

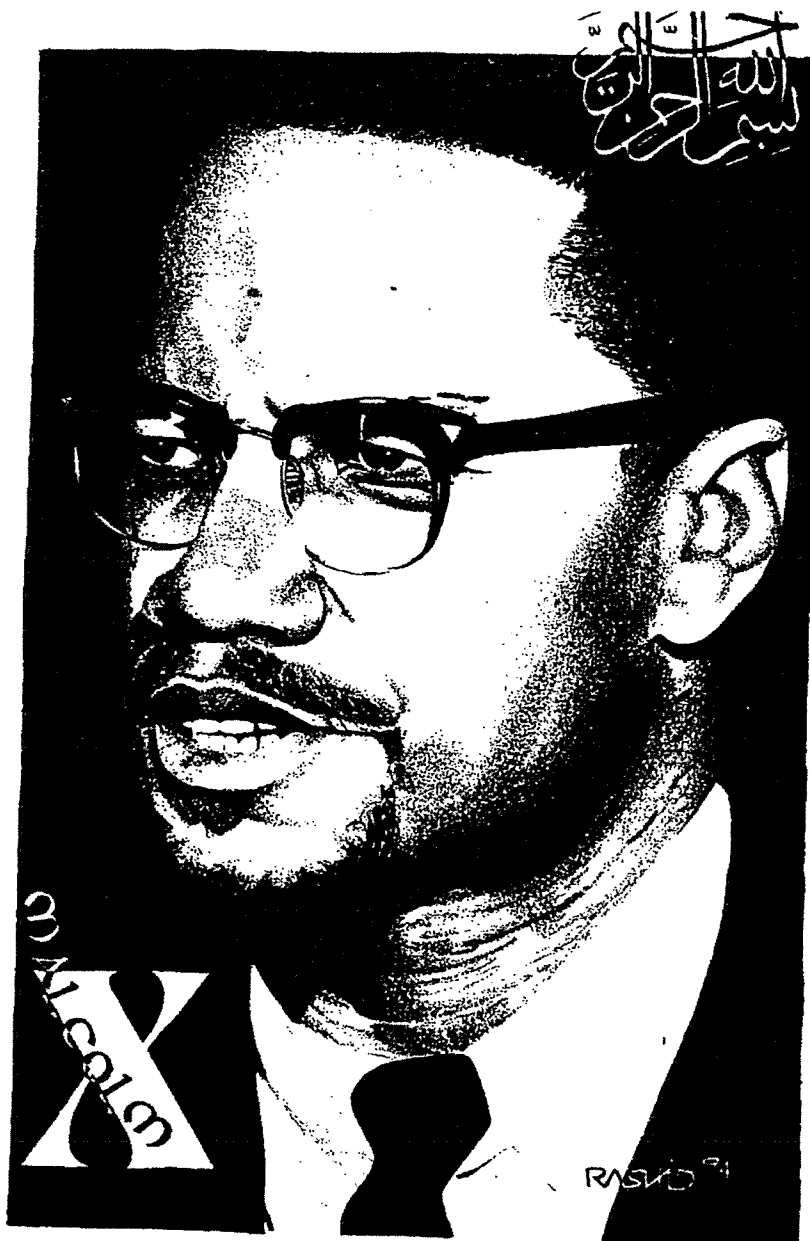
FROM THE "BELLY OF THE BEAST"

Prison Writings of Kevin "Rashid" Johnson



**Minister of Defense New Afrikan Black Panther Party –
Prison Chapter (NABPP-PC)**

We who are inside the "Belly of the Beast," may perish inside these razor-wire fences and stone walls, but not without first illuminating the path forward for our sisters and brothers, our sons and daughters. If we can offer nothing but our dying breath, it will be to say: "DARE TO STRUGGLE AND DARE TO WIN!" – Kevin "Rashid" Johnson



"We're not Americans, we're Africans who happen to be in America. We were kidnapped and brought here against our will from Africa. We didn't land on Plymouth Rock - that rock landed on us."

-- Malcolm X



Rising Sun Press

2010

INTRODUCTION

By Tom Big Warrior

October 25, 2010

We are all a product of our times, and Kevin "Rashid" Johnson is no exception. The times that shaped him were the years of reactionary Republican rule, religious fundamentalism, corporate downsizing, the "Crack Epidemic," gang violence, unending imperialist wars, "War on the Poor" and deepening poverty in the ghettos. He came on the scene poor and Black, and also armed and dangerous. It isn't surprising he landed in prison at a very young age – so many of his generation have.

What is surprising is that lacking any formal education he blossomed into a revolutionary intellectual in prison, comparable to the best this epoch has produced – in just a few years – and that while confined and kept isolated from other prisoners, he has emerged as a leader looked to by other prisoners around the country – and his influence is growing! His genius is reflected in his writings and in his artwork, but most of all, it is reflected in the ideological and political line of the Party he is building.

The New Afrikan Black Panther Party – Prison Chapter (NABPP-PC) is a continuation of the original Black Panther Party (BPP) founded by Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale in 1966. Almost 40 years later, Rashid has assumed the role played by Huey as Minister of Defense and the chief theoretician of the Panthers. He has not merely copied but developed Huey's theories, applying them to today's conditions. In many ways, these conditions have intensified in the past four decades – and so has the Panthers' ideological and political line.

The NABPP-PC was founded in 2005 as a faction within the prison-based Black Brigade. I and my organization, the prison-based Red Heart Warriors' Society (RHWS), had the honor of sponsoring the formation of the Black Brigade. When we started the Red Hearts ten years ago, we had no idea where it would go. We started by grappling with the question: "How does one walk the Red Road as a Warrior of the 21st Century?"

We understood that Amerika is a "Nation of Prisons and a Prison of Nations." The largest of these is the Nation of New Afrikans in Amerika. It is unlike other nations. It was formed under conditions of slavery and "Jim Crow" segregation far from its people's ancestral homeland. Its people are the sons and daughters of many Afrikan nations, but hardly any could tell you which ones. The only country they know is the one they cannot really assimilate into – White America.

Like the imprisoned Native nations, Black people in Amerika are outsiders not welcomed as the feast, treated with contempt and indifference in a country that boasts of its being a democratic "Melting Pot." Like us they have been stripped of their culture and languages and given instead the culture of the oppressed, the marginalized and outcast. We cannot go back – we can only make the past serve the future...a future we shall make collectively!

The United Panther Movement (UPM) is not an offshoot of any of the alphabet soup of leftist political parties and organizations. It is not funded or directed by anyone. It was formed in isolated prison cells by prisoners deemed unsuitable to mix with the general prison population. It was created on scraps of paper smuggled between cells or cellblocks and kited between prisons and prison systems. It is an organically growing revolutionary movement of the oppressed. Its hallmark is not acts of desperate violence but patient struggle, self-education and organization. It is a serious movement – as serious as VC coming through the wire!

The Movement is now ready to burst upon the outside world, mindful of Mao's dictum that "A Single Spark Can Start a Prairie Fire!" In particular Rashid is reaching out to other oppressed young people like himself, calling on them to remold themselves as proletarian revolutionaries – as Panthers.

This is a collection of his writings published in the prison newsletters sponsored by Rising Sun Press. They are arranged chronologically in the order they were published. There is more, but this is a good sampling, and others will be republished elsewhere. It will serve to acquaint you with the man and the movement. There are many other voices being raised in this movement, all worth listening to – more importantly, worth adding your voice to!

Prisoners cannot change the world – by themselves!

Dare to Struggle Dare to Win!

All Power to the People!

Panther Love!

The New Afrikan Black Panther Party - Prison Chapter: Our Line

By Kevin "Rashid" Johnson, Defense Minister, NABPP-PC¹

Reprinted from Right On #1, Fall '05

Introduction

In this paper, we outline the political and ideological line of the New Afrikan Black Panther Party - Prison Chapter. The NABPP-PC, an all-Afrikan people's revolutionary party, proposes through its work and example to spread its line to the general NABPP on the outside, and to all revolutionary-minded New Afrikans, and ultimately to expand the Party into a broad international vanguard of all Afrikan people the world over. We are in full accord with the analysis set forward in "The Panther and the Elephant," which this paper intends to further illuminate.

The Vanguard Party

As a vehicle for coordinating masses of people for action, organization is necessary. Planning is necessary, and so is assigning roles and tasks to those most capable of performing them, and holding them accountable for performing their assigned tasks completely and to the best of their abilities. Coordinating the activities of the active forces of the New Afrikan Nation in America towards the achievement of full democracy and national liberation requires a genuine vanguard party based among the masses. No revolutionary or genuine national independence struggle has ever succeeded without a party to organize and coordinate the energy of the struggling people into focused result-oriented action.

"From the People to the People" is the Mass Line - the opposite of top-down organizations. The NABPP-PC practices and promotes the Mass Line. In applying this, the Party workers must go among the People, and, by living with them and struggling alongside them, experience and learn their needs, ideas and interests. The Party then - applying the principles of Historical and Dialectical Materialism - returns the People's unorganized ideas to them in a comprehensive form, coordinating their collective actions, resources and abilities around their needs and thereby aids and organizes them in solving their own problems.

As a revolutionary vanguard party, the NABPP-PC realizes that strategic or tactical inflexibility runs counter to the organic nature of a mass-based leading party. Such a party must operate within the limits of existing concrete conditions as they develop and change, and it cannot attempt to drive people to stick stubbornly and mechanically to methods of struggle which actual conditions do not support or allow. It has been by failing to exercise flexibility and initiative and practicing "commandism" that many would-be revolutionary movements in the past have failed and have given vanguard parties a bad name.

Our strategic and tactical decision-making process is that of Democratic Centralism, which does not contradict applying the Mass Line. Nor does it go against maintaining flexibility and initiative and being creative in our political work. Democratic Centralism is the method by which our Party determines, through intense internal discussion, debate, and then majority agreement, the Party's overall strategic and tactical line. The basic principle is to raise criticisms and ideas up and to implement down. Once a strategy and tactical approach is decided, the lower bodies of the Party can then exercise a great deal of initiative and creativity in applying the line in practice, adapting to the particularities of local conditions.

At the heart of any democratic process is the need and right to be informed of all issues relevant to making accurate analysis and correct decisions. Therefore, Party cadre must never stop learning, (and teaching the People), and must never hold stubbornly to views not supported by the ongoing experience of the Party. Our sources of learning are our people's life experience, books, and especially our practice. We must never stop learning.

Essential to democratic practice is criticism and self-criticism. All Party members must feel free to criticize other Party members and leaders, line and practice within the context of internal Democratic Centralism. The Party must also be open to listening to the criticisms of the masses. If what is unproductive or harmful cannot be criticized, then how can what is productive and good be determined?

The Party will exercise greater or lesser degrees of centralism, depending upon the freedom and necessity of the struggle in a given time and place. For example, security considerations may restrict the ability to hold discussions and force the leadership to assume more authoritative methods at times, restricting certain

¹ NABPP-PC was initially called the New Afrikan Black Panther Party Prison Chapter. This was changed to New Afrikan Black Panther Party Prison Chapter after the first issue to avoid confusion with the narrow nationalist New Black Panther Party (NBPP). Reprints of Right On! #1 were subsequently amended.

information, to protect the cadre or the Party as a whole. But overall, our goal is to promote democracy and collective decision making. In all cases, we must adjust and adapt new, varied and creative tactics and approaches to maintain the initiative in our work and avoid becoming predictable and thus susceptible to being outmaneuvered and defeated.

Classes and Class Struggle

On the point of classes and class struggle, we adopt the analysis presented in "The Panther and the Elephant," we also add in relation to the Lumpen Proletariat that the NABPP-PC, as its name implies, is an autonomous chapter of the future NABPP centered within the prisons. The vast majority of prisoners in the U.S. are proletarians, but many come from a lumpen background, and all are influenced by this perspective in the context of prison culture. The lumpen class² overlaps with the proletariat, (drifts in and out of employment), but maintains an outlook that opposes a proletarian class outlook. The lumpen's confused and backward values stem from its position of preying upon others and general ignorance, which can be corrected through education and struggle, and through guided practice in a mass organization like the Black Brigade³. A minimum condition for the acceptance of lumpen class militants into the Party must be a period of re-education and practice inside a Party-affiliated mass organization like the Black Brigade, where we can observe their practice, and they can remold their class outlook and develop into a full-time, all-the-way revolutionary.

Contradictions in Proletarian Versus Lumpen Perspectives

Many people when presented with the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist idea that that only the proletariat can lead in making all-the-way revolutionary class struggle question why this is, and why some other class, (without changing its class perspective), cannot lead such a struggle. One reason is because the proletariat is the only class that has no real stake in preserving the class relations of the capitalist system, but has everything to gain in taking control over the social wealth it has itself created by its labor and the tools it uses to create it. Another reason is that the proletariat, (in contrast to the lumpen), has the conditioning in patient work, social unity and cooperation necessary to wage the protracted class struggle required to abolish all exploitation and oppression. Basically, it is our social practice that determines how we think and not how we think that determines our social practice.

The proletariat has a strong sense of family commitment and unity and a sense of respect for and commitment to the community. These values grow out of the routine of going to work each day in the social environment of the workplace to provide for the needs of one's family, and not only maintaining employment but also engaging in domestic labor in the home, rearing children, and taking part in the social life of the community. This requires and instills stability, discipline and responsibility as well as cooperation with one's peers.

The class conscious worker can be of two sorts, the militant and the revolutionary. The militant worker takes the sense of commitment beyond the family into the workplace and will stand up to the bosses for workers' rights, even to the extent of jeopardizing one's employment, freedom and safety by participating in strikes and job actions. The revolutionary worker takes the sense of commitment even farther and challenges the oppressive social order to change the social relations for all and put an end to class exploitation and oppression once and for all. The revolutionary is inspired by a great love for the people and sense of duty to the masses and to future generations.

The revolutionary worker doesn't swagger or boast and has little sense of ego. He or she is serious-minded and self-disciplined. The revolutionary knows that like a strike, the revolutionary struggle must be a united mass struggle, and that it will take quite some time to succeed. Each contribution is important, and the end result is to benefit the overall society. In contrast to the proletarian's practice and outlook, the lumpen schemes and preys upon others to acquire survival needs and personal wealth, which renders him or her indifferent to the effects visited upon others and society as a whole.

The lumpen mentality mirrors – on a smaller scale and with less sophistication – that of the big gangsters (the monopoly capitalists), and amounts to a ruthless drive for immediate self-gratification, power, control and "respect," (even though their lifestyle is anything but respectable), through deception, corruption, violence and intimidation of others. These tendencies are what lies behind certain lumpen aspiring to be perceived as "crazy" and unpredictably violent.

Translated into the revolutionary movement, the lumpen tendency has some thinking that militant swaggering, posturing, and "talking shit," is acceptable behavior for revolutionaries, which is very wrong and demonstrates political immaturity and lack of a true proletarian outlook. Such posturing leads to actions of a reactionary,

² The lumpen are not a class in the fullest sense but part of the lower strata of the proletariat. "Lumpen" means "broken." The lumpen-proletariat are those who exist by illegal means or hustle.

³ Now the New Afrikan Service Organization (NASO).

adventurist and provocateur nature, that invites enemy attack that the movement is unprepared to deal with and alienates the masses. Comrade Sundiata Acoli, (a member of the old BPP and BLA), observed that just such lumpen tendencies contributed to the downfall of the old BPP and the general Black Liberation Movement in America. (See Sundiata Acoli, "A Brief History of the Black Panther Party and its place in the Black Liberation Movement," (1985), which is posted on the internet and was recently reprinted in the Summer Issue of Leviathan, the newsletter of the Black Brigade).

Also, because they are conditioned to seek immediate and short term benefits in their daily practice, the lumpen generally lack the resolve to pursue and stick with tasks that require hard work and patience. We in the NABPP-PC feel that a major factor that led to the old BPP's destruction was the failure to raise many of the Party's members' world view to that of the revolutionary proletariat and allowing the Party and its leadership to become saturated in lumpen ideology, values and practice.

The motives behind revolutionary violence are fundamentally different from the reactionary violence of the lumpen, who model their violence after that of the big gangsters. Revolutionary violence is rooted in the collective resistance of the masses organized against the violence of the big gangster bourgeoisie system of repression and exploitation. History is made by the collective masses, with the genuine revolutionary vanguard serving to raise their consciousness and organize their force into collective revolutionary struggle. Correct thinking is the catalyst, just as intelligence draws order out of chaos – out of the chaos of noise – music, and out of chaos of images and color – art.

Raising the Lumpen Outlook to a Revolutionary Proletarian Outlook

To serve in the capacity of a truly revolutionary vanguard, the Party must consist of committed, disciplined people who have the outlook of truly revolutionary workers; people who are committed to work every day in a patient and disciplined way until the conditions for a revolutionary seizure of power by the masses arise. Without remolding their class outlook, the lumpen will pursue ultra-leftist militant acts of exhibitionism and spew forth "Off the Pig!" rhetoric, and when this provokes repression from the Establishment, they will flip-flop to right opportunism, turn rat and become enemy agents, or run for cover. Lacking correct analysis, self-discipline and patience, they will vacillate left to right, and they will confuse one stage of the struggle for another and try to skip the stages that require hard work and tenacity.

These elements disdain to apply the Mass Line, ignore the Democratic Centralism of the Party, fear Criticism and Self-Criticism and lean towards individualism and "commandism," indulging in personal attacks and attempts at intimidation and coercion of other Party members and the masses through threats and force. Their unremolded lumpen ideology is a corrosive to building Party unity and maintaining discipline, and it makes them easy prey for recruitment by the enemy. The lumpen are capable of "the most heroic deeds and the most exalted sacrifices, or of the basest banditry and dirtiest corruption."

A large part of our work in NABPP-PC is to properly educate and re-orient the lumpen through ideological and political training and bringing as many of them who are capable of "the most heroic deeds and the most exalted sacrifices" into the active work of the struggle as possible, and thereby expand the Party while struggling against opportunism, both of the "left" and right varieties. We know that in this work, the enemy will unceasingly attempt to infiltrate its agents of repression and seek out the weak links among us to turn them into their snitches and agent-provocateurs, and we must be vigilant to guard against this, without becoming paranoid. In the struggle, "ideological and political line determines everything," and we must rely on ideological and political training and commitment to practicing the Mass Line, Criticism and Self-Criticism and the Democratic Centralist method of determining what should be done and how to do it.

We realize that the lumpen are our brothers and sisters, and we do not desire to make war on them, rather we look upon their wrong ideas and lack of understanding as loads upon their backs, and we endeavor to help them cast them off. "Cure the sickness to save the patient," is our goal. However, we are not naive idealists, and we realize that there are those who lack the moral fiber and will to change or courage for the struggle. Some people have no integrity or loyalty, and those who, after struggle, persist in wrong ways must be purged from the ranks of the people's movement.

Before someone is recruited into the Party, they must be tested and prove themselves in the people's mass organizations, like the Black Brigade. They must show proof of both good character and advanced understanding of what needs to be done. Words are cheap. Practice is the measure of commitment and the way consciousness develops.

Our goal is to be more than a prison organization. The struggle of our New Afrikan and Afrikan people worldwide cries out for vanguard leadership. With the Black proletariat concentrated in America and Europe and our

peasantry concentrated in Afrika, we have an internationalist duty to provide revolutionary proletarian leadership and to set an inspiring example. Our struggle against imperialism and neo-colonialism is a class struggle of international dimensions. We have much to learn and much to do. We must become good at learning and resolute in struggle.

ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE!

The Panther and the Elephant

Reprinted from Right On #1, Fall '05



The Elephant is large and powerful and is unsurpassed in direct confrontation. The Panther is agile and stealthy and is unsurpassed in indirect confrontation. The Elephant relies on his size, thick skin and tusks to meet his enemy head on, while the Panther blends into the night, exercises patience, and employs the art of surprise and ambushes his prey. His intelligence and cunning are greater weapons than his formidable fangs and claws.

In the "Art of War," the ancient Chinese sage, Sun Tzu, proposes that two types of forces and maneuvers are called for. He called these *CHENG* and *CH'I*. These would be regular and special forces and direct and indirect maneuvers. The purpose of *CHENG* forces is to engage the enemy, and the purpose of the *CH'I* forces is to defeat the enemy.

In advancing the cause of Black Liberation, both types of forces, *CHENG* and *CH'I*, are needed. Or to put it another way, both a vanguard and a mass form of organization is needed. The mass form of organization is based upon programmatic unity, and includes people of various political, spiritual and cultural orientations. In the case of the Black Brigade, its basis of unity is service to the Nation of Africans in America. The vanguard form of organization is based upon a higher level of unity, application of the Science of Revolution, which is Historical and Dialectical Materialism, and commitment to being a full time revolutionary.

Classes and Class Struggle

The Proletariat is the class that must sell its labor power to the capitalist class, submitting to exploitation, to survive. In other words, it is the working class, the class of "wage slaves." This is the only class with nothing to lose but its "chains," and thus is the only class capable of leading the United Front Against Imperialism to make all the way revolution and advance society to communism or classless society. Other classes have more or less of a stake in the capitalist division of society, even though they are compelled to resist and to revolt against the Monopoly Capitalist Class dictatorship and the imperialist system to some degree.

In this historical period, the most advanced application of the Science of Revolution is Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, but one need not be a communist with a capital "C" to be part of the Vanguard force. However, one must be a revolutionary nationalist, and as Mao put it: "Revolutionary Nationalism is applied Proletarian Internationalism." There is a difference between the Black Nationalist Movement and the Proletarian Internationalist or Communist Movement, but the two are inexorably intertwined.

The Nation of Africans in America is divided into classes, though overwhelmingly it is a Proletarian Nation. There is also a Black Bourgeoisie (Bush-wa-zee), which is divided into National and Comprador sections, the latter being those who objectively serve the ruling class of the white colonial-settler regime. Clarence Thomas and Condoleezza Rice are examples of this grouping. The National Bourgeoisie are more independent, and those who got rich through sports or the entertainment industry are examples.

The Petty Bourgeoisie is the strata in the middle between the rich class and the working class. It includes the professionals, (like doctors, educators and lawyers), small business owners and middle and lower management. Though they may actually make less money than the upper strata of the industrial proletariat, their relationship to production is less direct, and they are more likely to reflect the outlook of the employing class and to nurture hopes of becoming big bourgeois themselves.

Some sections, such as the intellectuals, or the semi-proletarian artisans, can be won to become relatively firm allies of the revolutionary proletariat. On the other hand, sections of the middle class are the historic base of fascism. The upper strata of the industrial proletariat, or "Labor Aristocracy," were the vanguard of the unionization movement, but due to the super profits engendered by imperialism and the exploitation of the Third World countries, the monopoly capitalists were able to bribe this strata with a higher standard of living and middle class aspirations. Their class consciousness was dulled and the white workers particularly were rallied around U.S. national chauvinism and anti-communism.

Now, as a result of increased globalization, this strata has been greatly reduced by the outsourcing of their jobs overseas by the multi-national corporations and the downsizing of their U.S. workforce. This has greatly reduced the power of the industrial workers and the number of unionized workers overall. The largest section of the Black proletarians are part of the great mass of non-organized workers who have no unions, (and in most case no health coverage), and live from paycheck to paycheck barely getting by. Linked to them are their dependents and the de-classed poor, welfare and disability recipients, pensioners, the marginally employed, and the jobless and homeless.

There is also the Lumpen Proletariat. "Lumpen" literally means "broken." The Lumpen make their living by illegal means; as petty gangsters, drug dealers, pimps, con-artists and thieves. They reflect the mentality of the big gangsters and monopoly capitalists and feed parasitically off the people, but some have the potential to be won to a proletarian outlook and become revolutionaries. Unlike the big parasites, they do not enjoy immunity from prosecution for their crimes and often end up spending most of their lives in prison.

The Black Nation in America

Black people were forged into a nation in America under conditions of slavery and segregation. Stripped of their national cultures, languages and identities under slavery, they were amalgamated into a new nation based upon their common African origin and features. Four hundred years of oppression and exploitation shaped the national identity and culture of this nation. Originally centered in the "Black Belt," or "Cotton Belt," of the Deep South, where most Blacks and many poor whites were reduced to a condition of being made share-cropping peasants after the overthrow of slavery. KKK terror and Jim Crow segregation laws denied them a political voice, even though they were the majority, and the region was made an internal colony of the US with Third World-like conditions.

Mechanization of cotton picking and the demand for industrial workers in the industrial centers, particularly during WWI and WWII, encouraged a massive exodus of Black people from the South to the North and the West. Huge urban ghettos sprang up and become new internal colonies of the U.S. From Harlem to Compton, these centers defined the faster-paced urbanized culture of Black America in the 20th Century. New music and worldliness replaced the rural life style and outlook.

The national liberation struggles of the people in the former European colonies in Africa and throughout the Third World were echoed in the civil rights and Black Nationalist movements within the U.S. Revolutionary Black Nationalist groups, like the Black Panther Party, sprang up to challenge both racism and imperialism and begin the struggle for socialist revolution. The high tide of struggle in the U.S. in the 60s and 70s coincided with the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in People's China and the Vietnam War and numerous other national liberation struggles and attempts to establish socialism in Africa, Latin America and Asia.

The US emerged victorious from the Cold War, and the ebb in struggle internationally, (with the right-wing coup in China following Mao's death, the collapse of the former Soviet Union and Socialist Bloc and the defeat of socialist forces in Africa and elsewhere), was mirrored by a decline in the Black Liberation Struggle here too. But the emergence of the New World Order and sole-superpower domination only served to intensify exploitation and the aggressive and predatory nature of U.S. imperialism.

Neither the Neo-Liberals nor the Neo-Conservatives saw a need to continue the pattern of Cold War Liberalism and concessions to common people. The decline of the Left was more than matched by the rise of the extreme Right. Backing both Islamic and Judeo-Christian religious fundamentalism, the stage was set for the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq and increased pressure on all the oil-producing countries by U.S.-Anglo imperialism. Under the cover of the "War on Terror," major attacks on the democratic rights and protections of the American people have been made and steps have been taken to build a more efficient police state.

Since the end of the Cold War, a massive increase in the number of people incarcerated in the U.S. has taken place, (mostly Black and other people of color), so that America now accounts for nearly half the imprisoned people in the world. Affirmative action programs have been cut back and social welfare programs have been dramatically slashed. The ruling class is aggressively waging class struggle against the working class and poor while the Neo-Cons are aggressively suppressing the Neo-Liberals, characterizing them as the "Radical Left."

The white, capitalist, colonial-settler state was built upon genocide and dispossession of the indigenous nations and the kidnapping, enslavement and exploitation of the African people, and this oppression continues to this day. Legal desegregation has not altered the condition of super-exploitation of Black people in America or in Africa. Civil Rights is still an issue. White Racism is still an issue. The right to self-determination and national liberation is still an issue. The Nation of Africans living in America has the right, and the necessity, to struggle for solutions to its problems as a nation. This includes the right to define and govern its own territory and to transform the internal colonies of exploitation into base areas of cultural, social and political revolution.

At the same time, it also includes the right to fight for full civil rights for all within the U.S., including prisoners and those convicted of felonies and the so-called "illegal aliens." We say: "NO INCARCERATION WITHOUT REPRESENTATION!" and: "AMEND THE 13TH AMENDMENT TO ABOLISH SLAVERY FOR ALL!" And we say: "IF YOU ARE HERE, YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO VOTE AND TO RESPECT OF YOUR CIVIL RIGHTS!" It is the white-settler colonial regime that are the real "illegal aliens." Every bit of this land was stolen from the indigenous nations. These indigenous nations have historically been the main ally of the African people in America. Long before there was an "Underground Railroad," the path to freedom led to the Indian nations. Many of the so-called "illegal aliens" are in fact Native Americans from south of the border drawn by the whites. The Red-Black Alliance is key to national liberation within the U.S.

Pan-Africanism

Just as African people were formed into a new nation in America, so too African people internationally have

been formed into a new type of nation by conditions of colonialism, slavery and racism. This Pan-African movement and nationalism links the primarily proletarian New Afrikans of America and Europe with the primarily peasant Africans of Africa. The African Diaspora created new conditions for both building All African Unity and advancing World Socialist Revolution.

The anti-colonial wars of national liberation following WWII, led to numerous attempts to build African socialism in several countries. Undermined by CIA and European-hatched assassinations, coups and tribal conflicts, these were rolled back, and a destabilized condition of neo-colonial domination prevails in Africa. Dire poverty and conditions exist across Africa. Famine, AIDS, alcohol and drug addiction, warlordism and religious and inter-tribal strife weigh heavily on the African peoples. Rich in natural resources, Africa remains the poorest place on Earth, while everywhere people of African descent are faced with racial discrimination.

Building Pan-African Unity is vital to the uplifting of the African people everywhere and particularly here in the U.S. Conversely, supporting the Black Liberation Movement here is vital to continuing the struggle for liberation and socialism in Africa. This calls for new forms of organization and struggle as well as the renewal of previous forms. The Black Panther Party needs to be renewed not only in the U.S. but internationally and the Black Brigade needs to be built both nationally and internationally.

In supporting and building ties with Africa, it is important to include elements of the national bourgeoisie and all classes in contradiction with imperialism and neocolonialism, uniting all who can be united. The principles of New Democratic Revolution need to be applied.

New Democratic Revolution

National liberation involves a two stage revolutionary process to advance to the building socialism. First you have to liberate the country from imperialist neo-colonial domination and their agents and address the question of: "LAND TO THE TILLERS." Since the emergence of Monopoly Capitalism and modern imperialism, the bourgeoisie has proven incapable of leading democratic revolution against remnants of the old feudal order, and this duty has fallen to the proletariat and its vanguard.

The national bourgeoisie can be a vacillating ally in this struggle, in which the peasantry is the main force, but the ideological and political leadership must come from the proletariat. Even within the internal colonies of the US, the principles of New Democratic Revolution have some relevance, particularly in overturning the feudal remnant of the 13th Amendment, which perpetuates the status of slave for those convicted of crimes, and the unfinished civil rights struggle.

In the 3rd World, the New Democratic Revolution is advanced by means of People's War, surrounding the cities from the countryside and creating people's power on a national level before liberating the urban centers and consolidating state power. The people's war in Nepal is a classic example of this strategy.

Strategy and Tactics

The Black Brigade is needed to confront and engage the colonial-settler power structure frontally creating institutions of people's power locally. The basic unit of people's power must be neighborhood councils composed of the veteran fighters and respected elders of the community. We can then organize programs for the people's security and social welfare under these committees.

Private security firms can be created and licensed to operate under contract to the neighborhood councils, supported by voluntary neighborhood security patrols. These can present offenders with the option of having their cases decided by the people's council instead of being turned over to the municipal authorities. The council can levy fines, order that restitution be paid and/or mandate community service. It can also banish offenders from the community.

The security officers would be armed, equipped and trained to handle this role in a professional manner. Besides dealing with the problem of crime in the neighborhood, the people's security force can also monitor and collect evidence on police complicity and corruption. Over time, it can displace the police as the force most relied upon by the people to handle their security issues, empowering the people's councils to function as a parallel government.

Besides addressing the issue of the people's security, the neighborhood councils would also initiate and coordinate all manner of social service and survival programs taking up the slack of government cut backs and responsibility to see that the hungry are fed, the homeless are given shelter, the sick and injured are provided with medical care and health services and in general that the needs of the people are addressed. In addition, the councils would work to promote the political economy of the neighborhoods by assisting in the creation of worker's coops and consumer's coops and in the countryside grower's coops.

An important link to be forged is between the urban oppressed communities and the rural communities where most of the prisons are located. Regular transportation and housing for families visiting prisoners needs to be established. As part of the drive to extend voter rights to prisoners, uniting with the progressive forces in the communities where the prisons are located is important. These include family members who have relocated to be close to their loved ones.

Our general strategy must be to: "TRANSFORM THE IRON HOUSES OF OPPRESSION INTO SCHOOLS OF LIBERATION, AND TO BUILD THE OPPRESSED COMMUNITIES INTO BASE AREAS OF CULTURAL, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL REVOLUTION." There is a dialectical relationship between these tasks. The more we are able to succeed at one aspect the better we will do at the other.

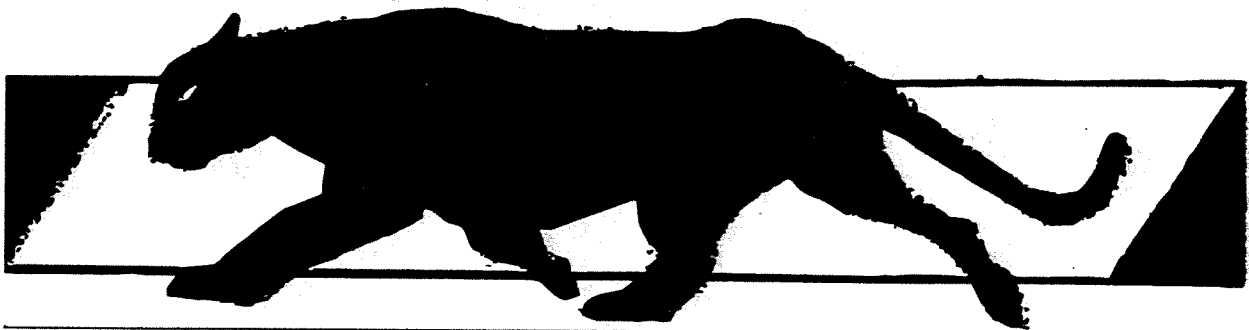
The vanguard force has the principle task of providing political education to the masses and making them conscious. They must represent the broad and revolutionary viewpoint of the proletariat. They must also act as shock troops and jump in as needed when a highly motivated and disciplined force is called for.

Conclusion

While a revolutionary situation does not at present exist in the U.S., as Sun Tzu pointed out: "BATTLES AND WARS ARE WON OR LOST BEFORE THEY ARE FOUGHT!" The Panther and the Elephant, the *CH'I* and *CHEN* warriors and forces of the people, must be organized now so that when a revolutionary situation does present itself, the people will not be unprepared.

"IT IS RIGHT TO REBEL!" against tyranny and national oppression, and we must "SEIZE THE TIME!" and "DARE TO STRUGGLE AND DARE TO WIN!" Many fine comrades and heroes of the people have sacrificed themselves to illuminate the path forward. We have our duty to the future generations.

ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE!



Katrina, Capitalism and Continuing Black Crisis in Amerika

by Kevin "Rashid" Johnson, Minister of Defense New Black Panther Party - Prison Chapter

Reprinted from Leviathan, Fall '05

Hurricane Katrina brought the twisted illogic of capitalist imperialism to the surface; exposing that corporate profits take precedence over environmental and human needs. Disregard for and exploitation of the poor and people of color by the government at every level, the big corporations and even the wealthy minority "Uncle Toms" in their response to (and lack of response in) this crisis, and the suffering of the poor Black and white people left to fend for themselves, played out in front of a shocked nation and world.

On August 28, 2005, the National Weather Service warned that vast structural damage would be inflicted to the Gulf Coast region by Hurricane Katrina, and that many homes and other buildings would be destroyed. Three days earlier, the Governor of Louisiana gave emergency warnings. But no provisions were made to evacuate the poor of New Orleans. When the hurricane hit on August 29th, these people suffered devastation that those in power knew would occur. They knew that the levies could not withstand a level three, let alone a level five, storm, and that the city, being below sea level, would be flooded.

Typically, the masses of poor people in Amerika are ignored by the media and hidden from sight. If they are shown it is to heap blame and ridicule on them for being poor, such as in 1996, when Bill Clinton was pushing

through the welfare "reform" laws. Welfare recipients were portrayed as driving Cadillacs and exploiting the system. But the flooding of New Orleans showed the extent of real poverty in Amerika. In fact the main reason so many poor Black wimyn and children died in New Orleans was because they had no cars or money to flee the city on their own.

In a pretence of offering the unevacuated citizens "hurricane relief," the city government told them to go to the Convention Center and the Superdome. Thousands of mostly Black residents walked or waded to these locations from miles away expecting to find help, food, water and medical care. What they found instead was cruel indifference, unpreparedness and chaos. Surrounded by disease contaminated water, there was nothing to drink and no food as they were jammed into these darkened arenas without sanitary toilet facilities.

When the desperate, abandoned people began to obtain basic necessities from abandoned stores, (certainly doing no worse than the Cadillac-stealing police), orders came down to "shoot to kill looters." The mainstream media blatantly described whites and police as "finding" food and water from abandoned stores and Blacks as "looting" these things. Martial law was declared, and the actual relief and rescue operations being organized by the people were shut down by armed mercenaries (hired by FEMA) and the military and police.

Brigadier General Gary Jones, commander of the Louisiana National Guard Joint Task Force, compared the operation to the U.S. invasion of Somalia in 1993. According to reports aired on Democracy Now!, private mercenaries admitted to shooting up a group of young Blacks on a New Orleans overpass. The media reported it as a group of "snipers" killed by the military who they had fired upon. A Miami Herald article on July 5, 1987, reported that former FEMA director Louis Guiffida's deputy, John Brinkerhoff, handled the martial law planning of FEMA, and that it was similar to a plan Guiffida had developed earlier at the Army War College to confine "at least 21 million American negroes [in] assembly centers or relocation camps." FEMA has built and staffs such camps spread out all over the U.S., and it is now part of the Department of Homeland Security.

From the moment FEMA appeared on the scene in New Orleans, it made matters worse not better. FEMA cut civilian communication lines to the outside, flew in the infamous Blackwater mercenaries from Iraq, blocked and delayed assistance coming from other cities and countries (including Cuba) from reaching the hurricane victims, and it channeled massive amounts of funding donated to help the Katrina victims to right-wing Christian groups like Pat Robertson's Operation Second Blessing, to mention just a few of the outrageous things it did.

While Robertson was getting windfall subsidy from FEMA, he used his TV ministry show to degrade the Black hurricane victims and depicted items left behind in the city as "voodoo" paraphernalia. Operation Second Blessing had previously been exposed for exploiting Black people in the Congo, where it turned out that Robertson invested the funds collected for disaster relief in a Congo diamond mine. Robertson was exonerated by former VA Attorney General Mark Earley, whom Robertson had gifted with a \$30,000 campaign contribution. Previously, Robertson pulled a similar scam in Liberia, where he invested in a gold mine.

I could go on and on about the dirt that has come to the surface already regarding this disaster and the lies told by the government, many of which will be exposed in this issue. The lesson we must learn from all this is the need to organize ourselves to deal with our security and welfare issues and to create people's power in our communities. The government won't help us, and we shouldn't waste our time trying to get it to. It's not our government! It belongs to the rich white ruling class of Amerika who got rich by exploiting us. We need to rely on ourselves.

ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE!

From Benton Harbor, Michigan to Clichy-sous-Bois, France: The International Oppression of Youth of Color

By Kevin "Rashid" Johnson, Minister of Defense NABPP-PC

Reprinted from Right On #2, Winter '05-'06

As a policy of atomizing the Nation of Afrikans in Amerika, the U.S. ruling class has cultivated a sense of isolation from the rest of the Afrikan world. The reason behind this policy is to keep us from seeing ourselves as part of Afrika's people around the world, a common people suffering common conditions of oppression and exploitation at the hands of a single system of imperialism.

Close scrutiny of the recent revolt of Afrikan and Arab youth in Clichy-sous-Bois, and across Europe, demonstrates the reality of a common condition of oppression in Europe and the U.S. for people of color. The conditions that sparked the youth uprising in France mirror those that we face in Amerika, an example being those that sparked the 2002 Black uprising in Benton Harbor, Michigan.

Benton Harbor is a small, Black, working class town with a history of racist oppression by the local police and judicial system. Police chases, beatings, shootings and false arrests in Benton Harbor had taken their toll on the Black people of Benton Harbor, where Black children and youth were regularly killed by the police at a rate 14 to 28 percent higher than the national average.

Benton Harbor had gone from a town with a vibrant economy to one of dire poverty in just a few short decades. This was affected by its relationship with the predominantly white town of Saint Joseph's across the river. Most of the property in Benton Harbor is owned by residents of St. Joseph's, and most of the major job and revenue generating opportunities were taken out of Benton Harbor and moved to St. Joseph's, (the hospital, courthouse, water department, etc.), leaving the Black town without jobs or basic infrastructure and its people owning nothing.

The police department, (located in St. Joseph's), is 99% white. The jail is situated so that it is the first building you see upon crossing the river from Benton Harbor into St. Joseph's.

The routine brutality suffered by the Black residents of Benton Harbor psychologically conditioned them to fear police stops. It was the death of a fleeing young Black motorcyclist named Terrance Shum, during a police chase, that ignited the uprising in Benton Harbor. Eyewitnesses reported seeing one police car driving closely behind Shum and bumping into his bike's tires, while another police car drove him off the road and into an abandoned house. The next day, police attempted to break up a vigil being held by the youth's family, which incited anger and the ensuing two days and nights of street battles with the police.

Much like Benton Harbor, and the U.S. inner cities in general, Clichy-sous-Bois, France, (where the youth uprising that spread to over 400 European cities and towns in less than two weeks began), is a small working class ghetto of single family public housing units isolated from France's metropolitan areas. The ghetto's residents are mostly Afrikans and Arabs lacking regular jobs and forced to pay high rents, which leaves them in a cycle of poverty. The town doesn't even have a cinema or library.

For Clichy's youth, police brutality, harassment and humiliation are routine. Many abuses occur during the frequent raids of homes as police claim to be looking for "illegal immigrant" squatters to deport. Carloads of police suddenly swarm young men out walking, under the pretext of making "identity checks." As in Benton Harbor, Clichy's youth have a reasonable fear of police stops. The French Interior Minister, Nicolas Sarkozy, publicly described the residents of these ethnic working class ghettos as "scum" and "filth" to be "scoured with industrial cleaner."

The uprising, which began on October 27, 2005, was sparked by the deaths of two teenage boys resulting from their fleeing from and being chased by the police. The two teens, Buena Traore and Zyed Benna, fled from police who chased them into an electric power substation, where they were electrocuted to death. Weary of the repression by the French police, who were in Sarkozy's words, "waging a war without mercy" against the "riffraff" of the public housing ghettos, the Afrikan and Arab youth rose up.

The youth revolt took the form of burning thousands of cars, including police cars, and spread to other cities where poor Afrikan and Arab people are concentrated and oppressed, including in Germany and Belgium. These disempowered youth, like those in the Amerikan cities, have endured the humiliation of poverty, racism, and official oppression all their young lives. But inside there is a burning desire for liberation.

The mainstream imperialist media, as in all cases of such uprisings of the oppressed, have attempted to conceal, misrepresent and minimize the real causes of the uprising and vilify the participants. The same demonizations were used to discredit the urban Black uprisings that swept across the U.S. from 1964 to 1968 in response to poverty, racism and police brutality. In the wake of the 1960s rebellions, multitudes of government-funded studies were conducted which demonized our people and proposed to respond with a war against youth of color under which the prison-industrial complex was born as a mechanism to "restore order" and deplete and contain the Black Nation within Amerika. As H.R. Haldeman, Nixon's top aide, noted in 1969 in his now published diary: "Nixon emphasized that you have to face the fact that the problem is really the blacks. The key is to devise a system that recognizes this while not appearing to."

However, white riots against Blacks in Amerika have never been depicted as depraved in the same way that Black riots against racist oppression and systematic — indeed government sanctioned — discrimination, repression and abuse have been. In fact, government and police officials often incited and participated in these riots in which Black communities were overrun by rampaging mobs of armed whites who indiscriminately beat

up, maimed and killed innocent Black men, wimyn and children, such as the 1863 NYC Draft Riot, the New York Riot of 1900, the 26 white riots that occurred during the "Red Summer" of 1919, and the innumerable lynchings that took place throughout the 19th and most of the 20th Centuries in Amerika.

Because the oppression and super exploitation of people of color is the norm in the imperialist countries, and the youth are particularly targeted for police repression, we must recognize the need for intercommunal (multi-ethnic) and Pan-Afrikan unity to resist this oppression and to struggle to put an end to the imperialist (monopoly capitalist) system and replace it with People's Power.

The New Afrikan Black Panther Party-Prison Chapter (NABPP-PC) supports the righteous rebellion of the Afrikan and Arab youth in Europe against their oppression, and we call upon them to do more than vent their anger. We call upon them to form mass organizations to serve their people and defend their communities and to take up the principles of "Pantherism" to form a vanguard party to lead their struggle and link it to that of the New Afrikan and oppressed people of color around the world.

We understand that monopoly capitalism, which thrives upon the super exploitation of Third World people, both inside the imperialist countries and the neo-colonial countries of the Third World, cannot meet the needs or provide for the security of our people. We must do this ourselves by creating community-based People's Power. We must organize ourselves and link our struggles with those of the advanced detachments of the international proletariat IN ALL COUNTRIES to form a revolutionary United Front Against Imperialism.

ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE!

What is Fascism?

By Comrade Rashid

Reprinted from Right On #2, Winter '05-'06

"The Fascist State organizes the nation, but it leaves sufficient scope to individuals; it has *limited useless or harmful liberties* and has preserved those that are essential. It cannot be the individual who decides in this matter, but only the State." – Benito Mussolini, 1922

"Fascism is capitalism in decline." – V.I. Lenin

In the late 19th Century, banking and industrial capital merged to form finance capital and ushered in the Age of Proletarian Revolution. V.I. Lenin pointed this out in *Imperialism the Highest Stage of Capitalism*. However, Lenin by no means meant that Imperialism (monopoly capitalism) would not itself continue to evolve until it was overthrown. In fact, he emphasized that we must define imperialism "as capitalism in transition, or, more precisely as moribund capitalism," or capitalism in decay, capitalism rotten ripe for revolution.

He emphasized that this decay was by no means negated by the rapidity of its growth, that the accelerated growth rate was symptomatic of its rottenness and parasitism. And that this decay manifested itself most profoundly in the countries richest in capital. Since Lenin's time, we have seen the evolution of Fascism as an even more virulent form of imperialism.

Lenin also recognized that in whatever stage of its evolution, capitalism balances two approaches to maintaining its power and control over the working masses 1.) The Carrot – bribery and liberal concessions, and 2.) The Stick – violence and repression. In Lenin's words:

"The receipt of high monopoly profits by the capitalists in one of the numerous branches of industry, in one of the numerous countries, etc., makes it economically possible for them to bribe certain sections of the workers, and for a time a fairly considerable minority of them, and win them to the side of the bourgeoisie of a given industry or given nation against all the others. The intensification of antagonisms between imperialist nations for the division of the world increases this striving. And so there is created that bond between imperialism and opportunism, which revealed itself first and most clearly in England, owing to the fact that certain features of imperialist development were observable there much earlier than in other countries."

Fascism emerged in Italy and spread to Germany and other countries which did not have the colonial base to extract super-profits from to compete with the Western Democracies in the employment of bribery for the workers. Thus they employed "the stick." Ironically, Fascism, founded in 1919 by Benito Mussolini, should come from the name of a bundle of sticks. The Italian name of the movement, *fascismo*, is derived from *fascio*, "bundle, (political) group," but also refers to the movement's emblem, the *fascis*, a bundle of rods (sticks) bound around a projecting axe-head that was carried before an ancient Roman magistrate by an attendant as a symbol of authority and power. In Mussolini's words:

"...For Fascism, the growth of empire, that is to say the expansion of the nation, is an essential manifestation of vitality, and its opposite a sign of decadence. Peoples which are rising, or rising again after a period of decadence, are always imperialist; and renunciation is a sign of decay and of death. Fascism is the doctrine best adapted to represent the tendencies and the aspirations of a people, like the people of Italy, who are rising again after many centuries of abasement and foreign servitude. But empire demands discipline, the coordination of all forces and a deeply felt sense of duty and sacrifice: this fact explains many aspects of the practical working of the regime, the character of many forces in the State, and the necessarily severe measures which must be taken against those who would oppose this spontaneous and inevitable movement of Italy in the twentieth century, and would oppose it by recalling the outworn ideology of the nineteenth century - repudiated wheresoever there has been the courage to undertake great experiments of social and political transformation; for never before has the nation stood more in need of authority, of direction and order. If every age has its own characteristic doctrine, there are a thousand signs which point to Fascism as the characteristic doctrine of our time. For if a doctrine must be a living thing, this is proved by the fact that Fascism has created a living faith; and that this faith is very powerful in the minds of men is demonstrated by those who have suffered and died for it."

Dr. Lawrence Britt has examined the fascist regimes of Hitler (Germany), Mussolini (Italy), Franco (Spain), Suharto (Indonesia) and several Latin American regimes. Britt found 14 defining characteristics common to each:

1. **Powerful and Continuing Nationalism** – Fascist regimes tend to make constant use of patriotic mottos, slogans, symbols, songs, and other paraphernalia. Flags are seen everywhere, as are flag symbols on clothing and in public displays.
2. **Disdain for the Recognition of Human Rights** – Because of fear of enemies and the need for security, the people in fascist regimes are persuaded that human rights can be ignored in certain cases because of "need." The people tend to look the other way or even approve of torture, summary executions, assassinations, long incarcerations of prisoners, etc.
3. **Identification of Enemies/Scapegoats as a Unifying Cause** – The people are rallied into a unifying patriotic frenzy over the need to eliminate a perceived common threat or foe: racial, ethnic or religious minorities; liberals; communists; socialists, terrorists, etc.
4. **Supremacy of the Military** – Even when there are widespread domestic problems, the military is given a disproportionate amount of government funding, and the domestic agenda is neglected. Soldiers and military service are glamorized.
5. **Rampant Sexism** – The governments of fascist nations tend to be almost exclusively male-dominated. Under fascist regimes, traditional gender roles are made more rigid. Divorce, abortion and homosexuality are suppressed and the state is represented as the ultimate guardian of the family institution.
6. **Controlled Mass Media** – Sometimes the media is directly controlled by the government, but in other cases, the media is indirectly controlled by government regulation, or sympathetic media spokespeople and executives. Censorship, especially in war time, is very common.
7. **Obsession with National Security** – Fear is used as a motivational tool by the government over the masses.
8. **Religion and Government are Intertwined** - Governments in fascist nations tend to use the most common religion in the nation as a tool to manipulate public opinion. Religious rhetoric and terminology is common from government leaders, even when the major tenets of the religion are diametrically opposed to the government's policies or actions.
9. **Corporate Power is Protected** – The industrial and business aristocracy of a fascist nation often are the ones who put the government leaders into power, creating a mutually beneficial business/government relationship and power elite.

10. *Labor Power is Suppressed* — Because the organizing power of labor is the only real threat to a fascist government, labor unions are either eliminated entirely, or are severely suppressed.

11. *Disdain for Intellectuals and the Arts* — Fascist nations tend to promote and tolerate open hostility to higher education, and academia. It is not uncommon for professors and other academics to be censored or even arrested. Free expression in the arts and letters is openly attacked.

12. *Obsession with Crime and Punishment* — Under fascist regimes, the police are given almost limitless power to enforce laws. The people are often willing to overlook police abuses and even forego civil liberties in the name of patriotism. There is often a national police force with virtually unlimited power in fascist nations.

13. *Rampant Cronyism and Corruption* — Fascist regimes almost always are governed by groups of friends and associates who appoint each other to government positions and use governmental power and authority to protect their friends from accountability. It is not uncommon in fascist regimes for national resources and even treasures to be appropriated or even outright stolen by government leaders.

14. *Fraudulent Elections* — Sometimes elections in fascist nations are a complete sham. Other times elections are manipulated by smear campaigns against or even assassination of opposition candidates, use of legislation to control voting numbers or political district boundaries, and manipulation of the media. Fascist nations also typically use their judiciaries to manipulate or control elections.

— From Liberty Forum

George Jackson pointed out in his essay *"Classes at War: Mobilization and Contra-Mobilization,"* That at home Amerika's liberal fascist mode took on the form of liberal democracy in the "New Deal," and after WWII as Cold War liberalism — which applied neo-colonialism in the 3rd World (namely replacing European colonial administrations with overtly fascist native ones under the pretense of promoting "democracy.") While at home, Cold War liberalism combined intense anti-Communist propaganda and McCarthyism with liberal concessions promoting opportunism in the trade unions and the Civil Rights movement.

The super profits generated from super exploitation in the 3rd World financed the bribery of a section of the industrial working class to the point where some unionized workers were actually being paid more than the value of their labor. This served the dual purpose of both winning the unions away from the "reds" and "radicals" who had built them and enabling the large multinational-based corporations to squeeze out and absorb the smaller national-based companies, who could not pay the higher wages and compete, allowing the monopoly capitalists to consolidate their control over the U.S. economy.

WWII had pulled the U.S. economy out of the "Great Depression." As Richard B. DuBoff pointed out in *Accumulation and Power: An Economic History of the United States*:

"Only the second world war ended the Great Depression. "Rearmament" commenced in 1940, and over the next year, before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, military spending jumped more than six-fold, to 11 percent of the GNP. It rose to 42 percent of the GNP in 1943-44. Under this mighty stimulus, real national product increased 65 percent from 1940 through 1944, industrial production by 90 percent... What had really happened between 1929 and 1933 is that the institutions of the nineteenth-century free market growth broke down, beyond repair... The tumultuous passage from the depression of the 1930s to the total economic mobilization of the 1940s was the watershed in twentieth century capitalism. After that nothing in the macroeconomy would ever be the same; there was no going back to the days of a pure, practically unregulated capitalist economic order."

The merger of corporate and state interests was a reality. As Fred J. Borch, the president of G.E., put it in a speech before the Economic Club of New York on November 9, 1964: "Overriding both the common and cross-purposes of business and government, there is a broader pattern — a consensus if you will, where public and private interest come together, cooperate, interact, and become *the national interest*." Mussolini would have applauded loudly.

Let us return again to Lenin, for it is impossible to really grasp what fascism is without firmly grasping what imperialism as the highest stage of capitalism is all about, for it is the economic essence that drives fascism and determines the form it will take:

"We have seen that in its economic essence imperialism is monopoly capitalism. This in itself determines its place in history, for monopoly that grows out of the soil of free competition, and precisely out of free competition, is the transition from the capitalist system to a higher social-economic order. We must take

special note of the four principal types of monopoly, or principal manifestations of monopoly capitalism, which are characteristic of the epoch we are examining.

"Firstly, monopoly arose out of a very high stage of development of the concentration of production. This refers to the monopolist capitalist combines, cartels, syndicates and trusts. We have seen the important part these play in present-day economic life. At the beginning of the twentieth century, monopolies had acquired complete supremacy in the advanced countries, and although the first steps towards the formation of the cartels were first taken by countries enjoying the protection of high tariffs (Germany, America), Great Britain, with her system of free trade, revealed the same basic phenomenon, only a little later, namely, the birth of monopoly out of the concentration of production.

"Secondly, monopolies have stimulated the seizure of the most important sources of raw materials, especially for the basic and most highly cartelized industries in capitalist society: the coal and iron industries. The monopoly of the most important sources of raw materials has enormously increased the power of big capital, and has sharpened the antagonism between cartelized and non-cartelized industry.

"Thirdly, monopoly has sprung from the banks. The banks have developed from humble middlemen enterprises into the monopolists of finance capital. Some three to five of the biggest banks in each of the foremost capitalist countries have achieved the "personal union" of industrial and bank capital, and have concentrated in their hands the control of thousands upon thousands of millions which form the greater part of the capital and income of entire countries. A financial oligarchy, which throws a close network of dependence relationships over all the economic and political institutions of present-day bourgeois society without exception – such is the most striking manifestation of this monopoly.

"Fourthly, monopoly has grown out of colonial policy. To the numerous "old" motives of colonial policy, finance capital has added the struggle for the sources of raw materials, for the export of capital, for "spheres of influence," i.e., for spheres for profitable deals, concessions, monopolist profits and so on, and finally, for economic territory in general. When the colonies of the European powers in Africa, for instance, comprised only one-tenth of that territory (as was the case in 1876), colonial policy was able to develop by methods other than those of monopoly—by the "free grabbing" of territories, so to speak. But when nine-tenths of Africa had been seized (by 1900), when the whole world had been divided up, there was inevitably ushered in the era of monopoly ownership of colonies and, consequently, of particularly intense struggle for the division and the redivision of the world.

"The extent to which monopolist capital has intensified all the contradictions of capitalism is generally known. It is sufficient to mention the high cost of living and the tyranny of the cartels. This intensification of contradictions constitutes the most powerful driving force of the transitional period of history, which began from the time of the final victory of world finance capital.

"Monopolies, oligarchy, the striving for domination instead of striving for liberty, the exploitation of an increasing number of small or weak nations by a handful of the richest or most powerful nations—all these have given birth to those distinctive characteristics of imperialism which compel us to define it as parasitic or decaying capitalism. More and more prominently there emerges, as one of the tendencies of imperialism, the creation of the "rentier state," the usurer state, in which the bourgeoisie to an ever increasing degree lives on the proceeds of capital exports and by "clipping coupons." It would be a mistake to believe that this tendency to decay precludes the rapid growth of capitalism. It does not. In the epoch of imperialism, certain branches of industry, certain strata of the bourgeoisie and certain countries betray, to a greater or lesser degree, now one and now another of these tendencies. On the whole, capitalism is growing far more rapidly than before; but this growth is not only becoming more and more uneven in general, its unevenness also manifests itself, in particular, in the decay of the countries which are richest in capital (England)."

In the space between WWI and WWII, monopoly capitalism plunged the world into the Great Depression, with the exception of the then socialist Soviet Union. The overtly fascist Axis Powers (led by Germany, Italy and Japan) formed a bloc to challenge the Western European imperialists and the U.S. for a redivision of the world's spheres of influence and domination. (After the Spanish Civil War, fascist Spain and Portugal remained "neutral.") There were strong movements towards overt fascism in the west, most notably in France, but also in England with the National Front, and in the U.S., where the KKK reached its peak strength in the 1920s and the American Nazis Party (and others of their ilk) held mass rallies. A significant section of the bankers, (including Prescott Bush, George W. Bush's grandfather, who was Hitler's banker in New York), and industrialists, like Henry Ford, (who was awarded the Iron Cross by Hitler), openly called for overt fascism in Amerika. *Time Magazine* even made Mussolini its "Man of the Year."

While FDR and his "New Deal" did not pull the U.S. economy out of the Great Depression, it did stave off overt fascism and succeeded in pulling a significant section of the rising Left into the opportunist belief that socialism could be achieved through liberal democratic reform rather than revolution. Few identified the "New Deal" as a covert form of fascism.

When the Axis Powers made their bid to conquer Europe and grab up their rivals colonial possessions, and at the same time to invade and attempt to conquer the Soviet Union, the Left jumped to unite with their own bourgeoisie, forgetting the class struggle in the name of a United Front Against Fascism.

The Left had a hard time coming to grips with the rise of fascism and flip flopped on how to respond to it. At first it was seen as no big threat. Many former socialists and anarchists were recruited into its ranks during fascism's "left" phase, when it was out of power. Mussolini had himself been kicked out of the Socialist Party, and Hitler had been a police spy within the socialist movement. So they were familiar with how to conduct propaganda to appeal to sections of the working masses. After gaining power, the fascists moved against the Left with a vengeance. This too was hard for the Left to gauge and the tendency was to only recognize fascism in its overt form and see it as wholly outside the framework of bourgeois democracy.

THE CLASS CHARACTER OF FASCISM

"Comrades, fascism in power was correctly described by the Thirteenth Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International as the open terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinistic and most imperialist elements of finance capital.

The most reactionary variety of fascism is the German type of fascism. It has the effrontery to call itself National Socialism, though it has nothing in common with socialism. German fascism is not only bourgeois nationalism, it is fiendish chauvinism. It is a government system of political gangsterism, a system of provocation and torture practised upon the working class and the revolutionary elements of the peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia. It is medieval barbarity and bestiality, it is unbridled aggression in relation to other nations.

German fascism is acting as the spearhead of international counter-revolution, as the chief instigator of imperialist war, as the initiator of a crusade against the Soviet Union, the great fatherland of the working people of the whole world.

Fascism is not a form of state power "standing above both classes -- the proletariat and the bourgeoisie," as Otto Bauer, for instance, has asserted. It is not "the revolt of the petty bourgeoisie which has captured the machinery of the state," as the British Socialist Brailsford declares. No, fascism is not a power standing above class, nor government of the petty bourgeoisie or the lumpen-proletariat over finance capital. Fascism is the power of finance capital itself. It is the organization of terrorist vengeance against the working class and the revolutionary section of the peasantry and intelligentsia. In foreign policy, fascism is jingoism in its most brutal form, fomenting bestial hatred of other nations.

This, the true character of fascism, must be particularly stressed because in a number of countries, under cover of social demagoguery, fascism has managed to gain the following of the mass of the petty bourgeoisie that has been dislocated by the crisis, and even of certain sections of the most backward strata of the proletariat. These would never have supported fascism if they had understood its real character and its true nature.

The development of fascism, and the fascist dictatorship itself, assume different forms in different countries, according to historical, social and economic conditions and to the national peculiarities, and the international position of the given country. In certain countries, principally those in which fascism has no broad mass basis and in which the struggle of the various groups within the camp of the fascist bourgeoisie itself is rather acute, fascism does not immediately venture to abolish parliament, but allows the other bourgeois parties, as well as the Social-Democratic Parties, to retain a modicum of legality. In other countries, where the ruling bourgeoisie fears an early outbreak of revolution, fascism establishes its unrestricted political monopoly, either immediately or by intensifying its reign of terror against and persecution of all rival parties and groups. This does not prevent fascism, when its position becomes particularly acute, from trying to extend its basis and, without altering its class nature, trying to combine open terrorist dictatorship with a crude sham of parliamentarism..."

— Georgi Dimitrov, (The Fascist Offensive and the Tasks of the Communist International in the Struggle of the Working Class against Fascism, Main Report delivered at the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International)

It is a big mistake to view overt fascism as stronger and more dangerous than covert fascism. Rather it is an expression of weakness and desperation. So long as they can, the monopoly capitalists will mask their dictatorship and maintain the illusion of liberal democracy.

Dimitrov had this backwards. The Axis Powers were from the start weaker than the more established western imperialists, and they were doomed from the start to lose their bid for world domination, but few in the communist movement, other than Mao Tse-tung, could see this. When ordered to subordinate the Chinese Red Army to the nationalist KMT, he only changed the army's name. He never surrendered control of it nor the liberated base areas it controlled to the KMT, whom he recognized as being fascist to the core. He never gave up the initiative of the Chinese Communist Party and its revolutionary orientation to the United Front Against Fascism.

Unfortunately, this was not the case elsewhere. Even the Communist International was disbanded in the interest of building closer ties with the Western "democracies." In Amerika, the CPUSA completely let down its guard and abandoned the class struggle, and it deluded itself with the illusion of post-war cooperation between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. and was completely taken by surprise when the U.S. initiated the Cold War. So were the CPs of Western Europe and the leadership of the Soviet Union.

Instead of rallying the workers and masses to resist McCarthyism, the Party ordered its cadre who were hauled before the House of Un-American Activities Committee to plead the Fifth like criminals and meekly accept being blacklisted. It liquidated the Party in the South without discussion, and it ordered half its cadre to go underground and await the onset of "fascism" and left them there. When the revolutionary upsurge came in the 60s, there was no communist vanguard party to give it leadership. It had thrown itself on its sword in the 50s. It was up to the revolutionary masses to create their own vanguard party.

Amerika is moving towards overt fascism, because of weakness:

"As in Italy and Germany in the '20s and '30s, business associations clamour for more deregulation and deeper tax cuts. The gradual erosion of antitrust legislation, especially in the United States, has encouraged consolidation in many sectors of the economy by way of mergers and acquisitions. The North American economy has become more monopolistic than at any time in the post-WWII period.

"U.S. census data from 1997 shows that the largest four companies in the food, motor vehicle and aerospace industries control 53.4, 87.3 and 55.6 per cent of their respective markets. Over 20 per cent of commercial banking in the U.S. is controlled by the four largest financial institutions, with the largest 50 controlling over 60 per cent. Even these numbers underestimate the scope of concentration, since they do not account for the myriad interconnections between firms by means of debt instruments and multiple directorships, which further reduce the extent of competition.

"Actual levels of U.S. commercial concentration have been difficult to measure since the 1970s, when strong corporate opposition put an end to the Federal Trade Commission's efforts to collect the necessary information.

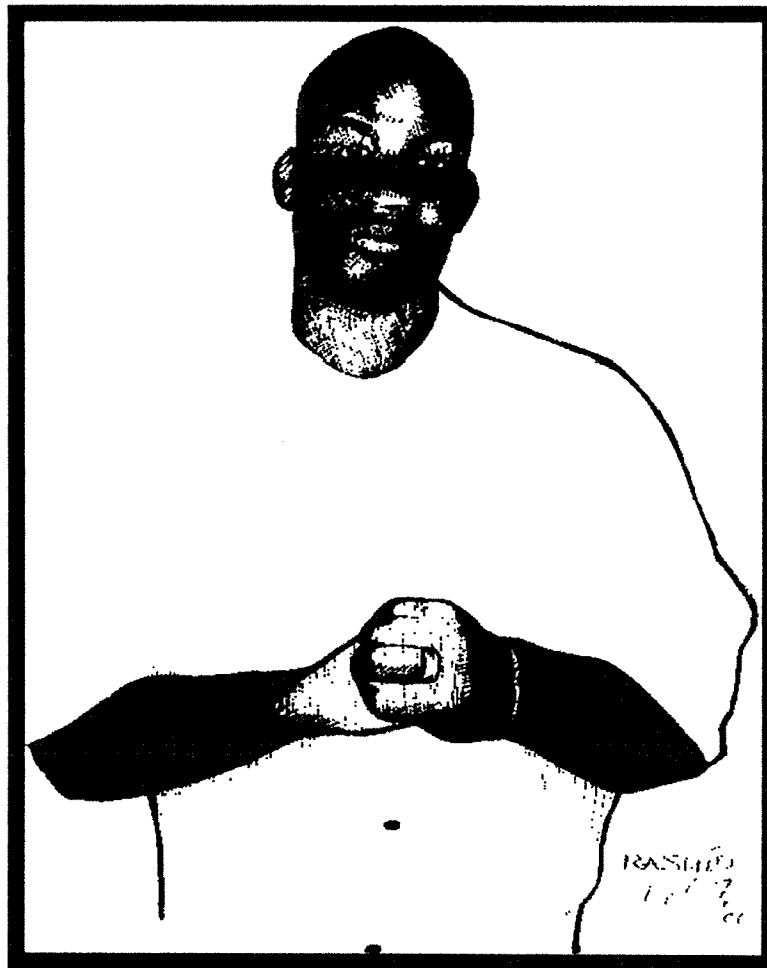
"Fewer, larger competitors dominate all economic activity, and their political will is expressed with the millions of dollars they spend lobbying politicians and funding policy formulation in the many right-wing Institutes that now limit public discourse to the question of how best to serve the interests of business.

***"The consolidation of the economy and the resulting perversion of public policy are themselves fascistic. I am certain, however, that former president Bill Clinton was not worried about fascism when he repealed federal antitrust laws that had been enacted in the 1930s."* –**

– Paul Bigioni, ("Fascism then Fascism now?" Toronto Star, November 27, 2005)

The monopoly capitalist class is in trouble. Not because the Left is so strong, but because imperialism is moribund capitalism, and it is in decay from within.□





Hasan Shakur (1977-2006)

In Memory of Our Slain Comrade Hasan Shakur

By Comrade Rashid

Reprinted from Leviathan, Fall '07

"Know that I stood committed to not only die for the people but to live for them as well, for that is the real challenge!" – (March 2, 2006 letter from Hasan Shakur to the author)

Following the founding of the New Afrikan Black Panther Party – Prison Chapter (NABPP-PC), [formerly the New Black Panther Party-Prison Chapter (NBPP-PC)], in July 2005, Comrade Hasan Shakur was recommended to us, and was quickly recruited as the 3rd member of our Central Committee. Hasan had demonstrated through various initiatives he'd headed, despite facing a sentence of death, his dedicated work in service to the people. He was appointed to be our Minister of Human Rights.

Hasan brought his infectious energy and commitment into the Party and immediately set to work developing the Party and its work. He did this as if he was totally unfazed by designs to take his life within weeks or months. Although this reality seemed not to burden Hasan, it had a definite effect on me. As a persyn conditioned to action and made very uncomfortable with being unable to help a friend and comrade in need, I'd expressed in one of my last letters to Hasan my frustration in knowing that the very same forces that have prematurely destroyed so many promising Black lives were devising to take his life, while I could take no decisive action to help or to stop them.

Hasan assured me that I had not failed him. He stated in reply: "We all have a certain level of limitation. We can attempt to surpass it, but there will be boundaries in place that we just cannot surpass. But what we must do is

turn that frustration into *fuel* - fuel that will be used to push you in several other areas. I have a problem with patience. Yet, I must refocus that extra energy to push other agendas, like building bridges, building the Party, and building the Human Rights Ministry as well.

"Do me a favor. Hold your hand – right hand – out with fingers extended. Your individual fingers aren't very effective weapons for punching through obstacles are they? Now, when I call out a letter, drop a finger, starting with your pinky. "P! – O! – W! – E! – R! What have you got? Now punch through that adversity and continue to lead by example!"

Comrade Hasan's level of intelligent fortitude in the face of death reflects a conviction that only a revolutionary awakening brings. It reflects a firm love-inspired confidence in the cause he lived for and the masses of people he sought to serve and lead by example. On this point he wrote to me:

"Brotha, a true servant of the people *NEVER* forgets his/her role, even in times of need and despair. For me it is natural. I do what I do 'cause I have a sincere love for what I do. I have faith in self, the Creator, and no doubt, my People! Therefore, my blessings will become the *Peoples'* blessings as well. You should see the brothas I have had *DIRECT* influence on – they have the same personality!"

Hasan clearly led by example. And it was his ability to reproduce his own revolutionary fervor in others that tipped the scales of reaction against preserving his life a moment longer. Despite admitted fundamental errors in the proceedings that landed him on death row, the courts refused him the usually granted delay in execution, and the racist, fascist death machine in Texas murdered him on Black August 31st, 2006.

Hasan stood as a shining example that struggle on the road to revolution can awaken, redeem, heal and transform people. Especially those people whom the Establishment claims are unredeemable and beyond healing. He was a living contradiction of this decadent and rotten capitalist system, a cancerous, gangster system that breeds sicknesses which it makes no attempt to cure – because it cannot! Only a revolutionary remolding of our values away from being property-centered and *toward* becoming people-centered, and struggling to develop similar values within the broad masses can effect the necessary healing process.

This is a process that the imperialists cannot tolerate. For imperialism to reign, the people must be kept divided by fear, hatred and suspicion. Because if they unite and become a common force recognizing the common cause of their poverty and oppression, the common source of their alienation and division, as being a predatory, greed-driven minority; and they realize that through their united action they can liberate themselves from this ruling elite class, then people's power will reign supreme.

It is because of this reality that the imperialist capitalist class recognizes that people who love people above property and profit constitute a threat to their empire. People who struggle to uproot racism and national oppression, sexism, poverty and inequality and every form of oppression generated by the imperialist capitalist system are bad for business. Comrade Hasan embodied the true spirit of anti-imperialism and the highest aspirations of the New Afrikan Liberation Movement.

Hasan was the third member of our Central Committee, our first recruit and first martyr. Just as Lil' Bobby Hutton, who was murdered by police on April 6th, 1968, was the first recruit and first martyr of the original Black Panther Party. Lil' Bobby's sacrifice inspired many more recruits to step forward to join the Party and became an impetus and inspiration to the work of the original BPP. So too will Hasan's sacrifice and memory inspire our New Afrikan Black Panther Party and push our work forward.

The forces of reaction can kill a revolutionary – but they can't kill the revolution. They can imprison our bodies – but they can't imprison our spirit. They can't take away our love for our Comrade and the Panther Love he gave to us! The Struggle continues! Panther Love to the memory and example of Comrade Hasan Shakur! Let 1,000 fighters arise to fill his place!

ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE!

Minister of Defense Kevin "Rashid" Johnson
New Afrikan Black Panther Party – Prison Chapter

Amerikan Prisons are Government Sponsored Torture

Reprinted from Right On #6, Winter '06-'07



By Minister of Defense NABPP-PC
Kevin "Rashid" Johnson

It's likely that many of those attending this forum don't quite relate U.S. prisons to government-sponsored torture. To the extent that this is the case we can probably thank the mainstream media politicians. Since the 1960s and 1970s they've persistently projected the false image of U.S. prisons to the public as resorts where criminal predators eat chips, lift weights, and watch videos all day. Much like the false images given of slavery as an experience that Black folks actually enjoyed. These false images are sustainable because the real world of prisons is a hidden one, concealed behind walls and razor wire, inaccessible to the public.

There's also a connection between prison and slavery. The plantation system actually merged with the penitentiary system after the civil war and the torture and savagery of slavery, especially beatings remained a mainstay. In fact at the end of the civil war slavery was for the first time authorized by the U.S. Constitution in the 13th amendment, which authorized the government to treat convicts as slaves. So the newly freed Blacks were simply targeted with criminal prosecutions and then placed right back into bondage to serve as contract laborers, on chain gangs, on prison plantations, etc. Today in a mad rush to find cheap labor, prisons serve as a source of free workers for corporate Amerika. But let's look at torture.

Brutality and torture is the common feature of U.S. prisons. Nothing coming out of Guantanamo Bay or Abu Ghraib matches the images that showed the savage torture of prisoners following the Attica uprising in 1971. And what about California's Corcoran state prison where guards set up fights between prisoners, gambled on the outcomes and then shot the prisoners for fighting. Some 43 were shot and 8 killed just between 1989 and 1994. Others were shot and killed with no justification. These are documented situations.

Sexual abuse by officials in U.S. prisons is prevalent. There has long been a nationwide scandal surrounding women prisoners being raped by male guards. Then there's the sexual humiliations attendant to abusive strip searches, which often go along with verbal abuse. This all exacerbated by complete denial of voluntary heterosexual relations. And there's a genocidal component to this and the vast targeting of virile aged youth of color for imprisonment where they cease to be able to reproduce and is an environment where HIV, AIDS, and Hepatitis abounds.

There's a higher grade of torture. After World War II western governments established an aversion to physical torture, which they embodied in their newly established United Nations, its charters and treaties. This was brought on by the outrages of Nazi Germany tortures and experiments of its own white citizens: Jews, Slavs, Gypsies, the disabled, the dissidents, etc. On account of this, the newly established CIA became very interested in developing less physically evident methods of mentally breaking enemies and brainwashing. As a result, the CIA and the Defense Department financed several studies with Harvard University and National Institute of Mental Health Psychologists and psychiatrists.

These studies led to breakthrough developments in the art of torture that focused primarily on psychological methods but produced revolutionary effects never before seen under physical torture. What the CIA learned was that states of mental disorder, collapse, capitulation, and psychosis could be produced in a victim by use of seemingly harmless and benign methods. Namely sensory deprivations and self-inflicted pain, coupled with attacks on cultural sensitivities and personal problems.

Sensory deprivation alone proved effective and torturously traumatic to its victims. As one CIA researcher Dr.

Donald Mebb discovered, "the effect of isolation on the brain function of the prisoner is much like that which occurs if he is beaten, starved, or maybe deprived of sleep." He found that normal brain function was severely impaired if a person is deprived of the complex sensory stimulation of normal social environments. In fact, the Harvard psychiatrists found that "sensory deprivation can produce major mental and behavioral changes in man," and will produce psychosis more naturally and consistently than drugs and physical torture.

The CIA embodied the findings of these studies in its 1963 torture manual "Kubark Counterintelligence Interrogation," where it confirmed that:

1. the deprivation of sensory stimuli induces stress;
2. the stress becomes unbearable for most subjects;
3. the subject has a growing need for physical and social stimuli; and
4. some subjects progressively lose touch with reality, focus inwardly, and produce delusions, hallucinations, and other pathological effects.

The second feature of mental torture the CIA developed was self-inflicted pain, where the victim was caused to remain in physically and mentally painful positions and conditions, which he is told will end upon his own cooperation with his captors. This causes the victim to feel he is the cause of his own pain, thus making him the master of his fate. So long as he resists, he will suffer, but as soon as he cooperates his sufferings will instantly stop.

The last two methods, which were later developed, were to target the victim's cultural sensitivities and personal phobias. Such as the practices of destroying a Muslim detainee's Quran or flushing it, forcing him to commit acts that violate his religion, exposing him to animals he fears like dogs, etc.

These four techniques were apparent in the photographic images coming out of Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay: prisoners hooded and goggled and gloved to shut out sensory stimulation, or attacks on senses such as with loud noise and music; forced to remain in painful positions (kneeling and standing at length, forced to keep arms outstretched) etc. Those who saw the images of those combined techniques saw nothing alarming because there was no evidence of physically damaging brutality. However all who have made expert analyses comparing psychological and physical torture have unanimously found mental torture the worst kind of torture, because it causes more severe mental damage, is hard to prove, and its effects last longer. But what many who saw those images coming out of the U.S. military prisons also did not recognize was they were a stark reflection of conditions and practices inside prisons across America.

The American reformers who first devised the penitentiary believed that criminals could be "reformed" through solitary confinement, labor and deprivation. This began at Philadelphia's Eastern State Penitentiary in the 1820s. What was actually discovered was that the conditions of sensory deprivation in isolation caused psychosis and mental deterioration. Leading writers like Charles Dickens and Charles Darwin, upon touring the penitentiary, spoke out against its conditions of mental torture. The U.S. Supreme court ultimately ruled such solitary confinement mentally destructive and outlawed it in the 1990s. The practice, along with physical brutality, still persisted.

The brutalities of the U.S. prison system became public knowledge in the 1960s and 1970s as a result of the activism and literature of a broad prison movement, and eloquent writings like those of George L. Jackson, Field Marshall of the Black Panther Party. Prisoners' views were being widely published and the Attica uprising exposed in shocking images the oppression and brutalities of America's prisons.

The official response was to suppress prisoner literature, eliminate or restrict college and writing courses, to outlaw prisoners' profiting from their writings and eliminating prisoner-oriented media. This effectively silenced prisoners and allowed officials and the corporate media to wage a racist campaign to downsize their image, to eliminate public awareness and support. It was a struggle to win the minds and hearts of the people. Meantime measures were taken to kill the revolutionary activist spirit of prisoners. Only months after Attica, the U.S. prison at Marion, Illinois opened up the nation's first control unit within which torture became institutionalized.

Marion's former warder Ralph Arons stated in federal court "the purpose of the Marion control unit is to control revolutionary attitudes in the prison system and in society at large." Note his emphasis on mere thoughts of fundamental change not actions, and not only inside the prisons, but also society at large. But America denies political imprisonment or persecution of political dissidents and opponents. Since Marion opened in 1972, control units and supermaxes have swept the country, with torture of detainees along the lines of the CIA model as their main feature.

Indeed in a 1990's lawsuit brought by prisoners at California's Pelican Bay prison, it was found by an expert

Harvard psychiatrist, Dr. Stuart Grassian, that 80% of the prisoners whom he'd studied that were contained to Pelican Bay's control unit suffered mental injury of psychosis as a result of sensory deprivation. He handed over a detailed report of his findings to federal and state officials. Their response was to lobby for and push through the 1996 Prison Litigation Reform Act, which in part bars prisoners from suing about conditions that cause mental injury unless they can show that those conditions caused a prior physical injury. Mental torture by definition produces no injury pre-existing a mental one. So the courts and legislature have, in effect, given prison officials license to torture.

All U.S. supermaxes and control units practice sensory deprivation: isolation and solitary confinement 23.5 hours per day, minimal human interaction, limited property access, etc. Self-inflicted pain is also common practice in control units. Prisoners are routinely shackled and handcuffed or restrained to cell bunks in cramped and uncomfortable positions without meals and left to urinate and defecate on themselves and lie in it for hours to days, they're left with minimal or no clothing in cold, bare cells, subjected to destroyed or denied property, meals and privileges like exercise and showers, or forced to remain indefinitely in control units until they decide to cooperate with officials, cease a pattern of disagreeable conduct, abandon or snitch on political or gang affiliations, etc. They're also housed next to prisoners with mental disorders or who guards incite that scream, rant, bang, flood, throw body waste, etc. (sensory shock). They are made to feel that their discomfort is their own fault for failing to cooperate and will cease upon their finally giving in.

Attacks on their cultural sensitivities and personal phobias is the norm also, especially in that most of the control units are located in rural white populated areas whereas the prisoners are primarily urban people of color. This condition of itself creates cultural shock. Prisoners' senses of masculinity and heterosexuality are routinely targeted with homosexually suggestive strip searches by guards accompanied by demeaning and provocative remarks, etc.

While seemingly benign, this combination of psychological techniques has proven revolutionary in its consistency in driving its victims to either give in or decline into acute psychosis. I have personally witnessed this result in those confined in supermax prisons with me. The rate of attempted and successful suicides is unprecedented in this environment. I've witnessed four attempts in my own 22-bed unit in less than two months—two in one night.

Most of those who've endured supermax confinement for a year or more I've observed a distinct regression into paranoia, irrationality, grandiose and persecutory delusions, childish attention-seeking behavior, reduced impulse control, hyper-sexuality, loss of ability to concentrate or maintain organized thoughts, compulsive searches for stimulation and attention, etc. Many decline to eating and smearing feces on themselves and their cells, rambling to themselves, screeching and ranting day and night, throwing feces on others (especially other prisoners under guard encouragements), etc. All are simply left untreated except for being prescribed anti-psychotic drugs that further damage the brain and have dangerous side effects, which many don't take. All are treated by guards with violence, abuse and disciplinary measures most often being left property-less indefinitely in empty cells—further sensory deprivation.

So what's occurring in these prisons is treatments of U.S. prisoners which have been developed for use against so-called enemy combatants whom the U.S. government admits have no political rights in its eyes.

Not only do I witness these methods and their sobering and heart-rending results on the human psyche, but I have been and am a victim of them. My only advantage is in knowing and understanding the methods, being conscious to counter their effects, and having a strong constitution. Indeed only a few weeks ago, in response to my work in exposing the brutalities at this prison and refusing to back down in other political work I've been involved in with outside people, I was twice electrocuted with a 50,000 volt electric stun belt by guards.

During and since the Cold War era, U.S. officials have learned that torture is best carried out in the dark and in ways that avoid proof and attention. The norm is therefore to deny the practice publicly, to couch it in seemingly harmless forms, but continue to plumb it of all its benefits in hidden and veiled practice. Its victims are the poor and powerless. That's me and potentially you.

There's a need for us to move collectively against this normalization of torture specifically and the slave status of US prisoners in general. The alternative is to sit in relative isolation each of us and permit the outrages to increase, which they will, until no one will be left unaffected. 95% of those imprisoned in Amerika will return to society at some point, and most of them in a more damaged state than when they came into prison. It's likely some of them will be living near or with you.

There's a movement under way to Amend the 13th Amendment, to Abolish Slavery in All its Forms! The New Afrikan Black Panther Party—Prison Chapter supports this movement. We also support Transforming the Iron

Houses of Oppression Into Schools of Liberation! We ask that you join us in these efforts. A rally is being organized to take place along with a conference in Philadelphia in 2007. The conference will focus on 1) reaching out broadly to prisoner rights groups and drawing them together into a national association with abolishing the status of slaves for prisoners as its cornerstone, and 2) reaching out broadly to the Black and other oppressed people in the Philadelphia area and getting them to build for and attend this conference. The rally following the conference in the streets of Philly will raise the demands 1) Abolish Slavery—Amend the 13th Amendment, 2) Amnesty and Freedom for Political Prisoners/POWs, 3) End the Racist Death Penalty, 4) Defend the Humyn Rights of All Prisoners.

For information on this conference and rally, contact Tom or the Rising Sun Press at PO Box 4362, Allentown, PA 18105, phone (610) 437-2971 or email tomwatts1@iwon.com.

If we Dare to Struggle we Dare to Win! Ending torture compels that all power be turned over to the People!

Panther Love!

Kevin "Rashid" Johnson,
Minister of Defense, New Afrikan Black Panther Party—Prison Chapter

June 2006



Applied Panther Love: Organizing the Black Brigade and It's Work Within the Razor Wire Plantations

**By Kevin "Rashid" Johnson
Minister of Defense – New Afrikan Black Panther Party – Prison Chapter**

Reprinted from Leviathan, Winter '06-07

The Black Brigade is a mass organization, which means that its members are warriors drawn from a variety of political, spiritual and cultural schools of thought. What enables the Brigade's membership to function as a unit in programmatic unity is its core function of rendering service to the Nation of Afrikans in Amerika.

So far, the Brigade has operated in a relatively loose and unaccountable fashion. Its work and organizational structure have not been consolidated nor clearly defined, particularly in relation to serving the needs of the imprisoned New Afrikans. This is natural given the conditions under which it has been founded, but it is time to pull the Brigade together into chapters at the respective prisons where the members are confined and begin to develop concrete programs to serve the people.

In order to do this, the members must develop a clearer understanding of the tasks before us, and the members of the NABPP-PC within the Brigade should play an active and leading role in this process. We are ourselves in process of creation of our organizational structure, and the two tasks are intertwined and dialectically united.

Our people's material needs are food, clothing, medical care, shelter, security (conflict mediation), literacy and education, family-community support and cohesion, spiritual freedom, legal support, safe and healthy working and living conditions and so on. Some of our people need psychiatric care, drug and alcohol addiction counseling, and other specialized rehabilitative services. There are two primary aspects of serving these needs within the razor wire plantations: 1.) The first aspect is creating STP (Serve The People) program committees. 2.) The second aspect is organizing study and discussion circles to politically and ideologically educate and continually deepen people's understanding. In other words, the Brigade must develop revolutionary practice and revolutionary theory using one to enrich the other.

The Party has the same basic tasks. The difference is that the Party members should be committed revolutionaries in a fuller sense, who are down for the whole thing. Their role is to be the advanced detachment or vanguard. In carrying out the two tasks, we must implement Panther Love, which is the positive commitment to raise the oppressed masses out of their physical and mental enslavement to imperialism, and to pave the way for a better world for future generations through revolutionary struggle.

Study and Discussion Circles

An enslaved people are brought into and kept in this state by being made to believe that they are physically and mentally incapable of doing for themselves without a slave master. They are conditioned to rely upon their enslaver for motivation and direction and to achieve their survival needs. Fundamental to accomplishing this is to keep the enslaved misinformed and ignorant and living under conditions where they are compelled to seek the necessities for survival from the enslaver.

This is essentially how things worked on the old cotton and tobacco plantations and how they work on today's razor wire plantations. And overall, it is how things are for the New Afrikan Nation within the Amerikan Nation and for the working class under capitalist dictatorship. The imperialist (mis)education system, the (mis)information and entertainment industry, and even the religious indoctrination establishment all work to keep the masses of people numb from the neck up. They fill our heads with false and misleading information about what is going on and how things got to be this way.

They teach us false histories and interpretations of world and domestic affairs, swamp us with mind-numbing entertainments and diversions, and subtly (and not so subtly) infect us with self-hate and contempt for our blackness, keeping us in the dark about our truly remarkable Black heritage. Such positive images and examples empower us and enhance our self-esteem as Black people and give us the confidence that we can not only be independent but contribute in a powerful way to advancing society to a higher level.

As Comrade Russell "Maroon" Shoats pointed out: "When a whole people undergo ...separation from their historical past, they invariably become easy prey to those who want to use them, because not having any historical record to fall back on, they have nothing to compare things to." He further stated that, "Ironically, they are like the circus and zoo lions and elephants raised in captivity. Never having been taught by other lions and elephants in the wild, they don't know how to hunt or forage and survive in their natural habitat. They are pretty easy to control and are pretty harmless to their controllers."

"European slavers and expansionists," he argues, "were well aware of this phenomenon, and they argued and fought with their peers to have strict laws adopted that were designed to eradicate as much past knowledge from their enslaved Afrikans and Amerindians foes as possible; including their traditional spirituality, languages, folklore, hair styles, diets, family patterns, their values and sense of right and wrong, their former group solidarity, and overall, their customs and self-identity."

So it becomes self-evident how valuable correct education is for an oppressed, marginalized and neo-colonized people, like we New Afrikans, and especially in the creation of effective mass organizations. Any organization that is not based on the people and their true history is opposed to them and will treat them as slaves and manipulate them against their true interests. Organizations that are based upon the people's true interests do not fear the truth and encourage their members and the people to study hard and to be critical thinkers.

We do not want to be manipulated and exploited by our own Black bourgeoisie but to free all of humanity. Black liberation can only be accomplished by the overthrow of global imperialism, and we in the Belly of the Beast, the heart of the monopoly capitalist empire, must play the leading and decisive role and deliver the *coup de gras*, the death blow, to this epoch of exploitation and oppression.

To do this, we must liberate ourselves from the mental, spiritual and ideological shackles of slavery. We must rise above our station as beasts of burden, wage slaves and lumpen proletarians, and become the New Men and Women of the Socialist Revolution. The Black Brigade's first duty is developing its member's minds, their knowledge and understanding along with the people so they will not lose confidence in their ability to become the makers of history.

Bravery in the absence of political understanding is only brute courage. The courage we need is conscious and the result of understanding what needs to be done and how to go about doing it. It is what will make us unconquerable. Death comes to all, but like life it can vary in significance. To live a life of purpose, to live and die a revolutionary, is the highest calling there is. To be like Comrade Hasan and fear neither life nor death in the strength of total commitment, that is the ultimate freedom.

To develop this level of political understanding and commitment, the New Afrikan Black Panther Party – Prison Chapter must set the example for the Black Brigade and the masses. We must study the hardest, teach and demonstrate the principle of revolution, and in every way strive to be the people's pride and inspiration. Through the regular practice of organized collective study and discussion and applying the principle of "each one teach one," the Brigade's political and spiritual development will be enhanced and welded more and more into a unified force to serve the people.

Serve The People Committees

The work of the STP Committees is as the name implies, to develop programs to serve the basic survival needs of the people. By practicing self-reliance, mutual assistance and creativity, we can achieve a measure of self-determination and people's power even under the most oppressive conditions. This is applying Panther Love in practice. Those who have particular skills or abilities can apply them to help others. Even the unskilled can donate their time and efforts.

We should strive to be as independent of Empire as we can be and look to our own needs and collective welfare. Of course we will still demand the services the State is obligated to provide, but to the extent we can, we should be self-reliant and not dependent. For example there is a lot we can learn about natural cures, nutritional supplements and health. We can assist each other in legal work and research, in learning languages and dealing with personal issues like anger, grief, addiction or self-discipline. This demands unity in theory and unity in practice, getting past self-centeredness and becoming family and comrades to one another.

The STP Committees should implement survival programs according to conditions with the particular prisons in which they operate. They should make assessments of these conditions and the prisoners' needs and resources. Successes should be shared with others so they can be replicated when applicable.

Within the razor wire, our survival needs are many:

Health: There should be a public health committee at each prison to address the issues of disease prevention and treatment. HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis A and C, TB and STDs are at epidemic levels in many prisons, yet little is being done on prevention education, testing and treatment. Sanitation, use of disinfectants, healthy diet, exercise, and access to proper medical care and medicines are issues that need to be addressed in an organized way.

Legal Aid: Many people would not have to be in prison if they had proper legal advice and assistance. There should be a legal assistance committee to organize the jailhouse lawyers, legal resources, community legal aid and support contacts, and to assist prisoners with legal paperwork, filings and record keeping.

Literacy and Language: There should be a committee to help illiterate prisoners learn to read and write and/or to become bilingual.

There are many other potential committees that can be formed to address a whole range of issues from drug and alcohol dependency to rape prevention. These committees should research and hook up with services available on the outside and the inside, obtain and produce educational literature and distribute it.

Get Organized!





On the Roles and Characteristics of the Panther Vanguard Party and Mass Organizations

By Minister of Defense, Kevin "Rashid" Johnson

Reprinted from Right On #8, Summer '07

"[T]he existence of a political vanguard precedes the existence of any of the other elements of a truly revolutionary culture."

— George Jackson, *Blood in My Eye*, 1971

"A revolutionary party cannot be built on the quicksand of ideological confusion. Obviously there are a lot of people in the Black movement whose political positions are dead wrong, and someone has to have the courage to say it, even if it busts wide open the façade of unity. A political split, like a divorce, is often healthier than trying to live together in the same house when you have fundamental differences...There are political differences inside the Black Movement representing different socio-economic layers inside the Black community. It is better to start the vanguard party from scratch with the serious few...than with many assorted persons who are all going in different directions and who are therefore bound to split at the moment of crisis, just when the need is for maximum organizational strength and unity. This does not mean that those who cannot or will not accept the ideology and discipline of the vanguard party cannot play a role in the movement or in concrete struggles for liberation that will culminate in the taking of power. But their place is in the various organizations of mass struggle, not in the vanguard party."

—James and Grace Lee Boggs, *The Role of the Vanguard Party*, 1970

Recurring criticisms and questions have been raised about the New Afrikan Black Panther Party—Prison Chapter's organizational structure. Most of these criticisms and questions have come from veteran comrades of the original Black Panther Party, (and those they've influenced), whose negative experiences under the leadership of Huey P. Newton, (the BPP's co-founder and Minister of Defense), has led them to reject both the need of a vanguard Party and the decision-making process of democratic centralism (DC), both of which we believe are absolutely essential for the success of any revolutionary struggle. Our purpose here is to answer those criticisms and questions.

In order to address these issues, we must begin with analyzing what type of organization the BPP really was and what sort of decision making process the BPP leadership actually applied.

Was the BPP a Vanguard Party?

While we believe the BPP contained many genuine vanguard elements, (comrades who had cultivated a revolutionary proletarian outlook), it also contained many elements who maintained and cultivated un-remolded lumpen class values and perspectives. In fact, BPP leaders Huey Newton and Eldridge Cleaver in 1970 and George Jackson in 1971 proudly identified the BPP as being a lumpen party. Furthermore, as pointed out by Charles E. Jones and Judson Jeffries in chapter one of *The Black Panther Party Reconsidered* and by Comrade Sundiata Acoli in his *History of the Black Panther Party*, the class backgrounds of BPP members spanned from petty-bourgeoisie, to lumpen proletarian, to pre-class high school and college students and many were in fact

employed workers. There was no requirement within the Party that its members commit "class suicide" or otherwise develop proletarian class consciousness, despite the fact that in the Black communities different classes, with various different ideological and political views, were contending to influence the direction of the movement.

Membership in the BPP was generally open to all members of the Black communities. All one had to do was walk into a Party office and sign up. This allowed raw elements to join who were not trained and prepared to lead a revolutionary movement, and offered no protection against infiltration by disruptive elements and enemy agents who would undermine the Party's ability to operate at a high level of ideological, political and practical unity.

So, in essence the BPP, while operating under the banner of a vanguard party, actually combined the features of both a vanguard party and a mass form of organization. This occurred because the BPP's leadership failed to make the distinction between the different natures and roles of a vanguard party versus a mass organization. They thus combined both organizational structures into one with the result of having many different tendencies pulling in different directions inside the Party. So, while a strong sense of cultural unity and collective willpower was able to hold the Party together in many ways, it ultimately blew apart as a result of the pigs' inciting these different internal tendencies into factionalism, competition, envy, paranoia and distrust, ala CIONTELPRO. This sort of division would have been much harder to accomplish within a genuine Vanguard Party that practiced DC.

What is a Vanguard Party? What is a Mass Organization?

In order to understand where the BPP went wrong in its organizational structure, we must examine the difference between the Vanguard and the mass organizations. We must also understand that the kind of organization that an oppressed people needs is determined by what the people are ultimately trying to accomplish. As Chairman Bob Avakian of the RCP-USA has stated:

"If the goal is simply to fan dissent and protest, or to build a movement that may take militantly to the streets around particular outrages, but does not aim to overthrow the system, then one can dispense with revolutionary organization; a vanguard is not necessary, and for that matter there's no need for revolutionary ideology.

"But if the goal is to mobilize the masses to seize power from a murderous ruling class and to establish a new power that enables the masses to run and transform society, then you have to act on the implications of this: a vanguard party becomes essential."

How else can the masses defeat a highly organized oppressive system controlled by a united class enemy? Accomplishing this requires a highly disciplined, organized and united revolutionary party; one that understands the underlying nature of class society and imperialism, and the stages and forms of struggle necessary to overthrow such an enemy order and replace it with a system that genuinely implements the will of the masses. This form of organization is the revolutionary vanguard party.

The vanguard party must consist of the most ideologically and politically united, advanced, disciplined, and dedicated class-conscious elements of a people's revolutionary forces. These elements must have developed the class perspectives of the revolutionary proletariat, and apply the scientific method of *Historical and Dialectical Materialism* to its analyses and practice and to educating and guiding the less-advanced masses in solving socio-economic problems.

The vanguard party must be able to investigate material conditions and social contradictions, taking in a broad view of all relevant factors, drawing their information from *all* areas and sectors of society, high and low, at home and abroad. This data must be analyzed, then synthesized to draw conceptual conclusions and implement programs and policies that organize the masses to solve their own economic and political problems. The vanguard party must be united in theory and practice in the highest sense, and aspire through guiding and educating the masses to raise mass consciousness up to the level of the vanguard elements. The vanguard party does not seek to be a specialized group operating above and out of reach of the common people, instead it actually lives and struggles alongside the people and educates them in the process of struggle so that they too will become vanguard elements. The ultimate objective is to make the Party and the people one and the same.

Until the masses of people are raised up to the level of the vanguard elements, they are organized into mass organizations. The mass organizations represent and include people of various different political, cultural, ideological and class backgrounds, views, influences and levels of awareness. In the case of New Afrikans, for example, our mass organizations like the New Afrikan Service Organization (NASO) include New Afrikan people of different political, cultural and spiritual persuasions. But they are united by a common objective of carrying out programs that serve the needs and interests of the Nation of New Afrikans in Amerika. Many of the members of

mass organizations are not even revolutionary minded, but they do recognize a burning need to change and improve the social-economic conditions of Black people.

So, mass organizations will include some open proponents of capitalism, liberals, reformists, activists of various persuasions and everyday apolitical people. But also spread throughout these organizations are cadre of vanguard elements whose role within these organizations is to struggle alongside and learn from the people, to materially serve their needs and interests, to educate, lead and advance their levels of political and ideological consciousness, and to ultimately develop the masses from within these mass structures, to become themselves vanguard elements. As peoples' consciousness and understanding are raised, and they prove their dedication through their work and study within the mass organizations, they are recruited into the vanguard party where they become fully committed leaders, educators and servants of the People.

The reality is that no people have ever made a spontaneous and leaderless revolution. In every case where any revolution succeeded (Russia, China, Angola, Mozambique, Guinea Bissau, Cuba, Vietnam, etc.), there was a party of vanguard elements that led and organized them. It is unrealistic to suppose that a people can spontaneously unite, rise up and overthrow and then themselves replace the institutions of a highly organized economic system and state. Many ultra-Leftists theorize about the possibility, but no one has ever achieved it in practice. It is therefore an idealistic and materially unsupportable premise. (Theory, to be accepted as "truth," must be proved in practice). It is no more realistic than expecting that a person with no mechanical study, training or experience could spontaneously build a modern car engine. To develop such a skill, one must be actively instructed over a period of time through study, practice and guidance by others who are advanced in the appropriate technical fields, or they must have had plenty of leisure time, opportunity and hands-on access to the necessary technical information and tools to learn the skills themselves. They must be exposed to or studied in the practice itself to become capable and effective in applying it.

So this is to say that yes, the common persyn definitely *can* learn to build a car engine, however, they *cannot* develop the ability instantly and spontaneously without practical exposure or instruction. To claim otherwise would be absurd and we dare day improvable. The same reality exists for a people consciously struggling with a society's highly developed and complex economic, political, military and cultural processes, in pursuit of first seizing power from the bourgeoisie, and then effectively operating these institutions themselves. This is why the masses need a revolutionary party to lead, organize and raise their collective consciousness to achieve and then successfully administer a revolutionary seizure of power.

In this regard, the vanguard party must consist of a hard core of committed revolutionaries who scientifically understand the various economic, political, military, cultural and historical conditions that underlie present society and its various levels of development; who recognize the changes and forms of struggle necessary to overthrow the oppressive system in the ebbs, flows and eaves inherent in the developments of revolutionary struggle; and who have the ability to organize the masses to seize the reins and administer the institutions of the new mass-based society that must smash and build itself upon the ruins of the bourgeois society. As Amilcar Cabral pointed out, while the vanguard party is needed to lead a revolutionary struggle, "our problem is to see who are capable of taking control of the state apparatus when the colonial power is destroyed." This is a key question. The answer, as Cabral observed, is the mass-based revolutionary party.

So, in essence, the vanguard party is the administrative nucleus of the aspiring and rising revolutionary society. When out of power, the Party acts as the political embryo, which guides and organizes the people's struggle to ultimately seize power from their bourgeoisie and imperialist oppressors.

And of course we do not claim that less-advanced elements won't find their way into a vanguard party, because they will. Unity of opposites and uneven development exists within all social phenomena, including a revolutionary party. People are always going to have different levels of understanding of *Historical Dialectical Materialism* and how to apply it. What is important is that the center is consolidated while uplifting and educating the cadre and party rank and file in an ongoing way. Envision an escalator where people get on at ground level and go up in stages floor by floor. There will always be new people getting on and therefore unevenness at each successive level of a vanguard party. The deeper understanding will be at a higher level.

These are the distinctive features and functions of the vanguard party versus the mass organizations. The fact that the BPP failed to make these distinctions and organize the Party accordingly, created the internal conditions that allowed the government to destroy it.

Actually, despite his organizational genius, Comrade Amilcar Cabral made a similar error in structuring the vanguard party of Guinea Bissau, the PAIGC. Too many aspiring bourgeois elements were allowed to enter the leadership levels of the PAIGC. Therefore, all these aspiring capitalist elements had to do was neutralize the

advanced class-conscious elements like Amilcar, (through assassinating him in 1973), and his brother Luis Cabral, (through a coup that sent him into exile), and these elements took over the Party and derailed Guinea Bissau's revolutionary advances.

Did the BPP Practice Democratic Centralism?

The questions remain whether the BPP applied DC and whether DC is the correct decision-making process of a vanguard party.

"Every comrade...should help the masses to organize themselves step by step and on a voluntary basis to unfold gradually struggles that are necessary and permissible under the external and internal conditions obtaining at a particular time and place. Whatever we do, authoritarianism is always erroneous because, as a result of our impetuosity, it makes us go beyond the degree of the masses' awakening and violates the principle of voluntary action on the part of the masses."

- Mao Tse-tung, 1945

Quite a few BPP veterans, especially those on the East Coast, are still smarting from Huey's unilateral purges of committed Party cadre, beginning in 1970 when the BPP split into the pro-Huey West Coast and pro-Cleaver East Coast factions. Huey had reached an icon status as a result of the massive nation-wide campaign led by BPP cadre (1968-1970) to free him from prison on charges of killing a cop. An unintended consequence of this campaign was a centralization of the Party's decision-making powers in Huey. As some Comrades point out, the BPP became in reality "Huey's Party," instead of the "People's Party." What's worse, is that many of these Comrades mistakenly equate Huey's centralized power as an *expression* of DC, when in fact the BPP *did not* practice DC. Indeed, Huey's purges of BPP cadre occurred because he was unaccustomed to, and unwilling to accept, criticisms from the Party's rank and file. Whereas criticism of this nature is an *essential* feature of DC. What Huey practiced was a form of Commandism or Authoritarian Centralism, which is the very opposite of DC.

BPP veteran Mumia Abu-Jamal described the process aptly:

"Despite the ideological claim that the Party functioned under the principle of criticism and self-criticism, the Party hierarchy in fact functioned much like any other group in bourgeois society, that is, according to the principle of power dynamics: those who have power strive mightily to keep it—period.

"So when Huey received letters full of criticism of his leadership, he struck out at those he thought were angling to undermine his rule of the organization. When Eldridge received letters critical of Huey's leadership, he felt a sense of affirmation. Neither apparently questioned the authorship of this critical correspondence.

"Why would they? Why *should* they?"

-*We Want Freedom: A Life in the Black Panther Party* (2004) p. 208

In answer to Brotha Mumia's closing questions, we must point out that *if* the BPP was accustomed to practicing DC, then Party leaders would not have taken offense to criticism nor would they have allowed it to generate factionalism. Indeed, secret criticisms of the sort described by Mumia would not have been tolerated, but the letters would have been turned over to the Party's Chief of Staff (Bobby Seale) for investigation as attempts to incite inner-Party rivalries and factionalism. DC demands that criticisms of Party members be made openly, and assures all Party members at all levels the right to criticize any other member's actions. The very object of DC is to preserve unity and prevent divisiveness and factionalism.

That the BPP did not practice DC is further demonstrated in Huey's belief that he *owned* his leadership position in the Party; that he was not subject to recall or being held accountable for his actions; and that he could unilaterally expel those who criticized or exposed his conduct or failure to meet the obligations of his leadership. Under DC, Party leaders are *elected* to their leading positions and are likewise *subject to recall by vote*.

So that we don't repeat the errors of the past and so that comrades today can dispense with the mistaken view that the BPP practiced DC, it is *essential* that we explain what DC is.

What Is Democratic Centralism?

The basic principles of DC are expressed in V.I. Lenin's slogan, "freedom to criticize, unity of action." I repeat, "*freedom to criticize, unity of action.*" The *Democratic* component of DC means *all* Party members are free to criticize, debate and discuss internal matters of Party decisions, policy and direction in open sessions, and final decisions on such matters are reached by majority vote of all Party members. The *Centralism* component of DC means that once decisions are reached by majority vote, all members must uphold that decision. Those who

disagree with the decisions must still abide by them, they must reserve their personal opinions, but they are free at the next session to raise the issues again and struggle to change the Party's views and vote on the matters.

Furthermore, *no* individual party member has unqualified power. Indeed, all party members must answer to the party itself and to the public criticism of the masses.

Many sincere comrades stereotype and reject DC as an organizational fetish of 'Leninist' parties, based upon the practices of parties who've *claimed* to practice DC but *actually did not*. Many Leftist parties applied commandism much like Huey did and *called* it DC, leading many to erroneously equate DC with those bourgeois forms of *authoritarian* centralism.

Many on the Left also reject DC as a peculiarly 'Leninist' ideology, not realizing that not only did the concept pre-date Lenin, but that DC was an organizational form embraced and practiced by Lenin's opponents such as the bourgeois liberal Mensheviks who adopted it in November 1905, a month *before* Lenin's Bolsheviks adopted it. Indeed, in its 1905 resolution, "On the Organization of the Party," the Mensheviks state that, "the RSDLP must be organized according to the principle of democratic centralism." The Bolsheviks, a month later, elaborated on DC in their resolution, "On Party Organization," and gave a very different picture of DC than what the Left depicts it as today. That resolution states: "Recognizing as indisputable the principle of democratic centralism, the Conference considers the broad implementation of the elective principle necessary; and, while granting elected centers full powers in matters of ideological and practical leadership, they are at the same time subject to recall, their actions are given broad publicity, and they are to be strictly accountable for these activities."

In fact, DC was *never* in dispute between the opposing Bolshevik and Menshevik wings of the RSDLP (Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party), neither in definition nor practice. At a 1906 unity conference both the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks adopted a resolution by vote that stated "All party organizations are built on the principles of democratic centralism." The communism report adopting this resolution was written by a Menshevik, Zagorky-Kokhmal, who stated that all Mensheviks and Bolsheviks accepted this resolution, "unanimously."

In actuality, none of Lenin's contemporaries in the Social Democratic movement criticized DC, not even Rosa Luxemburg, who strongly opposed features of 'Leninist' organizations. Features, which her failure to adopt into her German Communist Party, left its entire Left wing—Luxemburg included—open to assassination.

At bottom, corruption and abuses of power are essentially impossible when DC is observed, since all Party members, leaders especially, are subject to criticism, exposure and recall through open democratic processes. Leaders are *elected* to their positions based upon *demonstrated* qualifications and integrity, and are subject to having their powers *revoked* for *failure* to live up to their responsibilities, also by majority vote.

So, in summing up the errors of the BPP's organizational practices, and recognizing the *actual* role of the vanguard party and its appropriate decision making process, we must disagree with those comrades who reject the need of a vanguard party and the role of DC as such a party's correct method of deciding its policies and practices. In actuality, what these comrades oppose from their experiences in the BPP are tendencies that we too oppose, and were not genuine examples of the type of party and practices that we promote as essential for leading an oppressed people in a revolutionary struggle.

This is not to say the BPP got it all wrong, because it didn't. Actually, the Party was right on in much of the mass work it accomplished—in mobilizing the people around their needs and showing them through example and participation that we can solve our own problems, that indeed *we must*. It was just in its internal organizing and in its attempts to perform as both a vanguard party *and* a mass organization that it erred. The Party came into being spontaneously, in response to immediate crisis in the New Afrikan communities, and consisted primarily of youth. It didn't have the time, experience or prior examples to rigorously work out its program and structure, but today we do. And we are determined not to repeat yesterday's mistakes.

A Consensus on the Need of a Revolutionary Vanguard

The essential need of a Vanguard Party stands above all other organizational forms in revolutionary struggle. This has been acknowledged and proved by the successes of all revolutionary movements.

Lenin recognized it, and committed most of his work to building the revolutionary Party.

"What few people realize is that until 1917 Lenin rarely addressed himself to a mass audience, either in writing or speaking, nor appeared on a public platform. Instead, he concentrated his extraordinary abilities and energies on the task which he concluded was decisive to the success of the Russian Revolution: the building of an apparatus of dedicated, disciplined revolutionaries to lead the masses in the struggle for power.

"For the revolutionary movements developing today in every country, the great contribution of Lenin was the clarity with which he put forward and acted upon his fundamental convictions regarding the vanguard party: 1) that the purpose of a revolutionary party is to take absolute power in order to revolutionize the economic and social systems as the only way of resolving fundamental popular grievances; 2) that it is absolutely essential to build a revolutionary vanguard party if you are not just playing with the phrase; and 3) that a revolutionary party can only be built by a) unceasing ideological struggle, b) strict discipline, c) organized activity of every member, and d) merciless self-criticism."

-James and Grace Lee Boggs, *The Role of the Vanguard Party*

Lenin's organizing work paid off in dividends enabling his Bolshevik Party to not only seize power in Russia, achieving history's first working class revolution, but it survived the most extreme repression at the hands of the Czar's secret police, and the world's imperialist powers that promptly invaded Soviet Russia (1918-1920).

"Why was it that the Bolsheviks (for example) could be so heavily infiltrated, suffer many busts and setbacks of all kinds, and yet remain strong enough—effective enough—to seize power in 1917? There's probably no single or simple answer, but a few things stand out:

- 1) There was a significant level of ideological training and consistency among leadership and cadres, and extensive political education.
- 2) There was a certain type of organizational structure, disciplined practice of principles, methods and style of work.
- 3) There was a relatively secure system of communications.
- 4) There was a mass-based infrastructure, and broad, active connections to the mass movement.
- 5) The party construction began at the center, and spread outward."

-VITA WA WATU: a New Afrikan Theoretical Journal, Volume 11 p.30 (1987)

In pursuing the anti-imperialist and New Democratic aims of the Chinese Revolution, Mao Tse-Tung acknowledged the essential role of the Vanguard Party.

"If there is to be a revolution, there must be a revolutionary party. Without a revolutionary party, without a party built on the Marxist-Leninist revolutionary theory and the Marxist-Leninist revolutionary style, it is impossible to lead the working class and the broad masses of the people in defeating imperialism and its running dogs.

-“Revolutionary Forces of the World Unite, Fight Against Imperialist Aggression!” November 1948

"A well disciplined Party armed with the theory of Marxism-Leninism, using the method of self-criticism and linked with the masses of the people; an army under the leadership of such a Party; a united front of all revolutionary classes and all revolutionary groups under the leadership of such a Party—these are the three main weapons with which we have defeated the enemy."

-“On the People’s Democratic Dictatorship,” June 30, 1949

Mao's vanguard party walked its talk. Not only did it repel a Japanese imperialist invasion, defeat the imperialist-backed puppet bourgeois KMT army and seize power in 1949, empowering and improving the living conditions of China's millions, but with a peasant army—and fresh from a civil war—it repelled the day's most powerful combined military forces, (the US and UN), from its borders in the Korean War (1950-1953).

In Guinea Bissau's revolutionary struggle for national liberation from Portuguese colonialism, Amilcar Cabral acknowledged the essential role of the vanguard party.

"[W]e must try and unite everybody in the national liberation struggle against the Portuguese colonialists. It is imperative to organize things so that we always have an instrument available which can solve all the other contradictions. This is what convinced us of the absolute necessity of creating a party during the national liberation struggle."

-*The Politics of Struggle*, May 1964

But as Cabral admitted, "we are not a Marxist-Leninist party." The fact of Cabral's failure to organize the PAIGC as a Marxist-Leninist Vanguard, left it internally weak and vulnerable to destruction by bourgeois elements as occurred when he and his brother were neutralized by the rightists inside the Party.

George Jackson acknowledged the indispensable role of the vanguard party in any people's revolutionary struggle, and especially the one that must occur here in Amerika. In fact, all of Comrade George's military proposals surrounded protecting the vanguard elements at their work in organizing and educating the masses.

"Recall: our Mao teaches that when revolution fails it isn't the fault of the people, it's the fault of the vanguard party... There have never been any spontaneous revolutions. They were all staged, manufactured, by people who went to the head of the masses and directed them.

"The liberalist slogan 'you can't get ahead of the people' is meaningless. From what other position can one lead? From the rear? Rearguard leadership?!! A typical Yankee innovation.... In all the successful class struggles and colonial wars of liberation, the vanguard elements did get ahead of the people and pull. There is no other way in forward mass movement....

"I'm not implying that the vanguard party act out the people's role. I'm not implying a 'society superior to society.' We must never forget that it is the people who change circumstances and that the educator himself needs educating. 'Going among the people, learning from the people, and serving the people' is really stating that we must find out exactly what the people need and organize them around those needs."

-George Jackson, *Blood in My Eye* (1971)

The same was acknowledged by the Vietnamese, the Colombians, and every other movement for revolutionary overthrow of oppressive conditions under capitalism and imperialism. And every reverse in the gains of those movements took place because of capitalist elements infiltrating and subverting the vanguard parties, or errors in their internal structures allowed external forces to cause internal destruction. Comrade Mao was the first to point out the importance of waging ongoing struggle *inside* of vanguard parties to prevent their subversion and destruction by bourgeois elements, or bureaucratic errors. The vanguard party is indeed the motor of a people's revolution.

Is the NABPP-PC a Vanguard Party?

The NABPP-PC was founded under uncommon conditions. Being based as we are amongst prisoners confined across the U.S. Empire, it is difficult, if not impossible, to function as a genuine vanguard party that can lead and organize the masses on society and practice DC. We are not idealists, but dialectical materialists, and therefore do not deceive ourselves and the people about our practical limits.

Because of our material limitations, we exist in reality as only a pre-party formation: The embryo of a genuine revolutionary vanguard. The scope of our work is limited and defined as it should be. As set out in one of our founding position papers, "Our Line," we aspire through our practice and example to develop the actual NABPP on the outside within our oppressed communities, and ultimately into a Vanguard Party of Afrikan people worldwide. Our Party will take root as our cadre re-enter society. As Uncle Ho once wrote in a poem, "what becomes of a Nation when its people come out of confinement?....when the prison gates open the real dragon will fly out!"

The NABPP won't be real until it can hold a founding Congress, draft a Party Programme, and elect a free world Central Committee and Politburo. Then DC can be fully implemented. At that eventual stage, the Prison Chapter will be one of many Chapters within the Party.

At the present stage, we are able to practice limited forms of DC, with our focus on *Transforming the Razor Wire Plantations into Schools of Liberation* and organizing around serving the material and spiritual needs of oppressed people in the inside.

As a pre-Party structure, we are struggling to outline a blueprint of the ideological and organizational basis upon which our broader struggle must be built. Earlier efforts gave us examples and lessons to build on—our object is this time to get it right, and organize to win!

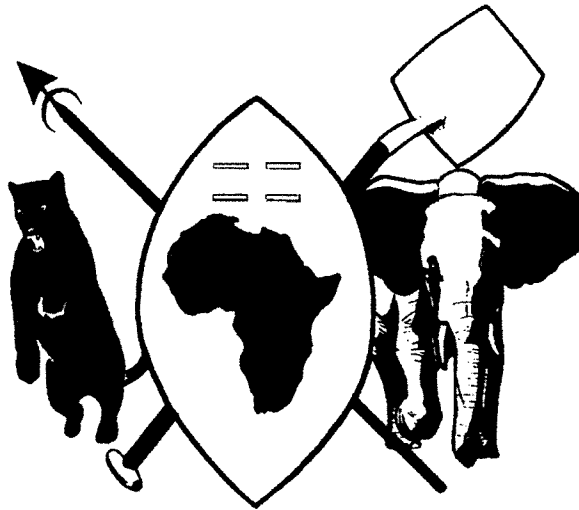
As we've stated before:

We who are inside the "Belly of the Beast," may perish inside these razor-wire fences and stone walls, but not without first illuminating the path forward for our sisters and brothers, our sons and daughters. If we can offer nothing but our dying breath, it will be to say: "DARE TO STRUGGLE AND DARE TO WIN!"

ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE!

Kevin "Rashid" Johnson

Minister of Defense, NABPP-PC



Advancing from the Black Brigade to the New Afrikan Service Organization (NASO)

A Great Leap Forward!

By Kevin "Rashid" Johnson

Reprinted from Right On #8, Summer '07

The Black Brigade was co-founded by two prisoners in Pennsylvania, Nathaniel Lee and Samuel "Angel" Coley. "Angel" was a former member of the original Black Panther Party and a founder of the Philly Panthers' Free Breakfast for Children Program. He was already dying from advanced hepatitis, and he passed over before the first issue of Leviathan, the Black Brigade's newsletter was published.

The Brigade was sponsored by the Red Heart Warriors Society (RHWS), an inter-tribal Native American organization centered in the prisons and sponsored by the Traditionalist United Eastern Lenape Nation (TUELN). TUELN is headed by Chief Tom Big Warrior.

The RHWS grew out of the struggle of Native American prisoners seeking to practice their traditional ceremonies and to study the traditional spiritual orientation of warriors – which is to serve the people. The Black Brigade's orientation was to serve the Nation of New Afrikans in Amerika and all oppressed people.

The example of Malcolm X and the original BPP were major influences on the Black Brigade from the start. But there was another influence promoted by Bro. Lee, which was the philosophy of Thomas Hobbes, a 17th century English philosopher, whose major work, *Leviathan*, (published in 1651), was chosen as the name of the Black Brigade's newsletter.

Struggle between two lines: Hobbesianism vs. Pantherism

The struggle between these two ideological and political world views took the form of Bro. Lee's insistence of having complete control as the Brigade's "Commander," though in reality, he was content to let others do the work including raising all the funds to publish the newsletter.

Meanwhile, within the Brigade, various individuals came together to form the New Afrikan Black Panther Party – Prison Chapter (NABPP-PC), with their own newsletter, Right On!, and they required prospective members to first join and help build the Black Brigade as a mass organization through which the Party could play its vanguard role.

A lot of prisoners hooked up, expressing a desire to both work with the Brigade and to join the Panther Party. Eventually things came to a head when Commander Lee announced that he wanted to take the Brigade in a completely different direction and openly attacked the idea of restoring the Black Panther Party and what it stood for.

At this point, it was decided that RHWS would cease to fund the Brigade and would instead support the formation of a new mass organization under the leadership of NABPP-PC. Thus the NASO was conceived.

Instead of a "Commander," it will have a National Steering Committee, composed of both Party and non-Party members, and it will have an overall democratic structure.

Even in his own time, Thomas Hobbes was a reactionary philosopher and a proponent of the absolute power of the monarchy over the masses. He put forward the theory that people must give up their liberty to a leviathan (giant) in exchange for security and peace.

Now in his day, bourgeois liberalism was challenging the royalist establishment and overthrowing autocratic rule with the English Revolution, and Hobbes had to flee to France to write his book. But as Cromwell made himself High Protector (dictator) over England, Hobbes was able to return, and his philosophy was used to justify the bourgeois dictatorship.

Ever since, the bourgeoisie have promoted a Hobbesian world view that the natural state of man is war between every individual, and a powerful state (and Head of State) is required to create law and order. In fact in class society, the state is a dictatorship and everyone is put in competition with everyone else.

In this context, there is a contradiction between Black bourgeois nationalism and revolutionary Black nationalism. To the latter, revolutionary nationalism is an expression of proletarian internationalism.

Nationalism is by its nature a product of the bourgeois (capitalist) epoch of history. However, under proletarian leadership, national liberation is a step towards socialist revolution and stateless (communist) society. When Huey P. Newton stated, "We are nationalists and internationalists," he was asserting that the Black Panthers, unlike the narrow "pork chop" Black nationalists, rejected a bourgeois conception of nationalism.

Pantherism is part and parcel of the global socialist revolution to transform all of human society and move it beyond the epoch of exploitation, war and oppression. It links the struggle for Black liberation with the struggle against class exploitation and all types of oppression. It will not tolerate the substitution of Black capitalist oppression for white capitalist oppression, nor does it seek to gain democratic rights for Black people by taking them away from anyone else. Quite the contrary, it encourages Black people to play a vanguard role in the struggle to build a united front with all other oppressed people against capitalist imperialism and for all people to stand in firm solidarity with each other in the spirit of "Panther Love."

Some folks, including Bro. Lee, would have us believe that Pantherism is "out of date" and no more than nostalgia for a bygone day. But what is "new" in their offering? It's just the same old bourgeois philosophy expounded by Hobbes and others for the past 350 years.

They mistake the ebb and flow of the class struggle for "proof" that the proletariat cannot remake the world in its own interest and do away with class society and all oppression. But, what struggle has not gone through stages of internal gains and losses, successes and setbacks, rises and declines?

The ideology of the capitalist imperialists permeates all of this society and is reflected back most strongly from those whose lifestyles mimic their own, such as the criminal element, or as Huey P. Newton characterized them, the "illegitimate capitalists." Their lifestyle, which embraces the core of capitalist values, leads them to the distorted view of humyn nature that Hobbes came up with.

"Hereby it is manifest that during the time men live without a common power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called war; and such a war as is of every man against every man. For war consisteth not in battle only, or the act of fighting, but in a tract of time, wherein the will to contend by battle is sufficiently known: and therefore the notion of time is to be considered in the nature of war, as it is in the nature of weather. For as the nature of foul weather lieth not in a shower or two of rain, but in an inclination thereto of many days together: so the nature of war consisteth not in actual fighting, but in the known disposition thereto during all the time there is no assurance to the contrary."

- Leviathan

Far from war being the natural state of humynity, humyn beings were around for tens of thousands of years and living in community before the first weapons were conceived. Primitive egalitarian societies were characterized by their lack of authoritarian figures and forms of compulsion as well as their customs of sharing and hospitality.

Far from everyone being in a state of war with everyone else, as Hobbes asserts, the normal state of humyn

relations was for tens of thousands of years characterized by its lack of conflict and general peace. Conflict arose with the creation of private property and the division of society into exploiting and exploited classes, which brought on violence and war, which has intensified with the development of class society.

Far from standing above society to maintain peace, the sovereign maintains inequality and forces submission of the masses to a privileged class of exploiters. This is civilization.

The proletariat, the class of wage slaves created by capitalism, has the historic destiny of being the gravediggers of the epoch of exploitation and the harbingers of the post-exploitative epoch based upon socialized control over socialized production – creating a society in which each receives according to his or her needs from the collective effort of socialized labor.

Under these conditions, racism, war and all oppression can, and will, be abolished, national boundaries will disappear, and humynity will rise above the struggle for survival to enjoy a degree of liberty and quality of life not previously possible. This is the goal and logical outcome of the class struggle; not simply to make class exploitation and oppression more tolerable but to end it.

The New Afrikan Nation in Amerika has an historic destiny, which is to play a leading, vanguard role in this struggle to create a bright future for all of humynity. As capitalism arose with the enslavement of our ancestors so will it fall through our self-liberation.

The formation of the New Afrikan Service Organization (NASO) is a great leap forward in that it is being conceived as a mass organization that can build the vanguard party to lead the liberation struggle under the most difficult conditions, and continue to rebuild it as necessary, while at the same time uplifting and involving the oppressed Black masses and other oppressed people in day to day struggle to serve the basic survival needs of the people and politically arm them with revolutionary understanding. Our philosophy is: *From the Masses to the Masses*.

Without a revolutionary vanguard party to act as a strategic and tactical headquarters, there can be no successful revolution. Such a party must be built by the masses from the bottom up under centralized leadership in accordance with the principles of democratic centralism.

NASO, which is democratic in character, will be united around the 10 Point Program of NABPP-PC, (which is part of the legacy of the original Black Panther Party). Chapters of NASO can be established by three or more people in conjunction with the National Steering Committee. Those who demonstrate their dedication and grasp of Pantherism may rise to become members and cadre of NABPP-PC and build the infrastructure of the Party under the leadership of our Central Committee.

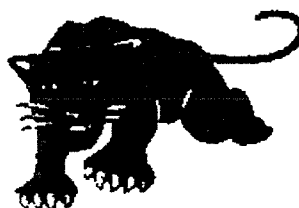
NASO is a mass organization that is intermediate between the Party and the people as a whole. It is open to people with a wide range of ideological and political beliefs who are in programmatic unity with the minimum goals and aspirations of the New Afrikan Black Panthers. It is about service to the people.

It is also a "School of Revolution" where those who are inclined can become comrades schooled in revolutionary theory and practice, rise in their level of commitment and understanding, and be entrusted with leadership responsibilities. Revolution is about solving problems, and revolutionaries devote their lives to struggle and service of the people. The minimal program of the Party, which addresses the immediate problems of survival the people face, will also reorient the masses to address the main problem, which is capitalist imperialist rule, with the only solution possible – taking history into their own hands.

The New Afrikan Black Panther Party belongs to the people. We will build it in the course of struggle against oppression, drawing into our ranks the best and most dedicated fighters for liberation. The New Afrikan Service Organization will link the Party to the people and the people to the Party.

All Power to the People!

Kevin "Rashid" Johnson
Minister of Defense, NABPP-PC





Reparations or Revolution?

By Kevin "Rashid" Johnson

Reprinted from Right On #9, Fall '07

INTRODUCTION

During the weekend of June 22, 2007, the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America (N'COBRA), sponsored a gathering in Philly. The aim of the conference was to build and channel a broad base of mass energy towards winning reparations for Blacks in Amerika; to repair the ongoing suffering and negative effects we've suffered as a result of slavery, segregation and racism.

In light of the amount of work put into this conference and the overall campaign, we thought it important to say a few words on the question of reparations, to challenge the focus of this energy and to contrast it with working towards revolution. As revolutionary nationalists and internationalists, we feel working towards revolution should be the main focus of the New Afrikan Nation in Amerika.

REVOLUTION IS THE SOLUTION

No one can argue that the past exploitation of Black people in Amerika did not enrich the white capitalists or that it played an insignificant part in making the U.S. today's sole imperialist superpower. Moreover, the capitalist ruling class continues to super exploit and oppress Black people in the U.S. and internationally. The point and the solution, however, is not to beg for a monetary settlement but to settle accounts by putting an end to the system of capitalist imperialism altogether.

This means revolution, and we believe that this should be the focus of our energy and what we are down with organizing. It is not a simple task, but it is pure idealism to believe that the U.S. government is going to pay out trillions of dollars to Black people simply because we make a compelling moral argument that they should. At best all they will give is a carefully worded apology.

What we see within this talk about keeping money in the Black community is a plea by aspiring Black capitalists to get a bigger piece of the profits made off the exploitation of the Black masses. There is nothing new about a section of the Black community profiting in this way. It is the same old neo-colonial trickery that was used to derail the revolutionary struggles of people of color throughout the 20th century.

Capitalism is the problem, and there were Black people all along who profited from our exploitation going back to our ancestors' enslavement back in Afrika. There were Black overseers on the plantations and even some Black slave-owners. Historically, Black businessmen and gangsters have fronted for white businessmen and gangsters in the Black community, and this is still the case. Black "illegal capitalists" are a big part of the problem in the Black community, but so too are the "respectable" Black bourgeoisie.

We're not saying that there is not some room for making tactical alliances in furtherance of building a united front against capitalist imperialism, but this class cannot lead us to liberation. Their class interests don't go that way. These Black bourgeoisie and bourgeois nationalism cannot lead to the liberation of Black people in Amerika anymore than they have in Afrika.

The Nation of New Afrikans in Amerika is in a unique situation. We cannot achieve our national liberation by separating from the white supremacist United States nor by integrating with it – only by overthrowing it and putting an end to capitalist imperialism. So long as this system exists, it will maneuver its money and power and its military force and neo-colonial agents to keep us down and exploited. Divided, the colonized people who have struggled for national liberation could not escape the bonds of neo-colonial economic and political domination.

Much less could we secede from the U.S. and form our own republic in the Black Belt South. Such dreams and schemes are a diversion from what must be done. We must pull the system down. Black people are not the only ones exploited and oppressed by capitalist imperialism – the whole world is! This comes down unevenly – with some people being more oppressed and more exploited than others – but almost everybody stands to gain from proletarian socialist revolution and sweeping capitalist imperialism onto the trash heap of history.

WITH THE U.S. ECONOMY IN CRISIS, WHERE WOULD REPARATIONS COME FROM?

The U.S. government and economy is headed towards bankruptcy. In fact it is running on borrowed money now! Whereas the U.S. used to be the No.#1 lender nation, it is now the No.#1 debtor nation. As the national debt grows, more and more of the GNP must be channeled towards servicing that debt. The U.S. ruling class is doing to the U.S. economy what it has done to the 3rd World. It is cannibalizing it. How will it get out of the crisis it is creating? It won't.

No wonder leading ruling class figures are talking about the "End Times" and "Revelations." Imperialism is the last stage of capitalism, and globalization has only sped up the decline. So in the face of this growing economic crisis, how can any sane person imagine that the U.S. government would borrow trillions more to pay for the past exploitation of Black people? And who would be the caretakers of this vast sum of money? This is just pandering to the Black capitalist element with dollar signs in their eyes.

It's a diversion from the real need of the Black masses to end their exploitation and oppression by organizing to make a revolution when a truly revolutionary situation presents itself – as it will. Since 1987, when N'COBRA was founded, the situation for the masses of Black people in Amerika has steadily declined. Unemployment has risen, and so has incarceration for millions of Black and other oppressed people. Social service programs have been dramatically cut, and social problems have dramatically worsened.

But instead of rebuilding the Vanguard Party and mass movements of the 60s and 70s, many Black activists shifted towards accommodation with capitalist imperialism and the U.S. government. Stripped of its nationalistic rhetoric, that is just what this reparations movement is about.

IMPERIALIST PAYOFFS AS CLASSIC NEO-COLONIALISM

Whether given out in the name of "economic aid," "debt forgiveness" or "reparations," large sums paid out by the imperialists to "imperialist-approved" leaders of oppressed people is a classic neo-colonialist tactic. It serves a purpose – namely that of propping up their control over the oppressed people and countries. The aspiring capitalists of oppressed nationalities serve to hold in check and divert the oppressed masses from the struggle for their liberation from all oppression and channel their energy into substituting one master for another – a master through whom the imperialists can rule indirectly.

This has happened across the 3rd World, from Afrika to Palestine, to Latin America, to Native America; From Cape Town to Harlem. The native bourgeois act as front men in the exploitation of "their own" oppressed masses. Is this national liberation? We think not! It is classic neo-colonialism, which is the preferred means of domination by the U.S. Empire. It can then talk about promoting "Democracy" and "Independence," while reserving the "right" to effect "regime changes" whenever it suits its interests, and dollars are more cost efficient and less obvious means of control than colonial administrators.

If the oppressed people choose leaders the U.S. doesn't approve of, it can cut off payments, as the U.S. did when Hamas was elected last year by the Palestinians. And then there is the option of sanctions and U.S. invasion and occupation as in Afghanistan and Iraq.

India under British rule was an early archetype of neo-colonial domination, and the U.S. learned from this model. Under British domination, India was administered by Indians for 200 years. This "Jewel of the British Empire" was primarily administered by an Indian elite and garrisoned by brutal Indian soldiers who oppressed the Indian people.

Even under Apartheid in South Afrika, it was Black soldiers and police who did most of the dirty work of oppressing the people. But more revealing is that after the fall of Apartheid, a native Black elite was substituted for the white colonial settler regime and given a cut of the profits from the exploitation of the still miserably poor Black masses while, the local white elite and imperialists continue to control the economy.

This neo-colonial process is how the U.S. keeps Latin America under its thumb and controls its wealth of resources. These countries are run by imperialist agents who receive U.S. "economic aid" and depend upon a military system that props up the local elite and allows U.S. economic exploitation of their oppressed masses. The poor are kept poor and "in line."

The same would be the case with New Afrikans, if we did manage to convince the U.S. government to pay us reparations. It would go into the hands of the Black bourgeois elite for services rendered to the Empire. But they don't need to do that. Not when straight up exploitation and oppression are doing just fine.

REVOLUTION IS THE DIVIDING LINE

There are those who want to protest and seek to reform this rotten system and those who was to end it, overthrow and bury it, and move on to build a new, radically different kind of system based upon serving people's needs through socialist ownership of the basic means of production and people's power. The New Afrikan Black Panther Party – Prison Chapter and our allies are quite clear where we stand and on the absolute need for revolution. That is what our ideological and political orientation – "Pantherism" – is based upon.

Yes, we will and do protest the many outrages perpetrated by this system, and we do demand certain reforms, but not as ends in themselves and not to reach any accommodation with imperialism. We do so only to build a truly revolutionary movement and to create more favorable conditions for struggle. We need to agitate, educate and organize to this end.

To make revolution, we must have a revolutionary vanguard party that is steeled in struggle, a mass movement that builds mass revolutionary consciousness, and a revolutionary united front that is both national and international. The Party must be guided by the most advanced revolutionary theory and organized along tried and proven revolutionary lines to facilitate the maximum amount of democratic discussion and unity in action.

THE DEBT WE OWE

A nation is a continuum. It includes those who have passed on and those yet to be born. As a nation, the most fundamental question we New Afrikans should be asking is: "What do we owe our ancestors and to future generations?"

To those whose bones lie at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean and under the black soil of the South, to those who will come after us bearing our DNA, we owe our life's blood. We owe the determination to carry the struggle against exploitation and oppression forward to victory, so that our progeny will not labor for exploiters or suffer cruel oppression because of the color of their skin.

Beyond the Nation, we owe it to our class – to all who labor for their daily bread – here and around the world – to break the chains of servitude and subjugation – to bring to an end the Epoch of Exploitation – and to advance humyn social evolution to a higher stage.

The system of capitalism – which arose with the kidnapping and enslavement of our ancestors from Afrika – will only perish when we New Afrikans rise to lead the world proletarian revolution. Can anyone put a price on that?

Capitalist imperialism is the final stage of capitalism. It is capitalism in its most rotten and decadent form – rotten ripe for revolution. It imposes poverty on the masses worldwide to serve the enrichment of a small class of social parasites. It destroys the natural environment and wastes precious resources. It devalues human life, destroys families and communities, and promotes alienation and shallow individualism and consumerism.

It is the final stage of the long Epoch of Exploitation that began with the overthrow of Mother Right and the imposition of Patriarchy. Slavery was thousands of years old before it brought our ancestors to Amerika. So who owes the descendants of the slaves of Afrika, Asia and Europe reparations? The evolution of class exploitation with all its suffering – wars, rapes, tortures, hunger and poverty – the suffering of slaves, serfs, tenant farmers and wage slaves – has brought us to this point in time when it can be finally ended once and for all.

The possibility of social justice for all is now a reality if we but dare to SEIZE THE TIME and take history into our own hands. The globalization and socialization of production and advances in technology cry out for liberation from private ownership to serve the needs of all humanity. The possibility of providing everyone on the planet with a decent standard of living, with decent health care and personal liberty exists now.

All that is needed is the courage and conviction to take the power into our hands to do it. The Nation of New Afrikans in Amerika has the moral responsibility to stand up and lead this revolution. We who live within the "Belly of the Beast," the sole imperialist superpower that was built upon the backs of our ancestors, we owe it them, to our posterity and to ourselves not to seek accommodation with capitalist imperialism but to dig its grave and bury it!

In the words of our late comrade, Hasan Shakur, an innocent man murdered by the state of Texas because of the color of his skin: "The sooner begun the sooner done!"

All Power to the People!
Dare to Struggle Dare to Win!

Kevin "Rashid" Johnson, Minister of Defense
New Afrikan Black Panther Party – Prison Chapter



Kevin "Rashid" Johnson
Minister of Defense

No Incarceration or Taxation without Representation: Amerikan Slavery in the 21st Century

Reprinted from Right On #10, Winter '07-'08

During 1776, in the midst of its Revolutionary War against British colonial rule, Amerika declared its independence. A major event we're told that led up to the demand and struggle for independence was the Boston Tea Party.

On December 16, 1773, Amerikan patriots dumped 342 chests of British tea into the Boston Harbor. This was done in protest over the British government's forcing its Amerikan colonies to pay taxes on British tea, while the colonies had no power to participate in the British political system and its policies that affected them. Such "taxation without representation" was seen as pure tyranny and a clear form of slavery.

If "taxation without representation" was a just cause for struggle then, it is equally so today. In theory, the voting process empowers citizens to choose their political representatives and leaders. This is supposed to be the essence of a republican form of government. Indeed, the power to vote is itself what distinguishes the citizen of a republic from an alien or slave.

So what does this mean for prisoners and most ex-felons in Amerika who've been stripped of the power to vote? It means exactly what the U.S. Constitution's 13th Amendment says of us - that we are slaves, not citizens. And like all other slaves, past and present, although we are excluded from participating in choosing our rulers, we are still compelled to support and pay them with the wealth we produce.

Taxation Without Representation

The notion that U.S. prisoners do not pay taxes is false. We are subject to garnished wages and interest that collects on all money deposited into our prison accounts is expropriated for government purchases. Every dime we spend in prison commissaries for basic necessities, hygiene items, writings supplies, food, etc. is taxed and an additional percentage of the net profits is also taken by the government. Prison departments receive massive kickbacks from the criminally overpriced rates we and our families pay on automated phone calls. Our personal property is routinely confiscated, policies on what we may possess are frequently changed to justify such takings and to compel our continued purchases from prison commissaries to replace property no longer allowed or rendered obsolete. We are fined for everything from medical care (generally substandard care at that), to disciplinary charges, to costs imposed upon our criminal convictions. We're compelled to pay either up front or in routine deposits hundreds to thousands of dollars to pursue litigation seeking to protect what very few "rights" we're supposed to have. And to top it all off we are paid mere pennies to nothing at all to perform various jobs from manufacturing and prison maintenance work to textile production, food service and custodial trades, to assembly work that free world Americans would earn at least minimum wage to do. And we receive no vacations, work safety protections, nor any "benefits." This is slave labor.

Overall, the Prison Industrial Complex (PIC) expropriates billions of dollars of labor and taxes from prisoners every year. And in that we are stripped of the franchise, we are, like early Americans under British colonial rule, victims of taxation without representation. We are slaves in every sense of the word.

Slavery is a detestable tyranny in all its forms, and one that cannot be justified no matter who it is imposed against and no matter what the claimed reason. Indeed, the U.S. in drafting and ratifying the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 acknowledged as much. Article 4 of that Declaration states: "No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms." This Declaration, which the U.S. government played a central role in drafting and bound itself to, stands in stark contradiction to the 13th Amendment's authorizing that convicts be treated as slaves.⁴

But such contradictions of U.S. leaders on slavery is not new to American history. Indeed a major motive behind a large sector of the wealthy American ruling class's opposition to British colonial rule, leading to the American Revolutionary War, was Britain's condemning the slave trade in a 1772 decree.

This ban threatened the wealthy agricultural ruling class in Amerika whose wealth depended on maintaining the slave system. In June of 1772 Lord Mansfield of the British high court outlawed the trade and holding of Black slaves. This ruling extended also to the American colonies which were subjects of the British crown. In Mansfield's own words:

"...the state of slavery is of such a nature that it is incapable of being introduced on any masons, moral or political; but only by positive law, which preserves its force long after the reasons, occasion, and time itself from whence it was created is erased from memory. It's so odious that nothing can be suffered to support it, but positive law. Whatever inconveniences therefore, may follow from a decision, I cannot say this case is allowed or approved by the law of England; and therefore the black must be discharged."

So while the wealthy leaders of the American Revolution were inspired to pronounce in their Declaration of Independence the "self-evident" truth "that all men are created equal" and are divinely endowed with the "unalienable rights" to "Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness," a major motive behind many of them backing a bloody war to win independence from Britain was to keep "their" Blacks in slavery.

⁴ Article 1 of the 13th Amendment states: "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as punishment for crime where of the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction."

Initially in the original draft of the Declaration of Independence, slavery was listed as one of the King's crimes that justified separation. Not all of the revolutionaries supported slavery. But a large enough number of them did, and this condemnation of slavery was removed from the final draft of the Declaration, which was then approved by the Continental Congress on July 4, 1776; the very same July 4th that Blacks today share in celebrating.

It was in answer to the vile contradiction that July 4th commemorates liberty in America, that Frederick Douglass attacked the hypocrisy of the holiday in an Independence Day address he gave on July 4, 1852:

"Fellow Citizens: Pardon me, and allow me to ask, why am I called upon to speak here today? What have I or those I represent to do with your national independence? Are the great principles of political freedom and of natural justice embodied in that Declaration of Independence extended to us? And am I, therefore, called upon to bring our humble offering to the national altar and to confess the benefits and express devout gratitude for the blessings resulting from your independence to us?..

"What to the American slave is your Fourth of July? I answer: a day that reveals to him more than all other days of the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim. To him, your celebration is a sham; your boasted liberty an unholy license; your national greatness, swelling vanity, your sounds of rejoicing are empty and heartless; your denunciation of tyrants, brass-fronted impudence; your shouts of liberty and equality, hollow mockery; your prayers and hymns, your sermons and thanksgiving with all your parade and solemnity, are to him mere bombast, fraud, deception, impiety and hypocrisy - a thin veil to cover up crimes that would disgrace a nation of savages. There is not a nation of the earth guilty of practices more shocking and bloody than are the people of these United States, at this very hour."

Thus was the face of slavery then and the hypocrisies that allowed it, so it is today: a vile tyranny of oppression that manifests itself in America today not only as taxation without representation, but also brutal incarceration on razor wire plantations.

But when has there ever been a benevolent and righteous system of slavery? Never.

Apologists for today's penal slavery proclaim that those who run afoul of the laws deserve their enslavement. They would also like to convince everyone that this modern slavery is somehow kind and gentle, purged of the general barbarisms inherent in slavery. Who of them have never violated the innumerable laws of America? In fact the crimes of the poor and people of color who are the principal targets of penal slavery pale in comparison to those of the ruling class and their government.

The apologists' arguments hold sway only because, unlike other and older forms of slavery, modern penal slavery is

not a condition witnessed by the public, but is hidden from public view within fortresses of concrete and razor wire.

But this system's oppressive, cruel and depressing realities and its legions of incalculable brutal crimes inflicted on voiceless victims can be read about at length in such periodicals as *Prison Legal News*.⁵ In fact a 1973 experiment exposed the brutal and oppressive dynamics inevitably unleashed by and inherent in the prison environment.

A simulated prison was constructed at Stanford University, under the direction of psychologist Philip Zimbardo, who randomly gave 21 average, healthy American college males "roles as prisoners and guards. Uniforms and clubs were issued to the guards, while the prisoners were given gowns to distinguish their differing inferior role. Although the experiment was planned to last two weeks, it was terminated after just six days because brutality by the guards was growing dangerously out of control. The experiment graphically proved the truism that arbitrary power corrupts, and absolute arbitrary power corrupts absolutely.

Under the guards' "sense: of mastery and control the prisoners suffered "depression and-hopelessness." All 11 guards "behaved sadistically," and several "delighted in the new-found power," showing "great...cruelty in the forms of degradation they invented for the prisoners." Zimbardo found that in the role of guards, all the participants committed acts of cruelty, and several engaged in acts of exceptional and extreme cruelty.⁶ Even U.S. courts have admitted "prison guards may be more vulnerable to the corrupting influence of unchecked authority than most people." The court went on to add:

⁵ This journal can be read online at www.prisonlegalnews.org

⁶ See Philip G. Zimbardo, "On the Ethics of Intervention in Human Psychological Research: With Special Reference to the Stanford Prison Experiment," *Cognition* 2, No.2, (1973), 243-44.

"It is well known that prisons are operated on minimum budgets and that poor salaries and working conditions make it difficult to attract high-caliber personnel. Moreover, the 'training' of the officers in dealing with obstreperous prisoners is but a euphemism in most states."⁷

This, despite the fairy tale version given by prison apologists is the lived reality of prison slavery.

It is this reality that lies behind the recognition that there has never been and could never be a humane form of slavery. As Lord Mansfield observed over 300 years ago, slavery is by its very nature incapable of being justified on any moral or political grounds, and exists solely by authority of insensitive laws. Rationalizations for slavery are today as ever but prevarications, hypocrisy, and lies, just like the racist lies and bestial stereotypes created against New Afrikans (Blacks) to falsely rationalize our chattel enslavement for 250 years as an economic expediency for the wealthy.

Just as was done during chattel slavery, the vilifying race and class based images of criminality, ignorance, and incivility that are attributed today to the poor- but to Blacks and Latinos especially, who make up over half of the U.S. prison population- are conditions and images created by the wealthy ruling class to rationalize our being the principal targets of confinement, oppression and economic exploitation in today's razor wire plantations.

In the past three decades the prison population in Amerika has quadrupled, subjecting millions to both incarceration and taxation without representation: A modern slavery within a country that projects itself to the world as a shining example of democratic values. (Note: democracy means rule by a government of representatives elected by those subject to that government's authority and such a system emphasizes equal rights to all). This is Amerika at its hypocritical best. The same Amerika that, while it strips millions of its own "citizens" of the vote, justifies war in Iraq - that has so far cost the lives of thousands of its own soldiers and hundreds of thousands of Iraqis - in the name of "spreading democracy."

In the face of declarations of international law, penal slavery in Amerika exists "legally" solely upon the authority of the 13th Amendment: a law that not only contradicts every other modern proclamation against slavery in the "civilized" western world, but one that was actually never passed into law as a valid constitutional amendment. That's right, the 13th Amendment *is not a valid constitutional law*. It was adopted and applied to the states by the 14th Amendment under martial law, at the end of the U.S. Civil War while the Southern states were under military occupation by the Union Army. When martial law ends so do all laws instituted under military authority.

Under Article 5 of the U.S. Constitution any proposed amendment to the Constitution must be ratified by 2/3 of the Union of States. During the Reconstruction period after the Civil War (1865-1877), the Confederate government was overthrown in a military coup by the U.S. federal government. Military and martial law were declared. Military flags were raised in many state courts across the country indicating that emergency war powers were in effect and the Constitution was in effect suspended. Southern senators had been removed from office by force during the Civil War. They were replaced by military officers. It was these officers and not the duly elected members of Congress who voted in the Reconstruction Era Amendments (the 13th and 14th Amendments). The 14th Amendment - which is the amendment that made the 13th Amendment applicable to all the Union States and which *forced* the "freed" Blacks to become citizen subjects of the U.S. instead of allowing them to freely choose their own citizenship or independent national identity (but that's another paper), was proclaimed as ratified by the Secretary of State (July 28, 1868), over which Ohio and New Jersey protested and attempted to withdraw.⁸

So there you have it. The Reconstruction Era Amendments (which includes the 13th Amendment) had no legal standing after the end of the Reconstruction period when the Union Army withdrew from the South and martial law supposedly ended. Or did it?

Ironically, on February 24, 2007 the General Assembly of Virginia issued a rhetorical verbal and unwritten resolution expressing "profound regret" for the state's role in slavery. These being the same legislators who oversee the Virginia prison system, (where I am myself imprisoned), which without any citizen vote allocates hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars each year, (prisoners' and our loved ones' tax and labor dollars included), toward the continued expansion and operation of this modern day plantation system, wherein the heinous abuses symptomatic of all slave systems abound. What's more, Virginia bears the distinction, reversing the trend in other states, of actually building prisons faster than it can produce bodies to fill them; and this

⁷ See Landman V. Peyton, 370 F. 2d 135,140 (4th Cir. 1966).

⁸ On May 6, 1987 Thurgood Marshall pulled our coats. He said, "While the Union survived the Civil War, the Constitution did not...in its place arose a more promising basis for justice and equality, the 14th Amendment."

despite having one of the nation's highest conviction rates and having implemented three strikes laws and abolished parole over a decade ago.

But as for the claimed "regret" over Virginia's role in slavery expressed by its lawmakers - have they never read the 13th Amendment? Even if they haven't, ignorance of the law is no excuse. So, how does one "profoundly regret" a condition that they are a functional part of still enforcing? This is typical U.S. hypocrisy to conceal its brutal political reality.

While it is important in many cases for us to mobilize electoral support for those political candidates who *prove* to pursue *and enforce* the interests of the common people, (while being mindful of their nature to prevaricate and spew forth empty promises and rhetoric), it is even more important that we move to amend the 13th Amendment to eliminate the clause that authorizes the treatment of convicted felons as slaves, and we must move to extend the franchise to prisoners and ex-felons.

.We must demand an end to all forms of slavery in holding with international law! No incarceration or taxation without representation!

ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE!



Comrade Rashid

Wimyn Hold Up Half the Sky!

On the Question of Wimyn's Oppression and Revolutionary Wimyn's Liberation versus Feminism

Reprinted from Right On #11, Spring '08

"Women comprise one half of the population. The economic status of working women and the fact of their being specially oppressed proves not only that women urgently need revolution, but also that they are a decisive force in the success or failure of the revolution." – Mao Tse-tung

We acknowledge that presently, the New Afrikan Black Panther Party Prison Chapter (NABPP-PC) lacks a femyl membership. Because of this situation some mistaken views have developed concerning our position on the questions of wimyn's oppression and liberation. That we lack a femyl presence right now *in no way* reflect our views on these *fundamental* questions. Actually the *major* cause of this predicament is the uncommon circumstances under which our Party was founded, namely, by Brothas who are isolated away from Sistas by their confinement in various U.S. prisons. Another contributing factor is that unfortunately very few prison activists have maintained active ties with wimyn prisoners, with the result that these Sistas' ideological and political educations and active involvements in social justice struggle has been minimal. However, we are in the process of taking affirmative measures to remedy these situations. And along with these efforts it is also imperative that we set out our line and position on wimyn's oppression and liberation with special attention given to the plight of New Afrikan wimyn.

We recognize, as one revolutionary New Afrikan writer expressed:

"We can't generate [mass-based struggle] if we continue to think and act as if all the people are men, and as if all the children are boys.

"We can't build a mass movement if we fail to educate and organize on the basis of the particular needs

of women, who 'hold up half the sky.'

"We can't shout 'Black workers take the lead!' while failing to address ourselves to the particular interests of those workers who are women.

"ALL problems facing the nation and ALL of its citizens are interrelated and interdependent, and the policies and programs of the new movement must base themselves on this reality. We must address ALL issues, and then coordinate the many struggles and fronts of war."

But to the question, are we, the NAPBB-PC feminists, we answer, "No, we are *not* feminists. We are proponents of Revolutionary Wymyn's Liberation (RWL)." To some this position may sound contradictory and confusing. Some will ask: "What is the difference between feminism and Revolutionary Wymyn's Liberation? Aren't they the same thing?" We answer that there's a *big* difference between them, and no, they are *not* the same thing. Although both perspectives developed in response to wimyn's oppression in patriarchal class society, they represent two opposite class perspectives on the womyn question: one bourgeois and reactionary (feminism), the other proletarian and revolutionary (RWL).

The oppression of wimyn predates bourgeois capitalist society and goes back to the beginning of class society and patriarchal slavery. To a certain extent, the bourgeoisie needed to accommodate the liberation of wimyn in order to exploit their labor power as proletarians and their brains and organizational abilities as managers, professionals and even as executives.

We understand that wimyn's oppression is tied in with the general bourgeois oppression of the working class, and that genuine and full emancipation of wimyn can only be accomplished with the total destruction of class society. "Genuine equality between the sexes can only be realized in the process of the socialist transformation of society as a whole." (Mao Tse-tung). Bourgeois society cannot eliminate gender oppression, because inherent in its divisive culture is the tendency to divide and play various social sectors against each other and to elevate ranks of essentially equal people above one another to perpetuate its divide, agitate, miseducate and rule schemes. Only the struggle of the international working class against capitalist-imperialist domination seeks to fully eliminate the artificial differences and prejudices that sustain bourgeois-dominated class society.

As Lenin noted, proletarian wimyn must firmly lead the struggle for wimyn's liberation and this struggle must be tied in with the broad working class revolutionary movement. This because there is an:

"...unbreakable connection between woman's human and social position and [emphasizing this] will draw a strong, ineradicable line against the bourgeois movement for the 'emancipation of women.' This will also give us a basis for examining the woman question as part of the social, working class questions and to bind it firmly with the proletarian class struggle and the revolution. The communist women's movement itself must be a mass movement, a part of the general mass movements; and not only of the proletarians, but of all the exploited and oppressed, of all victims of capitalism, or of the dominant class. Therein, too, lies the significance of the women's movement for the class struggle of the proletariat..."

- Lenin, 1920, quoted in *My Recollections of Lenin*, "An Interview on the Woman Question," Clara Zetkin

Our distinction between feminism and RWL is based in our Party's ideology of Historical and Dialectical Materialism (HDM), which rejects uncritical idealism and instead demands that we make concrete analyses of concrete conditions and understand things in their motion and development.

Feminism as a Deviationist Tendency

In analyzing the womyn question using HDM and recognizing that wimyn's oppression is tied in with class oppression, it becomes clear that mainstream feminism embraces bourgeois ideology and is thus a deviationist tendency. Feminism elevates gender above class and essentializes gender much like cultural nationalists elevate and essentialize race, whereas both gender and racial oppression are the outgrowths of class contradictions and oppression. In this light, we bear in mind that sexism is not merely male chauvinism any more than racism is simply white supremacy.

Indeed mainstream feminism is just as much a manifestation of bourgeois ideology as male chauvinism. And while male chauvinism is "politically incorrect," despite that it is still practiced everywhere in capitalist society, (just like racism), one cannot oppose or criticize feminism without risking being called "sexist." The same with

unity and accord:

"Contradiction and struggle are universal and absolute, but the methods of resolving contradictions, that is, the forms of struggle, differ according to the differences in the nature of the contradictions. Some contradictions are characterized by open antagonism, others are not. In accordance with the concrete development of things, some contradictions which were originally non-antagonistic develop into antagonistic ones, while others which were originally antagonistic develop into non-antagonistic ones."

- Mao Tse Tung, "On Contradiction," *Selected Works, Vol. I*, p. 311.

The social oppression of wimyn is not a condition that has always existed. And it did not just drop from the sky. It is a condition that developed in humyn societies at definite stages of their social-economic developments. It therefore has definite historical features and points of origin, and definite prevailing social-economic conditions allow it to continue or support its elimination.

Until certain changes came about in humyn society, wimyn and men originally existed in relative equality. Definite changes within society created the antagonistic social relations between the sexes which expressed themselves in the structuring of social relations, institutions, and traditions which oppress wimyn and exalt men. Before *classes* developed, the contradiction between the sexes was non-antagonistic. Unity of interest prevailed because both genders shared relatively equal roles in both the productive and reproductive life of society, and although productive and reproductive roles were gender-specific, they were also social activities that involved the entire community. Indeed, the root causes of wimyn's oppression are clearly found on investigating the changing gender roles in societies as they evolved from the early egalitarian, ('primitive communal'), structures to the more technologically advanced and stratified stages of class-divided society.

Only by making such a historical materialist examination of social development can the roots of wimyn's oppression be unearthed. And with this knowledge it becomes evident why the liberation of wimyn from oppression can be fully achieved only with socialist reconstruction of humyn society and the ultimate abolition of classes. But we must not only reconstruct humyn productive relations in this socialist struggle. We must also reconstruct our *reproductive relations and eliminate gender-specific roles in these relations*. Unlike the conditions of 'primitive communalism,' modern post-industrial society allows virtually every job to be performed equally well by men or wimyn. Proletarian is a gender neutral term describing a class of equals, and this equality must extend to the rearing of the next generation.

Wimyn's oppression is rooted in class oppression and developed roughly along these lines; classes (rich/poor, rulers/ruled, etc) developed as a result of social production, means of production and social wealth becoming concentrated more and more into private hands; with the development of pastoral, (animal raising), societies men came to increasingly dominate and control productive relations, means of production and social wealth; reproductive relations in society became less and less a public, community-oriented and gender-neutral activity, but became more and more confined to individual wimyn whose roles and lives became increasingly confined to a "private" sector, (i.e. the domestic home), and like cattle and other productive "possessions" came to be regarded as the "property" of the male who "ruled" the domestic household; with men dominating control, acquisition and distribution of social wealth and tools of producing social wealth, and wimyn and children therefore compelled to "depend" on men to provide for the basic needs of the "household," gender relations took on the form of domination, (men), and dependence, (wimyn), which has come to be "normalized" and expressed in innumerable oppressive forms against wimyn. These forms of social-economic development are clearly seen through Historical Materialist analysis of social development.

Development of Gender Oppression Under Historical Materialist Analysis

Outside of Historical Materialist analysis, (namely the analysis of social development by applying Dialectical Materialism); attempts to understand history are confusing at best. Historical Materialism understands that the basic underlying reality of humyn existence is the struggle of humyns to survive and continue their existence from one generation to the next. History *is* the process of social development. This process compels people to produce the basic material necessities of life, and indeed to reproduce humyn life, to develop and advance technologies to serve these purposes and pass on survival and social skills to their offspring. These are the economic and reproductive conditions of humyn society. And like all social conditions, the source of wimyn's oppression is rooted in economic conditions, (namely how people act on nature and with or against each other

one who opposes reverse racism; if the critic is white s/he'll be labeled a "racist," if a person of color, s/he'll be labeled an "integrationist" or "racist collaborator."

The prevailing feminist tendency of "male bashing" is no more revolutionary and liberationist than Blacks playing the racial blame game. Wymyn's oppression by men is *definitely* real, as is the racial oppression of people of color. But gender oppression, like racial oppression, must be understood not as things unto themselves, but as manifestations of the oppressive and divisive conditions and culture of class society.

Most movements against oppression, like feminism, don't focus on class. They therefore are or become infused with bourgeois ideology and openly embrace such reactionary and equally divisive tendencies as men bashing and reverse racism. And much of the Left, in adopting revisionist politics, openly embraces and fears to criticize feminism and male bashing. However, we in the NABPP-PC oppose these tendencies and do not fear to expose or criticize such deviations, (whatever the consequences, whatever the attacks), being conscious that the most dangerous deviation is always that which is not being struggled against.

As proponents of RWL, the NABPP-PC promotes *full* gender equality and opposes *all* forms of discrimination and oppression against wymyn, and we are committed to the struggle for wymyn's equality. But we also understand that gender equality can only be genuinely achieved in the process of building, and as a result of, socialist reconstruction of society. That is, by socializing both productive *and* reproductive relations and making both these social relations *gender neutral*. While many past socialist struggles have failed to fully implement socializing not only productive *but also reproductive* social relations (child care) and *in gender neutral fashions*, feminism does not seek or pursue these objectives at all. In reality feminism has served to advance the bourgeois aspirations of petty-bourgeois white wymyn while stifling and subverting the genuine liberation struggles and culture of the broad masses of wymyn of the lower classes, and replaced them with the psycho-emotional feel-good sub-culture of men-bashing and a counter-culture of wymyn's separatism and sexual 'independence.' These tendencies run counter to building *gender neutral* social relations and achieving *gender equality*.

By *gender neutral* reproductive relations we mean both parents being fully involved in the responsibilities of baby care and child rearing and sharing the necessary labor and time investment. As much as possible this should also be facilitated by socialized care giving, freeing wymyn to play a full and active role politically, socially, culturally and in the struggle for production.

Applying Dialectical Materialism to the Womyn Question

As Dialectical Materialists, we recognize that every existing thing, including social phenomena, relations and conditions, is in a constant state of motion and change. Nothing is stagnant, nothing remains the same. The cause and source of this continuous motion and change is the presence of contradictory forces within *all* existing things, phenomena and conditions. These contradictory forces constantly act together and against each other, contending and competing for dominance, exchanging and replacing positions. This "unity of opposites" is *universal* and *absolute*; however, it expresses itself differently in various particular phenomena based upon the nature of the contradictions and the conditions under which they operate. What must also be understood is that all contradictions do not take on antagonistic forms, but open antagonisms can and do develop at particular stages and under certain conditions of the struggle of opposites.

On this point Mao gives this illustration:

"Before it explodes, a bomb is a single entity in which opposites coexist in given conditions. The explosion takes place only when a new condition, ignition, is present. An analogous situation arises in all those natural phenomena which finally assume the form of open conflict to resolve old contradictions and produce new things."

While some controversialists would likely contend otherwise, it is a simple matter to recognize that within the complex reproductive biology of the humyn species, wymyn and men are physiological opposites. This is *not* to say that either sex is superior or inferior to the other. In fact concepts of superior/inferior play no part since wymyn and men are *equal* and *interdependent* opposites. They are essential to each others' very existence. Indeed they are essential to the very existence of humyn beings as a species. The point is simply that wymyn and men, like all existing things, exist as a unity of opposites. They exist in contradiction and struggle as well as

to survive), past and present. A society's culture, political and spiritual institutions and traditions, forms of play, etc. form its superstructure and merely reflect the nature of its members' economic relations, which form its basic infrastructure (foundation).

With men having come to dominate the economic life of society, they thus came to control the society's political power, armed force, culture, ideology and religious institutions. This domination of the political economy in class societies by wealthy males was duplicated at all levels of society high and low. In fact the tiny male-dominated ruling classes have always been able to exert greater controls over class-divided societies by perpetuating and preserving cultures and traditions that gave men a preferential status of social superiority and domination over wimyn. Therefore, if the poor and working class men couldn't share in ruling over society, they could at least rule over their own wimyn and domestic life. In fact, domination over wimyn became expressed as the social "duty" of men to "protect" wimyn and came to essentially *define* "manhood." And when societies clashed, the rallying cry of the men was that of protecting their wimyn and children, who were deemed and socialized to be helpless, passive weaklings.

But let's examine how these notions and developments came to be. In the oldest social systems beginning in Afrika, which anthropologists call "hunter-gatherer" societies, there was equal participation of both sexes in acquiring and providing for the basic needs of their societies' members: Wimyn foraged, men hunted. In fact, as foragers who harvested wild fruits, vegetables, nuts, berries, etc. from the land and forests, wimyn were these societies' principal producers. These foods formed the staple of the societies' nourishment. Hunting was chiefly the productive work of men, due to their being more easily suited and trained to the hardships and rigors of tracking and stalking game, often for days on end, while wimyn carried the children as they foraged. The men often had to fight other predatory animals, and kill large game and drag the kill back to the community. Hunting produced food far less regularly and efficiently than foraging. In these "primitive" societies, food, tools and productive implements were the common property of the community and distributed to members according to their needs. Wimyn played a major role in decision making and in the economies of these societies. Children were raised in common, and as life givers, wimyn were honored and cherished. Because of the nature of these productive and reproductive relations and overall gender equality, there existed no concepts of dominant and subordinate classes or sexes.

The bonding between mothers and their offspring determined the reckoning of kinship relations through the mother's line. As wimyn enjoyed sexual freedom, one could only be certain of who one's mother was. Kinship-based society thus developed around a matrilineal clan structure. These relationships could be biological or adoptive. In either case, the taboo on incest extended to all members of one's clan, and thus a few or several clans allied to form a band or village. As children belonged to their mother's clan, the Clan Mother had overall responsibility for their welfare, and maternal uncles played a significant role in their upbringing.

A handful of these societies exist today in Afrika, South Amerika and a few Pacific Islands, although most have been affected by contact with "modern" societies. But recorded accounts of such societies, even those that existed in this region of the world and were transitioning to more "settled" stages, (such as the Arawak Indians of Hispanola and Cuba), give testament to the gender relations of the now nearly extinct Indians of Cuba as found by the Spanish who destroyed them:

"Marriage laws are non-existent: men and women alike choose their mates and leave them as they please, without offense, jealousy, or anger. They multiply in great abundance; pregnant women work to the last minute and give birth almost painlessly; up the next day, they bathe in the river and are as clean and healthy as before giving birth. If they tire of their men, they give themselves abortions with herbs that force stillbirths, covering their shameful parts with leaves or cotton cloth: although on the whole, Indian men and women look upon total nakedness with as much casualness as we look upon a man's head or at his hands."

- *History of the Indies*, (New York, Harper & Row, 1971)

As the tools and technologies of these "primitive" societies developed, people no longer had to exclusively forage and hunt for foods, but learned how to grow their own crops. Therefore, societies become relatively stationary as villages. Meat was still acquired by hunting and fish by fishing, and these were male responsibilities. In these "transitional communal" societies the people still cooperated in their relations of producing and providing for the society's basic needs, and their spiritual and cultural relationships reflected this. All labor was based upon "natural" division between both sexes, adult and child. Thus all members of the society shared equal rights and duties within the society. Children were often raised in common by men and wimyn,

hence the Afrikan proverb "It takes a village to raise a child." The entire village took equal care and responsibility for the upbringing of the children. Therefore, there was no artificial division between anything called public life and domestic life. Productive and reproductive life were genuinely communal. These social systems were based on extended kinship, (which saw the entire community as "family"), because everyone recognized everyone else as necessary and equal contributors to the survival of the entire community and each of its members. In that all adults performed the productive labor needed to feed and sustain the society and collectively "owned" the wealth that their collective labor produced, all adults, (wimyn and men), equally participated in decision making matters that affected the community.

These societies were based upon humyn production of primitive agriculture without the use of domesticated animals for fertilizer and cultivation, but many advanced into use of tamed animals, upon development of metal tools and other technologies and handicrafts. It is at this stage of development that the social division of labor and economic domination by men arose to displace the major role played by wimyn, although in many societies traditions that honored wimyn were preserved.

With the development of pastoral societies – where animals were tamed and bred by men, (men took over tending animals from their prior role as the societies' principal hunters), and in turn were used to fertilize and help cultivate the crops, the role of men came to dominate the society's economic life. These animals became, like tools, a "means of production" as well as part of production, (sources of milk and meat). So along with the decline in the wimyn's productive role in society and kinship came an increase in men's control, domination, and private "ownership" of the society's means of production and the social property.

Cattle and settled agriculture allowed societies to produce greater surplus produce, which increasingly became the "property" owned by individual men, which in turn was traded between societies, more firmly rooting economic control into the hands of men and creating increasing repression and domination of wimyn. Wimyn became more confined to "domestic" roles.

With the development of surplus wealth, the opportunity presented itself for stronger groups to raid and take the herds or harvest of weaker groups including their women, (for reproductive purposes), and in general to make slaves of those captured by warfare or those who fell into debt. The role of war leader became enhanced and dominated over the formerly democratic decision making of the people.

Trade and barter of surplus production was enhanced by uses of developed technologies – irrigation, the plow, diverse forms of specialized labor, etc. – which ended in productive work being performed not merely to meet the needs of the society's own population, but for purposes of exchange. This trend of production for exchange enhanced the practice of greater concentrations of social wealth into the hands of individual headmen and led to the patriarchal domination of society.

Concentration of wealth and power increased along with the enhancement of productive technologies as class societies advanced from slave-owning to feudal, to capitalism, to capitalist-imperialism, (monopoly capitalism). In each of these stages of political economic development, men dominated the economic infrastructure and thus also the political, military, cultural, ideological, and religious superstructure of the state.

In the pre-state communal societies, warriors were made up of the basic members of the society, who constituted a genuine "people's army." However, with the development of classes, those who privatized and hoarded social wealth created a separate caste of specialized armed forces, whose role was and remains that of protecting their property holdings and preserving a social arrangement where their balance of power as non-laboring haves over the laboring have-nots is not upset by either internal or external challengers. This specialized armed military/police structure is the foundation of the state.

So, in essence, wimyn's oppression grew out of the overthrow of the kinship system, through the political-economic displacement of wimyn as major producers and center in kinship-based society, and the attendant separation of the smaller family unit from the greater community, making the nuclear family, (instead of the community), the source of child-rearing, (which becomes confined to wimyn), and the man, (instead of the collective community), the source of providing for the basic needs of the family. Wimyn became confined to domestic, (reproductive), private life and men came to control political-economic, (productive), "public" life. From this economic arrangement grew various cultural, political and religious forms in various state societies which oppress and subjugate wimyn. And it has been against such forms of economic, political, social, military

and cultural repression that wimyn have risen up and rebelled, in class societies and even in pre-state structures that have been influenced by the oppressive traditions, ideologies and religious institutions of class societies.

It must be pointed out also that the Western Europeans and many of the Afrikans who fell victim to the trans-Atlantic slave trade existed at different stages of economic development. Feudalist class society had taken deep root in West Europe, particularly within those states which were actively involved in the transcontinental slave trade, whereas many of the captured Afrikans still existed in pre-state or transitional societies where clan relations or remnants of them were still strong. Unlike the West European wimyn, (who were constrained and subjugated by feudalist Anglo-Christian culture), Afrikan wimyn still played a major role in the public life of many of their tribal societies.

This fact, and the fact that during chattel slavery in the Amerikas, Afrikan wimyn were compelled to labor just as hard and resolutely and were brutalized just as harshly as their men, (indeed more so in the form of routine rapes by white "owners" and overseers), made the conditions against which New Afrikan versus white wimyn struggled in Amerika very different in many ways. Their views of wimyn's liberation were often perceived, expressed, and pursued quite differently.

Professor and historian Howard Zinn offers an accurate summary of the different characters of economic relations and treatment of wimyn between the West European societies and the communal Native American and Afrikan societies which they overran:

"Societies based on private property and competition, in which monogamous families became practical units for work and socialization, found it especially useful to establish [a] special status of women, something akin to a house slave in the matter of intimacy and oppression, and yet requiring, because of that intimacy, a long-term connection with children, a special patronization, which on occasion, especially in the face of a show of strength, could slip over into treatment as an equal. An oppression so private would turn out hard to uproot.

"Earlier societies -- in America and elsewhere -- in which property was held in common and families were extensive and complicated, with aunts and uncles and grandmothers and grandfathers all living together, seemed to treat women more as equals than did the white societies that later overran them, bringing 'civilization' and 'private property'."

- A People's History of the United States -- 1492 to Present, (Harper Collins: NY 1999)

Differing Gender Oppression of New Afrikan Versus White Wimyn

The oppression of New Afrikan versus white wimyn in Amerika assumed different forms based upon the roles assigned to or demanded of them in the society's economic and public life. White wimyn, like New Afrikan wimyn, were considered as powerless property objects of the white man, but their terms of servitude were very different.

Through most of early Amerikan history, white wimyn were confined primarily to a status of domestic slaves to their male counterparts. Like Blacks they had no political rights, but in addition they were subjected to various restraints in manners of dress, speech, and conduct in public. As Howard Zinn pointed out, they were a "convenience for men who could use, exploit, and cherish someone who was at the same time servant, sex mate, companion, and bearer-teacher-warden of his children."

As pointed out earlier, under such class-divided patriarchal systems as existed, (and still exists), here in Amerika, "manhood" was/is defined by the passion, zeal, willingness and ability of the male to "protect" his sheltered femyl. "Womanhood" was/is defined by a "ladylike" performance of feeble and helpless dependence on men. These concepts of "manhood" and "womanhood" inherently grew out of the economic-based oppression and exclusion of wimyn, and they were used as formidable and brutal weapons of subjugation against New Afrikans.

Indeed the most brutal and frenzied white violence against Blacks was often incited by typically false accusations of Black males making sexual advances toward or attacks on white wimyn. Throughout U.S. history Black struggles for economic and political gains often lost white support under charges by opponents that economic and political equality for Blacks would end with Black men coupling with white wimyn. This was

intolerable because the white males deemed the white womyn as exclusively their own property.

For example the wave of southern lynchings of Black men following the abolition of slavery in 1865 through the early 1900's, was repeatedly attributed to Black men raping white wimyn. Ida B. Wells and Frederick Douglas exposed such accusations to be false and the lynchings to have been actually prompted by poor whites who feared and opposed political and economic competition and displacement in the South by Blacks. In 1923 the predominantly Black town of Rosewood, Florida was burned down and depopulated by mobs of whites following the false accusations of Fannie Taylor, a young white womyn, that she'd been sexually assaulted by a Black man. It was later discovered that she'd lied, that her attacker was actually a white Mason who was able to escape scrutiny by relying on the society's code of requiring members to conceal one another's crimes.

On August 28, 1955, 15 year old Emmett Louis Till was kidnapped, bludgeoned and shot point-blank in the head by two white men for allegedly whistling at a white womyn in a store in Sumner County, Mississippi. Indeed, throughout the South, every opponent of Black equality equated racial equality seekers with Black rapists and efforts to "rape" the rights of southern power holders. FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover wrote to the Selective Services director during World War II that white wimyn were in increased danger by the number of Black men not inducted into the military.

In his book "Mind of the South," Wilbur J. Cash described the southern white mentality thusly, "any assertion of any kind on the part of the Negro constituted in a perfectly real manner an attack on the Southern [white] woman." Dixiecrats used rape as a common metaphor to attack all proposals to change southern race relations. Noted segregationist Strom Thurmond wrote that efforts to change race relations in the South were attempts to "rape the rights of the states." As Jaquelyn Dowd Hall aptly summed it up in her *Southern Exposure* article "The Mind That Burns in Each Body:" "As absolutely inaccessible sexual property, white women became the most potent symbol of white male supremacy."

Conversely, white men were free to routinely rape Black wimyn. W.E.B. DuBois rebutted repeated Dixiecrat uses of rape as metaphors for challenges to the Southern white racist status quo in stating, "The rape which your gentlemen have done against helpless black women in defiance of your own laws is written on the foreheads of millions of mulattoes and written in inefaceable blood." In the same light, James Baldwin answered those whites who depicted Blacks' struggles for justice and equality as nothing but Black men aspiring to marry the sisters and daughters of white men with an un rebuttable observation, "You're not worried about me marrying *your* daughter. You're worried about me marrying *your wife's* daughter. I've been marrying *your* daughter since the days of slavery." The system of routine rapes of New Afrikan wimyn by white men served as a gendered form of psychological warfare against Blacks to reinforce the dominant status of the white male, (Black men were not deemed to be "men" at all but "boys" because they had no power to protect "their" wimyn), and to repress the Black womyn whose prominent role in productive work and attendant hardships of slave life conditioned her to be quite strong and independent -- immensely so in comparison to the "sheltered" white womyn -- and the conditioned equal of any man. Rape of Black wimyn was also practiced as a rite of passage into "manhood" by young white males. The actual practice of routine rapes of Black wimyn by white men is a feature of slavery and U.S. history that mainstream historians and modern criminologists unanimously evade and gloss over. Here's Angela Davis's assessment:

"Black women were equal to their men in the oppression they suffered; they were their men's social equals within the slave community; and they resisted slavery with a passion equal to their men's. This was one of the greatest ironies of the slave system, for in subjecting women to the most ruthless exploitation conceivable, exploitation which knew no sex distinctions, the groundwork was created not only for Black women to assert their equality through their social relations, but also to express it through their acts of resistance. This must have been a terrifying revelation for the slave owners, for it seems that they were trying to break this chain of equality through the especially brutal repression they reserved for the women. Again, it is important to remember that the punishment inflicted on women exceeded in intensity the punishment suffered by their men, for women were not only whipped and mutilated, they were also *raped*."

"...Rape was a weapon of domination, a weapon of repression, whose covert goal was to extinguish the slave woman's will to resist, and in the process to demoralize their men. These observations on the rape of women during the Vietnam War could also apply to slavery: "In Vietnam, the U.S. military command made rape 'socially acceptable;' in fact, it was unwritten, but clear policy." When GI's were encouraged to rape Vietnamese women and girls, (and they were sometimes advised to 'search women' with their

penises), a weapon of mass political terrorism was forged. Since the Vietnamese women were distinguished by their heroic contributions to their people's liberation struggle, the military retaliation specifically suited for them was rape. While women were hardly immune to the violence inflicted on men, they were especially singled out as victims of terrorism by a sexist military force governed by the principle that war was exclusively a man's affair.

"In the same way that rape was an institutionalized ingredient of the aggression carried out against the Vietnamese people, designed to intimidate and terrorize the women, slave owners encouraged the terroristic use of rape in order to put Black women in their place. If Black women had achieved a sense of their own strength and a strong urge to resist, then violent sexual assaults...would remind the women of their essential and inalterable femaleness. In the male supremacist vision of the period, this meant passivity, acquiescence, and weakness.

"Virtually all the slave narratives of the nineteenth century contain accounts of slave women's sexual victimization at the hands of masters and overseers...

"Despite the testimony of slaves about the high incidence of rape and sexual coercion, the issue of sexual abuse has been all but glossed over in the traditional literature on slavery."

Davis went on to add:

"One of racism's salient historical features has always been the assumption that white men – especially those who wield economic power – possess an incontestable right of access to Black women's bodies.

"Slavery relied as much on routine sexual abuse as it relied on the whip and the lash. Excessive sexual urges, whether they existed among individual white men or not, had nothing to do with this virtual institutionalization of rape. Sexual coercion was, rather, an essential dimension of the social relations between slave master and slave. In other words, the right claimed by slave owners and their agents over the bodies of female slaves was a direct expression of their presumed property rights over Black people as a whole. The license to rape emanated from and facilitated the ruthless economic domination that was the gruesome hallmark of slavery.

"The pattern of institutionalized sexual abuse of Black women became so powerful that it managed to survive the abolition of slavery. Group rape, perpetrated by the Ku Klux Klan and other terrorist organizations of the post-Civil War period became an uncamouflaged political weapon in the drive to thwart the movement for Black equality."

- Women, Race and Class, (Vintage Books: NY 1983)

The role, experience, suffering, resistance and survival of slavery by New Afrikan wimyn alongside their men demonstrated in lived reality that wimyn are the equals of men. It is therefore no wonder that the early feminist movement found and still finds its greatest inspiration in the image of a slave womyn – Sojourner Truth. Unlike the middle class white wimyn who have dominated the feminist movement, Sojourner had not lived a sheltered life, so unlike those wimyn she could rebut as living proof the claims made by white men that womyn is innately weak and inferior to man. This she did in her famous "Ain't I a Woman?" speech delivered at the 1851 Women's Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio.

An emancipated slave, Sojourner walked uninvited into the church where the convention was being held, took a seat on the steps in the corner of the pulpit and listened quietly for several days first to the arguments of ministers who argued that men were by right to enjoy superior privileges and rights on account of claimed "superior intellect," because of the "manhood of Christ" and the cardinal "sin of our first mother."

At this Sojourner rose and approached the pulpit to address the crowd that filled the church and stood outside listening at the windows and doors. Members of the crowd – wimyn and men – protested but were hushed by Frances Gage, the convention's organizer, who announced Sojourner Truth.

Sojourner began "Well children," fixing her intent gaze on the crowd, "where there is so much racket, there must be something out of kilter. I think that between the Negroes of the South and the women of the North all talking about rights, the white men will be in a fix pretty soon. But what's all this talking about?" She continued:

"That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm."

And she bared her muscular arm for all to see.

"I have plowed and planted and gathered into barns and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man -- when I could get it -- and bear the lash just as well! And ain't I a woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seen most all of them sold off to slavery, and when I cried with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a woman?"

"Then they talk about this thing in the head; what's this they call it?"

An audience member whispered "intellect."

"That's it, honey. What that got to do with women's rights and Negroes' rights? If my cup won't hold but a pint, and yours holds a quart, wouldn't you be mean not to let me have my little half measure full? Then that little man in black there [she said pointing and looking intensely at the man who'd made the argument], he says women can't have as much rights as men 'cause Christ wasn't a woman! Where did your Christ come from? From God and a woman! Man had nothing to do with him. If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back and get it right side up again! And now they asking to do it. The men better let them. Obligated to you for hearing me, and now old Sojourner ain't got nothing more to say."

With this and to the tune of applause and tears of gratitude on the faces of many of the white wimyn in attendance, Sojourner returned to her seat in the corner. Gage recalled, "She had taken us up in her strong arms and carried us safely over the slough of difficulty turning the whole tide in our favor. I have never in my life seen anything like the magical influence that subdued the mobbish spirit of the day, and turned the sneers and jeers of an excited crowd into notes of respect and admiration. Hundreds rushed up to shake hands with her and congratulate the glorious old mother, and bid her Godspeed on her mission of 'testifying' again concerning the wickedness of this here people."

The hardships of slavery and racism produced of New Afrikan wimyn some of the most outstanding examples that wimyn are not only equals, but in many instances have shown strength and fortitude surpassing that of the typical man. Our ancestor Harriet Tubman was such a womyn, of much smaller stature than Sojourner Truth. Harriet Tubman personally led multitudes of slaves on daring escapes and flights to freedom over miles and miles of woodland, roads, fields, and hills on the Underground Railroad; in her own words she stated "I freed thousands of slaves. I could have freed thousands more if they had known they were slaves."

Even today, Harriet Tubman bears the distinction of being the only womyn in U.S. history to lead Amerikan soldiers in battle, (during the Civil War). What made her exceptional? Nothing except her harsh lived experience in slavery and skills given by her father that enabled her to hunt, forage, and survive off the land. This combined to give her both the fortitude and ability, fueled by outrage and devotion to her oppressed people, to struggle for freedom. How many New Afrikan men today could hold a candle to this sista?

Time and again, hardship and necessity have brought the noble and fierce fighting spirit of wimyn to the surface, demonstrating over and over that wimyn are no less witty, strong, able and passionate than men. Unlike their white counterparts, New Afrikan wimyn have endured brutal oppression not only because of their gender, but because of their race and repressed nationality as well. Her struggle is therefore against three levels of oppression, whereas that of the Amerikan white womyn's is but one or two. However, genuine liberation for either or both of them can only be achieved by the successful overthrow of the monopoly capitalist political economy, and wimyn must march at the head of such a revolutionary struggle under the banner of revolutionary wimyn's liberation.

Wimyn's Liberation Cannot be Achieved Through Feminism

It was the survival, fortitude, and fearless struggles of wimyn like Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman, and also many working class white wimyn like Margaret Corin ("Dirty Kate"), "Molly Pitcher," Deborah Garnet, Mother

Jones, Gurley Flynn, the wimyn of the Lowell (Massachusetts) Textile Mills and others, that gave the greatest impetus to the progressive aspirations of feminism. However, lacking a revolutionary working class perspective, feminism has repeatedly been subverted and contained by the bourgeois enemies of working class wimyn.

As Howard Zinn observed, "When feminist impulses are recorded, they are almost always the writings of privileged women who had some status from which to speak freely, more opportunity to write and have their writings recorded."

This sham movement for "women's liberation" has each time co-opted and used the image of wimyn who stood firmly opposed to oppression as tools to subvert and marginalize the radical working class and oppressed nationality elements within the wimyn's liberation movement. It has in turn merely expanded the ranks of the bourgeois class to include wimyn willing to share in the class oppression of the poor working class people, (wimyn included), and preserved the very system that is at the root of wimyn's oppression.

This is in essence why we oppose feminism and instead promote a struggle for wimyn's liberation explicitly led by working class wimyn and illuminated by revolutionary class ideology. For lack of a clear working class and anti-imperialist perspective, the feminist movement has served as a platform for and opened its ranks to every foul element and trend of thought that exists across and indeed sustains imperialist and class society; from the eugenicists of the early 1900's like Margaret Sanger, who promoted the genocidal extermination of all Blacks in Amerika through mass sterilization and proposed using Black preachers to influence Black wimyn to submit to sterilization; to the daughter of the late billionaire H.L. Hunt who finances various "feminist" foundations; to Laura Bush speaking on the November 17, 2001 presidential radio address in support of the imperialist massacre of Afghanistan in the name of feminist concerns for the Taliban's oppression of wimyn.

As a movement that has been reduced to a rhetorical culture of "political correctness" that talks wimyn's equality and places the issue of sexism above class, the feminist movement functions as a toothless, vacillating and reformist melting pot that brings wimyn of exactly opposite and irreconcilable classes together in an artificial alliance under a rhetorical banner of seeking equality of wimyn. Acting under the pretense of being the "collective" voice of oppressed wimyn, mainstream feminism has served only to advance the perspectives and the material interests of privileged wimyn and those who aspire to achieve bourgeois privilege, while leaving the poor working class and oppressed nationality wimyn marginalized, voiceless, and still oppressed.

Some radical elements within the feminist movement have attempted to give voice and recognition to the concerns and issues of working class, poor, and oppressed nationality wimyn, but their voices are largely muted by the dominating voices of middle and upper class wimyn in the movement. Indeed the two great waves of the wimyn's liberation movement in Amerika were brought to an end as a result of reforms and bourgeois concessions made by the male-dominated ruling class to the opportunist collaborating sectors of the movement, thereby preserving the imperialist system of working class, national, racial, and gender oppression.

We stand adamantly opposed to the repression of wimyn and the enforced inequalities imposed upon them by patriarchal class society; but because we also recognize that wimyn are indeed the equals of men in every respect, (this is a dialectical reality), we know that an imperialist is an imperialist, a jingoist is a jingoist, a racist is a racist and a class enemy is a class enemy whether they wear pants or a skirt. So our struggle for wimyn's equality, while it opposes many of the gender oppressions that even bourgeois wimyn suffer, is guided by principles of class and oppressed nationality liberation. We therefore promote a principled alliance with the oppressed class/national and advanced elements of the feminist movement, and beseech them to approach the struggle against wimyn's oppression from the perspective of class and not merely gender struggle.

Class society has succeeded to a great extent in conditioning many wimyn of all sectors to embrace individualism, which is deeply rooted in bourgeois culture, inculcating in them, as in many men, a "me first" mentality. This mentality is at the root of the trend in feminism of placing wimyn above class. Whereas class is the principal contradiction, while gender oppression is secondary, in reality nowhere in society have wimyn been more successful in gaining leadership positions than in movements on the Left, but the anti-class tendency toward individualism which such feminist-influenced wimyn have brought with them has aided in the Left's break-up into factional single issue groups with reformist agendas and a lot of well-feathered nests. The Left is much to blame on account of uncritically embracing feminism for fear of being criticized as male chauvanist.

Bourgeois society breeds divisiveness and individualism and is ideal for wimyn who aspire to upper class

achievements. They are freed from many of the pre-capitalist feudal restraints and able to rise in power. The feminist movement has opened the door for this, and we therefore see a growing number of wimyn rising in business and government to high positions, like Condoleeza Rice, Hillary Clinton, and Nancy Pelosi. Many companies now have femyl CEO's and top executives. In fact there has been much more of an opening for wimyn than for Black men into the middle class and the bourgeoisie. Even wimyn of the oppressed class are pulled towards a feminist ideological and political line to some degree. But what about proletarian ideology and politics? In its correct application, it stands in contradiction to both male chauvinism and feminism.

And at the same time, we have seen dramatic cutbacks in social services and masses of poor wimyn with children cut from welfare roles. We've seen a rise in sweatshops and in the number of wimyn going to prison and becoming homeless, all without an outcry from the feminists.

What about children's rights and their need to be loved and nurtured and raised with strong proletarian values and morality? We must apply Panther Love to them, because a gendered ideology and political line cannot resolve these issues. Solving these problems demands that we introduce all-sided collectivism in a pragmatic way to draw together wimyn, men, and children in the oppressed communities – wimyn and men who are down for this proletarian line are worthy of recruiting and training as warriors of the vanguard. To watch out for feminism as well as male chauvinism, we must promote proletarian ideology and egalitarianism among comrades.

Two Waves of Feminism's Rise and Decline in Amerika

As pointed out above, the Amerikan feminist movement saw two waves – the initial broad impetus of which came from working class wimyn – but was both times co-opted and subverted into reformism by middle class and bourgeois elements. Similar methods of using opportunists and middle class collaborators within the oppressed group were applied to undermine our own New Afrikan liberation movements, (the tactic of neo-colonialism), and to undermine the early working class movement of the early 1900's in Amerika, (buying off labor leaders and making token political and economic concessions to workers).

The first wave of the Amerikan feminist movement was sparked by the resistance of working class white wimyn in textile mills, like the working wimyn of Lowell Massachusetts, and sweatshops, like in the Garment District in NYC. An attendant impetus was driven by the rising anti-slavery movement in the early 1840's. White wimyn in general came to see their conditions of domestic servitude to white men as not unlike the chattel enslavement of Blacks. This rise in consciousness gave rise to a broad movement for wimyn's equality. However, towards the end of the 19th century and into the early 20th century this movement was co-opted, reduced and channeled into one to win wimyn's suffrage.

Emma Goldman, a radical feminist who was deported from Amerika in 1919, recognized this reformist trend in feminism of merely seeking wimyn's suffrage for what it was. She stated of feminism:

"Our modern fetish is universal suffrage... The women of Australia and New Zealand can vote and help make laws. Are the labor conditions better there?..."

In a similar vein, in 1911 Helen Keller, an avowed socialist, criticized the same trend in England thusly:

"Our democracy is but a name. We vote? What does that mean? It means that we choose between two bodies of real, though not avowed autocrats, Tweedledrum and Tweedledee..."

"You ask for votes for women. What good can votes do when ten-elevenths of the land of Great Britain belongs to 200,000 and only one-eleventh to the rest of the 40,000,000. Have your men with their millions of votes freed themselves from this injustice?"

Lacking a clear revolutionary working class leadership, this first wave of feminism was corralled into a narrow movement of wimyn's suffrage. When the wimyn's vote was granted, the movement petered out.

Although based primarily amongst white wimyn, the second resurgence of feminism found its inspiration in the struggles of the 1960's, especially by the activism of Black working class wimyn and college students, centered largely in the Student National Coordination Committee – formerly the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee – The SNCC

was itself founded by Ella Baker – a sista who performed much of the behind the scenes work to push the Black Civil Rights movement to the forefront of U.S. politics. Wimyn members of the various radical social movements of the 60's – anti-war groups, civil rights groups, student organizations, etc. – began coming together to organize against gender oppression.

Wimyn were especially prominent within the Black Liberation Movement; many came to link gender oppression up with class and racial oppression. Indeed the most advanced Black political formation of that era – the Black Panther Party – came to be in fact, (despite its popularized male image), largely a wimyn's party. But the movements of the 1960's and 70's were brutally repressed, co-opted and/or bought off by the power structure, and by the influence of feminism – again lacking a consolidated revolutionary working class leadership and ideology, and based largely amongst middle class white wimyn – the Women's Movement was effectively neutralized as a movement for social justice for wimyn.

The activism of this second wave was diverted – again – by civil reforms, (affirmative action), and the entry of greater numbers of white wimyn into the middle and upper classes, thanks in large part to the restructuring of the U.S. economy, (from factory to service-based), and the “general prosperity” of the time. Today, feminism is proclaimed by its mainstream voices to have “succeeded” on account of wimyn today enjoying more positions as corporate CEO's and directors, in high political offices, and in other prominent careers and positions. Yet for wimyn of color and working class wimyn in Amerika, conditions of poverty and male chauvinist oppression prevail.

Overall, the broader entry of wimyn into the U.S. work force and expanding their roles in the public sector of capitalist society has not won them equality, nor working class liberation. Violence against wimyn continues; wimyn are still largely kept out of traditionally male fields, they still earn less than men, and amongst the poor and oppressed nationalities and races single wimyn with children predominate. As with the proclamations of racial equality, wimyn's equality is promoted as a publicly accepted principle, yet in reality these are empty “politically correct” pronouncements which do not actually exist. So while wimyn's aspirations and consciousnesses concerning gender equality are an existing cultural trend, their struggle for genuine liberation has been subverted and has petered out.

Our Line on Revolutionary Wimyn's Liberation

We are no more “feminists” than we are “masculinists.” We are social egalitarians who oppose placing either gender above the other. But as an oppressed group, wimyn definitely have the right and duty to organize and struggle against their oppressive conditions, against all stereotyped social roles and exploitation by men. Male revolutionaries must commit to aiding our sistas and ensuring that all forms of oppression against them are ended.

However, we must keep our class perspective foremost. It is only through class struggle, through materially changing and eliminating gendered categories in the process of socializing productive and reproductive life that we can change how people think. We need to gain the power to effect these changes.

Some feminists, (and even some comrades), propose ending gender oppression by simply eliminating the social categories of gender by ceasing to classify people as femyl and male. This idea reverses materialist principles; and supposes that simply by changing how people think we can change material reality. Whereas, it is our social practice that determines our thinking. Furthermore, how is it possible not to recognize that the sexes exist as a unity of opposites? This becomes apparent as soon as we stand naked side by side, as soon as we carry out our respective functions in the reproductive processes, which are at the very root of our existence and survival.

Moreover, the mere fact of gender differences is no more the basis of gender oppression than attempting to ignore them could eliminate gender oppression. It is the material relationships within societies that brought the contradictions between the sexes into a state of antagonism which expresses itself as gender oppression and consequent struggles against it. These are material conditions that developed organically alongside the development of class society. In order to eliminate wimyn's oppression, we must eliminate the material social conditions that cause this condition. We must eliminate class society and consciously socialize all social relations. Wimyn must participate equally with men in economic, political, military, cultural, and social life. And these activities must be public activities, mass-based and not monopolized by or centralized into the hands of a small wealthy elite, male or femyl.

These changes cannot happen overnight. In the process of working towards them, we will definitely persist in certain gendered practices and thoughts. This is inevitable, since we are the products of a gendered society and have inherited certain behaviors and perceptions over our lifetimes, (and over thousands of years in some cases), that will demand continuous and difficult struggle to overcome. We are not idealists. But our path forward is illuminated by the examples, successes, and errors of those who've gone before, and it is our duty to study and learn from, apply and advance the lessons of those advances and mistakes.

Our struggle as New Afrikans must begin with the understanding that cultural imperialism has imposed bourgeois concepts of "manhood" and "womanhood" on us, yet these definitions have never fit our lived reality. This bourgeois warp defines the gender role of the "man" as that of protecting the womyn, whose role as a "lady" is that of being helpless, subservient, passive, and incapable of contributing to the administration and defense of our communities.

Our lived experience contradicts these concepts for several reasons. First, during and since chattel slavery, our men have been largely prevented from defending our wimyn and communities from violence. Second, New Afrikan wimyn – because of their prominent role in productive and reproductive life – have endured the "authority" of the husband much less than white wimyn. Her role throughout U.S. history, (in slavery, domestic service, as a general service-trade wage-earner, etc.), has thrust her into a position of doing manual labor and thereby providing for the productive needs of family and community. Therefore she has generally exercised greater decision making power in matters of family and community than her white counterpart.

Finally, attempts by New Afrikan men to live up to the bourgeois image of "manhood" often expresses itself in a subculture of exaggerated violence, (directed against ourselves and other poor and powerless social groups), and preoccupation with one's sexual potency. The former tendency has our males routinely engaging in irrational, often stupid acts of violence and feigned bravado to "impress" femyls and "prove" manhood. Yet we've never been able to defend ourselves, much less our communities, from the oppression and abuses of the power structure and its violent enforcers. The latter tendency is in large part a carry over from the degraded role of our men on the old slave plantations. Particularly after the abolition of the transport of slaves from Afrika, breeding of slaves to increase stock became all-important. Consequently strong and sexually potent "studs" – like bulls – became among the most prized slaves.

So, as opposed to bourgeois culture, "manhood" for the slave was merely an expression of sexual potency, (how many wimyn the male could sexually use and impregnate). We see traits of this today in Black communities: young males boast about how many "baby names" they have while being unable or unwilling to assume responsibility for the welfare and upbringing of the children they have produced. There is also the frequent practice of young males holding their crotches to emphasize or exaggerate the size and potency of their sex organ.

Bourgeois concepts of "womanhood" also do not apply to Black wimyn. As Sojourner Truth pointed out, our sistas have never enjoyed the general "privilege" of being sheltered, pampered, and protected. Nor have they been passive, submissive and deferential in their domestic life. Domination over Black wimyn by their men has remained relatively weak. Still, the pervasive imperialist-manufactured urban youth sub-culture encourages our males to denigrate our sistas. They are projected as sex objects, concubines and prostitutes, to be used and depreciated by men, not to be loved, appreciated, and respected as the other half of our Nation, as producers, reproducers, and indeed as the source of our very existence. In fact it has been the almost super-humyn strength and struggle of our wimyn that has allowed us to survive as long as we have.

Since the close of chattel slavery in 1865, (excluding prisoners), New Afrikan wimyn have remained prominent in performing the hard productive and reproductive work necessary to sustain our communities both in the rural and urban sectors. From planting and harvesting, to working as domestic servants, to doing factory work, to now struggling to maintain employment within the service trades, our wimyn have always assumed a major role in the productive work to pay the bills and put food on the table. What's more, our sistas' burden in sustaining our communities and families is attended by combined gender, racial and class oppression. Indeed, our males, acting under the influence of bourgeois concepts of "manhood" while excluded from participation in bourgeois society, have supported and aided in the oppression of our wimyn. As George Jackson observed in a letter to his mother:

"The Black woman has in the past few hundred years been the only force holding us together and holding us up. She has absorbed the biggest part of the many shocks and strains of existence under a slave

order. The men can think of nothing more effective than pimping, gambling or petty theft. I've heard men brag about being pimps of Black women and taking money from Black women who are on relief. Things like this I find odious, disgusting — You are right, the Black men have proven themselves to be utterly detestable and repulsive in the past. Before I would succumb to such subterfuge I would scratch my living from the ground on hands and knees, or die in a hail of bullets! My hat goes off to every one of you. You have my profoundest respect...The men of our group have developed as a result of living under a ruthless system a set of mannerisms that numb the soul. We have been made the floor mat of the world, but the world has yet to see what can be done by men of our nature, by men who have walked the path of disparity, of repression, of abortion, and yet come out whole. There will be a special page in the book of life for the men who have crawled back from the grave. This page will tell of utter defeat, ruin, passivity, and subjection in one breath, and in the next, overwhelming victory and fulfillment."

In order to take our place in history as men, as *revolutionary men*, and not to be defined by and ape bourgeois culture, we must join with our sistas in the collective process of building, nurturing, and sustaining our communities and Nation. Wimyn and men together must assume equal roles in our cultural, social, political, productive and reproductive life. Neither our brothas, nor are our sistas, are slaves or property, and we must cease relating to ourselves as such! These twisted concepts have us treating our wimyn and sex as commodities, (articles of property), to be given to men in exchange for material gifts and "protection."

In building and serving our communities and nation, material equality for our wimyn must be developed and practiced. Only in this way will we undermine the prevailing subjective advantages our men have been conditioned to believe they have over our sistas, entitling them to demean, marginalize, use, abuse, and oppress them. And only in this way will we survive as a people and be strong enough to end our oppression.

Our men's very concept of social significance and their warped notions of "manhood" will be challenged by sistas who actively and effectively take the lead in a collective unified and organized manner to advance our Nation's struggle for survival and against imperialist oppression. With wimyn taking the lead, shoulder to shoulder with our revolutionary brothas, (our New Men), and youth, the other so called "men" will be compelled to either recognize sistas as their equals and unite with their mothers, daughters, sisters, aunts, grandmothers, lovers, and wives in support of our struggle, or be widely recognized as less than the men they claim and define themselves to be.

Lessons to be Drawn from the Black Panther Party

In this struggle, important lessons can be taken from the practical work of the original BPP, its effects on gender relations in the New Afrikan communities it served, and its broader implications within revolutionary struggle. In this context it is important to point out that rural peasant-based societies typically retain strong communal ties, (remnants of kinship), at least subjectively. All of the successful revolutionary struggles of last century occurred in societies where peasants were the majority: in Russia, China, Vietnam, Guinea Bissau, Angola, Mozambique, Cuba, etc. This is because, as a people accustomed to relating to social members in a sense of kinship and community, peasants are more readily able to unite in a community-wide struggle against oppressive forces once they become organized and conscious of being oppressed, of who is oppressing them, and the methods by which that oppression is imposed. In this regard rural people are more ready to accept political discipline.

However, in the case of oppressed urban folk in developed capitalist societies in particular, senses of kinship and community have been largely destroyed through their constant experiences of having to hustle, compete, and scramble on an individualized basis against their peers to survive. This is especially reinforced by the division of communities into small nuclear families which do not see themselves as dependent on each other for overall survival and protection of the community and each other. The imperialist system has conditioned them to look to outside forces — the imperialist corporate workplace, government and police — for these things — forces that prey upon and oppress rather than serve the interests and needs of these communities.

Furthermore, in the urban New Afrikan communities the sense of kinship in even the small nuclear family has been shattered under our neo-colonial conditions. In our urban communities both wage earning and child care fall largely on the shoulders of our wimyn. Our men have been increasingly alienated from both productive and reproductive life. Dwindling jobs and racist and class-based stereotypes of young Black males have made it increasingly difficult for them to find and maintain work, especially non-degrading work. They are pushed into illegal capitalist pursuits or chasing remote dreams of brief careers as entertainers or athletes. Moreover, the dominant chauvinist culture has

conditioned them to view child-rearing as essentially a womyn's vocation. The socially destructive result is that our children are growing up without positive male role models and examples. It was in its moves toward solving this great social problem that one of the greatest achievements of the BPP can be found.

The BPP was able to transform the competitive and individualistic "lumpenized" (broken), urban mentality in the Black communities it served into a communal one. The key was its focus on mobilizing the entire community around something that its individual members were able to place above their personal interests: their kids.

In the U.S. government's anti-Panther crusade, FBI director J. Edgar Hoover fingered the BPP as the single greatest threat to U.S. domestic "security." The most fearsome thing he said the Panthers were doing was the Free Breakfast for Children Program (FBCP). What made a program that served free wholesome meals to hungry poor Black children such a dangerous activity? It was the program's practical ability to counter the Black communities' conditioned dependence upon the imperialist system.

The FBCP struck at the heart of this system and its values. It brought together in public communal and cooperative *productive and reproductive* life all ages and groups in the communities, including wimyn, men and youth, and thereby built that sense of unified, community oriented, self-sufficiency and kinship that predominated in our historical communal societies.

The Panthers' FBCP demonstrated by practical example, along with the BPP's other *Serve the People* programs, that working together in unified, community-based and gender-neutral structures, even the poorest of people can solve their own problems without need of begging for handouts and crumbs from the imperialist system. The FBCP implemented a gender-neutral, socialist program that brought out the collective community to serve and meet its own economic needs and collectively participate in child rearing. This was a move toward revolutionizing urban life. It focused on investing collective energy into the children, as they most clearly reflected the future they were struggling for. The Panthers educated and demonstrated by example and mass participation that socialistic practice was the answer to the problems of the people.

As martyred Panther leader Fred Hampton Sr. observed, it was the Panthers' service to the people that most securely welded the communities to the Party and vice-versa. He noted that when the cops attempted to alienate the Black communities from the Panthers by emphasizing to them that the BPP was a communist and socialist party, the consistent response they got from community members was they didn't care what the Panthers or the FBCP were, because they were feeding their children and providing services for community needs that the government couldn't, wouldn't, and had long ignored. And if the cops touched those programs they would get the communities' collective foot put up their pig asses. In fact on many occasions when the cops laid siege to and threatened to conduct assault raids on BPP offices, the communities came out en masse, surrounded the Panther building, and themselves drove the pigs off.

But what relevance does this all have to the question of and answer to wimyn's oppression? Well, point is, as former Panther Malika Adams expressed, the BPP's community service programs, (which were staffed and implemented on a collective, public and community-based level), engaged in activities that were traditionally viewed as "wimyn's work," such as feeding children, taking care of the sick, etc. They also implemented activities to provide for the basic economic needs of the communities. What's more the Party, which had a largely femyn membership because of this orientation, saw many of the wimyn comrades face armed confrontations with police side by side with men in the Party. Thus, the Panthers brought into public life the work of acquiring survival necessities for the community, nurturing the community, caring for children and community members, passing along moral values, and community defense.

It combined both traditionally male-centered and womyn-centered roles in community service programs, carried out by men and wimyn of various ages. Furthermore, it gave wimyn leadership roles in the Party at a time when wimyn were largely blocked out of leadership positions everywhere else, including within civil rights groups.

While the rise of wimyn into leading ranks of the BPP came with considerable struggle against typical male machismo, intolerance, insolence and disrespect early on, the wimyn demonstrated courage, shared brutality and the hands of the pigs and refused to accept male-imposed limitations. This caused much of the resistance to give way. Wimyn held such a dominant position in the BPP that Panther vet Mumia Abu-Jamal referred to the BPP as a "woman's party." In Sista Malika's words, "women ran the BPP pretty much. I don't know how it got to be a male's party or thought of as being a male's party."

The BPP in its practice even struck a blow against the bourgeois concept of the nuclear family and marriage. Their members lived in communal houses, and wimyn as well as men selected their partners freely from amongst other Panthers. This is not to say that many Panthers did not function as married couples or live in nuclear families, but in either case there was struggle over gender roles and to put politics in command.

And like our New Afrikan sistas, who struggled alongside our brothas throughout our ordeal of chattel slavery, Panther wimyn were anything but weak. Comrade Mumia has these reminiscences of Panther wimyn:

"When I read or hear critics employ their projections against the BPP on charges of sexism I can barely conceal a chuckle for my memories of women in the Party were of able, determined and powerful revolutionaries who fought with and for their brothers like lionesses.

"Women in the Party in which I spent several years of my youth were not dainty, shrinking violets. They were, of course, of various backgrounds and, as is common in Black America, of every which hue.

"They were also tough women.

"We lived in Spartan, virtually bare 'Panther Pads,' where we fell onto mattresses at the end of a long day's work.

"Whether I was in Philadelphia, the Bronx, or in Berkeley, California, I was under the authority of a female Panther who ran a tight and efficient operation...

"On both coasts, in cities of different rhythms and pace, one found confident, capable, proud and inspiring women who commanded respect, camaraderie, intense loyalty, and sisterly love.

"We knew from experience that they would be treated as viciously as we if they fell into the hands of the enemy, and we loved them all the more for their courage and their sacrifice. We knew, and could recite, the names of our sisters who were political prisoners of the pigs, and their names were like a mantra of resistance: Ericka Huggins, Angela Davis, Afeni Shakur, Joan Bird...

"As for sex, women chose their partners as freely as the men, and many could and did say no...

"To be a Panther meant something extraordinary in 1970, and one felt immensely honored to know, work with, and love these tough, committed women. These were, as Elaine Brown would later recount, 'hard' women who were seen as 'soldiers, comrades -- not pretty little things.' They were, to use Eldridge Cleaver's words, our 'other half,' who fought as 'strongly and enthusiastically as we [did]...in the struggle...'

"In the ranks and offices of the Black Panther Party, women were far more than mere appendages of male ego and power. They were valued and respected comrades who demonstrated daily the truth of the adage 'a revolutionary has no gender.'"

Furthermore, at a time when many social justice movements were uncertain how or if to relate the question of the oppression of homosexuals to their own agendas, BPP Minister of Defense Huey P. Newton acknowledged that gays are not enemies of the people and indeed may be the most oppressed social group. He pointed out in his August 1970 statement on "the Women's Liberation and Gay Liberation Movements," that many men's first instinct is "to want to hit a homosexual in the mouth." Not because they've done one any wrong, but because many of us men are insecure about our own manhood. He gave the example that this is a result of social conditioning in class society, which caused him to feel male homosexuality a threat but not femyl homosexuality. Huey took the novel position that we should cease in derogatory and oppressive behaviors toward gays and instead ally with them in the struggle.

In our struggle against imperialism and patriarchy, the BPP offered much that we can learn from, apply and advance. As a genuinely revolutionary program, the Panthers were the first structure to pursue socializing both productive and reproductive humyn relations in a gender neutral fashion, thereby creating a genuinely revolutionary communal culture in one of the most reactionary and competitive of social environments.

It is also imperative in today's struggle that we develop and implement affirmative programs that will provide for our sistas' independent security and self defense, as a brake on 1) tendencies toward male domination and 2) tendencies to stereotype national and community defense as exclusively male functions. In this way we can struggle against male "macho" tendencies which seek to "protect" wimyn or prove oneself, which as a Comrade recently pointed out to me is "synonymous most often with stupidity." We must equalize the roles and positions of our sistas in these areas to give them both the means and confidence to defend themselves and our communities and thus pull the carpet from under the very concept of patriarchy that wimyn must be men's passive playthings, subservient, and weak because dependent on males for protection. But even in this endeavor we must keep politics and our class interests in command. All our efforts – economic, political, defense, cultural, and social – must be regulated and illuminated by historical and dialectical materialism.

Dare to Struggle and Dare to Win!

All Power to the People!

Kevin "Rashid" Johnson

Minister of Defense NABPP-PC

Prosecution as Intimidation



Kevin "Rashid" Johnson
Minister of Defense, NABPP-PC

Reprinted from Right On #13, Fall '08

On April 29, 2008, an indictment charging me with one count of attempted capital murder of a prison guard, one count of possessing a weapon while a prisoner, and three counts of felony assaults on guards were dismissed with prejudice, on grounds of violation of my entitlement to a speedy trial. The charges carried a maximum sentence of life and 20 years.

The indictment, which was issued by a grand jury on March 19, 2008, was the third consecutive indictment issued against me in three years on these same charges. The first two indictments were voluntarily dismissed by the local prosecutor's office with leave to re-indict me. In this third case, I elected to represent myself.

The final dismissal wasn't exactly an example of judicial fair play. It was more a move to avoid exposure of ongoing governmental persecution of Black grassroots political activists and leaders that haven't been chosen and "approved" by the Establishment, and the blatant racism of the local judiciary in particular and the Amerikan judicial system in general.

For several years now, I have been openly involved in various organized efforts to report and expose ongoing abuses of prisoners here at Red Onion State Prison (ROSP), the remote supermax prison where I am confined in Wise County, Virginia. ROSP maintains an 85-90% non-white prisoner population contrasted by a 98% white staff, that is drawn from local rural communities that are openly-race segregated, and white racism is a strong feature of local culture and tradition.

I am also openly involved in the more broadly focused work of the New Afrikan Black Panther Party & White Panther Organization – Prison Chapters. I am a founding member and serve as the Party's Minister of Defense.

Each high point of exposure of abuses here and the permissive attitudes of the ranking officials, and consequent public response, has been followed by heightened harassment and new indictments against me. That this is intended to intimidate me is obvious.

While local prosecutors frequently seek and prosecute criminal charges against prisoners here, they absolutely refuse to prosecute guards for their criminal offences against prisoners. The local courts likewise slam their doors against prisoners seeking civil redress and enforcement of their legal protections through civil litigation. So much for (color) blind justice.

The bottom line in who gets justice – or even a hearing – is based on a color line that divides prisoners and staff at this and other state prisons in Virginia. It is black and white.

The local policy of selective prosecution serves a double purpose. For one, it reinforces anti-Black prejudice and prejudice towards prisoners and the stereotypes already in the minds of the local population that are played up nationally to support the criminalization and mass incarceration of the youth in Black and other oppressed communities, and secondly: it emboldens and encourages the guards to abuse and otherwise violate the rights of the prisoners, knowing that they will not be prosecuted or held to account. Indirectly, this encourages prisoners to individualistic acts of violence which are met with swift punishment.

The first indictment against me was issued by a grand jury on January 17, 2006. I was arrested on January 27, 2006. No action was taken on the indictment by the court or the prosecutor's office, the obvious intent being to harass and intimidate me, and to attack my character by painting a violent image of me in particular and ROSP prisoners in general.

All criminal charges against ROSP prisoners are reported in the local media, with charges of violence against guards highlighted to incite fear and hatred in the minds of the people in the local communities. Thus they are conditioned to respond with indifference to any reports of guard brutality that may leak out.

During the latter part of 2006, an attorney friend sent word to me that she had discovered that the indictment was dismissed by *nolle prosequi*, meaning that it could be reissued at any time. A second indictment charging the exact same offences was issued on October 16, 2006. I was arrested on April 2, 2007. no action was taken for over four months after this.

On September 31, 2007, I was taken before the Wise County Circuit Court for arraignment and hearing on appointment of counsel. This hearing occurred just two days before the five month speedy trial deadline set by Virginia law would have expired.

I stated my demand to be tried within the speedy trial time frame. I also informed the presiding judge, Joseph Carrico, that I had attorneys who were willing to assist me with my defense but ROSP officials were refusing to permit me to communicate with them. Judge Carrico ignored my issues and decided to appoint a local attorney to represent me. I learned some time later that this second indictment was also dismissed by the prosecutor's motion to *nolle prosequi* on the same September 31 date, in obvious league with Judge Carrico to invalidate the impending speedy trial violation.

The third indictment, issued on April 29, 2008, was never served on me. This time I was arraigned before ever being arrested. In Virginia, the statutory speedy trial time period begins to run from the date of arrest. The court moved quickly to ensure that no speedy trial violation could occur in this third case.

On March 31, 2008, I was arraigned before Judge Carrico to determine my status as to counsel. I asserted my right to represent myself. As required by law, the Judge appointed a local attorney, C. Paul Johnson, as standby counsel, to assist me in preparing my defense. The actual handling and conduct of my defense, however, remained at all times within my hands.

Pretrial motions hearing was scheduled for April 29, 2008, and trial was set for May 27th. Just two months prior to the issuance of the third indictment, I had been called to testify on behalf of another prisoner who was on trial for allegedly assaulting a guard. Joseph Carrico was the presiding judge in that case as well.

The prosecuting attorney, Adrian Collins, began his cross-examination of me attempting to play up anti-prisoner and racist stereotypes before the all-white jury. He first questioned me implying that I'd written a publication that advocated prisoner violence against guards, referring to the "Don't Shank the Guards Handbook: Legal Recourse to Guard's Brutality, Harassment and Rape." I answered that the title itself made it evident that his characterization of the publication was dishonest.

He went on to question me about the violent character of my past criminal and prison disciplinary convictions and attempted to correlate them to my role as a leading member of the NABPP/WPO-PC, which he referred to as simply the "Black Panther Group." Among local whites, the typical conception of the "Black Panthers" is that of a Black Ku Klux Klan or anti-white criminal street gang.

He implied that my role in the Party meant that I promoted violence against guards and white guards in particular. I thoroughly countered his anti-Panther racist-baiting and explained to the jury our opposition to all forms of discrimination and our policy promoting the exposure of the hidden brutalities of imprisonment to the public, whom the prison and judicial officials seek to shield these conditions from with just such hate-mongering and false accusations.

The officials put on a major show to ensure that this jury was thoroughly prejudiced and to enhance local fear and alienation regarding the prisoners. The court house was surrounded by guards dressed out like police SWAT units, brandishing an arsenal of weapons, with three K-9 units with dogs barking loudly and straining against their leashes, and teams of snipers with high-powered rifles visible at various distances around the court house.

Local police units were also present and dressed-out for war. As during the slave days, when Blacks were portrayed as the "enemy within" to the poor whites, needing to be kept in check with open displays of readiness to unleash state-sponsored violence, an atmosphere of a "state-of-siege" was being orchestrated, and was all the more absurd because we were handcuffed, chained and shackled and barely able to scratch our noses.

It is telling that I was taken to the same court house on March 31, 2008 with only three guards for security and no combat attire, no waiting back-up, or K-9 units. No show was put on when I was again taken to court on April 29th for pre-trial motions hearings.

After the arraignment, I immediately contacted Atty. Johnson and set him to obtaining materials I need for my defense. I interrogated him to obtain an insider's view of the customs of the local court. He reluctantly revealed much of what I already suspected, and based on his answers, I intended to request a change of venue from Wise County to a less remote area where a more culturally and racially diverse jury might be found.

Under my questioning, Atty. Johnson confessed that over the past five years, he'd only seen two Blacks in the pool from which jurors are selected and neither of them were selected to serve on juries. He also admitted that Black officeholders were non-existent in the County. The whole set up was a throw-back to the U.S. South of the early 1800's.

From the information I was acquiring, it was evident to him that I intended to put the local justice system on trial and expose its predisposition to racial prejudice as part of my defense. Paul Johnson was reluctant to assist me in my intentions to place his colleagues, his town and its political establishment in the spotlight. Suddenly, just before the pre-trial hearing, he remembered that he was working in the DA's office back when the first indictment was issued against me in 2006, and he suggested I might want to replace him because of the conflict of interest. I declined.

I also expressed to him that I noted that the first two indictments had resulted in speedy trial violations, and a technicality in the governing law which implied that a new indictment could purge a speedy trial violation on a previous indictment. I filed my motion to dismiss the indictment on the grounds of speedy trial violation the week before the hearing date.

Obviously Paul knew something I didn't, because before it was confirmed that I was going to formally move to dismiss, he'd assured an outside comrade that the case would most likely be dismissed on this basis. As soon as court convened on April 29th, he went about the formalities of retrieving the case record for the judge, showing he was very much at home in the local court, and requested the judge to speak with me in a private office.

I'd requested no conference. As soon as we were in the room, his beginnings of a purely banal conversation were interrupted by the prosecutor, Adrian Collins, poking his head in the door to tell Paul he wanted a brief word with him. A staged performance if I ever saw one.

Outside the door, Collins told Paul in a voice loud enough for me to hear that he'd read my motion to dismiss and he was going to concur that a speedy trial violation had occurred. He would himself move to have the case dismissed with prejudice.

The charges were dismissed and barred from ever being brought up again. Atty. Johnson exclaimed "You Win!" with feigned excitement. But I don't really consider it to be a win. The systematic abuses against prisoners continue and local redress remains blocked. Selective prosecutions continue, and the public remains unaware of the injustices perpetrated in their name.

It remains for us to build a mass movement to fight for prisoners' civil and human rights. When we are moving decisively and *en masse* in a direction to expose, educate and organize to struggle against these mass injustices that are inherently a part of this exploitative, rotten, imperialist system, then I will celebrate.

Dare to Struggle and Dare to Win!

All Power to the People!



Kevin Rashid Johnson
NABPP-PC Minister of Defense

Black Liberation in the 21st Century: A Revolutionary Reassessment of Black Nationalism

Reprinted from Right On #19, Spring '10

"[T]rue revolutionary leaders must not only be good at correcting their ideas, theories, plans or programs, when errors are discovered... but when a certain objective process has already progressed and changed from one stage of development to another, they must also be good at making themselves and all their fellow revolutionaries progress and change in their subjective knowledge along with it..."

— Mao Tse-tung, *On Contradiction*



Introduction

Some time ago, comrades of the New Afrikan Maoist Party (NAMP) expressed a desire to reconcile contradictions between their line and the line of our New Afrikan Black Panther Party – Prison Chapter (NABPP-PC) on the question of Black National Liberation in the 21st Century. On this question, NAMP along with several other organizations – including the New Afrikan People's Organization (NAPO), the Provisional Government of the Republic of New Afrika, the Maoist International Movement (MIM) and others – promote the Black Belt Thesis (BBT) as it was set out by the Comintern (Third Communist International) in the 1920s.

The NAMP comrades are correct in pointing out that our respective organizations have a major line contradiction on this question. Because we have as yet not publicly fleshed out our line on this in contrast to that of NAMP and others, it is time we did so in a formal position paper.

In developing our line on the Black National Question in the U.S., we have applied the method of historical dialectical materialism and deepened the analysis put forward by Huey P. Newton of the original Black Panther Party (BPP). which means we do not hold dogmatically and idealistically to outmoded ideas and formulations that no longer fit the current situation. Instead we base our analysis on the study of concrete conditions in the context of their actual historical development, realizing that everything is in a state of motion and development from a lower to a higher level, and that correct ideas develop in struggle and contradiction with incorrect ones.

The Black Belt Thesis and the New Class Configuration of the New Afrikan Nation

The BBT was developed by the U.S. "Black Bolshevik," Harry Haywood, in his 1928 and 1930 "Comintern Resolution on the Negro Question," which was adopted by the Comintern and the U.S. Communist Party with support from V.I. Lenin. It holds that Blacks in Amerika (New Afrikans) constitute a nation within the territorial U.S. and that we should establish our own sovereign national territory in Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, Louisiana and South Carolina (the "Black Belt" also known as the "Cotton Belt"). The states were chosen because we slaved there and developed and evolved as a national group and "internal colony" where Blacks made up the majority. The principle factors which supported the BBT were economic and demographic that existed in the 1920s but no longer exist today.

No one can sensibly deny that Black people were forged into a "nation within a nation" because of their loss of Afrikan national identity under slavery and exclusion from the white Amerikan nation under conditions of "Jim Crow" segregation. Nor can one deny that this nation is bound to its Afrikan origin and defined by the imposed value that a drop of Afrikan blood sets one outside of the "melting pot" of white Amerikan society.

But where the BBT breaks down is that our present situation doesn't fit into the neat definition used by the Comintern in the 1920s. The reality is more complex today.



At the time the BBT was developed, Blacks in the "Black Belt" were a predominantly peasant (sharecropper) nation tied to cotton production. This condition was also shared by many poor whites and some Indians and mixed bloods. The BBT was based on Comrade J.V. Stalin's analysis of the National Question as essentially a peasant question. Unlike the analysis put forward by Lenin, and more fully developed by Mao, Stalin's analysis limited the National Question to essentially a peasantry's struggle for the land they labored on geographically defined by their having a common language, history, culture and economic life together. Hence the slogans "Free the Land!" and "Land to the Tiller!"

Indeed, ALL the national liberation struggles of the 20th Century occurred in peasant-based societies in opposition to colonial or neo-colonial domination and feudal or semi-feudal class oppression. Today, however, the Black population within the U.S. is no longer a rural peasantry. It is overwhelmingly a proletarian nation (wage slaves) dispersed across the U.S. and concentrated in and around urban centers in predominantly Black or multi-ethnic oppressed communities.

The trend since World War I has been towards migration away from the "Black Belt" South and from the rural to the urban setting (even within the South). Check this out from "1001 Facts" on Black History:

"African Americans continued to move northward and cityward after World War I in 1918. In fact, the migration increased during the 1920s as another million southern African Americans picked up their bags and left southern living conditions. The migration expanded in the 1930s as the New Deal Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933 forced many more to migrate once the AAA paid white southern farmers not to produce crops and made it profitable to dispense with Black sharecroppers. Technological advances such as the cotton picker machine made large numbers of unskilled agricultural laborers obsolete in southern agriculture. Then, as World War II began, Black mass migration exploded and nearly 5 million African Americans left the South for the North from 1940 to 1960... [This] Second Migration created huge ghettos in all the major American cities. Whereas in 1890 close to 90 percent of African Americans lived in the South,

by 1960 only 50 percent of African Americans still resided there. Moreover, the movement North was also a movement toward urban rather than rural living. By 1990 over 84 percent of African Americans lived in urban areas, making 'African American' and 'urban' almost synonymous in modern America."

Therefore, without need of pursuing a struggle to achieve a New Afrikan nation state, we have achieved the historical results of bourgeois democracy, at least as far as transforming ourselves from a peasant to a predominantly proletarian national grouping through the "Great Migration."

Of course the Amerikan liberal democratic revolution begun in 1776, which was continued by the Civil War (1861-1865), remains unfinished – in particular as far as Black people are affected. Pre-capitalist forms of exploitation continue to exist, such as the "slave status" of U.S. prisoners, institutionalized torture, legalized "lynching" as embodied in the racist death penalty, and all manifestations of racism, sexism and discrimination that prevent all from enjoying the "life, liberty and pursuit of happiness" promised by liberal democracy.

To complete the liberal democratic revolution and move forward to socialist reconstruction the proletariat must lead the struggle which is stifled by the increasingly anti-democratic, fascistic and reactionary bourgeoisie. The bourgeois are no longer capable of playing a progressive role in history.

The Revolutionary Advantages of Our Proletarian National Character

That we New Afrikans are now a predominantly proletarian nation – and one without a national territory – is an advantage to the cause of building a multi-ethnic, multi-racial socialist Amerika. Indeed, it thrusts us into playing a vanguard role in leading the whole working class and the broad masses in pulling down the capitalist-imperialist system and achieving social justice for all.

This conception of our historical role corresponds with Lenin's and Mao's lines on the National Question which we contrast with Stalin's and dogmatic continuation of the BBT. Lenin and Mao saw the national question primarily as a matter of building the ranks of the proletarian revolution to pull down the system of imperialism. In fact, in all of his writings on Black liberation in the U.S. Mao consistently talks about merging the Black liberation struggle with the proletarian revolutionary struggle in the U.S. He doesn't mention the land issue once. In *A New Storm Against Imperialism*, (April 16, 1968), he stated:

"Racial discrimination in the United States is a product of the colonialist and imperialist system. The contradiction between the Black masses in the United States and the U.S. ruling circles is a class contradiction. Only by overthrowing the reactionary rule of the U.S. monopoly capitalists class and destroying the colonialist and imperialist system can the Black people in the United States win complete emancipation. The Black masses and the masses of white working people in the United States have common interests and common objectives to struggle for.

"Therefore, the Afro-American struggle is winning sympathy and support from increasing numbers of white working people and progressives in the United States. The struggle of the Black people in the United States is bound to merge with the American workers' movement, and this will eventually end the criminal rule of the U.S. monopoly capitalist class."

In his August 8, 1963 article, *Oppose Racial Discrimination by U.S. Imperialism*, Mao's emphasis is on racial discrimination, not "Free The Land!" He sees Black liberation as driving forward the United Front Against Capitalist-Imperialism and pulling white workers and other strata towards socialist revolution in the U.S. The issue is not integration versus separation but revolution.

Even Malcolm X came to embrace this position. In fact, every popular, independent Black leader who came to hold this view and actively advanced it was promptly assassinated. Why? Because neither separation nor integration threatens the imperialist system – socialist revolution does!

Separation, Integration or Revolution?

Take Brother Malcolm; in his early stages of political development, he promoted Black separatism. Based upon his observation of independence struggles across the predominantly peasant-based 3rd World of the 1950s and early 1960s, he adopted the view that revolution was about land, and he embraced the slogan "Free The Land!," which he elaborated on in his *Message to the Grassroots* speech given in 1963. However, in an April 6, 1964 speech given in Harlem, he expressly rejected both Black separatism and integration, in favor of revolutionary change of Amerika as a whole. He stated:

"We have to keep in mind at all times that we are not fighting for integration, *nor are we fighting for separation*. We are fighting for recognition... for the right to live as free humans in this society." [my emphasis]

Malcolm increasingly came to identify capitalism and imperialism as the ultimate enemy – embracing the need of Afrikan people everywhere to consolidate their struggles into a united Pan-Afrikan movement, and for Blacks in Amerika to unite in a common struggle with all the “have-nots,” regardless of their skin color, against the common exploiters who try to divide everyone and play us against each other. it was at this crucial stage of his development as a revolutionary that he was silenced with a bullet.

A few months before his assassination, Malcolm X criticized his earlier views on separatist Black nationalism, finding that:

“I was alienating people who were true revolutionaries dedicated to overturning the system of exploitation that exists on this earth by any means necessary... I had to do a lot of thinking and reappraising of my definition of Black nationalism. Can we sum up the solution to the problems confronting our people as Black nationalism? And if you notice, I haven’t been using the expression for several months. But I would still be hard pressed to give a specific definition of the overall philosophy which I think is necessary for the liberation of Black people in this country.”

At the opposite pole, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. – who was initially pro-integration and pro-capitalist – also came to identify capitalism and imperialism as the ultimate enemy, expressly rejecting integration and privately promoting socialist revolution in Amerika as the way forward. he stated in November 1967: “Something is wrong with capitalism as it stands here in the U.S. We are not interested in being integrated into this value structure.” During later 1967 and 1968, shortly before his assassination, King repeatedly promoted socialism to his inside circle, but he refused to make this stand publicly for fear of government assassination. But his private statements, public opposition to U.S. imperialist wars abroad, and support for the rights of the poor and workers’ strikes were enough for the imperialist ruling class to mark him for death.



George Jackson, pursuing the same path and arriving at the same conclusions in a more developed way, was likewise cut down by an assassin's bullet. He observed:

"It's no coincidence that Malcolm X and M.L. King died *when* they did. Malcolm X had just put it together... You remember what was on his lips when he died, Vietnam and economic, political economy. The professional killers could have murdered him long before they did. They let Malcolm rage on Muslim nationalism for a number of years because they knew it was an empty ideal, but the second he got his feet on the ground, they murdered him."

Despite Malcolm X's and even King's clearly-stated revolutionary positions that New Afrikan liberation lies neither in assimilation (accommodation) nor separation (running away), but in fundamentally changing Amerikan society as a whole, so that we can live as a free people right here, the Black Movement, and those purporting to lead it, have remained deadlocked between these two less than revolutionary positions. The original Black Panther Party has been the notable exception.

The Panthers recognized that the New Afrikan Nation can neither effectively separate from nor integrate into capitalist-imperialist and white supremacist Amerika. Neo-colonialism precludes the former and racist national oppression precludes the later. Our path to liberation – which even the Panthers found a bit difficult to consistently articulate – is to overthrow U.S. imperialism and play a leading role in the global proletarian revolution and socialist reconstruction. We must be the tip of the spear and rally everyone who has contradictions with imperialism to unite with us.

Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale, who were greatly influenced by Malcolm X, were organizing in this direction, in implementing the BPP's 10 Point Program and Serve The People (STP) survival programs while carrying out revolutionary agitation, education and political organizing to build community-based people's power. Huey saw that Blacks were an oppressed nation inside Amerika, but his ideas on charting our path to liberation took a quantum leap forward when he visited and toured Mao's revolutionary China. There he found that numerous racial and ethnic minorities had attained genuine liberation within China's socialist state, without separating or integrating in the classic sense.

What Huey observed in China gave him a blueprint for organizing Black folks to become self-reliant in the very urban communities where they were concentrated in preparation for revolution in the U.S. The BPP's implementation of these ideas quickly earned it the label of the "greatest threat" to imperialism's security, and the U.S. government concentrated its forces in an all-out campaign to destroy the Panthers. Here's what Huey found in People's China that inspired the BPP's STP survival programs and illuminated his ideas about Black liberation in Amerika:

"I saw, crystal clear, how we can start to reduce the kinds of conflicts that we're having in [Amerika]. I saw an example of that in China... what I saw was this: when I went there, I was very unenlightened and I thought I knew something about China. I thought, as it has been said so often, that China would be a homogeneous kind of racial/ethnic territory. then I found that 50 percent of the Chinese territory is occupied by a 54 percent population of national minorities, large ethnic minorities. They speak different languages, they look very different, they eat different foods. Yet *there is no conflict*. I observed one day that each region – we call them cities – is actually controlled by those ethnic minorities, yet they're still Chinese... I'm talking about a general condition in China where ethnic minorities I've observed control their whole regions. they have a right to have representation in the Chinese Communist Party. At the same time they have their own principles... the cities in this country could be organized like that, with community control. At the same time, not Black control so that no whites can come in, no Chinese can come in. I'm saying there would be democracy in the inner city. The administration should reflect the people who live there."



Huey P. Newton in People's China

While Huey proved less than adept at linking together, organizing and leading a multi-racial anti-imperialist united front in Amerika, Fred Hampton, the leader of the BPP in Chicago, successfully pulled together a revolutionary coalition of poor whites (Rising Up Angry and The Young Patriot Party), Puerto Ricans (the Young Lords Organization), Mexicans (the Brown Berets) and various student groups known as the "Rainbow Coalition." He was being considered for promotion to national leadership when he was killed in his bed by FBI and Chicago police in a planned assassination.

Around the country the Black Panthers did inspire and forge alliances with many different ethnically-based groups including the White Panther Party, I Wor Kuen (Chinese), Ang Katipunan (Filipino), the American Indian Movement (AIM) and many others. This was paving the way for a revolutionary united front against imperialism rooted in the oppressed communities.

The NABPP-PC also finds relevance in Huey's theoretical concept of "Revolutionary Intercommunalism," which recognized that the U.S. no longer fits the classical definition of a nation state nor do the countries under its neo-colonial domination. Using "Dollar Diplomacy," along with covert operations and outright invasions, the U.S. has successfully imposed itself upon all of the former European colonies and overthrown the socialist-oriented governments brought to power by national liberation struggles in the 3rd World. This paved the way for the U.S. becoming the world's sole imperialist superpower. Amerika's consolidation of global power since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the increasingly globalized economic interdependence gives greater credibility to Comrade Newton's theory of "Intercommunalism," but we embrace this theory conditionally, recognizing that nation states still exist in the geo-political sense under various political and military set ups of "reactionary intercommunalism," although they exist within a system of relative dominant and subservient positions with the U.S. in the position of "Top Dawg." The shackles of bourgeois nationalism still bind the productive forces of the various nations to some degree, from which world proletarian socialist revolution will liberate them, creating the conditions for "revolutionary intercommunalism."

Reassessing the National Liberation Question

As every national liberation struggle in the 20th Century has demonstrated, genuine national liberation and self-determination have been unattainable. In each case the capitalist-imperialists have created and appealed to aspiring native bourgeois and petty-bourgeois elements within the oppressed national groups and used these puppets to derail their own people's liberation struggles. They have used "Dollar Diplomacy" to forge neo-colonial bonds upon these new republics.

Through their neo-colonial designs, the budding socialist and non-aligned 3rd World blocs were undermined and overthrown (sweeping the tillers off the land) and their natural resources and productive forces were brought under U.S. imperialist domination (with other imperialist powers getting a share). In this world of U.S. imperialist hegemony, any New Afrikan struggle for independence and separation from the U.S. – along the lines of the BBT – would suffer the same fate in spades. Even if we did manage to reconstitute ourselves as a territorial nation in the "Black Belt," we would only join the ranks of imperialist dominated 3rd world nations – and with the imperialist U.S. right on our border.

At a time when few within the 3rd World national liberation struggles foresaw the danger of U.S. neo-colonialism, Amilcar Cabral sounded a warning to other leaders of anti-colonial national liberation movements in the 3rd World. He questioned whether the national liberation movements were altogether born of the colonial peoples' determination to be free or if they were also to some degree instigated by imperialism to create and "liberate" 3rd World bourgeois and aspiring petty-bourgeois forces to serve as imperialist agents and "front men" to impede and counter the growth of world socialism and create global U.S. imperialist hegemony. Few took heed to his words – then or now. Here is Cabral:

"In Guinea, as in other countries, the implementation of imperialism by force and the presence of the colonial system considerably altered the historical conditions and aroused a response – the national liberation struggle – which is generally considered a revolutionary trend; but this is something which I think needs further examination. I should like to formulate this question: is the national liberation movement something which has simply emerged from within our country, is it a result of the internal contradictions created by the presence of colonialism, or are there external factors which have determined it? In fact I would even go so far as to ask whether, given the advance of socialism in the world, the national liberation movement is not an imperialist initiative. Is the juridical institution which serves as a reference for the right of all peoples to struggle to free themselves a product of the peoples who are trying to liberate themselves? Was it created by the socialist countries who are our historical associates? Let us not forget that it was the imperialist countries who recognized the right of all people to national independence."

Cabral went on to point out the inherent contradiction in the imperialists "promoting" 3rd World national independence if indeed such struggles were a threat to imperialism:

"This is where we think there is something wrong with the simple interpretation of the national liberation movement as a revolutionary trend. The objective of the imperialist countries was to prevent the enlargement of the Socialist Camp, to liberate the reactionary forces in our countries which were stifled by colonialism, and to enable these forces to ally themselves with the international bourgeoisie. The fundamental objective was to create a bourgeoisie where one did not exist, in order specifically to strengthen the imperialist and the capitalist camp."

— Amilcar Cabral, *The Politics of Struggle*, (1964)



Amilcar Cabral (1924-1973)

Cabral found that "what really interests us here is neo-colonialism," which he observed was a new phase of imperialism devised after World War II to replace the old colonial system, by "grant[ing] independence to the occupied countries plus 'aid.'"

Witnessing the failed promises of 'national liberation' Cabral recognized that to be genuinely revolutionary and 'liberating' the struggles for national independence had to be *joined with* the struggle of the international proletariat. He concluded;

"...that imperialism is quite prepared to change both its men and its tactics in order to perpetuate itself, it will make and destroy states and, as we have already seen, it will kill its own puppets when they no longer serve its purposes. If need be, it will even create a kind of socialism, which people may soon start calling 'neo-socialism.' if there has been any doubts about the close relations between our struggle [for national liberation] and the struggle of the international working class movement, neo-colonialism has proved that there need not be any."

— Ibid.

Even the U.S. imperialists admitted using such "new tactics" of neo-colonialism as Cabral observed in supporting Afrika and Asia's various national liberation movements. In the words of Vice President Richard Nixon on his return from a 1957 tour of Afrika:

"American interests in the future are so great as to justify us in not hesitating even to assist the departure of the colonial powers from Africa. If we can win native opinion in this process, the future of America in Africa will be assured."

— Quoted in *Dirty Works 2: The CIA in Africa*, edited by Ellen Ray, et als. (Seacaucus; Lyle Stuart, Inc., 1979, p. 58)

Accord this statement of the U.S. National Security Council:

"We must recognize, although we cannot say it publicly, that we need the strong men of Africa on our side. It is important to understand that most of Africa will soon be independent... Since we must have the strong men of Africa on our side, perhaps we should in some cases develop military strong men as an offset to Communist development of the labor unions."

— Quoted verbatim from the record of a January 14, 1960 meeting of the NSC

So clearly the U.S. government favored pushing its European rivals and their colonial governments out of Afrika by *supporting* the Afrikan national liberation struggles, by backing or placing native puppets at the head of those anti-colonial movements. In doing so:

"The stage was set for the transition to *neo-colonialism*: formal political independence for the African countries, but continued economic domination by imperialism, with imperialist political control exerted indirectly through bureaucratic African governments more or less subservient to imperialism, and military control exerted indirectly through covert links between imperialist powers and African military/police hierarchies."

— Daniel Fogel, *Africa in Struggle: National Liberation and Proletarian Revolution*, (ISM Press: CA, 1982, p.116).

National 'Liberation' has therefore proved empty of substance to oppressed 3rd World peoples, absent the defeat of imperialism: Exactly as it would be in a struggle for New Afrikan national 'Liberation' in the southern U.S. territory, absent the defeat of imperialism.

Moreover, any such struggle would almost certainly degenerate into an imperialist-sponsored race war, similar to what went down in the Kosovo conflict (1998-1999), and present day Sudan. In any such struggle, Blacks would be at a decided disadvantage — witness our helplessness in the face of the Hurricane Katrina Crisis and attendant martial law in Louisiana and Mississippi (both "Black Belt" states). And in that crisis we didn't have to contend with angry and desperate whites fighting to keep their land and homes. Or do our proponents of the BBT expect whites in the "Black Belt" to passively concede the territory and leave? Or do they think we will just grab the imperialists by the throat and demand that they give us five states, make all the arrangements, and then let us run the show there without interference?

And what about the white proletarians who live in the "Black Belt?" What stake would they have in this? Or would we want to just push them into the arms of the reactionaries opposing us? Such a plan would only divide the proletarians along racial lines, set them against each other and give the imperialists a free hand to play the "Divide and Rule" game "Willie Lynch" style.

Furthermore, our migration back to the "Black Belt" would be "a leap from the frying pan into the fire" for how would we survive in the already poor economy of the rural South? "Returning to the Land" may sound romantic, but trying to bust a living out of the depleted soil of the Deep South was a dead end that caused the "Great Migration" in the first place.

And what a loss it would be to the international proletariat for us to give up our strategic positions within the urban centers across Amerika. Of course revolutionary work should be done among the people of the "Black Belt" South (including the poor whites and others) as well, as part of building the revolutionary movement to overthrow capitalist-imperialism.

The BPP did not promote a mass exodus of New Afrikans back to the "Black Belt," rather they correctly looked to New Afrikan self-determination right in the oppressed urban communities where Black people are concentrated. It really wasn't until Harry Haywood's book *Black Bolshevik* was published in 1978 that the BBT was revived among the New Communist Movement in the U.S. The name New Afrikan was adopted by a convention of 500 Black nationalist leaders in Detroit in March of 1968, at a Black government conference.

For the NABPP-PC "New Afrikan" is more than the latest in a series of monikers given to Black people in Amerika. Afrika is our common heritage. It — not the "Black Belt" — is our common historic homeland. When a Black person comes to Amerika from the Caribbean, Brazil or from Afrika they become a part of the New Afrikan Nation in Amerika — and suffer national oppression and discrimination — even though their ancestors never set foot in the "Black Belt."

As proletarians, our relationship to production and the world economy makes us "New" and different from the peasantry of the 3rd World and our ancestors in the Old South. Even if we could go back it would be a retrogressive step — and we doubt this is what the Black masses want.



We Have Not Liquidated the National Question

By our pointing out that the shift from peasantry to proletariat and from rural to urban has fundamentally changed the National Question for New Afrikans, we expect some critics will accuse us of having "liquidated" the National Question. For those who dogmatically apply Stalin's analysis, the problem is: "How can we be a nation without a land base?"

We reiterate that the issue is a bit bigger and more complex than that.

If we look at the New Afrikan Nation as being part of a greater Pan-Afrikan Nation – inclusive of the peoples of Afrika and the Afrikan Diaspora (as Malcolm X did), – and this liberation struggle in the context of world proletarian socialist revolution, then we shall see the issue a bit differently. Then we can also see our struggle within the context of a future socialist Amerika that is multi-ethnic and a strong ally of the oppressed peoples internationally.

The proletariat fundamentally has no country and seeks to create a world without boundaries or nation states. So to the proletariat national liberation is not an end in itself but a stage to pass through on the road to World Communism. It is a stepping stone to greater unity and the ending of all oppression.

There are many white comrades (Communists, Socialists, Anarchists, Radicals and Progressives) who are committed to supporting Black liberation because it serves the cause of liberating all of humanity from imperialism and exploitation – because it strengthens the workers' movement. The cause of uniting the Black liberation struggle with the proletarian class struggle is a step towards the total liberation of humanity and the whole world becoming one people.

Just as the proletariat seeks to abolish itself as a class by abolishing all classes, we must seek to abolish ourselves as a nation by abolishing all nations – all national divisions and all national oppression. But this has to begin with liberating ourselves as *nations* from the grip of colonialism, neo-colonialism and imperialism. Just as the proletariat must rise as a class and "pick up the gun to put down the gun," (what is the state but a special body of armed men and wimyn?), we create nation states only to render them obsolete and allow them to fade away when they are no longer necessary. The transitory nature of nation states under socialism is clear.

Comparing Racial and National Oppression

We can only speak of New Afrikan national liberation because we suffer from national oppression. National oppression is linked to but not the same as racist oppression. The people of Haiti don't just suffer national oppression as citizens of a 3rd World nation but also racist oppression because they are black. Iceland is a small island nation too, but if an Icelander family emigrates to the U.S., they will be accepted as whites. If a Haitian family moves here they will face racial oppression. All people of color, to one degree or another, suffer racist oppression because of the institutionalization of the ideology of white supremacy.

The Haitian family will suffer oppression and discrimination in the U.S. because they are immigrants, because they are Black, and because they are not white. A Korean family will have to face the first and the last but not the specific oppression and discrimination leveled at Blacks (New Afrikans in Amerika). This oppression is rooted in the history of slavery (not just in the "Black Belt" South) and colonialism that spawned the white racist mentality.

Whereas in Amerika, the oppression of the indigenous people is a bit different. People with Indian features ("Skins") suffer from national oppression and so do Indians with black or white-skinned features. Black Indians are also oppressed as New Afrikans. White-skinned Indians (if they are identifiable by their dress) may be subjected to racial slurs and discrimination, but this is really national oppression. There is a difference between "white Indians" and "white people" in Amerika, but the difference is national rather than racial.

Within the Indian nations there are divisions between "Bloods" and those who are perceived as "Black Indians" and "White (or mostly white) Indians." These contradictions (which can be antagonistic) between "Red," "White" and "Black" members of the same oppressed indigenous nations are a reflection of the culture of racism that permeates Amerikan society (a colonial-settler state) and projects throughout the world.

We do not (as many Black nationalists do) confuse race with nationality. Nationality is not confined by race. One can change their nationality. One can also have dual or multiple nationalities. One can be a Puerto Rican and a New Afrikan (and also a Taino Indian). One can be a Palestinian, an Arab and a New Yorker all at the same time. National identity is a complex issue.

Do not some New Afrikans identify primarily as Americans? What is Obama trying to sell us? Yet look around any prison and what do you see? Look at the statistics on poverty, infant mortality, hunger, unemployment, and violent deaths. These tell a very different story – one of continued (and intensified) national and class oppression for the Black masses in the U.S.

I have written before that:

"As revolutionary New Afrikan nationalists, we realize that there is a contradiction between race and nationalism, and moreover, that there is no nation composed of a single race. All existing nations, like the Indian nations here in North Amerika, includes whites and mixed bloods, even though there are contradictions. It was the policies of white colonialism created by the ruling class that produced these contradictions, and indeed the New Afrikan Nation. In this regard, we say all people of Afrikan heritage, regardless of skin tone, are part of a single New Afrikan Nation — a Pan-Afrikan Nation. Indeed, most "Blacks" in Amerika are "mixed bloods," mixed with white and/or Indian bloodlines.

"We therefore move beyond black and white dogmatism – Native Americans have always done this in adopting any "race" of people into their nations who embrace and respect their heritage and culture. All non-chauvinistic nations have done this. We also accept that nationalities can overlap and are not merely an either/or situation. People the world over embrace multiple nationalities, and so can New Afrikans. One can be a Venezuelan and a New Afrikan, or a Lenape and a New Afrikan, etc. This concept becomes practical revolutionary internationalism that has all nationalities struggling for both national self-determination and united multi-national, anti-imperialist cooperation...

"From our point of view, the key question is building alliances between the oppressed nations [and nationalities] within the U.S. and abroad and the multi-national proletariat."

– Kevin "Rashid" Johnson, *On the Questions of Race and Racism, Revolutionary National Liberation, and Building the United Front Against Imperialism*, 2007

U.S. Revolution as an Advance Towards Global Communism

The success of socialist revolution in the U.S. would "break the back" of global imperialism and create conditions for successful revolution in every other country. This eventuality will create the conditions for a global dictatorship of the proletariat and move the struggle decisively towards rendering nation states obsolete. What then will be the need for national boundaries or militaries?



Black Riders Liberation Party (BRLP)

Could we not then move forward towards classless society at an accelerated pace? Could we not, for example, create a single international currency and globalized planning of production and distribution of goods? Would it not be possible to have a World Health Organization that really provides for people's health needs and a global commission with clout to address the issues of ecological preservation and balance? Could we not standardize wages and prices and ensure a decent standard of living for everyone on the planet – eradicating poverty?

Conclusion

Most theories on the National Question do not address the dialectical relationship between New Afrikans in the Diaspora and Afrikans in Afrika, the contradictions between Afrikans everywhere and imperialism in the Age of Neo-Colonialism and the Crisis of Capitalist-Imperialism, and between New Afrikans in the U.S. and the white-supreacist, imperialist U.S. ruling class. These questions demand a reanalysis of the BBT and our strategy for Black Liberation.

Kwame Nkrumah's concept of an All-Afrikan (Pan-Afrikan) Revolutionary Party (supported by a military arm) is the correct answer to neo-colonialism. We can take a lesson in this from the struggles going on in South Asia. India contains many nationalities with their own languages and regions, yet they are being led by a united Communist Party of India (Maoist). Likewise we can look to Nepal where the Maoists have won the support of many national minorities and have created autonomous regions. In Afrika, neo-colonialism had an advantage because it was able to play the various budding nation states and tribal groups against each other. Our strength is based on unity and common purpose.

Our concept of Afrika as a Pan-Afrikan nation departs from the Comintern's definition of the National Question which confines the nation to the boundaries already in existence (even though these only reflect the imperialists' carving up of Afrika). We don't expect that the New Afrikan Nation will ever constitute itself again in the "Black Belt," but we can play a significant role in the constitution of a Socialist Afrikan Union, and in the creation of a Socialist U.S.A.



Dr. W.E.B. DuBoise and President Kwame Nkrumah

We believe that it is the historic destiny of the nation of New Afrikans in Amerika to play a leading role among the oppressed peoples of the World in overthrowing capitalist-imperialism and advancing humanity to a higher stage of political-economic organization based on the principles of social justice and equality.

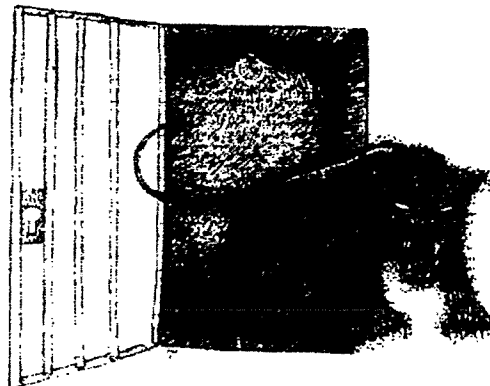
Our unique history and position within the "Belly of the Beast" gives us the opportunity to deal the *coup de grace* to U.S. imperialism. Our long suffering at the hands of white-supremacist Amerika gives us a bond with all who have suffered racist and national oppression and enables us to be truly internationalist in outlook.

As Mao predicted:

"The struggle of the Black people in the United States is bound to merge with the American workers' movement, and this will eventually end the criminal rule of the U.S. monopoly capitalist class."

This is the mission of the New Afrikan Black Panther Party – Prison Chapter and our position on the National Question.

Dare to Struggle Dare to Win! All Power to the People!





Interview with Comrade Rashid

Reprinted from *The Liberator* #15, Summer '10

The following is from an interview by correspondence with Comrade Kevin "Rashid" Johnson, the Minister of Defense of the New Afrikan Black Panther Party Prison Chapter (NABPP-PC) conducted by Comrade Anthony Rayson of the South Chicago ABC Zine Distro. Comrade Rashid is a prisoner at the Red Onion State Prison in Pound, Virginia, a supermax facility.

Anthony Rayson: As you know Amerika does not want people to know what you know and are busy articulating. We're told the "civil rights struggle" of the 1960's took care of racism and that Blacks are cool with capitalism (Snoop Dogism). Tell us what the deal really is and the place the vast gulag system plays in society today – particularly with Black people.

Rashid: We both recognize that the last major wave of New Afrikan/Black struggle against this imperialist (monopoly capitalist) system, racism and national oppression here in Amerika, occurred in the 1960s and 1970s. This struggle took place on two fronts, reflecting the aspirations of two *opposite* class poles in Black Amerika. The first was the pro-monopoly capitalist pole (these elements sought an accommodation with and integration into the U.S. capitalist system). The second was the revolutionary national liberation pole (these elements sought independence and separation from the Amerikan capitalist system or fundamental socialist reconstruction of Amerika's political-economy as a condition to Black integration).

The first tendency was most strongly represented in the Civil Rights Movement. The second tendency by the Black Power/Liberation Movement. Because the second tendency represented a direct challenge to the U.S. imperialist system, it was feared the most by the Establishment.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. began as an accommodationist and pro-integrationist. His major gripe with Amerika was that white racism was a major obstacle to Black integration. That the U.S. government in openly fostering racism was not living up to the rhetoric of all people being equal as

expressed in its founding creed – the Declaration of Independence.

As a middle class (petite-bourgeois) Black, MLK initially held the same class values as the U.S. capitalist ruling class (big bourgeoisie), so he had no beef with capitalism itself, only with the conditions of white racism which prevented Black integration into capitalist Amerika. But MLK became more class conscious toward the end of his life, and ultimately came to realize that the wealth-worshipping capitalist system was the very cause of social inequalities and exploitation, including white racism. At this point he became an advocate of socialism. But initially, he was an advocate of capitalism. MLK's major presence as a civil rights leader spanned from the late 1950's until his assassination in 1968.

Now at the opposite Black Liberation Pole were revolutionary thinkers like Malcolm X. Malcolm's early political understanding was stifled by what I call 'reverse racism' – the subjective idea that Blacks are by nature superior to whites and whites are the embodiment of 'evil.' This view was initially behind his support for Blacks to separate from Amerika. But he wasn't exactly anti-capitalist. In fact, as a leading member of the Nation of Islam, he belonged to an organization that itself promoted Black capitalism. Despite this, his voice was a beacon to New Afrikans who opposed integration into Amerika and accommodation with its white ruling class.

The power structure repeatedly maneuvered to block *both* trends of our movement, prompting New Afrikans to fight back physically against both racial oppression and enforced poverty, and a broad grassroots movement of poor Blacks spontaneously organized to

March on Washington, D.C. in 1963, with the intention of shutting the Capital down – stopping all movement in D.C. including shutting down government operations, traffic, airports, commerce, etc.

This is when President John F. Kennedy decided to open up the Democratic Party to Blacks as a “supporter” of us getting basic civil rights and “equality” within the capitalist system. Kennedy and his big money backers financed King, (who was not broadly known then, but was a prominent pacifist civil rights leader in the South), and used him to rein-in and control Black militancy, and the spontaneously-planned 1963 march, which initially MLK had nothing to do with. He became the face and the voice Kennedy and Co. used in the mainstream media, the churches and elsewhere to speak to the riled-up Black masses and contain their festering rage that was threatening to militantly besiege the U.S. capital.

The U.S. government was compelled to use King and the Democratic Party to avert what would have been a major political and economic crisis that would have shattered its world image. At that time, I believe that MLK, confused by his pro-capitalist class interests, naive faith in the federal government, and his avowed pacifism, was sincerely opposed to Black racial oppression and felt he was doing the right thing.

So King was used as a political pawn to convert what was going to be an angry Black militant siege of D.C. into a government-controlled, passive, one-day march where Blacks – manipulated into a pacifist spirit with “things will get better someday” speeches – marched, sang, and cried out their frustrations, pain and misery, with a few white sympathizers on the fringes. It was a general repeat of what we’d done for centuries during and since slavery in the Black churches.

Now Malcolm X witnessed this entire farce, saw it for the trick it was, and bitterly criticized King and his allies. Malcolm pointed out that Amerika had repeatedly stifled, subverted, tricked and infiltrated every Black struggle for genuine freedom from oppressive conditions, government brutality and neglect, endemic poverty and white racism; and that the 1963 march was just another example of this. He predicted that the Black masses recognized this too, were fed up, and as a result Amerika was in for a “long hot summer” of Black revolt. And just as he predicted, beginning in 1964, (just months after the 1963 march), and continuing through 1968, Black ghettos across the U.S. exploded in continual revolt.

Meantime, after being excommunicated from the NOI by Elija Muhammad, Malcolm began traveling across Afrika, studying their liberation struggles, working to build Pan-Afrikan ties between the oppressed New Afrikan masses in Amerika and the newly liberated Afrikan nations. From the 1950s through the 1960s, Afrikans were fighting for and winning political

independence from European colonialism, and establishing new formally independent Afrikan-led nations. With the European colonizers being expelled from Afrika, and Afrikans taking over the governments, Amerika sought to establish ties with the new heads of the Afrikan countries, so it could secure access to and control over Afrika’s abundant natural wealth. However, racism in Amerika presented an image problem that could prevent the U.S. ruling class from winning the “hearts and minds” of Afrika’s new Black leaders, and their diplomats who were visiting or living in Amerika. This was actually the motive behind federal government efforts to outlaw segregation in the southern states, beginning with the landmark ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* in the mid-1950s.

Even during the most rabid periods of racial oppression, Amerika always projected a patently false international image of the U.S. being a racial and cultural “melting pot” where all people lived and were treated equally. Malcolm’s efforts threatened U.S. imperialist ambitions in Afrika, as he was actually exposing the true racist face of Amerika to Afrikans and showing them that their own sistas’ and brothas’ were brutally oppressed in Amerika, as they had been under the European colonial systems they had just struggled to break free of in Afrika.

Unlike MLK, Malcolm X at this stage was a strong advocate of our right to struggle for political independence and separation from Euro-Amerikan rule, – as Afrikans were doing in Afrika – and to defend ourselves against racist violence, “by any means necessary,” which included by use of arms. Malcolm’s views became more and more revolutionary and less rooted in reverse racism, as a result of his international travels. His pilgrimage to Mecca exposed him to the reality that whites were not inherently “evil,” but that the brutal racism that he witnessed in Amerika was the result of conditions created by those who ran and “owned” society.

His closer study of U.S. imperialism led him to reject capitalism. The major government fear of Malcolm was that he was winning the support of the nations of color in Afrika and Asia, who were coming to identify Amerika as an imperialist power that was colonizing the Blacks within its own borders, and Malcolm was seen by Afrikan and Asian leaders as the legitimate leader and representative of the oppressed New Afrikans. This threatened to win international support for our right to struggle for national independence from Amerika, just as Afrikans and Asians were doing against European colonialism. Malcolm was also maneuvering to formally present the grievances of New Afrikans against Amerika, including charges of genocide, before the United Nations through a petition he’d drafted. But before all the pieces could come together, the CIA had him assassinated in 1965.

Inspired by Malcolm's revolutionary nationalist and Pan-Afrikan internationalist visions, Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale founded the Black Panther Party (BPP) the next year to lead this struggle. The BPP openly adopted an anti-capitalist and pro-socialist platform, and implemented socialist [Serve The People/Survival] programs in the ghettos to organize and serve the needs of the people free of dependence on the imperialist system. This quickly earned the Panthers – and the Young Communist Movement they helped inspire – the label of being *the* major threat to the U.S. capitalist system.

Meantime, King became more and more exposed to the fundamental contradictions in capitalism and became disillusioned with it, and blind faith in the U.S. government, and the idea of Black integration into the U.S. Empire as it existed. He thus broke ranks with the middle class, pro-capitalist, civil rights agenda and came out in support of the poor and working class, and bitterly opposed the war in Vietnam as an adventure in imperial conquest against Asian people struggling for liberation from imperialism.

King became a closet socialist, knowing he'd be killed if he openly championed socialism. But as a devout pacifist he had no concrete ideas on how to pursue a struggle to empower the oppressed poor and working class people to transition Amerika into a socialist society.

Realizing that he'd been used by the U.S. imperialists in 1963 to stifle the Black movement for fundamental change, MLK planned a new march on Washington to occur in 1968 as a Poor People's Encampment. This campaign would lay siege to the capital as planned in 1963 until subverted, but this time on behalf of all of Amerika's poor and oppressed peoples. King's "betrayal" of capitalism and radical change of politics could not be tolerated by the imperialists, who'd made him a widely recognized leader whom they knew multitudes of Black people across the nation respected and would follow. Therefore, the U.S. government had him assassinated just months before the Poor People's Encampment was set to occur.

Another factor in his assignation was that, beginning in late 1967, MLK became increasingly vocal that he was losing faith in passive resistance and growing tired of being repeatedly brutalized and arrested by the government. The FBI admitted its aim to "neutralize" (government-speak for murder) King for fear he would ultimately abandon his views on passive resistance and openly embrace a genuinely revolutionary line that included the right of the oppressed masses to defend themselves against official violence and pursue fundamental change through methods that included armed struggle.

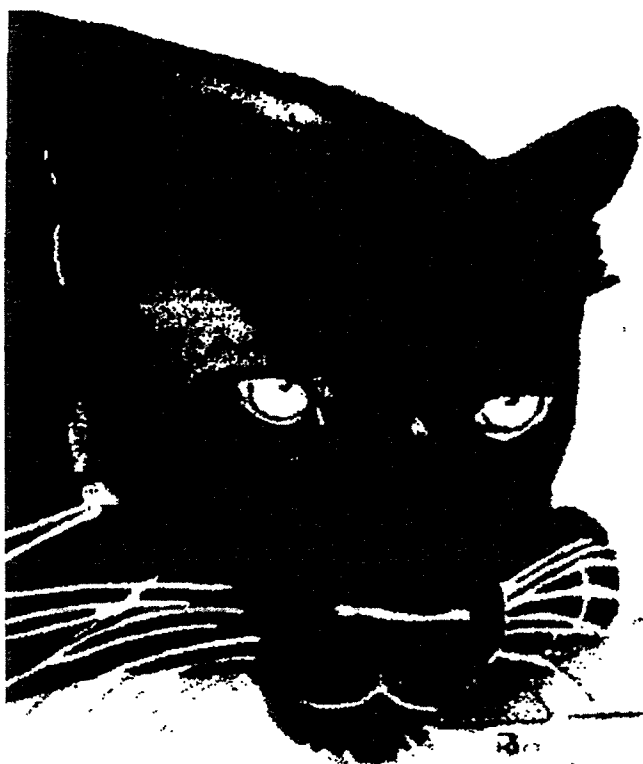
When, in latter 1967, he began expressing the need to "fashion new tactics which do not count on government good will, but instead serve to *compel* unwilling authorities to yield to the mandates of justice," I believe Dr. King was beginning to struggle – even if only unconsciously – with the inherent contradictions of pacifism as a political strategy. I think he was coming to realize as well that he was not really a pacifist. Since, for example, he had embraced the government's use of violence as "legitimate," while rejecting that of the people acting in self-defense as "illegitimate." Indeed, while he counseled the people to practice pacifism in the face of racist and oppressive violence, he'd long looked to the federal government to provide *armed protection* to him, his colleagues, and their followers during southern marches and protests.

He came to realize that it was Amerika's "very own government" that was actually "the greatest purveyor of violence in the world," which left him with the realization that no such power could be looked to by the people to genuinely provide protection and that he was likely to meet a violent end himself at the hands of the government. And he did: Hence – his fear to openly promote and lead a mass movement for socialism in Amerika.

A thorough investigation into the role played by the various U.S. government agencies in King's murder and the cover-up in 1968 can be found in William Pepper's *An Act of State: The Execution of Martin Luther King* (2003).

After MLK's death, the liberal wing of the U.S. capitalist ruling class's political vanguard (namely the Democratic Party), used the 1963 pro-capitalist, integrationist version of MLK and Black-capitalist civil rights leaders like Jesse Jackson, Sr., (in his final years King was opposed to Jackson's Black capitalism), to project the Democratic Party as Black Amerika's friend and champion, and the channel through which we should pursue social justice. "Black capitalism" was promoted by the imperialists as the key to Black progress. In fact, a plan was promoted, since 1967 by FBI assistant director William E. Sullivan, to destroy MLK and other influential, independent, Black political leaders and activists, and then handpick a "new national Negro leader" to replace them. Sullivan wrote of his plan to destroy such Black leaders:

"When this is done, and it can *and will be done*, obviously much confusion will reign, particularly among the Negro people.... The Negroes will be left without a national leader of sufficient compelling personality to steer them in the proper direction."



He promoted that Samuel R. Pierce, Jr., A Black, capitalist, corporate lawyer, be groomed to replace the destroyed Black leadership. However, a new leadership emerged from amongst the people to fill the void, before the imperialist scheme could take root.

This new leadership, namely the BPP, came under all-out attack by the U.S. government at all levels. Its key members were openly assassinated by police and/or jailed on obvious frame-ups, the government attempted to manipulate and even financed violence-prone street gangs and street-level Black capitalist groups into "gang-warfare" against the Panthers. Government agents and "friendlies" inside the media were used to publish articles and air reports slandering and demonizing the Panthers to the Amerikan public. Agent provocateurs were infiltrated into the BPP to incite and carry out acts of violence that would make government counter-violence appear justified. BPP supporters were harassed, slandered, attacked and arrested, Panther community service programs were disrupted, and so on, all carried out as a counter-intelligence program (COINTELPRO) of the FBI.

Because of a flawed internal organizational structure, and because it came to be wrongly "commanded" by Huey instead of correctly led collectively by genuine democratic-centralism, the BPP rank and file were unprepared to handle and to counter government instigations that caused the Panthers to split into two factions; one wing adopted a rightist-accommodationist, liberal-reformist line [like running Bobby Seale for

mayor of Oakland as the Democratic Party candidate], while the other wing adopted an adventurist, ultra-leftist, militarist line. Under continued government attack, while pursuing these flawed and incorrect political lines, the Panthers were unable to combat the government's campaign, and the Panthers ultimately self-destructed, with no suitable leadership in the Black community to replace them.

Although several attempts have been made to regroup and rebuild a revolutionary party to lead and organize the Black masses in our struggles, each has failed or disintegrated because none have correctly summed up the lessons of our previous failures and applied this knowledge. So in this void, the Empire has been able to push Black capitalism on the people free of opposition, challenge or alternative, as the *only viable solution* to our oppressed condition – but capitalism is the very *cause* of our oppression and all of our problems. Indeed, it was the lust for profits and the dollar that was behind the kidnapping and enslavement of our Afrikan ancestors to begin with: Capitalism is the enemy!

The cities, where New Afrikan and other oppressed nationalities are concentrated in large numbers, were and are seen as an area of continual threat by the Empire. Deep-seated mass insecurity and desperation still lie just under the surface. Therefore, if ever organized and united in struggle for fundamental change, the U.S. ghettos and barrios could easily transform into revolutionary fronts and base areas here inside the "Belly of the Beast."

But this cannot happen spontaneously. It demands a conscious and committed revolutionary leadership. The Establishment realizes this, and this is why it has remained committed to undermining and destroying every persyn or organization that threatens to take up the torch of the original BPP and lead our people in this direction. To stifle urban revolutionary potential, the system has implemented policies to foster and perpetuate instability in the urban centers, flooding them with narcotics (first heroin and then also crack cocaine, PCP and other addictive and deadly drugs) and military-grade weapons (like AK-47's and Uzis) which generated severe social degeneration, fratricidal gang wars and genocidal implosion.

Stripped of revolutionary leadership and organization, the urban youth have only had their neighborhood gangs (which have been manipulated and used by the oppressor). In place of political purpose and cultural pride, and the self-respect the revolutionary leadership gave the urban youth – which united them in struggle against oppression and for liberation, – the Empire and its entertainment media have promoted a self-destructive subculture of "gangsterism," (black and brown imitations of earlier movie images of expensively-dressed, luxury car-driving, Italian Mafioso and other white hoodlums devoid of social

consciousness), vulgar materialism, crass consumerism, moral depravity, rampant individualism, self-gratification at the expense of the community, nihilism and an illegal, ghetto version of Black capitalism in general.

Under these government-created conditions, the youth turned their poverty-driven frustration and potentially revolutionary rage against themselves, with inter-communal violence, street crime and drug-peddling. The Establishment then used these conditions they had created and facilitated to justify increasing their own violent repression of the urban communities under their declared "War on Drugs," "War on Crime," and "War on Gangs." The result has been enhancing of the militarization of the police occupation of these communities and incarceration of the cream of our potentially-revolutionary youth inside the massive, and ever-expanding prison-industrial complex.

In a 2006 report entitled *Cracks in the System: Twenty Years of the Unjust Federal Crack Cocaine Law*, even the ACLU admitted that the "Drug War" is targeted at Blacks and has in effect turned U.S. prisons into mass disposal sites for Black people. We can see this scheme was greatly enhanced with the added "War on Gangs." And make no mistake about it, Black youth are the principle targets. The CIA has acknowledged that the largely youthful, urbanized ethnic populations present a danger of "regime-threatening unrest." A 1984 [CIA] report stated:

"The youth of a growing population may very well play a major role in pressing for change. They are among those who are usually disproportionately disadvantaged: They have less at stake in the existing structure of authority, more idealism, more impatience, and in a society with a steady or rising rate of growth their proportion to the total population increases. The density of the number of youth relative to the total population may thus be a clue to strength of pressure for change."

Malcolm X also observed that it was the youth who made up the greater portion of the rank and file forces leading the struggles against colonial oppression in Afrika and Asia. And it was the New Afrikan youth who rose up in revolt against neo-colonial oppression in the urban centers here in Amerika from 1964 to 1968. It is this dense, growing population of urban ethnic youth that the strategy of mass incarceration is designed to deplete. The U.S. prison-industrial complex is a fascist tool of social containment, a weapon evolved to a level of sophistication that makes the concentration camps of Nazi Germany appear crude and amateurish by comparison.

The Establishment fears nothing else as much as it fears these disadvantaged and oppressed youth developing a revolutionary consciousness. California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger made this quite clear

when he refused to commute Stanley "Tookie" Williams' death sentence in 2006, not because "Tookie" was a founding member of one of Amerika's largest urban youth gangs, but because he dedicated his book – *Life in Prison* – to New Afrikan revolutionary leaders of the 1960s and 70s, specifically George Jackson – the founder of the original BPP prison chapter – who was assassinated at San Quentin by prison guards in 1971.

The prisons were a major front in our liberation struggle in the 60s and 70s. It was in an effort to crush this aspect of our movement and the outside support for our movement after George Jackson's murder and the Attica Uprising that followed, that the system began the proliferation of "control units" and "supermax" prisons, beginning with the Marion control unit established in 1972. The strategy was to weed-out and isolate potential leaders while the remainder were pitted against each other with instigated racial and gang violence.

They want us to be divided by racial hatred and to kill each other off with "gang-bangin'," to shoot-up and peddle dope in our neighborhoods to weaken and harm ourselves and our communities – just as they used alcohol to destabilize the Native American tribes and imported opium to undermine the Chinese in the 1800s. They want us engaged in and degraded by a pimp-ho subculture, objectifying our sistas as commodities and selling their bodies on the block like we were sold into slavery, and catching and spreading deadly sexually-transmitted diseases, like HIV/AIDS and hepatitis, furthering the strategy of genocidal disposal of our youth. That's how much they fear us becoming revolutionaries and uniting and struggling for liberation and to pull down this predatory capitalist system that is the cause of our poverty, insecurity and misery.



Another component of urban population control is "spatial deconcentration," a policy implemented since the 60s' revolts of breaking up large concentrations of poor Blacks, which includes "urban gentrification" of neighborhoods, closing down housing projects, and pushing poor people into the suburbs, smaller cities and towns. It also includes integrating other ethnic poor into formerly all-Black neighborhoods.

Our conditions of poverty, lack of job availability, security and accessible basic services that are essential to survival for urban people, are worse today than they were back in the '60s. So we exist as a perpetually threatening (to the Empire) dependant population with little value to the wealthy elite. Therefore, we face a very real and ever more intense official policy of genocide calculated to spread us thin and pick us off by increasing our death rate, decreasing our birth rate and lowering our life expectancy.

There is a deeply-rooted capitalist logic behind this policy. If we look back to capitalism's early development out of European feudalism, we find capitalist economic theorists like Thomas Malthus and David Ricardo openly advocating the need to mass exterminate populations who couldn't be put to profitable use by the rising capitalists. In his 1798 treatise *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, Malthus suggested that if surplus population groups couldn't "go somewhere else," they should be killed off through artificially-created famines, wars and plagues.

Under the feudal system that preceded capitalism, government policies recognized the need for supporting and providing of the poor with basic necessities in order to maintain stability and avoid rebellions. Yet the monarchs still found it necessary to seal themselves away from the masses whom they plundered from inside walled and fortified palaces. Under capitalism, however, Malthus and others held that providing for the poor would cause an unacceptable loss of profits for the rich, therefore the poor should be removed to "somewhere else" or exterminated. These "Malthusian" concepts were and remain a basic tenant of capitalist logic in a system that put profits over people.

It could be no other way in a system that turns on taking and hoarding the wealth produced by the labor of workers, with the result of rendering them dependent and poor, making mass revolt inevitable. So those in power must contain or deplete this potentially rebellious population to prevent their coming together to pull down the system that exploits them and put things under their own control. This is the hidden logic behind the schemes of displacement and depopulation that threaten Black people and poor and oppressed people everywhere and are most apparent in the 3rd World. From imperialist-instigated tribal, ethnic and gang wars through which we are induced to kill each other; to

economically-induced famines, such as the one devastating the Sub-Saharan region; to the unchecked spread of the HIV/AIDS virus that is destroying millions of Black lives on every continent; to flooding our communities with narcotics; to mass incarceration of our young men and wimyn in prisons where they cannot reproduce; we are under genocidal attack!

The latter condition basically replicates the same system of using armed lower-class whites to guard and dominate masses of enslaved Blacks that we were subjected to under chattel slavery before the Civil War. The "New Slavery" of the prison-industrial complex shows that "history repeats itself," but as it was then motivated by a shortage of necessary labor to work the land, it is today motivated by a surplus of labor that cannot be profitably exploited by the capitalists. Because we have no value today – as we did on the old plantations – we find ourselves facing genocidal policies much like those historically aimed at the Native Americans.

Also, our conditions become more desperate by the day: with growing mass urban concentrations, and a continuing "Great Migration" of industrial and manufacturing jobs away from the cities, the working class is shrinking fast and Black workers everywhere are being marginalized, even as the urban proletariat keeps growing. They can't find full-time jobs at decent wages, and here in the U.S. there is a cap on welfare. The ghettos have become dead ends leading only to early graves or prisons.

So the power structure has had to feed us false hopes in the form of a "Black" President – a hand-picked Black capitalist-serving President – to mislead us in the face of a genuine leadership vacuum. They now have us chasing dreams of Black capitalism, while we are caught in a crisis of deadly competition with each other and other poor folks for five minutes of fame and a temporary shopping spree, through channels that have destroyed our culture, destroyed our history and collective memory, destroyed our communities, and is ultimately destroying us.

And it is no grand conspiracy. It is the simple logic of the globalized capitalist system which operates only to enrich a tiny, super-rich elite class at the expense of everybody else. Just like the dopeman on the block who doesn't care whose lives he destroys or who he uses to turn a profit and gratify his wants. *This* is the logic we've learned from the capitalists.

The first to get the axe are those the capitalists value least – those considered most expendable – and those least able to defend themselves. In other words; *US*. That is our situation today.

Anthony Rayson: I am astounded by the complexity and subtlety of your artwork. Seeing one of your originals, one cannot but be amazed – especially as

you are accorded such rudimentary materials. Can you explain to us how you developed as such an accomplished artist (and what your driving motivation is)?

Rashid: In your introduction to this interview you mentioned that my drawing tools consist of pen and pencil. Actually, the only tools I use a five inch long ballpoint pen and standard typing paper.

While I appreciate the compliments I often receive on my art, (which acknowledges that it reaches people on more than a superficial level), I think we all have particular skills and talents – or can develop them – and if driven by a certain level of determination, we can evolve them to exceptional levels.



My art is driven by my determination to contribute what I can towards educating and inspiring the common people to collectively build the struggle to crush imperialist oppression, which is the cause of all other forms of social oppression. A major front in this struggle, as I've already pointed out, is the cultural front. This front, – which relates directly to raising the consciousness and resolve of the masses, – must directly challenge and counter the dominant bourgeois culture, which reflects and promotes the corrupt values of capitalism and conceals and stifles mass culture. Art (imagery and sound) is a major form of cultural expression. With my art, I aspire to produce images whose quality is both aesthetically pleasing (to capture and hold the eye and emotions) while educating (even if only initially on a subconscious level).

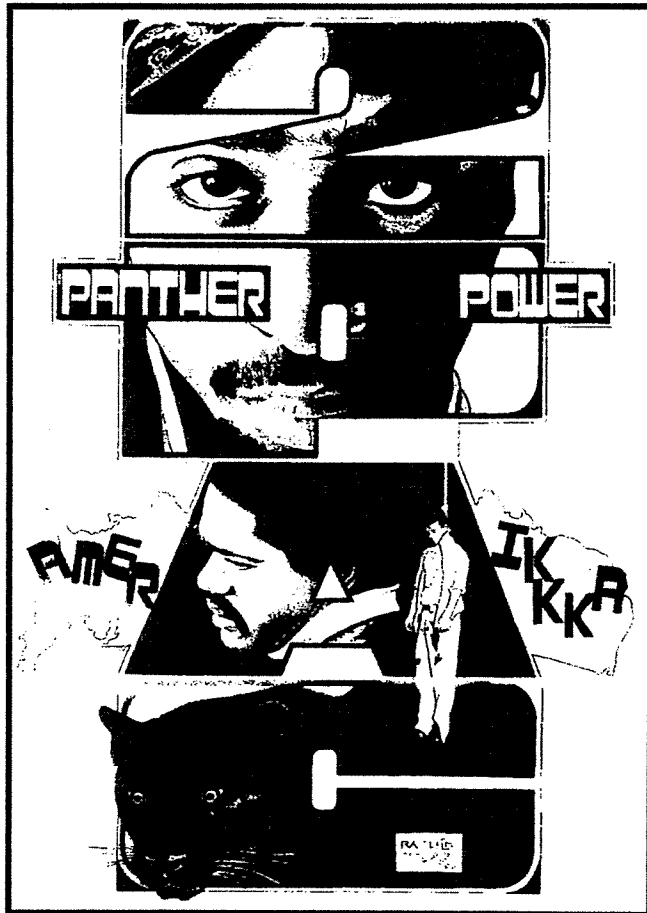


The vast majority of people are affective decision makers rather than cognitive decision makers. Meaning; they base decisions more on emotion than calculated reason. This is especially the case in a society like this where the reasoning faculties of the masses are kept in suspended animation. This is a reality that seems to be lost to most academic "Marxists" and Anarchists alike, and it is why they fail to reach and inspire the masses. (They spend most of their time talking to themselves and going over the common people's heads).

The ruling class realizes this and in fact promotes forms of "education" that basically train the people to function on the spontaneous emotional level rather than cognitively. The masses of Americans function without thinking much at all. This is why the capitalists are so successful at manipulating public opinion through media that is targeted almost exclusively at the basest and most primitive emotional levels. They don't call their communications media an *entertainment* industry for nothing. So a big part of our struggle is, as George Jackson recognized, to teach people *how* to think instead of *what* to think. This is a struggle carried out in the ideological and educational fields, and is targeted at *awakening* the conscious mind.

Whereas artistic imagery both captures and informs the emotions, many may be unwilling or unable as yet

to grasp the ideas in print or spoken word form. Artistic imagery reaches another, deeper, level of the psyche – often involuntarily and unconsciously. Therefore I try to educate using both words and imagery and reach both the rational and emotional levels of the mind. This allows a dialectical balance in consciousness raising, reaching large numbers of people despite the limitations of my physical surroundings and availability of materials. In fact my art has been copied, circulated and seen by people on a vastly larger scale than my writings. Art makes knowledge accessible across class, race, gender, educational and state boundaries.



I'm also a particularly determined person. When I commit to something, I invest my all into it, often to the point of exhaustion or injury. We all have that capacity, it's just where our interests lie and where we are motivated to invest our energies. I'm no different from anyone else. I'm really not exceptional. Most people's limitations are self-imposed: The result of self-doubt or lack of interest. The same factors I believe are behind New Afrikans and other oppressed peoples having remained oppressed for so long. We've been conditioned to doubt ourselves and our ability to overthrow our oppressors, or we're distracted to the point of lack of interest in pursuing liberation.

I don't doubt myself, although I often question myself and self-criticize (and by extension I don't doubt the masses), because I know that we/I have the same capacity to do what anyone else can. It just requires correctly analyzing problems and devising correct solutions. This awareness is what often allows me to devise ways to counter or overcome adversity and maneuver around external restraints.

We've been so conditioned to self-doubt and therefore have become so consumed with idolizing others that we forget we can each become or do the same things. For example, since 2006, and as part of a campaign of repression, I've been indicted on some sixteen criminal charges – 3 times for attempted capital murder of a prison guard. In each case I represented myself and got the charges either withdrawn or dismissed. That's pretty much unheard of, but I didn't approach these cases with self-doubt. I know I have just as much sense as any lawyer, and with the right tools and time can do just as well defending myself. Plus, I planned ahead. Before all this came down, I'd already spent years collecting pertinent legal materials and learning law. This is how I approach most problems.

I study, critically analyze material conditions and evaluate what others have done, and what I've done. I investigate mistakes and successes, looking at things from both sides, pro and con, and I search for play in the joints. I use what tools I have at hand and I improvise. I've done this for so long that it's become natural. In this regard, I was a Marxist – a practiced dialectical-materialist – long before I ever heard of Marx, Engels, Lenin or Mao. Studying them just gave me more clarity and a philosophical and ideological explanation of my practice. And my practice, like *genuine* Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, is anything but dogmatic and mechanical.

As you recognize, I get results. It all boils down to applying practical judgment, determination, flexibility and also audacity (the will to act) to change material conditions. It's the scientific approach to solving problems and is why Mao called Dialectical Materialism a "living science." This is why "intellectuals" and "academics" who've become conditioned to trying to solve problems inside their heads instead of in the real world don't comprehend Marxist theory and can only perceive it mechanically as a dogma.

I'm just determined. This struggle means a great deal to me, so I will find ways to contribute my best to it. Period: Until I stop breathing, that's what I'll do.

I suppose I've always had an inclination towards art, but never much pursued it. As a child, I used to draw, although infrequently. While I was never consistent with it, I could just do it at will, unlike a lot of "natural" artists I've known who have to be in a certain mood.

Between 1990, when I began my present term of imprisonment, and 2001, I probably drew no more than about 15 pictures total. It wasn't until I began studying the struggle that I really set into drawing regularly, creating images that expressed and depicted themes of struggle and oppression and those who organized against oppression, which continues to develop, as does – I feel – the quality of my art.



Anthony Rayson: You've poured a lot of your energies lately into building up your Panther Prison Chapter. Can you tell us what the main tenets are, who the principle activists are, what you hope to achieve, and how it relates to other Panther formations and other anti-imperialists?

Rashid: Yeah, the New Afrikan Black Panther Party Prison Chapter (NABPP-PC) has been my main energy focus since Comrade Shaka Sankofa Zulu and I co-founded it 2005.

The major tenet is "Pantherism" as elaborated by the original Black Panther Party (BPP) during its most revolutionary stages. Specifically, Pantherism is revolutionary New Afrikan/Black Nationalism, Pan-Afrikanism and proletarian internationalism illuminated by the "Science of Revolution" (Historical Dialectical Materialism). We identify with the BPP because in our analysis it was, when at its best, the most revolutionary and successful organization on

Amerika's Left, and made the greatest all-round gains for New Afrikans in our struggle against national oppression and white supremacy.

Before the BPP was split into two factions by government attacks that left each pursuing opposite erroneous lines, (one of ultra-Leftist militant reaction and the other of rightist-reformism), the BPP was breaking new ground in building the struggle for revolution in Amerika. Through applying HDM, we aspire to rebuild the BPP, learning from and applying the lessons of its advances and mistakes and learning from the lessons of the struggles of today. Especially we are focused on studying and correcting its errors, because we are determined that this time we shall win.

Our work is at this time focused on transforming the "Razor-wire Plantations" into "Schools of Liberation," to educate, uplift and organize those within the prisons and convert these humyn warehouses into revolutionary universities which will produce Panther cadres and activists of all nationalities and races. 85% of all those incarcerated in the U.S. will eventually return to society. Our goal is to seem many of them empowered to return to their oppressed and poor communities and play a role in transforming them into revolutionary base areas. The next step is to replicate this process on an international level.

At this point in time we have Party collectives in many U.S. prisons. But unlike other formations people can't just join our Party, but are instead recruited based upon *proven* commitment to the struggle, and they must adopt and adhere to our Rules of Discipline and 10 Point Program. This is required because we fully understand that talk is cheap, and many folks who claim aspiration and dedication to push the struggle forward don't have a full understanding of or the resolve to sustain the difficulties of the work, the hardships and self-sacrifice that is required. Some who approach us will be working for the enemy.

So we are setting it up so that commitment and sincerity must be proven through service in a mass organization like the New Afrikan Service Organization (NASO) before a candidate is recruited into the Party. NASO operates under the leadership of our Party and has as its basis of unity support for the 10-Point Program, but it is building its own leadership structure under a National Steering Committee. Folks *can* join or start new chapters very easily. NASO operates on democratic principles (as opposed to democratic centralism), and we seek to include a wide spectrum of ideological and political orientations within this organization.

Contrary to bourgeois propaganda and bourgeois "leadership style," a genuine vanguard party, such as we aspire to become, doesn't lead the people by compulsion or "commandism." Its leadership must be voluntarily accepted by the masses based on its proven

commitment to serving their genuine welfare and interests, and demonstrated ability to organize and lead the people in solving their own problems. As Mao pointed out:

"Every comrade... should help the masses to organize themselves step by step and on a voluntary basis to unfold gradually struggles that are necessary and permissible under the external and internal conditions obtaining at a particular time and place. Whatever we do, authoritarianism is always erroneous because, as a result of our impetuosity, it makes us go beyond the degree of the masses awakening and violates the principle of voluntary action on the part of the masses."

In its practical application, this style of leadership is based exclusively on the principle "from the masses to the masses," which means we take the ideas of the masses (raw, unorganized and scattered ideas) and concentrate them (through study and transform them into organized systematic ideas) and return them to the masses in the form of slogans and programs. And we rely upon collective leadership.

As an illustration, take for example a mass of people confined to a barren land. The overall group doesn't know how to work the land so it will become productive and produce food or sustain livestock and are therefore on the verge of starvation. There can be no doubt that the masses *want* to produce sufficient food to eat and survive. Problem is *they don't know how*. Now there are a couple of their members who have managed to study the ecological factors of their given environment and learned techniques to transform the barren land into a virtual paradise of production. So they go about showing the people by example how to do it and organize their collective power to produce this result.

Now they don't force their leadership on the people, the people embrace them voluntarily because of their proven example and ability to help them help themselves, and because they are themselves *of the people*. Instead of standing *above* the people giving orders and punishing their errors, the comrades work alongside the people and share their knowledge freely, encouraging collective leadership, so that ultimately the leaders and the people become one in understanding and practice. In essence, this is how a mass-based vanguard leadership works – though my example may be a bit oversimplified. And this is what the Chinese Communist Party under Mao's leadership strove for during China's revolutionary years, contrary to bourgeois lies and propaganda – that are often uncritically parroted by many "Leftists."



Under this leadership style, the masses' disorganized and unsystematic ideas are organized and systematized, returned to them as programs, explained and popularized until they embrace and implement them. Then they are tested and refined through summing up practice. This process is repeated over and over in an ongoing spiral of practice-summation-practice. The ideas thereby become more and more correct and useful – connected to life and productive.

This is the scientific method which reflects the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist Theory of Knowledge. Through *proof* of its correctness in theory by practice in serving the people, the Party continuously *earns* the support and confidence of the masses. It makes no claim to leadership except by the consent of the masses it serves.

It takes an organization of people who share a certain level of consciousness, commitment and discipline to provide this sort of leadership, and an organizational structure that facilitates the maximum degree of inter-party discussion with the maximum degree of unity in action. It requires constant struggle to check corrupting influences and tendencies. In this context, the New Afrikan masses and the Party must be able to expect a

high degree of commitment and dedication to the cause of revolution and social justice – even unto death.

We Panthers must put the highest interests of humynity above self-interest and endure hardships and self-sacrifices when they are called for. The oppressed masses have a right to expect us to be consistent and not vacillate or sell them out – no matter what – to build strength and not weakness, to be honest and humble and never dishonor ourselves or the Party. Our duties as revolutionaries are many, among which I think are:

1. To embrace Historical Materialism (HM) and Dialectical Materialism (DM) and not sentimentalism, romanticism or any kind of idealism.
2. To proletarianize ourselves and be loyal to the class of the future (the proletariat) and not the petty-bourgeoisie and their petty (and less than revolutionary) concerns over bourgeois rights and privileges.
3. To be all-the-way revolutionary thinkers and leaders in the fight against *all* oppression, *all* forms and manifestations of racism, sexism, ageism and any other divisive prejudices harmful to uniting all who can be united to overthrow capitalist-imperialism and build socialism.
4. To reject sectarianism while at the same time standing firm for proletarian ideology and struggling for a correct ideological and political line to lead our movement forward.
5. To combine unity with struggle and be principled and aboveboard.
6. To oppose liberalism (see Mao's Sept. 7, 1937 essay) *Combat Liberalism* and rectify incorrect styles of thinking, work and conduct.
7. To be open to criticism by comrades and the masses and to practice self-criticism.
8. To struggle for objectivity, seek truth from facts and learn from the masses and the struggle.
9. To be fair-minded, to listen to the people's concerns and suggestions and apply HDM to deepen their understanding and raise their level of consciousness and ability to solve problems.
10. To be loyal to the Party and regard its life as your own, to defend it, build its strength and influence and strive to perfect it as the vanguard of the people's struggle.
11. To respect, uphold, build and defend the democratic centralism of the Party, the subordination of lower bodies to higher bodies, the minority to the majority and the whole Party

to the Central Committee or a sitting Party Congress.

12. To be united in spirit and action and to speak with one voice and act as one body.
13. To be self-disciplined, to live by the Party's Rules of Discipline, uphold proletarian morality and represent the bright future in the struggles of today, striving always to be the people's pride and a credit to the Party.
14. To have courage and dare to struggle and dare to win all power to the people, to die for the people if necessary and endure any oppression as a true red-hearted revolutionary.
15. To practice and promote revolution and not reformism, Pantherism and not cultural nationalism, and revolutionary optimism and not cynical defeatism.
16. To uphold and defend and work to extend revolutionary intercommunalism and unite all the people in all the oppressed communities on the planet through the United Panther Movement.

I think these sixteen points should be kept in mind at all times and serve as a basis for further discussion throughout the Party and our movement.

Now, there are a *lot* of misconceptions and distortions about democratic centralism, some of which I addressed in *On the Roles and Characteristics of the Panther Vanguard Party and Mass Organizations*. These misconceptions are largely the result of bourgeois-propagated disinformation about the role and character of communist parties, but also they reflect historical misapplications of the concept by groups on the Left where *commandism* was substituted for the *mass line* while claiming to be practicing democratic centralism either out of ignorance or revisionism. Also many critics have seized one-sidedly on errors made by various organizations on the Left and presented those errors (while ignoring their correct aspects) as the essence of these organizational forms and practices.

As Dialectical Materialists, we recognize and understand that nothing proceeds in a straight line, that every positive has a negative side (and vice versa), and that humyn error is inherent in life. We simply aspire to honestly evaluate things from both sides, to identify and correct errors instead of throwing out the baby with the bath water. If we fail to act for fear of making mistakes then we give victory to our oppressors by default.



The NABPP-PC includes the White Panther Organization (WPO) and the Brown Panther Organizing Committee (BPOC), which are arms of our Party being set up to represent our Party among and give ideological and political leadership to oppressed white and brown people in the prisons and oppressed communities. Our Party unites with all anti-imperialist forces, including other Panther formations – such as the Black Riders Liberation Party, the National Alliance of Black Panthers, the New Panther Vanguard Movement, the Anarchist Panthers, etc. – even if we have disagreements with their line and practice.

There have been some inquiries and assumptions made regarding ties or similarities we might have with the New Black Panther Party (NBPP) which came out of the Nation of Islam (NOI) in the 1980s. We began as an autonomous chapter of NBPP aspiring to change the orientation of the outside NBPP into that of a genuine vanguard party in the New Afrikan communities, however, we soon realized it was better to separate ourselves from NBPP's narrow nationalism and reverse racism. We also changed our name to the New Afrikan BPP – Prison Chapter to further distinguish ourselves and reflect our orientation towards revolutionary New Afrikan nationalism.

Folks interested in learning more about or linking up with NABPP-PC can do so by writing us care of:

Rising Sun Publications
PO Box 4362
Allentown, PA 18105

Information and some of our publications can also be obtained through the Anarchist Black Cross (ABC) network.

Lastly, we feel the U.S. prisons are an important front in the struggle against imperialism. Prisoners are among the most oppressed sectors of the U.S. population, and because many have a good deal of time and opportunity to read and study, we stand to be potentially one of the most advanced sections of the people. This is why prisons are sometimes called the "poor man's universities." Comrade George Jackson once stated that only two types of people ever leave these concentration camps – the rebels and the broken. But there's one other type he overlooked, namely the revolutionaries. The oppression inherent in these expanding human warehouses by nature breeds rebels, but infused with proletarian revolutionary theory, prisoners can make the qualitative leap from rebels to revolutionaries.

Comrade Lenin said, "Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement." And it is these revolutionary prisoners who, upon their release, can hit the streets like paratroopers, joining and building the outside movement to educate, organize and lead the less advanced masses in determined struggle to deal this dying capitalist-imperialist system the *coup de grace*.

We don't plan to build our Panther movement just in the U.S. but wherever poor and oppressed Black people (and all oppressed people) are concentrated throughout the world. We plan to build WPO wherever there are concentrations of poor whites and BPOC wherever poor and oppressed brown people are concentrated. And I am sure we will eventually have a section of the Party dedicated to organizing Asian people as well. Half the world's people now live in urban settings, jammed together in urban slums or shantytowns, and we aspire to transform these into revolutionary Panther base areas throughout the global capitalist empire.

We aim to create and build people's power from the grassroots up, and to organize Serve The People (STP) survival programs, People's security forces and liberation schools. And we aim to link these urban revolutionary base areas into an inter-communal network through the Party and our own media and United Panther Movement. Between our work in the prisons and the oppressed communities, we aim to raise up a revolutionary generation schooled in the *Science of Revolution*, trained and tested in class struggle through the Party and the mass organizations, so that we will not be dependent upon petty-bourgeois intellectuals to lead our revolutionary movement. There will of course be a role for these types who are willing to commit "class suicide" and dedicate themselves to becoming all-the-way

revolutionaries and remold themselves to adopt the class stand of the revolutionary proletariat.

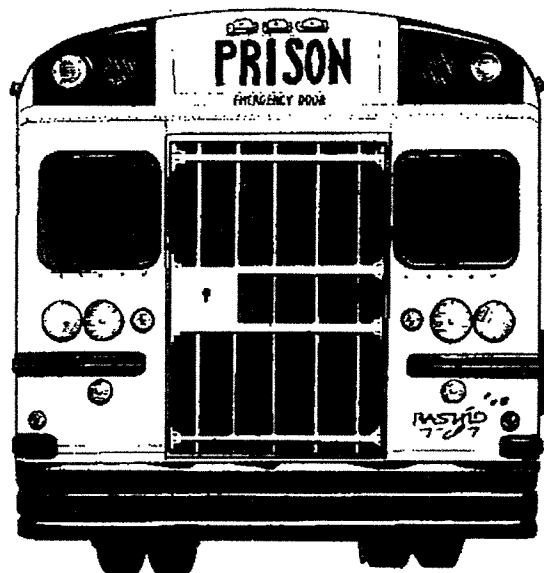
Anthony Rayson: As you know, I am a serious Anarchist, as you are a dedicated Communist. At this point, we are on the same side of the barricades. The fundamental difference of course, is the Communists want to take state power, as the "leader" of the oppressed, and the Anarchists have as their goal the elimination of oppressive state power altogether. As international capitalism, led by the voraciously murderous U.S., gets more and more desperate to retain its empire, the world's people will suffer through more hellacious wars, occupations, enslavements, lack of life's basics such as food, water, health, safety, etc. People will become more and more politically polarized. Some will be suckered-in as fascist dupes (or outright agents and killers of the criminal state). Others will look for truth, protection, and involvement in revolutionary opposition – Communist, Anarchist, New Afrikan, or otherwise.

Anarchists believe that state power is the epitome of evil – the ultimate corrupter. Now let's assume that through a worldwide effort we are able once-and-for-all to destroy the centuries' old nightmare of capitalism. Let's also assume we were also able to

stop them from dragging all life on earth down with them.

So, there's a chance at "Socialism." Anarchists believe in the equitable distribution along anti-authoritarian principles. Communists want to assume state power and orchestrate it all from a "Central Committee." Every other time Communists have attained power, they've repressed Anarchists, other revolutionaries, etc. What would be different this time?

Rashid: I think this question offers the opportunity for an important discussion in the ongoing debate between Anarchism and Communism. Also, it exposes a common tendency I've observed of critics of Communism, namely that their critiques are often pretty inaccurate and just repeat charges based on superficial stereotypes. In fact, when one pushes Anarchists to the wall, and compels them to give concrete answers to concrete problems, instead of abstract criticisms, they begin to sound a lot like genuine Communists. Otherwise, they don't go deeply and thoroughly into solving the real problems that arise in struggling to defeat an oppressive class system such as capitalism. But many of their criticisms are valid and worthy of consideration. □



*Transform the Prison Plantations
Into Schools of Liberation*

New Afrikan Black Panther Party Prison Chapter

PO Box 4362

Allentown, PA 18105

AMEND

THE

13TH

AMENDMENT

*Universal Declaration of Human Rights
Article 4. No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and
the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.*

*Amerikan slavery
under the guise of
Criminal
Justice*

Universal Suffrage

**ABOLISH
SLAVERY
FOR ALL**



No Incarceration Without Representation!

Historical & Dialectical Materialism

The Science of Revolution



by Kevin "Rashid" Johnson
Minister of Defense
New Afrikan Black Panther Party – Prison Chapter
Reprinted from Marxism, WPO Booklet

"The tool of analysis is for us a further development of the historical materialist method, the dialectical method. We will not even waste our time debating the values of Marxism with those who are essentially hung up on white people – hung up to the point of ideological blindness. We understand the process of revolution, and fundamental to this understanding is this fact: Marxism is developed to a higher level when it is scientifically adapted to a people's unique national condition, becoming a new ideology altogether. Thus was the case in China, Guinea-Bissau, Vietnam, North Korea, the People's Republic of the Congo and many other socialist nations [during the revolutionary era of the 20th century]. For Black [New Afrikan] people here in North Amerika our struggle is not only unique, but it is the most sophisticated and advanced oppression of a racial [and] national minority in the world. We are the true 20th [and now 21st] century slaves, and the use of the dialectical method, class struggle and national liberation, will find its highest development in as a result of us. This dialectic holds true not only for Marxism, but for revolutionary nationalism as well; it holds true for concepts of revolutionary Pan-Afrikanism; it is true on the theoretical basis in developing revolutionary [New Afrikan] culture. All of these ideological trends will find their highest expression as a result of our advanced oppression."

– Message to the Black Movement: A Political Statement from the Black Underground – CC – BLA

Introduction

Karl Marx developed the scientific method of analysis which came to be called *Dialectical Materialism* (DM) by those who came after him. As an analytical tool, DM provides a method for understanding the laws of material existence and for changing material conditions by acting within these laws. *Historical Materialism* (HM) is the application of DM to the study and understanding of social development and history.

Marx's Teachings

Marxism developed during an era of struggle between the philosophical schools of rationalist versus materialist thinking. Marx was able to merge the best of both schools, drawing dialectics (study and analysis) from the rationalists and materialism from the materialists.

The most advanced rationalist thinker during Marx's time was Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, and the most advanced materialist then was Ludwig Feuerbach. But both schools of thought were tied up in and hindered by traditional idealistic and theological influences.

Marx's Dialectics

Hegel saw the "idea" as an absolute and as the creator and center of the material world. From Hegel's thinking Marx seized on the pertinent role of the "idea," but found it to be "nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought."

Marx understood that the brain – the very medium of our thoughts and ideas – is itself a material construction, it grows and develops with and as a result of material conditions without which it would cease to be and could not generate thoughts. Purged of metaphysical influences, dialectics regards nature as a connected and unified whole, as a combination of organically bound phenomena that are interdependent and affect each other's development. Therefore, no activity in nature can be understood if it is isolated from surrounding phenomena.

Metaphysics teaches that nature exists in an absolute and unchanging state. The dialectical method teaches that nature remains in a state of constant change, development and renewal. This can be seen through scientific and even general studies of nature and natural processes. Nothing remains the same.

"The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point, however, is to change it."

"Hitherto men have constantly made up for themselves false conceptions about themselves, about what they are and what they ought to be. They have arranged their relationships according to their ideas of God, of normal man, etc. The phantoms of their brains have got out of their hands. They, the creators, have bowed down before their creations"

"One has to 'leave philosophy aside' ... one has to leap out of it and devote oneself like an ordinary man to the study of actuality, for which there exists also an enormous amount of literary material, unknown, of course, to the philosophers."

"The question whether objective truth can be attributed to human thinking is not a question of theory but is a practical question. Man must prove the truth, ie: the reality and power, the this-sidedness [Diesseitigkeit] of his thinking, in practice. The dispute over the reality or non-reality of thinking which is isolated from practice is a purely scholastic question." – Karl Marx

Everything is in a state of either - growth, relative equilibrium or decline, but is never stagnant. All matter is in a state of constant motion through increases or decreases in quantity.

But dialectics doesn't merely see things in a state of motion where there is only increase or decrease in quantity without fundamental changes in quality. This means that phenomena moves and develops not in straight lines but in spirals. These qualitative and overlapping changes are seen as leaps. An example of change from quantity to quality can be seen in how all matter changes in quality, according to the quantity (increase or decrease) of temperature, from gas to liquid to solid.

In recognizing the continual growth and development of all material processes, dialectics recognizes that at the root of all motion are internal contradictions – opposite forces operating inside of things, pulling back and forth between their poles for control. Such polar forces can be seen competing, merging and changing positions in everything; negative and positive, light and dark, sickness and health, hot and cold, birth and death, pain and pleasure, advancement and decline, old and new, contraction and expansion, electron and proton and etc.

This is the *unity of opposites* that operates within all phenomena large and small, known and unknown. Without one, the other could not exist, nor could the matter or phenomenon exist that they combine into. Because of the constant struggle between such opposite forces, everything remains in constant motion. Because of this constant motion and resultant change, dialectics recognizes that there are *no unchangeable* absolutes, and therefore continual study and experience of these material processes is the *only* source of proofs, "truth," and understanding.

Many people today see, in an abstract and unconscious way, the value of studying the history and development of things in order to determine and understand how they reached their present state, in order to attempt to determine what their potential for future change and development might be. But in order to really accomplish these ends, they must understand and practice this method in the comprehensive manner of Marxist dialectics.

Without proper analysis of material conditions and their internal and external contradiction, it is impossible to develop a proper understanding of them. Lenin stated:

"...in order really to know an object we must embrace, study, all its sides, all connections and "meditations." We never achieve this completely, but the demand for all-sidedness is a safeguard against mistakes and rigidity."

This scientific method of all-sided analysis, which is not the method of lazy or idealistic minds, can be applied to all areas of existence; mental, emotional, social, physical, etc. Dialectics "...takes things and their perceptual images essentially in their interconnection, in their concatenation, in their movement, in their rise and disappearance." (Marx and Engels)

The term dialectics comes from *dialego* (Greek) which means to debate or discuss, and was in times past the pastime of philosophers, who would engage in debates to overcome the arguments of their opponents that contradicted their own. The ancient philosophers who practiced this "art" thought such introspection and debate conducted without practice and experiment in the material world was the best method of discovering "truth."

Most social, economic, political, cultural and historic theorists today continue in this tradition to a greater or lesser degree. However, the Marxist approach advanced dialectics as a method of understanding reality in relation to existing phenomena and its internal and external contradictions, allowing "truth" to be determined *and proved* through the test of material practice. In essence, Marx's dialectical method is the opposite of conjecture, idealism and metaphysics.

Marx's Materialism

Feuerbach's materialism, rather than perceiving physical phenomena simply as it is, was, like Hegel's concept of the "idea," marred by traditional metaphysical idealism. But as Engels pointed out, Marxist philosophical materialism "...means nothing more than simply conceiving nature just as it exists, without any foreign admixture."

Idealists claim only our consciousness really exists and the real world, therefore, exists only in our minds. However, Marxist materialism recognizes that the world of matter, nature and being is an actual world that exists independent of our consciousness. Matter is primary, since it is the source of all we know, feel and think, whereas consciousness is secondary, since it is a product of and reflection of matter that actually exists in the physical world. The brain is of material construction. Without it, we'd have no thoughts and no mechanism with which to process thoughts into physical actions – so how can we separate or raise our consciousness above matter? "It is impossible to separate thought from *matter that thinks*. Matter is the subject of all change," – Marx

On a grander scale, there is a dialectical relationship between universal consciousness and physical matter. In physics, this unity of opposites was proven by the physicist, Albert Einstein, (who was a Marxist), in his famous formula $E=MC^2$, or that energy is matter moving at great speed; light, electricity, magnetic force, etc. are examples of this. Indeed our brain signals which communicate thoughts or messages – and can transmit them to be acted upon in the physical world - are electrical impulses of matter in motion.

Marxist materialism solved the problem that philosophers had long disputed – the relation of thinking to being, spirit to nature. "Matter is that which, acting upon our sense organs, produces sensations... Matter, nature, being, the physical – is primary, and spirit, consciousness, sensation, the psychical – is secondary." (Marx)

"Thought proceeding from the concrete to the abstract - provided it is correct - ...does not get away from the truth but comes closer to it. The abstraction of matter, of a law of nature, the abstraction of value, etc., in short, all scientific (correct, serious, not absurd) abstractions reflect nature more deeply, truly and completely."

– V.I. Lenin

"Is there such a thing as objective truth, that is, can human ideas have a content that does not depend on a subject, that does not depend either on a human being, or on humanity? If so, can human ideas, which give expression to objective truth, express it all at one time, as a whole, unconditionally, absolutely, or only approximately, relatively? This second question is a question of the relation of absolute truth to relative truth. ...for dialectical materialism there is no impassable boundary between relative and absolute truth."

"From the standpoint of modern materialism i.e., Marxism, the limits of approximation of our knowledge to objective, absolute truth are historically conditional, but the existence of such truth is unconditional, and the fact that we are approaching nearer to it is also unconditional. The contours of the picture are historically conditional, but the fact that this picture depicts an objectively existing model is unconditional. When and under what circumstances we reached, in our knowledge of the essential nature of things, the discovery of alizarin in coal tar or the discovery of electrons in the atom is historically conditional; but that every such discovery is an advance of "absolutely objective knowledge" is unconditional. In a word, every ideology is historically

conditional, but it is unconditionally true that to every scientific ideology (as distinct, for instance, from religious ideology), there corresponds an objective truth, absolute nature. You will say that this distinction between relative and absolute truth is indefinite. And I shall reply: yes, it is sufficiently "indefinite" to prevent science from becoming a dogma in the bad sense of the term, from becoming something dead, frozen, ossified; but it is at the same time sufficiently "definite" to enable us to dissociate ourselves in the most emphatic and irrevocable manner from fideism and agnosticism, from philosophical idealism and the sophistry of the followers of Hume and Kant. Here is a boundary which you have not noticed, and not having noticed it, you have fallen into the swamp of reactionary philosophy. It is the boundary between dialectical materialism and relativism."

— V. I. Lenin

Holding that thought is a product of matter, Marxist materialism understands that the material world and its laws are fully knowable. That by testing our knowledge of nature by experiment and practice, we can learn and know objective "truth." Nothing is unknowable. There are only things that are as yet unknown, but which we can learn through the scientific approach of dialectical experiment and practice.

Marxist materialism therefore opposes idealism, which believes that the world is beyond our ability to know, and therefore we can never really grasp objective truths or change conditions. This idealist view is non-dialectical and non-materialist. It ignores the proofs of developing physical science and provides only a method of abstractly interpreting the world, but none to change it. It therefore ignores, avoids and fails to understand in worldly social relations the importance of "revolutionary, practical – critical activity."

In essence, idealism leaves people feeling helpless to understand and change conditions. We can see the importance of Marxist dialectical and materialist philosophy to those who aspire to change and improve social conditions. It provides the fundamental approach for developing revolutionary theory based upon physical reality, instead of attempting to interpret the world idealistically, based upon creations of the mind and imagination that are unrelated to material reality.

Dialectical Materialism

DM is a scientific tool that allows us to consciously understand and change material conditions by coming to "know" the laws governing the physical world, and prove or disprove our knowledge by applying it through practice and experiment. As the scientist knows, it is the result of *physical* experiment that ultimately proves or disproves the "truth" of his/her theory – "the rat is always right!"

How indeed do scientists approach studying and solving problems in the material world? They begin with using their perceptual senses to observe some phenomenon and its internal properties as it interacts with its environment and other phenomena, and then they analyze the data accumulated from these observations. Though this process of observation, scientists accumulate a *quantitative* amount of perceptual knowledge about the object(s) of their study, and at some point, a *qualitative leap* takes place, and they begin to make conceptual connections and develop theories, ideas and predictions about the observed thing(s), its development and its nature.

In order to prove or disprove these theories, ideas and predictions, the scientists begin to design and perform experiments that will add to their *conceptual knowledge*. It is only by acting out their ideas in practice that "truth" can be determined. The science surrounding particular things or phenomena is then advanced. This is the essence of DM, the scientific approach to study and practice.

Likewise, any genuinely revolutionary people and/or party must base their revolutionary practice on study and application of the laws of social development, and not upon the conjecture, morals, reason or good intention of individuals. This is because social life in this material world is a material thing. And just as all material phenomena is knowable and changeable according to correctly understanding and acting within its governing laws and contradictions.

DM realizes that, like all processes, social development repeats stages previously passed through, but on a higher level – in spirals not circles. These leaps in cycles of development are the dialectical transformation of quantity into quality, namely revolution. They are the result of the contradictions within a thing or process that act on and are acted upon by external contradictions. It is the law of motion expressing itself. By understanding this law, we can act upon and within the internal contradictions of a thing - our society – to bring about fundamental changes in its quality – through revolution. As Mao Tse-tung observed: "Marxist philosophy holds that the most important problem does not lie in understanding the laws of the objective world and thus being able to explain it, but in applying the knowledge of these laws actively to change the world..."

Historical Materialism

HM is DM applied to the study and understanding of social development and history.

Marx saw that the past philosophical approaches to understanding history and social development were not scientific but were inconsistent and incomplete. He therefore applied DM to the study and analysis of society and history. In doing this, Marx saw that the very core of human society is the struggle for survival, which expresses itself in the systems of social production. These are the relations that a given people engage in to work up and extract survival necessities from nature for social consumption and use. In these productive processes, people become involved in definite relations that are necessary and independent of their will. These relations are the economic basis, the foundation, and root of every society. It is upon these economic foundations that the society's social institutions or superstructure (political, legal, religious, ethical, cultural, etc.) are built.

"The application of materialist dialectics to the reshaping of all political economy from its foundation up, its application to history, natural science, philosophy and to the policy and tactics of the working class – that was what interested Marx and Engels most of all, that is where they contributed what was most essential and new, and that was what constituted the masterly advance they made in the history of revolutionary thought." – V. I. Lenin

Based upon advances in the technologies used to extract survival necessities from nature, the quantity of production increases (or has the potential to do so) and this creates a conflict with the existing social institutions which have become a fetter on further development and represent outmoded social relations. This dialectical relationship (contradiction) between the developing productive forces and decadent relations of production and distribution creates a revolutionary situation.

In other words, when the economic foundation advances and changes while the social institutions and those running them attempt to remain conservative, and ridged, there inevitably develops a social-economic demand for overthrow of these old and outmoded institutions and those running them. New and progressive institutions and leaders are called forth which will be compatible with the changes in the mode of production.

Based upon these processes of social-economic development, HDM holds that humyn societies have developed through several transitional stages, beginning with the primitive communal, to the slave, to the feudal, to the wage-slave or capitalist system. Modern imperialism, or monopoly capitalism, is the highest stage of capitalist development. From here, society is ripe to make the leap to communism, or classless society, by passing through the transitional stage of socialism.

"[T]he history of one human group or of humanity goes through at least three stages. The first is characterized by a low level of productive forces – of man's [and womyn's] domination over nature; the mode of production is of a rudimentary character, private appropriation of the of the means of production does not yet exist, there are no classes, nor consequently, is there any class struggle.

"In the second stage, the increased level of productive forces leads to private appropriation of the means of production, progressively complicates the mode of production, provokes conflicts of interest within the socio-economic whole in movement, and makes possible the appearance of the phenomenon 'class' and hence of class struggle, the social expression of the contradiction in the economic field between the mode of production and private appropriation of the means of production.

"In the third stage, once a certain level of productive forces is reached, the elimination of private appropriation of the means of production is made possible, and is carried out, together with the phenomenon 'class,' and hence of class struggle; new and hitherto unknown forces in the historical process of the socio-economic whole are then unleashed.

"In politico-economic language, the first stage would correspond to the communal agricultural and cattle-raising society, in which the social structure is horizontal, without any state; the second to feudal or assimilated agricultural or agro-industrial bourgeois societies, with a vertical social structure and a state; the third to socialist or communist societies, in which the economy is mainly, if not exclusively, industrial (since agriculture itself becomes a form of industry) and in which the state tends to progressively disappear, or actually disappears, and where the social structure returns to horizontality, of a higher level of productive forces, social relations and appreciation of human values." – Amílcar Cabral

Class Struggle

Each of the social-economic systems, after the primitive communal and preceding communism, are distinguished by class divisions, and consequently class struggle. "Freeman and slave, patrician and plebian, lord and serf, guild master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstruction of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes..."

"The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones.

"Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possess, however, this distinctive feature: It has simplified the class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other – bourgeoisie and proletariat." (Marx & Engels) *The Communist Manifesto*

This basic contradiction within the capitalist system, between a small exploiting class that privately owns the socially produced wealth and means of production (land, tools, factories, railroads, natural resources, and the labor power of the workers), and the exploited majority (who must sell their labor power to survive) who are the producers of society's wealth, is the basic contradiction in capitalist society, manifested in the class struggle.

However, as Lenin pointed out, the capitalist class consolidated its forces and began to exploit the whole non-industrialized world to feed the industries of the imperialist countries with cheap raw materials and capture markets for their products, transforming the class contradiction into an international one.

Imperialism, as the highest form of capitalism, represents the concentration of the fundamental contradiction within capitalism; with the people and nations exploited and oppressed by the system at one pole and the monopoly capitalists and their henchmen at the other. Within the 3rd world countries, the struggles against colonialism and neo-colonialism take the form of national or "New-Democratic" revolution.

Whereas, in its ascendancy the bourgeoisie (capitalist class) was revolutionary, sweeping away pre-capitalist forms of exploitation and their accompanying superstructure through "Liberal Democratic Revolution," under imperialism the bourgeoisie becomes thoroughly reactionary, promoting fascism and defending the remnants of feudalism, even slavery, under the banner of "Anti-Communism." "Democracy" is no more than a window dressing to conceal its deeply reactionary essence. Therefore, the proletariat must lead the fight to continue to sweep away feudalism and patriarchy along with imperialist domination in order to set the stage for socialist reconstruction.

This has application as well for the internal colonies and oppressed nations and nationalities within the imperialist countries. Inside Amerika, the struggle against national oppression by New Afrikans, Indigenous People and others, is revolutionary class struggle and part of the international struggle to overthrow imperialism.

But even after socialist revolution, class struggle continues and in fact intensifies. Because socialism is a transitional stage from capitalism to communism, the class struggle can go forward or backwards to capitalist restoration. The continuance of aspects of the bourgeois mode of production and bourgeois social relations and culture regenerate the bourgeoisie, most particularly within the upper ranks of the Party and State.

These elements, together with the overthrown bourgeoisie, will stubbornly resist the advance towards communism as "going too far" and will attempt to rig up a new capitalist system under the cover "socialism." Mao Tse-tung was the first Marxist-Leninist to truly recognize this phenomenon. This is what actually occurred in the post-Stalin Soviet Union, in other socialist countries, and in China after Mao's death in 1976. But, Mao pointed to the Chinese Communist Party headquarters as the place where the most dangerous capitalist-roaders lay hidden and through which they could easily rig up a new capitalist system if not stopped.

This leap in historical dialectical materialist understanding was the basis of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in which Mao urged the Chinese people, and particularly the youth, to "Bombard the Headquarters!" and continue the march towards communism.

Mao made several advances in Marxism by applying HDM to the particularities of his own country and the struggle of a colonized people against imperialism. While he acknowledged that the contradictions of capitalism made the proletariat the only class capable of leading genuine all-the-way revolution against the bourgeoisie, he saw that China was an overwhelmingly peasant society with only a very small proletariat. Therefore, he reasoned that the peasants must be the main force in the revolution but led by a revolutionary proletarian party.

This approach deviated from earlier applications of Marxism-Leninism which focused solely on organizing the urban workers.

Based upon the material reality of China's prevailing mode of production (broadly semi-feudal with small capitalist enterprises under foreign imperialist domination), he led the Chinese people's struggle for national liberation as a "New Democratic" revolution to achieve national independence and free the peasants from semi-feudal domination. Then with political independence achieved, he led the workers and peasants in the socialist reconstruction of People's China.

Mao's advances of Marxism-Leninism, which included developing the theory and practice of waging "People's War," are still relevant today. In Nepal, India, Peru, and the Philippines and other 3rd World countries, Maoist parties are leading "New Democratic People's Wars" against imperialism, bureaucratic capitalism and the remnants of feudalism. All around the world, anti-revisionist communist parties and organizations basing themselves on Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, as the concrete application of HDM in this epoch, are struggling to develop revolutionary theory and practice as part of a growing international united front against imperialism.

"The fortunes of the African revolution are closely linked with the world-wide struggle against imperialism. It does not matter where the battle erupts, be it in Africa, Asia or Latin America, the master-mind and master-hand at work are the same. The oppressed and exploited people are striving for their freedom against exploitation and suppression. Ghana must not, Ghana cannot be neutral in the struggle of the oppressed against the oppressor." – Kwame Nkrumah

Like every existing thing, imperialism exists as part of and within a dialectical relationship: that relationship being characterized by overdevelopment and underdevelopment, by a new world order and a new level of chaos and disorder. Wealth is drained from the exploited 3rd World countries which lack an autonomous and independent infrastructure and are made dependent through debt to U.S.-dominated structures like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). While the U.S. itself has become the world's greatest debtor nation and continues to borrow to finance its military aggression in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Mao characterized this period as one of "Great disorder under Heaven," but he also predicted that "The future shall be bright." Whatever setbacks that have or will occur, revolution is still the main trend in the world today. We must therefore arm the masses with the correct and scientific method – HDM – so that they can analyze and determine how to arrive at that bright future, becoming the masters of their own destiny. Armed with this knowledge, they will become that conscious social force capable of taking history into their own hands and bringing to an end this epoch of exploitation!

"Theory becomes a material force as soon as it has gripped the masses!" – Marx and Engels

"Thought without practice is empty – action without thought is blind!" – Kwame Nkrumah

**Dare to Struggle – Dare to Win!
All Power to the People!**

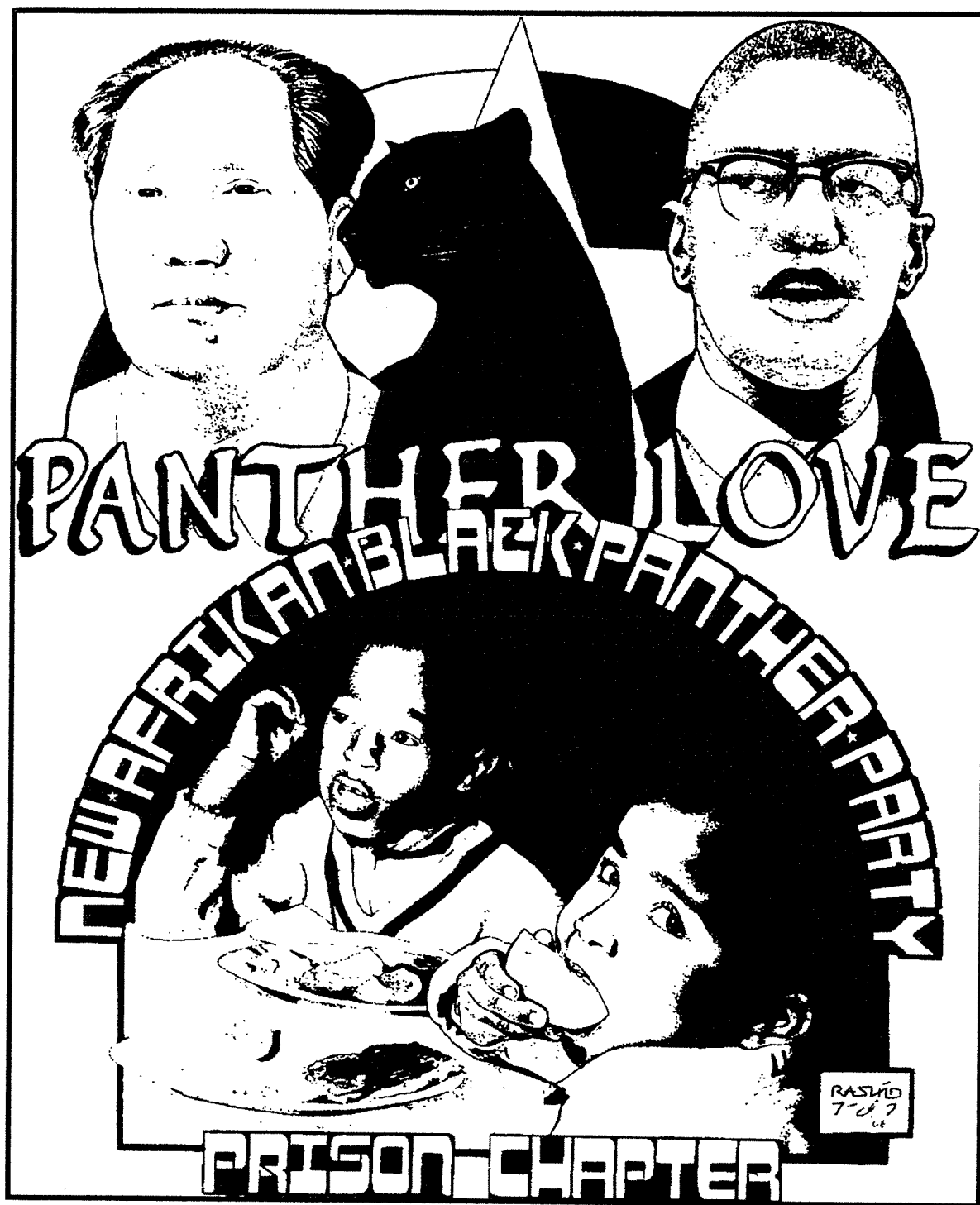




*"You can jail a revolutionary but
you can't jail a revolution !!"*

**"Not to have a correct political point of view is like
having no soul."**

– Mao Tse-tung



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