

# CROSSROAD

**VOL. 9, #4      Spring 2001**

## Remembrance of Paul Robeson

By  
Dr. Margaret T. Burroughs

I am thinking of Paul Robeson now and I am thinking of myself. I am thinking that if it had not been for Paul - for what he was, what he believed, what he stood for and fought for, and sacrificed for - that I might not be here today or be to a great degree, how I am, believe, and what I fight and sacrifice for. I am thinking of how this humane human, this beautiful person, this splendid son of the Afrikan peoples has inspired so many persons, has been a barometer, has been a system of checks and balances in measuring how much my life, all our lives have been concerned with the liberation of people, of [New Afrikan] people and of oppressed peoples all over the world.

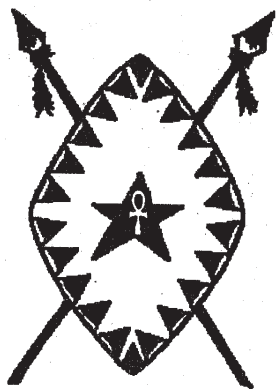


I am thinking back to the time when I was seventeen. For that is when my love affair with Paul Robeson began. I am remembering appreciatively my favorite uncle, Louis Pierre, who bought me my first ticket to hear Paul Robeson in concert at Orchestra Hall. As an impressionable teenager, I was entranced. I had not known that this manner of man or that this kind of a world existed. Paul Robeson ascended and took his place as star in my sky, a place which he still occupies today.

After the concert the audience was invited to attend a reception at the Appomatox Club on Grand Boulevard in honor of Paul and his family. Since everyone was invited, I went too. There I got a close-up look at this magnificent man and shook his hand and that of his son, his wife and his mother-in-law.

From that point on, I was touched by the Robeson magic. I collected Robeson records, I read all I could about Robeson. Via the news, I followed him in his travels. And in the thirties, my first knowledge of the experience of the Soviet Union came from reading or hearing Robeson reports.

I am remembering how I challenged the anti-Soviet remarks of my High School Social Science Teacher. "They don't have Jim Crow in the Soviet Union like we do here," I declared. She asked, "And how do you know? You've never been there." "Paul Robeson said so!" I said. "He's been there and furthermore, he [has] his son to go to school there so he could get a good education." (continues on pg. 3)



**SPEAR & SHIELD PUBLICATIONS**  
3420 WEST 63rd Street  
CHICAGO, IL 60629

## NEW AFRIKAN DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

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

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

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

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

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

(cont'd from pg 1) So it was that when faced by grave decisions, I would often ask myself, now what would Paul Robeson do in this case? Now, on what side was Paul Robeson? Whatever I concluded that Paul would do, that is what I did. His guidance and direction sustained me through the thirties and the forties and left a lasting impression on me.

Then came the fifties, the years of cold war, inquisitions and incipient fascism. I am remembering how the expression of my militancy, necessitated my being haled down to the Board of Education to be questioned concerning my views political and otherwise. A key question put to me was this: "What do you think of that Communist, Paul Robeson?" Even though my job was on the line, I knew I had to stand with Paul. "I have nothing but admiration for Mr. Robeson," I said. "I think he is the greatest artist that America has produced. I'm proud that I belong to the same race of people as Paul Robeson." "But isn't he supposed to be a communist sympathizer?" They asked. "Why he even sent his son to school over there."

"I am not concerned with his politics," I said. "And I suppose he has the prerogative to send his child to school wherever he wishes. I think Paul Robeson is a truly great man." At that time, even the threat of the loss of my job did not cause me to repudiate my idol. Suffice it to say, my position remains the same today.

I am remembering the humility and humanity of the man. I remember when he played Othello in Chicago and I, along with Ish Flory, was invited to have dinner with him up at his hotel. I was frightened to death as we went up in the elevator. Here, I was going to meet the great artist and singer! But I was immediately put at ease when the great man greeted me at the door. "Come right on in," he said, "and make yourself at home." Later, at dinner, not being used to the great array of unfamiliar plates, platters and fancy silverware and covered silver dishes which were placed before me, I was flustered. Since I was the only lady present, the gentlemen waited for me to begin. I pondered which was the proper way to get started, after a pause. Finally, I blurted out, "How do you manage this? How do you get to the food?" Paul Robeson grasped the situation and my impending embarrassment immediately. He had dined with Kings and Queens and knew the etiquette perfectly well but how I appreciated the sensitive consideration of the man when he said, "I think you do it this way." As if he didn't know. I consider myself fortunate that my acquaintance with Paul Robeson grew into a friendship that withstood the strains and stresses of the McCarthy Witch-Hunt period. When few homes were open to him, he was always welcome at our home. To buttress my pledge of fidelity, in his later years I vowed to place my talents and my time at the disposal and behest of Paul and Eslands Robeson and this I have done.

I am remembering that many people short-sightedly date the active revolt of the [New Afrikan] people against their racist government from the sixties. They salute Martin and Malcolm whom I would not wish to detract from, but I am wondering if their protest would ever have surfaced if Paul Robeson, the people's artist, the intellectual, the athlete, the scholar, the linguist, the man who was honored in countries all over the world, had not twenty years before in the late forties ripped the cover off and exposed the white, racist, U.S. capitalistic establishment policy for what it is. Because of that, and because he could not be bought, the man who had everything soon saw his career wiped out as well as efforts to damage his character.

The establishment was so furious with him that it wreaked its vengeance on him by ordering the prostitute news media to mute his dynamic voice with a curtain of silence. Even many [New Afrikan] people, friends of his, who formerly had basked in his glory, shrank from and



PAUL ROBESON SPEAKS



avoided him. Some of them were paid 30 pieces of silver to openly denounce Paul Robeson in the print and electronic media. One [New Afrikan] writer under a pseudonym wrote an anti-Robeson article, which was circulated in the Afrikan countries to turn them against Paul.

This is why two generations of [New Afrikan], [North American] and other youths are not acquainted with a man who is the tallest tree in the forest.

At Peeksville, New York fascist elements were allowed free reign in their efforts to silence and to kill Paul, for exposing them and speaking the truth. Failing this, every effort was made to prevent the great Baritone from pursuing his career. Every concert hall was closed to him. He had to take to storefronts, the parks and the streets, all the places where the plain people were. But by this time, the approval of the bourgeoisie had ceased to be important to Paul Robeson. The working people of all colors and nationalities responded by accepting, appreciating and protecting their people's artist. Paul Robeson was practically put under house arrest for a number of years but because of the continued pressure and support of people's groups all over the country and all over the world the government was finally forced to give him back his passport. He was greeted with love and great enthusiasm on his world tours following that.

On his last visit to Chicago I had the honor of deepening my friendship with him and his late wife and of helping to arrange his concerts and of being a member of his security detail, and carrying his briefcase and being Paul Robeson's Girl Friday.

I am remembering four or five years ago, which was the last time I saw Paul. It was at his home on Juniper Terrace. Though retired and ill he was alert and concerned and still deeply interested in the surge of [New Afrikan] people and all working people for their rights and for a good life. This was his motivation then. It is his motivation now. How happy he would be to be here today. Certainly, he is with us now, and will always be.

Paul Robeson was born April 9, 1898 and passed on January 23, 1976.

*Dr. Magraet T Burroughs is a marvelous artist in her own right; she is also the founder of the Museum of African-American History in Chicago.*

#### Press On

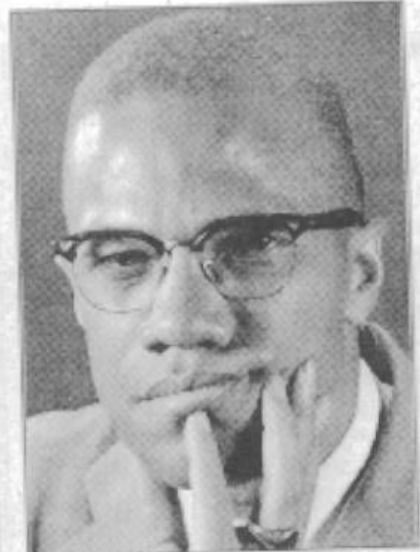
**Nothing in the world can  
take the place of persistence.  
Talent will not, nothing is more  
common than a man with talent.  
Genius will not, an unrewarded  
genius is almost a proverb.  
Education will not, the world  
is full of educated derelicts.  
Persistence and determination  
alone are omnipotent.**

**(margaret burroughs)**



## Malcolm X: Model of Personal Transformation

Malcolm X often used the concept of prison as a metaphor to describe the situation of New Afrikan people. He implied that just as those in actual prisons are expected to “rehabilitate” themselves as a condition for their release, We must transform ourselves, as a people, as a condition for securing our freedom from oppression.



Malcolm's autobiography offers evidence of the pivotal role that prison played in his transformation (esp. chapters 10,11,and 12), and provides guidance for imprisoned New Afrikans, who can begin a process of self-transformation similar to that undertaken by Malcolm. We have the added benefit of knowing the general outline of our identity, purpose, and direction.

Although in prison, We are not defined by this condition. We are New Afrikans (identity; nationality), citizens of an oppressed nation. Our purpose is to secure the independence of the nation, and socialist development is the direction.

The time spent in prison should be devoted to our self-transformation...to the further development of our identity, commitment to our purpose, and the pursuit of knowledge and skills needed to aid our people in the realization of the socialist development of our society.

## II

While in prison, Malcolm began to think – in a systematic, critical way, about his past life-style, about the world and the society he lived in. He began to question the way things were, and he realized that change – in his life, and in the society – was both possible and necessary.

While in prison, Malcolm began to think – but only after he began to read. Prior to his imprisonment, Malcolm had been enclosed in the world of the hustler, the player, the pimp, the gangster – the parasite – and he couldn't imagine himself outside of that world. Reading exposed Malcolm to new worlds; it allowed him to see that there were alternatives to the lifestyle and values of the social parasite.

While in prison, Malcolm began to think, and to read – but only after he had been encouraged to do so by someone that he respected and who had taken an unselfish interest in him. Malcolm was later motivated by a new sense of self-worth and identity and purpose, as his family introduced him to the religious and political philosophy of Islam, as taught by Elijah Muhammad, and practiced by the Nation of Islam.

Soon after leaving prison, Malcolm began to effect change upon the world – but he was able to do so because he had first changed himself, while in prison. Many imprisoned New Afrikans can follow his example, change themselves, become new men and women committed to acting upon the world to effect its radical transformation. As with Malcolm, such change would more likely occur if imprisoned New Afrikans are encouraged and assisted by individuals, groups, or a community seeking to make them part of a collective process of redemption and progressive social development.

## III

When imprisoned New Afrikans read Malcolm's autobiography, We should reflect upon our own lives, as We can easily identify with Malcolm, and see similarities between his life and our own. In fact, Malcolm charges us to examine our lives when he says, "*why am i as i am?oTunderstand that of any person, his whole blurfe), fr must be eviewed. All of our experiences fuse into our personality. Everything happened to us is an ethigent.*(1)

Critical review of one's own life is the first step in the process of personal transformation. It's also the hardest step to take, because it requires that one be brutally honest and unreserved in the examination and critique of one's fears and shortcomings.

Reading Malcolm can help us to understand how critical self-examination is done. What is there in Malcolm's life that's not in our own? Who was he, if not one of us? What does Malcolm mean to us if not that We, like him, can change? What does his prison experience mean to us if not that We, too, can use the prison as the environment within which We undergo our own metamorphosis?

As Malcolm looked back on his life as a parasite, he acknowledged the degree to which it was a result of the bad choices he had made, due in part to "the wrong kinds of heroes, and the wrong kinds of influences." but those heroes and influences, those bad choices, should be examined within the context of the society that helped to produce them – We are all products of a unique form of colonial oppression.

## IV

Most people enter prison thinking only of surviving the experience and returning to their previous way of life. They spend most of their time watching television, listening to music, playing sports or working jobs linked to the operation of the prison (e.g., kitchen or laundry or janitorial services). Educational programs in prison are designed so that only a few prisoners may participate. Rare are the self-motivated prisoners who decide to educate and transform themselves.

*A prisoner has time that he can put to good use. I d put prison second to the best place for a man to go if he needs to do some ~~thinkin~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~s~~ prison he can change his(2)life.*

*I don t think anybody ever ~~go to~~ ~~of~~ going to prison than I did. In fact, enabled me to study fare ~~mon~~ ~~tensively~~ than I would have if my life had g difeently and I had attended some collegee. ~~else~~ ~~r~~ but in prison could I have attacked my ignorance by being able to study intensely sometimes as much fifteen hours a ~~d~~ ~~a~~?*

When convicted in 1946, Malcolm was first sent to the prison in Charlestown, Massachusetts, where he initially wasted his time, engaging in aimless rebellion and drug use. He didn't begin to put time to good use until he was encouraged to do so by Bimbi, an older con who'd spent many years in many prisons – but he had not wasted his time. Bimbi was articulate and well-read, and he became a minister to Malcolm, who'd been drawn to Bimbi because "*he was the first man I had ever seen command totalespect with his ~~wis~~.* (4)

Bimbi reignited within Malcolm the passion for words and the acquisition of knowledge that he'd begun to lose in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. He urged Malcolm to take advantage of the prison library, and to enroll in some of the correspondence courses allowed by the prison.

Malcolm admitted that at that point in his life, his working vocabulary may have been only two hundred words which, together with his penmanship, made it impossible for him to write a decent letter. He first took a correspondence course in English. He began to read from the prison library, saying later that:



*I have often reflected upon the new vista ~~that~~ opened to me. I knew right then in prison ~~that~~ reading had changed ~~ever~~ the course of my life. As I see today, the ability ~~to~~ awoke inside me some long ~~ago~~ craving to be mentally alive.*

However, it would take more time, and a different motivation, for Malcolm to develop the appreciation for reading just described. Initially, his reading was aimless, and he was motivated by little more than the desire to become a more literate hustler – he hadn't transformed that criminal/colonial mentality. It wasn't until Malcolm was transferred to another prison that he moved beyond his mere "book-reading motions":

*Pretty soon, I would have quit even these motions, ~~undesired~~ had motivation that I ~~did~~.*

# V

Malcolm was transferred to the Norfolk Prison Colony in Concord, Massachusetts, in 1948. There, he received a letter from his brother, Philbert, who said that he had joined the "Nation of Islam," and he urged Malcolm to "pray for deliverance." Malcolm wasn't ready to hear anything about religion. His attitude changed, however, after he received a letter from another of his brothers, Reginald.

Because Reginald knew how Malcolm's street hustler mind worked, his approach was more effective than Philbert's. Reginald told Malcolm to stop eating pork, to stop smoking cigarettes, and that he would show Malcolm how to get out of prison. Malcolm took the bait. What he initially regarded as a probable con to be worked on the prison authorities, turned out to be the next step in the process of his transformation:

*For the next years, I was the ~~new~~ thing to ~~am~~ in the ~~Norfolk~~ Prison Colony. I never have been ~~so~~ busy in my life. I still marvel at how swift ~~my~~ previous life ~~s~~ thinking ~~is~~ ~~is~~ away ~~of~~ me. It is as though someone else I knew of had lived by hustling and crime. I would be startled to catch myself in ~~a~~ ~~more~~ way of my earlier self as another ~~person~~.*

It was at this point in his life that Malcolm began to read selectively and critically, and to develop intellectual discipline to complement his spiritual and moral development.

For New Afrikan women and men held in U.S. prisons, Malcolm stands as an example of the way in which We can free ourselves, even though behind prison walls.

Malcolm attained his freedom long before he was released from prison – when he began to read, to think, to question his old habits and values. If Malcolm had not used his time in prison to change his life, he would not have left us ideas and a life worthy of examination and emulation.

Moreover, if Malcolm had not changed his life while in prison, he would have returned to the life of the “criminal” and the oppressed colonial subject.

The parable of Job, which Elijah Muhammad used in introducing Malcolm to the Nation of Islam soon after Malcolm’s release from prison, is instructive. Mr. Muhammad told the gathering that Malcolm had been strong while in prison. Malcolm reports that he then said:

*When God had bragged about how faithful Job was the devil said only God hedge around Job kept Job so faithful. Remove the devil's hedge, the devil told God, and I will make Job curse you to your face.*

*The devil could claim that, hedged in prison, I had just ~~used Malcolm~~ Mr said. But the devil would say that now, out of prison, I ~~wasn't~~ drinking, smoking, dope, and life of (8) time.*

We can go through the motions of changing our lives – while in prison, or otherwise – but the test of the truth comes when the prison doors are opened, or, when otherwise We’re confronted with situations which test our characters.

Nevertheless – before We can remain faithful, We must first become faithful. Malcolm’s prison transformation can be a model for our own.

Atiba Shanna

- (1) The Autobiography of Malcolm X: As told to Alex Haley (Olympic Books, 1981). p. 173
- (2) Ibid., 450-451
- (3) Ibid., 207
- (4) Ibid., 178
- (5) Ibid., 206
- (6) Ibid., 198
- (7) Ibid., 196
- (8) Ibid., 227



## Cadre Lessons

*The following story is taken from Ho Chi Minh's Reminiscences of Ho Chi Minh Le Manh Trinh, which relates an episode during which Ho Chi Minh was working in Siam, and known as Thau Chin.*

*It doesn't matter that the names of people and places may be unfamiliar and hard to pronounce, or that the story depicts events in another time and involves another place.*

*The story and its lessons transcend time and space, and can apply to all times and places. There are lessons here that we need to draw from as we struggle to go to our people and work with them, starting where they are and with what they have.*

\* \* \* \* \*

During the time Thau Chin lived in Sakol, the cadres could get from him a great deal of education for work among the masses. We take as an example, among others, this story told by Tai Ngon:

"In the summer of 1928," Tai said, "Mr. Chin came to Sakol, where I was working. He was accompanied by Ty, born Dang Canh Tan.

"A few days later, Mr. Chin told me and another young man by the name of To to go to Mukdahan, a district town of Nakhon province, opposite the Laotian town of Savannakhet. He entrusted us with the mission of making enquiries and propaganda among the people, then setting up a Friendship Association for them. I came back to Sakol after a month.

"That evening, he asked me to make a report. I said, 'There is nothing. I went to the Vietnamese homes at Mukdahan by a ferry landing stage. There are about thirty families, and even a temple dedicated to Tran Hung Dao. The Vietnamese there earn their living as ferrymen, rice dealers, butchers, carpenters, masons, etc., in short, they do all trades. Among them are a few dozen young men and half a dozen young girls. Most of them are poor people, I found only two families living fairly comfortably.'

"I stopped for a while, then shook my head in despair and went on, 'It was very difficult to speak of revolution there. The women are notorious for their quarrels at the market; every day they argue or wrangle with each other over some bargain. The men are usually drunk. As soon as their supper is finished, they gather somewhere to play cards. They also go to the Tran Hung Dao temple to practice spiritualism. The young men are no better; they do nothing but go to the temple, gamble and flirt with the girls. How could I make revolutionary propaganda in such a place!'

"As I finished, Mr. Chin said, 'All right. Go and have a rest. We'll see it tomorrow.' 'What can we expect from such a state of things?' I asked. He smiled, saying, 'There's something good in what you reported.'

"Before leaving, I told him, 'I should like to get another job tomorrow.'

"Yes, we'll talk about that tomorrow,' he replied.

"On my way home I hoped that I would get another job. But days passed by without Mr. Chin saying anything about my work. Later, I asked him. 'Now, what kind of work shall I do?' 'Well,' he said, 'did you tell me that people there are too bad? They gamble, drink, wrangle at the market and quarrel with each other, don't they? It is not too bad, however! It may be worse – there might be police informers among them.

"He stared at me and went on, 'You have forgotten what you learned in the books.' 'What have I forgotten?' I asked. He replied, 'You have forgotten this: our revolutionary books tell us to carry out propaganda work among the masses, to educate them, don't

they? And if the masses were all good people, who knew how to love one another and unite together, how to study and become progressive, how to love their country, would there be any need for propaganda and education, would there be any work to do? You might just go and see them for a while and leave. And if they were all as good as you and I, you wouldn't need to go at all!

"He stopped for a while and continued, 'You have also forgotten that they are our compatriots, our poor Vietnamese compatriots who have lost their Fatherland.'

"Completely disarmed, I kept quiet, and nodded, 'Yes'. 'Then, go back to that place and work' he said, 'Last time we had no definite plan. This time you should do better. Choose the worst, the most wicked family, and live with them. Try to make them better. If they come to like you, it will be all right.'

"A few minutes before I left, Mr. Chin handed me a small packet, wrapped in paper and carefully tied up and said, 'I give you a 'gospel'. Don't open it before you reach the place.'

"I told myself that it must have been a secret or precious document. I put it very carefully in my bag. When I arrived at the place I opened it. What a 'gospel'! It was only a book of verses about Tran Hung Dao.

"I went to Mukdahan, following his advice, I managed to find the worst family. I paid a visit to ask them to rent a room, paying one bath a month.

"Every morning, the husband went to market to sell pork. In the evening, after supper and drinking he went out for gambling, every day without exception. He lost all his money, the family got poorer and his wife, a shrewd woman, scolded and insulted him every time he came home, which drew him more and more out of family life. Not a day passed without a quarrel between them.

"The man's father was a drunkard. His duty was to look after the house and children, but the house was always dirty, the children cried all day long, suffering from want of care, mosquitoes and lice. All that made the mother angrier, and she did not refrain from insulting even her father-in-law. I tried in vain to persuade them to be more reasonable. One day, I bought some spirit and offered it to the old man. He drank and fell asleep. I then bathed the children. As they also slept after the bath, I put everything in the house in order and washed the dirty linen.

"Returning home, the wife found the house quite tidy, the father-in-law and the children sleeping soundly. She was pleased, and asked me 'Why is the home so clean today?' 'Well,' I said, 'your father-in-law cleaned everything and bathed the children, then they all went to sleep,' What on earth did you tell him to make him so good? she asked.

"The woman began to have more regard for her father-in-law. The next day she bought some spirit and offered it to him. The old man was quite surprised at the change of attitude of his daughter-in-law. As he talked to me about that, I said, 'Well, yesterday I cleaned the house and bathed the children. Seeing that she was pleased with it, I told her that it was you who did all that. I hope you will help me with the work next time.'

"So he began to help me to do odd jobs. Then later he did it himself, and I helped him. He became diligent. The house was well kept, the children well looked after. And no more quarrels between him and his daughter-in-law.

"As for the gambling husband, I advised him to learn how to read and write. He agreed. I began to teach him at the very hour when he usually went gambling. He was a very bad learner, but it was a good thing that he had stopped gambling, and consented to stay at home to study.

"His new behaviour made his wife love and esteem him again. Their family life was better and more harmonious than before. Then even the wife asked me to teach her reading and writing.

"The whole hamlet was surprised at the great change in this family reputed as the most quarrelsome in the place. From then on people began to like me, they came and befriended me, especially the young people. I used to go to the Tran Hung Dao temple when services were held. One day I said to them, "I see that you are still reading the old psalms here. In Sakol they have a new book of psalms, a very good one. I've brought a copy here."

"Then I took out my 'gospel' and read it to them. Thus I gradually became a friend to everybody in the hamlet. I regularly procured a copy of the *Than Atpaper* and read to them.

"Nearly two months later, Chin and Thuyen arrived at Mukdahan. Thau chin came to see me and asked, 'What's the situation like at present? How do you think it will be?' 'It's much better than before,' I answered. 'Is it? Have you ever gone and read the gospel at the temple?' he inquired. I smiled, 'Every day.' 'Can we now send our papers here?' he asked. 'Are there any young men who are ready to receive them?' 'Yes. They have asked for them,' I replied. I then gave him two addresses. He smiled joyfully, saying, 'All right. You are working better than I. I've got only one.'" (pps 158-164)



ho chi minh

• THE CHILLING 2 HR DOCUMENTARY ON  
THE SECRET WAR IN AMERICA •

## ALL POWER

TO THE  
PEOPLE!

THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY AND BEYOND



"The Truth!"  
- Phil Anselmi, CTA (1969)

"The 1960s as reported  
by a gifted radical journalist of color"  
- Erika Holmes, LA Times

"All Power to the People is a must see  
film for anyone interested in the actual  
history of the African American National  
Movement during the 60's and 70's..."  
- L. Williams, Working People's News

• WITH: MUMIA • GERONIMO • SHAKUR • PELTIER •

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Please make check or money order for \$29.95  
payable to: **ELECTRONIC NEWS GROUP •**  
P.O. Box 86208 • Los Angeles, CA 90086-0208

## BRC Condemns Israel

January 15, 2001

Contact:

*National Co-Chair, Bill Fletcher Jr., [bfletcher4@compuserve.com](mailto:bfletcher4@compuserve.com)*

*National Co-Chair, Manning Marable, [mm247@columbia.edu](mailto:mm247@columbia.edu)*

*National Co-Chair, Jennifer Hamer, [jenhamer@aol.com](mailto:jenhamer@aol.com)*

### STATEMENT ON U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES RESOLUTION 426

The Black Radical Congress condemns the House Resolution Concerning the Violence in the Middle East (H.Con. Res.426), enacted by the 106th Congress of the United States on Tuesday, October 24. This absurd resolution, which supports the behavior of the State of Israel without qualification or criticism and absolves the Israeli government of any responsibility in fomenting the current violence, totally ignores the reality of Israel's illegal, armed occupation of Palestinian lands. For as long as it persists, that occupation — which continues in defiance of United Nations Resolution 242 — constitutes a violent assault on the persons, property, national rights and human rights of the Palestinian people. To assign to the victims of an inherently provocative military occupation even primary, much less sole, responsibility for an episode of violence in which agents of the occupying force played a further provocative role, defies logic and history.

The Fifth Special Session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights declared that "Israeli occupation [of Palestinian lands] in itself constitutes a grave violation of the human rights of the Palestinian people," and that the deliberate and systematic killing of civilians and children by Israel constituted "a flagrant and grave violation of the right to life and a crime against humanity."

We commend the handful of Representatives who took the principled stand of voting against House Resolution 426. Out of a congress of 432 members, 365 voted "yes" on the Resolution — including 21 members of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC). Only 30 were opposed, including 11 CBC members. In particular, we are ashamed and outraged that so many members of the CBC could not discern through the propaganda veil the similarities to Black history: a state suppressing by violent means a people demanding fundamental democratic rights. Tanks against children in Palestine cannot but remind us of hoses turned on [New Afrikan] youth in Birmingham in our own struggle against white supremacy. The struggle of the Palestinian people to rid their homeland of an illegal foreign occupation recalls struggles over the centuries by many peoples, and the Palestinian fight is no less righteous than those that have gone before. Thus, we salute the 11 courageous members of the CBC who stood up to anti-Arab hysteria and did the right thing.

With its ill-conceived action, the U.S. Congress has contributed to perpetuating the problem instead of working to bring about a solution. The Black Radical Congress, representing people of African descent who support the Palestinian Intifada's goal of justice and equality, calls on the House of Representatives to rescind its resolution #426 and, instead, add its voice to the call of nations around the world for a just peace in the Middle East.

(1) Israel cease immediately its murderous suppression of Palestinian protests, including its assassinations of grassroots leaders in Palestinian communities;

(2) Israel end its occupation of Palestine by withdrawing its troops from the Occupied Territories, in compliance with UN Resolution 242, and by dismantling all Jewish settlements on Palestinian lands;

(3) the United States end all aid to the State of Israel, aid which enables Israeli defiance of UN mandates and world opinion;

(4) the United States support the initiation of a new peace process, a process that goes beyond the flawed Oslo accords, one that is supervised by the United Nations and founded on UN Resolution 242, a process that establishes the right of return for all Palestinian refugees and exiles, equal to the right of return enjoyed by members of the Jewish diaspora.

*Black Radical Congress, National Office • Columbia University Station • P.O. Box  
250791 • New York, NY 10025-1509 • Phone: (212) 969-0348 •  
blackradicalcongress@email.com • Web: <http://www.blackradicalcongress.org>*



# UNITING WOMEN IN STRUGGLE AND CELEBRATION

## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2001

**International Women's Day  
March and Rally**

**Building A Global Women's  
Movement thru Local Action**

**Thursday, March 8, 2001  
12:00 Noon**

**March Begins at Federal Plaza  
320 S. Dearborn (at Adams)**

**Impact of Globalization on Women,  
Violence Against Women,  
Sweatshops, Women's Reproductive  
Rights, Trafficking of Women and  
Girls, Immigrant Women's Rights**

For more information, please call 773.270.8786.

**Sisters Organizing for United  
Leadership (S.O.U.L.)**

**Celebration of Sisterhood**

Join us as we break 320 years' male-centered, top-down,  
centered group of young women who have come together to  
celebrate the power of sisterhood.

**Saturday, March 10, 2001  
11:00 am to 3:00 pm**

**Hoffhouse, 31 E. Balbo, Chicago**  
**Women and Girls Only**  
**Entrance Accepted at the Door**

Panel, Entertainment, Cultural Programs, Silent  
Auction, Door Prizes, Spoken Word, History of  
International Women's Day

Child Care provided. Please RSVP by 3/2/01 to Carol at  
773.476.3838, ext. 22 or Sonia at 773.735.4025.  
To donate clothes or prizes for the silent auction, please  
call 773.476.3838, ext. 35.



**CRSN News, Notes & Announcements • 3420 W.  
63rd St • Chicago IL 60629•773-737-8679 •  
crsn@aol.com • [www.afrikan.net/crossroad](http://www.afrikan.net/crossroad)**

**Congratulations** to Comrad-Brother *Sundiata Acoli*, his 1st grandbaby was born earlier this year; a pretty good birthday present for the brother, who turned 64 this past January. **Condolences** to *Demetri Marshall*, who lost his wife; to brother *Kedar*, who just lost his mother; and to the comrades, family & friends of BLA POW Teddy 'Jah' Heath, who passed away earlier this year after a battle with cancer.

**The Death Penalty  
is Political  
Help Support Zolo Azania!**



Zolo Agos Agos

*Zaka Juma is a political prisoner on death row in Indiana. He is a writer, artist and an activist, who at the time of his arrest in 1981, was actively involved in the New African movement. The fact that he defined himself as a New African and was committed to the self-determination of New African people directly influenced the way the police, the prosecution, and the Indiana courts denied him a fair trial and denied the flimsy of pretence to admit the death penalty.*

The campaign to prevent the state from executing him is at a critical stage. Judge Eickhoffberger has allowed hearings on the systematic exclusion of Black jurors from the jury pool at the time of Tate's 1956 trial and the fact that the prosecution knowingly put on false testimony at his original trial in 1942. Both issues raise fundamental constitutional issues. Please contact Tate's attorney for the hearings!

**Attend the evidentiary hearings!**  
**9 o'clock am, March 13th, 14th & 15th**  
 715 Calhoun St., Courtroom of Judge Scheibenberger  
 Fort Wayne, Indiana

For more info contact  
Solo's Campaign  
to People's Law Office  
80 N. Milwaukee Ave.  
Chicago, Illinois 60642  
773.334.3073

For more information please visit Zula's web site: <http://www.pacificplus.org/WorshipingwithZula.html>  
 Walter Rios, Zula Agency Associate, 84968, Indiana State Prison, PO Box 41, Michigan City, Indiana 46361-0041

Angola 3 Defendant Released!  
National Coalition to Free the Angola 3  
P.O. Box 22100

Sacramento, CA 95822

[www.prisonactivist.org/angola3](http://www.prisonactivist.org/angola3)

(Feb. 8, 2001)

— Robert King Wilkerson, one of the prisoners known as “the Angola 3,” was released from Louisiana State Penitentiary today after spending twenty-nine years in solitary confinement for a murder he did not commit.

Wilkerson, 57, was convicted of the 1973 murder of a fellow Angola prisoner despite the fact that another man confessed and was convicted of the murder. After two prisoners who testified against Wilkerson - the only evidence ever presented against him - retracted their testimony and revealed that it had been coerced by prison officials, the United States Court of Appeals in December issued a ruling that almost certainly would have led to his release.

In response, in what his supporters characterized as a face-saving move, the state offered Wilkerson a plea bargain, which he accepted. Six hours later, to the cheers of a throng of family and supporters, Wilkerson walked out of Angola a free man.

He has pledged to dedicate his life to winning freedom for Albert Woodfox and Herman Wallace, the other two members of the Angola 3, and for all of the other innocent men with whom he was incarcerated for the past three decades.

“I may be free of Angola, but Angola will never be free of me,” Wilkerson said.

Woodfox and Wallace have also been held in solitary confinement for 29 years. They were convicted of the 1972 murder of an Angola prison guard in a murder that they have unwaveringly claimed they did not commit. In recent years, new evidence of their innocence has surfaced. Even though the new evidence was suppressed at the time of their trials, they have thus far been unable to win justice from the courts.

Wilkerson, Woodfox, and Wallace have always believed that they were framed by prison officials because they organized the Angola chapter of the Black Panther Party. Prior to being placed in solitary confinement, the men led campaigns to end prisoner rape, improve race relations, and ameliorate conditions at the slave plantation-turned-prison.

All three men entered prison on unrelated robbery charges and quickly joined the prisoners' rights movement that was sweeping the country in the late 1960s. In the ensuing years, the men continued their activism from within solitary confinement by organizing hunger strikes, educating other prisoners, and by becoming highly-skilled jailhouse lawyers.

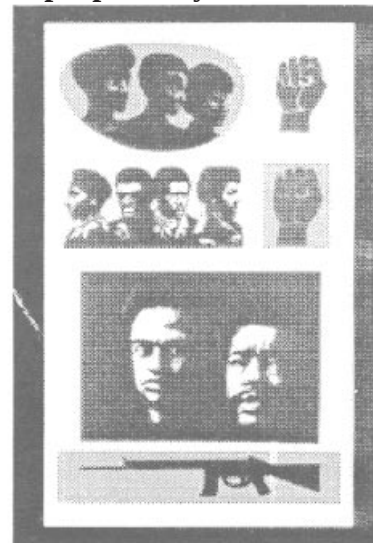
The American Civil Liberties Union is currently pursuing a federal lawsuit alleging that the men's 29-year stay in solitary confinement amounts to unconstitutional cruel and unusual punishment.

Now that he is free, Wilkerson plans to travel and speak out against the imprisonment of Woodfox and Wallace and the continuing growth of the American prison-industrial complex.

For more information contact Marina Nunez, National Coalition to Free the Angola 3, (510) 655-8770.

### **It's About Time 35th year Black Panther Party Reunion October 11-14 Washington DC**

**The It's About Time Committee is committed to hosting an inclusive, non-sectarian, memorable event that celebrates the founding principles, platform and programs of the Black Panther Party (BPP). We will commemorate the historic legacies of the BPP as well as the many sacrifices and constructive contributions that all of us made while serving the people body and soul.**



**for more info: It's About Time • PO Box 221100  
Sacramento CA 95822 • (916)455-0908  
[www.itsabouttime.com](http://www.itsabouttime.com)  
[itsabouttime3@juno.com](mailto:itsabouttime3@juno.com)**



SLAVERY IS NOT OVER YET



CRITICAL  
RESISTANCE



BEYOND THE PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX



MARCH 9-11. 2001. NYC

@COLUMBIA LAW SCHOOL/TO VOLUNTEER>jboogiebklyn@yahoo.com  
CRITICAL RESISTANCE/NORTHEAST REGIONAL ORGANIZING COMMITTEE  
PMB 4053, 341 LAFAYETTE STREET., NY, NY 10012. (212) 561-0912.  
CRITRESIST@AOL.COM / www.criticalresistance.org

ORGANIZE FOR FREEDOM AND LIBERATION

# Republic of New Afrika 33rd Annual NATION DAY

Building A National Strategy  
"Land & Independence, Honoring New Afrikan Freedom Fighters"



AMNESTY FOR OUR FREEDOM FIGHTERS!



March 30 - April 1, 2001

Invited Speakers  
Honorable Cynthia McKinney

Ceremonio Ji Jaga Pratt

Aleni Shukur

Dr. Derrick Marshall

Wanda Plummer

Wanda Plummer

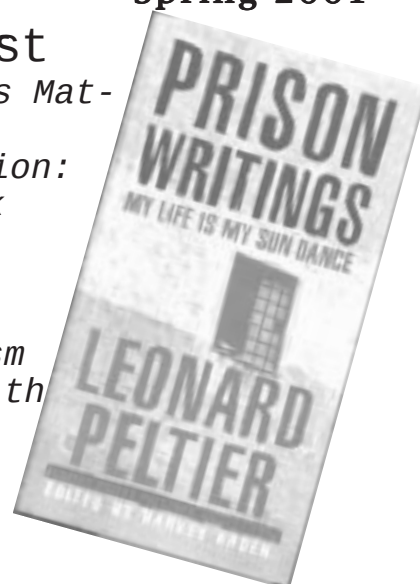
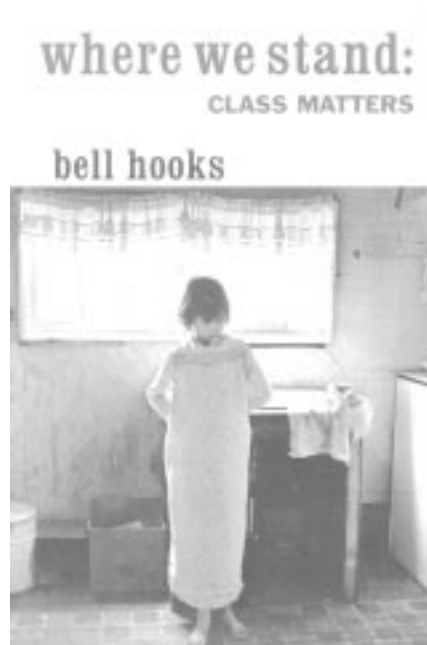
Wanda Plummer

Wanda Plummer

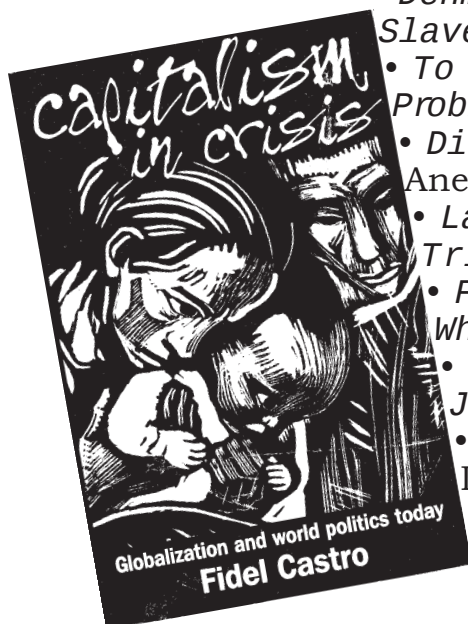
Interdenominational Center  
700 M. L. King Drive SW  
Atlanta, Ga

Admission: \$20.00 for 3 days  
For information call (404) 540-8824  
nationsday2001@aol.com

## Books of Interest



- *Where We Stand: Class Matters*, bell hooks
- *A Nation Within A Nation: Amiri Baraka and Black Power Politics*, Komozi Woodard
- *We Are Not What We Seem: Black Nationalism and Class Struggle In the American Century*, Rod Bush
- *Towards A Marxist Humanism*, Leszek Kolakowski
- *The Ethical Dimensions of Marxist Thought*, Cornel West
- *Notes On Dialectics*, C.L.R. James
- *When And Where I Entered*, Paula Giddings
- *In Struggle: SNCC and the Blackening of the 1960s*, Clayborne Carson
- *Woman's Evolution from Matriarchal Clan to Patriarchal Family*, E. Reed, Pathfinder, 1975
- *Guevara, Also Known as Che*, Paco Ignacio Taibo
- *Wounds of the Spirit: Black, White, Violence, and Resistance*, Ethnic West
- *Socialist Vision*, ed. Stephen Shalom
- *The Messenger: The Rise and Fall of Elijah Muhammad*, Kamau Farooq
- *I May Not Get There With You: The True Martin Luther King*, Michael Eric Dyson
- *Plan B*, Chester Himes
- *An Autobiography of Black Chicago*, Ossie Davis
- *Denmark Vesey: The Buried Story of America's First Slave Rebellion and the Man Who Led It*, David Robertson
- *To Awaken My Afflicted Brethren: David Walker and the Problem of Antebellum Slave Resistance*, Peter P. Hinks
- *Discovering America As It Is*, Valdas Anelauskas
- *Last Man Standing: The Tragedy and Triumph of Geronimo*, Jack Olsen
- *Forced Into Glory: Abraham Lincoln's White Deceit*, Lerone J. Bennett
- *On a Move: The Story of Mumia Abu-Jamal*, Terry Bisson
- *The Philadelphia Negro*, W.E.B. Dubois
- *Black Metropolis*, Drake & Cayton



## Book Review:

Jailbreak Out of History: the Re-Biography of Harriet Tubman by Butch Lee, Stoopsale Books, PO. Box 400171, Brooklyn NY 11240 • butchlee@stoopsale.com or erols.com/geocities.com/Area 51/Omega/5844/

Butch Lee writes, primarily, for revolutionary, working class, and progressive women. Not being a woman, but attempting to qualify for the adjectives, i think her works are some of the most important contributions to worldwide revolutionary theory & practice to come out of the u.s. empire today. Why? It's her voice - so rarely heard that it's hard to hear. Don't get me wrong, this is

entirely my problem. i'm used to hearing people who sound like me, and see things and experience things the way that i would. A woman is not like me. When you're used to reading stuff where you're the primary audience because the authors are - for the most part just like you - picking up something where you're not the first person that the author is talking to takes some getting used to!

"Patriarchal capitalism, which only wants Amazons to be exotic myths from exotic ages, have hidden Harriet Tubman in her own fame. They both trivialize and exceptionalize her. These are tools of oppressor culture..."

"... to trivialize Harriet Tubman the capitalist patriarchy pictures her as an idealized woman by their definition, who makes a life of helping others. Thus her deeds are squeezed into women's assigned maternal role as nurturer and rescuer of men (who then go on to do the important stuff). But Harriet wasn't repping Mother Teresa. She wasn't even any kind of civilian at all. She was a combatant, a guerrilla, a warrior carrying pistol and rifle, fighting in her people's long war for freedom. A war that rocked the foundations of Amerikkkan society and that has never gone away." (pps 2-3)



i've felt like this before - with Barbara Smith, bell hooks, Paula Giddins, Alice Walker, Barbara Neely (Be like Blanche!) - notice anything? Have you heard of these people? Have you read any of their work? There's a lot of people who have. The last time i've felt this feeling so profoundly was when i read the essays in BottomFish Blues: The Coming of Black Genocide. This is a good feeling, you oughta try it; if you want a new society, i think you'll like it.

"Harriet wasn't leading the weak. No, that's got it backwards. She was leading the strong. The great anti-slavery struggle was a movement of the best and the bravest, the most serious-minded folks of that day. And it was among these, the strong, that Harriet was a leader. She was an Amazon player in the political decisions that determined the ending of the slave system."

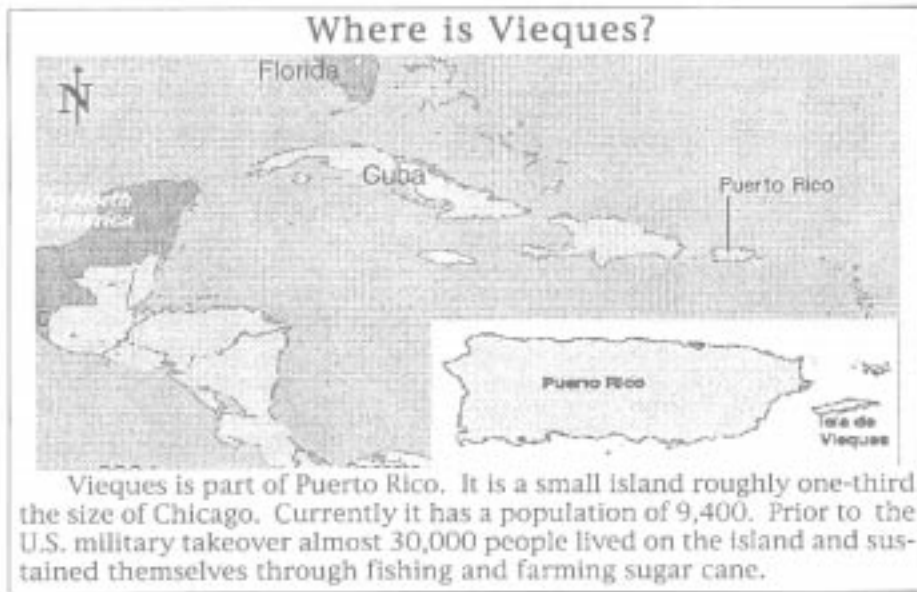
Jailbreak Out of History is a totally fresh look at the life and work of Harriet Tubman. It attempts to de-iconize her & make her a real person to be emulated, supported, and reproduced. What would it be like to have an army of Harriet Tubmans? It would be like having an army of Kuwasi Balagoons, or Sundiata Acolis, Atiba Shannas, or... Butch Lees. This is what We need & say We want, but We've got to learn to listen to all the voices with the capacities & potentials for this. The bottom line is that revolution without women STILL ain't happenin'!

Re-Build!  
hondo

## Did you know that the U.S. Navy Is bombing the Island of Vieques, Puerto Rico?

### Why is the U.S. military using Vieques, an island of Puerto Rico, for target practice?

Because they can. In 1898 the U.S. invaded and colonized Puerto Rico and still maintains control today. In 1938, when the military decided it needed a facility to test their bombs, it took over the island of Vieques. Contrary to the wishes of the Viequenses, the U.S. military expropriated the land and displaced thousands of Puerto Ricans. The Navy paid landowners as little as \$50 for 6 1/2 acres of land. Presently, the Navy controls 26,000 of the island's 33,000 acres. It occupies the island's most productive farming and fishing areas leaving the island's population squeezed between the ammunition depot and the training facility. Just imagine how you would feel if Vieques were your home!



### What is the U.S. military doing in Vieques?

The Navy has an ammunition storage depot and a weapons range on Vieques. The U.S. military conducts war games up to 200 days a year on the island. The U.S. Navy routinely drops bombs and practices different invasion scenarios using live ammunition. The rest of the year, it has the audacity to rent the facility out to NATO allies and Latin American countries to bomb the island and test their weapons. The Navy collects as much as \$80,000,000 per year in rental fees.

### What are the effects of the U.S. military presence on Vieques?

**Safety:** In April 1999 an errant bomb killed Puerto Rican citizen David Sanes and wounded four others. A year earlier National Guard war planes strafed a school bus and police car. According to the 1999 Governor of Puerto Rico's Special Commission on Vieques "the Navy cannot ensure the safety of the population of Vieques."

**Environment:** The bombing of Vieques is an extraordinary example of environmental destruction. Vieques was once covered with thick forests of palm trees. Now, according to University of Puerto Rico Professor Jose Seguinot, "the eastern tip of the island constitutes a region with more craters per kilometer than the moon." The training facility is littered with unexploded bombs and shrapnel. Chemical compounds, including napalm and uranium from the fired projectiles, pollute the land, water and air.

**Economy:** The Navy's expropriation of the land has caused an economic crisis that has forced the island's residents into poverty and dependency. The fishing industry has been destroyed. Twenty-six percent of the population is unemployed and seventy-two percent live below the poverty level.

**Health:** Vieques has the highest mortality rate of any municipality in Puerto Rico at 10.8 deaths per 1000 residents compared to 7.7 per 1000 residents for the rest of the island. The cancer rate on Vieques is 26.7% higher than the rest of Puerto Rico. Living in a "war zone" routinely disrupts people's daily routines. As teacher Javier Torres asks, "Do you know what it is like trying to teach with jet fighters and helicopters buzzing over us and bombs exploding in the distance?"

### What has been the response of the people of Vieques to the military?

The people of Vieques say "Not one more bomb." For decades they have petitioned, marched, blockaded the navy with their boats and occupied their stolen land. They want their land and their way of life back. Since 1999 the struggle has grown as organized protestors have occupied the most strategic points on Vieques and prevented the military from using the range. In Puerto Rico thousands of people

have marched demanding an end to the bombing. There is consensus among all sectors of the population, including the Catholic Church, labor unions and all three major political parties, that the navy should clean up and return the island.



Drawing by Vieques elementary school student

### What has been the Navy's response to the protests?

According to the Navy's Special Panel on Military Operations on Vieques, "insensitivity has been the hallmark of its approach." Nonetheless, President Clinton declared that the Navy will continue to use the island for military practice. In response Representative Luis Guterres stated "The administration has set the Navy on course to inflict further damage on the island." In 1983 the navy promised to protect the environment, create jobs and bomb less. The Navy never followed the agreement and in fact increased its bombing. Jesse Jackson recently visited the

island and told military leaders "You just don't get it. These people don't want you here. Colonialism is a sin anywhere."

### What is the role of the U.S. military?

The U.S. military is used to protect and expand U.S. interests and control around the world from eastern Europe to the Middle East to the Philippines. It doesn't protect people. It defends the ability of big corporations to make large profits.

### Why should I care about the struggle for Vieques?

The U.S. military has no right to destroy Vieques. Vieques is a modern example of U.S. colonialism and a people's fight for self-determination. We have a historic opportunity to right a wrong and side with justice. In doing so we contribute to building a movement to change a system that guarantees privileges to a few at the expense of the majority of the world's population.



Viequesenses take their land back

### What can I do?

You can call or write the President Bush, (The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., Washington D.C. 20500) or your congressional representative, talk to your friends and neighbors and contact Prairie Fire Organizing Committee [[www.prairie-fire.org](http://www.prairie-fire.org)] regarding upcoming events.



January, 2001

Dear friend of the Prison Phone Project,

We are writing to give you an update on the Prison Phone Project-what our work is about, and what direction our campaign will be taking in the New Year.

As you probably know, we are fighting the exorbitant costs of phone calls from prison. We are working to end this severe price-gouging which puts millions in the pockets of phone companies and the State. The high rates put an extra burden on families and friends of prisoners. We are demanding that the phone companies charge only reasonable rates, and that the State stop accepting commissions and signing bonuses as kickbacks from the phone companies.

**WE CAN CHANGE THE PRISON PHONE RATES** - We wish solutions were easy, but changing these conditions will only be possible with our hard work and hard-hitting, well-targeted campaigns. However, we are heartened by the successes that people like us have had in other states, and we have learned that there are a range of approaches to fighting this widespread problem:

- In *Louisiana*, the state Public Service Commission ordered a phone company to refund money for overcharging when people brought the issue to their attention.
- In *Missouri*, the State has announced that its next contract for prison phone systems will not include a commission or kick back for the state.
- In *Ohio*, the prison system has entered into a contract that will reduce the cost of phone calls by 15%.
- Right now, there are a number of lawsuits about prison phone prices filed around the country, and a national boycott of prison phones sponsored by CURE this summer has brought this issue into the news around the country.

**OUR STRATEGY FOR ILLINOIS** - We are committed to fighting this injustice at every prison in the state of Illinois, but we have decided to focus our energy on one target at a time. With each success, we will gain momentum, expertise, and publicity. As our first target, we have decided to tackle the single top-grossing source of phone profits in Illinois - Cook County Jail.

In 1999, Cook County signed a contract with Ameritech for exclusive phone service to the jail for 5 years. Out of this, Cook County gets a large commission from every collect call made by a prisoner (approximately 45%), and a \$200,000 bonus each year of the contract. Ameritech, by overcharging for calls made from jail, will bring in more than \$30 MILLION in profits over these five years. The state will gain about \$24 MILLION. With pressure and publicity, we hope to change the terms of the next contract.

**OUR STRATEGY FOR COOK COUNTY JAIL** - We are focusing on the Cook County Board of Commissioners, because they oversee phone contracts with the jail. Each one of us has an elected representative on the Cook County Board who is supposed to represent us. We will gather in groups, and visit our commissioners to let them know how we feel about the prison phone rates. We will emphasize what a hardship these phone calls create for us, and emphasize our disgust that our county government creates contracts to make 24 MILLION DOLLARS in blood money! We are getting endorsements from churches and other organizations in the district, saying that they oppose these practices. Such endorsements help convince a commissioner that there is broad support for changing the terms of these contracts. Once we have presented our position to all of the commissioners, we will take our demands to the Cook County Board as a whole.

Currently, the Prison Phone Project is organizing our membership by district, so that people from each district can prepare to meet with their commissioners. In the next few months, we will hold meetings on a district-by-district basis so that we can prepare by district. This involves getting endorsements, arming ourselves with the facts, and developing "talking points." Most of you have probably received a fact-sheet about your commissioner already. Next, you should look for a meeting which is especially targeted for your district, and plan to come!

**PRISON PHONE PROJECT**

POBox 578172, Chicago, IL 60657

773.235.0070 x6 • prisonphone@hotmail.com

**WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW!**

- Talk to others in your district, and sign people on to meet with your representative.
- Ask people to sign postcards supporting our demands to the Cook County Board.
- Ask churches and other organizations in your area to endorse the campaign.
- Think about places to have a meeting in your district, and let us know.
- Volunteer to be an organizer or contact person in your district.
- **MOST IMPORTANTLY, COME TO THE PREPARATION MEETING HELD FOR YOUR DISTRICT AND JOIN THE GROUP MEETING YOUR REPRESENTATIVE!!**

For anyone who needs help or support, please contact us.- We can figure out what district you are in, who your commissioner is, connect you with other members from your district, and bring you to the campaign! We can also answer questions and send you fact sheets and "endorsement packages" or other support materials.

The only way we can fight the scandalous prison phone contracts is by organizing, and putting a lot of pressure in the right places. We look forward to hearing from you, and seeing you at your district meeting. Again, please feel free to contact us if you would like any more information, and best wishes for the new year.

Sincerely,  
THE PRISON PHONE PROJECT

---

**Students Protest University of Chicago  
Law School Professor's Support for Red Squads**

Chicago, IL—Students at the University of Chicago held a rally on Friday, February 16th on the main U of C campus in Hyde Park to protest the decision of Judge Richard Posner, a senior lecturer at the U of C Law School, to overturn the consent decree which restricted political spying and the disruption of constitutionally protected activities by Chicago Police Department.

After eleven years of litigation, a June, 1984 jury verdict and a December, 1985 court decision held that the Chicago Police Subversive Activities Unit, also known as the "Red Squad", had unlawfully spied on, infiltrated and harassed political groups. On January 11<sup>th</sup> Judge Posner wrote the decision for the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals which overturned Federal Judge Ann Williams' 1999 ruling upholding the consent decree.

Speakers at the rally included Emile Schepers, program director for the Chicago Committee to Defend the Bill of Rights, and Melinda Power of the West Town Community Law Office and National Lawyers Guild.

Student groups at the University of Chicago supporting the rally include the Feminist Majority, the Anti-Sweatshop Coalition, Young Democratic Socialists, the Environmental Concerns Organization, Students Together Opposing Prisons, and Creative Progressive Action...

Judge Posner agreed to the city's request to modify the consent decree that had reined in the Chicago Police Department's notorious Red Squad. The student activists seek to remind Posner that the Red Squad spied on, infiltrated and harassed such "subversive" groups as the American Friends Service Committee, the United Methodist Church and the League of Women Voters. Thousands of paid and unpaid undercover agents were used to compile Police dossiers on hundreds of thousands of Chicago residents. The Red Squad collected information on 14,000 organizations and 258,000 individuals.

Judge Posner granted the Chicago Police permission to resume collecting political data on any community group or organization, and to declare, at their discretion, certain groups to be "extreme" and then place those groups under surveillance. The police are now also allowed to routinely film all protest demonstrations "for training purposes". The reasons given for asking the federal courts for these powers were patently false, as was pointed out by the original federal judge, Ann Williams, when she rejected the city's petition in 1999. It was shown in that trial that the police have ample power to do their investigations without these expanded powers. A police sergeant involved with anti-terrorism work gave a sworn deposition to the effect that at no time did the consent decree ever interfere with a legitimate police investigation, of hate crimes or anything else.

Posner professes distaste for the antiwar and civil rights demonstrations of the 1960s, which he has characterized as an "anarchic outburst." And he agrees with Supreme Court justice Antonin Scalia that "people who look to the courts for social reform do not take democracy completely seriously." However, the student activists charge that by allowing the police to infiltrate, spy on and otherwise disrupt social movements Posner himself fails to take democracy seriously.

**Formore information see:**<http://www.concentric.net/~Gutmanpc/>

**SSP 3420 W. 63rd Street Chicago IL 60629; 7737378679; crsn@aol.com**

## What was the Chicago Police Department's Red Squad?

For more than fifty years, the Chicago Police Department's Intelligence Division contained a unit which spied on, infiltrated and harassed lawful political, religious, and civic groups. After eleven years of litigation, a June, 1984 jury verdict and a December, 1985 court decision held that the Chicago Police Subversive Activities Unit, also known as the "Red Squad", had unlawfully: maintained an extensive political dossier on Lucy Montgomery (\$10,000 damage award); infiltrated the Alliance to End Repression and the Chicago Peace Council (\$20,625 damage award each); and attempted, in the words of the police, to "destroy the Spanish Action Committee of Chicago, its leaders, and its community influence" (\$60,000 damage award).

These decisions were the first in history holding political file-keeping or infiltration per se in violation of the First Amendment. 27 other plaintiffs were awarded an additional \$397,500 in out-of-court settlements. Due to these decisions the Chicago Police Dept. was forced to accept a consent decree which limited its power. The lawsuit revealed that the Subversive Activities Unit:

- \* Maintained "subversive" dossiers on more than 800 organizations including the United Methodist Church, League of Women Voters, PTA, Catholic Interracial Council, Planned Parenthood Association, Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, Jewish WarVeterans, NMCP, and National Council of Churches
- \* Collected information on 14,000 organizations and 258,000 individuals
- \* Used hundreds of infiltrators who became directly involved in the targeted groups, often as leaders, including a president of the Organization for a Better Austin, a director of the Men's Division of Operation PUSH, and a chairperson of a chapter of the Citizens Action Program
- \* Infiltrated the plaintiffs' legal team for this lawsuit
- \* Passed intelligence reports on lawful political activity to the CIA and FBI
- \* Passed 900 reports a month to the U.S. Civil Service Commission, potentially to be used in denying job applicants federal employment
- \* Burglarized organizational files, membership lists, correspondence and office equipment of the Chicago Peace Council, Fellowship of Reconciliation, and Latin American Defense Organization
- \* Illegally wiretapped homes of political activists
- \* Assisted a paramilitary terrorist group, the Legion of Justice, in physically attacking dissidents and burglarizing files
- \* Targeted peaceful civic organizations such as the Citizens Action Program, the Spanish Action Committee of Chicago (a Puerto Rican civil rights organization) and the National Lawyers Guild for neutralization.
- \* Planned "to negate or nullify sympathetic and political influence, financial and organizational support, and the operational activities" of the Alliance to End Repression, the Chicago coalition that brought the lawsuit which resulted in the consent decree.

(for more info see: Frank Donner, "Protectors of Privilege: Red Squads and Police Repression in Urban America, n University of California Press, 1990. pp. 90-154, 353-55, 357, 362-63.)

## Crime Watch



Armed Thugs come into court to pressure jury to find young New Afrikan guilty of cop killing despite thin, circumstantial evidence! When a lone New Afrikan juror refused to vote to convict, the mayor and neo-colonial police superintendent voiced their disappointment. Innocent until proven guilty?

These same folks were nowhere to be found during the trial of Gregory Becker (below, with lawyer) for the killing of Joseph Gould, a homeless man



who Becker had a run-in with while off-duty. The only reason Becker was brought in for the killing was someone wrote down his license plate number as he sped away from the confrontation. Gould lay dead in the street. Becker was convicted and received a 15-year sentence for 'armed violence' (not murder!), but is currently out on bond after his release on a technicality. The state is currently preparing to re-try his case.

Another courtroom where the armed thugs are nowhere to be seen is the trial of Joseph Medzianowski for drug-dealing and other crimes while he used his uniform, badge & gun to facilitate felonious behavior.

It's clear that Chicago's colonial masters and henchmen have a selective sense of justice and civic duty!



**New Afrikan Creed**

1. i believe in the spirituality, humanity and genius of [New Afrikan] people, and in our new pursuit of these values.
2. i believe in the family and the community, and in the community as a family, and i will work to make this concept live.
3. i believe in the community as more important than the individual.
4. i believe in constant struggle for freedom, to end oppression and build a better world. i believe in collective struggle; in fashioning victory in concert with my brothers and sisters.
5. i believe that the fundamental reason our oppression continues is that We, as a people, lack the power to control our lives.
6. i believe that fundamental way to gain that power, and end oppression, is to build a sovereign [New Afrikan] nation.
7. i believe that all the land in America, upon which We have lived for a long time, which We have worked and built upon, and which We have fought to stay on, is land that belongs to us as a people.
8. i believe in the Malcolm X Doctrine: that We must organize upon this land, and hold a plebiscite, to tell the world by a vote that We are free and our land independent, and that, after the vote, We must stand ready to defend ourselves, establishing the nation beyond contradiction.
9. Therefore, i pledge to struggle without cease, until We have won sovereignty. i pledge to struggle without fail until We have built a better condition than the world has yet known.
10. i will give my life, if that is necessary; i will give my time, my mind, my strength, and my wealth because this **IS** necessary.
11. i will follow my chosen leaders and help them.
12. i will love my brothers and sisters as myself.
13. i will steal nothing from a brother or sister, cheat no brother or sister, misuse no brother or sister, inform on no brother or sister, and spread no gossip.
14. i will keep myself clean in body, dress and speech, knowing that i am a light set on a hill, a true representative of what We are building.
15. i will be patient and uplifting with the deaf, dumb and blind, and i will seek by word and deed to heal the [New Afrikan] family, to bring into the Movement and into the Community mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters left by the wayside.

**Now**, freely and of my own will, i pledge this **Creed**, for the sake of freedom for my people and a better world, on pain of disgrace and banishment if i prove false. For, i am no longer deaf, dumb or blind. i am, by inspiration of the ancestors and grace of the Creator — a **New Afrikan**.