

# Welcome To The Quagmire

So much for "Mission Accomplished."

On May 1<sup>st</sup>, US President **George W. Bush** "flew" in a military jet onto the deck of the *USS Abraham Lincoln* to announce the end of war operations in Iraq. A large "Mission Accomplished" banner was hung as a backdrop. Originally set up to appear that the vessel was out at sea, thereby "justifying" Bush's dramatic entrance by claiming the ship was out on maneuvers, it was later revealed that it was in fact off the San Diego coast, with the skyline in view, thus necessitating precise maneuvers by the ship to ensure that only the open sea would be visible in camera shots. All this so Bush could pretend to pilot the fighter jet (He allegedly was at the controls for the last thousand feet or so of the flight) and emerge as the gallant young--well, not so young--flyboy, decked



out in bomber jacket and helmet just like Snoopy in his *Sopwith Camel*. ("Curse you, Red Baron!") That the charade was so quickly and easily seen through was just another testimony to the president's naivete about his own image.

Another controversy would emerge regarding who had authorized the banner. Bush administration officials claimed it was the work of sailors on the vessel; several sailors claimed the banner was prepared at the request of the administration. Once again, the Bush Image Machine was shown to be missing several key cogs.

Just as his self-image was grounded somewhere far away from that wonderful place called Reality, so too was his administration's view of events in the

"newly liberated" country of Iraq. While administration officials continued to insist that everything was under control; that the people of Iraq truly do love the "coalition" forces; that the sporadic attacks against US and British forces were nothing more than a group of ragtag militants; that the United States was

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## Running Away From Mumia?

"... here's a start on what we've [the Left] been wrong about:

- "Mumia probably killed that guy. There, I said it. That does not mean he should be denied a fair trial or that he should be put to death. But because we don't want to see him or anyone executed, the efforts to defend him may have overlooked the fact that he did indeed kill that cop. This takes nothing away from the eloquence of his writings or commentary, or the important place he now holds on the international political stage. But he probably did kill that guy."

--Michael Moore, *Dude, Where's My Country?*, p. 189, Ch.10, "How to Talk to Your Conservative Brother-In-Law"

Thus **Michael Moore**, filmmaker, author and part-time comedian and political activist, nearly wipes out the previous 188 pages of thoughtful analysis and clever critique of the nation's drive toward war and totalitarianism.

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## HOLIDAYS THE AFRIKAN WAY

'Tis the Season to be Jolly. And to be spending lots of money on gifts, lights and tryptophan-loaded turkey.

And to participate in a wide variety of pre- and post-yuletide traditions without a full understanding of what those traditions mean. 'Tis a time to celebrate, mainly for the big retail shops. And Americans, especially those of Afrikan descent, seem to blindly celebrate right along with them.

How well do we really understand the holidays we celebrate? As this article is being written, Muslims are approaching the end of the sacred rite of **Ramadan**. At the end of November, Americans celebrate Thanksgiving, while those of Indigenous descent often refer to that commemoration as "**Misgiving Day**", and Afrikans are finding their own expression in the **Gye Nyame** ceremony. In December, while the Christmas Holiday and the Hebrew celebration of Hanukah take center stage in the popular

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bringing democracy to the people of Iraq; that the war was not about oil; and that this was truly a Liberation, not an Occupation, the news seemed to reinforce just the opposite conclusion with each passing day. Perhaps Saddam was right after all. Iraq seemed to be turning into "a quagmire" for the US military.

This issue, we take a brief look at some of the major events that have caused critics of the war and resulting occupation to believe that their worst fears have been realized: an unstable situation in Iraq, a former dictator still on the loose, a reputed international terrorist stepping up attacks against Americans and their allies, eroding civil liberties at home and a deteriorating national image around the world. We realize that, by the time you read this, the situation in Iraq may have changed dramatically; apprehensions of terrorist operators, as well as attacks against American and allied forces, are occurring at a rate of over thirty a day as this is being written. What follows is the most up-to-date chronology of many of the developments, on the military, diplomatic and political fronts that are giving shape to the emerging quagmire that is present-day Iraq.

**May 1:** Bush declares an end to combat operations aboard the USS Abraham Lincoln, apparently unaware that many more US troops will die after his declaration of victory than did during the official war.

**May 12:** A triple-suicide attack gutted three housing compounds in the Saudi Arabian capital city Riyadh, killing 35 people, including nine American citizens and twelve attackers. About 600 people would be arrested in the months to follow, suspected of affiliation with the al-Qaida terror network, which Saudi Arabia later blamed for the attack.

**June 13:** From a *Washington Post* article by **Barton Gellman**, mentioned again in an *Al-Jazeera* article dated August 10, 2003. "A covert Army Special Forces unit, operating in Iraq even before the war began in March, has played a dominant but ultimately unsuccessful role in the Bush administration's stymied hunt for weapons of mass destruction, according to military and intelligence sources in Baghdad and Washington." According to *Al-Jazeera*, "The task force left Iraq in early June empty-handed and thoroughly dismayed."

**June 14:** Two policemen and five others, labeled as "terrorists" by state-owned television, were killed in a shootout in the Holy City of Mecca.

**Late June:** Six British military police officers were shot dead in the Iraqi city of Majar al-Kabir in an attack by unknown resistance forces.

**August 19:** The United Nations Headquarters in Baghdad was subjected to the first major attack of the growing resistance. A bomb was set off that destroyed a large portion of the compound and killed 23 people, including UN envoy to Iraq **Sergio Vierra de Mello**, who was one of the closest advisors to UNITED NATIONS (UN) Secretary-General **Kofi Annan**.

**September 23:** A shootout in the southern Jizan province of Saudi Arabia killed one policeman and three "militants" (*Reuters News Service*).

**Thursday, October 2:** Citizens are turning against Bush, even in death. An obituary appeared in the *New Orleans, LA Times-Picayune* for **Gertrude M. Jones** of Mandeville, LA, who had died on August 25. The 81-year-old Jones' obituary asked that memorial donations be given "to any organization that seeks the removal of President Bush from office," according to the Associated Press. An online memorial book for her has noted dozens of messages of support.

**From The Guardian, Friday Oct. 17:** *Stars and Stripes* newspaper published a series of special reports on Iraq, including a survey of 1,935 troops, which found that a significant number of them were confused about their mission, and had lost faith in it.

The magazine, which is funded by the Pentagon, had received scores of letters from disenchanted servicemen. 49% of respondents "rated the morale of their unit as low or very low, 49% said it was unlikely they would re-enlist, and 31% said they thought the war had not been worthwhile," according to the Guardian.

Also, the Army had admitted on Thursday, October 16 that at least 13 troops had committed suicide in Iraq.

**From The Guardian, Saturday Oct. 18:** The Senate voted to turn half of Bush's Iraq reconstruction budget into a loan instead of keeping it as a grant in a vote held Wednesday, October 15. Eight Republican senators voted against Bush's request for a full grant, despite a meeting Bush held with nine of the dissidents on Tuesday October 14 in which he "ordered them to support his version of the bill", according to the Guardian.

Meanwhile, with a Justice Department investigation underway, FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION (FBI) investigators began questioning White House staff to

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find the person who leaked the name of one of the CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY'S (CIA) operatives to the press. The wife of former ambassador **Joe Wilson** was apparently "outed" to the press as retaliation for Wilson's reporting of the fallacies inherent in Bush's claim of Iraq's attempt to obtain yellowcake uranium from Niger. This controversy has led to what **William Kristol**, editor of the neo-conservative *Weekly Standard*, referred to as "open revolt against the White House" by the CIA and a "civil war in the Bush Administration [that] has become crippling." A "new coordinating group" announced on October 6th to be run by National Security Advisor **Condoleezza Rice** was met with some skepticism the next day by Defense Secretary **Donald Rumsfeld**.

**Saturday, October 25:** A series of protests, most notably in San Francisco, CA and Washington, DC, highlighted continuing opposition to the Iraq war. Park Police estimated 50,000 protesters in Washington, DC, while protest organizers estimated upwards of 100,000. The march was organized by International A.N.S.W.E.R. (ACT NOW TO STOP WAR AND END RACISM), UNITED FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE, BLACK VOICES FOR PEACE, and other activist organizations.

**Sunday, October 26:** Another major wave of attacks. Three soldiers were killed in two separate Baghdad-area attacks.

A rocket barrage was launched against the Al Rashid Hotel, with between eight and ten rockets striking it between the third and 11th floors on the north side. US Deputy Defense Secretary **Paul Wolfowitz** was staying in a room on the 12th floor but escaped unhurt. One US soldier was killed and 15 other people were injured in the attack.

**Monday, October 27:** Four separate attacks reportedly killed between 30 and 40 people.

At 8:30 AM, a police car was rigged to explode at an al-Baya police station. 15 Iraqis and one US soldier were killed.

At 8:35 AM, an ambulance stopped 60 feet in front of the office of the INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS. When it exploded, it created a 15-foot crater in the ground, knocked down a 40-foot section of the building's fortified front wall, broke a water main, demolished a dozen cars and killed 12 people, including 2 security guards and 10 passersby. At least 20 people were wounded. More might have died had the Red Cross not reduced their staff after the UN bombing.

At 8:55 AM, another car bomber exploded his vehicle at a Baghdad police station.

At 9:15 AM, the front of the al-Khudra police station in southwest Baghdad was destroyed by another car bomb.

Finally, at 10:15 AM, an attempted car bombing at a police station in the eastern district of New Baghdad was foiled.

Of the carnage, *Cable News Network's (CNN)* **Jane Arrar** was quoted as saying, "it is a reminder, if any were needed, that there really is nowhere safe in Baghdad and in all of Iraq, and that there are significant pockets of what the US continues to refer to as resistance who will do anything to drive out American forces."

According to the Associated Press (AP), Bush condemned the bombers as "cold-blooded killers, terrorists" who "don't care who they kill. They just want to kill," while claiming that the escalating violence is out of desperation at the mounting success of the US-led coalition's operation: "The more progress we make on the ground, the more free the Iraqis become, the more electricity is available, the more jobs are available, the more kids that are going to school, the more desperate these killers become."

Democratic Party presidential candidates chimed in to bitterly dispute Bush's analysis. Senator **John Kerry** of Massachusetts responded: "Does the president really believe that suicide bombers are willing to strap explosives to their bodies because we're restoring electricity and creating jobs for Iraqis? Is the president arguing that the better things get in Iraq, the more dangerous it will be for American soldiers? ... This sounds frighteningly like the 'light at the end of the tunnel' rhetoric of Vietnam. Every day, the White House's excuses become more insulting to our troops on the ground."

Fellow Democratic candidate **Howard Dean** said: "I just don't understand the president's logic—that because there is more violence and more deaths, things are going well. In my book, that means things are worse."

Senator **Joe Lieberman** (D-Conn.) said: "With all due respect, it makes no sense: This is a tragedy that occurred today, and it's amid growing signs of dangerous disorder in Iraq."

**Tuesday, October 28:** A suicide bomber struck in Fallujah, according to *The Progressive* magazine, [www.progressive.org](http://www.progressive.org). We did not find details regarding casualties. Also, **Matthew Rothschild** of *The Progressive* discussed the economic policies Iraq administrator **Paul Bremer** is imposing on the country. "Economically, Bremer has outlawed strikes and he's pushing the privatization of Iraq so fast that even members of the governing council are aghast, recognizing that the sell-off of Iraqi industry to U.S. companies will hardly be a popular development," he wrote. "In September, Bremer 'issued new rules giving foreign investors carte blanche to open businesses in Iraq in every sector except the oil and gas industries,' *The Wall Street Journal* reports on Oct. 28. 'The investment law, which allows for 100 percent foreign ownership and full rights to repatriate profits, is far more liberal than laws in all but a few other Arab countries.' One Iraqi-American businessman told *The Wall Street Journal*: 'This gives ammunition to the extremists who say the war was all about U.S. companies taking over Iraq.' ... The war wasn't only about letting U.S. companies grab Iraq. But that was part of it. U.S. soldiers today are putting their bodies on the line for Halliburton and Bechtel and ExxonMobil."

**Wednesday, October 29:** The Red Cross and DOCTORS WITHOUT BORDERS announced a pullout of their personnel from Baghdad, despite appeals from the US administration to stay. The Red Cross would remain in Iraq but would scale back their staff and increase security for those who stay.

US military authorities announced that American forces were now suffering an average of 33 attacks a day, up from 12 a day in July.

**Friday, October 31:** 14 Iraqis died during clashes between US troops and Iraqi crowds. The next day, an attack against a US patrol in the Abu Ghraib market west of Baghdad apparently caused no casualties.

**Saturday, November 1:** Two US soldiers were killed near the northern city of Mosul when their convoy struck an explosive device.

**Sunday, November 2:** A makeshift bomb killed a soldier in a vehicle on a road to Baghdad.

Also, two civilian contractors were killed by a similar device while they were driving in a convoy in Fallujah, a hotbed of resistance to the US occupation. Crowds were reported to have

gathered at the site of the explosion and chanted anti-US slogans, according to CNN.

Finally, a twin-engine CH-47 Chinook transport helicopter was reportedly hit by a missile before it crashed near Amariyah, west of Baghdad, killing 16 soldiers and wounding 20. The soldiers were being transported to a much-needed rest-and-relaxation break from the war.

**Monday, November 3:** A 4th Infantry soldier was killed when his vehicle hit a mine in Tikrit.

That night, a car bomb exploded in front of the Al-Barate Hotel in Karbala, about 55 miles south of Baghdad. One Iraqi was killed and at least five people were wounded.

In Saudi Arabia's Holy City of Mecca, police uncovered a "cell" that was linked to al-Qaida. Two individuals believed to have been affiliated with that cell were killed. Rocket-propelled grenades, guns, explosives and ammunition were found.

**Tuesday, November 4:** Several people were wounded at the Coalition Provisional Authority (US Occupation) headquarters, the location of the former palace of Saddam Hussein, when projectiles landed outside the palace grounds.

The Palestine Hotel and the previously-targeted Al-Rashid Hotel were the sites of several explosions.

An Army 1st Armored Division soldier was killed and two others were wounded when their vehicle struck a makeshift bomb in Baghdad.

The Mosul Hotel in northern Iraq, where some US troops reside, was hit by rocket-propelled grenades. There were no casualties reported.

**Wednesday, November 5:** Three soldiers on patrol were fired upon with rocket-propelled grenades and were wounded in the attack. This occurred near Ramadi, west of Baghdad.

Also, a soldier from the 1st Armored Division died from a "nonhostile" gunshot wound at a Baghdad checkpoint, according to CNN and coalition officials.

Rumsfeld announced plans to send more than 100,000 fresh troops to Iraq to facilitate his new troop rotation plan, including over 40,000 National Guard and Reservists. Meanwhile, members of the House Armed Services Committee added further heat to the criticism of the Bush administration's handling of the crisis in Iraq. Senator **John McCain** (R-Ariz.) spoke to the Council on Foreign Relations, referring to the administration's "self-imposed distance from the Iraqi leadership." He also criticized administration plans to quickly train Iraqi security personnel as a prelude to an early withdrawal: "Hastily trained Iraqi security forces cannot be expected to accomplish what US forces have not succeeded in doing."

That same day, a Democratic staff memo detailing plans to expose "the misleading, if not flagrantly dishonest, methods and motives of senior administration officials who made the case for unilateral and preemptive war" caused some angry Republicans to accuse the Democrats of playing politics.

**Thursday, November 6:** A military convoy was ambushed in Mosul, killing one soldier and wounding six.

At about 7 AM, the 101st Convoy was hit by rocket-propelled grenades and small arms fire.

Two "militants" blew themselves up during a raid in the Holy City of Mecca. A few hours earlier, another individual was shot dead in Riyadh.

**Friday, November 7:** The US Embassy in Saudi Arabia announced that US missions in that country would be closed due to intelligence reports that terrorist attacks were imminent.

A military convoy in Baghdad came under attack from rocket-propelled grenades, injuring one US soldier.

A Black Hawk helicopter crashed along the Euphrates River in Tikrit at 9:20 AM, killing all six of the soldiers on board. Witnesses said it had been hit by a rocket.

**Saturday, November 8:** The US Embassy and consulates in Saudi Arabia were temporarily closed, citing terrorist threats, according to CNN. State Department spokesman **Richard Boucher** issued this warning: "The embassy strongly urges all American citizens in Saudi Arabia to be especially vigilant when they're in any area perceived to be American or Western."

Two US soldiers died and one was wounded in a vehicle explosion.

Hours later, US Deputy Secretary of State **Richard Armitage** commented on the "fine line between liberator and occupier; we're trying to walk that and we're trying to make the point that as soon as we can turn over sovereignty to a credible organization that has assurance that they can make it in the long run, we will do so and we will be gone" on *CNN's Saturday Morning*.

Eleven people, including four children, were killed, and 122 people from 19 nationalities were wounded when suspected al-Qaida-affiliated attackers stormed an affluent neighborhood near Riyadh's diplomatic quarter late that night and set off three explosions. Witnesses reported hearing gunfire before the explosions, apparently when the attackers fired at security guards prior to driving their explosive-laden cars through the gates. The attack occurred at about midnight, when many of the adult residents were away from their homes because of Ramadan observances, leaving a large number of children in the compound, according to the compound's manager. It was believed that the attackers used the same car bomb strategy utilized in the May 12 triple suicide attack in Riyadh. "I don't know who they were targeting, most of the residents were Arabs," one injured woman said.

Monday, November 10: Democratic presidential candidates **Wesley Clark**, Lieberman and Kerry took turns criticizing Bush's health benefits program for US veterans. Among specific aspects of Bush's treatment of veterans that they attacked were the closing of schools on military bases, long waiting lists for care at Veterans Administration hospitals, the unavailability of military retirement benefits along with disability benefits, a lack of support for homeless veterans, inadequate mortgage insurance for NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVE members, a "decent wage", and special compensation for housing, health care and other services so veterans can provide for their families.

**Tuesday, November 11:** US paratroopers killed six attackers and wounded four others in a shootout that started when they were fired upon from a vehicle stopped near a hospital that was run by the Jordanian government near Fallujah.

British-controlled Basra was the location of a bomb explosion which killed two people, including the bomber, and wounded two. No coalition soldiers were involved in the incident.

One soldier from the 1st Armored Division was killed and two were wounded in a bomb attack at about 4 PM in Baghdad.

The chairman of Sadr City's governing council was shot to death by American soldiers during a heated argument that started

when the chairman, **Mohammad Ghazi al Kaabi**, objected to efforts by troops to prevent him from parking his car in a restricted area. Military officials said he became agitated, wrestled a soldier to the ground and grabbed his gun before being shot in the upper thigh. He was pronounced dead at a nearby hospital. Between 200 and 300 demonstrators later protested the incident, demanding an investigation and the departure of American soldiers from Sadr City, once known as Saddam City.

A roadside bomb hit a US military convoy near Baghdad, killing one American soldier.

**Wednesday, November 12:** In the deadliest attack against an American ally since the beginning of the occupation, a suicide bomber blew up a truck packed with about 650 pounds of explosives at an Italian paramilitary base in Nasiriyah, southern Iraq. The blast collapsed three sides of the building, gouged a six-foot-deep crater, set fire to several parked cars, and killed at least 26 people. As guards fired at a decoy car, a fuel tanker approached from the opposite direction and rammed into the gate of the building before exploding.

In Mosul, an Iraqi paramilitary guard was killed when rocket-propelled grenades and small arms fire were directed at an American military compound.

A roadside bomb exploded near a patrol by the town of Taji, northwest of Baghdad, killing one US soldier.

A roadside bombing in Baghdad resulted in the death of another American soldier on this day.

Meanwhile, a CIA assessment predicted that the Iraq security situation would get worse in Baghdad and across the country. Among the statements in the memo were the fact that more Iraqis were "flooding to the ranks of the guerillas" and the fact that ammunition is "readily available," making it easier for them to launch attacks.

**Thursday, November 13:** "Operation Iron Hammer" began as US gunships shelled targets in Baghdad, Tikrit, Kirkuk and Samarra. Some of the heaviest weapons yet were used, including 2000-pound bombs.

**Saturday, November 15:** Seventeen US soldiers were killed, five were injured and one was missing when two U.S. UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters crashed Saturday in a residential neighborhood in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul. One helicopter may have climbed to avoid gunfire and collided with the other, causing them both to crash.

Meanwhile, Rumsfeld said that the planned transfer of power to an Iraqi governing council would have no effect on the timetable for removal of US troops, even as Bush began hinting that a US occupation would not last "years and years."

In Turkey, two almost-simultaneous blasts went off at the Neve Shalom synagogue in the Istanbul suburb of Beyoglu and at the Beit Israel synagogue in the suburb Sisli. 23 people were killed. The government believes terrorists were behind the attacks but would not say if it believed al-Qaida was responsible.

**Sunday, November 16:** An audiotape attributed to ousted Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein was broadcast on the Arabic news network *Al Arabiya*. In it, the speaker called for continued and escalated resistance against the coalition forces in Iraq.

**Monday, November 17:** In two incidents near Baghdad, two US troops lost their lives. A homemade bomb killed one soldier and a civilian near Baghdad just before 8 a.m. A second soldier was

killed and two were wounded when their patrol came under attack from small arms and rocket-propelled grenades just after 7:30 a.m.

**Wednesday, November 19:** At the beginning of his visit to the United Kingdom (UK), Bush urged the European powers to work together in stabilizing the security situation in Iraq. "We did not charge hundreds of miles into the heart of Iraq and pay a bitter cost of casualties and liberate 25 million people only to retreat before a band of thugs and assassins," he said.

**Thursday, November 20:** In Istanbul, Turkey, suspected al-Qaida suicide bombers blew up trucks packed with explosives at the British consulate and a London-based bank Thursday, killing at least 27 people and wounding nearly 450, according to the Associated Press. The twin attacks, just minutes apart, were the worst terrorist bombings in the Muslim nation's history.

In London, police estimated that between 100,000 and 110,000 protesters marched in opposition to Bush's visit to the UK. In Trafalgar Square, a statue of Bush had been erected and was ceremoniously torn down, mocking the media hype surrounding the toppling of Saddam Hussein's statues in Baghdad and other cities as US-led coalition forces had swept through Iraq.

**Friday, November 21:** A rocket-propelled grenade struck the 16th floor of the Palestine Hotel in downtown Baghdad, which is home to a number of U.S. companies and foreign journalists. There were no immediate reports of casualties.

**T**hese are just some of the major events that occurred since the "declaration of victory" aboard the USS Lincoln on May 1, a day that may cause some to refer to it as "*May Fool's Day*".

How will the US extricate itself from this situation? Bush says the answer is to stay the course, follow the US plan for Iraq (assuming it has one), and squash the terror network of al-Qaida and its ilk. He says the answer is to pressure those Arab nations that continue to support terrorist organizations and that run their own countries with the iron fist of totalitarianism and elitist corruption. He says "democracy" is the answer, and that Iraq, even as it seemingly disintegrates into a flurry of terrorist bombings, is on the sure road to a quick recovery, even quicker than those experienced in Germany and Japan after World War II.

Others say that the solution is an immediate withdrawal of US troops from Iraq. While US officials warn that such a move would lead to a "bloodbath", peace activists point out that a similar note was struck regarding troop pullouts in Vietnam, and quite to the contrary, the killing *stopped* when US troops left. They take note of the United States' history of violently overthrowing stable governments and replacing them with their own dictatorships, and they insist that Iraq should be made whole to undo the damage the US has done, but then left to the Iraqi people. One thing is clear, though: As long as US troops remain in Iraq as an occupying force, as long as the oil and other resources of Iraq are being exploited by US-based multinational corporations, and as long as the Iraqi people are not granted the right to determine the course of their own country--*whatever it may be*--there will be a groundswell of often-violent resistance inside the country and ever-more popular protest around the world. Welcome to the quagmire.

**Sources:** *Associated Press; cnn.com; Reuters News Service; The Guardian; The Wall Street Journal; The Progressive Magazine.*

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The strangest thing is the fact that his book would have stood just fine without that single paragraph, losing none of its fire or its reason. Moore exposes many of the ridiculous lies used by the Bush administration to justify its own push toward death. But when it came to the case of award-winning journalist, Veteran Black Panther, MOVE supporter and death-row inmate **Mumia Abu-Jamal**, convicted in a flawed, tainted and corrupt 1982 trial of killing police officer **Daniel Faulkner**, Moore completely dropped the ball.

Why did Moore put so much time and effort into uncovering Bush's lies and apparently spend little or no time uncovering basic contradictions in Mumia's case that would seem to be intuitively obvious to the most casual observer? By referring to AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL and the NATIONAL COALITION TO ABOLISH THE DEATH PENALTY in his end notes, he displays the unfortunate mindset with which he apparently regards Mumia's case. It is an attitude that afflicts too many on the White Left and in Black Liberal- and Moderate-dom: that their opposition to the death penalty, not the question of Mumia's innocence, is what had drawn them to Mumia's cause in the first place.

This explains the collective sigh of relief that went up at federal judge **William Yohn's** decision two years ago to set aside Mumia's death sentence, yet upheld his conviction. The relative lack of collective outrage, except from Mumia's staunchest supporters, was indicative of where the motivations of a significant number of his backers lay. And now, with a renewed push to reinstate the death penalty against him, the INTERNATIONAL CONCERNED FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF MUMIA ABU-JAMAL (ICFFMAJ) must once again struggle to mobilize support that they surely had thought they had all along.

While we at **KUUMBAReport** would love to try to impress you all with our own analysis and passion for this issue, the fact is that there are others who can express the sense of outrage over Moore's unfortunate comment, and the liberal malaise that it seems to expose, better than we can. We now present two commentaries, one from Philadelphia-area lawyer and professor, Brother **Linn Washington**, and the other from Sister **Marpessa Kupendua** of ICFFMAJ.

### MOORE V. MUMIA: DUPLICITY ON THE WHITE LEFT

By Linn Washington Jr.

**W**hat do liberal icon Michael Moore and liberal-lambasting **Rush Limbaugh** share in common?

Both mega-media stars have drawn criticism recently for stooping to exploit racist sentiments about Black men for their professional enrichment.

Curiously, there is a Philadelphia connection to the Black men recently exploited by filmmaker Moore and radio loud mouth Limbaugh. Like Limbaugh's low blow to Eagles' quarterback **Donovan McNabb**, Moore's maligning of Philadelphia death-row journalist **Mumia Abu-Jamal** in Moore's latest book has sparked widespread criticism.

Last week Philadelphia political activist/author **Ewuare Osayande** flipped the script on Moore by pointing a verbal lens at this Academy Award winner's published remarks questioning

the innocence of Abu-Jamal. Osayande focused on Moore's anti-Mumia barb during a thought provoking presentation in Center City.

However, Osayande merely used Moore as an evidentiary prop for his searing, documentary style examination of racism and chauvinism within the white political Left ...from the anti-war movement to non-profit organizations.

"Michael Moore is a fraud ...There, I said it," Osayande quipped, mocking the phrasing of Moore's published comment about Abu-Jamal.

"Moore is the latest manifestation of what white liberalism means today. Until the white left becomes accountable to the oppressed they claim to represent, they will continue to mislead," Osayande charged during his presentation entitled, "With Allies Like These You Don't Need Enemies: Racism, War and the White Left."

Moore, Osayande contended, bases part of his anti-Mumia posture on the "racist premise of presumed guilt of Blacks" - a stereotype shared by some white liberals and most white conservatives.

Osayande questioned why the white Left has not mounted a campaign to denounce Moore's calculated-to-sell-books slap at Mumia.

The fact that Moore has told a few key (white) Mumia supporters that his book comment was perhaps "too flip" fits into what Osayande said is an all too typical antic of too many Left-liberals.

"Well meaning is not the issue. Results are the issue. White folks get stuck in, 'This is not what we meant to do,'" Osayande said during his presentation at the Friend's Center, sponsored in part by the AFSC's [AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE--Ed.] Criminal Justice Program.

The danger of Moore's anti-Mumia slap, Osayande argued, is its potential to confuse persons uninformed about crucial details of the internationally controversial case but who will accept Moore's position as fact because of their esteem for Moore.

"There is a man who has confessed to the murder that put Mumia on death row. You mean Mr. Research, Michael Moore, doesn't know of this confession?" Osayande asked rhetorically.

Osayande pointedly criticized Moore for pandering through using the anti-Mumia slap at the beginning of a book chapter where Moore "is making concessions to white conservatives."

Moore, in his hot selling new book, says Mumia "probably killed that guy. There, I said it." - offering no proof for this assertion while maintaining his longstanding posture that Abu-Jamal should not "be put to death."

Philadelphia area author **David Lindorff** pilloried Moore's presumption of Abu-Jamal's guilt in an article posted last month on the Counterpunch news/commentary website.

"Sadly Moore ...has joined a short-list of other purported leftists ...who seem ready to bolster their 'independent' credentials by trashing Mumia supporters," stated Lindorff, author of *Killing Time: An Investigation Into the Death row Case of Mumia Abu-Jamal* - the most comprehensive book on this case published to date.

Lindorff, himself a white Leftist, noted in his widely-circulated article that Abu-Jamal's 1982 murder trial "stank from the beginning ...If the evidence presented at the trial was weak, cooked and hidden, how can [Moore] or anyone come to any kind of 'probable' conclusion based upon it?"

Moore concedes that Abu-Jamal did not get a fair trial, a fact acknowledged by many including AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL investigators yet a critical fact rejected by Pennsylvania and federal courts.

Osayande, zooming beyond filmmaker Moore in his presentation, blasted the white-Left anti-war movement for its silence on the shabby treatment of **Shoshana Johnson**, the Black US soldier wounded and captured during the same Iraq war battle that produced Pentagon manufactured hero **Jessica Lynch**.

"Shoshana Johnson is not getting any book deals, movies, magazine covers and she is getting an Army disability pension far less than the pension given to Lynch. Where is the white Left on this issue?" said Osayande, whose new book is entitled, *Black Anti-Ballistic Missives: Resisting War/Resisting Racism*.

Osayande assailed local white Left-led anti-poverty and other self-proclaimed progressive organizations, charging they have become the "gatekeepers between the oppressed and the capitalists ... They are a Non-Profit Industrial Complex!"

Osayande said tensions have always existed between the white Left and Blacks since the 19th Century anti-slavery movement because the white Left refuses to aggressively address the issue of racism.

"When it comes to racism experienced by people of color, the reaction of the Left is to deny it or defend it, never to eliminate it," Osayande said.

Osayande's critique of the white Left echoes concerns raised by a succession of Black leaders, like Rev. Richard Cain's 1865 complaints about white liberals and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s 1963 criticisms of white moderates in his famous "Letter from Birmingham Jail."

White liberals "are responsible for several critical roles in the maintenance of peaceful white supremacy," asserts the 2002 published book, *The American Directory of Certified Uncle Toms*.

For Osayande, the question remains: "Are white organizations in the movement willing to be accountable to people who are oppressed?"

*Linn Washington Jr. is an award-winning writer who teaches journalism at Temple University. Send all inquiries to undagroundrr@yahoo.com.*

## NEO-LIBERAL FLIGHT IN THE HOUR OF CHAOS (MUMIA IN THE TERRORDOME)

by Sis. Marpessa Kupendua

**I**t's maddening to be subjected, time and again, to the weak-kneed whimsy of white neo-liberals. Even more disheartening are the whinings of black activists who trip over each other to act as their apologists when they fail to walk the walk. When the fire gets hot, best believe you can spit on your finger and hold it to the wind to see which way they'll land.

I refer to the recent revelation that Michael Moore, the John Wayne of white left-dom (and apparently a messianic figure to many activists of color) has arrogantly and with no basis in fact condemned Mumia Abu-Jamal as a liar and a murderer in his latest book. Surely, there must be outrage, right!? On the contrary, this dagger to the back of Mumia has become fodder for more blustery b.s. than Fox News n'em! In fact, they're probably p.o.'d that I'm/we're still talking about it!

It's time to recognize that these lukewarm "conditional" supporters do not now and never will have Mumia's back. They

are wannabe Mumia PIMPS, plain and simple. It's all good when his pictures and articles are selling their newspapers, books, tapes, increasing their radio listenerships, building their ranks, and "colorizing" their podiums and audiences (nice photo ops!). But when a deliberate, despicable act of aggression by one of their own occurs, they meekly sidewind into the shadows, leaving a foul stench.

We saw this neo-liberal shuffle before when Mumia exercised his right to self-determination and fired his lawyer, **Leonard Weinglass**. You wouldn't believe how scores of the white left harrumphed and stamped their feet away from Mumia (as self-determination for black folks is still a foreign concept to many of them --how *dare* he!), followed by an illicit, cowardly whispering campaign against MOVE and Mumia (perhaps giving Moore the gonads to proclaim "There, I said it!" during his dump). Suddenly, it didn't matter that Mumia was fighting for his life on death row. Their truest support then, as now, is reserved for their peers in white left-dom.

**Sis. Leslie Jones** of YOUTH FOR MUMIA and **Bro. Jason Corwin** of the LEAGUE OF INDIGENOUS SOVEREIGN NATIONS OF THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE (LISN) have written extensively on *Democracy Now's* hyper-promotion of Moore's book. Although this program has supported Mumia in the past, when "in-depth" reporter **Amy Goodman** interviewed Moore recently she curiously made nary a peep about his treacherous remarks indicting Mumia! Sis. Jones writes, "How can you support Mumia's freedom and promote a book that supports his demise all at the same time?" Simple logic, but to far too many, a telling revelation that they are more interested in Michael Moore's right to lie than Mumia's steadfast declaration of innocence in the face of suppressed evidence and an FOP-led [FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE--Ed.] campaign of death!

These acts of solidarity with Moore bolster his hallucination that he will never have to account for his treachery. The aforementioned apologists moan about Moore's right to his "opinion" ad nauseam. Check it ... Moore's opinionating carries weight because he has been elevated into the stratosphere by Holly-weird! People who read his book and believe his purposefully misleading "references" on this issue (none of which bolster his claim one iota) are gonna accept what he writes as gospel because they revere him! They won't investigate the government campaign to silence Mumia since the age of 14, the infamous **Judge "fry the nigger" Sabo**, the FOP-threatened witnesses, corrupted/rejected evidence, and the outrageous lies they've fabricated on Mumia! Moore has successfully played into the hands of the state that wants Mumia dead at *all* costs, strategically ingratiated himself with the insidious forces that prompted him to make this attack, *and* retained his Stupid White Man crown amongst the Mumia pimps! Now ain't that about a blip!

On October 8, 2003, the PENNSYLVANIA SUPREME COURT ruled against Mumia's appeal citing the "untimeliness" of the evidence proving Mumia's innocence. Time is fast running out for our brother to obtain any semblance of justice from within these courts, making it plainer than plain that only the power of the pressure of *dedicated*, uncompromisable supporters of justice is gonna free him from the clutches of the lynch mob!! We don't need NO MORE MARTYRS!

Despite all that swirls around him, Mumia consistently writes and records column after column exposing the injustices of this war-mongering, death-loving system, defending the rights

of workers everywhere, and calling the righteous people of struggle to hold fast the fight for liberation for ourselves and our future generations.

Sis. Jones writes, "While we cannot honestly say that all white people are alike, we can say that white people (especially white liberals) rarely take the time to check themselves and their own issues of white supremacy." I say... speak NOW, or forever hold your half-steppin', some-timey support! DEMAND that Michael Moore back up his claims with FACTS wherever he appears, or leave the door open for even more reckless, unsubstantiated attacks on Mumia!

11/2/03

FREE MUMIA AND ALL PP'S & POW'S! LONG LIVE THE REVOLUTIONARY SPIRIT OF OUR WARRIOR ANCESTORS! WE WHO BELIEVE IN FREEDOM CAN NOT REST! (www.afrikan.net / www.mumia.org/ www.onamove.org)

"We could not save Malcolm X, but we can save Mumia. We can save him and we must save him, because we love our Brother, and we need our Brother to help us fight for our freedom."

--Queen Sis. Assata Shakur.

## MOBILIZATIONS FOR MUMIA

**November 29th, Cafe Mawanoj, 624 "T" Street, NW, Washington, D.C.:** Book Reading of Mumia's latest book, *Faith of Our Fathers*, featuring Bro. Sam Jordan, Spokesperson from Campaign to Free Imam Jamil Al-Amin; the Great-granddaughter of Frederick Douglass; Prof. Tony Medina (teacher, poet, activist); and much more! For more information, call **Bro. Suncere Ali Shakur** at (202) 332-4480.

**December 5th, 7-9 PM, at historic Riverside Church, 91 Claremont Avenue at 120th Street in Harlem, NY:** Book Reading of "Faith of Our Fathers". Featuring Ruby Dee, Ossie Davis, Professor James Cone, Michael Tarif Warren, Pam Africa, Father Luis Barrios, Karen Taylor, and others. Readings, discussion, legal updates, book signings, food and music!

**December 6 at Haneef's Bookstore, Philadelphia, Pa.:** Book Reading of *Faith of Our Fathers* Featuring Ishakamusa and Lydia Barashango (Mumia's Sister).

**December 13, March and Rally in Philadelphia** for Mumia Featuring Seeds of the Revolution: Julia and Malcolm Wright (daughter and grandson of Richard Wright); Fred Hampton, Jr. (son of murdered BPP Chairman Fred Hampton); Frederick Douglass' great-granddaughter, Prof. Sybil Roberts, presenting her astounding 15 minute play called "The Visit"; and much, much, more!!

**On the weekend of Dec. 13th there will be a major conference in Philadelphia for Mumia.** This Dec. 9 marks 22 years since Mumia's arrest and imprisonment despite the massive amounts of evidence proving his innocence. It's been 22 years too long and we must step up the pressure to demand his release. Please mark this event on your calendar, spread the word and organize groups from out of town if you can. Please let us know you will be there, or find out more information on these events, by emailing **ICFFMAJ@aol.com**.

## Holidays the afrikan way Continued From Page 1

American consciousness, Afrikan-Americans have increasingly turned to the observance of **Kwanzaa** at this time. We will take a brief look at each in this issue.

### HOLY MONTH OF RAMADAN

Information Compiled by **Ms. Ayo Handy-Kendi**, AFRICAN AMERICAN HOLIDAY ASSOCIATION

**From Abubakr Muhammad Karim:**

**R**amadan Mubarik. As a note of interest, I would like to share some cultural/religious insight.

On the 26th or 27th of October we began the first day of the month called Ramadan for Muslims all over the world. Each year Muslims celebrate a month or 30 days as one of Islam's most Holy events. If you know any Muslims, here is a brief synopsis of what they may be experiencing during this period:

The fast of Ramadan is:

- On the plane of the will, a chance to master the *nafs* (ego) in the absence of Satanic whispers, and teach it to submit to discipline, so it will not be so likely to make trouble.
- On the plane of the soul, it is as ...said, the lute makes beautiful music only when its belly is empty.
- On the metaphysical plane, the fast brings us in an immediate way to the practice of spiritual poverty (*faqr*) to be absent from created manifestation, to see that nothing is really Real but Allah (God).
- Anger is one of the evil tendencies of the *nafs* (ego) that you have to bring under control while fasting. You mustn't lose your temper while fasting, or it will spoil your fast. I have become accustomed to a high, fine, lightweight feeling of the spirit while fasting in Ramadan, because Allah's *barakah* (blessing) is uplifting the spirit. But if I get angry, that feeling is lost. When you tune into the higher planes, you become more sensitive to maintaining a harmonious environment.

The Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, said, "Some people get nothing out of their fast but hunger and thirst." He meant that fasting is not an end in itself, but a means to help you tune into higher spiritual awareness. It works very well, as long as you keep your heart in the state of *dhikr* (remembrance of God), and don't let the evil tendencies of the *nafs* (ego) interfere.

The Prophet wrote that the lowest level of fasting is to keep food and drink out of the stomach. The medium level is to keep the limbs and the eyes and the tongue away from committing evil deeds. The highest level is the fast of the heart from the consciousness of anything other than Allah (God). May Allah help us to attain this higher level.

If you notice a change in focus on my part, please do not dismay. I will continue to strive for excellence in my daily work however, please be reminded that there is a greater calling for each person and when that call is heard they heed to it.

Peace and blessings to you and your family during this coming month of Ramadan.



## RAMADAN RESOLUTIONS

From Brother Hodari Ali

*In The Name of ALLAH, Most Gracious, Most Merciful:*

- 1) I will complete the Fast each day of Ramadan from *Salatul-Fajr* to *Salatul-Maghreb*.
- 2) I will attend the *Masjid* as much as possible for *Maghreb* prayer, and stay until the end of *Taraweh* Prayer.
- 3) I will read 1/30 (1 *juz*) of the Quran each day until I complete it by the end of Ramadan.
- 4) I will observe the true spirit of Ramadan, thinking of Allah much, and seeking Allah's mercy, forgiveness and pleasure. I will keep my thoughts and actions as pure as possible.
- 5) I will avoid bad thoughts, arguments and bad talk. I will avoid un-Islamic television, music and discussion.
- 6) I will wake up each morning to have *Sahoor* and make *Salatul Fajr* on time. I will make all of the other daily prayers on time.
- 7) While attending the *Masjid* for *Iftar*, I will help in preparing, serving or paying for the food. Or, I will help with the cleaning up afterwards.
- 8) I will do as much charity work as possible, such as being extra kind to the less fortunate, visiting the sick or elderly, etc.
- 9) I will pay all of my *Zakat* that is due during this month, and give as much *Sadaqah* as possible to worthy causes.
- 10) I will strive to implement the discipline and good behavior practiced during Ramadan throughout the year.

### AAHA NOTE

Ramadan is being portrayed incorrectly in the Media with Muslims making such comments as "this is a blessed month to resist the occupation of Iraq" because the streets are deserted and "we can attack without hurting our own people". Another statement on another news cast promoted, "during the holy month of Ramadan, there is an expectation that attacks will increase."

Indeed attacks on foreigners occupying Iraq have increased unfortunately since the beginning of this holy period, but Not because of it. Be aware that those who would use Ramadan for violence are NOT PRACTICING ISLAM as prescribed by the religion and the Prophet. Iraqi people are justifiably in pain over the killing of Iraqi people, the marginalizing of their country for oil, natural resources and profit and the occupation of their land by invaders.

Continue to be in prayer and solidarity with Muslims all over the world who are grappling with the daily, increasing climate of European modern day influences affronting the ancient, cultural differences amongst themselves.

In the holy book, The Quran, *Sura V, ayat* (section) 114, an understanding is given that all who bow to Allah (God) are Muslims meaning all who submit to the will of Allah (God) are Muslims. The false divisions between Muslims, Christians, Jews and any other religion must be removed by the people of faith, who must stand to enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong. Let us all learn more about each other and our religions, to know that we have more in common than the differences that are exploited to the benefit of the unrighteous.

Stay steadfast, humble and in the light of the Creator, this holy month of Ramadan and always ....

In the Spirit of the Akoma (the heart)

--Ayo Handy Kendi, founder/director, AAHA,  
PositivEnergyWorks

## THANKSGIVING, OR MISGIVING, DAY

American popular culture refers to it as "Thanksgiving". Descendants of the **Wampanoag Indians** of New England, especially, consider it **Misgiving Day** or the **Day of Mourning**.

To them, the arrival of the Pilgrims at Plymouth Rock in 1620 triggered a genocide that continues to this day. Much is made of the friendship and feast between the Pilgrims and **Chief Massasoit**. What is not commonly known is the fact that, after Massasoit's death, war broke out between the Pilgrims and **Metacom**, the Chief's son and the new leader of the Wampanoag, to whom the Pilgrims derisively referred as "King Philip". Sparked by unwelcome Pilgrim incursions into Wampanoag land, King Philip's War would rage for years, with murderous raids from both sides, until Pilgrim warriors finally killed Metacom and displayed his head on a pike at the gate to their settlement for 20 years. (See **KUUMBAReport #9**, February 1999.)

In 1970, the City of Plymouth invited **Wamsutta Frank James** to speak at their Thanksgiving celebration, but retracted their invitation when they learned of the topic of his planned talk: the genocide of his people, the Wampanoag. In response, other descendants of the Wampanoag and their allies formed the UNITED AMERICAN INDIANS OF NEW ENGLAND (UAINE), and started to organize "Day of Mourning" protests to coincide with official Thanksgiving Day events at Plymouth Rock. Every year, UAINE sponsors this event, in part to teach the full history of that day, and also to heighten awareness of other issues affecting the Indigenous community: the situation on the various Indian Reservations, other land issues, the plight of Political Prisoner **Leonard Peltier** (See **KUUMBAReport #7**, August-September 1998), etc.

We now include a brief commentary by **Jacqueline Keeler** that appeared in an earlier issue of **KUUMBAReport**.

### Thanksgiving & the Hidden Heart of Evil

By **Jacqueline Keeler**

November 18, 1997

*(Keeler, a member of the Dineh Nation and the Yankton Dakota Sioux works with the American Indian Child Resource Center in Oakland, California. Her work has appeared in Winds of Change, an American Indian journal.)*

**I** celebrate the holiday of Thanksgiving.

This may surprise those people who wonder what Native Americans think of this official U.S. celebration of the survival of early arrivals in a European invasion that culminated in **the death of 10 to 30 million native people**. Thanksgiving to me has never been about Pilgrims. When I was six, my mother, a woman of the Dineh nation, told my sister and me not to sing "Land of the Pilgrim's pride" in "America the Beautiful." Our people, she said, had been here much longer and taken much better care of the land. We were to sing "Land of the Indian's pride" instead. I was proud to sing the new lyrics in school, but I sang softly. It was enough for me to know the difference. At six, I felt I had learned something very important. As a child of a Native American family, you are part of a very select group of survivors, and I learned that my family possessed some "inside" knowledge of what really happened when those poor, tired masses came to our homes.

When the Pilgrims came to Plymouth Rock, they were poor and hungry -- half of them died within a few months from disease and hunger. When Squanto found them, they were in a pitiful state. He spoke English, having traveled to Europe, and took pity on them. Their English crops had failed. The native people fed them through the winter and taught them how to grow their food.

These were not merely "friendly Indians." They had already experienced European slave traders raiding their villages for a hundred years or so, and they were wary--but it was their way to give freely to those who had nothing. Among many of our peoples, showing that you can give without holding back is the way to earn respect. Among the Dakota, my father's people, they say, when asked to give, "Are we not Dakota and alive?" It was believed that by giving there would be enough for all--the exact opposite of the system we live in now, which is based on selling, not giving.

To the Pilgrims, and most English and European peoples, the Wampanoags were heathens, and of the Devil. They saw Squanto not as an equal but as an instrument of their God to help his chosen people, themselves. Since that initial sharing, Native American food has spread around the world. Nearly 70 percent of all crops grown today were originally cultivated by Native American peoples. I sometimes wonder what they ate in Europe before they met us. Spaghetti without tomatoes? Meat and potatoes without potatoes? And at the "first Thanksgiving" the Wampanoags provided most of the food--and signed a treaty granting Pilgrims the right to the land at Plymouth, the real reason for the first Thanksgiving.

What did the Europeans give in return? Within 20 years European disease and treachery had decimated the Wampanoags. Most diseases then came from animals that Europeans had domesticated. Cowpox from cows led to smallpox, one of the great killers of our people, spread through gifts of blankets used by infected Europeans. Some estimate that diseases accounted for a death toll reaching 90 percent in some Native American communities. By 1623, **Mather the elder**, a Pilgrim leader, was giving thanks to his God for destroying the heathen savages to make way "for a better growth," meaning his people.

In stories told by the Dakota people, an evil person always keeps his or her heart in a secret place separate from the body. The hero must find that secret place and destroy the heart in order to stop the evil.

I see, in the "First Thanksgiving" story, a hidden Pilgrim heart. The story of that heart is the real tale than needs to be told. What did it hold? Bigotry, hatred, greed, self-righteousness? We have seen the evil that it caused in the 350 years since. Genocide, environmental devastation, poverty, world wars, racism.

Where is the hero who will destroy that heart of evil? I believe it must be each of us. Indeed, when I give thanks this Thursday and I cook my native food, I will be thinking of this hidden heart and how my ancestors survived the evil it caused. Because if we can survive, with our ability to share and to give intact, then the evil and the good will that met that Thanksgiving day in the land of the Wampanoag will have come full circle.

And the healing can begin.

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## GYE NYAME CEREMONY

This information is provided by **Minister Zayid Muhammad** of the NEW BLACK PANTHER PARTY:

November will find the Northeast Region of the New Black Panther Party providing the community with Gye Nyame ceremonies.

Gye Nyame, pronounced 'gee-nah-may', is the New Afrikan alternative to thanksgiving developed by the late Khallid Abdul Muhammad. Meaning literally 'none except God' in the Akan language, Gye Nyame provides Afrikan people in the US with a meaningful alternative to the amerikkkan holocaust holiday, thanksgiving, designed to be celebrated on the fourth Thursday in November.

On Friday, November 28th, the New Black Panther Party will host their own Gye Nyame ceremony at the Carlos A. Cooks Memorial Hall, 2272 Adam Clayton Powell Blvd., between 133rd and 134th streets in Harlem, New York. Doors will open at 7 PM.

"Khallid gave us another weapon with which can truly liberate ourselves. The late Ken Bridges [Matah Network founder and sniper shooting victim on October 11, 2002--Ed.] was willing to work it through the Matah Network. In spite of losing these two underheralded giants within the last two years, we are still holding the line and covering down! Just the way Khallid taught us all to," explained Minister Zayid Muhammad.

For more local information on the New Black Panther Party, please call **201-602-0870**.

## KWANZAA

The following information comes from The Official Kwanzaa Web Site, [www.officialkwanzaawebsite.org](http://www.officialkwanzaawebsite.org):

### The Continental African Roots

Kwanzaa is an African American and Pan-African holiday which celebrates family, community and culture. Celebrated from 26 December thru 1 January, its origins are in the first harvest celebrations of Africa from which it takes its name. The name Kwanzaa is derived from the phrase "*matunda ya kwanza*" which means "first fruits" in Swahili, a Pan-African language which is the most widely spoken African language.

The first-fruits celebrations are recorded in African history as far back as ancient Egypt and Nubia and appear in ancient and modern times in other classical African civilizations such as Ashantiland and Yorubaland. These celebrations are also found in ancient and modern times among societies as large as empires (the Zulu or kingdoms (Swaziland) or smaller societies and groups like the Matabele, Thonga and Lovedu, all of southeastern Africa.

Kwanzaa builds on the five fundamental activities of Continental African "first fruit" celebrations: ingathering; reverence; commemoration; recommitment; and celebration.

Kwanzaa, then, is:

-a time of ingathering of the people to reaffirm the bonds between them;

- a time of special reverence for the creator and creation in thanks and respect for the blessings, bountifulness and beauty of creation;

- a time for commemoration of the past in pursuit of its lessons and in honor of its models of human excellence, our ancestors;
- a time of recommitment to our highest cultural ideals in our ongoing effort to always bring forth the best of African cultural thought and practice; and
- a time for celebration of the Good, the good of life and of existence itself, the good of family, community and culture, the good of the awesome and the ordinary, in a word the good of the divine, natural and social.

### **The African American Branch**

Rooted in this ancient history and culture, Kwanzaa develops as a flourishing branch of the African American life and struggle as a recreated and expanded ancient tradition. Thus, it bears special characteristics only an African American holiday but also a Pan-African one, For it draws from the cultures of various African peoples, and is celebrated by millions of Africans throughout the world African community. Moreover, these various African peoples celebrate Kwanzaa because it speaks not only to African Americans in a special way, but also to Africans as a whole, in its stress on history, values, family, community and culture.

Kwanzaa was established in 1966 in the midst of the Black Freedom Movement and thus reflects its concern for cultural groundedness in thought and practice, and the unity and self-determination associated with this. It was conceived and established to serve several functions.

### **Reaffirming and Restoring Culture**

First, Kwanzaa was created to reaffirm and restore our rootedness in African culture. It is, therefore, an expression of recovery and reconstruction of African culture which was being conducted in the general context of the Black Liberation Movement of the '60's and in the specific context of The Organization Us, the founding organization of Kwanzaa and the authoritative keeper of its tradition.

Secondly, Kwanzaa was created to serve as a regular communal celebration to reaffirm and reinforce the bonds between us as a people. It was designed to be an ingathering to strengthen community and reaffirm common identity, purpose and direction as a people and a world community.

Thirdly, Kwanzaa was created to introduce and reinforce the Nguzo Saba (the Seven Principles.) These seven communitarian African values are: Umoja (Unity), Kujichagulia (Self-Determination), Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility), Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics), Nia (Purpose), Kuumba (Creativity), and Imani (Faith). This stress on the Nguzo Saba was at the same time an emphasis on the importance of African communitarian values in general, which stress family, community and culture and speak to the best of what it means to be African and human in the fullest sense. And Kwanzaa was conceived as a fundamental and important way to introduce and reinforce these values and cultivate appreciation for them. Kwanzaa was created in 1966 by Dr. Maulana Karenga, professor and chair of the Department of Black Studies at California State University, Long Beach, author and scholar-activist who stresses the indispensable need to preserve, continually revitalize and promote African American culture.

Finally, it is important to note Kwanzaa is a cultural holiday, not a religious one, thus available to and practiced by

Africans of all religious faiths who come together based on the rich, ancient and varied common ground of their Africanness.

### **The Nguzo Saba**

Kwanzaa was created to introduce and reinforce seven basic values of African culture which contribute to building and reinforcing family, community and culture among African American people as well as Africans throughout the world African community. These values are called the **Nguzo Saba** which in Swahili means the Seven Principles. Developed by Dr. Karenga, the Nguzo Saba stand at the heart of the origin and meaning of Kwanzaa, for it is these values which are not only the building blocks for community but also serve to reinforce and enhance them.

Umoja (Unity): To strive for and maintain unity in the family, community, nation and race.

Kujichagulia (Self-Determination): To define ourselves, name ourselves, create for ourselves and speak for ourselves.

Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility): To build and maintain our community together and make our brother's and sister's problems our problems and to solve them together.

Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics): To build and maintain our own stores, shops and other businesses and to profit from them together.

Nia (Purpose): To make our collective vocation the building and developing of our community in order to restore our people to their traditional greatness.

Kuumba (Creativity): To do always as much as we can, in the way we can, in order to leave our community more beautiful and beneficial than we inherited it.

Imani (Faith): To believe with all our heart in our people, our parents, our teachers, our leaders and the righteousness and victory of our struggle.

### **Kwanzaa Greetings**

The greetings during Kwanzaa are in Swahili. Swahili is a Pan-African language and is chosen to reflect African Americans' commitment to the whole of Africa and African culture rather than to a specific ethnic or national group or culture. The greetings are to reinforce awareness of and commitment to the Seven Principles. It is: "Habari gani?" and the answer is each of the principles for each of the days of Kwanzaa, i.e., "Umoja", on the first day, "Kujichagulia", on the second day and so on.

### **Preparation**

There is a traditionally established way of celebrating Kwanzaa. We should therefore observe these guidelines to make our Kwanzaa the most beautiful and engaging one and to keep the tradition. Without definite guidelines and core values and practices there is no holiday.

First, you should come to the celebration with a profound respect for its values, symbols and practices and do nothing to violate its integrity, beauty and expansive meaning.

Secondly, you should not mix the Kwanzaa holiday or its symbols, values and practice with any other culture. This would violate the principles of Kujichagulia (Self-Determination) and thus violate the integrity of the holiday.

Thirdly, choose the best and most beautiful items to celebrate Kwanzaa. This means taking time to plan and select the most beautiful objects of art, colorful African cloth, fresh fruits

and vegetables, etc. so that every object used represents African culture and your commitment to the holiday in the best of ways.

### Celebrating Kwanzaa: Procedures

First, a central place in the home for the Kwanzaa Set, the symbols of Kwanzaa is chosen. A table is then spread with a beautiful piece of African cloth. Then, the **mkeka** (mat) is placed down and all of the other symbols are placed on it or immediately next to it to symbolize our rootedness in our tradition. Next the **Kinara** (candle holder) is placed on the mat and the **Mishumaa Saba** (seven candles) are placed in the kinara (candle holder).

The colors of Kwanzaa are black, red and green; black for the people, red for their struggle, and green for the future and hope that comes from their struggle. Therefore there is one black candle, three red and three green candles. These are the **mishumaa saba** (the seven candles) and they represent the seven principles. The black candle represents the first principle **Umoja** (unity) and is placed in the center of the kinara. The red candles represent the principles of **Kujichagulia** (self-determination), **Ujamaa** (cooperative economics) and **Kuumba** (creativity) and are placed to the left of the black candle. The green candles represent the principles of **Ujima** (collective work and responsibility), **Nia** (purpose) and **Imani** (faith) and are placed to the right of the black candle. The black candle is lit first on the first day of the celebration. And the remaining candles are lit afterwards from left to right on the following days. This procedure is to indicate that the people come first, then the struggle and then the hope that comes from the struggle.

And then the **mazao** (crops), and ears of corn are also placed on the mkeka. At least two ears of corn are placed down on the mat regardless of whether there are children in the immediate family or not for the children of the community belong to all of us and every adult in African tradition is considered an immediate or social parent. Next the **kikombe cha umoja** (the Unity cup) is then placed on the mkeka (mat). It is used to pour **tambiko** (libation) to the ancestors in remembrance and honor of those who paved the path down which we walk and who taught us the good, the Tamshi and the beautiful in life. Then African art objects and books on the life and culture of African people are also placed on or next to the mat to symbolize our commitment to heritage and learning.

### Daily Practices

Each evening the family gathers to light the candles. The candle corresponding to the principle of the day is lit. On the first evening the family lights the black center candle for unity. On the second day of Kwanzaa the family again lights the black candle for unity and the red candle for **Kujichagulia** (self-determination). On the third evening, the black and red candles are relit and the green candle for **Ujima** (collective work and responsibility) is lit. This practice of lighting the candles for the principle of the day beginning with the black candle and alternating from left to right, red to green continues throughout the seven days of Kwanzaa until the last candle has been lit on the last day of Kwanzaa. While the candle is lit the principle of the day is discussed. Everyone explains what the **Nguzo Saba** principle of that day means to them and how they have practiced it during the day. After the discussion, a commitment is made by each and all to practice and promote the particular principle throughout the

year. To close out, seven "Harambee" (Swahili for "Let's all pull together") are called out. Also various other activities are organized to practice and promote the principle of the day. These include working together on projects, studying and learning more on African culture, sharing narratives and other literature, poems, dance and drama; and making Kwanzaa items as symbols and/or gifts. All of these are to celebrate the holiday and reaffirm and reinforce family, community and culture.

### The Day of Meditation (Siku ya Taamuli)

The last day of Kwanzaa is the first day of the new year, January 1. Historically this has been for African people a time of sober assessment of things done and things to do, of self-reflection and reflection on the life and future of the people and of recommitment to their highest cultural values in a special way. Following in this tradition, it is for us then a time to ask and answer soberly and humbly the three **Kawaida** questions: Who am I; am I really who I say I am; and am I all I ought to be? And it is, of necessity, a time to recommit ourselves to our highest ideals, in a word, to the best of what it means to be both African and human in the fullest sense. This Day of Assessment or Day of Meditation is noted in the *First-Fruits Celebration of the Akan* by **J. B. Danquah**. He states that the Akan have one day during the first-fruits harvest in which they simply engage in quiet reflection. "The idea on this (day) is to maintain a quiet, humble and calm attitude with regard to oneself and towards one's neighbors." It is thus a good time for reassessment and recommitment on a personal and family level.

Closely related to this is an activity also noted by both Danquah and Sarpong, the Day of Remembrance of the Ancestors or the **Adae** celebration. We referred to it above as **Akwasi-dae**, but one could also use one of the days of Kwanzaa to pay special homage to the ancestors, those of the national community and those of the family. And this Day of Remembrance may also be a part of the Day of meditation or more precisely, The Day of Assessment.

**W**e hope this brief article has either helped to inform, or perhaps remind, our readers about these Afrikan-Centered and Indigenous expressions of the Holiday Season. In this time when free speech, and indeed free *thought*, sometimes seem to be under attack, we can reach for the best aspects of our culture to guide us and nourish us. Most of our readers share the common bond of Afrikan Ancestry, as well as the common situation of Life in the United States, a land that was once the domain of the First Nations, but in which they now live only in a state of occupation. As we reflect on the events of the last several years and look ahead to the years to come, we at **KUUMBAReport** wish you all, Black, White, Red, Yellow or Brown; Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Hebrew, Akan, Yoruba, Santeria, Vodou, Hindu, Buddhist, Agnostic, Atheist, and others; the ultimate gifts of *Ma'at*: **Truth, Justice, Righteousness, Harmony, Reciprocity, Balance, Compassion, Order and Propriety**. When we learn to respect and embrace these virtues, our actions will be directed by our wisdom, not our ignorance; our courage, not our fear; our love, not our hate. It is at this time that we may see the day when our world will finally know **Peace**.

Htp