

The Bay View's website, [www.sfbayview.com](http://www.sfbayview.com), was badly hacked but is coming back – soon. Meanwhile, here's a story from this week's printed Bay View:



Malik Rahim and Kiilu Nyasha, two Black Panthers who spread revolutionary love every day of their lives (Photo: Kamau Amen-Ra)

### **Black August Commemoration 2006**

Commentary by Kiilu Nyasha

This Black August marks the first anniversary of Hurricane Katrina's devastation of the Gulf states, especially New Orleans. We also just witnessed the horrific U.S.-backed Israeli bombing of Lebanon. It's ironic that New Orleans a year later looks much like bombed out Lebanon. And in both cases, the people's organizations are volunteering services and assistance to repair the damages and meet survivors' needs: the Common Ground Collective in New Orleans and Hezbollah in Lebanon.

This year also marks the 40th anniversary of the Black Panther Party. Religious differences notwithstanding, Hezbollah is reminiscent of the Party, first organized to defend Black people against the predominately white, racist occupation forces, dubbed "pigs," running amuck in our hoods, where they frequently shot, killed, brutalized and jailed unarmed Black folks.

Hezbollah grew out of the original 1982 invasion and occupation of Lebanon by Israel. Like the BPP, its youthful members organized their people to fight the occupiers while meeting their basic needs – establishing medical clinics and schools, providing food, clothing and other services.

Today, Hezbollah is an integral part of the Lebanese population and government – and they just waged a heroic battle against the Israeli invaders, forcing them out of Southern Lebanon once again. The "Paper Tigers," the U.S. and Zionist states got a big surprise with Hezbollah's powerful resistance as it scored a people's victory, winning support from all over the Arab region and freedom loving peoples worldwide. We must rally to their cause so the tenuous cease-fire may hold.

Turning truth on its head, the mainstream American media labeled Hezbollah and the duly elected Palestinian government of Hamas terrorist organizations, while hailing Israel's blatantly illegal offensive "the right to defend itself." A "right" that left over a thousand people dead, thousands more injured, destroyed Lebanon's infrastructure, whole villages and rendered at least a million people displaced and homeless, not to mention the atrocities they've committed in Gaza. All supported with billions of your tax dollars.

Billions more of your taxes are supporting a savage war against the Iraqi people that has claimed the lives of thousands of combatants and tens of thousands of civilians and caused injuries, destruction and chaos that is ongoing. Those billions could be rescuing Katrina survivors, e.g., providing them with everything needed to return to their homes and rebuild the Gulf region.

When two young students, Huey Newton and Bobby Seale, organized the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense in 1966, it

was legal to be openly armed. So they formed patrols carrying guns and law books to monitor police, and whenever Blacks were being harassed, they would step to the plate to insure people's rights were not violated. Of course, this outraged the establishment but impressed the Black community. They also won popular support with their free services, Ten-Point Platform and Program, and the Panther newspaper.

To raise funds for Party work, Huey and Bobby bought Mao's "Little Red Books" for 10 cents each, selling them for a dollar on campuses. The Red Book soon became the guide to action and Party discipline, and, before long, the Panthers' revolutionary message spread across the nation, creating some 35 or 40 chapters.

Panthers also organized the first revolutionary "rainbow coalition" with the American Indian Movement, the Peace and Freedom Party, the Red Guards and Brown Berets in the West. And in the East, Iwor Kuen of New York's Chinatown, the Young Lords of Spanish Harlem and the Young Patriots of Appalachia; they were also allied with SDS (Students for a Democratic Society) and Black Student Unions nationwide.

However, the Party and its coalition were short-lived due largely to the secret war of J. Edgar Hoover's Cointelpro, the FBI director's counterintelligence program that targeted Panthers and other revolutionaries for neutralization. By 1969, 28 Panthers had been murdered by police with countless others jailed or exiled.

In fact, it was the blatant massacre of Fred Hampton and Mark Clark that prompted me to join the Party in New Haven, Conn. I wouldn't trade those heady days of full-time revolutionary activity for love nor money. But we had a lot to learn, and unfortunately we learned it all the hard way. Still, I believe in the old adage, "If at once you don't succeed, try, try again."

Today, in addition to demanding the release of our long-held captives, we might well study the development and progress of Hezbollah, which appears to be a true people's army. I would also urge you to check out the very recent Venezuelan revolution.

In his Red Book, Mao poses the question "of the first importance for the revolution:" "Who are our enemies? Who are our friends?"

Paraphrasing Mao to apply to us: The basic reason our previous revolutionary struggles achieved so little was their failure to unite with real friends in order to attack real enemies. Our enemies are all those in league with capitalism and imperialism – the military, the reactionary politicians and bureaucrats, the big corporate class and its intelligentsia and mass.

Our closest friends are ordinary workers, the poor and oppressed, and the petty bourgeoisie. As for the vacillating middle class, their right wing may become our enemy and their left wing may become our friend. So we must guard against their creating confusion in our ranks.

In short,"Whoever sides with the revolutionary people is a revolutionary."

I leave you with the words of George Jackson from his book, "Blood in My Eye": "Settle your quarrels, come together, understand the reality of our situation, understand that fascism is already here, that people are dying who could be saved, that generations more will live poor butchered half-lives if you fail to act. Do what must be done, discover your humanity and your love in revolution."

Power to the people! Venceremos! Free 'em all!

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