



Shades of Power

Published by the Institute for MultiRacial Justice · Vol. II No. 2 · Fall 1999

STOP the war on Youth

We're all in the same gang!

BY RYAN PINTADO-VERTNER

Picture 200 young people, every shade of color imaginable, crowding a city block. Gold teeth, hip hop gear, pagers set on vibrator, fresh braids and fades. The kind of young people that fit the usual definition of a gang. They take over a street in downtown San Francisco and block the rush-hour traffic, rapping famous lyrics that adults don't recognize, updated to reflect a new consciousness.

Ho-tel

Mo-tel

And the Hilton

If you fund the War On Youth

You ain't gonna win!

Imagine these young people — with their hip-hop lyrics and their picket signs and their fists held way up in the air like revolutionaries — storming the lobby of a fancy downtown Hilton Hotel. White folks with money and suitcases drop their jaws as Jasmin Barker, coordinator of Third Eye Movement, a youth organization in San Francisco, explains the situation: They have come, she says, because W. Barron Hilton, chairman of the Hilton Hotels Corporation, gave money to the War On Youth. And they are not going to leave until he admits publicly that it was a mistake.

That happened in October. And it is going to happen again all over California. Up and down the state, young people are organizing to fight the latest assault.

On March 7, 2000, California will be forced to vote on

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YOUNG + OF COLOR ≠ A CRIME • NO ON PROP. 21



Oct. 27, 1999. Protest led by Third Eye Movement at Hilton Hotel for its funding of anti-youth initiative.

Photos by Steve Williams

Jasmin Rodriguez, Coordinator, Third Eye Movement.

yet another repressive initiative. Like Propositions 187, 209, and 227 before it, the latest is a bold-faced attack on people of color.

Officially it's called the Gang Violence and Juvenile Crime Prevention Act—and we can expect that name to fool many people, as did calling Prop 209 a “civil rights” initiative. Young people more truthfully call it the Juvenile Injustice Initiative.

By any name, this initiative is yet another shot fired in the nationwide War On Youth. And former-governor Pete Wilson is again at the center of the campaign, along with David LaBahn, deputy director of the California District Attorneys Association and former gang prosecutor in Orange County. Together they are proposing a new “juvenile system” that eliminates the 100-year old goal of giving young people the benefit of the doubt and treating them as worthy of protection and support.

“Get tough on kids” laws are exploding across the nation, including a bill in the House of Representatives, H.R. 1501, which would take back crucial protections for juve-

niles from the many abuses that can occur to them in adult prison. But none is as comprehensive as Proposition 21, which Wilson made sure to get on the ballot before leaving office.

- Prop. 21 would treat juveniles as young as 14 as adults, and try them in adult court. Once convicted, they would routinely be placed in adult prison. As a 1997 study by the Justice Policy Institute revealed, juveniles are 7.7 times more likely to commit suicide and 5 times more likely to be raped in adult prison. They would also serve adult time, including Life Without Parole and 18-year olds could even get the death penalty.

- Prop. 21 allows the government to wiretap those it suspects of being “gang” members.

- Prop. 21 requires juveniles (and adults) convicted of gang-related offenses to register with the police wherever they live—like sex offenders.

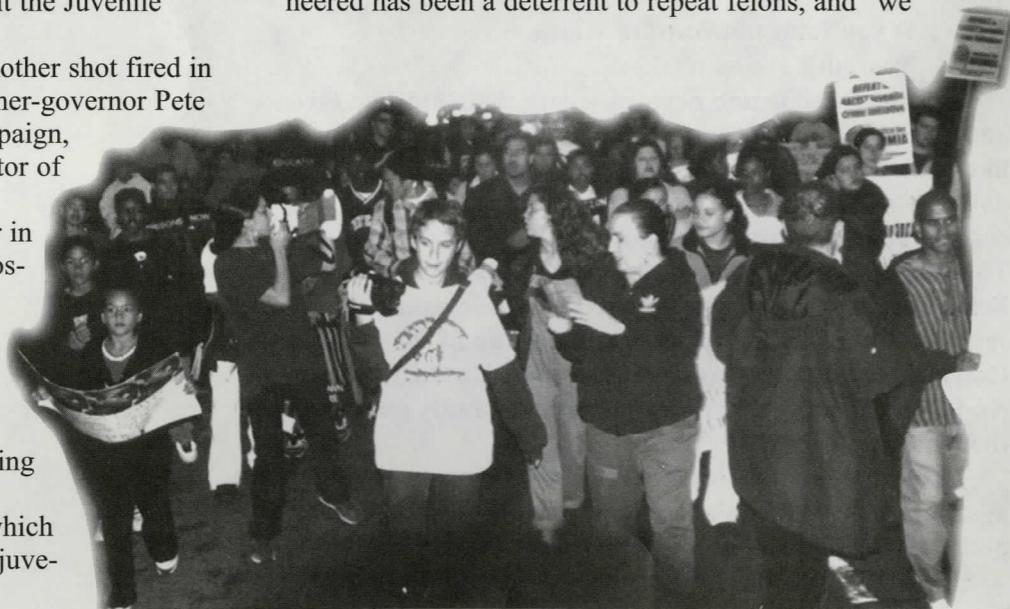
- Prop. 21 would make just knowing that a gang crime is going to take place into a crime. Such knowledge would be called “conspiracy.”

- A person now has to do \$50,000 worth of damage with graffiti or other “vandalism” for it to be treated as a felony. The new law would lower that to \$400.

- Prop. 21 also expands the “3 strikes” law, allowing 14-year olds to start accumulating the strikes more easily.

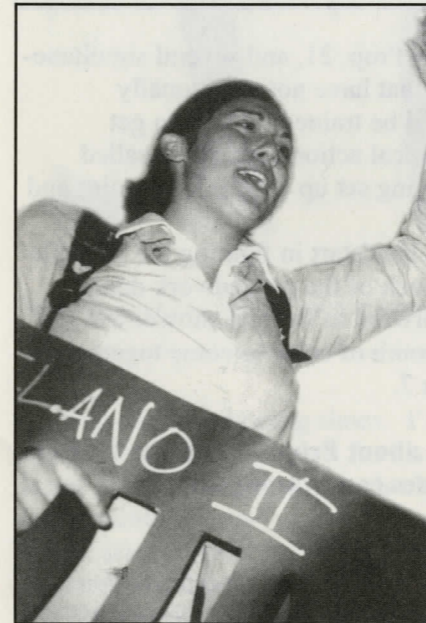
- Juvenile court proceedings, now treated as confidential, would be available to schools and employers.

And there are many, many more changes for the worse in this 43-page law. Mitch Zak, a former Wilson aide working with Stoorza, Ziegans & Metzger, a Sacramento public relations firm hired to run the campaign for the initiative, claims the “Three Strikes and you’re out” law that Wilson engineered has been a deterrent to repeat felons, and “we



are hoping that the juvenile crime initiative will be a deterrent for the gang members,” he says. But most criminologists do not believe Three Strikes caused the current decline in crime in California (and a recent U.C. Berkeley study confirms this). Crime rates began dropping well before that law was on the books.

On the other hand, there is widespread agreement about the impact of Three Strikes on communities of color. The prison population has exploded since the law passed, mostly people of color. Incarceration has now become big business in California. It is also clear that officials across the country have used public fear about gangs to terrible ends. George Bush, Jr., front-running presidential candidate and governor of Texas, used the gang “cancer” to add beds to juvenile facilities and to create a McCarthy-esque database of gang suspects statewide. Youth activists in Albuquerque, New Mexico are fighting the police department’s increased



harassment and listing of Chicanos as gang suspects. And Chicago was recently chastised by the U.S. Supreme Court for enforcing an “anti-gang” ordinance that led to 43,000 arrests in two years, mostly youth of color, and few of them ever charged with a crime.

California is no different. The Los Angeles Police Department is notorious for stretching the definition of “gangs” to justify its paramilitary tactics against communities of color. In 1993, the

ACLU sued several southern California police agencies for targeting Asian-American youth a gang members. At an east Oakland high school, a classroom full of students, most of them African-American, was asked to apply the Oakland Police Department’s gang member point system to themselves. Most students fit the definition as a gang member or gang associate simply because of their clothing, relatives, and neighborhood.

Indeed, gang definitions are notoriously open-ended. They connote racial stereotypes, hip hop culture, and poverty. In Aurora, a suburb of Denver, any combination of the following constitute gang membership: “slang,” “pagers,” “cellular phones,” “clothing of a particular color,” or “jewelry.” Pete Wilson proposes to destroy young people’s lives



with similar racialized and class-biased definitions of gang membership, and he raised half-a-million dollars from Corporate America to help him.

WHO'S FINANCING THE WAR ON YOUTH?

When he began fundraising for the initiative, Wilson was also expected to run for president in 2000 and his anti-youth initiative would have been another notch in his conservative belt. Corporate donations promised the long-term benefits that come from supporting a successful presidential candidate and this prospect may have wooed many executives. For example, San Francisco-based Chevron, a multinational oil corporation, gave \$25,000 to the initiative campaign. Dawn Soper, a public affairs agent for Chevron, admitted that Chevron knew little about the initiative itself and said “Our involvement in supporting it was at the request of Gov. Pete Wilson”—who wielded tremendous control over the oil industry.

Unocal 76, another multinational oil corporation based in California, gave \$50,000 as did northern California’s utility monopoly, Pacific Gas & Electric. Other donors were San Diego Gas & Electric, Ernst & Young, TransAmerica, and Atlantic Richfield Oil (along with the Hilton gift of \$10,000 already mentioned). It’s also notable that Mitch Zak of the pro-initiative campaign directed the campaign for Proposition 226, Wilson’s unsuccessful attempt to restrict labor unions from lobbying. In addition, his PR firm received \$25,000 a month from the Tobacco Institute to stop a new California tobacco tax.

Bay Area youth fighting the anti-youth initiative have been energized by this kind of information, in all its details, which exposes the forces behind the new law. In October, they staged a protest targeting a Contra Costa county Chevron office. A Chevron spokesperson later assured the media that it would not give money to the initiative again.

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MORE BAD NEWS ON THE BALLOT

The Knight Initiative isn't just against gays and lesbians, it's an attack on equal rights for all.

Next March 7, Californians will vote on a law prohibiting recognition of same-sex marriages. Proposition 22 would also block recognition of same-sex marriages performed in other states even if they become legal there.

On its face, the Knight Initiative (named for Senator William "Pete" Knight) just confirms existing state law. But its intent is much more sinister than that. Right now, judges and politicians in many state are proposing to legalize same-sex marriages. California is obviously next. So Prop. 22 is actually the Far Right's preemptive strike to prevent this.

The proposed law denies the basic human right of personal choice about who you want to spend your life with. If same-sex couples want to share in the commitment and responsibility of civil marriage, the government should not prevent it. But the Far Right is using and abusing religion to

justify discrimination, even though many religious leaders of various faiths oppose it.

For communities of color, we're counting on the organizations of gay and lesbian Blacks, Latinos, Asian/American/Pacific Islanders and others to fight Prop.22. But ALL people of color should oppose it—everyone who recognizes an unjust law when they see it, everyone who believes that any kind of discrimination is wrong. Remember, just 27 years ago, the law said "all marriages between a white person and a colored person shall be absolutely void."

We need to come together in this fight, not be divided once again by a mean-spirited effort to advance the whole right wing agenda for California. No on Prop. 22!

No on Prop.22! For information on speaker training and organizing in communities of color, contact the ACLU of Northern California (415-621-2493) or Lisam@aclung.org. General campaign info: No on Knight, 505 Howard St., San Francisco, CA 94105 (415-227-1020). <http://www.NoOnKnight.org>.

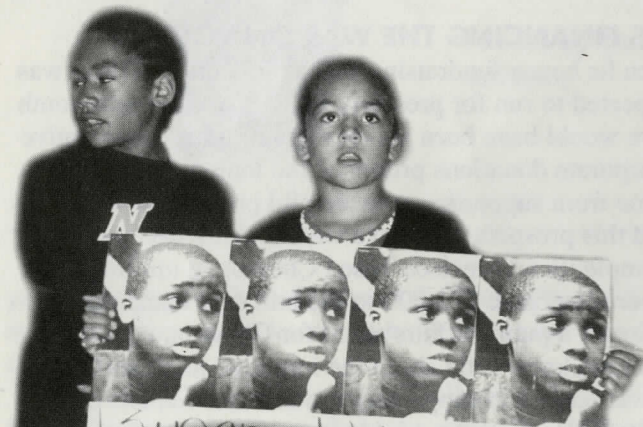
Kali Akuno Williams for Shades of Power.

youth organizer summits on Prop. 21, and several simultaneous protests. Youth groups that have not traditionally engaged in direct action will be trained on how to get involved. A permanent political action committee called Californians for Youth is being set up to provide monies and technical support.

California youth have a headstart in fighting the Juvenile Injustice Initiative. With much of the groundwork done, young Californians look forward to the real showdown. If ever there was a time for youth of color to come together, it is between now and March 7.

For more information about Prop. 21 and the War On Youth, go to www.colorlines.com/waronyouth or www.schoolsnotjails.com.

Ryan Pintado Ventner is a writer and an information activist at the Data Center's Impact Research Team (DIRT) in Oakland. DIRT provided information for this article.



Young protestors holding photo of Nathaniel Abraham, now 13, found guilty in a Michigan adult court on Nov.16 of second-degree murder when he was 11.

Stop the War on Youth

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Youth's efforts are exposing the political process that allowed the new initiative to get on the ballot in the first place: wealthy corporations giving money to wealthy white politicians who give money to wealthy media spin doctors who then lie to the public. At the end of the 20th century, this is what democracy has come to mean, and youth activists know it.

In fact, coalitions across the state are treating the struggle as an opportunity to build a movement. Whether the initiative passes or not, youth activists in California will be stronger than ever. They range from suburban high school students to teenage street workers. They're rich and poor; Black, Latina, Asian and White. And they are coordinated. Before the March 2000 vote, there will be two statewide

DANCING TO VICTORY

The Release of the Puerto Rican Political Prisoners

BY DIANE C. FUJINO



Adolfo Matos at his "freedom" party in Santa Barbara, CA. Sept.10, 1999. Photo by Diane Fujino

"Put on your dancing shoes. I'm coming home," was the message Adolfo Matos left for his daughters. He had just heard about President Clinton's clemency offer to the Puerto Rican political prisoners, after almost 20 years in prison for fighting to win the independence of his homeland.

But that moment of exhilaration quickly turned to disappointment when Adolfo learned that clemency depended on accepting strict parole conditions and a ban on associating with his compañera/os. The next month of intense negotiations and group phone calls among the prisoners of war led to their collective decision to accept the clemency offer. On September 10, 1999, a major Movement victory was celebrated when eleven Puerto Rican prisoners of war including Adolfo walked out of prison.

As someone who had worked for their freedom, I had the incredible honor of accompanying Adolfo from prison in Lompoc, California to Puerto Rico, where he now lives.

You might ask why an Asian American struggles to free Puerto Rican political prisoners. I became involved through the political work of my Japanese American elders. Mitsuye Yamada first introduced us to the *independistas* through a program featuring the poetry and prose of women political prisoners. Her brother, Rev. Michael Yasutake, lives in the Chicago area, the U.S. base for the movement to save the POWs. He has been an active fighter for the POWs since Adolfo and the others arrested with him were incarcerated in 1980. It is through Yasutake's Interfaith Prisoners of Conscience Project (IPOC) that we have been able to integrate religion and revolution in our prison visits.

Most influential of all has been Yuri Kochiyama, the renowned revolutionary who has worked to free political prisoners for the past three decades. These Nisei elders also motivated Rev. Nozomi Ikuta, of IPOC and the United Church of Christ, who has dedicated her life to supporting the Puerto Rican movement and POWs.

Though my involvement in the Puerto Rican movement was inspired by my Asian elders, my political and spiritual commitment stems from my opposition to the unjust treatment of people anywhere and my support for independence struggles by colonized people everywhere. This is why I support political prisoners: those incarcerated because of their resistance to oppression, who are routinely given excessive-

ly long sentences and subjected to harsh conditions.

Adolfo, for example, received a 78-year sentence—seven times longer than the average murder sentence—for actions that caused no injury or death. The main "crime" Adolfo committed was a guilt-by-association charge of seditious conspiracy, the same "crime" for which Nelson Mandela served 27 years. The 19 years Adolfo spent in prison was enough suffering. Such injustice formed the basis of the humanitarian support for the Puerto Rican prisoners' release

You might ask why an Asian American struggles to free Puerto Rican political prisoners. I became involved through. . .

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Dancing to Victory

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and Clinton's clemency. Moreover, it is important to recognize that under international law colonized people have the right to defend the sovereignty of their land and people by any means necessary, including armed struggle. Resisting colonialism is no crime. The crime is colonization.



Photo by Khalil Jacobs-Fantauzzi

Outside Dublin, CA prison on Sept. 10, 1999, day of release.

The fight against U.S. colonization is what Adolfo and others in the FALN, Armed Forces of National Liberation, were serving and risking their lives for. In 1493, Christopher Columbus landed in Puerto Rico, and soon thereafter, virtually all the indigenous Tainos died from slavery, disease, and murder under Spanish colonial rule. Just as Puerto Ricans were finally winning independence from Spain, the U.S. acquired the island in 1898 as "war booty" and made it a colony economically dependent on the U.S. By 1905, 84% of its exports and 85% of its import came from trade with the U.S. The influx of labor-intensive U.S. industries since the 1950s has enabled big business to reap huge profits off the cheap labor supplied by Puerto Ricans.

PUERTO RICO, A U.S. MILITARY BASE

For decades, the U.S. has also used the Puerto Rican island of Vieques for nuclear weapon storage and live bombing practice, even though 8,000 human beings live there. Throughout Puerto Rico, the presence of the U.S. military (11 bases cover 13% of the land) and heavy industry lead to environmental destruction. Toxic wastes and air and water pollution have created health problems, including a high incidence of cancer. An infamous U.S. policy dating back to

1939, when advisers to President Franklin D. Roosevelt attributed the island's economic problems to overpopulation, led to the sterilization of over 35% of Puerto Rican women of child-bearing age by the 1970s. That is genocide.

These are the conditions that Adolfo and other freedom fighters were resisting—the same conditions that Lolita Lebrón and Rafael Cancel Miranda opposed a generation before, and Pedro Albizu Campos, the father of Puerto Rican independence, the generation before that. These conditions still existed last year, when Puerto Rican students and workers protested the privatization of the telephone industry so vigorously that they shut down the San Juan airport. In April, 1999, the killing of a civilian on Vieques by a military bomb sparked unprecedented Puerto Rican unity demanding that the U.S. get out. Many in the Movement believe that it was this massive grassroots pressure on the U.S. military, in addition to the growing political prisoner movement, that spurred Clinton to release the POWs.

The vast majority of Puerto Ricans across the political spectrum also demand freedom for the Puerto Rican *independistas*. Even though most Puerto Ricans in recent plebiscites have voted for commonwealth or statehood over independence, we should consider that this happens under the conditions of economic dependency created by colonialism. Also, the widespread support for the release of the POWs and the end to the U.S. military presence in Vieques are essentially independence demands. As freedom fighter Rafael Cancel Miranda says, "Scratch the skin of any Puerto Rican and you'll find an *independista*."

The desire for freedom, justice, and self-determination is in the hearts of many people. It is for this reason that I, as a Japanese American, support the anti-colonial struggles of people worldwide and the release of all political prisoners, incarcerated for their struggles against imperialism. It has been only half a century since my parents and grandparents were locked up in U.S. concentration camps solely because of their ancestry, and since Japanese American resisters were imprisoned as political prisoners.

I believe in the saying, "None of us is free until all of us are free." My own liberation is intertwined with the independence of Puerto Rico, East Timor, and other colonized nations. We must continue to support these struggles and the release of the other five Puerto Rican POWs still behind bars, and all political prisoners.

But for right now, I am dancing a victory celebration with Adolfo.

Diane C. Fujino teaches Asian American Studies at U.C. Santa Barbara and works with the radical political group ASIAN!, Asian Sisters (& Brothers) for Ideas in Action Now! and the Santa Barbara Mumia Coalition.

Third World Front fights on for Liberation

BY AMY SADAO AND DANA KAPLAN

Amy Sadao is a graduate student in Comparative Ethnic Studies and Dana Kaplan is a history major, at U.C. Berkeley; both were arrested in the courthouse demonstration.

The struggle by the multi-racial Third World Liberation Front (twLF) based in Berkeley goes on. (See *Shades of Power*, Summer 1999.)

On Oct. 21, to protest the prosecution of student demonstrators for Ethnic Studies last spring, twLF members took over Courtroom 2 in Alameda County's Berkeley courthouse. They charged U.C. Berkeley Chancellor Robert Berdahl and Provost Carol Christ with cultural genocide. In a mock trial, a jury of 16 found the two guilty of crimes including: blocking staff union bargaining power, complying with Props. 187 and 209 (against immigrant rights and affirmative action), and the university's long history of police repression against progressive student activists.

The court's plans that day had originally called for a pre-trial conference on the impending prosecution of six twLF members for occupying Barrows Hall last April 14 in the campaign to save Ethnic Studies. At Barrows, 48 students had been cited after being arrested by officers using choke holds and "pain compliance" techniques banned by police forces nationwide. A police video confirms the brutality and excessive force used. Only six protesters were criminally charged. Chancellor Berdahl broke a verbal agreement made during the negotiations that ended the hunger strike for Ethnic Studies to ask the D.A. to drop those charges.

It was to protest the criminal prosecution of the Barrows 6 that over 70 supporters marched to the courthouse on Oct. 21. The twLF packed the audience gallery, demonstrated outside, and held their mock trial until 24 designated participants were arrested. Hauled off to Santa Rita County Jail, the 24 were processed and released with misdemeanors; one graduate student was charged with resisting arrest and his case will come up in January, 2000.

Meanwhile we can all consider the sentencing announced for Chancellor Berdahl and Provost Crist after the trial, which was based on the twLF supporting restorative justice

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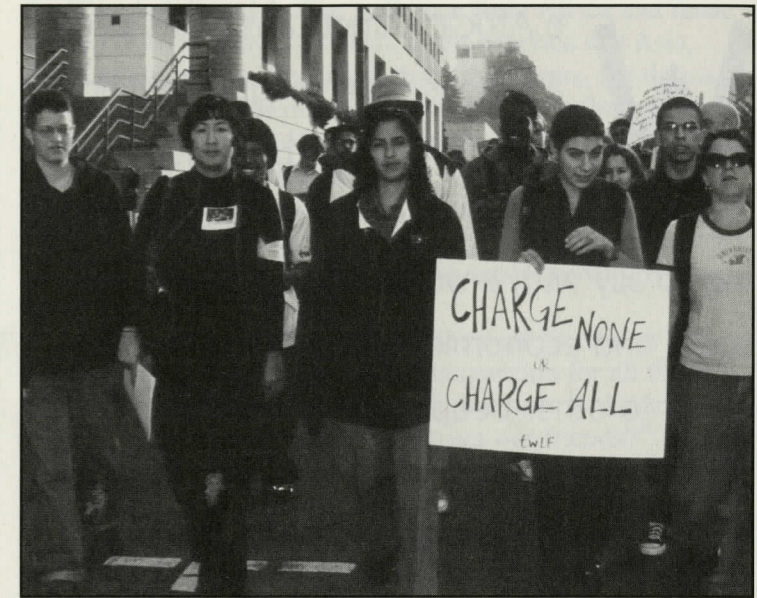


Photo by Liz Lee

twLF members walk in silent protest to Berkeley courthouse, Oct.21.

WELCOME TO THE BLACK RADICAL CONGRESS

The June Tenth congress of 1998 was a resounding success, with 2,000 people coming from all over the U.S. to unite in rebuilding a pole of radicalism in the African American people's movement.

Participants recognized that they should not replicate the existing work of Black radicals and their organizations, but should help to build upon that work. The work is of special importance, given daily events that include the quickening pace to end the life of Mumia, the effects of international economic events on the Black working class of the U.S., struggles in Africa against neo-colonialism and for national democracy; the demonization and criminalization of the Black poor. Our situation cries out for resistance led by those who hail from the tradition of Black radicalism.

As we move to make the Congress a permanent feature of the U.S. political scene, we need active members and active organizational affiliates. We urge you to use the membership form on our website, return it and then you can vote. Thank you, sisters and brothers. We look forward to joining with you to build the Black Radical Congress!

Address: P.O. Box 490365, Atlanta, Georgia 30349.
(404)768-2529 FAX: (404) 614-8563. Email: blackradicalcongress@email.com

We African-Americans need to do a serious rethinking of coalition politics for the 21st century.

African-Americans have normally been willing to ally with anyone in the struggle for social and economic justice. When it has come to other peoples of color, however, there has been a marked tendency on our parts to assume that WE would play the



Rudy Lozano of Chicago's Pilsen barrio helped build the coalition that elected Mayor Harold Washington in 1983.

RAINBOW POLITICS for the 21st century

BY BILL FLETCHER, JR.

African-Americans, Changing Demographics and Coalition-Building

leading role in any coalition and that WE would set the terms for such a coalition.

Times are changing.

In the 1980s, the Black-led electoral upsurge represented a major response to the conservative wind sweeping across the USA. What was particularly striking in this upsurge was the coalition aspect of the movement. Whether in the late Harold Washington's successful bid for the Chicago mayoralty, or in Jesse Jackson's '84 and '88 Presidential campaigns, these motions found significant ways of incorporating the participation and input of other people of color.

Nevertheless, these upsurges were indeed Black-led and in some cases, other people of color were taken for granted. A case in point was the unfortunate and strategically significant deterioration in the relationship between New York's Latino community and Mayor David Dinkins. Dinkins made several mistakes in his relationship with Latinos, betraying an insensitivity (some would say blindness) to the importance of the Black/Latino alliance in governing New York.

The strength of the Black-led electoral upsurge and the Rainbow movement of the '80s was its resistance to Reaganism plus the articulation of multi-racial/multi-ethnic politics led by people of color. In this sense the electoral upsurge was quite different from an earlier electoral movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s among African-Americans, which was both politically more liberal, and also paid less attention to other peoples of color.

The rainbow politics of the 1980s, however, lacked the leadership of a Left, and as such tended to lose steam and direction. One aspect of that loss of direction was the failure to build organization. Specific to the issue of rainbow politics was the failure to build upon what had been accomplished to advance a people-of-color-led and multi-racial/multi-ethnic politics. Instead, there was positioning within the parameters of the Democratic Party and a retreat into ethnic politics (which sometimes used a Left veneer).

The retreat into "ethnic politics," a phenomenon not restricted to African-Americans, was very disturbing. Rather than a clear challenge to white supremacy and to conservative politics, the larger character of ethnic politics was that of getting a piece of the action, so to speak. Ethnic politics lacked a clear, progressive program or agenda. Its other disturbing aspect was focussing on one group's relations with another people of color. Thus, the challenge became Latino vs African-American, or African-American vs Korean, or a line-up of some people of color with Republicans who expressed a willingness to chat.

In this context, the changing demographics will demand that African-Americans alter our approach to the struggle for social and economic justice as we enter the 21st century. This does not mean that we step back from the struggle against white supremacy. Nor does it mean that we downplay the demand for Black political power. Instead, African-Americans can no longer assume that in coalitions with

Latinos (or Asians) we are the determining force.

It ain't necessarily so...

The changing demographics of the USA, most in evidence in California, open up an excellent opportunity to pursue the struggle against racist oppression and white supremacy. Racism has never been a phenomenon experienced only by African-Americans. It evolved as a result of the genocidal wars against Native Americans and the enslavement of Africans; in time racism developed as a force involving the colonization and accompanying exploitation of Mexicans, the exploitation and vilification of Asians, and the colonization of Puerto Rico, the Philippines, Hawaii, and other Pacific areas. All of this, of course, has played a continuing role in the economic exploitation and social control of the working class as a whole.

As we enter the 21st century, the conditions exist to reinvigorate the struggle against racism. Certainly this is in evidence in the electoral arena, but one can also see in trade unions and in popular culture how the face of the USA is changing with the numbers. The numbers can be utilized to change the content of our experience here.

That is, if we as people of color remain aware of the manner in which "race," as a socio-political category, tends to mutate in the USA. In frank and stark terms, this means that the white supremacist system has never treated all people of color the same at every moment in every part of the USA. So much has depended on the particularities of numbers, social control and struggle.

Thus, not all Europeans coming to the USA, for instance, were automatically assumed to be "white". They "became white," so to speak, normally over the course of a generation and within the context of establishing a dominant bloc vis a vis people of color and as a mechanism to defuse European-American working class consciousness. African-American settlers were used against Native Americans at the same time that we [African-Americans] were suffering national oppression at the hands of white supremacy. After suffering racist assaults, oppression and condemnation for over 100 years, Asians are now held up as a "model minority," thus "earning" them the envy (and sometimes reactionary vilification) of other people of color even though Asians have not ceased to be the recipients of white supremacist oppression.

To put it another way, numbers alone are not enough. We must look at a set of politics which speaks to the changing environment and leads in the fight against white supremacy rather than leading in inter-ethnic rivalry (or war) among the dispossessed.

Many of my African-American sisters and brothers are nervous about the demographic changes underway. What will it mean, many ask, that Blacks are no longer the premier minority group? I will offer this. One, Black people in the USA are—ourselves—undergoing changes as a population as non-African-American Blacks (e.g., Nigerians, Eritreans, Ethiopians, Ghanians, Haitians) migrate here and introduce their experiences and views into our milieu.

Second, capitalism in the late 20th century is marked by massive migrations. Whether it is migrations to Britain from

the West Indies and Africa; to France from Africa and Asia; or the USA from the Carribean, Latin America and Asia, there are migrations underway that reflect wars, the dramatic changes in the global economy (which often influences those wars) and the overall destruction in the lives of many indigenous populations. There is no real way to stop such migrations, even if that was desirable. There are ways, however, to get caught up in very reactionary approaches and responses to immigration which can sow the seeds for very right-wing political movements.

For this reason African-Americans need to rethink the developing political landscape. The question for all those seriously interested in our liberation has been and continues to be "...who are our enemies? who are our friends?" If we rethink our alliances, our hand is strengthened in this fight, and the opportunities may be limitless.

In order to do any of this we need organization and we need dialogue. Specifically, as noted earlier, numbers alone are meaningless. The numbers need to be channeled into power. This means that the rainbow politics of the 21st century must be accompanied by a level of organization among people of color that can advance a programmatic agenda addressing the basic issue of racial/ethnic equity and free-

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THIRD WORLD FRONT FIGHTS ON

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instead of the prison industrial complex. Because UCB buys office furniture made by prison labor, it was recommended that the defendants spend time in a California prison remaking their office furniture and then return to campus to study for degrees in Ethnic Studies. Seems fair, doesn't it?

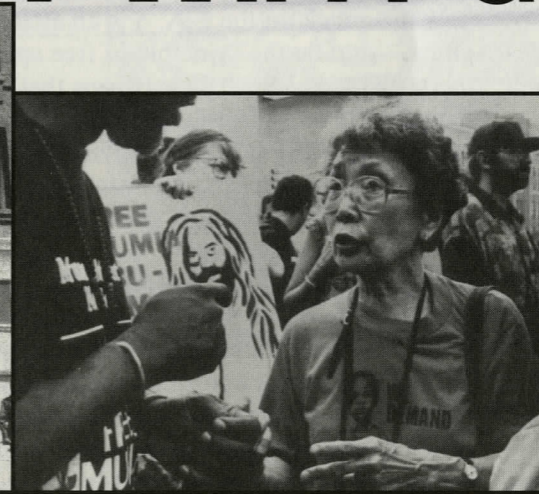
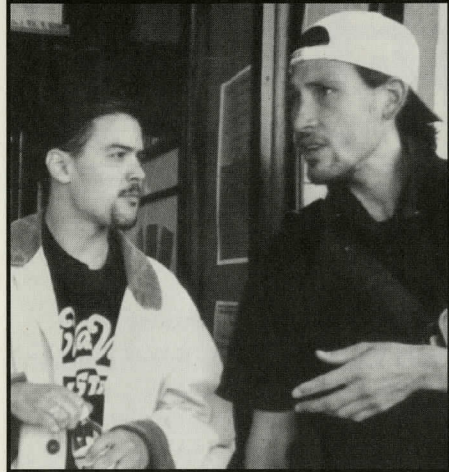
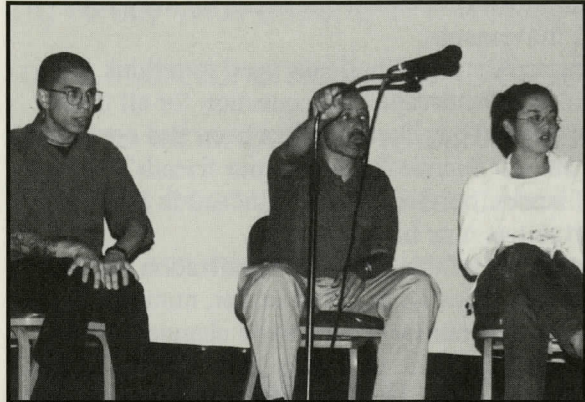
The next court date for the Barrows 6 is in early January, so the twLF continues its "Drop the Charges Campaign" in the U.C. student conduct system and its legal defense in the court system.

Let Chancellor Berdahl know you are concerned about the future of Ethnic Studies and his penalizing politically active students of color. Call (510)642-7264. Write to him or Provost Crist at 200 California Hall #1500, U.C., Berkeley, CA 94720. Encourage the D.A. to stop prosecuting political protesters: (510)644-6683, 2120 Martin Luther King Way, Berkeley 94704.

Note: Students from UCB, San Francisco State University, Mills College, Laney Community College and later Stanford University, together with community members, adopted the name twLF last spring to link their struggle with that of the original Third World Liberation Front which carried out the longest student strike in the U.S. 1968-69. That struggle finally led to the founding of the nation's first Ethnic Studies Department, at U.C. Berkeley.

ALLIANCE BUILDING FESTIVAL OCT 1-3

with film and video



Top: Discussion following two films on immigration, with José Palafox, Phil Hutchings and Jung Hee Choi. Left to Right: "Dirt Style" director Eric Norberg (in white cap) with Jason Ferreira; Dr. Ruth Gilmore of U.C. Berkeley, who led a discussion. All photos by Elena Serrano. (continued on next page)

Next: from the video "A Place of Rage," June Jordan and Angela Davis; from the "Fall of the I-Hotel" police ready to evict Filipino and Chinese tenants; from "A Passion for Justice" Yuri Kochiyama; from "ON STRIKE! Ethnic Studies 1969-99," U.C. Berkeley protest.

Founded in the Bay Area in 1997, the Institute for MultiRacial Justice is a resource center that aims to help build alliances among peoples of color against White Supremacy and for social justice. To build solidarity instead of division often requires replacing ignorance with knowledge. How can we do this?

All form of cultural expression can be useful, and none more so than movies. In that spirit, the Institute put together a film and video festival held October 1-3 at the Victoria Theater, San Francisco. Sponsors included 20 youth, labor, immigrant rights, and other community organizations.

The goal of our "Shades of Power Festival" was to show, with 17 videos and discussion, how African Americans, Arab Americans, Asian Americans, Latinos, Native Americans and Pacific Islanders share many of the same problems, and how we can fight side by side for social justice. From housing to

education, from the "criminal justice" system to environmental racism, there are many reasons for people of color to collaborate. There are also inspiring examples of our doing so.

So the festival showed videos about struggle against gentrification: one, by Black and Latino families in Brooklyn, another by Chinese and Filipino tenants in San Francisco (at the I Hotel). Discussion afterward was led by Prof. Ruth Gilmore of U.C. Berkeley and Emil de Guzman, Filipino community leader active in the I-Hotel Tenants Assoc.

One program combined "Another America," about the relationship between African Americans and immigrant Koreans, with José Palafox's video "The New World Border" about the treatment of Latino immigrants at the border. Afterward came discussion of immigrant rights and intra-community tensions led by longtime activist Phil Hutchings, filmmaker Jose Palafox and Jung Hee Choi of the

Asian American Left Forum. Yet another program brought together videos about struggles against environmental racism and Native American survival issues. Nilok Butler (Indigenous Women's Network), Richard Moore (Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice), and Geri Almanza (People Organizing to Demand Environmental and Economic Rights) spoke afterward. Sunday's youth program drew a large audience for three videos covering a N.Y. struggle to save public school funding, the U.C. Berkeley Ethnic Studies struggle, and hip hop (Eric Norberg's new "Dirt Style").

Because women have often taken the initiative in alliance-building, one highlight of the festival became the showing of "A Place of Rage," featuring women artist-activists, together with a video about homeless Puerto Rican, black and white women who set up housing in a

Philadelphia lot. One inspiring video focused on the multi-racial work done by the longtime Japanese-American activist Yuri Kochiyama with Malcolm X and others in Harlem. On the same program came the video "Pa'lante, Siempre Pa'lante!" an in-depth look at the militant Young Lords Party of Puerto Ricans based in Chicago and New York, which also worked across color lines.

From the moment the festival opened with Peter Bratt's magical film "Follow Me Home" until it closed with "The Great Mojado Invasion (The 2nd US-Mexico War) by Guillermo Gomez Peña and Gustavo Vasquez, people seemed to feel this event showed what could be done with movies and some imagination. Viewers have urged that the festival be an annual event. Indeed, why not?

Elizabeth (Betita) Martinez

THE CASE OF THE L.A. 8

by Nadine Naber
for the American Arab
Anti-Discrimination
Committee

FREEDOM OF SPEECH FOR IMMIGRANTS?

On January 6, 1987, FBI and INS (Immigration and Naturalization Service) agents arrested seven Palestinians and one Kenyan in Los Angeles on secret evidence, held them in maximum security prisons without bond, and charged them with possessing literature advocating "world-wide communism." This was a deportable offense under the 1952 McCarran-Walter Act.

Since then, the INS has repeatedly added or changed the charges against the Los Angeles 8. Each charge has been aimed at constitutionally protected freedom of speech and

association. The most recent charge falls under new legislation that prohibits aid, even for lawful purposes, to an organization deemed "terrorist" by the government. When the evidence used against the L.A. 8 was finally put forth in court, it revealed that the L.A. 8's "unlawful" activities were: selling newspapers, participating in demonstrations and organizing humanitarian aid fundraisers. Yet they still face possible deportation.

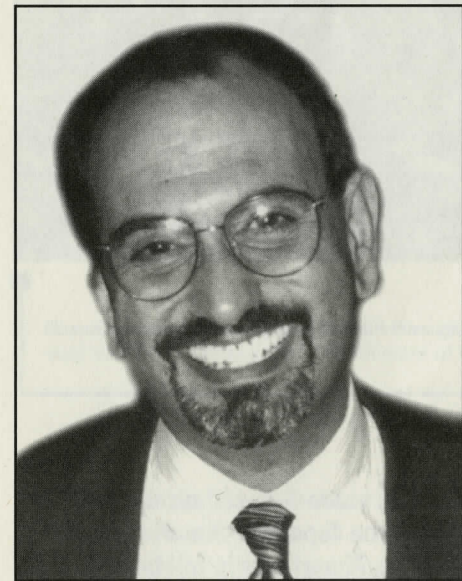


Photo by Nadine Naber

Michel Shehadeh at American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee banquet, San Francisco chapter, 1999.

The case of the L.A. 8 is often viewed as part of the U.S. government and media's systematic attack against the Arab and Muslim world. Although this is true, it would be a mistake to see the case as affecting only Arab and Muslim Americans. Not to see the effects on many other peoples as well only perpetuates the divide-and-conquer tactics of U.S. racial politics. Those tactics portray the struggles of each community as if

they are separate and thus ghettoize each community according to the issues that the dominant society considers theirs.

By adopting a politics of multi-racial justice, we can see how the attack on the L.A. 8 is an attack on all immigrants—and on the principle of free speech itself. L.A. 8 member Michel Shehadeh affirms that the L.A. 8 have been the subjects of a government experiment and they were chosen because, as Palestinian Arabs, they made an easy target. They were used to set a precedent leading to harsh new anti-immigrant legislation and enforcement policies.

A MULTI-RACIAL ANALYSIS

This case raises three questions: Do immigrants have the same First Amendment free speech rights as citizens? Do immigrants have a constitutional right to challenge selective enforcement actions by the INS? Can the INS use secret evidence to deny legalization to aliens with permanent resident status who are otherwise eligible?

(1) Do immigrants have the same First Amendment Free Speech rights as citizens?

On January 26, 1989, U.S. District Judge Stephen Wilson ruled that immigrants have the same First Amendment rights as citizens and that the McCarran-Walter Act is unconstitutional. In an attempt to avoid the Court's ruling, the INS filed new charges against two of the L.A. 8, Khader Hamide and Michel Shehadeh. It claimed that the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), with which the L.A. 8 were supposedly associated, advocates assault on government officials. Judge Wilson then ruled that the new INS provisions were unconstitutional because they punish individuals solely for associating with a group that advocates disfavored ideas.

The following year, Congress repealed the McCarran-Walter Act and replaced it with the 1990 Immigration Act making it a deportable offense to "engage in terrorist activity." Using this new law, the INS filed more charges against Hamide and Shehadeh in April, 1991 claiming they had provided material support to the PFLP and that this was grounds for deportation.

Five years later, Judge Wilson ruled that the activities the

L.A. 8 were charged with conducting are protected by the first amendment. The government appealed his ruling and claimed that no one, citizen or not, has a first amendment right to support the lawful activities of a foreign organization deemed "terrorist." That includes selling newspapers, participating in demonstrations and organizing humanitarian aid fundraisers. Those are all criminal acts—and again, grounds for deportation.

2) Do immigrants have a constitutional right to challenge INS selective enforcement actions?

Back in 1987, the L.A. 8 filed suit against the Attorney General and the INS charging that they had been selectively targeted for deportation based on constitutionally protected political activity. Members and supporters of the Nicaraguan Contras, Afghanistanian Mujahedin, and anti-Castro Cuban groups, on the other hand, were not charged. Ten years later, Judge Wilson denied the INS's motion to dismiss and ruled that the L.A. 8 were constitutionally entitled to immediate federal district court review of their claim of selective prosecution. And last February, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled

that aliens have no right to object to being targeted for deportation based on their political affiliations. It also ruled that the federal courts have no jurisdiction to hear constitutional challenges.

This meant non-citizens could only turn to immigration courts—where constitutional rights are meaningless.

(3) Can the INS use secret evidence to deny legalization to aliens with permanent resident status who are otherwise eligible for legalization under the Immigration Reform and Control Act?

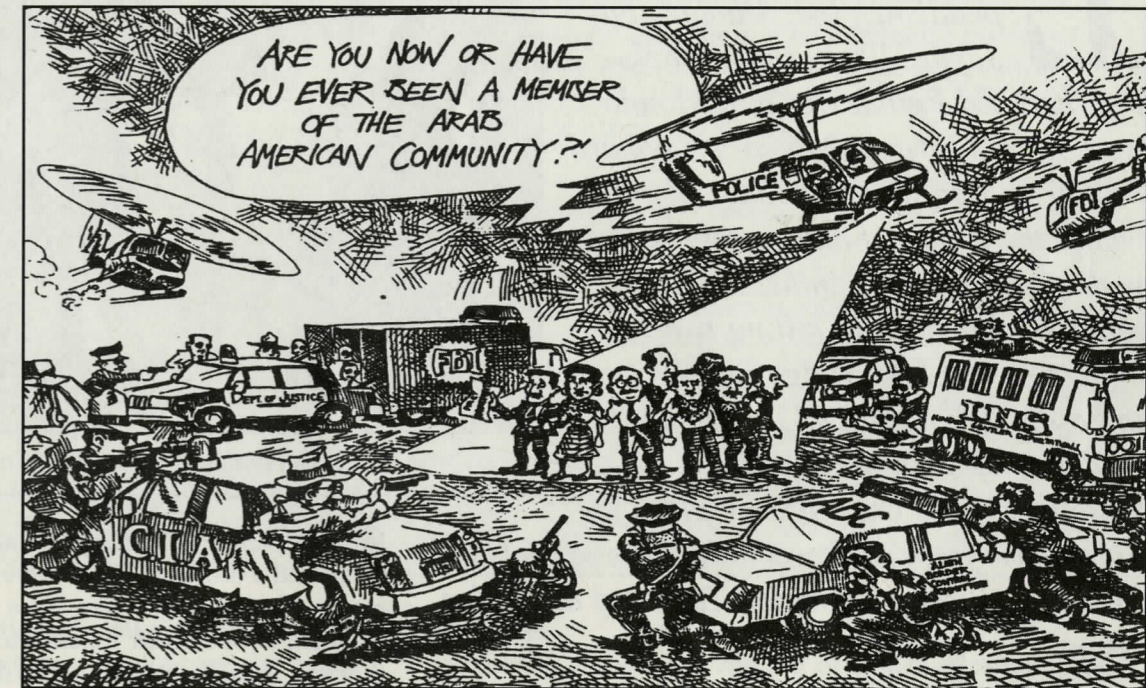
The FBI and INS arrests of the L.A. 8 were based on secret evidence and they were held as "threats to national security". Even while acknowledging that the immigrants were involved in no criminal activity, the INS continued to depict them as somehow linked to terrorism. They did this based on charges the government said could only be made in secret, without the eight respondents or their counsel present.

In November 1995, the U.S. Court of Appeals ruled that using secret evidence violates due process. But the following year, Congress passed the Anti-terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, which established "special removal courts" that allow for secret evidence to prove an alien has provided material support to a designated terrorist organization or solicited funds for, or solicited persons for member-

ship in such an organization.

The law also criminalizes citizens and aliens alike if they support even the lawful activities of any group the Secretary of State designates as terrorist. In dozens of proceedings, the INS has moved to use secret evidence against non-citizens as reason to deny bond and various discretionary immigration benefits, such as relief from deportation based on claims of asylum.

In April, 1996, the INS submitted 10,000 pages of evi-



Matt Wuerker, Z Magazine.

dence against the L.A. 8, most of it obtained through FBI surveillance. They used it to justify that the INS was justified in targeting respondents for deportation. In the initial court hearings, previously secret memoranda were leaked to the defense team for the L.A. 8. They revealed efforts made in 1986 to establish a mass internment camp for Arab and other Middle Eastern immigrants in Oakdale, Louisiana, complete with fences, cots and tents, ample space for 5,000 detainees. The "Alien Terrorists and Undesirables: A Contingency Plan," had been created by the Alien Border Control Committee (ABC), including the INS, FBI, CIA and other federal law enforcement groups.

Though rarely used before the L.A. 8 case, "classified information" has been introduced in about 50 immigration cases since 1992, according to the Justice Department. Most of the immigrants against whom it is utilized are Arab or Muslim. Arabs and Muslims may be the initial victims, but if the use of secret evidence is not repealed, anyone who provides support to an organization that the Secretary of State designates as "terrorist" could be deported.

Overall, the L.A. 8 case has set a precedent that allows the INS to choose to deport a non-citizen for voicing an opinion that is contrary to that of the government, does not

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Letter from Leonard Peltier

Like the Puerto Rican independistas, like Mumia Abu-Jamal, like former Black Panthers Ed Poindexter and Mondo we Langa in prison 29 years, Leonard Peltier is a political prisoner of color whom the rulers of our society punish with such relentless injustice. He remains convicted of killing two FBI agents on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota in 1975 despite vast evidence of his innocence. He remains behind bars despite pleas for his release from such world leaders as Nelson Mandela, Bishop Desmond Tutu and the Dalai Lama.

November, 1999 was designated Leonard Peltier Freedom Month, a time to press President Clinton to pardon Peltier with a massive campaign of letters, demonstrations, cultural events, prayers, fasting, a month-long vigil in Washington, D.C. and all manner of protest against 24 years of wrongful punishment. On Nov. 12, members of the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee, the Assembly of Nations, National Congress of American Indians, and others met with the Deputy Director of Tribal Justice in Dept. of Justice. To keep up the pressure, call the White House comments line: (202) 456-1111; you can press 0 to bypass the survey.

In a campaign action on Nov. 1, hundreds of supporters went to Leavenworth Federal Prison in Kansas to show their solidarity with Leonard Peltier. In response, he wrote this letter (partially shortened for space):

*

Greetings Sisters, Brothers, Friends and Supporters,

I hope everyone who has traveled long distances to be here today, to show their love and support for me has had a trouble-free journey and I'm hoping that it will be the same when you return home. I want to say to all of you from the deepest part of my heart, thank you very much.

February 6, 2000, will officially mark my twenty-fourth year in prison—24 hard years. A lot has happened in my



Leonard Peltier with one of his paintings depicting legendary warriors and ancestors.

life. I've seen my father pass into the spirit world, also a sister and a brother. Those were especially hard times for me, as I have always been close with my family. I wanted so much to be at their funerals to see them off, but of course this was denied. So all I could do was pray that they had a good safe journey into the spirit world. I was able to see some of my children grow up into fine young adults—a couple not so good, but they are all adults who have started to live their own lives.

I have been a grandfather for sixteen years. There are now seven grandchildren. I have learned from being a grandfather that it is a special gift from the Great Spirit. I have Alexandria (16) and Cyrus (14) near me, thirty miles away in Lawrence, Kansas, raised by special close friends and supporters for the past eight years. Believe me, this has been an enormous help and experience for me while I serve this time. I did not know that anyone could end up loving anyone as much as I have come to love these two kids. There were times when I was not sure that they would have a roof over their heads. Also, as troubled children who have not had such a great life themselves, they would make life a little hard for those caring for them and problems would arise from it—problems that I had no way of dealing with from here in a prison cell. To the people, who have opened their homes and given me a helping hand with them, thank you very much..

My health at 55 years old is not great. Most of you know what was done to me at the medical center for federal prisoners in Springfield, Missouri. I cannot say for certain that the botched operations were done intentionally. I would like to believe that it was not. Doctor Tom Collins was and is a good man. I do not blame him. I do blame the Bureau of

THE CASE OF THE L.A. 8

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allow a non-citizen to make constitutional challenges in their defense and allows the INS to rely on secret evidence to make its case. Although no date has been set at this writing, the L.A. 8 expect efforts to deport them will resume in the near future.

REPRESSION AND RESISTANCE:

While hiding behind the mask of "national security," the INS, the FBI, Albright and Clinton directly attack civil liberties. By reinforcing racist stereotypes of immigrants from particular countries, they justify the violence and injustice enacted against them. The Arab terrorist/camel jockey/evil beast may be today's initial victim, but anyone could be deported tomorrow for speaking their mind, organizing in their community, or simply donating a blanket to the social service sector of an organization that Madeline Albright deems "terrorist."

In addition to various Arab American groups, multi-racial coalitions that include Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Latino/a, African American, Native American, Asian American peace and gay rights activists, to name only a few, have been committed to the struggle to end the repression against the L.A. 8 and prevent their deportation.

Prisons because Dr. Collins did not want to do the operation there in the Medical Center, as they did not have the facilities to perform this kind of operation. So I live in daily pain and am not able to eat food properly. I put out a plea for lawyers to help me with this, but I never received any responses. So I filed a law suit of my own and the courts dismissed it, claiming that my medical problems were not cruel and unusual treatment. Just imagine if this was happening in a country like China or Iraq, the outcry in the U.S. would be enormous and deafening.

We did get to see and witness some positive things this year. When Clinton released my comrades, friends—the Puerto Ricans—of course this was not done without controversy and not done in the name of humanity, but possible votes for Hillary in her Senate race. Still, we must give the President credit for doing it. It was a little sad to see my good friend and comrade Luis Rosa leaving, but happy that he was leaving this hell called prison. I know that they will not disappoint anyone because if the others are like Luis, then there are some good comrades out there with you.

As I sit here writing this, I still cannot understand that with the millions of people around the world demanding my freedom, the government can still ignore it all—and how my continued incarceration can be based on a legal technicality. The Constitution of the United States says that one must be proven guilty beyond a shadow of a doubt. Recently we learned that the FBI and prosecutors were caught lying to the number one law enforcement officer, Janet Reno, about the Waco massacre. We know this happened over 20 years ago

Without the work of such a broad-based coalition, the L.A. 8 would have been deported long ago. The government's original estimate that it would take two or three weeks to deport the L.A. 8 became a twelve year battle. There is every reason to believe that the deportation cases can be won and the harsh legislation repealed.

In the words of Michel Shehadeh: "Please join us in this landmark civil liberties battle, and help assure that the L.A. 8 and all our immigrant communities are not rendered effectively speechless. Only through a concerted and deliberate effort can we demonstrate again to the government that this case is bad for immigrants, bad for civil liberties and bad for our country."

The information for this article was gathered from A Call for Justice, published by the Committee for Justice to Defend the Los Angeles Eight, Fall 1999, No. 4. For more information or to join the Committee for Justice to End the Deportation in Southern California, please contact the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, West Coast Regional Office: 714-636-1232, or e-mail: shehadeh@worldnet.att.net. To order an information packet on the L.A. 8 case (includes a video and book) please contact the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, San Francisco Chapter, 415-816-4015 or e-mail: adcsf@hotmail.com.

in my case.

Recently a Canadian Minister of Justice released a report on the investigation they did on my extradition. Yes, it was another cover-up. They claim that there was enough circumstantial evidence to extradite me. If this was so, why did they have to fabricate Myrtle Poor Bear as a witness? (A recently released confidential document by a former member of the Canadian Parliament added to the mounting evidence of government misconduct in the extradition.)

I know my friends, family and supporters are growing tired of this battle to win my freedom. I guess it would not be so bad if we could see a light at the end of the tunnel, but as of late there is no such light so I cannot truthfully say, I will be seeing you soon. I can only say, I hope, my friends, that I will see you all soon. I dream of the day that I can tell you all, thank you, in person. I will never give up and I ask all of you never to give up. We can and we will win this battle.

Let me shake all of your hands. Let me embrace you with my love and friendship. Thank you, my friends, for showing me all the love you have. In the Spirit of Crazy Horse,

Leonard Peltier

For more information, contact the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee, P.O. Box 583, Lawrence, KS 66044. (785)842-5774. Order Leonard Peltier's book PRISON WRITINGS: MY LIFE IS MY SUNDANCE from the Committee.

THE UNSPOKEN BRUTALITY

BY LEROY F. MOORE, JR.

Leroy Moore is co-founder, with Gary Gray, of Disability Advocates of Minorities Organization, formed to promote the welfare and equal opportunities of disabled people of color through self-advocacy training, counseling, and support. Here are excerpts from his article of October 1999.

The racist abuse and brutality that disabled people of color suffer, especially African Americans, have led to more severe disability or death for them. Take the James Byrd case: a disabled man dragged to death, according to *The Washington Post*. Or Ya Fang Li, an elderly Asian woman with arthritis and Alzheimer's disease who has filed a complaint of excessive force against a San Francisco cop. In July 1997 *The New York Times* reported on an operation forcing deaf Mexican immigrants to sell dollar trinkets with abuse including slamming heads against the wall and chaining them to a bed for weeks to keep them in fear and make them sell more trinkets.

These cases are only the tip of the iceberg. Nine times out of ten, such cases are not brought to light by the disabled rights movement. The ethnic press usually fails to recognize the victim's disability as part of his or her identity, thus leav-

ing this issue undeveloped. Mainstream newspapers mentioned James Byrd's disability; *Jet* and *Emerge* did not. The same holds true for Ya Fang Li; *Asian Weekly* hasn't mentioned her disability to date. The general public and especially communities of color continue to overlook the issue of brutality and abuse toward disabled people of color. It is a reality and must be given visibility.

DAMO meets the third Saturday of the month at 12 noon; call for information on locations in Oakland and San Francisco, or to receive the newsletter MWD (Minorities with Disabilities).

JAN. 5, 2000

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Gary Grey (510)234-5278
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RAINBOW POLITICS

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dom. In addition to that, and perhaps the subject of a separate article, the rainbow politics of the 21st century must advance the interests of the working classes of people of color. This reflects the growing class polarization AMONG peoples of color and the efforts by corporate America to ally itself and its interests with the upper stratum among people of color.

Second, we desperately need dialogue. Within the trade union movement, for example, an opening must be created for interactions and strategic discussions among workers of color. The changing demographics of the USA have played themselves out in very concrete forms within the working class. Certain industries, such as the janitorial sector, have shifted in major cities from being predominantly African-American to being predominantly immigrant Latino. This has been the source of immense tensions. In other sectors, there have been similar ethnic shifts. Ethnic shifts are nothing new under capitalism, but accompanying such shifts in the workforce are often profound conflicts which generally benefit the employers as working class organization becomes less and less viable.

In order to avert such clashes, there need to be organized forms of discussion and interaction among people of color. One of the fundamental weaknesses of the campaign around the anti-immigrant Proposition 187 in California is that there

were precious few exchanges between Latinos and African-Americans regarding the nature of the battle and what was at stake. While it is true that the majority of African-Americans voted against Proposition 187, too many of us voted for it.

The dialogue which I am suggesting here must begin among the real leaders of the people: leaders of community-based organizations; trade unions; credit unions; teachers... the list could go on. While we need politicians to be involved, we should not substitute electoral/tactical discussions for strategic dialogue.

Rainbow politics for the 21st century will need to be about many of the same things that it represented in the 1980s—resistance to conservatism, multi-ethnic/racial unity, political power—but the terms must be redefined. African-American leftists and progressives need to take responsibility for initiating the steps essential to building the political trust and unity that will make possible a strong bloc of the dispossessed. Such a bloc might radically reshape the 21st century reality and move us away from the abyss of balkanization and right-wing repression.

Bill Fletcher, Jr. serves as Assistant to the President of the AFL-CIO. He is a long-time activist in both the trade union and African-American movements. This article expands on a theme raised in his June 1999 column in the on-line magazine The Black World Today (www.tbwt.com).

BY ELIZABETH (BETITA) MARTINEZ

"Some people seem to think that when I say 'I'm Dominican first,' it means I'm not with you African Americans. But that's not true," said the young black woman emotionally.

"Because we have no allegiance around nationality, it's been hard to understand black Latino identity. This has challenged me," said the older African American woman emphatically.

"We have to watch out for defining racial issues in strictly black-white terms," said a Chicana.

And so it went when 20 African American and Latina/o educators and organizers came together for a 5-day gathering last July 19-23. The Encuentro Latino/Afro-americano sobre raza y cultura (Latino/African-American Gathering on Race & Culture) shed light on complex questions. It moved us ahead in building a multi-racial movement led by people of color, with real—not just rhetorical—honesty.

The Encuentro was hosted by the Institute for Latino Empowerment, ILÉ, founded in 1992 as an independent community education organization inspired by the work of Paulo Freire. Originally based in Massachusetts, it has held many Latino workshops and organizing efforts throughout the Northeast. Now headquartered in Caguas, Aguas Buenas, Puerto Rico, ILÉ's goal for the gathering was to have a dia-

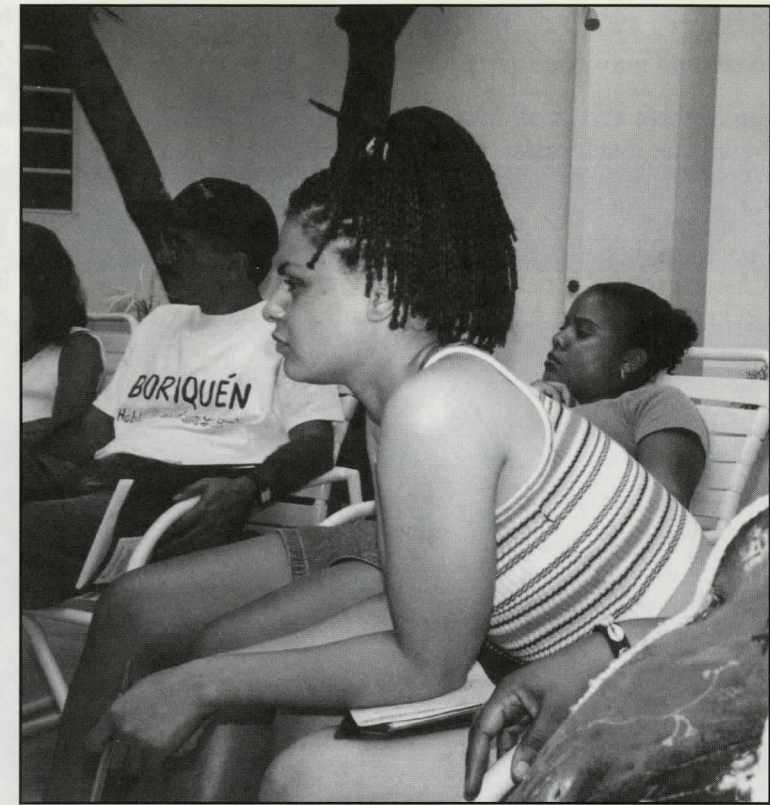


Photo by Monica Castillón
Participants in the Latino/African-American Gathering, Puerto Rico.

LEARNING FROM EACH OTHER

Blacks & Latina/as Meet in Puerto Rico

logue that would help develop a shared analysis and strategies for greater unity in our anti-oppression work (eventually including Native and Asian Americans).

In organizing the Encuentro, ILÉ worked closely with the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, an anti-racist training program with roots in Clergy and Laity Concerned. The Institute's African American founding director Ron Chisom and West Coast director Daniel Buford attended the Encuentro, as did some of its most experienced core trainers. From the moment Daniel Buford opened the event with everyone joining in a circle ceremony on the beach, the gathering had a strong spirituality. Aché!—So be it.

Presentations and dialogue focussed on our similarities and differences, colorism, class, the African diaspora in all its variations, and alliance-building strategies. Maria Reinat-Pumarejo, co-director of ILÉ, told us how, after moving to the U.S. some years ago, she had to advance from being Puerto Rican to "Hispanic" to "Latino" to "people of color" (the latter not being easy, since the Spanish words for that phrase mean Black, which she is not—by traditional Latin

American definition). This experience taught her to understand the key role that racism plays.

Raúl Quiñones Rosado, co-director of ILÉ, with Maria, presented his thoughts about how racism operates. He said a Latino/a group's identity is defined by culture, race, nationality and the experience of colonization. Both Raúl and Maria have been working to make Puerto Ricans more aware of racism as a problem on the island, where many negate its importance or reduce it to being simply a class problem.

Chisom and Buford of the People's Institute spoke about how the Institute, based in New Orleans, had included Latinos in their analysis and work "but in a strictly tokenistic way." And: "We didn't know about all the differences among Latinos. Also, there were Latinos who identified white, and this created another source of tension." And so: "We have a lot of differences but they are family differences—in fact, we really are linked by blood."

It didn't hurt that the meeting took place at a small hotel right on a beautiful beach in San Juan, so that the relaxed

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atmosphere and small numbers of participants made real dialogue that much easier. Early on, some felt that people were not being as open about their real feelings as they could be; this changed with a late-night discussion by a few people who stayed on at a party in one hotel room. When a young Chicana related a personal story about how she was once prejudiced against African Americans and told her daughter "don't marry one," it opened the door to people from all sides expressing difficult, even painful thoughts.



African Americans and Latinos/as at the July gathering in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

being killed for being Puerto Rican the way African Americans are killed for being black. But that's not true." Meanwhile, Puerto Ricans on the island need to know much more about their African roots and the pervasive colorism which sees lighter-skinned Boricuanos as superior. San Juan's new Museo de Nuestra Raiz Africana/Museum of Our African Root, which we visited, is a step in that direction.

A video about Chicano history, shown one afternoon during the gathering, served to advance the sense of linkage. It showed the brutal colonization of Mexican people in what became the Southwest after the U.S. take-over as the foundation of the racism encountered today by Chicanos and

Chicanas. Several participants said the video helped them to understand the linkage of colonialism and racism.

Step by step, we learn to see with new eyes. One of the finest moments of the week came when "Kool Black," a young African American organizer from New Orleans, after some days of being very quiet, suddenly couldn't stop talking. "I didn't connect the nationality struggle and race struggle before. I still need to figure it all out. We came here ignorant. We recognize the significance of El Morro because we had studied some of our own history. But people in the U.S. need to learn the history of people in struggle everywhere."

And Maria exclaimed to Kool Black and other African Americans in the gathering: "You saw a different El Morro from what I've ever seen! That's very important for Puerto Rican people here." Maria commented at the end of the gathering, "We don't see the linkage between all our struggles because of internalized oppression." One young

African American teacher from Virginia observed, "We see all white people as racist but we don't push ourselves to look honestly at colorism, so we're hypocritical."

The whole gathering was notable for the participants' rejection of arrogance and efforts to reach across differences. Not that heated debate didn't continue, until one Cubana said: "It's going to be hard for me to take all this back to Miami." (I guess so!)

So be it. ILÉ is planning more gatherings including a second Encuentro in Puerto Rico, regional Latino/a caucuses in the U.S., and ongoing workshops for Latinos with the goal of leadership development for community activists. By identifying crucial issues, the first Encuentro has helped us all to see how we can build alliances with new knowledge and wisdom.

Elizabeth Martinez, activist and writer, is chair of the Institute for MultiRacial Justice.

When Dragon Lady

Meets Pochahontas...

...Chinese firecrackers will pop, Mexican guitars will zing, Korean drums will roll, mariachis will whoop, and lord knows what else! Latina Theater Lab and the Asian American Theater Company's Women Writers put together one unforgettable show in October, with the challenging title of "Dragon Lady vs. Pochahontas." Got that second name? She's a homegirl for real, no Disneyfied Pocahontas but a mixed-up Mexican-Indian, the kind called *pocha* (slang for an Americanized Latina).

Well, the action starts when two combatants march out on stage, ready for an East-West rumble with the referee standing by. Dragon Lady and Pocahontas are both carrying suitcases marked "Cultural Baggage." Ha. No.1 opens her suitcase and pulls out a Japanese flag and glares at her opponent. No. 2 opens her suitcase and pulls out a Mexican flag, and grins triumphantly. They continue, matching one Asian vs. Latino flag after another, in a blur of sneering nationalist rivalry. Then No. 2 lifts up a tiny but proud Taco Bell chihuahua. Dragon Lady pulls out a big Godzilla doll that's about to demolish Taquito until the referee steps in.

The match continues with opposing foods and religious symbols as the competition gets ever more fierce. But then No. 1 pulls a sign out of her suitcase that says "Prop. 187" and No. 2 pulls out the same sign. They look at the signs and at each other, dumbfounded. Into the suitcase again, and this time they both pull out signs saying Prop. 209. Again, amazement.

My god, they're not opponents but allies! In a grand climax the two join in holding a black-and-red *huelga* flag, symbol of the historic unity between Japanese, Filipino and Mexican farmworkers on strike together. The message has come across forcefully and hilariously: these folks of color have all-too-much in common. Forget fighting, time for uniting!

And so goes a wonderful evening of cross-cultural, cross-racial fun with a serious punch. The skits that follow have great themes like "The Ethnic Casting Couch" and "2 Whiny Asian Girls" followed by "2 Whiny Latina Girls" and finally "4 Whiny Multicultural Girls." One of my favorites is "Something About Beans." LittleSing and LittleSong speak Japanese and Spanish mixed, with breathtaking confusion, and take on such stereotypes as Mexicans being called



Maria Candelaria and Patty Cachapero in "Dragon Lady vs Pochahontas." Photo by Joan Osato

"beaner." Peace is made at the end with speeches like: "Who's the beaner here? Tofu is made of beans, miso is made of beans, and soy sauce is made of beans. Honey," (to the Japanese girl) "you eat more beans than those (Mexican) kids do, and that makes YOU beaner number 1!"

The antics continue at a breathless pace with a different, more pensive not struck in "History of the Berets." This reminiscent 1960's-to-now story is told movingly by Wilma Bonet in her Puerto Rican Young Lords purple beret and Tessa Koning-Martinez, a Chicana Brown Beret. The whole show works thanks to a super-talented cast of Bonet, Maria Candelaria, Koning-Martinez, Dena Martinez (also directing), and Marlene Ramirez-Cancio from Latina Theater Lab; Patty Cachapero, Kim Compoc, Mary Dacumos, Rhoda Gravador, DHNaomi Quiñones, Suz Takeda and Pearl Wong from the AATC Women Writers. Pam Wu was the producer. You can tell they worked well together.

The show opened at La Peña in Berkeley, playing for two nights, and gave four performances later at the New Langton Arts theater in San Francisco. Word-of-mouth went like wildfire and, on the final night, 75 people were on the waiting list. Many, many people can only hope the show will return in January 2000. Cross your fingers and pray you will be one of the lucky ones to see this gem the next time around. It's just so cool.



The Road to Freedom

Update on the Struggle to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal

The struggle to free Mumia Abu-Jamal has taken a monumental leap. A U.S. Supreme Court decision on Oct. 4, 1999 allowed Pennsylvania Gov. Thomas Ridge to immediately issue a death warrant, setting Dec. 2 as the execution date. On Oct. 16, 1999 Mumia's legal team filed a habeas appeal, which led to a stay of execution by federal Judge William H. Yohn, Jr. The proceedings set in motion by Judge Yohn constitute Mumia's final hope for justice within the system.

Here is the timeline:

By Dec. 7, 1999 Mumia's legal team must file a "memorandum of law," with the

goal of getting an "evidentiary hearing" where the truth about this case could finally come out.

The prosecution has 60 days to respond (by approximately Feb. 5, 2000). Mumia's defense then has 20 days to respond to the prosecution (by approximately Feb. 25). Judge

Yohn will then establish a date for oral arguments about granting the evidentiary hearing; after oral arguments, he will decide on whether to grant the hearing.

The evidentiary hearing is key to Mumia's struggle for justice. Without it, Mumia will not be able to introduce the huge body of evidence amassed since 1982 demonstrating his innocence. The federal courts will have to accept as fact everything from Mumia's biased and unconstitutional trials of 1982 and 1995 under "Hanging" Judge Sabo.

So the time to act is now more than ever! Don't let the state get away with this

legal "lynching" of one of our outstanding fighters for Black Liberation and social justice. Free Mumia! Free All Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War!

For more information on how to get involved and activities in the Bay Area:

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P.O. Box 3585, Oakland, CA 94609
(510) 433-0115 (510) 667-9293
JerichoSFBay@hotmail.com
http://prisonactivist.org/jericho_sfbay

Black Radical Congress
P.O. Box 99286, Emeryville, CA 94662
(510) 635-8917

Send letters to: Judge William H. Yohn, Jr.
c/o Leonard Weinglass, Esq.
6 West 20th St., Suite 10
New York, NY 10011

Shades of Power

ABOUT SHADES OF POWER

Shades of Power is published by the Institute for Multi-Racial Justice. Founded in 1997 in the Bay Area, the Institute aims to strengthen the struggle against white supremacy by serving as a resource center to help build alliances among peoples of color and combat divisions.

Shades of Power brings you news of Institute activities, reports on current efforts to resolve conflicts and build alliances between communities of color as well as analysis of the issues at stake and historical examples of linkage between different communities of color.

Bulk copies are available to community organizations, teachers, youth groups and others working on relevant issues.

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Vol. II, No.2

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**Report on the
WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION MEETING (WTO)
in Seattle Nov. 29-Dec. 3**

The whole world is watching!

Thousands will protest as corporate domination swallows up even more global wealth. Activists of color will be there. WTO is capitalism triumphant—how can we together break its deadly grip on humanity?

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