

## “ON OPPOSITION TO ISOLATION AND TORTURE”

by Herman Bell, Fall 2005

Physical torture and forced isolation are two arms of the same body. At its social base is the state, which relies upon this practice to enforce its will upon its citizenry to achieve some specific political objective: usually to elicit information, or to dissuade one from engaging in disfavored activity.

In its efforts to assert its political and economic hegemony across the globe, even as the social contradictions between itself and its opposing forces intensifies, Western imperialism will employ any and every draconian means at its disposal to achieve its goal: world domination. Social activists, educators, workers, grassroots organizers, people who are avowed opponents of their government's egregious social and foreign policies, are cast in the mode of “trouble makers,” “agitators,” “criminals,” and the like, or in some other expedient pejorative to justify state repression. Imprisonment, torture, isolation cells, and disappearances are the tools of choice. Therefore, Abu-Ghraib; Guantanamo; u.s.a. Florence, Colorado; F-type prisons in Turkey, the EU, and elsewhere are not aberrant lapses -- they set the stage for this type of repression.

This is why support work to get people out who are locked in these torture chambers is so critical, and is why work to prevent their expansion must be vigilant and unrelenting. The word “ineluctable,” which means, “not to be avoided or escaped” is an apt characterization of what the world's people are up against as regard Western imperialism and its quest for global hegemony. One is either “in the fray,” or “out of it.” The former means that one's next location could well be in Abu-Ghraib; Guantanamo; or Florence, Colorado. The latter means that one could become an instant “collateral damage” statistic (not to suggest that life offers any



guarantees), as was the unfortunate case with the foreigner on a british subway platform shot to death by british authorities without provocation in the aftermath of a tragic subway bombing incident in that country.

Ultimately, ours is a struggle of ideas, of how people wish to live as opposed to the exigencies of market forces, a struggle to build a social environment in which basic human rights and freedoms are protected, a struggle to make judicious and respectful use of the earth's resources, which is the birthright and natural inheritance of all life on our planet. Unfortunately, a select group of people who have organized for centuries and are well established in governmental bodies have presumptuously claimed through tradition, by so-called “right of inheritance,” organized state violence and so on, to privately own what Mother Nature avails to us all. Therefore, and to the end of days, to all the good and unselfish people past and present who have taken a stand against this long train of social injustice, tyranny, usurpation, and oppression, I salute and stand with you.

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## War in Iraq

Standing at the crossroads  
Yet the outcome is certain  
The invader will be driven back  
Unable to carry his burden  
Shortly if alone  
Longer if in coalition  
That rebounds worldwide  
With a turn of the tide  
Not of their own volition  
But short or long  
The horseman is gone  
So the real question is  
What are you gonna do  
When the war comes home:  
Join the fascists last stand  
Or the host of hued and other oppressed mass demands?

September 3, 2003

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## From Ruchell Cinque Magee

...Where my case stands in court, we're closer to a hearing (publicly) than ever before, regarding the jury acquittal concealed since 1973.

Facts alive, fitting for publics vision are in need of reaching the dinner table of the masses. Nothing changed in the struggle for freedom. Without a doubt, august 7, 1970, since I broke the fetters of my suppression and surfaced through the wound inflicted by comrade Jonathan Jackson in the belly of the beast, the real stay alive for the cause.

The wheels of REVOLUTION will remain BALANCED for liberation. We the oppressed are blinded by humanity to liberate ourselves. With this in mind, ' move in several directions with the truth found in the fighting-backs atmosphere. It's necessary to use almighty truth to weld our peoples together in unity. My case is visible commitment to an ugly denunciation of slave operation backed by a news media and a racist made up judicial system. Both have fought desperately to camouflage the truth. ★

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## Happiness is a stungun...

The United State uses torture as a major tool in the war on terrorism. While torture has been used by the US military and clandestine services around the globe in the 20th century, it was always undercover, below ground, whispered about but never spoken out aloud. Now in the 21st century, the US government argues for its use. It makes no excuses. It comes up with reasons for why it is necessary. It hides the prisoners in Gitmo, or in Abu Ghraib and it's replicated in Iraq, in Baghram AFB, in county jails and immigration centers in the US. When the methods used to extract "confessions" or to satisfy the torturer's proclivities are uncovered, photographed, videoed...well, the men who gave the orders drop a dime on some low-ranked underling, a trial is arranged and "justice" is served.

I used to volunteer at the Center for the Victims of Torture at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. A friend of mine got help there after she had trouble adjusting to life because she had nightmares stemming from a couple of years as a prisoner in a Somali warlord's camp. She told me about the Center. I learned that torture is not a set of techniques employed to extract useful information. It won't help find the bomb before it explodes. Its goal is to terrify and terrorize. It makes the tortured feel helpless. It induces shame because it breaks a person, who then talks, only to reveal what the torturer already knows.

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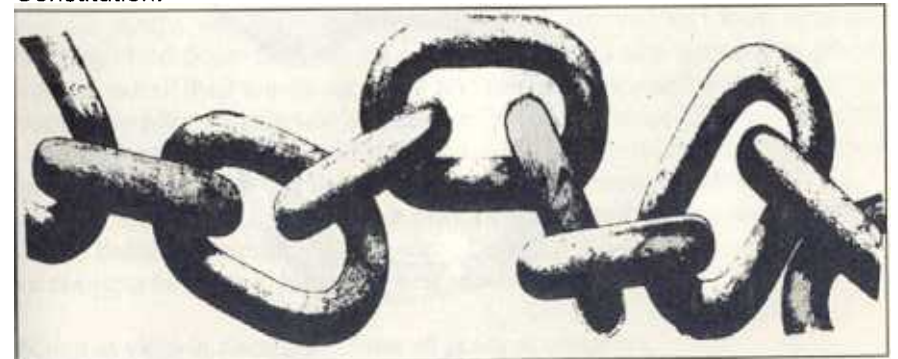
## From Mumia Abu Jamal

This international day of solidarity with political prisoners shows us that while repression is national, resistance can be global. In truth, it must be so. Many of us have been part of national liberation movements, revolutionary political parties, anti-racist communes, or, in the case of people like the Cuban Five, anti-terrorism activists. We've been tried in tribunals where our politics have been our crime, and our political associations our felonies. This, in nations which claim to support the right of free association. But the truth of the matter is that nations are not bound by law, but by power. It doesn't matter what is written in arcane ancient documents. It doesn't matter, truthfully, what treaties or pacts have been sworn to or signed. Treaties and constitutions are sheer conveniences, ignored more often than followed.

This is my position, based on my studies of history, law, and political, and also international, affairs. Political prisoners and prisoners of war should accept that truth, perhaps use it in political organizing, but not rely upon it. That's because many imprisoned activists and revolutionaries refer to international law principles when they protest either their incarceration or their conditions of confinement.

What can such an argument mean in an era when the attorney general refers to the Geneva Conventions as "quaint?" Law isn't something that simply exists up in the air, like the moon. Law is an instrument of the ruling class, and it can only be impacted by social forces which struggle to change or transform social relations. What that means in a nutshell is relatively simple: organize, organize, organize.

Many of us began our activism in an age when we'd claim to believe in the people. We should therefore, as much as possible, believe in them anew. Speak to them, write to them, work with them, organize. There are no shortcuts, especially for those who rebel in the heart of the empire. We live in an age of secret prisons, what a British jurist called recently "legal black holes." We have therefore seen, with our eyes, the death, if not the internment of America's reverence and adherence to the Constitution.



Those of us who remember the Cointelpro era have lived long enough to see many of those same illegalities and violations made into law. Many of us who count our radicalization in the fires of the Vietnam War have been around long enough to see another imperial adventure, begun in lies, and ripened into social resistance to the Iraq war. Many of us can speak to those realities from our specific movement experiences. There is space for us to write, to call, to speak, and hopefully, to touch others in the process of reaching and radicalizing them, as we were radicalized. We must pass it on, so that another generation doesn't know more about a 50 Cent than Huey P. Newton. So that young people will create a culture that doesn't say "Get Rich or Die Tryin," but "Get Free, or Die Tryin." That is our collective challenge. If we can do this, we will give arms and legs, hearts and minds, bodies and souls to the movement to create true international solidarity with political prisoners, prisoners of war, and political detainees. This is our duty. This is our responsibility. This is our work to remake the world in a more life affirming, humanistic vision. Thank you for your invitation.

Ona Move! Long Live John Africa! From Death Row, this is Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Mumia Abu Jamal

AM-8335 - SCI Greene - 175 Progress Drive - Waynesburg, PA 15370



## From Marilyn Buck

To everyone who supports political prisoners, especially you who have been political prisoners and continue to struggle for we who are absent, we the hidden, thank you. Thank you all for being here for political prisoners worldwide.

More of us would be in the darkness and depths of imperialism, militarist and dictatorial dungeons if you did not keep the light and candles lit to keep us visible. We would be whited out before the glaring interrogation lights or the searchlights that deny sleep as part of torture to grind down our lives without the support of our movement, groups, and people who believe in human rights and dignity as well in the international agreements like the Geneva Accords and Declaration of Human Rights, so hard fought for

This is a gruesome time for political prisoners to be. The U.S. naked embrace of torture, disappearance and isolation has been appalling. But it is significant that this syphilitic, demented prepotentate is stripping itself bare. Ironic, really, when stripping prisoners bare is one of the implements of degradation so commonly used. But we live in ironic times. We in the U.S. have an autocratic, demagogic president who blithely compliments Latin America on being free of military dictatorships. Perhaps he has forgotten that his family, his advisors and cronies – his government of the School of the Americas and CIA assassins – trained and financed those military coups in the 1960s and 70s with their torturers, disappearances and execution of people like us, like you.

So here we are. Here many of us still are, imprisoned from the Philippines to Turkey to Haiti to the U.S. In every country that is a stooge and henchman for global imperialism, on every continent, there are POWs and political prisoners of conscience. More than a few of us have been here for an entire generation. More are coming. We are alive, though some of us may be silent, waiting; our hearts still beat and shine like jewels – like Nazim Hikmet wrote – in the right side of our breast. The human rights side, the justice side, the side of the people world wide who have borne the depredations and degradations of white supremacist, neo-colonial war and rape of the land, resources, and bodies.

Sadly, we can't last forever. We are women and men who are being ground down daily. Some who are silent, scream from being driven insane, out of their minds. Isolation and constant repression does destroy, especially after 10 years or 20 years or 30 years. Those of us who are still relatively intact are fortunate to be so. I believe your support and efforts have helped to save our sanities. Certainly, you have saved mine.

We need your voices, your ongoing and fresh efforts on our behalf, in this battle for humanity and justice. Carry on the tradition – the tradition of struggle for justice, humanity and socialism.

Hasta la victoria siempre! Free all political prisoners.

## Blindfolded Men

A row of men are marched, youth and ancients, blindfolded men,  
hands bound tight behind, steps off balance, blindfolded men.

The line holds fast, the breath of one measures for the next;  
prodded toward trucks, they stand attendance, blindfolded men.

The line folds up, each captive hoisted in by soldiers;  
called a package in GI parlance, blindfolded men.

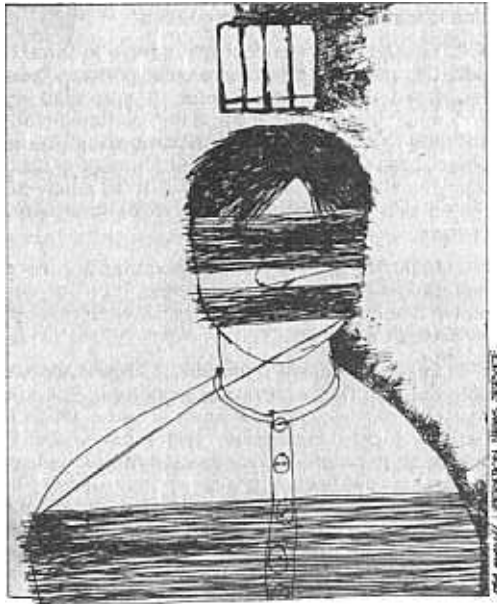
In hooded darkness, lines of men are moved to prison camps;  
they listen as the sightless do, awaiting entrance, blindfolded men.

The line unfolds, dissolves into a breathing pool  
bodies spread murmuring endurance; blindfolded men.

Captors guard blind-eyed over the tormented sea,  
ignore the clank of manacled dance: blindfolded men.

Unfaced men become commonplace on front-pages  
media disguises intolerance: blindfolded men.

Indifferent citizens don't care to look behind prisoner masks;  
the tortured would stare back, askance. Blindfolded men.



*Marilyn Buck*  
May 2002

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# December 3, 2005 International Day of Solidarity with Political Prisoners

## Oakland, CA

**George Galvis – Opening the Way**

**Marilyn Buck – from prison**

**Alicia Jrapko – Cuban 5**

**Political prisoners in the Philippines**

**Alicia Rodriguez – former Puerto Rican  
political prisoner**

**Azizeh Shahmoradi – Iran**

**Pierre Labossiere – Haiti**

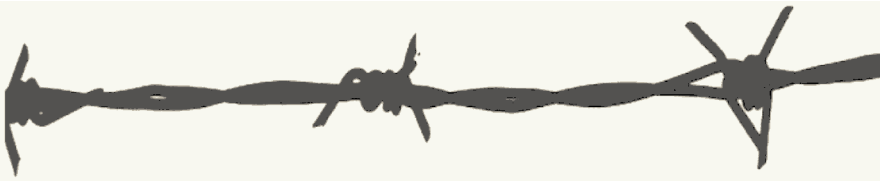
**Political prisoners in Palestine**

**Mumia Abu Jamal – from prison**

**Kathleen Cleaver – former Communications  
Secretary of the Black Panther Party**

**Al Juzoor – dance performance**

**Kali Akuno & Katrina Socco emcees**



Following is a list of some of the websites where you can get more information about the political prisoners. ★

[http://www.prisonactivist.org/jericho\\_sfbay/index.html](http://www.prisonactivist.org/jericho_sfbay/index.html)  
[www.freemumia.org](http://www.freemumia.org)  
[www.leonardpeltier.org](http://www.leonardpeltier.org)  
<http://sundiata.afrikan.net>  
[www.freethethefive.org](http://www.freethethefive.org)  
[www.freedomarchives.org](http://www.freedomarchives.org)  
[www.sfbayview.com](http://www.sfbayview.com)  
<http://www.veronza.org/>  
<http://caps.anarhija.org>  
<http://ppsolidarity.revolt.org/>

List of prisoner addresses  
About Mumia Abu Jamal  
About Leonard Peltier  
About Sundiata Acoli  
About the Cuba 5  
Archives, cds, videos  
Information and news  
About Veronza Bowers  
CA Anarchist Prisoner  
Coalition webpage

*Compiled by:  
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