

# PALESTINE, SIMPLE HUMAN CONSCIENCE & MATISYAHU

by swaneagle fitzgerald 2/8/18

For the past several years i have learned much about the situation in Palestine. In late 2016, i brought Iyad Burnat to Vashon, WA. The rug was pulled out from under me by a venue i secured months earlier due to overbooking. Then there was a delay in Iyad obtaining his visa, so i was unable to sufficiently advertise this important event. Consequently, very few people attended Iyad's talk and power point which ended up being quite a ways from town. It was discouraging, but several people expressed deep interest in Iyad's nonviolent struggle against illegal Israeli settlements and the intrusive apartheid wall cutting farmers off from their crops and olive trees that have been used by their ancestors for thousands of years.

Currently, the US funded Israeli Occupation Forces have been arresting and imprisoning children for throwing rocks or using sling shots against the wall. The military on the other hand is well equipped with every new chemical, sound, and lethal weapon imaginable. In fact, the police at Standing Rock were trained in Israel as are many police forces in the US. The weapons used against the Water Protectors are the same ones used against unarmed Palestinians.

No one was shot to death at Standing Rock, though many suffered serious injuries. However, in Palestine unarmed people, including children and women, are shot dead everyday and it is getting worse. Gaza, the largest open air refugee camp in the world, not only endures only a few hours daily of electricity and access to potable water but is now being bombed frequently by Israeli fighter jets.

Palestine has no military. Hamas and the Palestinian Authority have failed their people in many ways, one being the use of retaliatory rockets. The number of Israelis killed by Palestinians is a tiny fraction of killings caused by Israeli forces and settlers. It is a stark example of how striking, yet ignored, is the largely nonviolent resistance against heavily armed and brutal Israeli Occupation Forces. That those who are struggling to hang on to the remnants of their land are called terrorists is very similar to the current demonization of immigrant and Muslim people in the US.

There are over 700 Palestinian children imprisoned by Israeli forces. One young teen, Ahed Tamimi, just turned 17 a few days ago in prison. She has been defying heavily armed soldiers all her young life. She slapped an Israeli soldier who had just shot her cousin in the face; her cousin had suffered serious injuries including causing a coma. She and her mother were arrested shortly after this incident and both remain in prison.

Iyad Burnat's son Abdul Khaliq was arrested several months ago while he and 2 of his friends were going for pizza. They have been charged with throwing rocks and using sling shots which damaged the wall during past actions. Abdul is 17. A few days ago, Iyad traveled to Turkey to visit his oldest son, Majd, 19, who was in the hospital for a severe injury to his leg from a bullet fired by an Israeli soldier several years ago. He is awaiting surgery because he cannot feel his foot.

Iyad was to continue to the US from Turkey for a speaking tour, but while he was with Majd, the Israeli Occupation Forces barged into his home in the middle night to arrest his 15-year-old son Mohammed who is now in prison with his older brother. Iyad cancelled his speaking tour to return home. (Several days ago, Mohammed was released.)

In November 2016 i also set up a speaking event for Iyad in Seattle at the American Friends Service Committee building in the University District. It was during this event that i was able to meet the mother of Rachel Corrie, Cindy Corrie. In 2003, Rachel was a student at Evergreen State College in Olympia when she blocked an Israeli bulldozer headed to destroy the home of a Palestinian doctor. The bulldozer ran over Rachel though she had made eye contact with the driver as she called out and



was wearing an orange safety vest. Not only did he run her over, he backed up over her body leaving her crushed. Her friend ran to her side. Rachel's last words were, "I think my back is broken." Rachel was a member of the International Solidarity Movement cofounded by both Jews and Palestinians devoted to nonviolent resistance to the occupation, theft of land and life in Palestine.

After working closely for a week with Iyad and spending time with Cindy Corrie, my concern about Palestine deepened. Cindy and her husband Craig have continued Rachel's work with Palestinians living in Gaza. Iyad had really wanted to go to Standing Rock. But the chance we had to go conflicted with his remaining speaking tour. Several Palestinians were able to make it there in solidarity. Cindy's Rachel Corrie Foundation has featured speakers in Olympia from Palestine and Indigenous people who have been to Standing Rock reinforcing the connection of theft of land and life struggles of Indigenous peoples in the US endure under colonialist ongoing genocide and the resistance of Palestinians to Israeli occupation.

Several months ago i had an art exhibit, and my favorite piece was a drawing i did after learning about the largest nonviolent action in current times by Palestinians at Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. While 10,000 Muslims prayed, Israeli Occupation Forces unleashed tear gas on those people gathered outside the mosque. I drew 3 Muslim women outside the mosque with tear gas rising. One day i was showing my friend my art. A man was standing in front of my piece inspired by Palestine. I told him it was my work. He told me it was a lie. I spent the next 45 minutes trying to talk to him. I asked him if we could take our discussion outside as his voice was quite heated. I did what i could to share my knowledge, but he has been to Israel and claimed to have been to Palestine. He had nothing good to say and my efforts were pointless. So i told him we needed to stop. I left and went to buy some groceries. I felt very troubled and worried because he was so angry, so returned to where my art was and asked if i should take it down, but was told i had dealt with the situation in a good way. So i went home. The next day i took another friend to see my art, but it was gone. The guy called complaining, so it was taken down and put in a paper bag. It shocked me.

Now i see that Matisyahu is performing at Vashon Center For The Arts on February 17. He is a pro Israeli occupation Jewish American reggae/hip hop/rap artist who has performed for Friends of Israel Defense Forces fundraisers as well as the AIPAC conventions. He also says his work is not "political", yet he performs for the right wing lobby group American Israel Public Affairs Committee, one of

the most powerful pro Israeli occupation lobby groups in the United States. Matisyahu's music is featured in Israeli propaganda films. He also has pulled the plug on Jewish performers who opposed the occupation of Palestine.

Israel was promised \$38 billion in military aid by Obama in 2016. It is the single largest such package in US history. Israel has the most technologically advanced military in the world and is the most powerful in the Middle East. This is a hint at the extreme disadvantage that Palestine confronts with mostly rocks and sling shots. As a result of meeting Iyad, i also have been able to see for myself the daily horrors foisted upon the people of Palestine by Israeli forces due to photos and videos made by Palestinians. This dangerous work displays the extreme disparity between impoverished people and an over armed ruthless military. Those who so courageously stand against these daily incursions are risking their lives in filming the horrors their people endure. Yet few in the US know about how horrible it truly is because both the US and Israel are very successful in painting the Palestinians as terrorists and use the occasional firing of rockets by Hamas as proof. Hamas does not represent the most vulnerable people. Those whose very long nonviolent resistance to what is being done to displace, imprison and kill them deserve full voice that has yet to be allowed by the US, Israel and all who have vested interest in silencing authentic resistance.

The following is from an interview on Democracy Now:  
"OMAR BARGHOUTI: Well, I think we saw that, especially after the 2004 decision by the International Court of Justice against Israel's wall built in the Occupied Territories as illegal, that the world failed to move to bring Israel to account on just this one crime, let alone its denial of refugee rights, its apartheid system, its occupation. So, my colleagues and I thought that we cannot live forever just waiting for the "international community," under U.S. hegemony, to act to bring Israel to account for its obligations under international law. We had to take the South African path, so to speak, to bring Israel to account by citizens around the world, institutions around the world, civil society, getting together and taking measures that would isolate Israel academically, culturally, economically, and eventually impose sanctions on it, as was done against South Africa. So I was moved with a lot of personal experiences of repression under Israel's regime of occupation and apartheid."

As the situation in Palestine worsens everyday, i will stand vigil outside Matisyahu's performance for authentic peace and justice.

For more info on the Boycot, Divestment and Sanction movement against Israel see the following links online:  
<https://bdsmovement.net/what-is-bds/>;  
<https://www.facebook.com/BDSNationalCommittee/>;  
<https://jewschool.com/2015/08/37644/thoughts-on-matisyahu-and-bds/>

## James Acuna, RJ Donovan CF prisoner, was found dead in cell 3 days after death

The San Diego County Medical Examiner's Office released a report earlier this month ruling that James Acuna's cause and manner of death at the state prison in Otay Mesa were "undetermined." The M.E. noted that it was possible the 58-year-old prisoner died of natural causes during his third prison term, although this didn't exclude that his death might have been a homicide. At the time of his death last year, the San Diego Sheriff's Department admitted that Acuna had been dead two to three days before his corpse was found.

According to press reports, the investigative narrative and autopsy report — in which any information gleaned from medical records is redacted — says Acuna was found dead in his cell in the late morning of April 24, 2017, with his blanket pulled over his head. At one point, the stench from the cell brought complaints from other inmates and prompted staffers to put in a work order, on the basis that there was a sewer problem.

It seems inconceivable that prison staff members were unaware of Acuna's death for as much as 72 hours, given routine daily head counts conducted at RJDCF, including a count during which inmates are required to stand at their cell doors. Sheriff's homicide detectives investigated and determined that there was no homicide. Sheriff's Lt. Rich Williams told the press several factors went into that conclusion, including the absence of visible trauma. He claimed investigators looked at "the overall totality of the circumstances surrounding the death."

Neither the sheriff nor a spokesperson with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, would identify or discuss Acuna's cellmate, who did not report the death, citing privacy reasons. And as to how the death could have gone unnoticed for at least two days, the CDCR-R spokeswoman, Vicky Waters, said that question remains under scrutiny. "Our internal and administrative investigations are still on going," Waters said, "and once they are concluded, we will hold staff accountable if any wrongdoing is found."

Other prisoners last saw Acuna on April 21, 2017 — three days before he was found dead — when he was playing soccer. At that time, he had no complaints, according to the autopsy report. The next day, an inmate stopped by Acuna's cell, but Acuna's cellmate shooed him away, telling him not to come in because Acuna — on the bottom bunk under a blanket — had the flu.

The autopsy stated that Acuna had various ailments but documented no natural disease or



Prisoners on the yard at RJ Donovan Corr. Facility in Otay Mesa, from SD Union Tribune. Previous scandal involved guards smuggling contraband.

traumatic injury. Although he was not showing any symptoms that he was ailing when he was last seen, Acuna could have died of natural causes. The redacted report notes that a homicide could not be completely excluded.

Acuna went to prison in 1984, on a six-year sentence for committing a robbery with a firearm, and then again in 2000, when he received an eight-year sentence for burglary. He was considered a second-striker when he went to prison in October 2014, to serve a 16-year sentence for assault with a deadly weapon.

# The Committee's Response to Michael Novick's Self-Criticism Regarding His Relationship with General T.A.C.O./Mischa Culton and The Black Riders Liberation Party

What follows is the response of The Committee of the Afrikan People's Liberation Tribunal (The Committee) to the self-criticism of Michael Novick published in the January 1, 2018 edition of *Turning the Tide* (Vol 30 #1, Jan-March 2018). The self-criticism can be accessed online at <https://ara-la.tumblr.com/post/169434294415/self-criticism-rectification>.

While the general tone of the self-criticism appears positive in Novick's renouncing of his errors for supporting Mischa Culton aka General T.A.C.O. (Taking All Capitalists Out) of the Black Riders Liberation Party (BRLP), its intent is undermined and compromised by an apparent failure to respect the process that led to the sanctions against him and Culton in the first place, as well as several critical misstatements of fact and fabrications.

## BACKGROUND TO THE TRIBUNAL

Before we get to the actual response some background is necessary. The Afrikan People's Liberation Tribunal (APLT) was officially born in 2014. The Tribunal came about as a result of the investigation of a number of disturbing and alarming allegations including rape, torture and theft, by or under the direction of Culton, a founder and leader of the BRLP. Both the allegations against Culton and the attempts to investigate them spanned a number of years. Once enough evidence had been assembled – primarily in

surveillance and frame-ups, and false operations for its work and its espousing of revolutionary, anti-capitalist theory and practice amongst active gang members and others in Los Angeles. Many of the members of the Tribunal (The Committee and the Panel) had been supporters of the BRLP in one capacity or another over the years. This insured that the BRLP's history of work in Los Angeles' Afrikan community was known and understood. A listing of the Tribunal members is at the end of this document.

At that time, the Tribunal consisted of: 1) a committee of individuals ("The Committee") who investigated the allegations against Culton and helped to organize the Tribunal with logistics (securing a location, publicity, etc.) and recruiting members of the Panel; 2) A panel of members of the community consisting primarily of trustworthy activists known to have exhibited good judgment and courage in difficult situations which was a cross-section of individuals from the Black community of Los Angeles – former members of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, Nation of Islam, formerly incarcerated individuals/re-entry workers, gang intervention workers, Revolutionary Nationalists and Pan Afrikanists. The Panel would listen to the testimony and ask questions of the accusers and of Culton. Most of The Panel members were considered Elders in the community; and 3) an Okyeame (pronounced Ahh-Chee-Ahh-May), a judicial administrator who insured the ground rules of the Tribunal were understood and adhered to. The Tribunal's procedures facilitated the process of open questioning of witnesses by members of The Panel and the Okyeame.

It was after much deliberation that the decision was made to publicly issue allegations against Mischa Culton and not the BRLP as an organization. Culton's leadership over the BRLP is akin to that of a cult leader who has sole authority over his members. When we informed Culton that the Tribunal would be based on the allegations against him and not the BRLP, the response from both Culton and the BRLP was – and has remained – "we are one and the same." While there have been many defections from the BRLP since the Tribunal, the remaining members of the BRLP have steadfastly refused to distance themselves from their leader. So be it.

Summaries of the allegations against Culton; testimony of former members of the BRLP; the findings of The Panel; a statement on the process of the Tribunal, and the decision of The Panel to impose sanctions on Culton are available at the link at the end of this document.

The mission of the Tribunal was and continues to be to end the harm Culton was inflicting on 1) the cadre in his organization; 2) the community; 3) BRLP supporters; 4) the children who were at risk for harm, and 5) the Movement itself. It is in this spirit that the APLT stated that all those who support Culton or help him to subvert the sanctions did so at their own risk and could have the sanctions extended to them. The Tribunal itself was held in Watts, California in May, 2014. In June, 2014, the Panel issued findings that Culton had committed various offenses against members of the BRLP, supporters, and the Black Nation. On November 1, 2014, the Panel, The Committee, and the Okyeame issued the sanctions against Culton that would eventually be extended to Novick.

## BACKGROUND TO THE SANCTIONS ON MICHAEL NOVICK

Michael Novick is a white anti-imperialist and anti-racist organizer who has been based in the Los Angeles area for decades. Novick's history of work includes support for New Afrikan, Puerto Rican and Native American political prisoners/prisoners of war, as well as white anti-imperialist freedom fighters and eco-warriors; solidarity with all oppressed peoples/nations; anti-

Zionism and anti-fascist work. He has been a political and material supporter of the Black Riders Liberation Party under the leadership of Culton for several years.

As a member of Anti-Racist Action and as publisher of *Turning the Tide* newsletter, Novick's publications and uncritical material and political support of Culton's leadership over the BRLP allowed Culton's lies about his crimes and his lies about the Tribunal to be promoted to those who were and are imprisoned, as well as other comrades throughout the world who are isolated from the truth. On July 15, 2015, The Committee initiated contact with Michael Novick regarding his continuing support of Culton in spite of the sanctions issued by the Tribunal. After numerous email communications to resolve the blatant disregard of the Tribunal's decision by Michael Novick, the sanctions against Culton were extended to Novick on December 13, 2015 at the Jackson/Freeman Black Panther Party Alumni Breakfast in Los Angeles.

Most recently, The Committee received an email from Novick in May of 2017 asking if the sanctions could be reconsidered; we replied they could not. Mind you – at no time did Novick adhere to the sanctions and continued to give political and material aid to Culton and the BRLP under Culton's leadership without any explanation. It appears that the impetus behind Novick's email request was his concern about exclusion from White People for Black Lives (who were initially unaware of the sanctions against him but honored them once they found out) and not being able to contribute to the group's political development. At no time did Novick express an understanding of the reasons behind the sanctions or offer an explanation for his continued support of Culton. After requesting a face-to-face meeting with Novick on this question a conversation was held with him at Chucos Justice Center on July 16, 2017. Novick was asked at this meeting if his reasons for not adhering to the sanctions against Culton and the BRLP were due to threats to his physical safety or that of his family; his answer was no. Novick did not give a coherent answer for his refusal to honor the sanctions. When given a hard copy of the Tribunal documents (allegations against Culton, findings of the Tribunal, etc.) Novick's response was that he "had to think about" his abandoning support of Culton and recognizing the Tribunal sanctions and that he would get back to us.

When Novick finally got back to us, in December of 2017, he informed us that he had notified the BRLP that he would be ending his support of them.

What Novick neglected to tell us is that his decision to finally end material and political support of the BRLP under the leadership of Culton came about after pressure to support the sanctions was put on him by white and other anti-racist/anti-imperialist comrades in the Torch Anti-Fascist Network that he is a part of. Due to a Xicano anti-fascist comrade's alerting the Network that Novick was under sanctions, the Network did their own investigation and informed Novick that they were withdrawing their support from him for his failure to honor the sanctions.

Let us state for the record: Michael Novick's decision to issue this self-criticism and honor the sanctions of the Afrikan Peoples' Liberation Tribunal came only after the pressure placed on him by euro-american and other comrades; which comes after liberal democrats in the U.S. empire led their own campaign to oust sexual abusers from their seats of power. It is truly a sad commentary on the concept of anti-imperialist solidarity, and shows a lack respect for the leadership and self-determining efforts of Afrikan people.

## THE COMMITTEE'S RESPONSE TO NOVICK'S SELF-CRITICISM

The first paragraph of Novick's self-criticism states, "I incorrectly allowed my personal loyalty and indebtedness

the form of live and recorded testimony by community members and former members of the BRLP – a decision was made that the allegations were serious enough that Culton should be brought before the Afrikan community in the form of a Tribunal. The investigation; procedures; structure; format; and tribunal were formulated by long-time revolutionary activists based on revolutionary principles. As we publicly stated on January 2, 2015:

"A MODEL FOR A PEOPLES COURT" from Safiyah Bukhari's book "The War Before" influenced the creation of the Afrikan Peoples Liberation Tribunal. Bukhari was a founder of the Jericho Movement, a former prisoner of war/political prisoner, a former member of the Black Panther Party, and a veteran of the Harriet Tubman Brigade and the Amistad Collective of the Black Liberation Army."

Prior to setting up the Tribunal, The Committee made at least two attempts to discuss the allegations with Culton to give him the opportunity to respond to them in a non-public forum.

The BRLP considered itself a revolutionary, para-military organization; it sometimes referred to itself as a "New Generation Black Panther Party," comprised of former gang members and other lumpen-proletariat, children of activists and revolutionaries, and militant college students. The BRLP has been a documented victim of governmental

to the BRLP, because they had had my back repeatedly around threats from white supremacists." The BRLP are not the only ones who have ever ensured Novick's physical safety.

This statement by Novick ignores the efforts of Committee member Jitu Sadiki in helping to provide security for him when he was threatened by Greek fascists and ignores the collective security organized by Committee member James Simmons to protect Novick and his anti-nazi organizing when threatened by the National Socialist Movement.

We find it incredible that Novick saw the self-determining efforts of The Committee and the Tribunal as a "dispute within the Black Liberation Movement which I wanted to avoid intervening in." In reality, Novick did intervene by actively providing Culton with the means to attack the comrades and supporters of the Tribunal process who were attempting to protect the cadre of the BRLP and the community from Culton's crimes.

Novick's self-criticism fails to deal with the explicit and implicit death threats against Culton's critics by Culton's persistent spreading of the potentially deadly lie that his critics were part of a Cointelpro operation, particularly those defecting from the BRLP and those associated with The Committee and the Tribunal. These threats do not require Culton to order a hit or lift a finger to kill: all it requires is that ignorant and non-critical thinking sisters and brothers move on their own to eliminate "snitches" and "agents" of Cointelpro in order to protect the movement. Fortunately, no one has attempted a physical assault against Culton's critics as far as we know.

Novick also did not address the status of the BRLP's African Intercommunal News Service paper, the printed source of much of the lies and propaganda in support of Culton. In order to comply with the sanctions, Novick must cease all material and political support to Culton and any organization that supports him. As recently as February 3, 2018 there was a report that a person selling *Turning the Tide* at an event at a Baptist Church in Venice stated that in spite of Novick's self-criticism, the charges against Culton were "Cointelpro." Incredibly, Culton's primary internal supporter, Laa Laa Shakur, was observed selling *Turning the Tide* near Crenshaw and Manchester Sunday afternoon on February 11, 2018, just as she and other cadre have been doing to support Culton for years in spite of the sanctions. Novick must address this apparent continued material support of Culton.

Novick published several misstatements of facts and/or fabrications relating to the "procedures or findings of The Committee and the Tribunal" in his self-criticism. In paragraph eleven of his self-criticism, Novick spuriously stated, "I don't think the Tribunal should have considered the BRLP's silence as proof of guilt." The Tribunal only considered allegations against Culton and did not consider any charges against the BRLP. Culton's silence was not used against him and was cited only for the purpose of noting that he had not presented either a factual or any other defense. There was one allegation and several sub-allegations that the Panel found insufficient evidence on and thus, could make no findings of Culton's culpability. This included the horrendous torture of Meztli of the Brown Riders who we could not locate to take her statement as she had fled the state in fear that Culton would kill her.

Neither The Committee nor the Tribunal alleged that the BRLP was enriching itself at the peoples' expense, only that Culton did. By enriching we meant using the monies raised for support of BRLP programs, or BRLP members who were imprisoned, for his personal income. This was borne out by testimony from several individuals including progressive community merchants who had

*See: "The Committee, p. 6*

# New Classes for a New Class Politics:

## An Appreciation of David Gilbert's *Looking at the U.S. White Working Class Historically*

by Gabriel Kuhn

I spent the past weekend writing a German review of the new Kersplebedeb edition of David Gilbert's *Looking at the U.S. White Working Class Historically*, originally published in 1984. While the original publication mainly consisted of Gilbert's reviews of three relevant publications – Ted Allen's pamphlet *White Supremacy in the U.S./ Slavery and the Origins of Racism*, W.E.B. DuBois's classic *Black Reconstruction in America*, and J. Sakai's underground favorite *Settlers* – the new edition contains plenty of extra material, including Gilbert's essays "Some Lessons from the Sixties" (1991) and "After the Sixties: Reaction and Restructuring" (2017), as well as comments on the original piece by J. Sakai.

The review I wrote was specifically aimed at a German-speaking audience, so there is little point in translating it here. However, I would like to name five aspects that I found particularly intriguing in a book that I recommend wholeheartedly to anyone interested in anti-racist and anti-imperialist class organizing.

### 1. White Workers and the Revolutionary Project

"There is very little analysis, and even less practice, that is both real about the nature and consciousness of the white working class and yet holds out the prospect of organizing a large number on a revolutionary basis." This is Gilbert's point of departure. It is of great importance for radical organizing, perhaps particularly here in Europe where the white working class – largely made responsible for the rise of the far right, similar to the situation in the U.S. – remains a demographic large enough to turn the idea of revolutionary mass organizing without it into a farce. In reference to Redneck Revolt, an organization that has received a fair amount of attention even in Europe, Noel Ignatiev has written the following on this blog:

"American history shows that any political group, left, right or center, that fails to challenge in practice the white community and the institutions and patterns that maintain it will reinforce an identity that has led countless potentially progressive movements to ruin and whose capacity to do harm is by no means exhausted – no matter how vigorously it denounces "racism" and capitalism and how many coalitions it enters with non-whites. Simply put, white people organized as whites are dangerous to the working class and to humanity ... and this is true regardless of the intentions of the organizers."

This might be true, but organizations based on whiteness and organizations with the aim to primarily mobilize and organize among the white working class are not the same thing. The latter are mandatory if we don't want to simply abandon this part of the population and hand it to the right on a silver platter. This would be disastrous, particularly here in Europe. It is what makes the perspective offered by Gilbert so important: "We white radicals have a particular

responsibility and crying need to organize as many white people as possible to break from imperialism and to see that their long term interests, as human beings and for a livable future for their children, lie in allying with the rest of humanity." And: "We can't afford to repeat the old errors of once again floundering on the dilemma of either 'joining' the working class's white supremacy or of abandoning our responsibility to organize a broader movement."

### 2. The Meaning of Culture

Gilbert writes about the 1960s:

"The main base for the anti-imperialist movement of the 60s was a social movement of youth, heavily impacted and in many ways generated by Black culture. As the movement developed, it involved increasing numbers of working-class youth, who played a major role in the movement's growth and heightened militancy. This extension showed ... the ability of culture to be a bridge to deepening the class base of a social movement." (p. 44)

There are two particular lessons to be drawn from this:

One, it shows that even if the juxtaposition of class and culture is a reality causing much havoc in the left today, it is based on wrong assumptions. There is no contradiction, unless we create it.

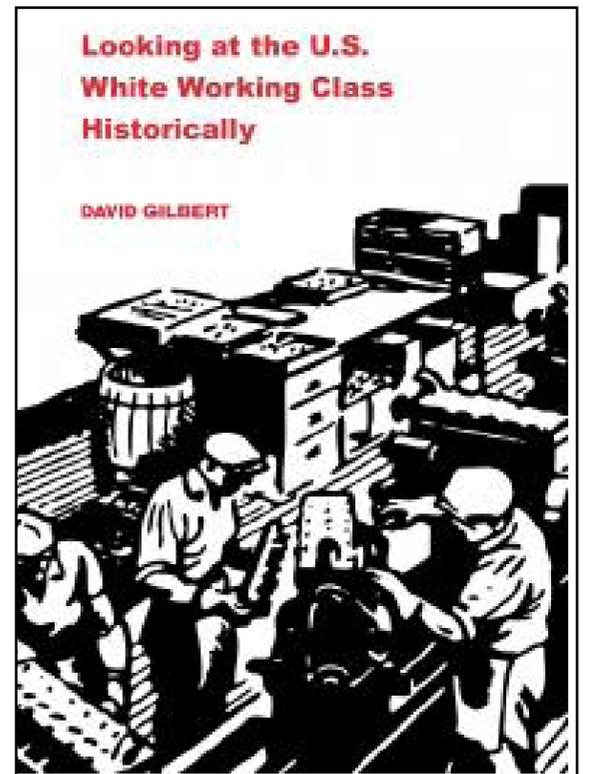
Two, it reveals the shortcomings of an essentialist understanding of cultural appropriation that does not make the critical distinction between random, offensive, and commercial use of cultural expressions on the one hand, and considerate, respectful, and curious cultural interaction on the other. The latter does not exploit culture but create culture, which is per se progressive. To deny this means to rob ourselves of one of the most promising ways to transgress the structural divisions between communities that the system imposes on us.

### 3. A New Class Politics

Gilbert writes that it is "an urgent priority ... to look for the places where movements for justice can best organize white people for their long term interests on an anti-imperialist, anti-racist, anti-sexist basis." This echoes the discussions about a new class politics that presently occupy large parts of the German-speaking left. Together with Sebastian Friedrich, I have written about this in an article for Counterpunch, which was mirrored on this blog.

### 4. Quality of Life vs. Standard of Living

In his essay "After the Sixties," Gilbert makes a distinction that we rarely encounter in anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist organizing: "The Left shouldn't try to outdo imperialism in promising workers at home a 'higher standard of living.' Instead, we have to show how we can work toward a better quality of life, especially for our children." This is crucial [in order that] people be reached with an honest and sustainable message. If we only



measure a good life by people's access to material goods, there is an objective reason for the white working classes to defend the imperialist status quo. In order for them to embrace a revolutionary project, they must also embrace different values.

### 5. New Classes

Finally, J. Sakai hits an enlightening note in his 1992 comments on Gilbert's piece. He writes:

"To me, the main point is that in seeing Classes as they really are, in their historical materialist development and in their daily lives, we learn that truly change-oriented classes are new classes. Young, being born in the contradictions of social structures. Young classes that are self-consciously creating themselves as much as they are being created by anonymous social-economic forces. The young euro-bourgeoisie was once such a class: bold, adventurous, reshaping the world through a revolution in the arts and sciences as much as the cannon. ... Revolutionary change requires us to discover a new communal class culture, a different daily life." (p. 90-92)

New classes for a new class politics. A winner.

Now, please go out and get this book.

(February 2018, originally posted on Gabriel Kuhn's PM Press blog page)

Order the book here: <https://www.leftwingbooks.net/book/content/looking-us-white-working-class-historically>

# The Magnificent 7

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They are a cross section of American men: Black, white, Greek (apparently), Italian.

Seven men - George R. Efthimiou; Mark Johnson; George T. McHale; John Shnipes, Jr.; Jeffery T. Staff; Paul J. Viglino; and James J. Walsh - seven guards at a county jail in Lackawanna County, PA. Seven men who collectively face 37 counts of sexual and institutional assault against a dozen women.

The women? Local newspapers have a policy of not naming them, a process that adds to their extreme invisibility.

As inmates - as prisoners, they were already invisible.

How could they feel otherwise, when they complained for years, only to be ignored, retaliated against, only to be assaulted again, and again -- and again!

The trial against the Lackawanna County 7 has begun - and who knows what will happen? They may be convicted; or, they may be acquitted.

For they are charged with sexually assaulting women - women prisoners - two categories doubly invisible in today's sexist America.

On local TV, when tape is shown of the men being arrested and walked out of the county prison, their hands cuffed, ball caps covering most of their faces, it was hard to tell their ages. I assumed they were mostly young men.

But published accounts showed all 7 were between the ages of 42 and 53. Mature men. Fathers.

Grandfathers.

The sexual assaults against women in a Pennsylvania county jail were no

different than the sexual assaults against Hollywood's brightest stars.

That's because it's all about Power -- state power -- male power -- the power of the law to legitimize scapegoating.

It's ultimately about Power.

What will happen?

We shall see.



Five of the seven Lackawanna County jail guards standing trial for multiple rapes of incarcerated women.

# Comrade Malik of N.A.B.P.P. (P.C.) Responds to Self-Criticism by Michael Novick Regarding His Relationship with T.A.C.O. & BRLP

By Keith "Malik" Washington 2/5/2018

"Our point of departure is to serve the people wholeheartedly and never for a moment divorce ourselves from the masses, to proceed in all cases from the interests of the people."

- Mao Tze Tung, "On Coalition Government"

Revolutionary Greetings, Comrades!

I am responding to an article penned by Comrade Michael Novick which appeared in the Jan-March 2018 edition of Turning the Tide (Vol. 30 No. 1). Michael's article was entitled "Self-Criticism: Regarding My Relationship with T.A.C.O. and the Black Riders Liberation Party."

In Comrade Michael's article he referenced a statement released by the NABPP (PC) concerning T.A.C.O. and the BRLP. For the record, I can state that I am intimately familiar with all of the circumstances which led to the NABPP (PC) statement. Self-criticism and criticism are integral parts of revolutionary practice. We (revolutionaries) engage in this practice in order to address problems and to resolve contradictions which expose themselves while we are engaged in this protracted struggle against Imperialism and White Supremacy.

Comrade Michael states in his article that he is not a Maoist. In fact, I am a Socialist and I also spend a huge portion of my time studying Marxism and Anarchism. Many of my close friends and comrades are Maoists, Anarchists, Marxists, and most importantly to me, Abolitionists! Prison abolitionists to be exact. Now allow me to give you a little history on our Party.

The New Afrikan Black Panther Party (Prison Chapter) was founded in April, 2005, as a pre-vanguard organization that pushes the "Theory of Revolutionary Intercommunalism" and "Science of Revolution," as theorized and practiced by Marxist-Leninist-Maoist parties around the world. Our co-founders are Kevin "Rashid" Johnson and Shaka Sankofa Zulu.

Our job/mission as Black Panthers fall under two categories:

1) To situate the original Black Panther Party as an aggressive proletarian organization committed to the ultimate remedy of "Revolution" as the solution to the immiseration of New Afrikan (Black) people everywhere. Our co-founders and respected elder and mentor Tom Big Warrior felt this Party was necessary to create because the original BPP was being subjected to the revisionist's knife of petty bourgeois intellectuals who wanted to portray the party as reformist, with a social democrat bent; we reject that history. That was our first mission and that ideological struggle against the party's detractors remain alive and kicking.

2) To engage and mobilize the energy of those in the lumpen-proletariat class who are fed up with existing on the margins of the nationalist capitalist economy and who have encountered mass incarceration as an instrument of counter-insurgency as a result. The drug dealers, pimps and gangsters who prey on the people have found themselves struggling with a whole new reality when confronted with the viciousness of mass incarceration, which has posed several problems that necessitate immediate solutions.

Why was I given 50 years for a petty coat robbery; why was I placed in solitary confinement torture chambers for refusing to work; why does it seem as if the police, prosecutor, public defender and judge are working in cahoots to jail my black body?!

We the NABPP (PC) are not advancing a non-materialist view here when we say that the New Afrikan youth's first thought of "something here is wrong" starts right there in kindergarten, when the filthy, gun-slugging pig places plastic handcuffs on her for "talking back." The encounter between the New Afrikan youth and the enemy pig consists of state repression and state oppression; of a despised people who continue to be the floor-mat for the ruling capitalist class to walk on!

Most of these words are those of our Chairman Shaka Zulu who is currently in the transition stage from slave pen to free society. Eventually, our goal is to see our Party constituted as a free-world political party that can provide an alternative to the current corrupt Imperialism

two-party system in Amerika.

The NABPP (PC) is an above-ground, legal movement. We do not advocate or support any illegal activities. Our party stands for the liberation of Black people and all oppressed people everywhere!

## Enter the Black Riders

Now that I have given you a little background and insight into the political philosophy of the NABPP (PC), allow me to state for the record that from a Revolutionary's standpoint, I love General T.A.C.O. and I love the Black Riders Liberation Party.

However, in Black Skin, White Masks, Fanon said: "Today I believe in the possibility of love; that is why I endeavor to trace its imperfections, its perversions."

Comrades, what happens when an individual you love and an organization you love begin to engage in actions and behaviors you despise or even hate? What happens when you refuse to acknowledge those mistakes and you remain silent?

Well, obviously a contradiction arises!

I was appointed to the position of Deputy Chairman by the Central Committee of the NABPP (PC), and when the information about General T.A.C.O. surfaced I was privy to all information as well as all of the recommendations made by the African People's Liberation Tribunal which was initiated by the Committee to look into the matter. The members of the Tribunal and the Committee were made up of the respected elders and veterans of the Black Liberation Movement; their credentials were and are impeccable.

It's been a couple years since I first saw the allegations against T.A.C.O. and the BRLP. There were intense inner-party conversations pertaining to this subject. I am not at liberty to reveal the contents of our inner-party conversations, but I can reveal my thoughts and input.

When I first reviewed the documents which included T.A.C.O.'s response to the allegations of commandism and inappropriate behavior, I scoffed at them, thinking to myself and sharing with my comrades that this was an FBI, COINTEL-PRO move to attack one of our "shining stars" in the revolutionary Black Liberation Movement.

You should know that to many of us prison Panthers and politicized freedom fighters, General T.A.C.O. had become our hero! For real! But it gets deeper than that. The BRLP for self-defense does real work in the hood!! They love New Afrikan people!! When Black and Brown people needed clean water to drink in Flint, MI, the Black Riders were there! When Hurricane Harvey hit the city of Houston, TX and devastated neighborhoods and communities of color, the Black Riders teamed up with the National Black United Front in order to provide survival supplies to the people!!

When Comrade Michael first told me a couple months ago that he was planning to embark on this self-criticism path, I backed him 100%! It hurts, you know? However, a lot was happening in regards to my education as an activist and humyn being and Michael had the courage to do that which I did not!

Sisters and brothers, the NABPP (PC) does not promote, condone, or sanction commandism, patriarchy, male chauvinism, msyogynistic behavior or actions, and we damn sure don't condone the sexual abuse or assault of our fellow sisters in the struggle: hell no!

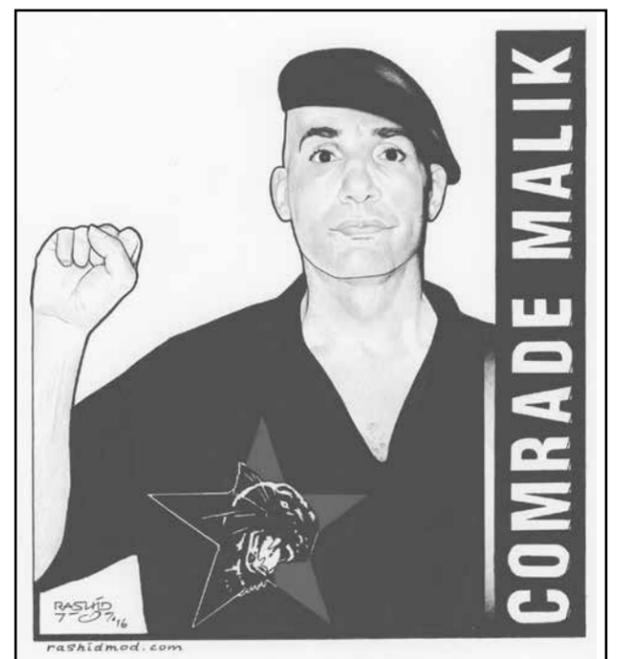
I want y'all to think about something for a minute: if I will confront the President of the United States in regards to his bigoted and sexist behavior and remarks, do you think I am going to allow T.A.C.O. to "make it"??

I can't tell the Black Riders what to do, but I can offer a few suggestions in reference towards a program of restorative justice and accountability. I don't know about you, but I believe we need the Black Riders Liberation Party to survive this.

## Restoration and Accountability

Comrades, in the fall semester of 2017 a fairly well-known LGBTQ activist, scholar and freedom fighter/abolitionist professor named Dean Spade reached out to me and asked me would I be interested in participating in a course he was teaching entitled "Policing, Imprisonment and Justice." His teacher's assistant Danny sent me the syllabus and professor Spade purchased all the required textbooks and sent me all the required reading and more!

A key topic in our class was violence against Black wimmin and wimmin of color! I was introduced to a who's-who of Black feminist scholars, activists and survivors!! I was introduced to transgender folks who are confronted by abuse daily. But most importantly, I was



taught about methods and programs which can be used to heal the victims of abuse and violence and also the abuser!

In retrospect, especially after finishing this course taught by Professor Spade, I firmly believe that the African People's Liberation Tribunal was trying to give T.A.C.O. and the Black Riders the opportunity to engage in something called "transformative justice and community accountability."

Sister Mariame Kaba of Project NIA says that the goals of transformative justice are:

- Safety, healing and agency for survivors
- Accountability and transformation for people who harm
- Community action, healing and accountability
- Transformation of the social conditions that perpetuate violence (systems of oppression and exploitation, domination and state violence)

During the college course, I learned that community accountability is not just a reaction we have when someone behaves violently; it is also a pro-active, ongoing thing negotiated among everyone in the community.

You see, sisters and brothers, we the members of the NABPP (PC) are fallible; we make mistakes in our analysis of conditions sometimes, but we are not afraid of facing our cities or admitting wrong and fixing these mistakes.

I am positive that our Minister of Defense, Rashid, as well as our Chairman Shaka Zulu will weigh in on this topic. I am going to end my statement with some words concerning accountability directed directly toward T.A.C.O.:

Comrade T.A.C.O., I have been one of your most avid supporters within my organization. But I can no longer associate with you or remain silent. I am asking that you embrace accountability for the good of the Black Riders.

To me, accountability means being responsible to myself for my choices and for the consequences of my choices. For me, accountability is an internal skill, not an external process. T.A.C.O., nobody can force you to be accountable. And lastly, I will tell you that accountability is a rigorous and difficult process.

May Allah (SWT) direct your path and may Allah (SWT) protect all the Black Riders from the shaitan and the snares of this corrupt-ass white supremacist in the White House!! I could say more but I'll end there.

**Dare to struggle; dare to WIN!**

**All power to the people!**

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## Malik Washington Bio:

Keith "Malik" Washington is a humyn rights activist currently incarcerated in Texas. He is a co-founder and chief spokesperson for the End Prison Slavery in Texas Movement. Malik is a proud member of the Incarcerated Workers Organizing Committee (IWOC) and he is the Deputy Chairman of the New Afrikan Black Panther Party (Prison Chapter). Malik has been instrumental in calling for the abolition of legalized slavery in Amerika and he is very active in the Fight Toxic Prisons campaign. You can view his work at comrademalik.com or write him directly at:

**Keith 'Comrade Malik' Washington**  
**TDC# 1487958**  
**Eastham Unit**  
**2665 Prison Road 1**  
**Lovelady, Texas 75851**

# Waiting to Die

Here in the state of Florida, once a man has been through his appeals, and the fraudulent clemency proceedings have been completed, he becomes warrant eligible. What that means is that, at any given moment, the governor can sign his death warrant and set an execution date, and the selection process is as arbitrary and capricious as the sentence itself.

No, there's no order in the death warrant selection process of the men whose appeals have been exhausted; so, a man could have gotten here in 1977 and have fully exhausted everything, but the governor may jump ahead and kill a man who's only been here since 1997!

Yes, there's no rhyme or reason behind this madness and currently there are approximately 30 men sitting on death row in the state of Florida who are waiting and wondering, with stressful anticipation, who's going to be next. Cruel and unusual punishment? Well, this takes cruel and unusual punishment to a whole new level!

How's that, you may ask? Well, let me walk you through this mental torture. Your only hope is that the governor's hit squad doesn't select you next. You sit there, like a trapped animal, in a 9' x 7', 63-square-foot cage, watching man after man selected before you, marched off to their death!

After each execution you worry, wondering with great trepidation if you will be the next victim of Florida's machinery of legalized murder. The electronic doors will pop dozens of times each day to allow the officers to come into the wing. Each time the staff hits that buzzer, your stomach knots up and your heart races, wondering if they're coming for you! Is it your time to die or are they about to kill someone you've befriended over the years?

No, this time it's just one of the 30-minute wing checks that takes place twenty-four times a day; or a psychologist, classification, doctor, nurse, yard call, etc., so your mind can ease up, for now. But, between 8 AM and 5 PM, Monday through Friday, you exist in a cage of

terror, a living hell, just waiting and waiting and waiting, for your time to die. Will you be next?!

And it only gets better after that because once you are finally selected in this killing process they will move you to Florida State Prison death-watch housing where you will have an execution date set and then for the next 30 days you, and your family and friends, will count down the last weeks, days, hours and minutes of your life. This makes premeditated murder look like child's play because this is premeditated down to the last detail!

Torture! This is torture, mental torture at its best! They torture you and your loved ones beyond an 8th Amendment violation. This is taking cruel and unusual punishment to a whole new level because during the last seven days of your life you're going to have a man posted in front of your death-watch cage watching every move you make, documenting everything you do, from sleeping to using the toilet! You're reminded every minute of every day that you're not just going to die. No, death is easy!

You're going to be strapped down to a gurney and killed; murdered, under the mantel of justice, as your fellow citizens watch on in an observation room. Yes, you may lay on that gurney strapped down for as much as an hour or two, knowing with sick apprehension, that your death, your killing, is at hand.

This is nothing like a terminal illness. No, knowing you're going to die is one thing; waiting to be killed is as different as apples and oranges! Not only are you suffering through all of this but your family and friends will be standing out in the parking lot awaiting the news that your murder by the state of Florida has been carried out; and then for weeks and months afterwards, your loved ones will relive this heinous act of murder, wondering if there was anything they could have done differently to save the life of their child, father, uncle, etc., who was lost to this arbitrary and capricious



process that we call justice, yet, is truly nothing less than premeditated torture and homicide at its best!

The time to act is now! I encourage you to fight for change. Join the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty at [www.NCADP.org](http://www.NCADP.org), or call e-mail or write the address below.

**National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty**  
**1620 L Street, NW, Ste. 250**  
**Washington D.C., 20036**  
**Phone: (202) 331-4090**  
**E-mail: [diann@ncadp.org](mailto:diann@ncadp.org)**

God bless you all and remember, mercy triumphs vengeance and civility triumphs this torturous process of murdering our own citizens.  
 Ronald W. Clark, Jr., #812974,  
 State of Florida Death Row Prisoner

## #BARZBEYONDBARZ

#BarzBeyondBarz is requesting artistic submissions from Confined Citizens throughout the US. We are looking artists of all kind. Written & Spoken Word, Visual Artists, HIP HOP Artists, and the like! All submissions are and will remain the Intellectual Property of the Author or Artist. And if there is any profit made, the Artist will receive a percentage of the income.

#BarzBeyondBarz is a part of the Freedom & Justice Movement #FJM, with groups like the Free Alabama Movement #FAM, the Free Ohio Movement #FOM, Unheard Voices Out The Concrete Jungle #UVOTCJ and the National Peace & Unity Summit. 2018 #NPUS2018. We are involved locally, nationally and internationally. The facts maintain the same in that there have been generational inflicted injustices when it comes to the prison system and it's over prosecution of the people. We also are taking a portion of the funds to establish a Revolving Bail Fund & to assist the Freedom & Justice Movement, to be able to continue to do its work, inside and out.

#BARZBEYONDBARZ is a collective of written, spoken, artistic and visual representations from brothers & sisters who are "behind enemy lines".

Why is the freedom movement important? Because slavery was never abolished. The current correctional system still practices Convict Leasing via the cooptation of property in the form of Labor, Person and Life of Confined Citizens throughout the United States; disproportionately in the South.

The 13th Amendment reads: "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, *except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted*, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to

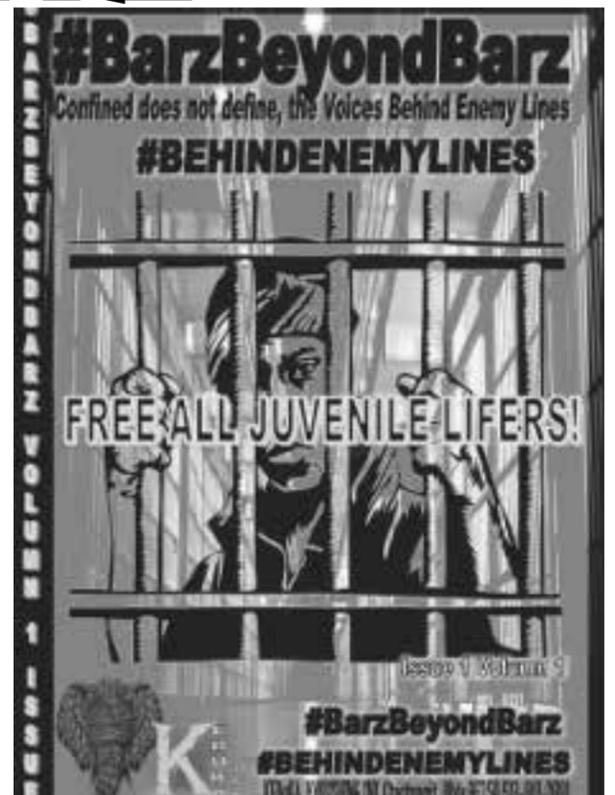
their jurisdiction."

### ABJECT SLAVERY STILL EXISTS

We are looking for Writers, Artists, Spoken Word Lyricists, MC's, DJ's, HIP HOP Historians and Legendary HIP HOP Legends to get involved! Are you one of those people? Do you know one of these people? If so, please reach out to us!

Queen Tahiyrah  
 Barz Beyond Barz Voices from Behind Enemy Lines  
 National Freedom & Justice Movement  
 Nu Power Radio Network Sign o the Times Blogtalk Radio  
 Kebuka Publishing INK  
 1623 Dalton Street Cincinnati, OH 45250  
 BarzBeyondBarz@GMX.COM 513-913-2691  
 Donations are also Gladly Accepted!

Please support the #RedistributethePain Campaign & the National Freedom Movement by purchasing the first edition of *Barz Beyond Barz Voices from Behind Enemy Lines* now available on Amazon.com. <https://www.amazon.com/dp/198391536X/> Please support the #RedistributethePain Campaign & the National Freedom Movement by purchasing #BarzBeyondBarz. We appreciate your support!



### On-Line Resources for Turning the Tide & ARA-LA.

You can find archives of *Turning the Tide* at [www.antiracist.org](http://www.antiracist.org) that go back more than 10 years. In addition, there are several Facebook pages, such as [facebook.com/tideturning](https://facebook.com/tideturning), and [facebook.com/intercommunalsolidarity](https://facebook.com/intercommunalsolidarity). You can follow @ara\_losanjeles on Twitter, and the De-Colonize LA! blog at [ara-la.tumblr.com](http://ara-la.tumblr.com).

## 100X100 Campaign to Increase Publication Frequency of Turning the Tide

Over its 26+ year publishing history, *TTT* has been published in magazine format, as a 24-page tabloid, and from time to time on a bi-monthly basis, six issues a year. For the last few years, economic necessity has dictated that we print four 8-page issues a year. Now, to restore bi-monthly publication, we have launched a fund-raising campaign we've dubbed "100X100."

We are looking for one hundred people who will donate \$100 a year, or \$10/mo, to make it possible for *TTT* to resume publishing six issues a year, and continue mailing nearly 2000 copies of each issue into the prisons. You can donate online at <http://gofundme.com/eugzgg>.

*Turning the Tide* doesn't print itself, or mail itself. Some prisoners who get the paper contribute a few stamps; their contribution more often comes by writing articles, letters and poems or sending in drawings. Often, they pass the copy of *TTT* that they received from hand to hand, cell to cell, or they send in the names and addresses of half-a-dozen or more other prisoners. **Prisoners, if you can find donors or subscribers outside prison to subsidize your sub, that would help a lot.**

If you'd like to see *Turning the Tide* more frequently, if you want to contribute to breaking down the walls of isolation and separation imposed by the prison system, please contribute. If you can't manage \$100 all at once, you could donate \$10 a month. But any donation you make can help. Postage costs for a single issue of *TTT* are almost \$1000 and climbing. If you can't donate yourself, please help spread the campaign via your social media, to your Facebook friends, Twitter followers,

and email contacts. Everything helps.

If the campaign is successful, we will begin publishing every other month in 2015. Postage is our biggest expense. Nobody gets paid at *TTT*. But the Postal Service is not so generous. We have a handful of people who are sustainers, making a monthly donation, a larger number of people who subscribe once a year or so. Right now, we are at 10% of our goal. LA supporters could set up house meetings, where the editor will pitch to your friends for support. The future of *Turning the Tide* is in your hands. Now, while you're thinking about it, go to:

<http://gofundme.com/eugzgg>

and donate. Then share it with your contacts. With your help, *Turning the Tide* can step up to the "urgency of now" -- the necessity for radical organizing, educating and analyzing to respond to the growing crisis of the Empire -- endless war, police terror with impunity, mass incarceration, colonialism, ecological devastation that will shortly become irreversible.

If you think *TTT* is a useful tool in the struggle for people's power and a new world, please donate today. If you wish, you can also just send cash, check or money order to **Anti-Racist Action, PO Box 1055, Culver City CA 90232.**

# THE COMMITTEE'S RESPONSE

... *Continued from p. 2*

thousands of dollars of merchandise misappropriated by Culton, as well as testimony from former BRLP cadre who expressed remorse for participating in the illegitimate taking of that merchandise and eventually returned some of it. Culton's bad intent was shown by his declaration of "jack-rider" at the outset, signifying he was intending to steal the merchandise all along. He then reneged on an agreement to pay back half of the money after intervention by comrade and Black Panther Party member Roland Freeman and a council of elders by only making one payment of \$200 and ignoring the remaining \$2000 he had agreed to pay back. There was also testimony that tens of thousands of dollars came into the organization based on the labors of BRLP cadre soliciting donations from the public. This money was then turned over to Culton who made decisions to spend it without any accountability. According to testimony, Culton apparently spent a good portion of the money on food, weed, and other luxuries for himself as the cadre subsisted on "zoom-zooms and wham-whams" while squatting in housing taken over from comrades and supporters. Further, according to testimony at the Tribunal, "survival" programs received little, if any, funding from money donated by supporters, except when Culton was in jail for an extended time.

In paragraph 11 of his self-criticism, Novick wrongfully infers that The Committee believed that it was incorrect "to defend Mecca and Etana Shakur of the BRLP against state charges brought against them in Inglewood for defending themselves against a racist, sexist assault by a cop..." or to "denounce LAPD Chief Charlie Beck and the LAPD's deputy chief for Homeland Security for targeting the BRLP." The Committee received a request for support of Mecca and Etana while the jury in their trial was deliberating; we decided to issue a statement of support but did not due to the late notice given to us.

The Committee has always supported the cadre of the BRLP against attacks from the state; supported them on a personal level; and have had discussions with cadre even as many of them remained within the BRLP. The Committee never attacked either the cadre within the organization or those supporting Mecca, Etana, or others. As individuals, members of The Committee (and possibly the Tribunal Panel) have in fact provided material support to BRLP cadre who were (and are currently) members of the BRLP. We did this surreptitiously to prevent additional violent retribution by Culton. The problem was and is with Culton, not those cadre who hustled to make a better world under the harsh conditions imposed on them by society, the state, and by Culton.

It can also be inferred from Novick's statements in paragraph 16 that The Committee propagated "false rumors, such as of pimping and drug-dealing... first raised, falsely, regarding the solidarity with the BRLP of 'white' members of the Inter-communal Solidarity Committee, some of whom were independent radical queer sex workers."

The "rumors of pimping and dope dealing" have nothing to do with the allegations against Culton and were not alleged as separate offenses at the Tribunal. The Committee considered, then rejected, separate allegations of pimping prior to the start of the Tribunal and The Committee was unaware of any allegations of dope dealing at the time. There was ample evidence that Culton benefitted from prostitution by members and supporters of the BRLP, as there was both testimony from several former cadre at the Tribunal, but no evidence of pimping. Numerous witness statements since the Tribunal point to funds generated by prostitution being used to support the BRLP with the money going directly to Culton. In an interview recorded in 2016, a family member of a former BRLP cadre informed The Committee that her brother entered the organization looking to make revolution but wound up learning how to pimp and deal dope within the BRLP, which eventually led to his being jailed for those state crimes.

The Committee has not publicized rumors of pimping, and Novick's self-criticism is the first time we have seen any public discussion of this lumpen conduct unbecoming of a revolutionary. Whether or not the state would arrest Culton or other members of the BRLP is not germane as to whether they are or were engaged in such conduct, as the state has a history of allowing criminal conduct if it serves its ends. The Findings of the Tribunal made clear that Culton was and is "engaging in unprincipled, criminal conduct, provoking indignation and contempt against revolutionaries by the masses and

supporters and bringing the revolutionary movement as a whole into disrepute".

## LIFTING THE SANCTIONS

Prior to the Sanctions being lifted from Novick, The Committee expects the following:

- = That the Committee's response to Novick's self-criticism will be distributed to the same places as Novick's self-criticism itself, and those places that have been reached by Turning the Tide and the Black Riders African Intercommunal News.
  - = That Novick will detail all the support he has provided to Culton and the BRLP from the beginning of the sanctions to date, including those material aid connections he is in the process of extricating himself from.
  - = That Novick will verifiably cease all material and political support of Culton and the BRLP as long as it is under the control of Culton. This includes, but is not limited to, providing issues of Turning the Tide to the BRLP and ending the publication of the African Intercommunal News Service for fundraising for Culton and the BRLP as long as it is under the control of Culton.
- This entire process has been long, sometimes tiring and occasionally disheartening, but absolutely necessary. It is incumbent upon activists who lay claim to a tradition of revolutionary struggle and consider themselves to be part of that trajectory to stand on revolutionary principles and the integrity of their words. It is in that spirit that we, the remaining members of The Committee of the Afrikan Peoples' Liberation Tribunal, state that the sanctions extended to Michael Novick on December 13, 2015, are lifted following his adherence to the aforementioned expectations.

Furthermore, it is because we stand on revolutionary principles and the integrity of our words that we make it known: Michael Novick's initial refusal to honor the sanctions of the APLT caused harm not only to the members of the Tribunal, who were labeled as snitches and agents, but to community members who saw it as their duty to honor and enforce the sanctions. Recently, we were informed that, unbeknownst to us, Michael Novick engaged in a campaign of slander and threats against several individuals for their attempts to hold him accountable on these sanctions. Novick's plans to repair the harm that he has done to these individuals and redeem himself in their eyes is not known to us; he will have to deal with these individuals directly on that matter. In Unity and Struggle, The Committee Thandisizwe Chimurenga Jitu Sadiki James Simmons

## ENDNOTES

### THE TRIBUNAL PANEL

- = Muriel (Jones) Shabazz: co-founder/owner, Shabazz Restaurant, a fixture in South Central Los Angeles for over 40 years.
- = Ronald "Baba" Preston: long-time community activist; served eight years in prison in the early 1970s for his underground political work
- = Assata Umoja: veteran of the Black Liberation Movement in general and the New Afrikan Independence Movement (NAIM) in particular.
- = Shareef Abdullah: member of the Southern California Chapter of the Black Panther Party in the 1970's and Minister of Defense for the New Panther Vanguard Movement where he helped oversee CULTON's development after his time in the California Youth Authority. CULTON had requested that Shareef help mediate with The Committee in order to avoid a tribunal on the allegations against him. Comrade Shareef joined the ancestors in April of 2015 at the age of 59.
- = B. Kwaku Duren: co-founder of the Coalition Against Police Abuse (CAPA) with former Panther Michael Zinzun; former chair of the Southern California Chapter of the Black Panther Party in the 1970's; former chair of the New Panther Vanguard Movement, of which CULTON was a member; former chair of the L.A. Chapter of the National Conference of Black Lawyers; and former Chair of the Board for the Peoples College of Law. Duren was the "foreperson" of the Tribunal Panel. CULTON also requested that Kwaku help mediate with The Committee in order to avoid a tribunal.
- = Tasha Thomas: raised in the Black Liberation Movement as a child. She initiated and maintains the JOKO, a panel/group discussion series that "examines the veracity of selected concepts, and their effects on our bid for the empowerment of African peoples."
- = Minister Abdullah Shabazz: a minister for the Lost-

- Found Nation of Islam. At about 71 years old, he was one of the elders of the Tribunal Panel. He is a proficient martial artist and is known to have engaged in hand-to-hand combat with a group of LAPD officers in his youth.
- = Fanya Baruti: a community organizer and former prisoner who brings 17 years of organizing experience to the table. While incarcerated in California prisons, he organized other prisoners to fight for better conditions, educational and self-development opportunities, and pre-release programs.
- = Tehuti Kambui: an educator with over 20 years of experience; a lecturer; musician and activist who cares for elder Dr. Earl Grant, a comrade of Malcolm X and former member of the Organization of Afro American Unity in New York.
- = Souljah De'Niece Williams: a community organizer; activist; and veteran of several decades of community work with female gang members in South Los Angeles.
- = Donna Graham: member of the Executive Board of the Cease Fire Committee; one of the "first Criplettes in California," has been a gang intervention worker with male and female gang members for several decades.
- = Jabari Jumaane: a founder of African Fire Fighters in Benevolent Association (AFIBA). He runs the A.F.I.B.A. Center, which is the home base for many community, revolutionary, and African cultural organizations and events.

## THE COMMITTEE

- = William "Billion GodSun" Campbell: Was the sole member of The Committee who was also a former BRLP member and was a Field Marshal for the organization. He remained a Culton loyalist until he was made aware of some of the worst charges including torture, rape, and child abuse. Billion operates the Blaction 365 website and is a founding member of the Africa Town Coalition. Billion left The Committee in 2014.
- = Thandisizwe Chimurenga: Has been active in the New Afrikan Independence Movement (NAIM) for decades. Former Editor of By Any Means Necessary, the organ of the New Afrikan Peoples' Organization; a founding member of the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement in Los Angeles; and a community journalist.
- = Dedon Kamathi: An internationally known Pan Africanist organizer and radio show host/journalist for KPFFK in Los Angeles. He was a member of the Black Panther Party under Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seal and a decades-long activist in the All-African Peoples Revolutionary Party (A-APRP) headed by Kwame Ture (Stokely Carmichael), Baba Mukasa (Willie Ricks) and others. Comrade Dedon joined the ancestors in August 2015 at the age of 64.
- = Jitu Sadiki: A founder of the first Black August Resistance while inside the belly of the beast at Soledad Penitentiary's O-Wing in 1979. He is an activist in the movement to bring peace to the warring factions in our communities and a founder of BACDO (Black Awareness Community Development Organization).
- = James Simmons: A long time activist in the Black Liberation/NAIM Movement and the National Conference of Black Lawyers; has provided legal assistance to Mutulu Shakur and Sekou Odinga as well as being the attorney for the BRLP for close to a decade. Simmons represented Culton and other Riders in criminal and civil court cases and on the streets until 2005 when Culton's reactionary tendencies began to manifest.

## THE OKYEAME

- = Nana Gyamfi: Pan Africanist; human rights activist; professor of Pan African studies; and attorney dedicated to advocating for and protecting the Black Liberation movement in the tradition of Chokwe Lumumba and the National Conference of Black Lawyers. Nana is the founder of Justice Warriors for Black Lives which trains members of the community in the fundamentals of legal observing and de-escalation tactics in the spirit of the Black Lives Matter Movement.

## TRIBUNAL DOCUMENTS

Links to Tribunal documents including the allegations against Culton, his responses, findings of the Panel, the sanctions, and other reading material related to the Tribunal can be found here: <https://www.facebook.com/The.Committee.Black.Law/notes>

# Reply to The Committee's Response

by Michael Novick

Thank you for your extensive and thoughtful response. I appreciate the opportunity to deepen my understanding of errors I have made and to seek to rectify them and make further amends. I will print your response in the upcoming issue of *Turning The Tide*, which would be the April-June issue due out at the end of March or early April, and have posted it on the related electronic platforms where the self-criticism has appeared, such as <https://antiracist.org/the-committees-response/> and my tumblr account [<https://ara-la.tumblr.com/post/171333711775/the-committees-response>]. I understand that my self-criticism has been very tardy, and that it was only the beginning at best of a process of rectification, and I will attempt to respond to and comply with the points you have made in response. I will try to respond point by point as best I can.

I acknowledge, and so stated in my self-criticism, that my definitive break with T.A.C.O. and the BRLP under his leadership came only after several of the challenges you cite, including struggles from comrades in the TORCH Network and the general social challenge around sexual assault and harassment. I agree that such challenges and pressure should not have been necessary and that I should have responded affirmatively to the Tribunal process and the sanctions when they were first proposed. As you state, and as I was trying to indicate in my self-criticism, this is “a sad commentary on the concept of anti-imperialist solidarity, and shows a lack respect for the leadership and self-determining efforts of Afrikan people.”

As I acknowledged in the self-criticism, “I incorrectly valued my partial and subjective assessment of the BRLP and its leadership over the longer, more complete and well-documented assessment made by the Committee and the Tribunal.” And later, “my unprincipled silence, and defiance of the communities’ sanctions, undermined and transgressed my commitment to anti-racism and inter-communal solidarity.”

I understand these serious and shameful errors of mine to be rooted in individualism and internalized white supremacy that I continue to work on overcoming. I will point out that I acknowledged that “I *incorrectly* [emphasis added] saw the matter as a dispute within the Black Liberation movement which I wanted to avoid intervening in.” Perhaps I should have been clearer that this was a (flimsy) rationalization. I understand that in fact, continuing to publish and support the BRLP under TACO’s leadership was intervening, and represented a moral and political failure on my part.

I recognize and appreciate the support I received from Jitu Sadiki at the time that I was tracked down to my home by local neo-Nazis associated with Joe Fields of the Populist Party, and from James Simmons and others when I was threatened by the NSM and “doxxed” by US supporters of the Greek fascist Golden Dawn Party. My statement about having received similar such support from the BRLP was not meant to discount or disparage that.

I recognize, and so stated in the self-criticism, that the BRLP’s charge of “being COINTELPRO” against the Tribunal, Committee and panel was false and improper. In regards to the BRLP’s *Black Rider African Inter-communal News Service*, I stated: “I noted with some bitter irony that, according to CNN, Judge Roy Moore, the Alabama US Senate candidate charged with sexual abuse and harassment of young girls, declared to his supporters: “We are neck deep in alligators.” This is the same terminology the BRLP has used to discount the Tribunal and the sanctions. Although I did not print such attacks on the Committee or Tribunal in *Turning The Tide*, I incorrectly assisted the BRLP in producing an issue of their own newspaper that did so, for which, again, I apologize.” I understand you to be saying that such an apology is inadequate, in the face of the threat such charges pose. I accept that deepening of the criticism.

I have had no further relationship to the BRLP’s newspaper in many, many months, I think well over a year, or to their other social media, internet radio or other efforts. I have stopped distributing any of the issues of *Turning The Tide* that contained their material, except that PDFs are still available on-line (preceded however by my self-criticism, and by your response). I have not had the BRLP newspaper posted on the antiracist.org website in several years. If you believe it is necessary, I will modify the PDFs to extract the BRLP content from issues of *TTT* online, although my own inclination is to think that would be a falsification of my history and errors. I have stopped providing *TTTs* to the Black Riders. If they are still circulating copies they have in their possession, they are doing so without my authorization or support. *TTT* is left in bundles at the Peace Center and other venues, such as libraries, and the BRLP may have picked up copies on their own. But the Nov-Dec issue included no content from them, and the Jan-March issue featured my self-criticism. The April-June issue will carry your response, which all make it highly unlikely that they will distribute them. If necessary, future issues of *TTT* could carry a box saying, “No longer associated with the BRLP because of community sanctions against its leader,” or something similar.

You state: “As recently as February 3, 2018 there was a report that a person selling *Turning the Tide* at an event at a Baptist Church in Venice stated that in spite of Novick’s self-criticism,

the charges against Culton were “Cointelpro.”” I was dismayed to learn that a distributor of *Change Links*, who also takes bundles of *TTT* for (free) distribution, has persisted in distributing back issues with BRLP content and recounted to me an exchange he had with someone regarding that, which may be what you are referring to. I told him that I thought that was improper, that I have stopped distributing earlier issues of *TTT*, and that I stood by my acceptance and support of the Tribunal and its findings, and my break with the BRLP under TACO’s leadership because of his abusive and destructive practice. That distributor has his own politics and opinions, which my arguments did not necessarily sway, and he is not part of “*Turning The Tide*” or Anti-Racist Action-LA/People Against Racist Terror (ARA-LA/PART). This incident may not have been he, as to the best of my knowledge, he gives away *TTT*, and does not sell them. Anyone selling *TTT* is doing so on their own; the paper has been distributed free of charge except for paid subscriptions to support the prisoner mailing, for probably two decades, since I stopped printing a price on the cover and attempting to get bookstore distribution.

I did not mean to imply that The Tribunal thought my support for Mecca and Etana Shakur was incorrect, nor my defense of the BRLP against false charges by the Southern Poverty Law Center and the LAPD. My inability to separate such matters from the sanctions was my own error. As I stated in the self-criticism, “It would have been wrong to stay silent about those state attacks. Despite all that, however, I should have spoken out publicly and honored the sanctions sooner.” In fact, immediately.

I also did not mean to imply that The Committee, panel or Tribunal were responsible for false rumors about pimping or drug dealing. I was saying that my failure to accept and uphold the Tribunal’s factual findings contributed to an atmosphere in which such unattributed charges could be raised. I only mentioned them because comrades in TORCH, in discussing the sanctions with me, specifically cited charges they had heard of pimping and drug dealing as a rap against the BRLP.

You ask that I detail the material support I have given the BRLP since the sanctions were imposed. I continued printing their material in *Turning The Tide* and provided them with a substantial number of copies for distribution, generally several thousand copies of each issue. I assisted in laying out several of their flyers related to their survival programs, and a couple of issues of their own newspaper. I made various financial donations. In 2013, which was before the sanctions, I donated a used vehicle to them. Subsequent to the imposition of the sanctions on them, when that vehicle was damaged beyond repair in an accident, I used my credit rating to help Laa Laa Shakur purchase a replacement car. Because my name was on the loan for the vehicle, I also periodically paid the collision and comprehensive insurance required by the lien-holder. This is the commitment which I referred to having to extricate myself from, which I have done. The car was transferred to Laa Laa’s name and I have no further liability or financial involvement with it or them. I also helped the Riders get their PO Box; I attempted some time ago to get them to switch boxes without success. Their box is technically still in my name as the original renter, but I have no responsibility for it and do not pay the bill. I have adjusted downward the press run on *Turning The Tide*, since I am no longer providing copies to the BRLP. I have not for some time and will not in the future assist in any way with the publication of a newspaper, flyers or social media by the BRLP under T.A.C.O.’s leadership.

I published my self-criticism, with a link to the Tribunal materials, in *Turning The Tide*, on-line at [www.antiracist.org](http://www.antiracist.org) and on my tumblr account, with links to the on-line version posted to my facebook account and twitter feed. I have done the same electronically with your response, and will do so in print, and also with my response to your criteria for lifting the sanctions if you think that’s advisable.

Anyone who feels I have engaged in a campaign of slander against them [for upholding the sanctions] needs to be specific about what they are claiming I have said or done. I admitted in the self-criticism that “I allowed resentment against people

who called me out for these failures, to increase my stubborn persistence in them.” But in general, and to my detriment and that of the process that The Tribunal has pushed forward, I maintained a lengthy and steadfast silence myself about all matters related to the sanctions. When confronted at public events about them, I removed myself without a public response or comment.

For example, I left the crowd after a memorial service for Yuri Kochiyama when someone began shouting at me that I supported a rapist, rather than have people disturbed by it; left a protest against police killings on the USC campus under similar circumstances; left a #BlackLivesMatter sit-in outside the Mayor’s office when asked to do so by an elder because a participant said I made him feel unsafe; left a #MeToo support rally in Hollywood. I sought approval from Nana Gyamfi about even participating in court support after the sanctions were extended to me.

To the best of my knowledge, I never said or wrote anything against the people who challenged me at public activities, and never said or wrote anything negative about the Tribunal, Committee or panel or individual members or witnesses thereof. I have never engaged with accusations made against me on facebook including ones raised recently about my having slandered people who spoke out about the sanctions. I did, very early in the process and before I was aware of the Committee process and before the sanctions were imposed, post a statement on facebook saying that I thought it was a poor arena for making accusations or repeating rumors, because the state heavily infiltrates social media and uses them to garner intelligence or “map” resistance relationships and divisions in order to exploit them. In response, I was told on facebook that “people thought I was CIA.” I may have responded with a denial but no further.

As I stated in the self criticism, “In response to the sanctions, I have previously withdrawn from significant associations and participation, including White People for Black Lives, the TORCH Antifa Network, and most recently the December 10 Repression Breeds Resistance Human Rights Day coalition. I hope I can rebuild those relationships on a more accountable basis in the future.” In particular, I would like to participate in any constructive way possible in reviving Jericho in L.A. and any other efforts locally or nationally to free political prisoners. I am open to communicating individually by email or in person with any individuals about these matters.

I will try to the best of my ability to undo the harms I have caused or contributed to by my actions or inaction. As I stated in my self-criticism, “My response was both individualistic and resistant to Black, Asian, Mexicano, Puerto Rican, indigenous and European-descent comrades who tried to engage me and correct my error. My silence was deceptive to readers of *Turning The Tide*, especially prisoners, and to other political associates and affiliates less aware of the issues, and for that deception I again apologize. I abetted the BRLP leadership’s resistance to correcting their practice or responding more self-critically. The disbanding of the LA chapter of the Jericho Movement, for example, was a set-back to efforts to free political prisoners.” I realize it was not just my silence, but my continued publication of material from the BRLP under TACO’s leadership, that contributed to that deception and those consequences. I commit myself again to learning from and rectifying these serious errors.

Please let me know if what I have said here clarifies or corrects any further errors I have made in my efforts at self-criticism and compliance with the sanctions and the Tribunal process of accountability. Please let me know if my responses above regarding publishing your response, accounting of my material support for the BRLP under TACO’s leadership, and commitment to refrain from any further such support, comply with or satisfy your understandable requirement for my “adherence to the aforementioned expectations.” Or if not, please let me know what else is required.

In solidarity,  
Michael Novick

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# TURNING THE TIDE

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- ★ April 7 - 50th anniversary of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Assassination
- ★ April 14-15 National Actions Against Imperialist War & Aggression
- ★ April 30 All Out for Mumia Abu-Jamal's new appeal-Free All Political Prisoners
- ★ May 1 International Workers' Day - Defend Migrants, Muslims, Women
- ★ May 15 70th Anniversary of Palestinian Nakba - Uphold the Right of Return
- ★ June 19 June 'Teenth commemoration of abolition of slavery
- ★ June 28 Anniversary of Stonewall Rebellion led by trans people of color  
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- MUMIA ABU JAMAL

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