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Black August 2008
By Kiilu Nyasha
BlackCommentator.com Guest Commentator

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This is the 29th anniversary of Black August, first organized to honor our martyred freedom fighters, Jonathan and George Jackson, Khatari Gauden, James McClain, William Christmas, and the sole survivor of the August 7, 1970 Courthouse Slave Rebellion, Ruchell Cinque Magee. It's a time to embrace the principles of unity, self-sacrifice, political education, physical fitness and/or training in martial arts, resistance and revolution - transforming ourselves into the new man, the new woman.

As Mumia Abu-Jamal noted, "August is a month of meaning, of repression and radical resistance, of injustice and divine justice; of repression and righteous rebellion; of individual and collective efforts to free the slaves and break the chains that bind us."

Primarily, August is the month we recall the great loss exacted upon our Black revolutionary movement with the assassination of George Jackson and his younger brother, the teenaged Jonathan Jackson. Jonathan was martyred when he led the August 7th rebellion; George was martyred a year later, August 21.

I had the privilege and the good fortune of being in the right place at the right time to initiate a correspondence with George in the winter of 1971, and months later, a one-hour visit in the holding cell of San Quentin. I've met no one before or since more

dedicated to revolutionary change.

As you will note from some of the quotes below, George was a brilliant leader who set a righteous example of intellectual, physical growth and advanced development of consciousness.

Attorney Steve Bingham, tried and acquitted of all charges in the case resulting from the events of August 21, '71, once told me that when prison staff cleaned out Jackson's cell after he was killed, they found 99 books covering the history of the world. In fact, he had sent me a book list (I had a lot of catching up to do.), and told me he read some six dailies and several books a week, while doing 1,000 fingertip pushups a day. He was in solitary confinement for most of his 11 years in prison for a \$70 robbery when he was 18 years old.

Bingham noted in an interview, "It's clear to me that his responsibility in bringing international attention to prison conditions in California brought on him the wrath of the California Department of Corrections. This, together with his designation as Field Marshal of the Black Panther Party, certainly put him in their cross hairs."

Moreover, his two books, bestseller "Soledad Brother: The Prison Letters of George Jackson" and "Blood In My Eye," completed just before his death were also factors.

As California prisons prepare to integrate double cells, beginning with Mule Creek in Ione and Sierra Conservation Center (what a euphemism!) in Jamestown, Jackson's words should be heeded:

"If there were any differences or grievances between us in the black colonies and the peoples of other colonies across the country, around the world, we should be willing to forget them in the desperate need for coordination against Amerikan fascism... To destroy it will require cooperation and communion between our related parts; communion between colony and colony, nation and nation.

Moreover, it's important to bear in mind that "race" is a false construct, that our genetic map is 99.9% the same indicating one human race (having cultural, religious, national, political differences), and that all humans originated on the Mother continent of Africa.

From "Blood in My Eye," George Jackson calls upon us to:

"Settle your quarrels, come together, understand the reality of our situation, understand that fascism is already here, that people are dying who could be saved, that generations more will live poor butchered half-lives if you fail to act. Do what must be done, discover your humanity and your love in revolution."

Given today's harsh realities, the need to organize a revolutionary movement is greater than ever.

Today's social and environmental problems are many times worse than they were 30 - 40 years ago and threatening to worsen. Economic disparities are greater than ever with one percent of the world's population owning 80% of the wealth. Multibillionaires vs. billions of people living on less than a dollar a day!

Food riots have broken out in Haiti, Bangladesh, Egypt and elsewhere as food prices soar along with the cost of fuel. And millions are going hungry right here in the belly of the beast.

The U.S. now has the highest rate of incarceration in the world – and rising. It currently has 2.4 million people locked up with seven million more on probation or parole.

California has the greatest number of prisoners and prisons – some 90 prisons, jails, and camps housing more than 170,000 men and women. – with a plan to add another 53,000 beds! And the cost is astronomical.

Add to this the lack of adequate health care, education and employment, proliferation of drugs and guns, homelessness, hunger and destitution, unjust imperialist wars, and climate-change disasters.

The result is the destruction of our families and communities, social isolation/alienation, PTSD, drug addiction, child and spousal abuse, and violence turned inward as manifested in random, senseless killings of oppressed people by other oppressed people.

By the end of the 1970's, the Black Panther Party was dissolved - victim of the FBI's notorious COINTELPRO that used every "dirty trick" in the book to destroy it, as well as its youthful lack of experience. Yet its impact upon the Black community, the nation and the world was immeasurable.

I still believe Comrade George was correct when he said, "withdrawal from the enemy state and its social, political and economic life is the first step toward its destruction."

As George put it, "Fascism has temporarily succeeded under the guise of reform."

Modern-day fascism is the combined dictatorship of big business and government, characterized by greed, militarism, racism, homophobia, and classism.

I think the fascist powers that be feel compelled to put a fresh face on fascism – a brown face.

We cannot be so naïve as to think that Democratic Party nominee Barack Obama has broken all records in campaign fundraising because he's going to change things for you and me. Please. As Jamil al-Amin (H.Rap Brown) noted, "If voting could change things; they'd make it *illegal*."

It should be obvious that Obama cannot and will not produce real change, like moving from capitalism to socialism, redistributing the wealth, abolishing the prison system per se, changing domestic and foreign policies.

In fact, upon his sealing the nomination, Obama beat a path to AIPAC (American Israeli Political Action Committee, the Zionist lobby) where he pandered grossly to the Zionist occupiers of Palestine. This is nothing short of a betrayal of the Arab/Palestinian people, especially those desperate children, women and men currently under siege in Gaza, an open air prison.

But Obama knows on what side his bread is buttered. No candidate for Congress or the White House can get there without the Israeli lobby. Congressional representatives, Cynthia McKinney and Earl Hilliard learned it the hard way.

"When we participate in this election to win, instead of disrupt, we're lending to its credibility, and destroying our own. With all the factors of control over the electoral

process in the hands of the minority ruling class, the people's party can always be made to seem isolated, unimportant, even extraneous...

"All political parties, as things stand, will support the power complex." -George Jackson

In conclusion, let's honor this Black August by honoring the politics of our beloved Comrade brother, George Lester Jackson. Study his works and struggle to release political prisoners, especially his comrades, Hugo L.A. Pinell and Ruchell Cinque Magee, doing their 44th and 45th year, respectively, in California gulags.

In closing, I ask you to send your love energies to our wounded warrior, Comrade Mjumbe Gazi, who is gravely ill with lung cancer, hospitalized in Oakland. His voice can be heard on "Black August Commemoration 2006," a four-hour radio program produced by yours truly and archived at [KPFA](#).

Long live the guerrilla.


Power to the people.


Free 'em all!

BlackCommentator.com Guest Commentator, Kiilu Nyasha, was a Black Panther and has been part of the international struggle for nearly 40 years. She is currently host of a weekly TV program, "Freedom Is A Constant Struggle," on SF Live (Cable 76), a columnist for the SF BayView newspaper and a member of the SF8 Committee. [Click here](#) to contact Ms. Nyasha.

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