

# FROM ATTICA TO ABU GHRAIB

APRIL - MAY 2005



REFLECTIONS BY  
POLITICAL PRISONERS  
IN THE U.S.

## Introduction

I believe it is important that participants in this conference understand the issue of the existence of US political prisoners is an issue of recognizing resistance in this country. There has been, and will continue to be resistance to capitalist-imperialism, white supremacy, and domestic colonialism. Although there are many varied aspects of struggle being waged on different fronts, the bottom line is that racism and capitalist-imperialism is the foundation of all of our troubles. Therefore, while progressive and revolutionary forces are battling against US imperialism outside the borders of the US, it is imperative that progressives and revolutionaries redouble their determination to do battle inside US borders.

The existing US political prisoners have stories to tell, stories of commitment, determination, and courage, that cannot and should not be ignored. They possess lessons from trial & error that should be recorded and understood to permit our struggle to take that giant leap in revolution. Supporting US political prisoners is crucial to maintaining consistency in our political practice, ensuring continuity in our determination, from one generation to the next. Furthermore, the struggle to free US political prisoners encourages activists to know they will not be abandoned in the course of the struggle. Supporting of US political prisoners strengthens the overall movement towards actualizing a revolutionary future. ★

—Jalil Abdul Muntaqim  
Founder & initiator of the Jericho Amnesty Movement

This brief pamphlet represents a sampling of the writings received from US-held Political Prisoners in response to letters announcing the Attica to Abu Ghraib Conference and soliciting their input. Despite difficulties inherent in making these disappeared comrades part of our work, despite the razor wire, the walls of violence, the decades which many of them have spent behind bars, we cannot forget them. These writings remind us that their leadership is critical in developing strategies of resistance that take on the state, for they understand this monster all too well. ★

## Confessions before the Orchestra

Photographs: hooded man wired  
naked men in piles  
torture nightmares in daylight  
zombied people stalk  
the earth crushed bones  
restless and numb  
where to flee  
the torturer lives next door  
wears guard gear  
stand-ins for shades in civilian clothes  
the prez spits on Geneva  
*I don't need you, bitch*  
*don't hang on me, don't beg*  
*I do what I want*  
*call me Capt. America*  
tortured and maimed  
buried in hidden cells, American jails  
can't call anyone  
tongues tripped  
wired into confession  
lie dried in red ink  
manufactured consent  
plucked out  
like eyeballs  
electrical persuasion, cattle prods  
and dogs, raped  
no sleep disorientation humiliation  
*Tell me what I did...*  
*Whatever you say I did I did*  
guilty  
guilty  
symphonic guilt composed by scholars  
orchestrated by SOA "professors"  
played by intelligence musicians on homebodies  
and world bodies  
Capt. America's death dirge  
tortures justice

—Marilyn Buck  
US anti-imperialist political prisoner



## From Ruchell Cinque Magee

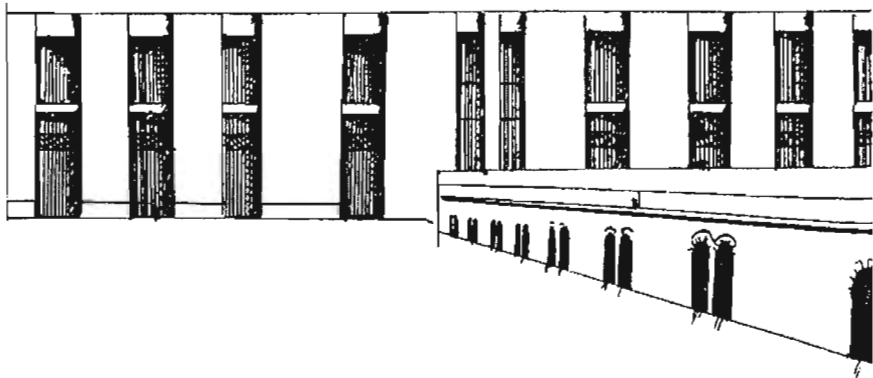
...Where my case stands in court, we're closer to a hearing (publicly) than ever before, regarding the jury acquittal concealed since 1973.

Facts alive, fitting for public's vision are in need of reaching the dinner table of the masses. Nothing changed in the struggle for freedom. Without a doubt, August 7, 1970, since I broke the fetters of my suppression and surfaced through the wound inflicted by comrade Jonathan Jackson in the belly of the beast, the real stay alive for the cause.

The wheels of REVOLUTION will remain BALANCED for liberation. We the oppressed are blinded by humanity to liberate ourselves. With this in mind, I move in several directions with the truth found in the fighting-backs atmosphere. It's necessary to use almighty truth to weld our peoples together in unity. My case is visible commitment to an ugly denunciation of slave operation backed by a news media and a racist made up judicial system. Both have fought desperately to camouflage the truth. ★

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## An Update On Hugo Pinell

I do appreciate the love and support. I can give a brief background of my situation. I've been down since October 1964, from San Francisco I came to the CDC in February 1965, with a sentence of 18 months. In 1967, in San Quentin, I joined the Black movement, thanks to brothers like W.L. Howard, George and Christmas who helped me get my head and feet in the right direction. By the end of the day of August 21, 1971, W.L., Christmas and George had been killed although not on the same day. Howard was going home in 1972, so I was put in a hotter seat than the one I was in 1970 in Soledad. A case was made out of the August 21, 1971 incident in San Quentin and I became one of the six prisoners to face charges and, eventually face trial. We became known as the San Quentin Six. When the trial ended in 1976, three were acquitted and three convicted. David and I were convicted of assault, but he was released in 1976 with the three acquitted. Johnny Spain was convicted of murder and conspiracy but because he used temporary insanity he was released in 1988. I've kept clean time, I've had 7 board hearings, but I keep getting denied my release.

I was 19 when I came in. I'll be 60 in March. The good news is that I am in good health, in great shape, physically and mentally and energetically. I've continued to grow and evolve. The new baby of 1967 has become a new man...of life and struggle. The fight for real freedom, justice, harmony, love and peace is more than a right. It is a duty like true love. There is only one kind of freedom for everybody. In my own personal way, I am free and I am with you always. Take care. Get to everyone. ★

*Hugo L.A. Pinell #A-88401  
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## When the Prison Nation Goes International

Speech for Attica 2 Abu-Ghraib Conference Rec. 4/2/05

Thanks for your kind invitation to join the Attica to Abu Ghraib Conference.

### ON A MOVE.

When we think about the atrocities of Attica and the abominations of Abu Ghraib, we're sometimes caught searching for a common denominator. What could it be, we wonder, as we look at the brutal state assault on both prisoners and staff at Attica and the human rights and, yes, torture that marked American behavior at Abu Ghraib Prison in Iraq. The commonalities however are more than first meets the eye. Of course they're both prisons, but that's obvious. They both came to public consciousness through the actions of people who were prison guards and they both were initially defended by the state by a flood of lies. What matters really least is that they occurred in different countries. They both happened in the same Empire. What marked the differences between them is the critical element of time. And even this quality does not speak well of things to come.

For as time is the difference, yet it tells us how far things have fallen, how the thirty years between Attica and Abu Ghraib have marked a coarsening of American character and a brutishness of imperial defenders. Attica opened up an era of prison reforms across much of the nation and fueled the movement to attempt to eradicate the most depraved elements of the nation's repressive prison systems. Abu Ghraib was met by quasi-official justifications, government obfuscation and the incredible spectacle of right-wing pundits likening the torture and human rights abuses there to college pranks. The humiliation of naked Arab men was compared to the field displays of cheerleading squads. There is, of course, another monstrous difference: the architects of Abu Ghraib and high level defenders of torture have been rewarded by higher and more prestigious posts in government. In a nut shell, torture pays!



We have not spoken of the pivotal American issue of race. Without prisoners actively advocating Black Liberation, there would have been no Attica. The tortured, maimed and humiliated prisoners at Abu Ghraib were targeted by the U.S. Army because they were seeking to intimidate and eliminate people who were trying to fight to free their country from foreign occupiers. In other words, they were fighting for their own national liberation. In an empire which picks puppets for other nations, this is not acceptable. It wasn't acceptable under the Roman Empire, the British Empire, nor its North American Successor, the American Empire. To this latest global incarnation of the white nation, Arabs are but sand niggers to be beaten into submission and obedience. It is the refusal to accept this status that is fueling what the U.S. media calls "the insurgency".



There is another element that arises from the evidence: American cruelty. Big Black, the late veteran of Attica, told stories of the torture and beatings that he endured as he was naked and held under gunpoint. It is an eerie precursor of the treatment of Arab prisoners at Abu Ghraib. Nor is it mere coincidence that some of the most brutal, most vicious actors at Abu Ghraib were U.S. reserves who in their civilian lives were prison guards. How else could they learn it? One of the most infamous was from SCI Greene in southwestern Pennsylvania named Charles Grainer. Recently his ex-wife came forward to tell of the terrors that she was exposed daily. She said that Grainer promised to cut her into little pieces and that no one would ever find her body.

Welcome to U.S. corrections. The prison nation goes international. ★

From Death Row and for the Attica to Abu Ghraib Conference, this is...  
Mumia Abu-Jamal.

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## From Sundiata Acoli

Greetings IHRI Conference

First i want to congratulate the Keynote Speaker and Honorable Congresswoman, Sister Cynthia McKinney, on her triumphant return to Congress. But moreso i want to personally thank her as being the only Congressional official who had courage or concern enough to make a determined effort toward my release when i was rounded up on September 11, 2001, and held incommunicado from my family, my attorneys and the entire outside world. Meanwhile prison officials torturously interrogated me, looking for any connection on my part to the destruction of the WTC or the later spread of anthrax thru the postal system. They openly threatened to hold me in total isolation for the rest of my life and their implied threat was to seek the death penalty.

So torture is nothing new to u.s. PP/POWs, not to everyday people of color and other oppressed in the ghettos, barrios, reservations, towns and cities thru out amerika. They don't call the Bronx's 44th Precinct, "Fort Apache," for nothing; or because they serve "tea and cookies" there. They call it "Fort Apache" because they whip heads there, bust lips, knock out teeth, blacken eyes, break ribs and even rape and kill there...and so it goes on to one degree or another in every police station across the country, big or small.

Abu Ghraib is not an aberration. Most u.s. prisoners instantly recognized amerika's fingerprints all over Ghraib; they match its prints in u.s. police stations, jails and prisons. The Ghraib perversions trace a straight line back home to White amerika's psychotic obsessions with the genitals of Blacks it lynched. The same perverted grins seen at Ghraib can be found in the faces and photos of White lynch mobs in the u.s. swarmed around Black bodies hung from trees. It's a perversion born in this country's racial-sexual degradation of its Black slaves and others of color since its beginning, and the lies told since then to cover it up. That same "cover-up" mindset also keeps most of the amerikan press silent about the many Iraqi women and children, young boys and girls, who were also raped, and probably still are being raped, at Abu Ghraib. Photographic proof exist and The San Francisco Bayview newspaper has it. For those adults who have legitimate need for such proof, the photos are available upon e-mail request from them at [editor@sfbayview.com](mailto:editor@sfbayview.com).



### Now for some of my personal experiences with torture:

In 1969 NYC cops kicked in my door looking for two other Panthers, Sekou Odinga and Kuwasi Balagoon, and without saying a word beat and stomped me unmercifully. Then they took me to the 32nd Precinct, Harlem, and threw me in the holding tank with Joan Bird, another Harlem Panther, whose lip was so busted and swollen, and eyes so blackened and swollen shut that i barely recognized her. She said that at one point during her beating they hung her out the 3rd-floor window by the ankles, made sexual taunts and threatened to drop her if she didn't tell the whereabouts of Sekou and Kuwasi. They didn't find them and after holding us in jail for a month they released us.

In 1970 during the New York Panther-21 Trial we defendants were assaulted numerous times, while cuffed, by Riker's Island jail guards who transported us back and forth to court each day.

In 1973, after my arrest in the New Jersey Turnpike case, i was held in strict isolation at Middlesex County Jail, NJ. Because of my placement there, and even tho i was allowed no visitors except my lawyer, the jail implemented harsh visiting rules on all visitors which caused the prisoners to protest by refusing to lock in their cells. New Jersey state troopers came in with shotguns, shot prisoners in the face and torso with beanbags that broke noses, blackened eyes and bruised ribs, shot teargas and choked, blinded and burned, and drove prisoners back into their cells. i was already under 24/7-lockdown so they simply shot teargas into my cell, turned the water off and heat on, in mid-summer, which left me and similar prisoners to wallow in pain from the sweat-reactivated tear gas which we had no means to wash off.

In 1976 at Trenton State Prison (TSP), NJ, i and other management Control Unit (MCU) prisoners were subjected to two hours of gunfire by Jersey state troopers raking the Unit back and forth, trying to shoot into our cells. John Andaliwa Clark was killed by a double-ought shotgun blast to the chest and another prisoner, "Gunner," who came out with his hands in the air was shot by an M-14 rifle aimed at his head but tore through his elbow instead. i and numerous other MCU prisoners were hit by shrapnel from bullets that ricocheted off the bars into our cells.

In 1977, MCU guards suddenly began demands to probe the anus of random MCU prisoners during their normal strip-search of us each time we were taken out or returned to our cells. And of course,



we refused to submit willingly to such a degrading and asinine demand. All who resisted were jumped by guards, beaten, wrestled to the floor and anus probed, then charged with assault on the guards which carried and additional 7-year sentence upon conviction. To avoid further anus probes, for the next seven months we refused all family visits, attorney visits, doctor, dental visits or anything else that required us to leave our cells. Prison officials then instituted a policy of "random" mandatory cell-changes so that they could continue to subject selected prisoners to "random" beatings, abuse and forced anal probes under the guise of changing our cells. The situation became so volatile and our families, attorneys and friends so alarmed that a federal judge stepped in, forbade the prison to continue anal probes, declared that a metal detector was just as effective as a search tool and that it be used instead of the anal probe and then summarily dismissed all assault charges that had been filed against MCU prisoners.

In 1983, at USP Marion, Il., a federal penitentiary, guards locked down the prison and went on a six-month rampage, roaming the prison and beating prisoners at will and randomly subjecting some to forced anal probes. During that period i was sent to "the hole" whose floor and walls were covered with feces thrown by prisoners who had been beaten and anal probed. It was mid-summer, the heat was intense, the smell incredible, the windows were closed and I was confined sixty days there without fresh air or relief.

Later in the summer of '83 i was taken by bus in chains to testify at Sekou Odinga's trial in New York where he and other comrades were charged with robbery of a Brinks armored truck and with liberating Assata Shakur from prison. After i dressed-out for the bus ride, the guard put a black box over my handcuffs which is supposedly for high security prisoners. Any prisoner who's ever worn it will tell you that after a half-hour the box gnaws into your wrists and sets them on fire with pain. i had to endure the three-day bus ride with the black box gnawing into my wrists all day, plus no smoking was permitted on the bus nor at any of its stopovers along the



way, which in itself was also torture to me with a then thirty-year cigarette habit. At MCC-NY, the city's federal jail, they put me in isolation wearing only a T-shirt, pants and shower shoes, then turned the air-conditioner to near freezing level so that I had no choice but to do push-ups day and night to keep warm. After three days of freezing and going without cigarettes, i testified in Sekou's defense and was immediately put back on the bus, cuffed in the black box, for another agonizing three-day trip back to Marion, Il.

In 1988, at USP Leavenworth, Ks., as happened on several occasions during my sojourn in prison, i was caught-up as an innocent bystander during a major prison disturbance. In such situations bystanders and participants alike suffer the same abuse by the intervening guards. This time it happened in the yard when a gang war broke out between the Texas-Syndicate and the EMEs: two Mexican street organizations. In the ensuing melees, Rene, the leader of the Syndicate, was stabbed to death and both groups sustained numerous stab wounds. Tower gunfire stopped the carnage as guards moved in to teargas and handcuff everyone, including me and other bystanders, facedown on the blistering summer asphalt, then lifted us by the cuffs and threw us in the dilapidated and condemned "Building 63" without food or water until the whole thing was sorted out days later.

And last, in 2001, September 11th, at USP Allenwood, Pa., I was rounded up, held incommunicado and tortured four months with interrogations about the WTC and the spread of anthrax before being released back into prison population due to the efforts of Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney, my attorneys and many other concerned people. ★

April 21, 2005  
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## From Michael Africa

Early in 2004 the news of the torture of Iraqi prisoners by U.S. and British soldiers was plastered all over the news. Members of the press and U.S. government officials all expressed shock and outrage. Having seen some of the more graphic footage of the torture and murder committed by U.S. soldiers on Iraqi prisoners, which includes civilian women and children, it is indeed extremely repulsive and unconscionable.

The only shocking aspect of this tragedy, however, is the public's continued acceptance of the feigned outrage coming from the head terrorist- the u.s. government. Those who order the bombing and annihilation of tens of thousands, those who continue to order assassinations, those who provide daily footage of innocent children blown to bits by u.s. bombs. ALL PREDICATED ON WHAT HAS BEEN EXPOSED AS A PACK OF BLATANTLY CALCULATED LIES. And this is continued still because of the ghouls running these "reform" world governments.

Bush and Blair are attempting to rape Iraq of its entire culture, its history, and, of course, its resources and replace it with the racist sham called democracy. Yet, they have the gall to act repulsed by a single u.s. soldier holding a leash, when they know goddamn well it is their intention to put the ENTIRE MIDDLE EAST on a leash. They have the arrogance to feign shock at the rape of Iraqi men, women and children when they know it is the expressed intentions to rape all of Iraq, just as they have done to every culture and peoples they have been able to infect through intimidation, terrorism, murder and slavery. Put a few scapegoat soldiers on trial for abuse, while continuing to bomb and assassinate Iraqi people even after admitting the "intelligence" which linked Iraq to terrorism and weapons of mass destruction were all lies.

U.S. officials wasted no time in branding the few scapegoat guards who were charged with abusing Iraqi prisoners as "unexperienced". However, it was precisely because of their documented experience of brutality, oppression and torture of american prisoners and citizens that they were picked to go in the first place.

On May 13, 1985, federal philadelphia city officials directed their flunky cops and firemen to assault THE MOVE ORGANIZATIONS'S HEADQUARTERS because of MOVE's



noncompromising confrontations and they refused to back down from their terrorist tactics aimed at stopping MOVE and JOHN AFRICA from exposing their foul asses. Hundreds of murderous cops and firemen attacked MOVE under the guise of disorderly conduct charges. They launched three bombs on to MOVE'S home, shot 10,000 rounds of ammo into the house, starting a massive fire which consumed MOVE'S home as well as the connecting 60 other homes, and shot anyone attempting to escape the inferno...INCLUDING FIVE BABIES!!! FIVE MOVE CHILDREN AND SIX ADULTS WERE ANNIHILATED.

Even as the building still smoldered, prison guards at pennsylvania's female state pen began to TAUNT the MOVE WOMEN who were all in the restricted housing unit (the hole). THE MOVE WOMEN who were in the hole are the MOTHERS of the babies MURDERED at MOVE'S HOME. The guards taunted them, made vicious jokes, came past their cells at all hours for weeks celebrating. While THE MOVE WOMEN, though remaining strong and determined, nevertheless grieved for their MURDERED FAMILY.

This is also why MOVE WOMEN were in the hole in the first place, for speaking out against the brutal treatment of the guards toward MOVE and other prisoners. MOVE MEMBERS have been kept in the holes of whatever prison they're at for decades for speaking out against the racist oppression in jail, just as MOVE spoke out against the racist oppression on the street by those street guards called cops, and these are the same prison guards and street guards who were the FIRST to be sent to oversee the rape, torture, and murder of the Iraqi prisoners and civilians, because of their documented experience in torture of people in the u.s., mainly minorities.

The role of the modern day buffalo soldier, the 21st century house nigger, deserves special dishonorable mention as well. The zest, the zeal with which these neo-slave catchers perform their appointed duties are truly despicable. These house niggas have absolutely no attachment to their culture, nor for those who fought to make it possible for their traitorous asses able to even apply for such jobs. Absolutely no loyalty to nothing but those so-called benefits. Professional community snitches who see out their culture, imprison their neighbors, relatives and friends for 12 bucks an hour. And are every bit as brutal and oppressive in an effort to impress a system perfectly willing to use them, but which still despises them all.

To quote MOVE FOUNDER JOHN AFRICA "IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR BLACK FOLKS TO SOLVE POLICE BRUTALITY WHILE BLACK CAPTAINS ARE HIRED TO SUPERVISE THE BEATINGS, IMPOSSIBLE FOR

BLACK FOLKS TO SOLVE COURT INJUSTICE WHILE BLACK JUDGES ARE HIRED TO PUT YOU AWAY. AIN'T NO NEED IN COMPLAINING ABOUT THE INHUMAN TREATMENT OF BLACK PRISONERS WHILE BOASTING OF THE APPOINTED NIGGERS THAT ARE SUPERVISING THESE JAILS.AIN'T NOTHING RESPONSIBLE, RESPECTABLE, UPLIFTING ABOUT A BLACKMAN ENSLAVED WITH THE IMPRISONMENT OF CONFUSION THAT SHACKLED HIS ANCESTRY, WHILE IMPRISONING BLACK PEOPLE WITH THE SAME SHACKLING INJUSTICE, DISCRIMINATING AGAINST THEIR FREEDOM AND SUPERVISING THEIR ENSLAVEMENT." LONG LIVE JOHN AFRICA!

THE PEOPLE must demand an end to this torture. The system only get away with these atrocities because the public allow them to. It is THE PEOPLE who pay their salaries and who give their approval of their vile tactics by their SILENCE, and it is past time that THE PEOPLE stop giving these demons their power. ★

FREE ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS!  
LONG LIVE MOVE!  
LONG LIVE REVOLUTION!  
LONG LIVE JOHN AFRICA!  
DOWN WITH THIS ROTTEN ASS SYSTEM!

ON THE MOVE!  
—Michael Africa

## From Janet Africa

This government operates by pressure. These officials do whatever they can get away with. If they think they can get away with killing us in these prisons, then that's what they will do. Despite what government has tricked people into thinking, government is scared of the people yall are the majority. Government needs the people to survive, government needs your tax dollars to pay their salaries and run this country. The politicians need people's votes to get in office. Government can't afford to anger the people because without the people's support, government would collapse! The Move 9, Mumia, All Political Prisoners – our lives are in the balance. You need a platform for your voice to be heard and to let this government know that they can't just send innocent people to prison, murder innocent people just because they want to get rid of them. This government uses that legality whenever they feel like they want to justify something, but JUST BECAUSE IT'S LEGAL DON'T MAKE IT RIGHT. Slavery was legal but it wasn't right. ★

04/05/05

## Attica To Abu Ghraib

By Sara Olson, CCWF

The United States-led coalition is re-colonizing Iraq with the aid of that country's former occupier, the military remains of the British Empire on which the sun never set. Now, the U.S. claims the title and these days, I believe, it also owns the Sun. Its armies blazed into Iraq, shelling Ba'athists and Al-Jazeera, with Paul Bremer in the T.E.Lawrence role...or maybe Lieutenant General Sanchez as the desert warrior...or, perhaps, Dubya all the while hoisting a plastic turkey or maybe...who cares? If you've seen one invader, you've seen...and on and on.

Apart from stealing Iraq's oil, demolishing its museums, history and culture and constructing fortified occupation strongholds called "bases" to police "the Region," the U.S. is also importing its domestic policy of wholesale imprisonment of huge sectors of the civilian population. Abu Ghraib is but one of many incarceration/torture centers in Iraq, albeit the most notorious. The photos, stored on computer files, that were posed at Abu Ghraib surfaced, reminiscent of the quaint American habit of recording the frolic that occurred during the lynching epidemic post-Reconstruction Era and up through the 1940's all over the country. What was old is new again.

Military Police employ practices learned while quashing the impenitent penitentiary population in the yards of Attica, against Iraqi prisoners. The U.S. knows how to incarcerate people. Yessiree! It warehouses over two million human beings in its own internal penal colonies and has approximately 6.9 million altogether under custodial supervision when one adds in the jailed, paroled, or those on probation. Some of its most experienced civilian prison directors from states such as Utah, New Mexico and Connecticut, free to move on because they'd been relieved of managerial duties due to unfortunate custodial deaths or outright incompetence, were sent to Iraq to set up and run the new prison system. If they could do it in Utah, they could surely do it in Baghdad.

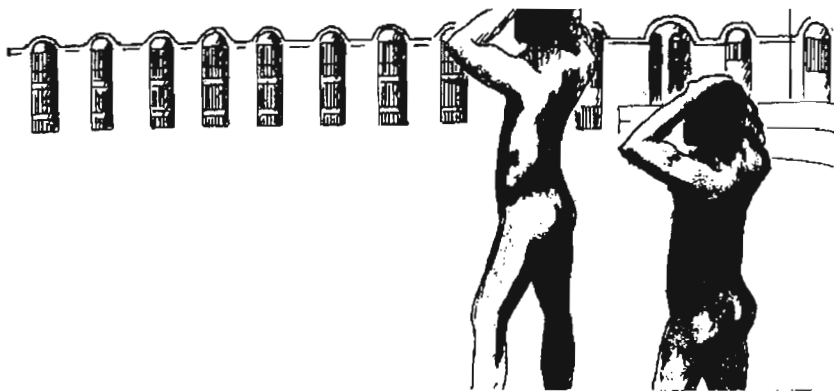
Could this be true? What about the photos depicting humiliating sexual torture? One U.S. prisoner rape study discovered one in every five male prisoners experiences pressured or coerced sex in prisons. One in ten is raped. Of women prisoners, more than 25% are pressured into sex or raped. In 2003, the Prison Rape Elimination Act, a federal law, was signed



to confront the brutal culture of sexual assault in U.S. Prisons. That's what America exported to Abu Ghraib.

Republicans, aided and abetted by willing Democrats, sold the Iraq Invasion to the American People. Predicated on an all-but-impossible love-fest between Saddam Hussein and the almost magically pervasive Al Qaeda, which is EVERYWHERE, the U.S. fairy tale told by those Grimm brothers in-avoiding-arms, Cheney and Bush, was complete when Ms. Condi Rice placed weapons of mass destruction on top of their mushroom cloud confection. Americans ate it up.

Much the same as they promulgated the Iraqi Invasion, the U.S. politicians devised a fictional narrative to create, in the U.S. population, a fear of criminals in order to build the Prison/Industrial Complex over the last 25 years. For this tale, politicians used the construct "dangerous felons", as their weapons of mass destruction. While campaigning in the late 1980's/early 1990's, politicians told voters that these weapons were deployed on the streets, in the neighborhoods, and secreted in American cities before voters were even aware, via supportive polls, there was a big problem. The script worked. Politicians were able, more and more, to go on the take from corporations of all stripes and myriad special interests, doing their bidding for the right price. When queried about whether or not they served the needs of the voters, "Hell, yes!" they replied. They were passing laws, state and federal laws, to lock up...felons and - and DRUG ADDICTS...mostly poor, usually black or brown - but they don't vote. They were building more prisons to lock these guys up and make the streets safe! Law and order reigns! We have to get used to more police curtailment; surveillance, drunk driving roadblocks, warrantless searches, but that's the price of freedom—more laws, more cops, The Patriot Act! Everybody wins! The American Dream. ★



## Correlation of prisoners' issues and conditions to international covenants and treaties

By Askia A. Baraka

Some of the overt forms of physical torture that tend to be employed by repressive governments and paramilitary groups worldwide are now being openly practiced in the United States penal system and have been for several decades now at either the state, federal or local levels.

There are a number of criminal justice policies and practices that constitute "cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment" of the type prohibited under Article 1 of the Convention Against Torture and under numerous other legally binding international human rights instruments. Among the areas where the U.S. government is not meeting its obligations to prevent highly abusive conduct of this type are the following:

- punitive violence and brutality in specially created super-maximum and control prison facilities
- indefinite and arbitrary solitary confinement
- the practice of punitive "cell extractions"
- conditions of detention of immigrants and asylum seekers awaiting deportation
- prison overcrowding
- prison rape and sexual abuse
- methods of prosecuting and detaining juveniles
- treatment of the mentally ill in prisons
- correctional officer brutality through abusive use of chemical sprays and dangerous methods of restraint and unnecessary use of force, including electro-shock devices
- health and safety violations
- abuse of prisoner classification system
- illegal incarceration of political prisoners



- murder of prisoners by corrupt correctional officials
- misuse of prison labor, and
- reinstatement of "chain gangs" as a form of punishment.

The gist of the position taken by the U.S. government in its Nov. 21, 1995, submission to the U.N. Special Rapporteur on Torture, and its 1995 report to the Human Rights Committee under the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, is that adequate legal protections exist under domestic law to prevent abusive practices in prisons.

For example, the government has contended: "The constitution and laws of the United States and those of its constituent states prohibit torture and any form of cruel and unusual punishment, ... (protect) every individual's right to bodily integrity and security, ... (and provide) numerous judicial, administrative and other remedies and avenues of recourse for individuals (claiming violations)."

It is true that U.S. laws do provide a number of essential protections against abuses in the criminal justice system, that the government and the courts have taken action to prevent or punish prohibited conduct in a number of instances, and that some aggrieved prisoner victims of abusive treatment at the hands of law enforcement and/or correctional authorities have been able to obtain redress.

But the extensiveness of the violations that currently are being reported and documented suggest that these legal protections and avenues for obtaining relief are far from adequate, and that a pattern and practice of significant abuses continues to exist, requiring more substantial remedial action than the government or individual states have taken to date.



To make matters worse, the likelihood of violations is increasing because of a number of recent initiatives by the U.S. Congress to reduce the ability of victims to use the federal courts to obtain effective judicial review and relief. In addition, the increasing fear of crime in American society has been used as a justification for law enforcement and prison authorities to initiate or substantially expand the use of prisoner control

and punishment techniques, such as "super-max" and control unit facilities and the reintroduction of the "chain gang," that greatly increase the risk and likelihood that cruel and degrading treatment will take place.

International treaties, conventions, minimum standards, rules, declarations and principles that are being violated:

- Basic Principles for the Treatment of Prisoners
- Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment
- Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women
- Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Being Subjected to Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment of Prisoners
- Principles of medical ethics relevant to the role of health personnel, particularly physicians, in the protection of prisoners and detainees against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment
- Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners
- Safeguards guaranteeing protection of the rights of those facing the death penalty
- United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty
- United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice ★

*Write to Askia Baraka as follows:*

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Vacaville CA 95696*



## By Ali Khalid Abdullah

The psychological effect of being in prison is one that many psychologists, behavioral scientists and social workers have been studying for some time in order to measure or gauge the mental condition of one who has spent a considerable number of years behind bars. There is ample literature out to suggest there is a psychological impairment that takes place from incarceration. The longer is imprisoned and the condition in which that person lives under while incarcerated, determines the amount or degree of psychological damage that individual has incurred.

As one who is a prisoner and who has a Bachelors degree in Behavioral Science, it doesn't take much for me to know that there are psychological negatives from long-term incarceration, albeit acute or subtle. My being in prison a number of years has seen the damage long-term incarceration can do, including what I have noticed of my own psychological difference –not all necessarily for the better. In fact, I "know" I have some psychological damage because of the endless tension, frustration, harassment, stress and strain of everyday living in an abnormal environment among thousands of different personalities and behaviors. Included among these are the court sanctioned oppressive and repressive behaviors of the prisoncrats.

There are times when my mental state is, in my mind, sound, while there are other times when I fall into such a deep depression that I feel I am never going to recover. This angers me, because when I fall into that depression there is no one for me to go to for relief. Yet, through the years I have learned to channel my negative energies and psychological damage or impairment in to areas of constructiveness rather than destruction, which is perhaps, why I do a lot of reading studying and free thinking. Free thinking is the ability to let your mind and your thoughts float and go as they desire without conscious interference. In other words, without guiding your thoughts to any structural format or form, as we normally would do. Free thinking allows me to unleash without shame or guilt, thoughts that are floating in my mind. I have found that when I allow myself 'free think' I am much more relaxed afterwards and more energized because there is no energy being expended. But this is not the case for many. For many, the anger and tension within is so tight and compressed that once exploded there are usually serious consequences to the individual or to others.

One of the things that I have suffered under and learned to adapt to a little, but still find hard to deal with, is the light being in my face at night. A constant dull light that glows in my face and no matter how much I try to blot that light out, it has become a part of my psyche to where if I do not have the light I cannot sleep. And I never really sleep. Not like the

non-incarcerated sleeps. For many in prison we must "half-sleep." That is, never go in to a sleep that you cannot immediately wake up at the slightest unfamiliar movement or sound, because that is a survival mode or mechanism one automatically acquires while in prison. Thus, I do not know what it is like to have a real deep sleep anymore. My mind has been conditioned and reinforced not to sleep in the normal fashion. That is an abnormality that prison life offers to the incarcerated.

Also, my being viewed and hated as a political prisoner or consciously active person by prison officials is not a thing one can live down once prison officials recognize who you are. Thus, you are and become a target for them at all times. You must remain on your "ps and qs" or you will fall and fall hard. You must be ever sensitive to many things those on the outside would not be as sensitive to. But prison sharpens your senses because this also becomes a survival tool, but make no mistake about it, prisons are designed to destroy you: to destroy the personality of your "self" and leave you broken and dependent. Political prisoners of any kind and jailhouse lawyers are targets for prison officials because you are presumed a threat. A threat because of your knowledge or because your thinking is different from others and you aren't likely to be intimidated by petty tactics. And so they (prisoncrats) design things especially for the ones whose wills remain unbroken.

Just look how long they have held, in prison, many political prisoners in Amerikkka. Many of them on languished on death row or in solitary confinement for well over 25 years. Some have been in such conditions for even longer than that. Not because they are a threat physically, but because they have not been broken down mentally, psychologically or spiritually and so they pose a danger to an element that must have compete control. Control of your body, the food you eat, the clothes you wear, type of heal care you receive (if you receive any). But they want the absolute prize of control, which is your mind and/or your soul, and I am not inclined to give that away to any human being.

I have seen men, strong men breakdown and become a shell of who they once were due to the type of psychological warfare placed upon them. I knew a man whose mother passed. The prisoncrats refused to allow him to have a funeral visit, or to even visit his mother in the hospital before she passed, even though guards would have been with him and his family would have paid an extortion price to the department of corrections, they still



refused him the visit. That was the beginning of this man's psychological downfall to where he fell so low he is now a walking zombie on thorazine and other mind blowing tranquilizers,

Society does not think of these atrocities because they are not readily known, nor are all the ramifications of prison life and what we endure. Further, the average human being does not want to believe that another human being would be so cruel and so sadistic as to torture and mangle other human beings, who are helpless, whether it be physical, psychological or spiritual. Yet that is the reality those of us in prison all too well know exists in many varying ways.

Amerikkka has a "lock em up" mentality that does not open its hand to rehabilitation any more. It is all about punishment to the highest degree. But such treatment only creates ticking time bombs that will day be back in society and living as your neighbor.

To a large degree I feel fortunate because I have been able to survive the many traumas during my incarceration thanks to having outside help and support through the years. This is something many do not have. That is why it is imperative that you – the public – take an active role in learning about prisons and what prisoners endure. As I stated earlier, the vast majority of prisoner will be coming back out and you have a vested interest in the kind of person you want to see walking among you.

The psychological effects of imprisonment are real and serious. If we want to have a healthy nation, the people need to think about how to deal with the problem of warehousing human beings. ★

*September 2004*

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*If you would like to read more writings of  
Ali Khalid Abdullah go to:*

*[www.geocities.com/freealinow](http://www.geocities.com/freealinow)  
[www.geocities.com/pppwc\\_uk/ak/ali.html](http://www.geocities.com/pppwc_uk/ak/ali.html)  
[www.geocities.com/dc/freeali](http://www.geocities.com/dc/freeali)  
[www.anarchistblackcross.org](http://www.anarchistblackcross.org)*

## ***US-held Political Prisoners***

**Mumia Abu-Jamal** is a Black journalist and a former member of the Black Panther Party who was an outspoken critic of the rampant brutality of the Philadelphia police department. He has been on Pennsylvania's death row for over 21 years, framed for the murder of a police officer in a trial where evidence was fabricated and witnesses were coerced.

**The Move 9** were captured after a full scale police assault against their home in August 1978. They were convicted as a group of the murder of one of the officers involved in the attack. Merle Africa, one of the MOVE 9, died in prison under suspicious circumstances in April 1998.

**Jalil Muntaqim** fought racism since his teens in San Jose, CA. He was captured in 1971 after he became a leader of the San Francisco Black Panthers and then of the underground Black Liberation Army (BLA). Along with Albert Nuh Washington (who died in prison in April 2000) and Herman Bell (the New York 3), Jalil was sentenced to life for the murder of New York City police officers in a trial where the state used perjured testimony. Both Jalil and Herman have repeatedly been denied parole, even though the son of the police officer whom they were convicted of killing has urged that they be released.

**Leonard Peltier**, a leader in the American Indian Movement, is serving two consecutive life sentences for the murder of two FBI agents on the Pine Ridge Reservation, although the FBI has admitted it has no idea who actually shot the two agents. Leonard's numerous legal efforts to prove his innocence have been rejected by the government and his eligibility for parole has also been consistently denied.

Puerto Rican independentista **Oscar Lopez Rivera** was captured in 1981 and is serving 70 years for the crime of "seditious conspiracy" because of his efforts to free Puerto Rico from the stranglehold of U.S. colonial domination. His disproportionate sentence and the conditions of confinement which he has experienced have been calculated to punish him for his political beliefs and acts.

**Marilyn Buck** is a North American anti-imperialist serving an 80 year sentence for charges which include conspiracy in the successful escape of political prisoner **Assata Shakur**. **Assata Shakur**, a Black Panther and BLA member, was serving a life sentence before she was liberated from a maximum security prison. She was granted political asylum by Cuba where she lives today still struggling for freedom for U.S. political prisoners and human rights for her people.

**The Cuban Five** were arrested by the U.S. government in 1998 on false charges of espionage and were railroaded to prison where they are now serving long sentences. In reality the five Cubans were trying to stop right wing terrorist groups from attacking the Cuban people.

### **THERE ARE OVER 100 POLITICAL PRISONERS IN THE UNITED STATES TODAY!!!**

The political prisoners are in prison today because they fought for self-determination for their people and stood up against police brutality, racism, miseducation and unjust incarceration. The fight to free them is part and parcel of the growing effort to dismantle the entire prison industrial complex.

Many of the political prisoners have been locked up for three decades, subjected to long years in solitary confinement and separation from family and loved ones, yet their spirits still remain strong.

**Sundiata Acoli**, captured on the New Jersey turnpike in 1973 at the same time as **Assata Shakur**, was recently turned down for parole once again and is being threatened with an "extended sentence". In California, Hugo "Yogi" Pinell is the only member of the San Quentin Six who is still in prison. The Six were acquitted of charges brought against them in a set-up by the prison during which George Jackson was killed. Yogi has been repeatedly denied parole.

**Veronza Bowers**, a former Black Panther, had a mandatory release date in April 2004 after serving over 30 years in prison, but at the very last minute the date was pulled by the U.S. Parole Commission. For the past year Veronza has been challenging this illegal action and is now supposed to be released in May 2005. As they age these men and women face a future without adequate medical care or the basic guarantees of human rights

guaranteed by international law and treaties. We cannot allow them to die under these conditions!

All of the prisoners take inspiration from the victories which have won been won by other political prisoners. In 1990



Dhoruba Bin Wahad was released when his conviction was overturned because of manipulation of evidence in his trial. In 1997 in a clear exposure of COINTELPRO, Geronimo Ji Jaga Pratt's conviction was overturned when a judge ruled that his trial had not been conducted fairly. In September 1999 eleven Puerto Rican political prisoners who were incarcerated for nearly twenty years won a commutation of their sentences after a massive, sustained amnesty campaign. These releases show that it is possible to win freedom against the odds!

The US has some of the longest-held political prisoners in the world. Internationally, other governments have released political prisoners in a spirit of reconciliation to move beyond past conflicts. Instead, the United States

is pursuing a vindictive policy where it continues to target activists from the sixties and seventies. In March 2000, Jamil Al-Amin (formerly H. Rap Brown) was framed for the murder of a police officer and is now serving a life sentence in Georgia. Sara Jane Olson was arrested in 1999 and charged with placing a bomb under a police car in 1975 and is now serving a fourteen-year sentence. Kamau Sadiki, a former Black Panther who had a daughter with Assata Shakur, was arrested in 2002 in a 1972 case where there had never been sufficient evidence to indict anyone. He is now serving a life sentence.

In a new offensive against progressive lawyers, attorney Lynne Stewart was convicted of providing support for terrorism in March 2005 in a case growing out of her legal assistance to one of her clients. She now faces a 30-year sentence. Chokwe Lumumba who has practiced law for decades in the South and has been called 'The Peoples Lawyer', was recently suspended and fined by the Mississippi Supreme Court in an effort to silence his eloquent defense of justice in the courtroom.

The government is also using grand jury witch hunts to pursue today's young activists from the environmental and anti-war movements. Grand juries gather information by granting people immunity from prosecution if they agree to testify and they threaten them with jail time if they refuse. People may agree to testify thinking that they won't harm anyone with their



limited testimony. But they can easily end up as tools of a government strategy against activists despite their intentions.

Since September 11th, the United States has expanded by the thousands the number of political prisoners and detainees it holds around the world. In defiance of international law and any basic standards of human rights, this government has captured and tortured unprecedented numbers of people in Guantanamo, Afghanistan, Iraq and other less well-known places. The so-called war against terror is in reality a war against all those who resist U.S. occupation and world domination.

Following is a list of some of the websites where you can get more information about the political prisoners. ★

[http://www.prisonactivist.org/jericho\\_sfbay/index.html](http://www.prisonactivist.org/jericho_sfbay/index.html)  
[www.freemumia.org](http://www.freemumia.org)  
[www.leonardpeltier.org](http://www.leonardpeltier.org)  
<http://sundiata.afrikan.net>  
[www.freethethefive.org](http://www.freethethefive.org)  
[www.freedomarchives.org](http://www.freedomarchives.org)  
[www.sfbayview.com](http://www.sfbayview.com)

List of prisoner addresses  
About Mumia Abu Jamal  
About Leonard Peltier  
About Sundiata Acoli  
About the Cuba 5  
Archives, cds, videos  
information and news

*Compiled by:*  
*Bay Area Jericho & Freedom Archives*  
*P.O. Box 3585*  
*Oakland, CA 94609*  
*415-863-9977*



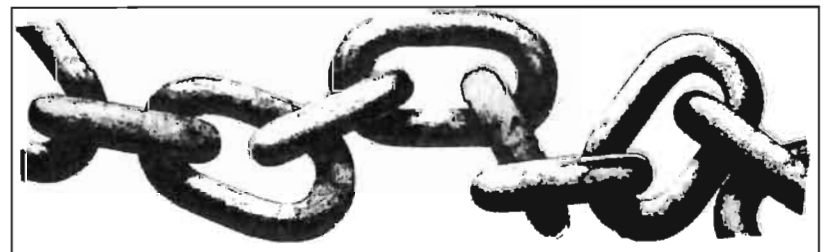
## The Key Ingredients

"KEEP MOVIN TO THE RIGHT"  
cried the Guard at the gate.  
20 yards later, two more guards  
In front of H-wing -- "TO THE  
RIGHT," yelled one. Between  
H and J stood Big Black, arms  
folded standing in the middle  
of the corridor between the yellow lines  
Didn't have to say anything. His looks  
told you where to go.

A few yards farther on, in front  
of J, two more guards making sure  
No one moved left of the yellow line  
supervised by a sergeant. Six guards within  
50 yards of each other. Posted up  
Performing "THE MOST DANGEROUS BEAT"  
in the state -- keeping us moving to the  
Right. I get the notion, somehow, I am  
the ingredient allowing that more than  
\$318,000 a year in salary I just passed  
in the corridor to so gleefully yell,  
"KEEP MOVIN' TO THE RIGHT"

And you -- you're part of the  
the ingredient too. sitting there wondering  
shy little Johnny's library has to close  
and little Donna's school shut down.  
The hospital no longer exists.  
HEY! they're being put out on the streets  
Being prepared for prison life.  
"MOVIN TO THE RIGHT!"

*By Kalima Aswad*  
*November 11, 2004*



## Blindfolded Men

A row of men are marched, youth and ancients, blindfolded men,  
hands bound tight behind, steps off balance, blindfolded men.

The line holds fast, the breath of one measures for the next;  
prodded toward trucks, they stand attendance, blindfolded men.

The line folds up, each captive hoisted in by soldiers;  
called a package in GI parlance, blindfolded men.

In hooded darkness, lines of men are moved to prison camps;  
they listen as the sightless do, awaiting entrance, blindfolded men.

The line unfolds, dissolves into a breathing pool  
bodies spread murmuring endurance; blindfolded men.

Captors guard blind-eyed over the tormented sea,  
ignore the clank of manacled dance: blindfolded men.

Unfaced men become commonplace on front-pages  
media disguises intolerance: blindfolded men.

Indifferent citizens don't care to look behind prisoner masks;  
the tortured would stare back, askance. Blindfolded men.



*Marilyn Buck*  
May 2002

This conference is happening after the closing of the annual meeting of the United Nations Committee on Human Rights has concluded. Once again the United States was able to push through a resolution condemning Cuba, but was not able to prevent the resolutions against Israel. There wasn't any discussion or examination of the US's violations of human rights both inside its borders and around the world. I mention this because it underlines the importance of the objectives outlined by the campaign. From the perspective of progressive European forces the building of an international campaign against the United States' violations of human rights based in the United States itself would be an important development. It would fill an existing political vacuum, provide a radical perspective and be a political partner with which progressive and radical forces outside the s could strategize and plan actions.

In Europe in the movement against the war and occupation of Iraq what has been missing has been the national movements internal to the US' political analysis and position. Without their contribution and leadership what has dominated is a false understanding of the United States, both its past and its present reality. The campaign that the International Human Rights Initiative is proposing, in addition to giving a voice to all the political prisoners at an international level, could help change that.

***Silvia Baraldini***  
***Rome: April 18, 2005***

**December 3, 2005  
International Day  
of  
Solidarity with  
Political Prisoners**

**Oakland, CA**

**Speakers include:**

**Kathleen Cleaver –**

**former Communications Secretary and the first  
woman on the Central Committee of the Black  
Panther Party**

**Alicia Rodriguez –**

**former Puerto Rican Political Prisoner**

**Representatives of Political  
Prisoners Internationally**