

# Former Black Panther To Be Released After 49 Years in Prison

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
September 25, 2020



Jalil Muntaqim

One of several Black liberation radicals incarcerated for decades in the wake of political and racial upheaval in the 1960s and 70s, Jalil Muntaqim won his decades-long struggle for freedom after a New York parole board ordered his release.

Muntaqim, formerly known as Anthony Bottom, has been in unbroken custody for nearly half a century after being arrested and convicted for the murder of two Harlem police officers in 1971.

During his parole hearing earlier this month—his tenth appearance since becoming eligible for parole in 1998—the parole board determined that he would be released

from the maximum-security Sullivan corrections facility in Fallsburg, New York, by October 20.

At the time of his murder of officers Joseph Piagentini and Waverly Jones—who believed they were responding to a domestic dispute call when they were ambushed and shot—Muntaqim was a clandestine member of the underground wing of the Black Panthers, the Black Liberation Army, having joined the armed group at 18 years old.

Although Muntaqim's release has been vehemently opposed by both the New York police union (PBA) and the widow of Piagentini, Muntaqim has said that he has matured his political position since 1971 yet remains committed to racial equality and justice.

"I now take the 'r' off the word and make it 'evolutionary.' Revolution for me is the evolutionary process of building a higher level of consciousness in society at large. I'm an evolutionary revolutionary," he said to The Guardian during a filmed interview in 2018.

While the number of Black liberation leaders locked up since the heyday of the Black Panthers is dwindling—with the surviving seven members of the Move 9 in Philadelphia having all been released on parole in the past two years—many, such as Edward Poindexter, who marked his fiftieth year in prison this August, still remain. Muntaqim's two co-defendants for the 1971 Harlem police killing were Albert "Nuh" Washington and Herman Bell, who each received sentences of 25 years to life. The former died in prison in 2000, whereas the latter was released on parole in 2018.

Source: [teleSUR](#)



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# **Tribute to the Attica Uprising**

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
September 25, 2020



Video of Attica Uprising tribute

If you missed the incredible program marking the anniversary of the Attica prison



uprising, you have a chance to watch it on video.

Featuring never seen coverage of Tom Soto, one of the original observers at Attica and the premiere of “Give Us the Freedom” featuring a prisoner from inside Vaughn prison explaining the conditions that led to the rebellion in Delaware.



Watch here: Video of Attica Uprising tribute



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# **Defend activists and organizers under attack! Defend Black lives!**

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
September 25, 2020

As the anti-racist uprising of 2020 roiled “business as usual” in cities across the U.S., many protesters have been hit with severe charges after being arrested for offenses that would normally be considered violations or misdemeanors. Many arrestees are facing possible sentences of years in prison or even life sentences.

In a dangerous attack on our right to protest, Attorney General William Barr in a recent conference call with U.S. attorneys across the country even encouraged sedition charges be widely used against anti-racist protestors. Sedition means conspiracy and intent to overthrow the U.S. government and can result in 20 years in prison.

The Socialist Unity Party has issued an appeal to all revolutionary left organizations and activists to unite in defense of those facing repression from the capitalist state and its allies in the white supremacist-fascist movement. (Read the appeal in [English](#))

or [Spanish](#).)

**Please share widely.** This list will be updated regularly. If you know of a case that should be added, send details to [info@struggle-la-lucha.com](mailto:info@struggle-la-lucha.com).

**Here are some important cases and actions that your organization or you as an individual can help to publicize and defend:**

### **Philadelphia**

An uprising against racist police terror swept through Philadelphia after cops killed Walter Wallace Jr. on Oct. 26. By the following day, Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf had deployed the National Guard to occupy the city to “protect businesses.”

On Oct. 28, federal troops raided the home of Anthony “Ant” Smith, a well-known Black community activist, teacher and member of the Philly Coalition for REAL Justice. Smith was jailed for several days without being allowed to speak to an attorney or post bail. He faces multiple federal charges.

According to the Philly Coalition for REAL Justice, “On Oct. 28, federal officers arrested Smith on trumped-up charges related to resistance activities that occurred earlier this summer during the rebellion after the police murder of George Floyd. These types of bogus charges parallel the racist police tactics that have led to the incarceration of countless Black liberation leaders. They must be urgently resisted.”

For information on how to support Ant Smith and others arrested in Philadelphia, email [phillyforrealjustice@gmail.com](mailto:phillyforrealjustice@gmail.com); Facebook: PhillyforREALjustice; and Twitter: @PHLRealJustice.

### **Detroit area**

Police in Shelby Township, Mich., a Detroit suburb, charged five protesters with



felonies (resisting arrest, obstruction, assault) after arresting them for stepping off the sidewalk during a protest on Oct. 24. Police came with riot shields, batons and attack dogs to threaten peaceful protesters in scenes reminiscent of Birmingham 1963. The Shelby 5 are Jessica Nadeau-Mayer, Tristan Taylor, David Mitchell, Samantha Phillips and James Deininger.

“These arrests and charges are an egregious violation of First Amendment rights,” according to Detroit Will Breathe, one of the groups that organized the protest. “Shelby Township’s Chief of Police Robert Shelide, Michigan’s own Bull Connor, has made statements calling protesters ‘vicious subhumans’ and threatened to put them in body bags. This racist rhetoric is shocking to the conscience, and even more so when backed up with action by the officers who work for him, like we saw last week. Macomb County Prosecutor Jean Cloud has chosen to pursue these charges, showing that she clearly stands with Jim Crow racism and the suppression of the right to protest. We demand that Jean Cloud drop these charges immediately!”

Readers can help by calling Macomb County Prosecutor Jean Cloud at (586) 469-5696 and Macomb County Executive Mark Hackel at (586) 469-7001 to demand that charges be dropped against the Shelby 5. You can also send protest emails to officials when you sign the petition to [“Drop the charges against the Shelby 5!”](#)

## **Louisville**

In Louisville Sept. 24, cops trapped and corralled marchers protesting the state’s refusal to charge the cops who murdered Breonna Taylor. They arrested 127 people and surrounded a church where protesters had gathered, refusing to let them leave.

Among the arrested were State Rep. Attica Scott and her daughter Ashanti. Representative Scott was targeted by the cops, who shouted, “Circle her,” as she and her daughter tried to enter the church.



Scott, the only Black woman in the Kentucky legislature, is the author of [a bill to abolish no-knock warrants](#) in the state, Breonna's Law. She is charged with inciting to riot. That's the same level of felony as the wanton endangerment charge against former cop Brett Hankison, who fired into the wrong apartment when his partners were murdering Breonna Taylor.

Cops absurdly accuse Scott and other protesters of trying to burn down a public library. "I have no idea where that came from and I'm quite frankly offended and disgusted that they would try to accuse me of setting fire to the library when I'm one of its biggest champions," Scott said. "And this is the library in my district, District 41. That makes absolutely no sense."

## **San Diego**

Denzel Draughn, a well-known San Diego anti-racist activist and supporter of the African People's Socialist Party, was arrested Aug. 28 at a demonstration in solidarity with the movement in Kenosha, Wis., calling for justice for Jacob Blake, who was shot seven times in the back by police. Draughn is charged based on the ridiculous claim that he pepper-sprayed nine cops. He is facing 19 felony charges as a result. The allegations stem from an incident when a group of demonstrators tried to defend themselves against a violent police assault. Ten people were arrested, but Draughn has been singled out for the harshest treatment. At the request of San Diego cops, his bail is set at the outrageous amount of \$750,000 — an amount usually reserved for kidnapping or murder.

- Watch: [Interview of Muambi Tanga of the African People's Socialist Party about Denzel Draughn case](#)
- Donate to \$ParrishDavis on CashApp, @Parrish-Davis on Venmo or the Dede McClure Community Bail Fund:  
<https://www.gofundme.com/f/help-us-raise-funds-to-support-our-community>

## Denver

On Sept. 17, police agencies in the Denver area arrested anti-racist organizers in a coordinated assault. Terrance Roberts of the Front Line Party for Revolutionary Action was arrested, as well as Whitney Lucero and Trey Anthony Quinn. So was Russell Ruch in a parking lot at a Home Depot. Five police cars surrounded and arrested Lillian House while she was driving. That afternoon, SWAT teams arrived at Joel Northam's home and arrested him. Eliza Lucero was also arrested. These last four are members of the Party for Socialism and Liberation. All five are organizers of protests to demand justice for Elijah McClain, who was brutally murdered by the Aurora Police Department. After days in jail, they've been bailed out. They face multiple felony charges and years in prison in an obvious frameup aimed at stopping the movement for justice for Elijah McClain.

- Over 500 people march on the Colorado capitol in Denver on Sept. 19.
- Sign the petition to drop the charges: <https://www.pslweb.org/dropthecharges>
- Donate here to the legal and political support campaigns for these organizers: <https://www.pslweb.org/donate4denver>

## Tallahassee, Fla.

On Sept. 5, Tallahassee police and Leon County sheriffs attacked a peaceful Black Lives Matter demonstration. After pulling a Black woman organizer from her car, 300 police attacked around 75 to 100 protesters. Fourteen were arrested on the spot and five more have been arrested since, including members of the Students for a Democratic Society and the Freedom Road Socialist Organization. The majority are facing multiple charges, including felonies, that could result in fines of \$10,000 and 10 years in prison. Others face up to one year in jail and a \$1,000 fine for each misdemeanor they're charged with. The demonstration was to protest a grand jury decision not to indict the police officers who murdered Tony McDade, Mychael

Johnson and Wilburn Woodard. The three were gunned down by Tallahassee police in March and May of this year.

- Call State Attorney Jack Campbell at (850) 606-6000, or email [saotech@leoncountyfl.gov](mailto:saotech@leoncountyfl.gov)
- Click the “File a Complaint” button on the Tallahassee Police Department webpage at <https://www.talgov.com/publicsafety/tpd-compliment.aspx>
- Go to the GoFundMe page to help with the legal fund: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/community-supportfor-blm-protestors-in-tally>

## **Portland, Ore.**

The battle against police racism is raging in Portland. Nightly demonstrations have entered their fourth month. Since the end of May, hundreds have been arrested. In August, hoping to quell the protests, incoming Multnomah County District Attorney Mike Schmidt dropped charges against protestors. Demonstrations to challenge systemic racism, arrests and brutality continued, and charges have become more severe. On Aug. 27, a [news release by the U.S. Attorney’s District of Oregon office](#) announced that it is going ahead with prosecutions of 100 people who have been arrested since May, many by Trump’s federal officers. Seventy-four of them are facing felonies that could result in prison sentences of years. A Sept. 5 [NPR audit](#) of the felony charges concludes that the actions protestors were accused of and arrested for were minor and should never have resulted in felonies.

- Call the District Attorney’s office at (503) 727-1000 or comment on the U.S. Attorney’s Office District of Oregon website by emailing [usaor.webmaster@usdoj.gov](mailto:usaor.webmaster@usdoj.gov) to demand that charges be dropped against anti-racist protesters.

## **Oklahoma City**

In Oklahoma, where the entire Black community of Tulsa was burned down in 1921,

and where a white supremacist attack killed 168 people in 1995, Oklahoma County District Attorney Lewis Prater has charged three teenagers, Malachai Davis, Haley Lin Crawford and Sydney Lynch — as well as two other participants in protests against the police murder of George Floyd — with terrorism. The bond amounts for a dozen other arrestees are between \$200,000 and \$1 million. The harshest treatment has been directed at those arrestees who are African American. Terrorism convictions could mean years or even decades in prison for charges that should have been misdemeanors. In May, DA Prater refused to charge cops who killed Isaiah Lewis during a mental health crisis in September 2019. When 42-year-old Derrick Scott was in custody of Oklahoma City cops in May 2019, he told them he couldn't breathe and asked for his medicine. The cop's response was "I don't care." Scott died soon afterward, but Prater brought no charges against those cops either. In August of this year, James Harmon was shot in the head by cops, also in Prater's jurisdiction, and there is no indication that charges will be brought against the cops who killed him.

- Call DA Lewis Prater's office at (405) 713-1600 and demand that he drop all charges against anti-racist protesters and bring charges against killer cops.

## **Salt Lake City**

In Salt Lake City, a group of protestors are charged with felony criminal mischief. District Attorney Sim Gill added a "gang enhancement," which could mean life sentences for seven people who were protesting Gill's decision not to file charges against two SLC cops who shot Bernardo Palacios-Carbajal in the back and killed him. Gill justifies the gang enhancement by saying that the activists conspired to splash red paint and break the windows of a building. The gang enhancement is an inherently racist feature of the criminal justice system, and the fact that it is being used against people protesting police murders of people of color is a further travesty of justice. More than 30 others in Salt Lake City have been hit with serious charges

stemming from recent anti-racist demonstrations, including some felonies.

- Call District Attorney Sim Gill's office at (358) 468-7600 to demand he drop charges against anti-racist protesters.

## **Miami**

Jonathon Gartrelle, a leading gay, African American, anti-racist activist in Miami, is charged with strong-arm robbery and escape — both felonies — as well as two misdemeanors. Jonathon is accused of removing two Trump flags from parked vehicles and dropping them on the ground while counterprotesting at a pro-Trump caravan. Gartrelle himself was hit by an SUV, which drove away and was not pursued by the cops, who are falsely claiming that Gartrelle declined to press charges. Gartrelle wanted to press charges but refused to go with them in a police cruiser to fill out a report at a precinct.

- Sign the petition:  
<https://www.change.org/p/miami-police-department-justice-for-jonni>
- Call Miami-Dade State Attorney Katherine Fernandez-Rundel at (305) 547-0100 to demand that she drop charges against Jonathon Gartrelle.

[An appeal to revolutionaries: We must defend each other from state attack](#)

[Llamado a los revolucionarios: debemos defendernos unos a otros del ataque estatal](#)

## **New York City**

In a case that many interpret as one of the earliest expressions of the White House war on Black Lives Matter protesters, two young attorneys are facing charges brought against them by the NYPD/FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force, charges that carry a minimum sentence of 45 years and a maximum of life imprisonment.

Colinford Mattis is the son of Jamaican parents. Before being arrested, he

represented low-income women in family court. Urooj Rahman is the daughter of Pakistani parents, who, until the arrest, worked as a lawyer defending tenants at Bronx Tenant's Court. Both have come to be known as "people's lawyers."

Mattis and Rahman are accused of burning a police van at a demonstration just days after the police murder of George Floyd. The van was empty, already had all its windows broken out and was covered with spray paint. They were bailed out of jail after being arrested, but prosecutors appealed, their bail was revoked, and they remain in jail as of today.

According to a [Sept. 16 Buzzfeed article](#) about the case, "Many local prosecutors were stunned by the severity of the charges." Were this not part of the Trump/Barr all-out war on anti-racist protesters, the charges would have been "local," and at worst would have meant a one-year sentence.

Follow the links to support the defense funds for [Colinford Mattis](#) and [Urooj Rahman](#).

Compiled by Scott Scheffer



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# Julian Assange, political prisoner by Mumia Abu-Jamal

written by Struggle - La Lucha

September 25, 2020

First things first: Who is Julian Assange? And second, why is his struggle of import to any of us?

Assange, born in Townsville, Queensland, Australia, in 1971, is the founder of the global online media service known as WikiLeaks. As such, Assange is a journalist. His group has been a blockbuster, capturing and passing on files and internal memos of governments all around the world.

For this, he has been hounded, targeted and jailed, now serving over 50 weeks for allegedly jumping bail in Britain, to avoid extradition to the U.S., which seeks to imprison him for violating the U.S. Espionage Act.

As shown earlier, Assange, born into a British Commonwealth State (Australia), is not an American and owes it no fealty.



But the U.S. empire rules the world, not just U.S. territory.

On July 25, 2010, WikiLeaks published on its website some 75,000 documents on the Afghanistan war. These documents presented a damning portrait of the U.S. empire at work.

But when you attack the empire, the empire strikes back.

For publishing documents that embarrassed the United States, Assange, if convicted, faces over a century, in fact, 175 years in prison. And, as a foreign national, the First Amendment to the Constitution does not provide a defense.

So, wait: The U.S. can invoke its criminal law for use worldwide, but the Bill of Rights doesn't obtain to foreigners?

That sounds fair...

The Iraq and Afghanistan wars are now widely considered the biggest blunders in U.S. foreign policy, for the wars of regime change floated into being on a raft of lies and misinformation. (Quick! Remember "weapons of mass destruction"?)

How many thousands — and tens of thousands — died based on an American mirage?

Assange, through his journalistic revelations, helped awaken generations to the elements of imperial wars.

He wasn't spying. Spies work for governments and militaries. Journalists work to inform people, to broaden the reaches of democracy.

In the not-so-recent past, the U.S. empire used its tools of repression to silence its opponents — even when they were U.S. citizens.

The targeting of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg comes to mind; they were called spies, and subsequently electrocuted.

The case of Sacco and Vanzetti, immigrants from Italy, comes to mind.

The targeting of the New York branch of the Black Panther Party and the trial of the Panther 21, on trumped-up charges, also comes to memory.

Julian Assange is a prisoner of a political vendetta.

Is he thus a political prisoner?

You damn betcha.

*Listen to Mumia's commentary at [PrisonRadio.org](http://PrisonRadio.org).*



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# **A salute to the heroic Attica**

# Rebellion

written by Struggle - La Lucha

September 25, 2020

“We are men! We are not beasts, and we do not intend to be driven or beaten as such!”

— *Elliot L.D. Barkley, a 21-year-old leader of the Attica Rebellion who was murdered by the state. He was placed in Attica on a minor parole violation and was scheduled to be released approximately a week after the rebellion broke out.*

On Sept. 9, 1971, approximately 1,500 prisoners in Cell Block D seized the Attica Correctional Facility in upstate New York, after submitting a 27-point manifesto to the prison administration in an attempt to address the torturous conditions inside the prison.

At the time of the uprising, 2,300 prisoners were sandwiched into a prison built for barely 1,600 people. White supremacy behind the walls was evident everywhere, from how prisoners were housed to brutal work assignments.

Prisoners were allowed one shower per week and one roll of toilet paper a month. They labored for five hours a day and were paid between 20 cents and \$1 for the entire day. For 14 to 16 hours, they were locked in tiny 6-foot by 9-foot cells.

## **A revolutionary mood**

It is critical to understand the broader historical context in which this rebellion took place. How could people who were so beaten down, whose lives hung in the balance at the whim of a guard, take such heroic action?

Outside of the jails and also inside many prisons, a battle was raging for the national liberation of Black, Puerto Rican, Indigenous and Chicane people. A new revolutionary mood was sweeping the country to end all kinds of oppression.

Millions of people were protesting the Vietnam War. The women's liberation movement was beginning to blossom. Just two years later, the occupation of Wounded Knee by the American Indian Movement (AIM) took place.

The McKay Commission (New York State Special Commission on Attica) later commented: "With the exception of Indian massacres in the late 19th century, the State Police assault which ended the four-day prison uprising was the bloodiest one-day encounter between Americans since the Civil War."

### **Organizing behind the walls**

Serious organizing was going on inside Attica prior to the rebellion. Many of the groups outside the prison were reflected inside, including the Black Panther Party, the Young Lords, the Nation of Islam and the Five Percenters. Many had study groups. The Attica Liberation Faction developed in this period.

In July 1971, the Attica Liberation Faction presented a list of 27 demands to Commissioner of Corrections Russell Oswald and Gov. Nelson Rockefeller. This list of demands was based on the Folsom Prisoners' Manifesto crafted by Chicane prisoner Martin Sousa in support of a November 1970 prisoner strike in California. (For more background, see [Project NIA](#).)

Then, on Aug. 21, 1971, Black Panther leader George Jackson was gunned down by racist guards in California's San Quentin prison. Prisoners all across the country, including several hundred in Attica, went on hunger strikes. The assassination of George Jackson became the glue that allowed the Attica prisoners to unite across religions, nationalities and political factions.

## **The prisoners' Paris Commune**

On Sept. 9, Attica prisoners seized the facility. They took corrections officers hostage to ensure that their protest would be heard, since they had received no response to their manifesto from the corrections commissioner or governor.

While the events that took place on Sept. 9 were spontaneous and began as a clash between guards and prisoners, the level of organizing and what became a full-scale uprising were the result of the revolutionary leadership and consciousness that had grown during this period.

What's remarkable is the high degree of organization and discipline of the thousands of prisoners who took part. They elected a central committee, which rotated chairpeople; they organized a 33-person observers' committee, which included not only attorney William Kunstler, Black Panther Bobby Seale, New York State Assemblymember Arthur O. Eve, and representatives of the Young Lords, but also Tom Soto of the Prisoners Solidarity Committee.

Demands were continually being developed. A major one was amnesty for all prisoners.

Countless photos show the rows of tents, preparatory ditches and many of the other measures the prisoners organized. They voted on demands and rationed food and water for survival. During the entire occupation, the 40 hostages were treated humanely.

The concrete demands that developed during the insurrection included all aspects of survival in the prison, including health, food, ending solitary confinement, the right to visitation and a list of labor rights, including the right to a union and an end to exploitation.

The first time the working class took power into its own hands was the insurrection

known as the Paris Commune of 1871. The communards canceled rents, recognized women's rights, abolished child labor, took over workplaces and set up their own form of government. The commune served as a historical example to many revolutionary socialists of the potential for a workers' state. It was ultimately put down in blood, but the lessons remain.

A century later, on Sept. 13, 1971, Gov. Rockefeller ordered the storming of Attica prison. With helicopters flying overhead, close to 1,000 state troopers, national guard troops and prison guards fired into the yard, killing 39 people and wounding 85 in what can only be described as a massacre. This took place in just 15 minutes.

Many of those wounded received no medical care. The prisoners had no guns or bullets to defend themselves.

The press screamed that the 10 captive guards who died had their throats slit. But autopsies showed that all 10 had been shot to death by Rockefeller's storm troopers.

What happened in the immediate aftermath of the slaughter is too painful to fully describe. Prisoners were stripped naked, beaten, made to run through gauntlets of guards and brutally tortured. Guards stormed into the yard chanting "white power."

### **A battle cry for liberation**

Nevertheless, the Attica uprising and the massacre stirred prisoners everywhere. It's estimated that 200,000 prisoners protested and held strikes in its aftermath. The number of prison rebellions doubled.

It continues to serve as a beacon today for those fighting against racism and mass incarceration and for workers' rights everywhere.

To commemorate the 49th anniversary of the Attica uprising, the Prisoners

Solidarity Committee will hold an [online forum on Sept. 13, 2020](#). The webinar begins at 2 p.m. Pacific time, 4 p.m. Central and 5 p.m. Eastern.

The forum will feature the premiere of “Give Us the Freedom: Voices from the Vaughn Prison Uprising” by filmmaker Rasika Ruwanpathirana, as well as speakers, poetry and videos.

Endorsers include the Prisoners Solidarity Committee; the Peoples Power Assembly; the Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice; Struggle-La Lucha newspaper; the Socialist Unity Party/Partido de Socialismo Unido; Youth Against War & Racism; and Women in Struggle/Mujeres en Lucha.

To participate, please [register here](#).



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# **Philadelphia protest: Free Mumia! Free them all!**

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
September 25, 2020



Over 500 people came to Philadelphia's City Hall on July 4 to demand that Mumia Abu-Jamal be freed. It was the largest action inside Philadelphia for the imprisoned revolutionary Black writer in years.

Every July 4th, demonstrations are held for Mumia Abu-Jamal, who helped found Philadelphia's chapter of the Black Panther Party when he was 15 years old. That's because just before July 4, 1982, Abu-Jamal was falsely convicted and sentenced to death for the killing of policeman Daniel Faulkner.

After a long struggle, authorities were forced to take Jamal off death row in 2011.

Supporters gathered across from City Hall where the statue of Frank Rizzo used to stand. Rizzo was a fascist mayor during the 1970s and police commissioner in the 1960s who told his fellow bigots to "vote white."

Rizzo also threatened Jamal at a news conference. The recent removal of Rizzo's statue was a victory earned by struggle.

Pam Africa, the leader of the International Concerned Friends and Family of Mumia Abu-Jamal, started the rally. She demanded "Free them all!"

All the political prisoners, like Leonard Peltier, a leader of the American Indian Movement who has been imprisoned for over 40 years, and Black liberation fighter Mutulu Shakur have to come home. So do hundreds of thousands of other prisoners whose real crime was being poor.

### **Mumia speaks**

The rally was joined by a hundred people led by Red Fists Rising, who marched from the 30th Street train station. A Red Fists Rising member, an eight-year-old girl, helped lead chants.

Speakers reminded people they were standing on Indigenous land that was stolen.

Saudia Durrant, from the Philadelphia Student Union, spoke of how 350 cops in Philadelphia's schools cost \$30 million per year. This money could be used to hire hundreds of needed school nurses and counselors.

People marched around to the south side of City Hall, and rallied in front of the statue of Octavius Catto, the Black school principal and political leader who was murdered by racists on election day, Oct. 10, 1871.

Then Mumia Abu-Jamal called in from prison and spoke to the rally. He quoted Frederick Douglass: "Power concedes nothing without a demand."

"This is a special time," said Mumia, referring to the millions of people in the streets demanding that Black lives matter. "I love you all."

"I think I will be with you. We will meet in the whirlwind," said Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Pam Africa, who is also the minister of confrontation of the MOVE organization, wound up the rally. She said that 2020 is the year when the last of the MOVE 9 political prisoners got out of jail.

The power structure said they would never be released. But, as Pam Africa said, "We made liars of them."

The power of the people that tore down Rizzo's statue will free Mumia Abu-Jamal and all political prisoners.



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# What to a Prisoner is the Fourth of July?

written by Struggle - La Lucha

September 25, 2020

*On the occasion of Nelson Mandela's visit to Philadelphia in 1993.*

“At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh! Had I the ability and could I reach the nation's ear. I would, today pour out a stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke. For it is not light that is needed but fire, it is not the gentle shower, but thunder. We need the storm, the whirlwind, the earthquake. The feeling of the nation must be quickened; the conscience of the nation must be roused; the propriety of the nation must be startled; the hypocrisy of the nation must be exposed; and its crimes against God and man must be proclaimed and denounced.

“What to the American slave is your 4th of July? I answer; a day that reveals to him, more than all the other days in the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to

which he is the constant victim. To him your celebration is a sham; your boasted liberty an unholy license; your national greatness, swelling vanity; your sounds of rejoicing are empty and heartless; your denunciation of tyrants, brass-fronted impudence. To the slave your shouts of liberty and equality are hollow mockery; your prayers and hymns, your sermons and thanksgivings, with all your religious parade and solemnity, are to him mere bombast, fraud, deception, impiety and hypocrisy! A thin veil to cover up crimes, which would disgrace a nation of savages! There is not a nation on the earth guilty of practices, more shocking and bloody, than are the people of these United States at this very hour”

— Frederick Douglass July 5, 1852.

July 4, 1993, saw African National Congress President Nelson Mandela in Philadelphia quoting this Fredrick Douglass speech as he accepted the Liberty medal along with South African State President F. W. de Klerk. If the joint presence of Mandela and de Klerk were not enough to stir controversy, then the award presenters, Philadelphia Mayor Ed Rendell and U.S President Bill Clinton, certainly stoked controversy amongst radicals. Hundreds of Black Philadelphians, while certainly admirers of Mandela, took umbrage at de Klerk’s presence.

Although we the awarders are known as “We the People-Philadelphia,” the actual everyday people of Philadelphia had little say in choosing the Liberty medal awardees and less say in rejecting the widely unpopular honoree de Klerk. The choice of Liberty medalists was not made by the people, but by corporate Philadelphia, big business.

Why? Why were the people, many of whom have worked for more than twenty years against apartheid and for Mandela’s release frozen out, their protests against de Klerk all but ignored? When the African majority takes power in South Africa, U.S big business wants friends there. If one reads the names of corporate sponsors of

the Liberty medal, it sounds like a roll call of the Chamber of Commerce: Unisons Corp, Pennsylvania Bell and the like.

Mandela, who has not voted in the government elections in seventy-four years,\* and de Klerk president, by way of election counting only minority non-Black votes, has only the hope of liberty no more.

The white minority in South Africa has done its level best to stifle African liberty for three hundred years.

The African majority even after the awards still isn't free.

From death row, this is Mumia Abu-Jamal

*\* In 1994, after the first elections during which Black people could vote, Nelson Mandela was elected president of South Africa.*

*Reprinted from "All Things Censored," essays by Mumia Abu-Jamal*



# Never forget Shaka Sankofa

written by Struggle - La Lucha

September 25, 2020

Shaka Sankofa was executed 20 years ago on June 22, 2000. Texas governor and future president, George W. Bush, conducted the legal lynching in Huntsville.

Sankofa spent half his life on death row. He was only 17 years old when he arrived there in 1981. Then known as Gary Graham, he was framed for the murder of Bobby Lambert, a drug dealer and police informer.

Lambert was killed next to a Houston supermarket. Six thousand dollars was found on his body. Obviously, this was a contract killing, not a robbery.

So why did the cops and district attorney pin the rap on Sankofa, a convicted robber? Was it just convenient? Or was it part of a cover-up?

Six eyewitnesses said Sankofa wasn't the shooter. Four people who said they were with him at the time of Lambert's murder passed lie detector tests.

Two workers at the supermarket who got a good look at the killer said Sankofa wasn't the shooter. These witnesses were never interviewed by Sankofa's court-appointed attorney. Nor were they called to testify.

Bernadine Skillern was the main witness to identify Shaka Sankofa as the shooter of Bobby Lambert. She claimed to have seen Sankofa's face for a few seconds through her car windshield at a distance of 30 to 40 feet.

That was enough for a jury to send the African American teenager to his death. Three of these jurors later signed affidavits saying they would have voted differently if they had known all the evidence.

## **Executed to get Bush elected**

The hustler Malcolm Little entered Walpole State Prison in Massachusetts and left as Malcolm X. Gary Graham went to death row in Texas and died as the revolutionary Shaka Sankofa.

After changing his life and educating himself, Gary Graham took the name of the African military genius Shaka Zulu.

Even Pope John Paul II pleaded with Texas Gov. George W. Bush not to execute Sankofa. So did the Rev. Jesse Jackson and the Congressional Black Caucus.

Bush went ahead and murdered him. Sankofa's execution was part of Bush's election campaign for president.

This war criminal killed hundreds of thousands of people in Iraq while he was in the White House.

The U.S. Supreme Court would later outlaw the execution of those who had been minors when they allegedly committed murder. This 2005 ruling came too late for Shaka Sankofa and 21 other inmates who had been sent to death row as teenagers and executed between 1985 and 2003.

As he lay strapped to a gurney, with poison about to flow through his veins, Sankofa remained defiant. "They know I'm innocent," he said. "Keep marching, Black people. They are killing me tonight. They are murdering me tonight."

Around the world, millions of people are marching against racism and police murders in the United States.

Among those moved by Shaka Sankofa's courage was a white cheerleader from the prison town of Huntsville. This young woman joined the protest against the



execution after finishing practice.

Texas is filled with poor people — Black, Indigenous, Latinx and white. They will avenge Shaka Sankofa.



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# **#FreeThemAll caravan honors Marlyn Barnes**

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
September 25, 2020

Baltimore — Marlyn Barnes would have turned 32 years old on May 14 if he had not died in custody at the Harford County Detention Center last year. The jail claims he committed suicide, but his family has not gotten the answers they need from the authorities, and they continue to fight for truth and justice in his case.

The number of reported suicide deaths at Harford County jail is alarming. In April, another prisoner allegedly died as a result of suicide.

The Barnes family and the Prisoners Solidarity Committee of the Peoples Power

Assembly have continued to press for answers in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and to amplify the demands of prisoners locked up in Maryland jails, who have demanded personal protective equipment (PPE), adequate showers, soap, hand sanitizer and much more.

On May 14, the Barnes family, and PSC and PPA supporters drove a block-long car caravan to the Baltimore City jail complex to underscore the demand to #FreeThemAll. When the caravan reached the jail, prisoners shouted out of their cell windows thanking them.

The caravan then traveled as a procession to the home of Marlyn Barnes' mother and to the nearby Gwynn Oak Park, a designated civil rights site where a historic protest against segregation took place in 1963. Family members had gathered at the park for a social-distance commemoration of Marlyn Barnes. They lit 32 candles and raised balloons in his honor.

Cars were not only decorated with signs and banners declaring "Justice for Marlyn Barnes," "Free Them All," and demanding PPE and testing for prisoners, but also calling for "Justice for Ahmaud Arbery!"

Andre Powell of the Prisoners Solidarity Committee stated, "Everywhere we drove, we were received with enthusiastic support — people clapping, raising fists and shouting 'Yes!'"

*SLL photos: Sharon Black*



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# **Free them all now! National day of protest May 30**

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
September 25, 2020

The recently refounded National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression (NAARPR) calls upon all its members, comrades, friends and allies to join in a national day of protest on May 30, 2020, at 3 p.m. Eastern Standard Time.

We as a movement have been agitated into taking mass, united action, not by the pandemic alone, but even more significantly by the federal government and the financial lords and barons of Wall Street who, driven by their own greed and lust for political power, are willing to sacrifice the lives, health, safety and well-being of the people; who deem their profits and their continuing plunder of the national treasury more important than the lives of the people.

We will be protesting to stop the racist murder and violence that this administration has willfully unleashed. Not only is the government standing by as COVID-19 ravages African American, Latinx and Indigenous communities — inciting mass

Black death with its calls to reopen the economy — but the police and racist vigilantes continue to brazenly hunt and kill Black folks while they sleep in their beds and on open roads in broad daylight. We are protesting the murders of Ahmaud Arbery in Brunswick, Ga., and Breonna Taylor in Louisville, Ky., because they are outrages that demand justice. This lynch-style, racist terrorism must stop, and perpetrators must be punished.

We are calling for this united action to protest genocidal government policies that have allowed city and county jails, federal and state prisons, juvenile detention jails and immigrant detention centers to become hotbeds for COVID-19 infections and death camps for millions. Who are the human beings incarcerated in these so-called correctional facilities?

They are overwhelmingly oppressed Black and Brown people, LGBTQ and Trans people and poor white, working-class people. They come to jails and prisons in large part from the 140 million poor people living in the U.S. They cannot voluntarily social distance themselves. Their confinement prevents them from taking action to protect themselves from death-causing infections. Their continued imprisonment under these circumstances is an act of genocide.

We must help them. The prisoners of Cook County jail in Chicago managed to write on one of the windows of the jail: HELP WE MATTER 2.

We are calling this united action to help protect all prisoners from COVID-19 infections and death by demanding that all prisoners be liberated from the death camps that U.S. prisons have become. We demand that the president, governors and mayors, prosecutors and judges take immediate steps to depopulate jails, prisons, immigrant detention centers and juvenile facilities.

We are calling this united action to demand the immediate release of all political prisoners and the wrongfully convicted survivors of torture immediately. These

prisoners can be released by pardons, commutation of sentences, paroles, furloughs, signature bonds, prosecutors dropping charges and judges granting probations. The federal and state governments have plenty of means for meeting our demands and no reason to deny them other than greed and profiteering off of private prisons and prison labor, the still-legal form of slavery under the 13th Amendment.

We will mobilize for car caravan protests and social distancing protests throughout the country. In united action, we will stand up, fight back and resist to exist. We will not now or ever stand in silence in the face of the crimes of the government perpetrated against oppressed peoples and the working class. We must make certain that there is resistance throughout the land in order to have a new and better world after we overcome this pandemic.

*Struggle-La Lucha newspaper and the Socialist Unity Party/Partido de Socialismo Unido are members of the NAARPR.*

Source: [NAARPR.org](https://www.naarpr.org)

