke both legs jumping off a parapet. Yura called the ambulance and waited until it arrived, when he was arrested by cops. Yura was shocked -- he did not intend to kill anyone.

Yura is an active participant in the anarchist and anti-fascist movement. In summer 2007 he participated in the anti-nuclear protest camp in Angarsk, Irkutsk Region (East Siberia). On July 21, 2007, the camp was violently attacked by Nazis. One activist was murdered (a good friend of Yura, Ilya Borodaenko from Nakhodka near Vladivostok). Yura was one of the few people who were fast enough to resist the attackers in Angarsk, so severely beaten he spent more than two months in a hospital, fighting for his life due to complications which were a result of neglect during first hours of his hospitalization. His health condition still remains weak, and after Angarsk, he got a disability status. But he continued his activities in Vladivostok anyway and got multiple threats from local Nazis.

Yura has played a crucial role in organizing anarchist and anti-fascist movements

accidents.” We became accustomed to ignoring the migrants -- our class brothers -- getting killed. We are tired of living with the anxiety of securing a wage, revenue stamps, and a pension that now feels like a distant dream.

As we struggle not to abandon our lives in the hands of the bosses and the trade union representatives, likewise we will not abandon any arrested insurgent in the hands of the state and the juridical mechanism.

**IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF THE DETAINED --
NO CHARGES TO THE ARRESTED
SELF-ORGANIZATION OF THE WORKERS' GENERAL STRIKE
WORKERS' ASSEMBLY IN THE “LIBERATED” BUILDING OF GSEE**

Wednesday, 17 December 2008, 18:00 General Assembly of Insurgent Workers



The banner hanging from the occupied building reads as follows:

From labor “accidents” to murders in cold blood, State and Capital kill

No persecution

Immediate release of the arrested

GENERAL STRIKE

Workers' self-organization will become the bosses' grave

General Assembly of Insurgent Workers

couple of seconds the fire had spread to the kitchen and the living room. To exit through the front door was impossible. “We had to lower our daughter down to the neighbors' balcony one floor below,” our member explains. “We live on the top floor. Had she slipped out of our hands, she would have died.” The couple then climbed down the same way. Behind them the fire ravaged all their belongings, memories and plans.

Our members and their daughter miraculously remained unharmed, but it doesn't change the fact that one or several people deliberately and in cold blood tried to take their lives. Our targeted members' union work focused on antiracism and diminishing class divides. For this they were to be punished by death according to the Nazis.

Six months ago the openly Nazi homepage “info14” published names and pictures of our members. The police work from the theory that the deed was politically-motivated, performed by the same offenders who two days earlier burnt down the libertarian socialist cultural center “The Cyclops” in Högdalen. The case is classified as arson. The Nazis behind Info-14 are the same people who run the organization *Salemfonden*, that every year on the first Saturday in December arranges the biggest Nazi march in Northern Europe. “The people arranging the Salem march are not harmless individuals with a slightly dissenting opinion. They are ideologically convinced Nazis, evidently capable of murder in the pursuit of their cause,” Ola Brunnström from SAC's working committee states. SAC, the Syndicalists, urges everyone to join in the counter demonstration by the Network Against Racism at 12 o' clock in Salem Center. For information, contact www.sac.se <http://anarkisterna.com/blog/2008/12/03/nazis-tried-to-kill-union-activists-and-their-child/>

in the Russian Far East. He set up Pacific Rim Autonomous Action (which later split to Nahodka Autonomous Action and Vladivostok Autonomous Action due to distance between cities, but the Nahodka group dwindled after the death of Ilya). During the last year, Yura grew disillusioned with the federation concept of the organization, and moved more towards insurrection direction of anarchism, and he left Vladivostok Autonomous Action with most of the members of the group. However he stayed on friendly terms with Autonomous Action and participated to internal discussions of the organization. In <http://avtonom.org/index.php?nid=2048> you may read (only in Russian) a criticism of the organization he recently wrote. He also kept publishing the local anarchist paper “Udar,” back issues of which are available at avtonom.org in PDF format.

Vladivostok is among the Russian cities, where street war between Nazis in other side and anarchists and antifascists in another side is most intense. Some incidents are reported at <http://avtonom.org/index.php?nid=2003> and <http://avtonom.org/index.php?nid=1237>

Yura has now been released from custody, and murder charges changed to “exceeding limits of necessary self-defense.” However various costs relating to his case are already 5500 euros, so his family is very much in need of support! You may donate through the bank accounts of ABC-Moscow. They are available at <http://www.avtonom.org/index.php?nid=1912>. Always contact ABC-Moscow by email if you made a donation: abc-msk@riseup.net

Outing "Keystone State Skinhead" Nazi in South Philly

by
Members of PA & NJ Anti-Racist Action

On Sun, November 23, 2008, Anti-Racist Action members from Pennsylvania and New Jersey mobilized to South Philadelphia to let the community know about a violent neo-Nazi living in their neighborhood. Douglas Caffarella, of 1430 Porter Street, Philadelphia, was exposed as a member of the Keystone State Skinheads, a statewide Pennsylvania gang of neo-Nazis who are currently attempting to build a presence in Philadelphia.

Caffarella is currently facing multiple weapons and assault charges after an assault outside of McCusker's Tavern on 17th and Shunk Streets. The target of the attack – a potential KSS recruit -- sustained multiple fractures and cuts to his face, along with a broken nose. Remember, this is someone they were trying to recruit!

While flyering, anti-fascists were confronted by several people who knew Caffarella. A person who claimed to his childhood friend said "He can't be a Nazi - he has *A* black friend," going on to say that people in the neighborhood don't care about Caffarella's white power tattoos and shaved head. He and another friend of Caffarella's attempted to take down all the flyers posted; fortunately, in the busiest areas someone glued the flyers down, so good luck with that!

Caffarella's brother-in-law was also seen tearing down flyers and was so enraged when he saw the neighborhood blanketed with Doug's face he confronted the ARA members, threatening to kill them if they came back to the 1400 block of Porter Street. "If you guys come back, someone's going to get shot. I'll blaze you. I've got six shots for you."

This brother-in-law also denied Doug's involvement with neo-Nazi groups. It seems not only is Caffarella too much of a coward to confront Anti-Racist Action directly, instead sending his friends and family to do so, but he is obviously too much of a coward to be honest with those friends and family about his neo-Nazi politics.

We will be back to Caffarella's neighborhood in the very near future. In the meantime, we will continue publicly outing all of the other Philadelphia members of the Keystone State Skinheads.



BASH THE FASH!

Opposing the Tyler TX "National Socialist Movement" rally

by Bill, Houston ARA

ARA brought about 25-30 people from Austin and Houston, and Centex had some local contacts who organized leading up to it. In all, our group was around 100. The NSM had ten people who stayed rooted to their spot, behind police tape on the steps at the rear entrance of the city hall. They had originally intended to march, but didn't even try.

They had one dinky megaphone, we had two big megaphones and one small one, and lots more people. Folks lined up facing off the nazis and drowned them out with chants, I'd say at its peak, we were at about 150. The whole time we never let up on the noise, you couldn't hear anything the NSM said. A few shady looking gents (shaved heads, long goatees, motorcycle shirts with iron cross motifs) showed up before the NSM got there and were immediately surrounded by antifa, they ended up denying that they were racist and even wore some anti-racist stickers we gave them on their shirts... I still think they were sympathizers but they stayed on the sidelines and offered not one shred of vocal support. And they couldn't hear shit.

No "hands-on dialogue" with the fash but also no arrests and I think everyone on both sides left with the understanding that the NSM had just been punk'd.

pictures: <http://spotted.tylerpaper.com/photos/index.php?id=2298528>

Here's what some Nazi wrote about the rally; "The two-hour rally, timed to coincide with the Missouri rally, was intended to focus primarily on illegal immigration. But approximately 100 counter-protesters showed up to confront the NSM, closing Spring Avenue

from Ferguson to East Erwin Streets. Many of the counter-protestors were Anti-Racist Action (ARA) anarchist scum, considered the sworn enemies of White activists. These cowards cover their faces with bandannas during rallies, although it's more for image rather than identity protection. However, getting only 10 people to a rally can marginalize a group, particularly when queers and queer-enablers can put 2,000 on the street in Los Angeles, or 3,500 on the street in Salt Lake City. We can get away with 50 people at a pro-White rally, but even though they get good media publicity, ten is just too few and the antis will laugh at us. Perhaps the NSM

should concentrate on one rally at a time until it builds its strength up more."

the antis will laugh at us.. oh, we did.

And a comment on their page about the rally;

"I went to see the rally hoping to hear some good stuff, but it was sad to see that the NSM could only muster 10 people while there had to be 200 college students in bright clothes yelling for what they believed in. After five minutes of not being able to hear you (and of seeing one of the younger members crying you know the larger kind of pink guy on the far right) I realized that what you stand for is pointless and went to chant "DIE NAZI SCUM" with the rest of em. Seriously...ya'll need some better PR if a rag-tag group of college students can upstage you at your own rally...Of course I wouldn't call it a rally. It was more like they slaughtered you with peaceful words and common sense. Even Hitler, Hemmler, and Menegle were shaking their heads yesterday and ya'll just need to give up. People don't want to hear hatespeech anymore. YOU LOST THE DAMN WAR SO GET OVER IT!"

ANTI-RACIST ACTION NETWORK FOUR POINTS OF UNITY

1) WE GO WHERE THEY GO:

Whenever fascists are organizing or active in public, we're there. We don't believe in ignoring them or staying away from them. Never let the nazis have the street!

2) WE DON'T RELY ON THE COPS OR THE COURTS TO DO OUR WORK FOR US:

This doesn't mean we never go to court. But we must rely on ourselves to protect ourselves and stop the fascists.

3) NON-SECTARIAN DEFENSE OF OTHER ANTI-FASCISTS:

In ARA, we have lots of different groups and individuals. We don't agree about everything and we have a right to differ openly. But in this movement an attack on one is an attack on us all. We stand behind each other.

4) We support abortion rights and reproductive freedom. ARA intends to do the hard work necessary to build a broad, strong movement against racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, homophobia, and discrimination against the disabled, the oldest, the youngest and the most oppressed people. We want a free classless society.

WE INTEND TO WIN!

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Land and Freedom: Indigenous Communities in Oaxaca Fight HIV and Repression

by Suzy Subways

The US has twice the HIV prevalence of Mexico, so it isn't surprising that the need to cross the border for work has increased Mexican communities' vulnerability to HIV. But the reasons for HIV's increase in some places in Mexico – indigenous, rural communities far from the border – may not be so obvious. “The state of Oaxaca has the highest HIV rate in Southeastern Mexico,” Oaxacan queer activist Leonardo Tlahui says. “One of the primary factors is immigration. The Mixteco people [one of Oaxaca's largest indigenous groups] have a high population of immigrants to the US.” He explains that migrating to a country with double the HIV rate makes immigrants more vulnerable to HIV, and that increased vulnerability is then shared with their home communities since most immigrants return to Oaxaca.

Half a million indigenous people from Oaxaca (roughly 1/7 of the state's population) live in the US, according to Rufino Dominguez, a founder of the Binational Front of Indigenous Organizations (FIOB) in Oaxaca. Interviewed by David Bacon for a Truthout.org article called “The Right to Stay Home,” Dominquez said, “There are no jobs here, and NAFTA made the price of corn so low that it's not economically possible to plant a crop anymore. We come to the US to work because we can't get a price for our product at home. There's no alternative.”

Treaties and Lovers

Two years after the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) launched its 1994 offensive in the state of Chiapas as NAFTA was implemented, the EZLN won a potential victory for indigenous land rights with the San Andres Accords, an agreement it negotiated with the Mexican government. But in 2002, the government gutted the accords, and now, indigenous activists say that large corporations are buying their peoples' land. As more young people come to the US to work and send money home, families are separated for years at a time, and individuals far from their partners become vulnerable to HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.

For a new study called “Migration and ruralization of AIDS: reports on vulnerability of indigenous communities in Mexico,” researchers from Mexico and CA interviewed migrant workers and indigenous women in poor rural areas. Before a young man leaves as a teen, the researchers report, he often partners with a girl who is also too young for legal marriage and hopes for pregnancy so that she will remain faithful while he is away. Some of the women said that, although they understand the likelihood that migrants have other sexual partners, it's very difficult to ask the men to use condoms when they return. It doesn't help that Oaxaca's archbishop condemns the use of condoms to prevent HIV.

One Zapoteca woman in Oaxaca, 23, told researchers, “I'm here with my in-laws while my husband is in the US, and he sees that ... they pick up other women. Now it's long that my husband hasn't come, like five years. He already entered [the US] for six years [before]... When he returns, he comes looking for another pregnancy.”

In a 2008 presentation at the Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI) about HIV risk behaviors of Mexican migrant workers, Melissa Sanchez and other researchers reported that migrants, often struggling with unsafe working and living conditions, generally had more sex partners while in the U.S., and had more sex while using drugs or alcohol. A related study found that migrant men in California were 13 times more likely to have sex with another man than they were before leaving Mexico. Condom use increased while away from home, but migrants were unlikely to get tested for HIV for fear of deportation.

Sanchez also told TheBody.com that young men are being targeted for sex work at day-labor pick-up sites where they wait for construction work. “There are actually Web sites developed now where they give tips to people who want to approach Mexican-migrant, job-pick-up-site workers and actually recruit them,” Sanchez said. “They are told, ‘Go after three o'clock, when there is a clear indication that there is no work coming for the day.’ They target young, young men, thinking, ‘Well, they're going to be more naïve, they're perhaps more desperate to make some money given that they're not going to get a landscape job during the day.’”

Corruption and Repression in Oaxaca

In 2001, the Frente Común Contra el SIDA (Common Front Against AIDS), a community organization in Oaxaca, began buying bus tickets for people living with HIV in the countryside to see their doctors at the clinic of COESIDA, the state AIDS council, in Oaxaca City. While meeting this need, activists got to know the people they were serving. The stories they heard – many of the people weren't getting their medication regularly, were told to come back next month for medicine, or were given only one or two anti-retrovirals rather than the standard combination of three – shocked the activists. According to the Frente's website, this revelation set in motion a clash with COESIDA that culminated in the Frente's closure amid threats and violence by government thugs in 2006.

First, the Frente went to the press in 2001 with the information they had gathered about substandard HIV treatment at the clinic. Next, they negotiated with

COESIDA officials, who allowed the activists to conduct a more formal survey. For one month – in March 2002 – the Frente interviewed each patient who came to the clinic. The results were astonishing: Of 145 patients, 33 weren't receiving any medication, and 20 were given only two antiretrovirals, which could do more harm than none -- by fostering drug resistance. Thirty-one patients opted out of the survey. While it's possible that some may not have needed medication, it's more likely that impoverished people from rural areas would come to the city for treatment only if they were very sick.

At their next meeting with the Frente, COESIDA officials revealed enough boxes of medications to treat 50 more people. After this victory, the Frente continued its work, publicly criticizing the under-reporting of rapidly increasing AIDS cases in rural areas where indigenous peoples live – and where the official HIV rates are the lowest. Leonardo Tlahui, a founder of Oaxaca's Nancy Cardenas Sexual Diversity Collective and an organizer with the Popular Assembly of the Peoples of Oaxaca (APPO), explains, “There are no resources for our culture, for health, for housing.... All the budgeted money that comes in to serve people with HIV, mostly indigenous people, is lost. The indigenous people who are HIV positive in Oaxaca are invisible, even though more than ten years ago there was an armed uprising in Chiapas.” Under the current governor, Tlahui says, the situation has only become worse. “In this period, we have a pseudo-governor of Oaxaca, a man named Ulises Ruiz,” he says. “We're asking for his removal because he does not know how to govern the state, because he is a repressor, he has sent many people to prison. We have many dead and disappeared people. We demand justice.”

Bill Wolf, an artist from San Francisco who lived in Oaxaca and had worked with the Frente since 1995, took his own life earlier this year after a long struggle with lung cancer. Excerpts from his journals, available in English on the Frente's website, describe the depth of corruption in Oaxaca's government. In Jan. 2007, he wrote, “The current Secretary of Public Health, appointed by Ruiz, in one short year has become one of the wealthiest men in Oaxaca, recently buying an enormous mansion.... The director of COESIDA, Gabriela Velásquez, is the wife of the largest contributor to the political campaigns of both the ex-governor and current governor.”

In June 2006, teachers on strike occupied Oaxaca City's central plaza. They held it for seven months with the support of APPO, which was formed during the uprising by representatives of Oaxaca's 17 distinct indigenous peoples, many of the 400 majority-indigenous municipalities, and hundreds of grassroots organizations, all demanding the removal of Ruiz. Fifty-six movement leaders were assassinated during the government crackdown on the uprising that year.

AIDS activist Wolf and other Oaxaca artists built a “Day of the Dead Altar” on November 1, 2006, to honor 56 activists assassinated by the government and paramilitaries in the previous year. The sign is a play on Oaxaca Governor Ulises Ruiz's slogan, “Giving our face to the nation.” The slain activists are portrayed rising from their graves. “Five indigenous leaders were killed on the very weekend we received the final threat

from COESIDA,” wrote Wolf, who was also an APPO supporter. “We later met and it was agreed I would sign a document with the government promising to have no part in the national [AIDS] convention, to cease activities concerning HIV/AIDS in Oaxaca, to not speak with the media, and to not mention the above ‘incident.’”

The “incident” Wolf mentions is described in a quote from fellow expatriate Stan Gotlieb's blog: “They showed up at Condón Mania, the highly successful store [run by the Frente] that sells condoms at just enough over cost to stay in business. They gave a little demonstration by smashing the windshield on one of the worker's car. They gave everyone some advice about how to avoid these kinds of visits in the future....”

Visions of Survival and Resistance

Despite the repression by Oaxaca's government, its indigenous communities are creating new ways to survive and resist – with inspiration from their historical roots. Zapoteca AIDS activist Amaranta Gómez Regalado's essay “Transcending” offers a glimpse of her hometown, Juchitán, Oaxaca, and its traditional embrace of muxhe, whose identity she defines as “people who are born a man and grow up with the generic identity of a woman; this is an identity not unlike a gay or transgender identity, but with truly unique characteristics.” Muxhes like Gómez have traditionally been embroiderers, seamstresses, and fish-sellers, she writes. And now, they are community leaders, especially in the AIDS movement.

“In 1995, a group of women and muxhes formed [Juchitán's] first civil HIV/AIDS organization, called Gunaxhii Guendanabani (Love for Life), and in 1997 the muxhe community created other sources of civil movement for the promotion of sexual rights and the prevention of HIV/AIDS, like Colectivo Binni Laanu (Our People) and the group Las Intrépidas Contra el Sida (Fearlessly Against AIDS),” Gómez writes. She has become a leader in the international movement against HIV in indigenous communities.” [“Transcending” is available in English and Spanish on the Internet.]

The Binational Front of Indigenous Organizations (FIOB) works with farmers in Oaxaca who are exploring new food crops to replace corn and beans, so that they can support themselves on their land and make the basic human right they speak of as el derecho de no migrar – the right not to migrate – a real option in people's lives. In “The Right to Stay Home,” David Bacon writes, “Over the years, FIOB has organized women weavers in Juxtahuaca, helping them sell their textiles and garments through its chapters in California. It set up a union for rural taxis, both to help farming families get from Juxtahuaca to the tiny towns in the surrounding hills, and to provide jobs for drivers. Artisan co-ops make traditional products, helped by a co-operative loan fund.”

Human Rights for Indigenous Peoples

In a conversation at the Indigenous Peoples' networking zone in the Global Village area of the 17th International AIDS Conference in Mexico City in August, Leonardo Tlahui spoke about the role of APPO in the Mexican AIDS movement. “Part of being here in the Global Village is to demand respect for the human rights of all indigenous peoples, and of those of us who are in favor of justice in the state,” he said. “We use all the possible forums where we can get space to outreach about this. They didn't want to open up a space for APPO, because they thought we were going to talk about guerrilla war and political issues. In the APPO, we also work on health and security issues and many policies that we want applied in Oaxaca. But we are closed from doing this. We have a thirst for information, but they don't want to inform us.”

Amaranta Gómez closes “Transcending” in the spirit of nurturing her community's heritage as a source of strength in the face of threats to its survival. “It is difficult to explain everything about what it is like to be a muxhe from Juchitán in this small article, however I hope that this brief look at our vision of the world has enlightened some,” she writes. “A vision which is not exempt from the social, economic, political and cultural changes taking place in Mexico, yet it has the goal of continuing to conserve the social and cultural harmony that has existed throughout the years and has allowed for different identities, like that of the muxhe, to flourish and be expressed. This goal becomes even bigger when those from the outside look at Juchitán as a society with its own reality that resists disappearing.”

This article is reprinted with permission from *Solidarity Project*, the online magazine of the Community HIV/AIDS Mobilization Project (CHAMP), www.champnetwork.org

REMARKS TO THE 7th ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM AGAINST ISOLATION

by
Herman Bell, December 2008

When imprisoned, and placed in an isolation unit, at some point you begin to live inside yourself, assessing and measuring how you are doing against the moment-to-moment, day-to-day challenges that you are confronted by to gauge how well you are getting on. Even though we may spend countless years in prison, little if anything ever changes there. This might sound contradictory: in our minds we can become inured to the harshest conditions as a natural survival instinct. However in reality, they remain just as agonizing. How we deal with them, process them, interact with them in our mind largely determines the change we perceive around us and inside ourselves.

Isolation bears two recognizable features: one is introspection, the other is torture. It brings out the worst in us and the best in us; regardless, we must somehow still make it through the day. And in the course of that day, and every day, we must fight our demons, real and imagined. The real ones are plain enough to see. They turn the keys. (But not all the turn-keys are bad, just most of them. I like to think that the decent ones were well brought up by their parents. The bad ones, perhaps, didn't receive all they thought they should from their parents and others, and therefore will always feel the world owes them something and that meantime they can do whatever they want. Controlling for greed and ideology -- how else do we explain the pathology of man's inhumanity to man?)

Isolation means you are cut off from the rest of the world, save for the occasional life-line that finds its way to you in the form of a visit, a letter, and the occasional headline on a discarded newspaper that you might glimpse as you pass it by. Your world is greatly reduced. Fresh air, sunlight, food, keeping your body and clothes clean -- the things you once took for granted -- take on new importance in your life.

Under these reduced circumstances, you become so sucked into yourself that an hour feels like a day has gone by, a day feels like a week, and a week like a month. You lose a sense of time; you no longer care whether it's day or night; you hallucinate; you hyperventilate. You know your scene has to change, nothing lasts forever. Your survival instincts keep you holding on. And suddenly the unexpected melodic sound of jangling keys break through the cocoon that time and isolation had woven around you. Then you wonder had all that been a dream.

Isolation transposes our reality; physical torture shapes it. Physical torture is a ravenous beast that has slipped its bounds from Hell to feast upon the soul of humanity. It's the Big Bad Wolf threatening the Three Little Pigs. It's the Bogeyman lurking in the woods we heard so much about, coming to get us. It's our worst nightmare rattling a locked door, straining mightily to get at us. It's Abu-Ghraib; it's Guantanamo; it's the CIA's Extraordinary Rendition; it's the screams of prisoners in U.S. police stations. It's the cries of the torn, the battered, the tormented victims of this ravenous beast that rears its ugly head to feast on pried fingernails; electrically charred genitalia, ear lobes, and human breasts; chased down with a liter of water-boarding, stress-positions, extremes of hot and cold temperatures; and garnished with absolute silence and jarring noise. All done to preserve an antiquated political and economic system that deprives the many of their needs and serves the few in their greed. Outrage against this social practice should know no bounds; how can we not fight to end it?! Let us send the beast and its minions back to where they belong.

Note: Herman Bell is one of the New York 3, and currently facing trial in San Francisco as one of the SF8. Please support these brothers by sending a donation. Make checks payable to CDHR/Agape and mail to the address below or donate on line at

www.freethesf8.org/donate.html

Committee for the Defense of Human Rights (CDHR),
PO Box 90221, Pasadena, CA 91109, (415) 226-1120,

INHERITING AN EMPIRE

[column written 12/20/08 and copyright (c) 2008 by Mumia Abu-Jamal

When Barack Hussein Obama takes the oath of office, he will receive more than the reins to the executive office of the U.S. government; he will inherit the rulership of empire, one that no American consciously voted for. As if the highest political office in a nation of over 300 million people wasn't enough, capitals all around the world are immediately impacted by what happens in Washington.

In a sense, the U.S. inherited its imperial role after the weakening and decline of the British Empire at the close of the so-called Second World War (1941-194). This was the logical result of the losses of war, as well as the rebellion of British colonies in Africa and Asia, which struggled for national independence. In many places where Britain withdrew, the U.S. advanced.

Because the war largely avoided American territory, the U.S. was free to use its excess resources to emerge as the strongest and wealthiest survivor of the ashes of war. Now the U.S. freely interferes with nations across the globe. Through its intelligence services, its domination of the World Bank, and the military, it removes leaders, buys off other leaders, seduces critics abroad, and, using the media as it did on Iraq, wages unjust wars at will.

Part of this is a kind of global management program that claims to benefit America; part is also the abuse of great power to achieve desired ends, often the ends desired by the corporate sector. This has led leaders to speak of democracy while supporting a train of dictators from one end of the earth to the other.

This is the system that Obama will inherit. Will he endeavor to change it, or will he try to strengthen it? Time will tell.

Over 2,000 years ago, an African took the throne of the Roman Empire. He ruled for some 18 years, and waged wars on behalf of Rome. His name was Septimius Severus, and he was born in what is today Libya, in North Africa. And while his reign brought wealth, power and status to his family and his home province, he did not change Rome so much as Rome changed him.

His power went to extend empire, not to change it. His son, Caracalla, ruled the Empire after him and he extended Roman citizenship to the provincial freemen, but he's also remembered for a reign of cruelty.

What Rome taught us all is that for an empire to be born, a republic must die.

When change next comes, what form will it take?

Prisoner Andre Jacobs Awarded \$185,000 in Lawsuit Against DOC Staff

Andre Jacobs, a captive of SCI Fayette in the PA DOC, was awarded \$185,000 in compensatory damages by a jury today for violations of his constitutional rights while being held in the Long Term Segregation Unit in SCI Pittsburgh in 2003.

Andre represented himself at trial, and prevailed despite being forced to wear a remote-controlled electro-shock stun belt throughout that was controlled by DOC staff. Two of Andre's witnesses testified to Judge Conti that prison guards working the Special Management Unit (SMU) in Camp Hill threatened them for their participation in the case, with both testifying that C/O Uler assaulted one of the witnesses.

In the first of three upcoming jury trials (the other two are scheduled for January and February) in Federal

Court, Mr. Jacobs out-lawyered the state's attorneys throughout, eventually winning guilty verdicts against Lt. Gregory Giddens, ex-Captain Thomas McConnel, and Superintendent's Assistant Carol Scire.

Check the Post-Gazette for an article: <http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/08329/930437-100.stm> And don't believe the hype: Andre never broke the hand of a federal marshal, but rather was beaten unconscious by federal marshalls while in cuffs and shackles after he violated a direct order not to speak by having the criminal audacity to tell his grandmother, Elizabeth, that he loved her. To cover up their criminal assault they charged Andre with assault under federal statutes.

Check the Trib for a better article, although it repeats the same official slander:



Mumia is in his final appeal process to the U.S. Supreme Court -Act now to free him!

Audio of most of Mumia's essays are at: <http://www.prisonradio.org>

PLEASE CONTACT:

International Concerned Family & Friends of MAJ, P.O. Box 19709, Philadelphia, PA 19143,
215-476-8812, Fax: 215-476-6180, icffmaj@aol.com, www.freemumia.com

AND OFFER YOUR SERVICES!

Send our brotha some LOVE and LIGHT at:

Mumia Abu-Jamal, AM 8335, SCI-Greene, 175 Progress Drive, Waynesburg, PA 15370

Subscribe: mumiacolumns-subscribe@topica.com,

Read: <http://topica.com/lists/mumiacolumns/read>

Subscribe to ICFFMAJ email updates list by e-mailing icffmaj@aol.com!

[Check out Mumia's latest: WE WANT FREEDOM: A Life in the Black Panther Party, from South End Press, www.southendpress.org, 1-800-533-8478.

http://www.pittsburghlive.com/x/pittsburghtrib/news/cityregion/s_599980.html

Human Rights Coalition - FedUp! Chapter
5125 Penn Ave Pittsburgh, PA 15224
412-361-3022 xt.4 hrcfedup@gmail.com
www.thomasmertoncenter.org/fedup/

In Memoriam:

Sister Somayah Kambui also known as Herowese 'Peaches' Moore, and Queen Negus -- an original member of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense in Los Angeles, participant in the Free Breakfast for School Children program, survivor of the LAPD SWAT attack on the BPP along with Geronimo ji-Jaga, founder of Crescent Alliance for Self-help for Sickle Cell, supporter of the SF8 and leader of medical marijuana movement.

Gaza Massacre Rooted in Colonial Occupation

By Chandra Muzaffar
[Israel, Obama, and the US media blame Hamas for the violence.] While rocket attacks targeting civilians in the southern part of Israel are wrong from the point of view of international law, the media has failed to tell the public the truth about why Hamas ended the truce and how Israel is largely responsible for the underlying conflict. There are at least five dimensions to the larger context shaping the conflict that have not been highlighted in the media.

One, even after the so-called Israeli “withdrawal” from Gaza in August 2005, the Israeli army has conducted numerous raids and air strikes in Gaza in the name of fighting “terrorism” which have killed hundreds of civilians including women and children. These assaults intensified after Hamas captured the Palestinian Legislative Council in a free election in January 2006. When Hamas ousted Fatah, Israel went all out to destroy Hamas by military and non-military means.

Two, in spite of Israeli attacks, Hamas, a few violations notwithstanding, observed its June 2008 truce with Israel. Not a single Israeli was killed by Hamas rocket fire during the six-month period of the truce. The Hamas leadership even proposed a 10-year truce to Israel in April 2008. There was no response from Israel. Because of continuous Israeli military strikes, the closure of border crossings and a suffocating blockade of Gaza, imposed by Israel, Hamas was forced to end the truce.

Three, in juxtaposing Hamas rockets with the Israeli arsenal, the media seldom mentions the tremendous asymmetry in military power between the two sides. What are Hamas’s homemade rockets compared with the wide range of sophisticated lethal weaponry at the command of the world’s fourth most powerful army? The death toll from the present assault tells the whole story: Over 500 Palestinians to five Israelis even before the ground invasion.

Four, one has to place this asymmetry in the context of the Israeli blockade of Gaza that began soon after Hamas won the 2006 election. By punishing the people of Gaza for voting for Hamas through the imposition of a blockade that has increased poverty and destitution and denies life-saving drugs to the critically ill, Israel has made the victims of its cruel and callous siege even angrier and more desperate. The media hasn’t attempted to link Hamas’s rocket attacks to the siege.

Five, neither has the media explained to the people that at the root of this longstanding conflict that goes back to the beginning of the 20th century is the occupation and annexation of Palestine and the oppression of the Palestinians. Within a year of the unjust partition of the land in 1948, 78 per cent of Palestine was in the hands of the Zionists. Gaza is part of the 22 per cent that was annexed in 1967. Since 1948, Israel, argues Israeli historian Ilan Pappé, has embarked upon a policy of “ethnic cleansing” that seeks to eliminate the indigenous Palestinians from their land. None of these facts and opinions is aired in the mainstream international media. It is not difficult to understand why this is so. Zionist influence over the US-Europe controlled international media is enormous.

This is perhaps a propitious moment to challenge it. The US economy is facing its severest crisis, which must impact adversely upon Zionist power both directly and indirectly. With its inevitable economic decline, US global hegemony, which has been a critical factor in sustaining and perpetuating Israel’s military dominance of the Middle East, is also coming to an end. New patterns of global power are in the offing. At a time like this, it is important that Americans themselves realize that blind, uncritical US support and protection for Israel is damaging to US interests. In the last few years, some from the US establishment have begun to see this. Jimmy Carter is a case in point.

The Palestinians and other Arabs who have to contend with Zionist power should also develop more effective strategies to pursue their struggle for justice. At this juncture many of them oscillate between violence and rhetoric. What is needed is strategic thinking and planning which will produce new forms of challenge and resistance to Zionist dominance. For instance, those who try to break Israel’s Gaza blockade by transporting food and medicines through ships are not only providing much needed assistance but are also raising public consciousness about the inhumanity of the Israeli regime. Two women have been at the forefront of such initiatives: the Nobel laureate Mairead Maguire and former US congresswoman Cynthia McKinney. Such initiatives, it is hoped, will accelerate the demise of Zionist power and US hegemony and create the conditions for the liberation of the Palestinians and other oppressed peoples. Dr Chandra Muzaffar is Professor of Global Studies at Universiti Sains Malaysia and president of the International Movement for a Just World (IJW). He was on the *Internet Court on Israel’s War of Extermination against Palestine*. http://inst.com.ny/Current_News/NSI/Saturday/Columbus2442454/index.pda

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Palestine refugees are defined as "persons whose normal place of residence was Palestine during the period 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948, and who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict." UNRWA services are available to all those living in its area of operations who meet this definition, who are registered with the Agency and who need assistance. The descendants of Palestine refugee males, including adopted children, are also eligible for registration. The remaining two thirds of registered Palestine refugees live in and around the cities and towns of the host countries, and in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, often in the environs of official camps.