Inside this Issue:

**AWARE:**
Alliance of White Anti-Racists Everywhere

**PART’s Perspective:**
Why Do We Have No Teeth?
How Do We Get Some?

**Joint Statement of the SF Eight**
Death Row Inter-Communal Vanguard Engagement

**Hip-Hop Owes Women an Apology**

Black Riders & Union del Barrio at LA demo for SF Eight

20th anniversary year of ARA-LA/PART
20th year of publication of Turning the Tide
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We, the San Francisco 8, would like to send this joint statement extending our heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to all our friends and supporters. As many of you know, this COINTELPRO persecution has been on-going for nearly 36 years. However, in the last few years, in tandem with the implementation of the Patriot Act, the San Francisco 8 have been subject to renewed inquisitions and interrogations that lead the Court of Appeals to declare COINTELPRO’s illegal activities unconstitutional. However, the Senate Church Committee failed to create remedies for COINTELPRO’s negative impact on today’s social movements. Therefore, while we engage in legal battle in the courtroom, it is important to present the activities and policies of revolutionary or militant groups such as Stokely Carmichael, H. Rap Brown, Elijah Muhammad, and Malcolm X. COINTELPRO was in full operation, leading to directing its full attention to the Black Panther Party to prevent the Black Panthers from developing durable long-term political and organizational relationships with various segments of the Black community.

This case represents the continuation of that COINTELPRO objective, to further indicate how the government will persecute today’s activists. The government is seeking to rewrite the history of struggle as exemplified by the BPP, venomously trying to define that legacy of struggle as a “terrorist” movement. Support all oppressed peoples fighting against colonialism and imperialism at that time.

This case evolves out of a history of political struggle in this country, and it is our duty to fulfill that mission by exposing and subjecting the FBI to public hearings on why victims of COINTELPRO were not provided with a fair trial. The FBI COINTELPRO effort to “neutralize the activities of Black nationalist, hate type organizations and groupings, their leadership, spokesmen, membership, and supporters, and to counter their propaganda for violence and civil disorder” (COINTELPRO memo of August 25, 1967). The FBI not only targeted the Black Panther Party, but according to this COINTELPRO memo: “Intensified attention under this program should be afforded to the activities of such groups as the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Revolutionary Action Movement, the Deacons for Defense and Justice, Congress of Racial Equality, and the Nation of Islam. Particular emphasis should be placed on the direct activities and policies of revolutionary or militant groups such as Stokely Carmichael, H. Rap Brown, Elijah Muhammad, and Malcolm X.”

We, the San Francisco 8 hereby call for a national movement for the reopening of COINTELPRO hearings. We, the SFR, urge friends and supporters to phone/facewrite to John Conyers, Chair of the Judiciary Committee in Congress, and appeal for him to conduct public hearings on why victims of COINTELPRO languish in prison over 30 years after it was declared unconstitutional. Subject to that reality, the San Francisco 8 hereby call for a national movement for the reopening of COINTELPRO hearings. We, the SFR, urge friends and supporters to contact your congressional representative, Congressional Black Caucus members and other elected officials urging them to enable John Conyers to reopen COINTELPRO hearings.

3. Truth and Reconciliation Commission: At the conclusion of hostilities in the struggle to end apartheid in South Africa, many progressive forces took a path to resolve potential antigens subject to racial, socioeconomic and political strife during the decades of apartheid. That path led to the creation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, principally led by the Honorable Bishop Desmond Tutu.

In the United States, people of African descent suffered the trauma of chattel slavery, Black Codes, Jim Crow segregation laws, and matters of reconciliation are still relevant to this case. Therefore, a successful national campaign in support of the SFR requires friends and supporters to achieve the following objectives:

1. Anti-Torture Legislation: In 1909, the Niagara Movement evolved into the NAACP led by W.E.B. DuBois. The principal platform of the NAACP was a struggle to forge an anti-lynching movement. Today, torture in its many forms has become a scourge in America: there is the inhumane use of restoration and control, and an especially despicable device reminiscent of medieval torture mechanisms; there has been an increase in the use of theaser as a weapon to induce confessions and control prisoners, resulting in many deaths, another inhumane torture device. In the case of the SFR, law enforcement officers employed similar torture techniques, including those used in Vietnam and in Abu Ghraib by U.S. military personnel. The use of torture permeates all facets of the so-called “criminal justice system.”

Obviously, like the old anti-lynching platform of the NAACP the San Francisco 8 call for a national campaign demanding anti-torture legislation on local levels (city councils and state legislatures). The SFR hold that any form of interrogation that employs the use of waterboarding, simulated drowning techniques, cattle prod, tasers, restraint chairs, physical beatings, sensory and sleep deprivation, and psychological coercion must be deemed inhumane and criminal. Therefore, the San Francisco 8 call for all progressive and peaceful people to join in a national campaign on city, state and congressional levels, for proclamations and legislation outlawing all forms of torture.

2. Reopen COINTELPRO Hearings: It is well known that the FBI targeted the Black Panther Party for annihilation under the secret counter-intelligence program (COINTELPRO). The FBI COINTELPRO effort resulted in the assassination, criminalization, vilification, and the splitting of the BPP leading to its destruction, with many BPP members today languishing in prisons. The FBI COINTELPRO actions worked in alliance with police departments across the country, and today, the Patriot Act has legalized much of what were illegal COINTELPRO practices. In 1974, the Senate Church Committee investigating the illegal FBI COINTELPRO activities declared such practices unconstitutional. However, the
Black Community tells Minutemen to Go Home

by Leslie Radford

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More than 300 Crenshaw District residents joined 200 rights migrante supporters and linked arms to keep the minutenens out of Leimert Park, in the heart of Black Los Angeles. June 24. Anti-minutenes protestor, called out by the Mayday Defense Committee and Union del Barrio, linked arms across the 43rd Place entrance to Leimert Park three lines deep to defend the park against the minutenes. Across the street, "Choose Black America," a front group for the anti-immigrant march sponsors, Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), and Save Our State, a minuteman spin-off, fretted and stewed. The LAPD, apparently sensing the determination of the people and reeling from the public outcry against their violence, repositioned themselves across the east sidewalk entrance of the park and staked their claim to the space. The cops announced that we were to be penned on the east sidewalk of Crenshaw and Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevards to begin their parade down this major artery through the historically African-American neighborhood to Leimert Park, the public platform for Los Angeles Black voices and the center of Black Los Angeles culture. They put together a showing of about 85, 65 African-Americans, twenty white minutemen, and one or two Mexican-Americans. Save Our State has undergone serious internal upheavals and splits because of its support of former self-proclaimed homeless leader Ted Hayes, a pro-police Black republican who now chairs CBA.

As the minutenes assembled on the southwest corner, the counter-protesters, on the southeast corner, abated them. Minutemen, KKK, fascists out of South L.A. The LAPD allowed the swelling crowd of counter-protesters, a mixed Brown, Black, and white group led down Crenshaw by the Black Riders Liberation Party, to spill into the street as they marched fifteen feet away from CBA. Counter-demonstrators proclaimed their support for a community celebration of Juneteenth (anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation) and carried a banner supporting "Reparations! Legalization! Stop the War!" CBA and the minutemen rode and walked beside a flatbed float representing a slavers' ship decked out with Black Texans learning of the Emancipation Proclamation) and carried a banner proclaimed their support for a community celebration of Juneteenth (anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation) and carried a banner.

By 1:00 p.m. CBA had mustered its marchers and stepped onto the street at Crenshaw and Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulavards to begin their parade down this major artery through the historically African-American neighborhood to Leimert Park, the public platform for Los Angeles Black voices and the center of Black Los Angeles culture. They put together a showing of about 85, 65 African-Americans, twenty white minutemen, and one or two Mexican-Americans. Save Our State has undergone serious internal upheavals and splits because of its support of former self-proclaimed homeless leader Ted Hayes, a pro-police Black republican who now chairs CBA.

One Black activist explained, 'They're trying to separate and divide. Ted Hayes is brainwashed. The minutemen will turn their back on him when they're finished with him.' Residents along the march route were heard complaining that the Klan had shut down the buses on Crenshaw, as they drifted off to find alternate routes.

As we reached the park, the cops announced that we were to be penned on the east side of the park. The anger had mounted as we marched, and the call went out when we found ourselves between the park and the minutenens: don't let them in the park. The first arrivals took international flags into the park and stood at the gates, but the police had stopped CBA and the minutemen on the west side of the Crenshaw. The counter-protesters repositioned themselves across the east sidewalk entrance between the cop cruisers. People from the community, grandmotherly types, young men, shop owners, employees, with quiet and clear fierceness, were pouring through the park and coming north across 43rd Street to the sidewalk. The final call was 'lock down!' Three lines of people joined arms across the thirty-foot open space between the cop cars at the entrance, discussed how to handle police batons, and determined that the minutemen would not cross. The Aztec danzantes protected the people with ritual dances and guarded the southeast corner of 43rd Street and Crenshaw. The Black Riders alternated between patrolling the other entrances to the park and standing at the front of the defense line. A participant murmured, 'They're using Black Nationalism. I didn't know Black Nationalism sided with the Klan.' Then the triumphant cry: 'Whose streets? Our streets! People united will never be divided!' The police stretched their yellow tape around the CBA and the minutenens, penning them in across the street, and told them that they wouldn't be going into the park today. The counter-protesters roared, 'Leimert, MacArthur, New Orleans: Smash the racist war machine!' and Black and Brown allies called out, 'We are not the minority—we are the majority!'

At 3:00, the cops forced the CBA and SOS onto the west sidewalk, surrounded them, and offered them the choice of leaving or arrest. Hayes and five of his followers stepped into the street in a last-ditch, staged arrest so Hayes, as one observer put it, would 'earn his pay.' And the media ran to film Hayes being escorted into a police van. They were taken to a substation and released.

In a protest in some way reminiscent of Baldwin Park's first encounter with the minutenens, the Leimert Park defenders had built community unity, and turned hate and divisiveness out of their public space.
A Personal Message from the Editor, Michael Novick

As I was working on this issue of Turning the Tide, and preparing to go to the work on the Jericho Amnesty Coalition to Free All Political Prisoners, US Social Forum in Atlanta, I was struck with a painful attack of shingles. It’s which recently helped launched the Unity Mission to Free the Eight, the adult onset of the virus that causes chicken pox. My doc told me it often I moderate the e-list “Stop Police Abuse Now!” I do material aid and strikes who are run-down or over-stressed, and she prescribed rest, pain I also happen to be 60 years old, married, with two grandkids and a third workers’ rights May Day rally, firing “less-lethal” weapons at families, elders, children, and journalists covering the event.) Not to mention 3) The Los Angeles Police Commission unanimously approved an unprecedented second 5-year term for LAPD Chief William Bratton despite the egregious violation of human rights by the LAPD only weeks before. (The cops had, in premeditated fashion, attacked a peaceful immigrant

Second, we need to adopt an assertive, proactive strategy for the world we want to build and the way we want to live, none of which could or will be granted by the powers-that-be because it presupposes their extinction. We must recognize there is an irrecconcilable contradiction between a future for our children and the planetary eco-system and the continued rule of imperialism, colonialism and white supremacy.

We must cast off the illusions that bind us to our exploiters and oppressors, whether through white supremacy or neo-colonialism. The left will not take over and run the Empire. Liberation for all will only come through decolonization.

Finally, we need to begin to develop the ability to defend our communities and to make the Empire pay a price for its attacks. This does not mean to stop public organizing, community-building, education or agitation. But it means we need to make efforts to build beyond the eyes and ears of the state. It means we need to develop intelligence gathering capabilities about the strategies, tactics, strengths and weaknesses of the state, the corporations, and the right.

The horizontal rebelliousness of Latin America can be instructive in this regard. But we need to find ways to erode the armed power bases of the state, whether among the poverty-draft military, the armed anti-statist right, or the unconscious criminal element of colonized communities and open the possibility of turning those guns around. And that will take a nucleus of our own to attract and incorporate them to.

Part's Perspective:

Why Do We Have No Teeth? How Can We Get Some?

by Michael Novick, Anti-Racist Action-LA/People Against Racist Terror (ARA-LA/PART)

Let’s look at three recent setbacks or defeats for popular forces, that some (who should know better) professed to be shocked by.

1) Congress, controlled by the “opposition” Democrats, approved -- with no strings attached, no timetable for withdrawal, and no “quid pro quo” (nothing in return from Bush for caving in) -- a massive funding bill for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The main “benchmark” mentioned was Iraqi agreement to privatization (and thus US control) of their oil resources.

2) Democrats in California, in a party-dictated vote, approved a bill calling for the construction more than 50,000 more prison “beds” -- read, cages -- at both the state prison and county jail level. Again, no debate, no discussion, no evident “deal,” not a single dissenting vote in the entire Assembly, and only a handful of state senators who dared to vote “no.” This will not reduced overcrowding, as alleged. It will simply add 50,000+ prisoners to the state’s massive system of incarceration (meaning there will be more arrests in every jurisdiction to fill the “beds”).

3) The Los Angeles Police Commission unanimously approved an unprecedented second 5-year term for LAPD Chief William Bratton despite the egregious violation of human rights by the LAPD only weeks before. (The cops had, in premeditated fashion, attacked a peaceful immigrant
Hip-Hop Owes Women An Apology

By Chuck “Jigsaw” Creekmur

APOLOGY:

1. a-pol-o·gy (ap·ə-lə-jē) pronunciation

1. An acknowledgment expressing regret or asking pardon for a fault or offense.

An apology can mean so many different things for people, both the giver and recipient(s).

So, I’ve been thinking a bit.

I believe it’s high time that Hip-Hop offered an apology to its women, in particular the females of color.

Here we are in the year 2007, a pivotal year for our culture. Music sales are down while criticism of Hip-Hop is up. The culture is under attack, at a creative crossroads and it appears people are acting crazier every step of the way. We have outright, bold misogyny and rampant sexism in our Hip-Hop culture as if it were indigenous to our people. We have our music, which can barely find a commercially viable female rapper. Meanwhile, a host of talented female emcees cannot get a fair shake even out. At some point, mentally we have to raise up and move forward. Who can disagree with that?

An apology is also an admission of guilt, wrongdoing, regret and if properly executed, suggests strongly that the change is the key...

Now, think about this situation in terms of food.

When you eat your typical fast food for an extended period of time, you experience a number of adverse affects. Initially, you might simply gain weight, something remedied with exercise and change in dietary habits. However, if you continue to ingest the bad food, you will begin to suffer ailments that are much more difficult to fix. (Think high cholesterol, obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease.)

I view the music we consume in a similar way. If you listen to music that is always violent, persistently misogynist, you could assume the negativity as your own and over time, it could become a shaper of your perspective. These images are conditioning the way boys see women and the way girls see what they will become.

It’s a self-fulfilling prophecy that writes and re-writes itself in a vicious cycle. The blatantly, degenerate music is the food we masses feed our minds in every medium that means anything - online, television, musically and print.

I understand that there will be people that will inevitably disagree with my thoughts and even blast the mere thought of an apology. Hip-Hop is unapologetic by nature. Hip-Hop is a victim itself in many ways, if you know of its origins in the Bronx of the 80’s. It was considered Hell on Earth. So, in theory, one’s environment could be the “fast food” and harsh urban terrain never apologizes. But, playing victim is played out. At some point, mentally we have to raise up and move forward. Who can disagree with that?

An apology is also an admission of guilt, wrongdoing, regret and if properly executed, suggests strongly that the apology marks a imminent change in behavior.

Remember the forced apology when you were a child? You didn’t want to do it and furthermore you probably didn’t know why you were saying sorry. You just did it and it really didn’t mark any sustained change in habit. From that point of view, it’s probably too soon to expect an apology from Hip-Hop, much less a change in behavior. The change is the key.

Take Common as an example of a person that hasn’t made any recent apologies to women. He’s done something better, he’s evolved as a man and a human being. On his first album, Can I Borrow A Dollar, he penned a song called “Heidi Hoe,” that was an abrasive (and clever) dismantling of the “scallywag.” I loved that song too. But, what I can appreciate about Common is he didn’t feel compelled to stay there in his reality or his music (regardless of what public demands were). He would go on to write songs like “A Song For Assata” and “Come Close,” among others that examine the wide range of experiences men have with women.

So, while the Chicago MC didn’t necessarily apologize (or need to), the end result is the same. He kept making music and behaved in a manner that was consistent with evolution, the aftermath of any sincere apology. He simply altered his approach. Jay-Z, Nas, T.I. and others like Ludacris have been liberated from their former selves and still managed to stay relevant and successful.

Over the past 20 or so years, Hip-Hop has devolved from a revolutionary form of art that saw the rise of street intellectuals, rappers erasing racism and others proactive behavior to one that caters to the very base in humans. I see women all over Hip-Hop, but I still miss them.

Salt-N-Pepa, Queen Latifah, MC Lyte, Monie Love, Lauryn Hill, Rah Digga, Jean Grae and a plethora of others have offered their version of real womanhood. They were not a byproduct of a male rapper’s negative experience with a few bad apples. In many ways, these femcees’ messages balanced the men that were often talking about a “certain type of female.” But “The B****” has now become the prototype for all women in Hip-Hop and mostly are regarded as hoes or some other culturally necessary sex object. Necessary un-desirables, like the slaves.

Enslaved people - even after abolition - were still only confined to the menial jobs and not offered the breadth of opportunity afforded their counterparts. So, yesterday’s Salt-N-Pepa’s, Sweet-T’s and JF Fad’s are today’s video vixen and eye candy for your favorite rapper dude.

I’d personally appreciate that apology from the U.S. Government on slavery, but I’d much rather that people would just stop practicing racism.

I’m sure the ladies feel the same about their plight.

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1) WE GO WHERE THEY GO: When fascists are organizing or active in public, we’re there. We don’t believe in ignoring or staying away from them. Never let the nazis have the streets!

2) WE DON’T RELY ON THE COURTS TO DO OUR WORK: This doesn’t mean we never go to court. But we rely on ourselves to protect ourselves & stop the fascists.

3) NON-SECTARIAN DEFENSE OF OTHER ANTI-FASCISTS: In ARA, we have different groups and individuals. We don't agree about everything and we have a right to differ openly. But in this movement, an attack on one is an attack on us all. We stand behind each other.

4) We support abortion rights and reproductive freedom. ARA intends to do the hard work necessary to build a broad, strong movement against racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, homophobia, class exploitation, repression, and discrimination against the disabled, the oldest, the youngest and the most oppressed people. WE INTEND TO WIN!

ANTI-RACIST ACTION INTERNATIONAL GATHERING, OCTOBER 12 – 14, 2007 KENT, OHIO SAVE THE DATE!
Message from Oscar López Rivera to the 20th Annual Vigil for Dignity in Isabelia, Puerto Rico

Warm and patriotic greetings to all those present.

Why is there so much chaos in the world? Why does the world appear to be upside down? Who is behind this chaos and who benefits from it? Why is there such exaltation for the use of violence and for war?

Let us look at the policies of the U.S. government and its war in Iraq and Afghanistan, supposed to eradicate the terrorism of Islamic fundamentalists and to save the world for democracy. Several years of this war and what has the empire achieved? It has planted and produced violence everywhere. It has assassinated hundreds of thousands of human beings and it has mutilated many more. It has created fratricidal struggles and conflicts in neighboring countries and in the region and has destroyed the infrastructures of both countries.

It has installed two puppet governments and has passed the cost of the war to the Iraqis and the Afghans. The only things that it has successfully built are permanent military bases, enormous prisons, waves of conflict and, in Baghdad it has built the largest U.S. embassy in the world. What it has basically done is to implant a political model of permanent chaos that is used by Zionists Israelis in order to control and dominate the Palestinian people.

The empire has the world on its head and in this way controls, dominates, plunders and exploits as it likes and also does so completely with our people and our sister countries in the Caribbean and Latin America. We are affected by the politics of chaos. Some of the elements of that policy are the war on drugs, the free trade agreements and the criminalization of undocumented immigrants.

We know that the war on drugs was not created in order to eradicate that plague that has inflicted so much damage and destruction on us. Every day there are more and more drugs, more drug users, more crime, more fear and more insecurity, but the war continues. If we read and listen to the news from Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador or Columbia, we become aware of what it means to be countries besieged by paramilitary forces, drug cartels, gangs and corrupt politicians and which experience daily instability, fear and impotence. The chaos continues and will not change until we think that reality is what our peoples live. The empire uses its wars against drugs to maintain its military forces and repressive agencies in the region in order to protect its economic interests and exercise control.

The free trade agreements have nothing to do with commercial freedom or with the elimination of poverty. The empire uses them to-strangle autonomous economies in order to squeeze the juice out of them and accelerate the poverty. Everything should be privatized, they ordain, and everything must yield advantage.

It is the Latin American undocumented immigrants in the United States who are the best example of the devastation and poverty that has been caused by the treaties of free commerce. They are workers who have been displaced from their lands and forced to emigrate. More than 12 million do work that Americans do not want to do and for which they are extremely badly paid. They are criminalized, persecuted and often imprisoned and deported. Upon being deported to their countries they face more misery, more chaos and harsh treatment at the hands that U.S. repressive agencies have forced governments to implement in order to repress and silence the poor.

Where is this world of salvation by the empire in the name of democracy? Where are the jobs, the opportunities and the better living conditions? Where are the same and secure spaces where there is a free homeland and a better world that is more just, we must struggle for it. If we want peace we have to make it. The good thing is that we have the power to do it. All of us in struggle together and being in much solidarity we can turn the world right side up. Thinking of Filiberto, IN RESISTANCE AND STRUGGLE.

Oscar López Rivera, May 23, 2007

Oscar López Rivera is a captured Puerto Rican independentista who has been a political prisoner/POW in the US for more than 25 years.

Zolo Agona Azania to Face a 3rd Death Penalty Trial

by Howard Emmer

On Thursday, May 10, 2007 the Indiana Supreme Court reversed Boone County Superior Court Judge Steve David’s ruling that barred the state of Indiana from pursuing the death penalty in the case of Zolo Azania. Lake County Prosecutor Bernard Carter appealed Judge David’s ruling and that prompted arguments before the Indiana Supreme Court on June 27th, 2006. Zolo, who was convicted of murder in 1982, has spent the last 26 years in Indiana prisons, most of that time on death row. Twice the state has had Zolo’s death penalty verdict overturned by the Indiana Supreme Court due to: procurement’s suppression of evidence favorable to the defendant, ineffective assistance of counsel, and systematic exclusion of African Americans from the jury pool.

In Judge David’s ruling, he argued that the state could not seek the death penalty against Zolo a third time because of the length of time that had passed since the crime was committed (24 years at that time), and that the delay was caused primarily by the state’s failure to provide the jury of the witness, and the witnesses’ character, and therefore much of the evidence is either missing or destroyed. David also found that a jury at a third sentencing trial would be unduly focused on the “future dangerousness” of the convicted, depriving Zolo of an unprejudiced decision by the jury. Judge David concluded that society’s interest would best be served by barring the state from a third death sentence.

The majority opinion, written by Justice Sullivan and supported by Chief Justice Shepard and Justice Dickson, tries to blame Zolo Azania for the 25 year delay by having the authority to file appeals to his conviction and has had 12 appeals which ultimately exposed mistakes and misconduct by the prosecution in his trials. As stated above, it was this same Indiana Supreme Court that found there was just cause for these appeals. To now blame Zolo for the delays caused by pursuing them is tantamount to blaming the victim.

Justices Boehm and Rucker both wrote dissenting opinions supporting Judge David’s ruling. In his dissenting opinion Justice Boehm found the majority opinion’s arguments for attributing the delays to Zolo “both novel and indefensible.” Justice Rucker was troubled that the inordinate delay (25 years plus) would affect Zolo’s ability to produce character witnesses and cross examine state witnesses.

The state of Indiana has already convicted and held Zolo for over 25 years for a crime in which he has always maintained his innocence. It is only fair that it drops its pursuit of the death penalty that is cruel, inhuman, racist and has no place being used in a civilized society.

Zolo’s lawyers are considering a petition for certiorari to the United States Supreme Court.

Contact Howie Emmer for more information: 773-425-6716

Defend Native Hawaiian sovereignty -- Oppose the Akaka Bill

Brief excerpts from a talk by J. Kehaulani Kauanui

J. Kehaulani Kauanui, a Native Hawaiian professor at Wesleyan University in Middletown, presented a history of Hawaii/U.S. relations and her views of the Akaka Bill in the US Senate in a talk at Yale University on April 4, according to a report by Gale CountyTowning in Indian Country Today [http://www.indiancountrytoday.com/content.php?i=15664184&y=today-v] After acknowledging the land now known as New Haven as the homeland of the Quinnipiac people, she said the Hawaiian sovereignty movement is split between those who support Sen. Akaka’s “federal recognition” bill, and “those who want full independence from the United States based on decolonization and de-occupation under international law.”

“At the heart of this division between federal recognition and independence is the and European financiers and colonists who owned sugar plantations. The key statement in debate as to whether or not, and if so, how, Native Hawaiians fit into U.S. policy on the apology acknowledges Hawaii’s continuing independence: “The indigenous Hawaiian Native American governing entities, the Hawaiian people may never directly recognized their claims to their inherent sovereignty as a people or nations in this area who are absolutely entitled to federal recognition and you have the over their national lands to the United States, either through their monopoly or through a state bearing down on them, and the courts continue to erode tribal sovereignty. So the plebiscite or referendum.”

Challenge for me, intellectually, legally and politically, has been how to formulate my critique of federal recognition for Hawaiians without it ever being misrepresented as something that can be used against tribes here, because I support the federal recognition of tribes here,” Kauanui said. She asserted that the central argument against federal recognition in Hawaii rests on “the particularity of the Hawaiian claims given the legal history of the Hawaiian kingdom. Those particularities are embedded as facts in treaties here,” Kauanui said. She asserted that the central argument against federal recognition in the US Senate in a talk at Yale University on April 4, according to a report by Gale County Towning in Indian Country Today [http://www.indiancountrytoday.com/content.php?i=15664184&y=today-v] After acknowledging the land now known as New Haven as the homeland of the Quinnipiac people, she said the Hawaiian sovereignty movement is split between those who support Sen. Akaka’s “federal recognition” bill, and “those who want full independence from the United States based on decolonization and de-occupation under international law.”

“At the heart of this division between federal recognition and independence is the and European financiers and colonists who owned sugar plantations. The key statement in debate as to whether or not, and if so, how, Native Hawaiians fit into U.S. policy on the apology acknowledges Hawaii’s continuing independence: “The indigenous Hawaiian Native American governing entities, the Hawaiian people may never directly recognized their claims to their inherent sovereignty as a people or nations in this area who are absolutely entitled to federal recognition and you have the over their national lands to the United States, either through their monopoly or through a state bearing down on them, and the courts continue to erode tribal sovereignty. So the plebiscite or referendum.”

Challenges for me, intellectually, legally and politically, has been how to formulate my critique of federal recognition for Hawaiians without it ever being misrepresented as something that can be used against tribes here, because I support the federal recognition of tribes here,” Kauanui said. She asserted that the central argument against federal recognition in Hawaii rests on “the particularity of the Hawaiian claims given the legal history of the Hawaiian kingdom. Those particularities are embedded as facts in Public Law 103-150, an apology to the Hawaiian people signed in 1993 by Bill Clinton. The apology acknowledges the illegality of the U.S. government’s military regime change of “the sovereignty to the United States in 1989, but those lands, which were not their to give, have never fallen into private hands. For more information, contact Aloha First, PO Box 701, Waimanalo, Hawaii 96795, info@hawaii-nation.org or check out http://hawaii-nation.org
The anti-death penalty movement has seen some major changes in the last couple of months. One of the central emerging themes surrounding the death penalty debate is the cruel and unusual way in which executions are carried out. But the death penalty is cruel and unusual far before an inmate reaches the execution chamber. The people on death row in Texas can attest to the inhumane nature of capital punishment from the time of arrest all the way to the gurney.

At the end of last year, about a dozen brave men on Texas’ death row went on hunger strike to protest inhumane conditions in the Polunsky unit where numerous executions are warehoused. Even the New York Times took note of the protest. “Likening themselves to prisoners at Abu Ghraib and Guantánamo Bay,” the New York Times reported last November, “men on death row in Texas have staged hunger strikes over the last month to protest what they call abusive conditions, including 23 hours a day of isolation in their cells.” Continued media attention like this could cause the Texas Department of Criminal Justice to change the horrific conditions.

Rob Will explains the sit-in method of protest on the row and the response it met with. “You’re tired of abuse, fed up with oppression, seven officers are towering over you, standing you down and ordering you to get up. In your mind you think, ‘I’m tired of this sh*t! I’m just *ticking of this sh*t! I don’t even want these oppressive cowards to touch me!’ Then a CO [correctional officer = prison guard = ed.] suddenly grabs you and his hands feel like the sting of a slavemaster’s whip... How would you react?”

The protesters are asking for basic needs to be met such as food that is edible and the proper maintenance of their toilets so that they don’t clog and overflow their cell floors. Grievances also include the lack of education and work programs; group recreation; access to adequate healthcare; efficient mail services; arts and crafts programs; televisions; law library supplies; phone calls; religious services; visitation rights; and adequate laundry and hygiene services. Their requests could easily be granted and their humanity upheld. Unfortunately, though, the authorities have an interest in dehumanizing death row prisoners.

The Death Row Inter-Communist Vanguard Engagement, also known as DRIVE, stands in solidarity with the hunger strikers and continues their own methods of protest. DRIVE is a multi-racial group of non-violent prison activists who are dedicated to bringing change for the entire death penalty population. Their protest tactics include distributing literature, addressing their issues with guards, and occupying day rooms, showers and visitation chambers. Prisoners are encouraged to protest on days when executions are scheduled, and to protest their own executions by refusing to walk to the van that takes them to the Ellis Unit, where executions still take place; refusing last meals; and refusing to walk to the execution chamber. The DRIVE membership has doubled in size in the last couple of months, going from five members to ten, and has expanded to women’s death row also. This sends out a signal that more and more death row prisoners are fed up with the inhumane conditions and the struggle is moving forward.

Any type of resistance on the row is met with what can only be called torture. Many times their non-violent protests are met with tear gas and water cannons designed to hurt, not subdue, inmates. Protesters are often refused recreation, food, and showers after being gassed. The guards also use “divide and conquer” tactics to try to dissuade other prisoners from protesting.

Family members are also speaking out against the inhuman treatment of their loved ones. Sister of DRIVE comrade Kenneth Foster, Claire Dube, explains why this struggle is so important to her. “Many of the family members of the inmates and especially DRIVE have concerns about their family member’s humanity and treatment. Inmates are still human beings and should be treated as if their family was the one taking care of them.”

In response to letters from overseas raising concerns about the conditions at Polunsky, Texas Representative Jerry Madden, the chair of the Texas House Corrections Committee, has said that he will look into the situation at Polunsky. Plus, representatives of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice have contacted the Austin Campaign to End the Death Penalty regarding concerns that have been raised about the conditions at Polunsky. This shows that the pressure is working and that supporters on the outside can help Polunsky’s prison activists achieve their goals.

To support the hunger strikers and the members of DRIVE on Texas’ death row, activists can send grievance letters to the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ), which runs the state’s prisons. It is important that these officials know that the inmates have support from outraged people on the outside, and this will help the prisoners with their struggle. Sample letters can be downloaded from www.drivemovement.org. Supporters also should send solidarity letters to the members of DRIVE. The demands of the inmates will fall on deaf ears unless a movement of support is built on the outside to put pressure on the TDCJ.

“Yet even as we take this drastic step to stand against this injustice, we realize our actions alone will not likely bring the changes we require,” write Steven Woods, Justen Hall and Richard Cobb in their statement of intent. “We need your support in this struggle, fighting with us side by side. The administration will try to cover up and misinstruct our efforts, so we’re asking you to get involved, to put up as much effort as you’re able. Any actions you can take to help vocalize our plight are positive, be it writing to government officials, TDCJ administration, the media, participating in online blogs and forums, protesting if you’re able, and encouraging others to get involved.

We’ll also need your encouragement and solidarity to help keep us from faltering, as even the most stout of heart can waver. The struggle will be long and hard, but in the end, with your help, we hope to succeed.”

For more info about DRIVE; to read the journals of death row inmates, and to watch video of the repression they face visit www.drivemovement.org or www.anarchychains.com. Send grievance letters to: Warden Massesy and Assistant Warden Hirsch, Polunsky Unit, 3872 FM 150 South, Livingston, Texas 77351, (936) 967-8082. Ask for the Warden’s office. Representative Jerry Madden, Chair, Capitol Office Room EXT E1.506, P.O. Box 2910, Austin, TX 78768, (512) 463-9974—fax

Write to DRIVE members:

Steven Woods, #999427
Reginald Blanton, #999395
Rob Will, #999402
Kenneth Foster, #999232
Gabriel Gonzalez, #999225
Da’mon Simpson, #999370
Randy Greer, #999942
Randy Halprin, #999453
Carroll Parr, #999947

Polunsky Unit,
3872 EFM 350 South,
Livingston, TX
77351

Carolyn King, OC 7210,
P.O. Box 180 Unit R-B,
Muncy, PA 17756

In solidarity,
Muenda, Prime Minister, PURE
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