



Research Committee on International Law & Black Freedom Fighters in the U.S.

“The only alternative that Black [people] have in America today is to take it out of [U.S.] jurisdiction and take it before that body [United Nations] . . . which represents International Law and let them know that the human rights of Black people are being violated in a country that professes to be the moral leader of the free world.”

Malcolm X
April 8, 1964

Historical Perspective

The quality and nature of the struggle waged in this country by Black people must be viewed in a historical context. First, it must be recognized that we were brought here against our will, thereby making us, en masse, political prisoners.

The initial laws of this country, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, did nothing to change this status. They inherently stated that the laws of inclusion did not apply to us and we have essentially remained outside to the present. This lack of legal parity has demanded that our struggle develop from one of civil rights to human rights.

We must always look at our situation differently from those who have been included within the American society. Ours has been a continuous struggle starting with the capture, the middle passage, slave revolts and each successive generation of revolutionaries. The Black Freedom Fighters who resisted militarily in the 1960s, '70s and '80s follow in the tradition of Denmark Vessey, Nat Turner and Malcolm X.

Their struggle - our struggle - is similar to that of other peoples in the world striving for human rights and self-determination. Today, these world struggles are gaining legal recognition and protection in the growing body of international law vitalized by the Third World. Part of our task now is to have the International Law and international community recognize and protect the just struggle of Black Freedom Fighters within the United States.

Dr. John Henrik Clarke
Professor Emeritus, African World History
Hunter College, New York, N.Y.

The purpose of the Research Committee is to increase awareness of the relevance of International Law to the situation of Black political prisoners and prisoners of war in the U.S. For nearly four centuries Afrikans in the United States have been denied the power over their own destinies and, in return, have been fighting for self-determination. This struggle has taken many forms. In the 1960s, responding to the Civil Rights and Black Liberation Movements, a low-intensity war was undertaken by the U.S. government through the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Counter-intelligence Program and local police intelligence units. As in any war, this war has had its combatants, noncombatant support units, casualties and prisoners.

It is crucial that the local and international communities understand how International Law, including the 1949 Geneva Accords and Protocols I and II, apply to the cases of Black Freedom Fighters who are an essential and an inseparable part of the Black Liberation Movement in its struggle for self-determination.

Haywood Burns, Chair Emeritus of the National Conference of Black Lawyers *

Joy James, Ph.D., Associate Professor, University of Massachusetts, Amherst *

Duma Ndlovu, Political poet / playwright in exile from Southern Africa

Father Lawrence Lucas, Liberation Theologist, Resurrection Roman Catholic Church *

Professor James Turner, Founding Director, Professor, African Studies & Research Ctr., Cornell University *

Yuri Kochiyama, Activist

Judge Bruce Wright, author of Black Robes, White Justice

Dr. Curtis Powell, Ph.D., Immunologist

** Organizations listed for identification only.*

Committee Purpose

Board Of Advisors



Geronimo jiJaga Pratt
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Geronimo jiJaga Pratt

Geronimo jiJaga Pratt has served 19 years in California prisons despite efforts by Amnesty International and the Congressional Black Caucus to win his release. He has become a symbol of resistance to repression and of the struggle for Black freedom in America.

In 1968 Geronimo returned to the U.S. after three years in Vietnam. Only 21 at the time, Geronimo moved to Los Angeles, enrolled in college at UCLA, and joined the Black Panther Party. By 1971, he would be in jail, convicted of murder and facing life in prison.

"The oppressors' courts have made it all too clear that there is no justice coming for us New Afrikans* or any positive forces for self-determination," says Geronimo. "Much has been said about the situation regarding political prisoners and prisoners of war and it is good that people are finally coming to this understanding. Legal justification of our fight is firmly based on International Accords, Agreements, and Treaties between nations."

Geronimo has been trying to obtain a new trial based on the COINTELPRO** revelations since 1978. Despite clear and widely accepted evidence of FBI and judicial misconduct, all his attempts have been turned down. In February, 1988, the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals, Pratt's last resort in the legal arena, refused to rule on his case. They sent his case back to the lower court, claiming it had made a technical error.

* The New Afrikan nation is a colony within the United States and has been colonized since its inception by the United States. The New Afrikan independence movement is a national liberation struggle being waged for the purpose of freeing the New Afrikan nation from the United States.

** COINTELPRO was the coin name of an FBI "Counterintelligence Program" aimed at destroying Black (New Afrikan) organizations. In a 1967 letter, the then director of the FBI, J. Edgar Hoover, gave his reasons for initiating Cointelpro: "The purpose of this new counterintelligence endeavor is to expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit, or otherwise neutralize the activities of black-nationalist, hate-type organizations and groupings, their leadership, spokesmen, membership and supporters."

The New York Three



Albert Nuh Washington
77-A-1528
Wende Correctional Facility
Wende Road, P.O. Box 1187
Alden, New York 14004



Jalil Muntaquin
77-A-4283
Greenhaven Prison, Drawer B
Stormville, New York 12582



Herman Bell
79-C-262
Shawangunk, Box 700
Wallkill, New York 12582

In 1975, Albert Nuh Washington, Jalil Abdul Muntaquin and Herman Bell were arrested and charged with the murder of three police officers. As members of the Black Panther Party and the Black Liberation Army, each was a target of COINTELPRO. The then President, Richard Nixon, took a personal interest in their case. The New York Three were convicted of murder and each was sentenced to 25 years to life.

Although the New York Three have been incarcerated for more than 18 years, they remain steadfast in their commitment to Black liberation. Nuh states: "As a former member of the Black Panther Party and member of the Black Liberation Army, it is my position to struggle for the right of self-determination for Black people in the United States. Historically, our political rights have been determined not by our own national will, but by the needs of the political system that enslaved us. Therefore, as any other colonized people, Black people must be free to decide their own national, political, economic and social destiny."

In 1989, the case of the New York Three was appealed by petition of habeas corpus to a United States District Court. The case is based upon new evidence discovered through the Freedom of Information Act about COINTELPRO.



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Sundiata Acoli

I am a New Afrikan political prisoner of war. I am trained as a mathematician and computer analyst. I joined the Black Panther Party in New York after doing voter registration work in Mississippi. While in the Panthers, I did community work around issues of schools, housing, employment, child care, drug abuse and police brutality. My work in the Panthers caused me to be targeted in 1969 along with 20 other Panthers by COINTELPRO. At the end of our two year trial, known

as the Panther 21 conspiracy case, we were acquitted of all charges by a jury that deliberated less than two hours.

The Black nation is oppressed on the basis of nationality and class. A Black struggle for self-determination can itself set off a struggle for socialist revolution in America. It is almost certain that the U.S. government will turn increasingly towards open fascism in attempting to stem the tide of its decline. It can be counted on to accelerate these same measures in attempting to stem the Black Nation's move towards independence and self-determination.

In May of 1973, my comrades, Assata and Zayd Shakur and I were ambushed by New Jersey state troopers. Zayd was killed and Assata was wounded and captured. One state trooper was killed and another wounded. I was arrested days later. Assata and I were convicted of murder. I was sentenced to life plus 30 years. I am presently eligible for parole on the life sentence and if granted, I begin the 30 year sentence. There are no pending legal aspects of the case.

Kazi Ajagun Toure

I am a New Afrikan political prisoner who has been held in captivity my entire life. Ever since the mid '60s when I learned about slave revolts and the history of resistance, I have been of one mind and spirit with Afrikan people's struggle for self-determination and freedom.

The U.S. government was founded on the genocide of Native people, the enslavement and colonization of Afrikan people, and the robbing of Mexican peoples. Our only means of survival is any and all means of resistance, from organizing in our communities and building alternative institutions, to being able to defend ourselves and our communities. No people have ever gotten their freedom without a fight.

In 1982, I was convicted on federal charges of possession of firearms and sentenced to six years. Later I was convicted of the same charges under state law and sentenced to a consecutive five years. I am currently serving a sentence of seven years for seditious conspiracy -- conspiring to overthrow, put down, destroy by force and violence, the U.S. government. I am one of the few New Afrikans to be charged of this act. I will be eligible for parole in October, 1991.



Kazi Ajagun Toure
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Sekou Mgobogi Abdullah Odinga

I am a Muslim, New Afrikan and a prisoner of war. The name Abdullah means servant of God in Arabic. I choose that name because I try to be a servant of God. That is why I am incarcerated today, because I have been fighting oppression and trying to do what I think is right all my adult life. My political education began at Comstock Prison where one of the sergeants was head of the local Ku Klux Klan. The philosophy of Malcolm X greatly influenced my life. When I left Comstock, I became involved in nationalist politics and organizations, including the Black Panther Party. I traveled to Algeria to work in the International Headquarters of the Party. After my return to the United States, my political activity continued until my capture in October, 1981.



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All people have a right to peace, freedom, justice and self-determination. The U.S. government thinks that by killing and locking up freedom fighters and others who are supporting the right of people to be free, that it can destroy the liberation movement. The U.S. is mistaken because repression breeds resistance. Through COINTELPRO and other programs, the U.S. seeks to destroy the independence movement and the New Afrikan ideology which proclaims that Black people are free and independent of the United States.

In 1983 I was convicted of two federal charges under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organization Act (RICO) which were the liberation of Assata Shakur and the expropriation of an armored truck. I was sentenced to 40 years and a \$50,000 fine. I was also convicted of six counts of attempted murder of police in New York State which arose out of my capture. I was sentenced to 25 years to life to be served consecutively to the federal sentence.

Mutulu Shakur

Mutulu Shakur is a doctor of acupuncture and a political activist who has struggled for the liberation and development of New Afrikan people in the United States. As an acupuncturist he worked to reduce drug addiction in the Black community. He co-founded the Black Acupuncture Advisory Association of North America and the Harlem Institute of Acupuncture. Dr. Shakur's political and social consciousness began early in his life as he confronted the social service system to obtain services for his blind mother. In 1968, he co-founded the Provisional Government of the Republic of New Afrika. In 1980, at the invitation of the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), he traveled to Zimbabwe to observe the elections. His support of freedom fighters reached national recognition under the National Task Force for Cointelpro Litigation and Research. Because of his political activities, he became a target of COINTELPRO.



Mutulu Shakur
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"There can be no denying the positive aspects of the slogan, Black Power, and the positive impact of the Black Panther Party, and the dynamic effect that Malcolm X has had on the world struggle for self-determination. The rewards of our struggle derive from a proper analysis of the world and will win for our struggle some allies. But, it is the justness and the determination of our people and freedom fighters that will win the victory. This responsibility lies on our backs" states Mutulu.

Dr. Shakur was captured in 1986 and charged with several violations of the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act, including the liberation of Assata Shakur. He was convicted and sentenced to 60 years. The U.S. Supreme Court has recently refused to review his case.

Other Political Prisoners

- Dhoruba al-Mujahid Bin Wahad, (Released 3/22/90 due to government misconduct under COINTELPRO)
- Kwablah Mthwabu, 92097, La. State Pen., Angola, Louisiana 70712
- Kojo Sababu Bomani, 39384-066, Box 1000, Marion, Ill. 62959
- Basheer Hameed, 82A6313, Shawangunk, Box 700, Wallkill, NY 12585
- Teddy Heath, 75A0139, Sullivan Corr. Fac., PO Box 126, Fallsburg, NY 12733-0116
- Mark Cook, 20025-148K, 3901 Klein Blvd., Lompoc, CA 93438
- Craig Randall / Abdul Haqq, 8971710, PO Box 51, Comstock Corr. Fac., Great Meadows, NY 12821
- Robert Taylor, 10376-054, Otisville FCI, PO Box 1000, Otisville, NY 10963
- Terry Long, 06588-016, USP, Box 1000, Leavenworth, KS 66048-1000
- El Mahmoud Poindexter, 7525 4th Ave., Lino Lakes, MN 55014

Other

Political Prisoners

Continued

Anthony X Bradshaw, 3901 Klein Blvd., Lompoc, CA 93438
Seth Hayes, 74A2280, Southport Corr. Fac. PO Box 2000,
Pine City, NY 14871
Mumia Abu-Jamal, M8335 Drawer R, Huntington, PA 16652

**There are more than 50 Black political prisoners and prisoners of war. This list reflects those who have responded by the publication deadline. Others will be featured in later materials.*

Statement Of International Law

"International norms and principles for the treatment of national minorities have . . . become a part of international law through treaties and membership in the United Nations . . . and hence part of the laws of all states."
International Law and the Black Minority in the U.S., Dr. Y.N. Kly.

Among the international documents which guarantee the right to self-determination and protect those who fight to exercise the right are:

- 1949 Geneva Convention
- 1977, Protocol I (to 1949 Geneva Convention)
- 1/29/87 Protocol II (to the 1949 Geneva Convention)
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
Gen. Assembly Resolution No. 217 (III), Dec. 10, 1948
- Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 78 U.N.T.S. 277
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966

What You Can Do

- Raise this issue in your organizations and committees and amongst your friends, colleagues and co-workers.
- Order more copies of this brochure and please circulate it.
- Tell us of international forums and organizations involved in international laws to which we may bring our information.
- Write to the Black Freedom Fighters.
- Learn more about us. Write to:

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