

OUT OF TIME

Issue 102

Out of Control—Lesbian Committee to Support Women Political Prisoners

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Break the Chains: 33 Years after Black August

Excerpted from an article by Abayomi Azikiwe, *Pan-African News Wire*, at panafnewswire@gmail.com. and reprinted in the *SF BayView*, September 2.

This year marks the 33rd anniversary of Black August, the annual commemoration of the liberation struggle of African people inside the United States. The month of celebration and reflection was initiated by political prisoners, many of whom were members of the Black Panther Party and the Republic of New Africa, two of the main revolutionary organizations that emerged during the late 1960s.

One of the most widely spread falsehoods both inside and outside the U.S. is that there are no political prisoners. Yet there are untold numbers of people behind bars who were targeted, prosecuted and railroaded due to their political beliefs and activities.

The movement for African liberation has been criminalized since the days of slavery. Prisons were built during the antebellum period for enslaved Africans who ran away from bondage.



After the failure of Reconstruction, African Americans were subjected to arbitrary incarceration, lynching and forced exile from their places of birth. An entire penal code was established in Southern and Northern states designed to control the movement and political actions of the former enslaved population.

In the 1920s, the Honorable Marcus Garvey, whose date of birth, Aug. 17, 1887, falls within the month Black August, was framed up on spurious charges, imprisoned and later deported from the U.S. in 1927. Garvey had built the largest mass organization of African people up until that time period.

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, African American Communists took the lead in forming the Unemployed Councils that fought for jobs and against evictions. These efforts were met with widespread repression, including arrests and even political assassination.

In the aftermath of World War II, a new

wave of repression was carried out against leftists. Several leading African American leftists and Communists such as Henry Winston, Attorney George Crockett Jr., Dr. William Alphaeus Hunton, W.E.B. DuBois and Claudia Jones were prosecuted and all of them except DuBois served time in prison.

In 1955, the African American Civil Rights Movement took on a mass character with the Montgomery Bus Boycott led by Rosa Parks, E.D. Nixon and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

By 1960, African American students would take the lead in the movement when hundreds were arrested in sit-ins and other mass protests throughout the South.

With the advent of armed self-defense as exemplified by people such as Robert F. Williams of the Monroe, North Carolina, NAACP and the Deacons for Defense in Louisiana,

a new phase of the struggle would emerge.

Later urban rebellions would sweep areas throughout the U.S. and armed revolutionary organizations emerged.

Another wave of repression took hold during the mid- to late 1960s resulting in the assassinations of Malcolm X, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Fred Hampton, Mark Clark and many others.

Hundreds of the leading organizers in the Black Panther Party and the Republic of New Africa were arrested and imprisoned for their political beliefs.

By the early 1970s, the struggle inside the prisons was accelerating. Rebellions erupted in numerous correctional facilities throughout the country, the most notable being the Attica uprising of September 1971.

George L. Jackson, who was murdered several weeks prior to the Attica Rebellion, became a symbol of the revolutionary mood among African American prisoners in the U.S. Assata Shakur of the Black Liberation Army (BLA) was arrested in 1973 along with Sundiata Acoli in New Jersey.

Shakur was liberated by her BLA comrades and members of the Weather Underground on Nov. 3, 1979. She has been living in revolutionary Cuba for over three decades and remains committed to the struggle against national oppression and capitalism.

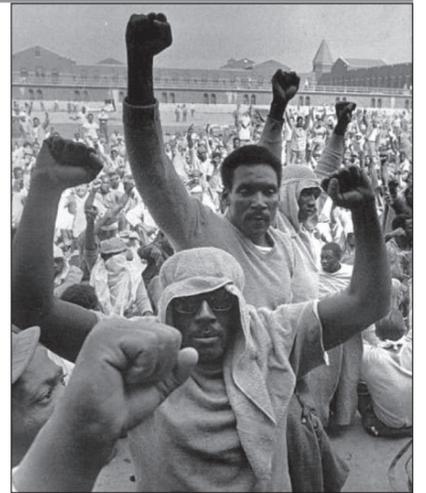
Despite the claims by the ruling class that the civil rights laws of the 1950s and

1960s created a post-racial society in the U.S., the prison population and the rates of poverty among African Americans and Latina/os contradicts these assertions. Today there are more African Americans in prison than ever before.

Today there is a revival in the movement among prisoners in the U.S. In several states such as California, North Carolina, Georgia, Ohio, Virginia and Illinois, prisoners have staged hunger strikes to draw attention to the deplorable conditions under which they live.

Hundreds remain in solitary confinement for decades. Hugo Pinell, a friend of George Jackson, has survived the torture of solitary confinement for over 40 years.

This movement is spreading throughout the country with Virginia and North Carolina being the most recent. Corporate media



outlets have been consistent in denying coverage of these developments in an effort to prevent mass support and to halt these forms of resistance from spreading even more rapidly. ■

TAKE ACTION CALIFORNIA: Tell Jerry Brown to End the Use of Shackles on Pregnant Inmates

California is one of 36 states in which it is still legal to shackle pregnant prisoners during labor and to cuff a woman's limbs to a hospital bed until delivery. Due to the brutal and sometimes lethal health risks to both mother and child, a growing number of states are banning the practice with anti-shackling bills. It is long over due for California to undo this intolerable practice. Take Action California is a coalition of 13 member agencies that firmly believe in the

2530 provides medical professionals the authority to have restraints removed in order to treat pregnant inmates.

The bill is on Governor Brown's desk. Please urge him to sign it now! Call Governor Brown at (916) 445-2841. Let him know why he must support AB 2530.

For more information about bills in support of prisoners, please contact Take Action California member agencies:



power of grassroots advocacy to advance social change. They ask you to call Jerry Brown now!

—OOT

Please ask Governor Brown to sign AB2530, a bill that will end the barbaric practice of shackling pregnant women held in California prisons and jails.

AB 2530 will strengthen protections on the use of restraints on pregnant women in correctional facilities. Two prior versions of this bill passed both houses of the legislature without a single "no" vote. Last year, under pressure from the California State Sheriffs' Association (CSSA) and both Alameda and Sonoma County sheriffs' departments, Governor Brown vetoed the bill.

AB 2530 addresses Governor Brown's veto by clarifying language and prohibiting the most dangerous forms of shackling.

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) opposes the use of shackles on pregnant women in all but the most extreme circumstances. Pregnant women in correctional facilities are more likely to experience miscarriage, preterm birth, low birth weight infants, and potentially fatal conditions like preeclampsia. Excessive shackling could not only increase stress and lead to further complications, but also render doctors unable to treat women in emergency situations. AB

African-American Health Institute, P.O. Box 12083, San Bernardino, CA 92423-2083 (909) 880-2600 | www.aahi-sbc.org

All of Us Or None, 1540 Market St. Ste. 490 San Francisco 94102 (415) 255-7036 | www.allofusornone.org

A New Way of Life, PO Box 875288 Los Angeles, CA 90087 (323) 563-3575

California Partnership, 2533 W. 3rd St., #101, Los Angeles 90057, (213) 385-8010, www.california-partnership.org

Californians United for a Responsible Budget (CURB), 1904 Franklin, Suite 504, Oakland 94612, (510) 444-0484 www.curbprisonspending.org

Californian Pan Ethnic Health Network (CPEHN), 654 13th St., Oakland, 94612, (510) 832-1160, www.cpehn.org

Critical Resistance, 1904 Franklin, Suite 504, Oakland, 94612 (510) 444-0484 www.critical-resistance.org

Ella Baker Center, 344 40th St., Oakland, 94609, (510) 428-3939 www.ellabakercenter.org

Families to Amend California's Three Strikes (FACTS), 33982 S. Figueroa, Suite 210, Los Angeles 90037 (213) 746-4844, www.facts1.org

Legal Services for Prisoners with Children, 1540 Market, San Francisco 94102, (415) 255-7036, www.prisonerswithchildren.org

Time for Change Foundation, PO Box 5753, San Bernardino, CA 92412, (909) 886-2984, www.timeforchangefoundation.org

The Women's Foundation of California, 340 Pine St, Suite 302, San Francisco 94104, (415) 837-1113, www.womensfoundca.org

Youth Justice Coalition, 1137 E. Redondo Blvd, Inglewood, CA 90302, (323) 235-4243, www.youth4justice.org. ■

URGENT: Write Lynne Stuart!

Mail being sent to incarcerated people's lawyer Lynne Stuart has been held up by the prison since the beginning of August. Lynne has just been hit with 45 days of no commissary, no visiting and no phone calls.

What did Lynne do? She helped another inmate with her legal papers and sent them to the outside for safekeeping. Lynne just had major surgery and is recovering well, but the injustice and harassment against her continues. Please take a moment to flood the prison with letters to make sure Lynne hears our support. Lynne Stewart #55304-053 Federal Medical Center, Carswell, PO Box 27137, Ft. Worth, TX 76127. ■

