

# "The Barrel of a Gun"

## Steal a Phrase, Silence a Movement: Propaganda and Mumia

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This issue was originally titled "Still Paying The Price", and it was to be a general introduction to the cases of several of America's Political Prisoners. Recent events in the case of **Mumia Abu-Jamal** (pictured) require us to examine his particular case more closely for our readers who may not be aware of him. In the process, we will also begin our discussion on the issue of Political Prisoners in the United States, a land that claims to hold no one for political reasons.

"Political power flows from the barrel of a gun."

-- Mao Zedong, quoted by Mumia Abu-Jamal in 1969

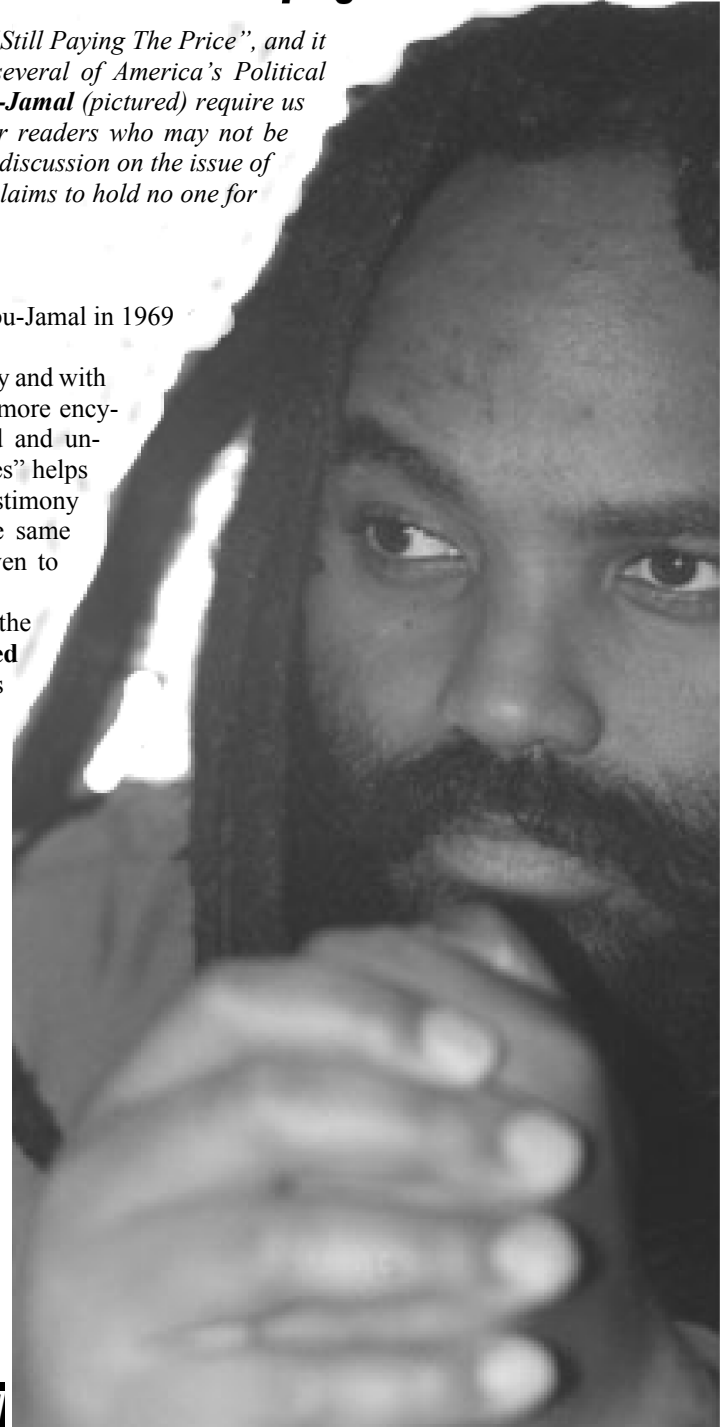
Interesting thing about a cliché. Used appropriately and with precision, it can help illuminate an issue that a more encyclopedic description would still leave muddled and unclear. The timely use of metaphors and "catch-phrases" helps to paint a more vivid picture than a more mundane testimony ever could. However, when used injudiciously, the same cliché can be used to introduce uncertainty, and even to mislead the listener to a false conclusion.

Shortly after the December 4, 1969 assault on the home of Black Panther Party (BPP) leader **Fred Hampton's** Chicago home that left Hampton and his lieutenant, **Mark Clark**, dead from a hail of Chicago Police, Cook County Police and FBI bullets, a 15-year-old budding activist and journalist was assigned to research and investigate the assault for the BPP. He, along with other researchers, would come to understand the means by which Law and Order was applied, and maintained, in the United States. When asked his opinion on the matter, he chose to answer using a statement by Chinese leader **Mao Zedong**: "Political power flows from the barrel of a gun."

The young man was born **Wesley Cook**, but would be given the name Mumia by an Afrikan Elder. Upon the birth of his son, he would take a surname that translated from the Arabic to mean "Father of Jamal", or Abu-Jamal. To his followers, the name **Mumia Abu-Jamal** would become synonymous with intellectual revolutionary activism and deep concern for the rights of the oppressed, *The Voice of the Voiceless*, even in the face of his own state-imposed extermination. To his enemies, his name will forever be linked to the night of December 8, 1981.

To his supporters, his answer to the question above was a quick, easily-understood commentary on the machinations of the Police State that had been the United States of America for countless Black, Red and White activists in the Anti-War, Indigenous Rights

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and Black Power Movements. To his enemies, and to a few of the more deluded collaborators within the Political Establishment, that line would become a means to demonize Abu-Jamal and paint him as a violent, cop-hating radical who would surely relish any opportunity to waste an Officer of the Law.

### "City of Brotherly Shove"

Philadelphia's recent history is littered with tales of confrontation between Black Power organizations and the State. That history is largely personified in **Frank Rizzo**, commissioner of the Philadelphia Police Department (PPD) from 1967 through 1971, having risen through the tough and unforgiving ranks of the department since the 1940's. Rizzo gained his reputation from a loyalty to his officers and a basic tough-on-crime platform, but also from a series of raids conducted against the **Philadelphia Black Panther Party (BPP)** in August 1970, just as the BPP was preparing to hold a People's Revolutionary Convention at Temple University. "The officers performed a strip search on the arrested Black Panther members in front of the news cameras. The picture ran on the front page of the Philadelphia Daily News, and was seen around the world. Rizzo did not order the raids, as he was home asleep at the time. He did defend the officers afterwards, as it was his custom to give officers the benefit of the doubt. ... Rizzo resigned in 1971 to run for mayor" (*Wikipedia*). This article also excuses some of Rizzo's behavior by stating that the BPP had "declared war on the nation's police officers", but the fact is the BPP's words were answered by actions of brutality by what had come to be known as "Rizzo's Thugs" by many in the Afrikan-American and progressive communities.

In August of 1978, with Rizzo as Philadelphia's mayor, the Powelton Village home of the **MOVE Organization** was subjected to a police assault after a one-year standoff. While concerns about the cleanliness of the MOVE home were cited as a primary reason for the siege and assault, the fact was that community activists had employed mediators who had successfully negotiated a settlement between MOVE and their neighbors that improved the conditions of the area while bringing other benefits to the MOVE family. The community's opposition to Rizzo's plans for the area also played a part in their increasing support for MOVE. As the standoff was nearing a year's duration and members of the community were sneaking food past the blockade and into the compound, a young radio journalist used his

lunch breaks to travel to the compound to interview the people inside and, during his radio show, he would replay some of these interviews, which humanized the MOVE people, much to Rizzo's dismay. This journalist was a young former Minister of Information for the BPP now known as **Mumia Abu-Jamal**.

After a year of MOVE's resistance against the blockade, Rizzo lost patience and launched an assault, during which hundreds of rounds of ammunition were shot into the MOVE home and officer **James Ramp** was killed. Authorities claimed gunfire erupted "from the MOVE compound" (*Wikipedia*), but the "crime scene" was destroyed the day after the assault, eliminating any possibility of gathering evidence. At the end of the assault, MOVE member **Delbert Africa**, one of 11 adults hiding in the basement, was savagely beaten by police as he stood in a pose of surrender, though *Wikipedia* claimed he was "trying to escape". Nine adults who refused to renounce MOVE were tried and convicted for Ramp's death and sentenced to terms of 30 to 100 years. On March 13, 1998, **Merle Africa**, one of the MOVE Nine, died of ovarian cancer, and the other eight remain imprisoned, having been repeatedly denied parole.

The bitterness from that 1978 assault has remained with MOVE ever since. They resurfaced in 1985 in the Osage Avenue neighborhood. Their loud, angry protests were offensive to their neighbors, and the police attempted to remove them from their new compound. After a protracted assault that involved gunfire,

teargas and water cannons, two canisters of C4 explosive were dropped on the roof, igniting a fire that consumed 61 houses and, according to official accounts, claimed the lives of six MOVE adults, including founder **John Africa**, along with five children and several pets. Several people have claimed that bullet fragments were actually found in the bodies, and **Ramona Africa**, the lone adult survivor, was shot at as she tried to escape the blaze with a child. While a city investigative panel would condemn the police action and specifically cite police commissioner **Gregore Sambor** and fire commissioner **William Richmond**, only Ramona Africa was charged in the incident, with "inciting a riot". The reputation of then-mayor **Wilson Goode**, the city's first Afrikan-American mayor, would be forever sullied by the incident.

Through all of this, Mumia has been a staunch defender of MOVE. Though not officially a member, he sympathizes strongly with the principles handed down by the organization's founder, often intoning in his written and audio commentaries, "On A Move! Long Live John Africa."

## KUUMBAReport

Currently published bi-monthly by **KUUMBA EVENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS**.

**MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. Box 1723, Baltimore, MD 21203-1723.** Let us know if you would like any letters or other submissions published.

**PHONE: (443) 865-2723**

**E-MAIL: [kuumba@verizon.net](mailto:kuumba@verizon.net)**

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# POLITICAL PRISONER PROFILE

*With this issue, we begin a new regular feature in the pages of **KUUMBAReport**. Despite official claims, the United States currently holds close to two hundred individuals that international human rights organization Amnesty International refers to as **Political Prisoners**, people who are held by the State because of their political beliefs or activities. We begin this regular feature by introducing our readers to Maryland's **Marshall "Eddie" Conway** of the Black Panther Party, and we will feature a profile of a Political Prisoner in each issue of **KUUMBAReport**.*

## MARSHALL "EDDIE" CONWAY

**Name:** Marshall E. Conway

**Affiliation:** Black Panther Party-Baltimore

**Birthday:** April 23, 1946

**Date of Arrest:** April 25, 1970

**Charge:** Murder of a Baltimore Police Officer

**Physical Evidence:** None

**What Happened:** On the night of April 24, 1970, two Baltimore City Police Officers, **Donald Sager** and **Stanley Sierakowski**, were responding to a domestic disturbance call. An unidentified gunman approached their car and opened fire. Sager was killed and Sierakowski was seriously wounded. Another Police Officer, **Roger Nolan**, exchanged shots in an alley with an unknown assailant, who escaped. Eddie was arrested when he reported to work at the Baltimore City Post Office the next day.

**Circumstantial Evidence:** Testimony of jailhouse informant **Charles Reynolds**, facing charges of fraud and assault in Detroit, Michigan. After he was extradited to Detroit to face charges there, Reynolds made claims to prosecutors that Eddie had confessed to the crime. Eddie had objected to being double-crossed with him because he suspected him of being a plant.

Nolan was brought into Police Headquarters, where he was asked to review two stacks of photographs instead of seeing a live lineup. Eddie's picture was the only one that appeared in both stacks. Nolan picked Eddie's photo out of the stacks, identifying him as the gunman in the alley.

**The Trial:** Eddie had requested representation from jailhouse lawyer **Arthur Turco**, which was denied. Eddie then asked to be allowed to represent himself. That request was also denied and he was given a Public Defender for representation. Eddie did not trust this Public Defender and thus chose to boycott his trial, claiming it was an attempt to politically railroad him.



**Background:** When Eddie returned from Vietnam, he noticed that Afrikan people were subjected to discrimination even after having honorably served their country in war. This realization led him to the **Black Panther Party**. During this time, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover's **Counter-Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO)** established itself as the chief means to destabilize organizations across the country, particularly the BPP and the **American Indian Movement**. Eddie learned that several members of the Baltimore BPP chapter were actually police informants or agents and alerted Party headquarters in California, which led to the closing of the Chapter

and the exposure of the agents. Eddie became a target of the **Baltimore City Police Red Squad**, as well as other law enforcement agencies.

**Related Political Prisoners:** Also railroaded, convicted and imprisoned with Eddie for refusing to implicate him in court was **Jack Johnson**, who has appealed for a reduction in his sentence.

**Primary Supporters:** Among the organizations that have supported Eddie are the **Prisoners of Conscience Committee (POCC)**, the **Marshall E. Conway Support Committee**, the **Jericho Organization**, and the **Organization of All Afrikan Unity-Black Panther Cadre (OAAU-BPC)**. **Paul Coates**, CEO of **Black Classic Press**, was a member of the Baltimore Chapter during the seventies and has often voiced his support for a new trial for Eddie. **Thomas Ruffin**, a member of Eddie's legal support team, and **Jared Ball** are others who have worked to increase public awareness of Eddie's case and his continuing struggle for justice. **Current Status:** Efforts to win a review of his case continue.

**How to Contact Eddie:** Eddie's mailing address is:  
**Marshall E. Conway #116469, Jessup Correctional Institution,**  
**P.O. Box 534, Jessup, MD 20794**

### "The Barrel of a Gun", continued

But MOVE is not the only topic on which Mumia has shared his perspectives with the world. He has consistently commented on the plight of political prisoners, as well as the state of politics and the current war footing of the US Empire around the world. His commentaries regularly appear in these pages and can be heard online at [www.prisonradio.org](http://www.prisonradio.org) and on **The Kuumba Radio Report**, broadcast over the Internet by **Harambee Radio** ([www.harambeeradio.com](http://www.harambeeradio.com)).

It was this consistent, unrelenting support of so-called militant, radical organizations stemming from the Pan-Afrikanist,

leftist and Black Power movements that have earned Mumia the unbridled hatred of many in local law enforcement circles. For their part, they claim that it is Mumia's alleged hatred of all forms of authority that led him to the fateful night of December 9, 1981.

### The Murder of Daniel Faulkner

Let us not mince words on this one: Philadelphia police officer **Daniel Faulkner**, a five-year veteran of the force just short of his 26th birthday, was murdered--shot in the back and again between the eyes, supposedly as he lay on the ground helpless. The question here is: *who murdered him?*

The Philadelphia District Attorney and the Fraternal Order of Police are convinced they have their man: Mumia Abu-Jamal. He was at the scene, driving his taxicab to supplement his income. He carried a .38 revolver, the result of several robberies. Faulkner was in the process of arresting Mumia's brother, **Billy Cook**, when the incident occurred. Mumia was found at the scene near Faulkner, himself the victim of a gunshot, allegedly from Faulkner's gun. In the subsequent trial, several witnesses claimed to have seen Mumia shoot Faulkner. Mumia allegedly confessed in the hospital. An open-and-shut case, claimed the prosecution.

But it wasn't so simple. Mumia's own gun was never tested to see if it had actually been fired. All that could be shown was that there were "five spent shells", meaning five chambers were empty. When those chambers were emptied, into officer Faulkner or at another time, was never determined. Photos of the crime scene do not show pock-marks that should have resulted from several shots being fired at a prone Faulkner on the sidewalk, especially since testimony indicated that the shooter missed Faulkner several times as he fired downward. Mumia's hands were never tested for gunshot residue, though authorities claimed that he was resisting so much that such a test would have been useless. Two of the prosecution's star witnesses recanted their testimony later, claiming they had been coerced into testifying against Mumia, and a third was, in the eyes of critics, discredited because of his criminal record. Mumia's alleged hospital confession was not reported for two months. The lead prosecutor, **Joseph McGill**, was accused of having utilized his jury challenges to try to keep Afrikan-Americans off the trial jury, and members of his office had been taped giving similar advice to prosecutors from other jurisdictions. The trial judge, the late **Albert Sabo**, was alleged by a court clerk to have stated, "I'm going to help them fry the nigger," and later gave the jury improper instruction on how to rule in the sentencing phase of the trial. McGill used Mumia's quoting of Mao in 1969 ("Political power flows from the barrel of a gun") to characterize the statement not as a *critique of US policy* as it has been applied against dissent, but as a *statement of strategy to be used by the BPP and other so-called "radical" Black organizations against those in positions of authority, especially police*. That tactic was believed to have successfully influenced the jury toward a sentence of death. But while assertions were made by the prosecution that Mumia was filled with hatred for police, there was ample evidence that the reverse was in fact true: the history of police brutality against first the BPP, then MOVE--even *before the events of 1978*--created an even stronger trail of evidence that some in the police department would be highly motivated to see any supporter of MOVE and the BPP eliminated, especially someone as effective at reaching the grassroots community as Mumia. Several civil rights organizations criticized or outright condemned the entire trial as corrupt and racist, including the **National Black Police Association**.

Subsequent appeals have failed largely because members of the prosecution team in 1982 later sat on review boards or on the Pennsylvania Supreme Court (**Ronald Castille**), and after Republican governor **Tom Ridge**, who had signed a death warrant on Mumia in 1995, took a position as president **George W. Bush's** Secretary of Homeland Security in 2001, he was replaced by Democrat and former mayor **Ed Rendell**, who likewise pledged to sign a death warrant. Rendell had also been affiliated with the 1982 prosecution team. A 2001 ruling by federal judge **William**

**Yohn** overturned Mumia's death sentence but upheld his conviction. Mumia's appeal of the decision regarding his conviction, based in part on the use of challenges by the prosecution to disproportionately eliminate Afrikan-Americans from the jury, was recently denied by the US Supreme Court. Meanwhile the city of Philadelphia--either through current District Attorney **Lynne Abraham** or through its probable next head prosecutor, **Seth Williams**--has announced plans to seek the reinstatement of the death penalty against Mumia. The "Voice of the Voiceless" may still be silenced.

### Documentary or Hit Piece?

*"Tell a lie, tell it often enough, and people will believe it as truth."*

--Adolf Hitler

Interesting thing about a cliché. To one person, it can be seen as an indictment of one's adversaries. To another, it can be seen as a *self-indictment*, an exercise in hypocrisy that betrays the speaker's own viciousness and mendacity.

**Maureen Faulkner**, widow of police officer Daniel Faulkner, has often used a variation of the above quote to describe supporters of Mumia Abu-Jamal. It is entirely possible that she believes that Mumia's supporters are either liars or duped by liars into believing in Mumia's innocence. But to the many who have reviewed the case and concluded that it was rife with prosecutorial and judicial misconduct; that key evidence of innocence was withheld; that witnesses were coerced into testifying for the prosecution; that conflict of interest ruled the day during appeals; and that there is a deep-seated hatred of Mumia and MOVE in key corners of the Philadelphia police department, the media campaign *against* Mumia has followed Hitler's advice to the letter.

First, there are the questions of evidence. At no time has there been any willingness, either on the part of the legal establishment or the anti-Mumia lobby, to actually review the photographic or physical evidence, in full view of the public, so that the questions can be definitively answered. Appeals are not actually *defeated*; they are simply denied their day in court. Debates can never happen because those who wish to see Mumia dead seem incapable of hiding their vitriol or controlling their hate. There are no new revelations offered, simply variations of "Mumia killed him and he must die", repeated over and over. The call is simply to execute Mumia and be done with it. Those campaigning for Mumia want questions asked and evidence examined; those seeking his execution want everyone to shut up so they can kill him in peace without having to answer. Mumia's supporters consistently say, "What about this contradiction? What about this evidence? What about this recanted testimony?" And the "Fry Mumia" crowd refuses to listen, often referring to them as communists, defenders of a murderer, closet terrorists and "Mumidiots".

And now, there is *The Barrel of A Gun*, a self-described documentary by **Tigre Hill** that has been heavily promoted by Maureen Faulkner and right-wing talk show host **Michael Smerconish**, and for good reason: it is just as strongly derided by Mumia's supporters as a "hit piece".

The Web site [www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com) gives the following synopsis of Tigre Hill's film: "This documentary offers the most comprehensive examination to date of the murder of white Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulker and the conviction of black journalist-turned-cab-driver Mumia Abu-Jamal. The case has ignited world-wide controversy, with Abu-Jamals arrest and trial becom-

ing a cause célèbre for celebrities, foreign dignitaries and human rights campaigners. For Faulkner supporters, however, the controversy serves as smoke and mirrors to obscure the truth behind a heinous crime.” The trailer for the movie features clips from pro-Mumia activists such as **Sister Helen Prejean** and actor **Edward Asner**, but it is dominated by clips of former prosecutor and current Pennsylvania governor Rendell, prosecutor McGill, District Attorney candidate Williams, talk show “shock jock” Smerconish, Maureen Faulkner and other personalities offering theories such that Mumia “meant to kill a cop that day” and that revolutionary organizations such as the BPP and MOVE actively promoted the routine killing of police officers, using such slogans as “Off the Pig”, posters depicting violence against police and a particular photograph of a slain police officer lying in a pool of blood to drive home the image of the intrinsically violent revolutionary. News clippings scream the headlines depicting a defiant and unrepentant murderer, while photos show a glaring Abu-Jamal from the age of 15 to the time of his arrest.

The **Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Coalition** on its Web site ([www.freemumia.com](http://www.freemumia.com)) instead recommends, for those seeking a balanced view of the case, the film “In Prison My Whole Life”, which they describe as “a British documentary about the world renowned journalist, who wrongfully sits on Pennsylvania’s death row, at SCI Greene. This film premiered, at the Sundance Film Festival [on] December 8, 2008.”

The Web site of **Journalists for Mumia Abu-Jamal** ([www.abu-jamal-news.com](http://www.abu-jamal-news.com)) also chimed in about the Tigre Hill film, deriding it as blatant anti-Mumia propaganda: “The trailer for the new film about Mumia has just been released. The film is scheduled for release in December, and all available evidence indicates that it will be extremely biased against Mumia. The title ‘The Barrel of A Gun’ refers to a quote from Mao Zedong, that Mumia cited when he was the 15 year old Lieutenant of Information for the Philadelphia branch of the Black Panther Party (BPP), speaking about the murder of BPP members Fred Hampton and Mark Clark by the Chicago police and the FBI in 1969: ‘Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun.’”

Also attached to their site is an article by German author **Michael Schiffmann**, titled *The Fantasies of Joe McGill*, in which the author “confronts the film’s pernicious title and explains why the scenario presented by prosecutor Joe McGill is ballistically impossible.” The article, which examines file photographs from the crime scene as well as statements made by McGill, Smerconish and others either on Smerconish’s radio

program or in official affidavits and documents, is entirely too long and too detailed to include here, but we encourage readers to visit the Web site [www.abu-jamal-news.com](http://www.abu-jamal-news.com) to read it.

### What Next for Mumia?

*“The FOP wants to see Mumia on a rotisserie.”*

*--Pam Africa, Chairperson of International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal*

**T**he campaign to save the life of Mumia Abu-Jamal is at a critical stage. With the Supreme Court’s refusal to hear his appeal in April, the way has been cleared for the Philadelphia District Attorney’s Office to seek to re-impose the death penalty in his case by appealing the 2001 Yohn decision. Lynne Abraham, the DA for the past several years, has tirelessly campaigned to put Mumia to death, but her likely replacement, Seth Williams, has likewise run on a promise to execute him, despite the endorsement he received from the Pennsylvania NAACP, which opposes the death penalty and recently was convinced to at least consider backing a new trial for Mumia. **Marvin “Doc” Cheatham**, President of the Baltimore chapter of NAACP, went so far as to shoot a video in defense of Mumia as well as **Troy Davis** and **Reggie Clemons**, two others who are fighting death penalty convictions in Georgia and Illinois, respectively. (See **KUUMBAReport** No. 42, The State Wants Them Dead, June 2009.)

A letter was sent to Attorney General **Eric Holder**, urging him to order a civil rights investigation into the conduct of Mumia’s trial. Other means of reaching the Obama Administration as well as members of the US Senate and House of Representatives are being pursued. Marches in Washington, DC on November 7th in support of Political Prisoners and November 12 to assert Mumia’s right to a new trial based on evidence have been planned and most likely held by the time you read this article. Emergency meetings of the **International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal (ICFFMAJ)** have been held with greater frequency. **Mama Pam Africa**, the chairperson of ICFFMAJ, has been reaching out to community activists for many years, but now the pace is more urgent. We who believe that Mumia has not yet had his day in court and who believe that he is most likely innocent of the crime for which the Powers That Be are driven to put him to death realize that time is growing short. If his supporters do not organize and mobilize *now*, the day could yet come when The Voice of The Voiceless is silenced forever.



### Raising Awareness About Political Prisoners

Starting with this issue, we will regularly give brief summaries in the form of “Political Prisoner Profiles” that will feature more detailed information on specific Political Prisoners, along with updates on their cases.

For a complete listing of Political Prisoners and their mailing addresses, visit the Web Site [www.thejerichomovement.com](http://www.thejerichomovement.com).



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# The Historical Debt to Native People Has Still Not Been Paid

## The Myth Keepers of Columbus

By Robert Robideau, October 10, 2006

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** *Robert Robideau, born November 11, 1946, was a member of the American Indian Movement (AIM) who participated in the Wounded Knee protest in 1973 to raise awareness of US Government maltreatment of the Lakota-Oglala Sioux on the Pine Ridge Reservation. He was arrested in 1975 and tried along with Dino Butler and, later, Leonard Peltier, in the wake of a 1975 shootout at the ranch of Cecelia Jumping Bull in which AIM member Joe Stuntz and two FBI agents died. Lately, he had been living and working in Barcelona, Spain as director of the American Indian Movement Museum, after two stints as National-International Director for the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee, when he died of a seizure on February 16, 2009. This commentary, written by Robideau in 2006, offers some insight to the Indigenous People's struggle in this season of the US celebration of Columbus (Genocidal Imperial Slave Trader's) Day and Thanksgiving (Misgiving) Day.*

In 1993, 500 years after European invaders of the Americas had brought the first Native Americans to Europe in chains, my plane landed in Barcelona, Spain. I had been invited to the International Cultural Symposium to speak on behalf of **Leonard Peltier**. The day after my arrival, I took a walk down their famous Rambler to the Placa del Portal de la Pau, where I ran headlong into a monument of **Christopher Columbus**. Built for the World Exhibition in 1888, the iron column is an impressive 197 feet tall and weighs 205 tons. On top of the column stands a 26-foot statue of Columbus with head sculptured high, positioned to face out over its outstretched arm, with finger pointing over the Mediterranean sea and out to the distant horizon toward the Americas. As I moved around its base I discovered a series of reliefs depicting the "new lands." What I saw was not the innocence that had been carved, but instead the first stages of colonization, the rape and plunder of the land and people of the Americas.

Christopher Columbus was born in 1451 in Genoa, Italy. At age 14 he became a sailor. Shipwrecked off of Portugal in 1470, he remained until his idea to sail west to India, known then as "Hindustan," was financed by Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain in 1492. He reached the Bahamas on October 12th, visited Cuba and Hispaniola (Haiti), where he left a small colony before returning to Spain on March 15th, 1493, bringing with him 6 captive Taino people, taken from the Caribbean islands, who were presented to Ferdinand and Isabella in the royal court of Barcelona as proof of his travel. A painting that today hangs in a government building shows the Taino people at the feet of the king and queen in servile postures of slaves. The 6 Tainos never saw home again; their spirits still linger in the streets of Barcelona.

In his delirium Columbus thought he landed in Paradise. He wrote in his journal that Tainos had beautiful, tall, slender olive bodies. They wore short haircuts with a long hank at the back of the head. They were clean-shaven and hairless. According to Columbus the Taino tongue was "gentle, the sweetest in the world, always with a laugh."

Friendly relations did not last long; many Tainos were beaten and murdered. The Spanish brought diseases with them that the Tainos lacked immunity to. The weapons of the Spanish were far

superior to those of the Tainos. An estimated 50,000 Tainos perished within two years of Columbus landing. The Spanish jammed more than 500 Taino prisoners into a boat for Spain. They became homeless in their own land. They were devastated by abuse, starvation, and disease. Life was never the same for Indians of the Americas after 1492. Puerto Rico, an Island once occupied by Tainos, was almost wiped out within two decades.

With the arrival of Columbus begin the onslaught of genocide in the Americas that Europeans only whisper about. The legacy of Columbus has kept Native Americans at the very bottom of the socio-economic ladder. Population surveys of the Americas estimate that at the time Columbus stumbled onto the Americas 100 million people inhabited it, a count far greater then that of all Europe in those times. More than 10 million resided in the United States; today less than a million remain in the United States. Many tribes have long become decimated and extinct.

The myth that continues to be propagated is that Native Americans were savages and the civilization brought by Europeans saved them. Reality is that the foods, medicines and political structures of Native Nations in the Americas not only saved Europeans from constant famine in Europe but also taught them much about freedom and democracy, later adopted by the forefathers of Euro Americans. The model of the Iroquois Confederacy (Haudenosaunee, also known as the League of Peace and Power) enabled the United States to form in part its constitution which, thanks to President Bush's Patriot Act, is well on the road to become myth. Today, the myth of democracy has become a perverted tool to dominate, subjugate and colonize other countries around the world, such as Iraq and Palestine.

The United States held their first celebration of the "discovery of America" in New York, on October 12, 1792. At that time the only statue of Columbus in existence was in New York. In 1876, Italian Americans of Philadelphia erected a statue of Columbus in Fairmount Park. In 1905 Italian Americans in Denver, Colorado were the first to observe Columbus Day. It was not until September 1934 that President Franklin D. Roosevelt made it national holiday. Finally, Columbus Day became a federal legal holiday in 1971 after lobbying from the National Columbus Day Committee. Columbus Day or "El Día de la Raza" has brought a wave of dissent across the United States and Canada by many Native Americans who feel that it perpetuates a myth that breeds bias and racism toward them.

Since 1970 Native Americans have gathered to commemorate a National Day of Mourning on Thanksgiving in remembrance of the genocide of millions of Native Peoples, theft of Native lands and the relentless assault on Native cultures since Columbus opened the flood gates to European invasions of the Americas. It is curious that Columbus Day is, except for religious holidays, the only historical event which all Pan-American countries celebrate.

Since 1989 the Colorado AIM chapter has lead a protest against the Columbus Day Parade in Denver declaring, "As the original people of this land, we cannot and will not tolerate social and political festivities that celebrate our genocide. We are committed to the active, open and public rejection of disrespect and racism in its various forms, including Columbus Day and Columbus Day Parades." For these last 17 years they have tried to

educate the general public about their feelings for Columbus Day; they have protested, blockaded and gone to jail for their efforts to stop this parade of indoctrinated myth keepers.

The issue of Columbus and Columbus Day is not easily resolvable in a society spoonfed on its propaganda of myths and historical lies that propagate the idea that Europeans were a superior race of two legged homo sapiens that came to save the Indians from their barbaric ways. The Europeans who came and settled invented and schooled the myth that they had created the New World by their imagined "discovery," just as they had come to create the creation myth of its origins known as the "Bering Strait Theory." Native Americans just had to have come from somewhere, but not the western hemisphere.

What good does Columbus Day contribute by celebrating racist propaganda and myths that perpetuate genocide in institutions of education? Nazi Germany is a perfect example of where such false, racist and opportunistic ideas lead. The most popularly believed myth of scholars is that Native Americans were

Jews. Louis Hennepin, in his *New Discovery of a Vast Country in America* wrote, "These savages originally sprung from the Jews," because they lived "in a form of tents, like as did Jews" and they are "subtle and crafty as Jews."

The first thought that crept to mind was that the encounter with the statue of Columbus must represent some sort of warning and I had better watch my step. Sure enough in 1996 I was teased back to Barcelona, Spain where I began a new life out of the reach of the FBI and the emergence of fascist rumblings in the States.

Europe too, I felt, had a historical debt and there was social need to transmit that Indian cultures had not been completely destroyed. We still existed despite 500 years of genocide and so I founded an AIM museum to bring awareness of it to Europeans so that they would not forget.

Free All Political Prisoners!

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## Who's Going to Run This Town?

By Sis. Leila Khaled, Editor, *Bronzeville Metropolis*, Chicago, Illinois

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** *The recent killing of young honor student Derrion Albert in a schoolyard disturbance raised an alarm all across Black America. Even though incidents like Columbine continue to show us that the problems of gang and related violence are common across the entirety of American culture, this particular incident shocked our collective conscience and once again had us questioning our ability to live together as a people. Here, Sis. Leila Khaled, Editor of Chicago's Bronzeville Metropolis ([www.bronzevillemetropolis.com](http://www.bronzevillemetropolis.com)), delivers a scathing critique of Black leaders, particularly those in the Church and in politics, who have failed to bring the healing our communities across the nation have desperately needed for the last several decades.*

*Feel it comin' in the air / Hear the screams from everywhere  
I'm addicted to the thrill / It's a dangerous love affair  
Can't be scared when it goes down / Got a problem, tell me now  
Only thing that's on my mind / Who's gon run this town tonight?  
Who's gon run this town tonight? / We gon run this town.*

*We are  
Yeah I said it / We are  
This is Roc [Black] Nation / Pledge your allegiance  
Get y'all fatigues on / All black everything  
Black Cards, black cars / All black everything...  
--"Run This Town" by Jay-Z*

**O**ur children have run amuck and no one wants to point fingers. Well, it's my newspaper and I'll point if I want to.

In this All-Around-Failure, you would think these so-called Black leaders would be embarrassed and ashamed at their own impotence. You would think that with 10,000 Black churches in Chicago the streets would be like heaven on earth. You would think that over 300 Ministers would meet over our children and not who to back for Cook County Board President. You would think they would have been praying over spilled blood instead of Burris and Blagojevich. You would think they would be holding meetings with gang leaders instead of press conferences.

Why haven't these churches adopted the neighborhood and school in their immediate radius during all of these years of murder and mayhem? Why are their doors closed six days a week? What is this "victory" that the choir sings about? Why aren't they performing miracles in Jesus name? Why are Brink armored trucks picking up bags of money on Monday morning?



Someone should drag all of these fake Reverends into Federal Court and charge them with Fraud and Embezzlement on behalf of Jesus.

I have HAD IT with all of them. How about we hold press conferences against them, picket their counterfeit churches and organizations, and demand that they provide the community with a stimulus package out of their stash of tithes, federal, state, and city funds?

Oh, I forgot, we're waiting on Jesus to come down and do the work of grown men. We're waiting on Jesus because he is the only one who saves. We're waiting on the President to give us money and we're waiting on Mayor Daley to tell us what to do. And as long as we pray and wait, we are free from responsibility. Our sins will not be visited on our children. After all, Jesus died for them. As do our young people.

For the record, there have always been school fights, neighborhood rumbles, and teenagers with natural aggression. Additionally, the dismantling of Chicago's housing projects placed thousands of children into new environments where their only safety net is to join an established group for belonging and protection. And since there are few male church groups recruiting them, they join gangs. The same as when young men enter prison -- deciding to go solo makes you an instant target.

Meanwhile, America's media slovenly celebrates the underbelly, subculture, and degeneracy of our society. Music, videos,

movies, and video games have gone unchecked and are glorifying the jailhouse and criminal lifestyle to the point that our children are ignorantly wearing their pants in the same way some homosexual inmates convey the message of "easy access".

And no matter how much funding comes to churches and not-for-profits, no matter how many police, and no matter how many of us take a stand, we will still miss the mark if we don't own up to what is happening.

Jesse Jackson, stop calling for the National Guard.

The National Guard will not solve the ills in our community. Our solution is Divine. Our youth are displaying the result of our compromised Black identity. We wanted to ingratiate ourselves and be more acceptable to main stream society and as a result, our offspring do not know who they are, where they came from, and where they are going. The one thing they DO know is that the adults surrounding them are toothless and no one wants to be associated with a coward.

Here it is - Why would Almighty God have both Dr. King and Elijah Muhammad prominent at the same time? Further, what would have happened if they had the opportunity to engage each other more? There is power in choosing sides but there is more power in learning from each other.

Instead, we allowed society to demonize them both. Black people picked sides and Elijah Muhammad was labeled a pariah and we willingly made him an outcast of Black society. And on Dr. King's birthday, there are so many sickening speeches that I often wonder why Almighty God doesn't just throw a lightening bolt to stop the madness. It's as if they're saying, "Thank you, Lord. We have integrated. We have arrived. Black youth? Who?" (People actually had the nerve to jump on President Obama when he brought up the state of our families.)

Once Dr. King was killed, Civil Rights Leaders became elected officials and business men and were no longer a threat as a possible source of power. By the time I was born, it was safe to honor Dr. King in public. Not so of Elijah Muhammad. After Elijah Muhammad was gone, the Nation of Islam became dismantled by Elijah's son Wallace but a few years later, Louis Farrakhan brought it back.

If Farrakhan had not brought back Elijah's teachings, we would have had an Elijah Muhammad Day every year on October 7th. But, because there was a living, breathing protégé capable of attracting huge numbers, Elijah and Farrakhan had to remain as outcasts.

Because of J. Edgar Hoover, an equal-opportunity-Black-empowerment-destroyer, and our fearfulness, Farrakhan has been on the outside of many important discussions. Didn't Jesus say, "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring"? When is someone going to invite Farrakhan to the table, into these schools, and into these neighborhoods?

Does not the NOI have a proven track record with violence intervention? With newly released inmates? With the incarcerated? With drug addicts? With gang truces? With illiteracy? With parenting classes? With male training? With female training? Have they not been successful even without federal, state, and city funding?

Do for Self? Wow. What a concept.

There is one fundamental principle of the Nation of Islam that makes them successful while others continually stumble and look to others to save them - Knowledge of Self. Not book knowledge, but true Knowledge of Self.

"Knowledge of the self is the mother of all knowledge. So it is incumbent on me to know my self, to know it completely, to know its minutiae, its characteristics, its subtleties, and its very atoms." Khalil Gibran

Who cares if you remain a Christian? Who cares if you don't claim any religion? Who cares what race you are? Knowledge of Self does not diminish anyone, it is the cure for the rampant ignorance that makes taking a life fair-seeming. It is a cure for the lack of respect for Almighty God and his creation.

Knowledge of Self makes insanity stop in its tracks. Knowledge of Self makes the most hardened criminal bow down to Almighty God. Knowledge of Self empowers you and is the biggest dose of self esteem any troubled young person can receive. Knowledge of Self inspires you to be the best parent, Knowledge of Self makes you treasure your babies and the institution of marriage. And Knowledge of Self makes you want to teach others.

Without Knowledge of Self, the young will continue to gravitate to the superficial power they see in gangs and television. And since Jesse and the rest are calling for the National Guard, they are clearly not up for the task.

How in the hell do you expect a Black man-child to show respect when they see men who ain't got no heart begging for crumbs and police? Who the hell wants to be like that when they grow up?

Dust your Black Card off and stop acting like a punk. ■

## SRDC, WADU and UNIA-ACL: The Pan-Afrikan Diaspora Union

### The Decade of the Diaspora and a Historic Coalition

**W**e are announcing the **Decade of the Diaspora, 2010 to 2020, starting in January.** Dr. David Horne, International Facilitator of the **Sixth Region Diaspora Caucus (SRDC)**, one of the major organizations working to organize Afrikans in the Diaspora to enter the African Union, was having a conversation with **Baba Senghor Jawara Baye-El**, President-General of the **Universal Negro Improvement Association-African Communities League (UNIA-ACL)**, on Baba Senghor's *Harambee Radio* show, *21st Century Garvey's Voice*, on Tuesday, October 27. Dr. Horne was Baba Senghor's guest so they could jointly announce the coming together of SRDC, UNIA-ACL and WADU (**World Afrikan Diaspora Union**) in the

new **Pan Afrikan Diaspora Union (PADU)**, a coalition of sovereign organizations designed to further the work of unifying and organizing the Diaspora for entry into the African Union. Dr. Horne was explaining the history of SRDC and PADU as well as the need for Afrikan people to come together, as these two great organizations were doing.

### Introduction: The Challenge Is Ours to Accept

Dr. Horne spelled out the basic challenge we face as we seek to re-connect with the Motherland: "Afrika has been under siege basically in terms of looking at the different periods including the 21st century, we're just talking about different degrees of being

under siege, whether it is for total devastation, whether it is for total control and dependency and getting the resources taken out while you have Afrikans help you take it out and then help you keep [the] people down. So Afrika has *been* under siege and Afrikan people, as the Honorable **Marcus Garvey** said, in 1917, Afrikan people wherever they were then and wherever we are now, are *still* under siege. So what we are talking about is that you and me and a number of others of us are Black men in a hostile environment, simply trying to swim our way from one shore to the next and take as many people with us as we possibly can. Because Afrika's dignity, Afrika's character have to be restored. We have to reclaim our reputation and our prestige in the world. And only *we* can do that. It cannot be done *for* us. Afrika cannot be saved by other people, and given back to us. *We* have to save Afrika and *we* have to bring it back to where it belongs. So, as Afrika goes, we go. And people need to understand that connection. That's what Marcus Garvey said, that's what **Kwame Nkrumah** said, **Blyden**, **McNeill Turner**, **W.E.B. Dubois**, **Malcolm X**, etc."

### Coming Into Pan-Afrikan Activism

Dr. Horne gave a brief explanation of his introduction to Pan-Afrikan organizing. "I teach Pan-Afrikanism at Cal State Northridge, so we spend a lot of time as part of the Black studies movement trying to teach young folk the value and the pride of being Black and how Afrika will always be intimately involved in wherever we go and whatever our heights are. So, as part of that teaching, I've also been a Pan-Afrikan activist for most of my adult life and the latter part of my teenage life."

### The Invitation to the Diaspora

"In terms of following that path that's led me to reparations, that's led me to Black nationalism, that's led me to do a very very long and continuous study of Marcus Garvey and a number of other giants who've gone before and on whose shoulders we stand, what happened was, in the aftermath of the Afrikan liberation struggles that we all followed, and the 6th and the 7th **PAC** [*Pan-Afrikan Congress*] that we all got involved in one way or the other, the **African Union** grew out of the **OAU** [*Organization of African Unity, disbanded in 2000*], and even though a lot of people can still [say] it's too bureaucratic and it still reminds people of the OAU and it's too slow, the African Union came into being with its primary mission, its *raison d'être*, its major objective being the achievement of the **United States of Africa**, or the **Union of African States**, just as Marcus Garvey had asked about in the 1920s. And just as Kwame Nkrumah said we must get to. So what we're talking about is here was an organization that finally laid down on paper a road map for 21st century pan Afrikanism. I was excited about that, as were a number of other people. At the time they came up with their first Constitution, their Constitutive Act, they left the Diaspora out, but a year later, in 2003, they amended their Constitution, Article 3(q), and that amendment said that the Diaspora is going to be the Sixth Region of the continent and more importantly, the Diaspora is invited to participate with the African Union in making decisions about the future of the continent. So the Diaspora was being asked to come in. That was the first time in history that the Diaspora had ever been considered a body. We'd never considered ourselves a body. We've been fighting and fussing and not getting along with each other, and if you speak Spanish I don't talk to you, if you speak French I don't know you, that kind of thing."

### The Seeds of PADU: We Can Do Unity

Dr. Horne continued: "But here you had the continental body saying, 'You are a significant part of our accomplishing the United States of Afrika,' so once that invitation came out, and a number of folk here in North America and the Caribbean and Canada and Europe were told to go back and spread that news and tell people that they need to be getting organized, well, that didn't happen for a while. And so I got pulled in by **Ishola Williams**, the head of **PANAFSTRAG** [*Pan African Strategic and Policy Research Group, [www.panafstrag.org](http://www.panafstrag.org)*], and a number of other people. We got together and had some meetings, and in 2006, we had a **Pan-Afrikan Roundtable** in Los Angeles, California, out of which came a clear direction to try to establish a methodology for helping to organize the Diaspora so that we could accept the invitation. Because one of the things that became clear, the Afrikan Union had made the invitation but they really did not know the Diaspora too well, and they were kind of frightened of our 1500 Afrikan-oriented groups scattered all over the world all of a sudden saying we want to come and join. So that meant the 1500 organizations had to find a way of consolidating, of actually getting operational unity. Not *talking* about it, but actually *getting it done*, in order to present ourselves to the African Union, to take our seats, to become voting members to help determine the future of the continent. And that's what we've been doing since 2006. There's an organization called **PADU**. PADU is supposed to be the international grouping of the Diasporan partners, the *equal representation* of partners, not one big group where somebody surrenders his or her sovereignty to somebody else. What we have is PADU as the umbrella organization for all of these partner groups and UNIA-ACL, SRDC and WADU have become the pioneer groupings within that, and right now we represent over 150 other organizations scattered all over the world, including in Europe. That's very important, because what that shows is that *we can save ourselves*. We can break through this barrier that has been established by COINTELPRO, by all of these people attacking us so that we don't trust each other anymore, and we fight and fuss and contradict and walk away, curse each other out. We know how to *separate* and *divide*. We know how to *talk* about unity. But apparently we have not been *doing* unity too well. We have now demonstrated that we have turned the corner and we have changed the paradigm. We *do* know how to achieve operational unity, and UNIA-ACL, SRDC, WADU, and other groups that we are going to partner with, including 40 to 45 groups in what we call the **Central American Black Organization**, the largest NGO [*Non-Governmental Organization*] in Central America covering 7 out of 8 countries, all of them are now part of this partnership, and we are going to help organize the rest of the Diaspora so that we can accept that invitation to the African Union. So we are showing that we *can* put our money where our mouth is, that we actually *can* unify positively without stepping on each other's toes. We *can* mutually respect each other, we *can* have some principles that we all agree to, we *can* have a Pan-Afrikan agenda that we can go into the African Union with, including reparations, including repatriation, dual citizenship. And that's what we're doing. Our consolidation, our partnership is based on principles and agenda."

### Baba Senghor: We're In

Baba Senghor expressed the support of the UNIA-ACL for the efforts of SRDC and the PADU Coalition. "Ourstorically and

historically, we talk the talk, but it's time really to walk the walk. The most important thing that you said was that it's okay for us to have differences and to disagree but we cannot be disagreeable when we've got so many young children falling victim to ourselves on the streets and Afrika going through all of the disease and all of this. I want you to explain this **Atlanta-Seattle Declaration** a little bit, because to me that is cutting edge 21st century stuff. As we say in the UNIA-ACL government, change is very important and sometimes change can be very difficult for people to accept. However, we see ourselves as U-Nia, meaning U are the Purpose [Nia]-African Communities League of the World. So if we are not establishing reputable relationships with like minded nationalists and Pan-Afrikanists, then we're not true to the whole concept of what we stand for. *So we're in.* But we need the cooperation of *all* of our brothers and sisters, and we don't want to be caught up in this trip of because we have differences, not allowing ourselves to have functional unity because we share far more in common, and we stand to all, each one, lose a lot if we don't have functional unity, because it's a reality that when we go to the African Union, they have some of the same issues of diversity and differences and confusion and all that that we have. So if we don't functionally unify with brothers and sisters who are of like minds, then we are not true to what we say. So tell people what came out of Atlanta, and then segue into Seattle, because I think that is a very very positive step for 2009."

#### **From SRDC, WADU and UNIA to PADU: The Atlanta-Seattle Declaration and the Road to Functional Unity**

Dr. Horne described the making of the Atlanta-Seattle Declaration: "In 2007, we got a chance to go to the Netherlands and to work with them about setting up town halls and getting community councils of elders elected in their own area so that they can push their own process. We did the same thing in France and we've done the same thing in Martinique and Guadeloupe and a number of other islands and we've done the same thing in Brazil, so what we've been able to do is move, as much as our money would allow, around to different parts of the world where Afrikan descendants live and operate, to spread the news that we have been invited. And like you've said, it's not about I and you and he, it's always *we*. *We* have been invited. So we have to be inclusive, and let you know what it is you have to do to get ready to accept the invitation that you've been given. In May of 2008, as part of the continuing process, we went to Martinique and we had a large meeting of folk from Canada, from the Caribbean, from North America, from Central America, and out of that meeting we came to an agreement that we called the Martinique Declaration, and that identified 13 principles that we could all agree with, that all Pan-Afrikan functional unity had to be based on mutual respect, we had to have that before we came into the room, so it was not that, as you say, everybody had to agree on everything, but we have to respect each other so that we don't get off into the politics and the personalities and since you don't agree with me, then I've gotta fight. We have to be able to work with each other, we have to understand that culture is a primary bridge builder and that the drums and the rhythm and any other kind of Afrikan culture that we can promote will help us communicate. Will help us remember and to translate Afrika to everybody, that we have to make sure that continental Afrikans and Diasporan Afrikans talk to each other. We have to attack the mythology that the colonialists, that the White supremacists have dumped on us

and have kept on us relentlessly so that we fight each other and we distrust each other just as we do here in this country, and we have to fight against that. So we have to make sure that we dialog with each other, we talk with each other, and language, whether it's French or whether it's Spanish or whether it's Portuguese, whether it's English, cannot be allowed to get in the way. So what we were able to do was to get that Martinique Declaration agreed to and signed. A brother named **Garcin Malsa**, who is the mayor of a town in Martinique, Sainte Anne's, his flag, the symbol of his township, is Red Black and Green, and he displays it prominently. He has the largest reparations celebration anywhere that I've seen in the world, every year. They also have, right now, the largest legal suit against France for reparations. So we got the Martinique Declaration done in 2008, and we took that declaration to other organizations to see, could we get an agreement, as you said, on what we all accepted: the principles of Pan-Afrikanism. And could we get agreement on the agenda items that we need to be able to carry through so that, once I get into the African Union, I'm not UNIA, I'm not SRDC, I'm not my particular organization. I'm representing 180 million Diasporan Afrikans all over the world. So, can we get some common agreement on some agenda items like reparations, like return of land, return of territory, repatriation, dual citizenship, etc. And part of the culmination of that effort, of going around to different organizations and asking to sit down and have discussions and see could we come to agreement, was going to Atlanta to the WADU Conference in July this year, and present to the WADU executive committee under **Baba Dudley Thompson** and **Dr. Leonard Jeffries**, and a number of other very very prominent Black folk who have been in the struggle for a long time; we negotiated with the Executive Committee. Baba Dudley Thompson agreed, he understood the vision. He understood why it was important. Everybody who is listening should remember this legend, Dudley Thompson, who worked with **Jomo Kenyatta**, who worked with Kwame Nkrumah, who knew **George Padmore**, who worked with a number of the people who we now lionize as heroes. So this man said, 'We have to consolidate, we have to get into this partnership.' Anyway, we ended up with an agreement on a name, because we had to go step by step, because again, we had to get over distrust and that kind of thing. So, on the last day of the conference, we were able to sit down in a room and negotiate out: SRDC is not joining WADU, WADU is not joining SRDC, nobody's organization is going to disappear, we are talking *partnership*, working *together*, and so we created a new organization called PADU, **Pan Afrikan Diasporan Union**, which will be an umbrella organization within which every sovereign organization that joined would be equal to any other organization. We're talking about partnership here where everybody had a voice. We did not get the final Atlanta Declaration signed at that point. They wanted to have a committee look at it and to make sure that everything was copasetic. We did that over three weeks. We came up with the declaration. We were going to sign it once we got to the SRDC Annual Conference in Seattle, Washington in September. We ended up signing a Memorandum of Understanding to sign what we are now calling the **Atlanta-Seattle Declaration**, and in fact we are going to do that the very next time that we get together, but the MoU between WADU and SRDC has been signed, sealed and delivered by the president of WADU and the vice president of WADU. And our major facilitators in Seattle, Washington and I and a number of other people signed the documents. And we're moving forward

with it. And we have about 15 groups out of Europe who were represented at the Seattle Conference. They signed it too. We have the 40 organizations out of Central America. They signed it too. So, what we have is this accumulation of Diasporan organizations who agreed to mutually respect each other, and to accept principles of Pan-Afrikanism. That there will be a unified **Diasporan Pan-Afrikan Agenda** to take into the African Union, and that reparations and repatriation would be a part of that, and that the Diaspora should work consistently and relentlessly to join and to fully participate in the African Union as voting members and that the African Union will provide resources to us and we'll provide resources to the African Union. *This cannot be one-way.* So, those are the kind of principles that we are talking about. Right after the Seattle meeting, the UNIA and those now representing PADU began talking and the result of that has been the MoU that we have just signed, so that now the UNIA-ACL is now a part of the new PADU umbrella organization. Now, I need to say this last thing for everybody to understand. PADU will be established as an umbrella international organization through which a council of elders representing every organization that joins will make decisions about how we operate diplomatically in the international sphere. In fact, PADU and its council will probably end up becoming the forerunner for a **Pan-Afrikan Diasporan Parliament**, which will then work with the **Pan-Afrikan Parliament** on the continent which now meets regularly in South Africa. So what we are talking about is fully being engaged in participating in the African Union, just as Malcolm X tried to get us fully engaged in being involved with the OAU, just as Marcus Garvey said that as long as we're divided, we will stay weak."

### Pan-Afrikanism: Pulling Together in Harambee

Dr. Horne stressed the task we have ahead of us in Pulling Together in the spirit of Harambee. "What you have to do is bring all of the available talents together. ... We are talking about *us*, we are talking about the Diaspora, we are talking about all that we have in terms of our talents, our intellect, our experiences and hopefully our wisdom, and our resources. We are talking about bringing all that together in *harambee*, the pulling together so that we can go forth and do what it is our obligation to do. Continue the work of all those who have led us to this point. We have within our grasp the opportunity to help Afrika regain its dignity, its self-respect, and its leverage and power in the world. *We* do. And that is what we have to do. And the last point ... a concise definition of Pan-Afrikanism so that they will know what we are talking about. Because there are so many various definitions floating around, some of which confuse you more than they clarify you. *Pan-Afrikanism is a multi-dimensional phenomenon whose ultimate goal is the unification and complete liberation of the Afrikan continent, the redemption and rehabilitation of Afrikan people, the unification of Afrikan descendants in the Diaspora, and the restoration of the dignity of Afrikan contributions to world progress. And it is totally based on land. It is totally based on control of your land and your resources.*"

### Our Western Arrogance and the Pain of Slavery

"One of the things that I learned in some of these travels is how we have to understand our own arrogance in the United States. ECOSOCC would be the first Afrikan commission that we would be accepted in as voting members. It is an advisory commission. Only the Heads of State Assembly and the foreign minister-based

Executive Council make the ultimate decisions in the African Union but you have a number of other commissions that make strong recommendations and give advice, and so ECOSOCC does that. So, once we found out that we had 20 seats [*out of 150 total in ECOSOCC*], a number of my North American colleagues said, 'Fine, then those in the United States should get 19. Maybe one should go to the Caribbean.' I had to back up and say 'Hey, brothers, y'all need to chill. You know, calm down a minute. We are not that important!' In fact, let me go back to what **Sekou Toure** and his foreign minister told us at the 6-PAC, when we again showed our arrogance about 'We're going to tell the Afrikan leaders what to do and how to run their countries and everybody needs to be Scientifically Socialist' and all this other stuff. Our heroes finally had to come to us and said, 'Negroes, sit down. You don't know what you're talking about. You came here to learn. You didn't come here to teach us anything. And until you're willing to listen, and to learn how other people are interacting with this international racist regime, you will never be able to make the contribution.' Now, in 2001 when they had the **World Conference Against Racism**, in South Africa, the Diasporan contingent, working with a lot of the smaller Afrikan countries--Zambia, Tanzania--they were able to strongly negotiate, hold their ground, Afrikan-Americans were able to show that we could diplomatically handle ourselves. **December 12 [Movement]** for example. They were absolutely *great*. They stayed the course, they had strategic planning. We were able to demonstrate that we had learned our lesson, and we were now ready to come up to the higher level, and stop trying to talk everybody into what to do. We were able to participate, we were able to share, we were able to learn, and that is how we have to deal with our new invitation as a body to come and join the African Union. Here is an example of what I'm talking about. In most parts of Central America, they don't call themselves Afrikans. And I have been there when a number of my more nationalistic friends and acquaintances have demanded that the Nicaraguans, the Guatemalans, the Hondurans, 'Oh, you have to call yourselves Afrikans.' They said, 'No no no. We are *Afrikan Descendants*.' But to them, Afrikan Descendants, or Afro-Descendants as a lot of them like to use means the same thing. And so our saying 'You have to use *our* title, you have to use the way *we* refer to it', does not respect who their folk are, and what they have had to come through. And so part of our lesson in getting operational unity and mutual respect is to learn to stop trying to impose our particular vision, onto everybody else because it does not work. So we have to learn. We have to be patient.

Finally, there are the emotional scars Diasporan Afrikans still feel from the Maafa, the enslavement of our ancestors, our own Holocaust. Dr. Horne advised us to conquer that pain and get to work preparing for the joyful reunion with Mother Afrika. "Some of us are still angry and hurt because we feel that we were either sold away or abandoned, and there has been no real demonstration that the continental Africans are sorry and they want us to come back. We've been feeling just basically outcast. But we don't need to feel outcast. What they are doing is *waiting for us to be ready to return*. Just like you say, they are hungry, you see it in their eyes and in their features: *Are you ready to come back and help us restore our dignity?* That's what this is about. We have to be ready to return, and not wait for them to say, *Hey, when are you all coming home?*"

For more details about SRDC and PADU, see *The African Union and You*, on the Back Cover of this issue.





# The African Union and You

## What is the African Union?

The spirit of **Pan-African Unity** arose from the hearts and minds of oppressed African People throughout the World.

Among them, great leaders emerged: **Edward Wilmot Blyden, Marcus Garvey, Kwame Nkrumah, and Haile Selassie** to name a few. These men led those aspirations and founded the principles that gave life to the spirit of unity among African Peoples throughout the World, Pan-Africanism. From their dreams and struggles, the **Organization of African Unity** was born.

The **African Union (AU)** is Africa's premier institution and principal guiding organization for the promotion of accelerated socio-economic integration of the Continent, which will lead to greater unity and solidarity between African countries and its peoples. As a Continental organization, it focuses on the promotion of peace, security and stability on the Continent as a prerequisite for the implementation of the development and integration agenda of the Union.

The AU is made up of an Executive Council, a General Assembly of Heads of State, an Authority Administration, a Court of Justice, a Peace and Security Council, a Permanent Representatives Council, and the Economic, Social, and Cultural Council.

## Why is the AU important?

The **African Diaspora** consists of peoples of African origin living outside the continent, irrespective of their citizenship and nationality and who are willing to contribute to the development of the continent and the building of the African Union.

We have been called Negro, Colored, Black, African-American and so on. Our identity is marked by a history that starts before the slave ships arrived on these shores. Let us now identify with Africa, our Motherland, stronger and more connected than we have ever been. Africa is your immediate heritage, your cultural connection, your best social, economic, and political foundation to build a World Voice.

Those among us of the African Diaspora who are recent immigrants do well to keep connected to their respective countries, sending money home to assist family and the home nation's economy. Many also come the States for education and return home to assist their communities. This is the missing link for African-Americans, whose cultural, financial, and technical resources don't benefit their own communities. This can change through unity.

In order for us to be unified, we need organization, which requires leadership. We need the wisdom of our Elders and the tenacity and direction of our leaders. By dealing directly with the African Union, as the Sixth Region of the Union of African Nations, we can begin to realize our true strength as a unified people. Let us begin by organizing ourselves here in the United States of America.

## What is the goal?

The entire African Diaspora **must be unified** in order for us to experience progress as a people. All organizations with a Pan African Agenda must work together through a set of shared goals and objectives to secure our place inside the African Union (AU). The AU has offered the African Diaspora twenty (20) places for Official Representatives to sit on the Economic, Social, and Cultural Council, four (4) of which have been designated to represent the African Diaspora in the United States. At least an additional 20 Official Observers will also be elected.

The **Maryland Organizing Committee of the Sixth Region Diaspora Caucus-United States Subregion (SRDC-US-MD)** is working to build and consolidate the capacity of the African Diaspora in the United States in order to secure a permanent working relationship within the African Union.

To accomplish this goal, SRDC-US is organizing **Pan-African Town Hall Meetings** headed by a nominated Council of Elders, with the explicit purpose of explaining the AU Initiative, its merits, and the process through which we would gain permanent representation in the AU to serve our needs and aspirations as a unified people.

Currently, SRDC has nominated Councils of Elders and Elected Representatives in **California, Washington, Ohio, New York, South Carolina and Maryland. SRDC is also engaged with WADU and UNIA-ACL in the PADU Coalition.**

## What can you do?

- Join a Pan African Community Organization
- Participate in Town Hall Meetings
- Advocate African Unity
- Contribute your services
- Build Partnerships
- Become a member organization of the **Sixth Region Diaspora Caucus** and the **PADU Coalition**

**Maryland Organizing Committee Meets Every Tuesday Evening**

**SRDC-US Facilitators in Maryland**

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**Don't Live in Maryland? Want to Join an Existing SRDC Chapter or Start One in Your State? Contact us at [kuumba@verizon.net](mailto:kuumba@verizon.net) for help in Getting Started.**