

# **500 YEARS OF RESISTANCE**

## ***The Columbus Legacy and the African***

**SEARCHING FOR TRUTH AND FIGHTING FOR THE FUTURE**

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**HOWARD UNIVERSITY / BLACKBURN CENTER / NOVEMBER 13-15, 1992**

This conference has been partially funded by the Funding Exchange, and the Mayer-Katz Foundation. Our primary source of conference funding is an enormous amount of in-kind goods and services, and grassroots fundraising. Thank you.

A COMPLETE CONFERENCE SCHEDULE CAN BE FOUND IN THE CENTERFOLD (PAGES 34 AND 35). STATEMENTS INTRODUCING EACH OF THE SESSIONS ARE WRITTEN TO STIMULATE FOCUSED DISCUSSION AND DEBATE. WE NEED ALL OUR DIVERSE VIEWS AS WE DEVELOP A POLICY FRAMEWORK TO UNITE OUR POLITICAL BATTLES. PLEASE USE THE BLANK SPACE IN YOUR CONFERENCE PROGRAM TO TAKE NOTES. WE LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR PARTICIPATION.

DUE TO NEGLIBLE DEMAND, WE ARE NOT OFFERING CHILDCARE.



# 50 YEARS OF RESISTANCE

## THE COLUMBUS LEGACY AND THE

**in·va·sion** (invā' zhan) n. 1. The act of invading.  
esp. entrance of an army to conquer or pillage. 2.  
The onset of something injurious or harmful, as a  
disease. [ME *invasioun* < OFr. *invasion* < LLat.  
*invasio* < Lat. *invadere*, to invade.]



**lib·er·a·tion** (lib'e-rā'shan) n. 1. The act of  
liberating or the state of being liberated. 2.  
The action or process of trying to achieve  
equal rights and status: women's liberation;  
gay liberation. -**liberationist** n.

AFRICAN • SEARCHING FOR TRUTH AND...

FIGHTING FOR THE FUTURE

# 1492-1992

NOVEMBER 13-15 HOWARD UNIVERSITY BLACKBURN CENTER

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL: 202/806-6853 OR 404/441-6345



## ***500 Years of Resistance: The Columbus Legacy and the African — Searching for Truth and Fighting for the Future***

The program will explore the rich history of African Peoples and cultures and their relationship with Indigenous Peoples and cultures in the Western Hemisphere, and correct the historical misunderstanding that Christopher Columbus "discovered" this part of the world.

**10:00 AM DEPART SCHOOLS**

**10:45 AM WELCOME / INTRODUCTION AND / PURPOSE**

**EAST/WEST BALLROOM BLACKBURN CENTER HOWARD UNIVERSITY**

Dr. Franklin Smith, Superintendent of Schools, District of Columbia  
Dr. Jimmie Jackson, President, Washington Teachers' Union  
Venetta Sloane-Akwara, ESL Teacher, Wilson High School  
Rachel Hicks, 1992-93 Distinguished Fellow, American Federation of Teachers

**11:00 am "Unexpected Facts in Ancient America: Who Decides?"**

An award winning video by Tahira Henderson & Erika Young, 8th graders at Jefferson JHS, followed by a short discussion with filmmakers.

**11:30 am Workshops and Group Discussions**

**EAST BALLROOM** "The Crisis of Youth," a discussion with upper level students and youth leaders "Little Monster" and "Bone" about their reunification and efforts to build a truly multicultural society. Dr. Abdul Alkalimat, Northeastern Univ & Dr. Rose Brewer, Univ of Minnesota facilitating.

**WEST BALLROOM** "We'll Understand It Better By and By." Bernice Johnson Reagon, Scholar/Artist, talking about pioneering African American composers and the Civil Rights Struggles of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.

**FORUM** "The Discovery: Black Explorers/Blacks in Georgetown." Carroll R. Gibbs, historian, presents lecture with visuals to highlight the remarkable record of bravery, strength and resource-fulness of African and African American explorers as they searched the skies and plumbed the depths of the ocean for more than ten centuries.

**AUDITORIUM** "The Age of Exploration; Economics, Capitalism, and Conflict." Howard Zinn, Professor Emeritus, Boston Univ, will guide us on a special "peoples' journey" through the United States to learn the stories and struggles of Native Americans, Africans, women workers, and poor people's movements. Facilitated by Dr. Ronald Bailey, Northeastern University.

**1:00 PM DEPART BLACKBURN CENTER**

## *Culture: The Soul of Our Struggle* *Cultural and Political Evening*

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## ***Let the Truth be Known: The Lessons of History for the Freedom Struggle***

This opening plenary will provide an overview of the topics to be discussed at the conference.

The study of history is a major battlefield for the world's people. The dominant historical interpretation is usually the view of a ruling class. All this means is that they control the publishing companies, the schools, the funding of scholars, and the institutions that preserve historical archives. In a word, the control of history is a question of power.

Every historical epoch of revolutionary struggle can be marked by leaps in consciousness, at the heart of which is historical consciousness. The task of exposing the exploitation and oppression carried out by the ruling classes is based on a new study of history, a history from the bottom up rather than from the top down.

Furthermore, the struggle for a people's history, a history of liberation, is the struggle for a scientific approach to history. This is the search for a method of history that can be shared by everyone in the world, and with which a universal history of the world can one day be written.

In this conference we want to attack the lies and distortions of "Eurocentric" and "imperialist" historians. This plenary will represent statements by scholar-activists and activist-scholars, who serve the interests of the masses of victims. We will hear the broad themes of resistance and rebellion, of culture and social organization, of survival and revolution.

We need this new history: What is history from a Black perspective? What is history from the perspective of the people who lived in the Americas and the Caribbean before 1492? What is history from the standpoint of the majority of working class white people? What will historical analysis be like without the assumption of male supremacy? *What is our history?*

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## *From Firewater to Crack—The Politics of Drugs: Seizing Back Control of Our Communities*

One of the major tools used to dominate and control peoples, nations and classes is chemical warfare. The most common forms used are alcohol and narcotics. These "drugs" have been developed through scientific research, so that what many cultures utilized in natural forms due to their functional utility, often as medicine or in connection with a disciplined cultural ritual, are now enhanced and concentrated as socially dysfunctional tools of exploitation.

The greatest victims of drug warfare are the poor peoples of the world, both in the imperialist countries as well as the third world. The economies of the third world are devastated by the greater demand for plants to produce drugs than to produce food, and by the demobilization of the work force due to drug addiction. The drug profits are usually not invested in the third world countries, e.g., Jamaica, Columbia, etc.

The same pattern holds within the imperialist countries like the USA, as drugs have been used to control. Alcoholism and other forms of addiction from heroin to crack cocaine are most commonly found among the poor and working classes of the Black, Latino, and Native peoples. However, the greatest use of illegal drugs is by white people. This is a problem that impacts all aspects of society, and is a great source of profits for the leading capitalists.

The USA is utilizing the fear of drugs and the violence associated with it to build a police state at home (check out the Weed and Seed program of the Justice department) and to rationalize imperialist invasions like in Panama. The Drug Enforcement Administration represents the worst of the CIA, the FBI, and the Marines.

We need a plan to solve this problem linked to the overall overthrow of the exploitation and oppression we experience in all aspects of our lives.



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12:45 - 2:00 PM LUNCH BREAK

## ***What Befalls the Earth — Environmental Racism and Ecocide***

One of the great assets of traditional societies was usually a cultural system that was in harmony with the natural environment. Human society adapted to the laws of nature and sought to fit in based on respect for life, all of life. Imperialism represents a stage of social development in which science and technology are designed to dominate and exploit nature based on the interest of only the dominant members of the human species. Life on our planet is threatened now more than ever before.

Life on the entire planet faces the danger of a damaged ozone layer and a myriad of air pollutants based on unrestrained practices of industrial production. This can be extended to the earth's water and soil. Chemicals that expanded production now poison our environment. Perhaps the most demonic invention has been nuclear energy, providing benefits in the short run but yielding wastes that can lead to the extinction of all life.

As might be expected, there is a blatant racism in the pattern of environmental abuse. Sites in poor Black and Latin communities are the main dumping ground for toxic wastes. Overall, the region hardest hit is the "Black Belt South." This extends to countries in the Caribbean and Africa. Haiti and Nigeria are particular examples where this is a major problem.

Green politics are essential for human liberation. Every progressive movement has to consider environmental issues, from the neighborhood to countries and global regions. If we are to survive, life on planet earth must continue to be regenerative. No species can stand alone, and revolutionary politics has to teach human beings this basic fact of life.

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12:45 - 2:00 PM LUNCH BREAK

## ***Disease and Disease Experiments: Stop the Genocide***

The medical sciences deal with three interrelated contradictions: death, injury and illness. The first deals with the inevitable difficulties of growing old, and before dying having to endure more and more pain as well as a decline in the functioning of some or all of one's organs. The second involves accidental or unforeseen health problems usually based on one time ad hoc experiences. The third type is related to disease. It is this third type that best fits the oppressed and exploited peoples of every society since most of us don't die "natural deaths" rather we die from injury or disease.

Disease attacks human beings based on a crisis of public health that in turn emanates from a crisis in the economic and social fabric of society. Disease has been used for the purpose of committing genocide against a subject people or merely to experiment with them for the benefit of the ruling classes. The US military used small pox to fight the native peoples of this country in the 19th century, while the US health officials experimented with African Americans to find a treatment for syphilis in the 20th century. The latter case is evidenced in the "Tuskegee Experiment."

In this current world crisis the diseases that were previously defeated have bounced back — TB, various forms of venereal diseases, and polio. We are also facing perhaps the most dangerous disease known — AIDS. Even the *New York Times* is clear on this one, stating in an editorial that because AIDS is so rampant in Black and Latino communities in the USA and in the world, unless more is done by the advanced countries AIDS will have to be regarded as a form of racial genocide. No 21st century revolutionary movement can succeed without a program for fighting AIDS.

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**12:45 - 2:00 PM LUNCH BREAK**



## *The Struggles of Working Class Women*

Women have been forced to do most of the dirty work, and have had to catch "hell" while doing it. They have been economically exploited as workers, and sexually exploited as women. Additionally, women of color have been attacked through the racism of national oppression as well. No matter how you look at it, working class women of all societies have been at the very bottom. This is a fundamental issue that must be understood in terms of developing a strategy for revolution, as well as in terms of the tactical aspects of every concrete program of action.

There are special issues that impact women, but are of great importance to everyone, including health issues and special family issues. Moreover, there are social issues of violence in the workplace, on the street and in the home. There is the extreme issue of male supremacy, both a direct danger and an indirect danger such as the infamous problems faced by Atty. Anita Hill. First she faced male supremacy through sexual harassment in the workplace, and then she faced it again when she sought a fair hearing before an all male committee of the US Senate.

Part of the solution has to be the development of an independent womens movement in general, within which there would be more focused groups dealing with problems like welfare, public housing, rape, domestic violence, equal pay for equal work, adequate health care delivery, etc.

On the other hand, every movement must make an attempt to include women at every level of responsibility. The affirmative action goal for women in leadership is 50%. The revolutionary goal for working class women is to fundamentally change the organization of the economy and the social dynamics of every social institution so that the interests of poor and working people are the basis for social policy.

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12:45 - 2:00 PM LUNCH BREAK

## ***Gangs and the Crisis Facing Youth: Stop the Killing***

Every urban community has always had forms of youth organization, partly serving as a normal way youth are socialized into the overall society, and partly to supplement the failure of other organizations to command the participation and loyalty of young people.

Gangs exist in the inner city today because they supplement and or substitute for a family, for a community in place of a church or a neighborhood organization, for an organization to bring order and justice, and for a way to make a living. Most gangs are just groups of youth organized on the basis of neighborhood ("turf").

Today the two main aspects of life in the community that impacts gangs are drugs and the police. Gangs that exist to sell drugs dominate neighborhoods as markets, and a great deal of the violence is to protect millions of dollars in profits. Virtually none of these profits is reinvested into the community and so the quality of life goes down, not up. The police, while generally occupying the poor community and preying upon youth, especially young Black and Latino men, are constantly in conflict with the gangs, those engaged in drugs and all the rest as well. The gangs threaten the police because they are the only armed force that can confront them. On the other hand the most dangerous gangs are "within" the police departments much like the death squads in El Salvador.

The main problem is that the gangs have not yet been educated with radical politics, and then reorganized around a revolutionary political program. Only in this way can we build a massive revolutionary movement prepared to fight for freedom "by any means necessary."

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**12:45 - 2:00 PM LUNCH BREAK**

## *History and Multiculturalism in the Curriculum: Teaching the Truth*

The curriculum of the schools in the USA have been Eurocentric and generally racist in the treatment of the world's cultures. The great "lie" has been to deny the contributions that the indigenous peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America have made to world civilization. The contention has been that the Greco-Roman foundations of Western civilization are unique to Europe and superior to all other cultures. This lie dates from 1492.

It is important that we counter with the truth. First, the origins of modern civilization can be traced to the independent historical contributions of cultures from every region of the world. Second, the advances of Greece and Rome have to be linked to the historical influence of an African civilization that developed in Egypt. Third, the intellectual and moral deficit that results from these lies impacts "white" people as much as the main targets of abuse.

The main texts for a curriculum have to constitute a multicultural canon. This new canon has to include great works from all cultures so that our education is truly multi-cultural in the global sense. Placing a high value on one's own culture is important, but it must not keep one from learning and valuing the cultures of others. Furthermore, in the USA it is imperative for people to become bi-lingual, for only by reading and speaking both English and Spanish will it be possible to realize the full goal of multiculturalism.

All curriculum models have to be changed, all teachers have to be retrained. Moreover, we have to change the libraries, the press, television, and all other sources of information to reflect the multicultural world that we live in.



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## *Culture and Religion: A Double-Edged Sword*

Every historical epoch reflects a whole complex of related struggles, and every fundamental struggle defines a historical epoch. The role of religion and culture always reflects the struggles over class and power, so it is always necessary to understand them as part of the overall situation. 1492 is a date that marks the new role of Christianity as the main cultural tool of colonialism. It assisted cultural genocide by providing the rationale for liquidating the religions of the indigenous peoples.

On the other hand, through the creativity of "fooling" the colonial slave masters, indigenous religions have survived even though in a new form by adopting some Christian practices and material artifacts but maintaining original content. This is the case with the African based Voodoo (e.g., Haiti), Santeria (e.g., Puerto Rico or Cuba), and Candomble (e.g., Brazil), etc.

Furthermore, much like its revolutionary beginning as the religion of the oppressed peoples fighting against their Roman conquerors, a new movement of liberation theology is sweeping through the oppressed communities of the world in which being a "servant of God" requires one to be a revolutionary fighting for "fundamental social change." The theological doctrine for oppressed and exploited people is that *God loves those who fight back.*

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## ***Information Imperialism—Media and the New World Order: Break the Isolation***

Every society in the world today requires information, ranging from the results of scientific investigation to the current events of the day. Communications involves publishing companies (including print, audio, video, and film), and the media of radio and television. The concentration of wealth has enabled these resources to be monopolized by the imperialist countries within giant transnational firms, and in turn they are used to further advance the goals of imperialism.

The most important aspect of 21st century economic development will be the development, distribution, and utilization of information in relationship to the new technologies. Further, political progress will increasingly be contingent on the overall level of consciousness and education of the masses of people in the society. The quality of news will determine the quality of democracy.

Scientific information should be free to the world community. Global communications should link every local community on a nonprofit basis making alternative news sources universally available. This is a prerequisite for a world based on democracy and justice rather than prejudice, fear and greed.

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## ***Battling the Professional Liars Among Us: Science, Research, and Knowledge for the People***

Some scholars seem to specialize in lying, so more of us have to get engaged in fighting back in search of the truth. The old adage is true, a room will remain dirty unless and until it is swept clean. This is a prerequisite for telling the truth, so a committed scholarship will always have a polemical aspect to it.

One example of this is the issue of intelligence and I.Q. testing. Sir Cyril Burt was acclaimed for proving that intelligence was inherited based on research utilizing comparative data on twins. He lied by presenting fraudulent research findings. His lies reinforced notions of biological racism.

There also prevails the notion that the origin of capitalism was based on the superior intelligence of Europeans because Europe was supposed to have developed so far ahead of and independent from the rest of the world. Third world scholars have refuted this lie, and pointed out how it was consciously crafted to build a Eurocentric myth.

And, there is the myth of male supremacy. This is a problem within all communities of people, but the way that this connects with power regards the myth of the dominant white male. Whether Christopher Columbus or Tarzan, John Wayne or Oliver North, the white male is presented as invincible, morally above reproach but feared. This is also a central "ideal" (i.e., lie) of Eurocentrism.

Critical to all of these "professional deceptions" is ruling class ideology, distortions with the purpose of maintaining the legitimacy of the status quo. The task for oppressed people is to tell the truth and expose these lies as part of fighting to transform society and to institutionalize democratic institutions for research and higher education. Establishing the truth is always a matter of political struggle.

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## *Hip Hop Culture and Rap Music*

There is a revolutionary wave that emerged from the youth of the Black community and it is sweeping over the country, over the entire world. This revolutionary attitude, and many diverse points of view, is manifested in rap music and hip hop culture. This is, of course, distressing to the ruling class.

When the people begin to speak in their own interests they are dangerous to the ruling class, and when the people begin to listen then the ruling class moves to stop them. This is the basis for censorship of radical forces today.

Youth are always for change, and as such are always under suspicion. Most of the rap artists are radical and have a political objective, as well as to provide entertainment for profit. Ice T has been attacked by police and the conservative mainstream, while criticisms mount on artists/groups like Ice Cube, Sister Soul-jah, Public Enemy, Arrested Development, and The Disposable Heroes of Hiphoprisy. We must stop the attempts to censor the creativity of our youth!

In order to accomplish this generational conflicts have to be avoided in our communities. For this reason it is essential that "older" people take the time to learn about rap and hip hop cultural forms. This will require library acquisitions, new course syllabi, setting up programs for the youth to discuss their views and to develop theoretical consciousness about their cultural innovations, and finally discussing this new culture in light of the overall historical development of Black culture so that everyone is educated and can be united based on mutual respect for continuity and innovation.

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## ***The Technological Revolution: Mother Earth Will Never be the Same***

Stages in the development of human society are intimately associated with technological advances in agriculture, transportation, power generation, materials and communication. Revolutionary changes in social relations have been closely coupled to major transformations in the technological forces of production. Capitalism developed and expanded in association with the industrial revolution; the steam engine, textile machinery, railroads and automobiles, telegraph and telephone, radio and television and the assembly line. A substantive part of these technological advances were used as part of an apparatus of oppression and exploitation.

Now we are faced with a new post-industrial technological revolution. This is based on innovations in electronics, the development of computers, robotics, new modes of long range communication, and the application of new knowledge in biology and chemistry to production. This integration of new technology into the production process generates an enormous increase in productive power with many fewer workers. Thus while human society now possesses the ability to provide for the needs of every human, the organization of production on the basis of private ownership and property, results in increasing unemployment and impoverishment.

Transforming the application of science and technology into a liberating force, rather than a source of corporate profit and military power, requires opening the barriers to entry, and redirecting to the common good. The first steps include transforming science education and bringing community leaders into technological decision processes.



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5:30 - 6:45 PM DINNER BREAK

## *The Global Economic Crisis: Who Will Pay the Debt?*

The existence of a world economy based on a global network dates from at least the 15th century. Colonialism was the system designed for the massive transfer of wealth (theft) from the third world (Asia, Africa, and Latin America) to Europe and North America. After World War II former colonial countries were economically subordinated through national and international loan schemes. These loan schemes financed middle classes and export industries as a form of neo-colonialism. These loans have produced such massive debt for third world countries that the interest payments often exceed 50% of all foreign exchange earnings.

This debt is now managed and expanded by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. These agencies dictate the terms for the borrowing countries to establish "structural adjustments" that include dismantling government welfare, a lowering of the standard of living, a reorganization of the economy for export and not local consumption, and high salaries for large numbers of foreign consultants to make sure things are run "properly," i.e., in the interest of the lending countries.

In the lending countries an economic revolution in technology has forced a scramble to replace old technology. The massive payments on debt is currently the major source of wealth that Europe and the USA needs to rebuild their economics for the 21st century. Capitalism started by grabbing wealth from the third world, and it is trying desperately to survive using the same old tactics.

Cuba is leading the way in demanding that third world countries refuse to repay the debt. The Organization of African Unity is demanding that slavery be the basis for reparations from Europe and the USA to Africa.

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**5:30 - 6:45 PM DINNER BREAK**

## ***Rumors of War: Whose New World Order?***

A central feature of imperialism is war, both between imperialist powers and against them by countries fighting for national liberation. These international wars intensify the tendency in every country for the class struggle to escalate to the level of warfare. There are constant rumors of war.

After World War II the threat of war in the world was connected to the contention between the USA and the USSR. After the overthrow of the final vestige of socialism in the USSR, capitalist and feudal forces emerged throughout eastern Europe to carry the counter-revolutionary class struggle to completion. Fascism is on the rise again, and with it new vicious forms of racism and mob violence against immigrants, especially in Germany, France, Belgium, and England.

The Bush administration has proclaimed this post war period a new world order. Every US president (Republican and Democrat) is forced to proclaim democracy as a banner only to conceal the most naked aggression of capitalist and feudal forces. However, everywhere progressive forces prepare for war against these forces. Some high points of this resistance are in Palestine, South Africa, and Cuba. The people of the world want to disrupt this reactionary order, and bring disorder so that a new revolutionary world order can be built. Only when we have peace based on justice and societies based on principles of equity will **our new world order be possible.**

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5:30 - 6:45 PM DINNER BREAK

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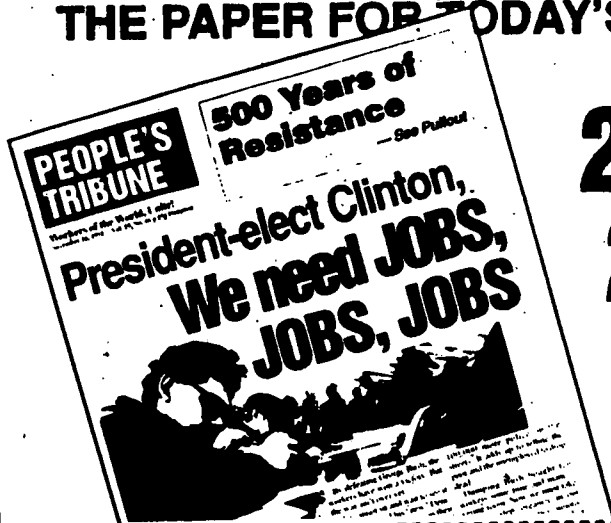
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## FRIDAY NOVEMBER 13, 1992

10:00 AM - 1:00 PM      **STUDENT - TEACHER CONFERENCE DAY**  
Teaching Truth: Our History, Our Future  
For Students, Youth, and Teachers

9:00 AM - 7:00 PM      **REGISTRATION**  
Second Floor Lobby

9:00 AM - 9:00 PM      **DISPLAYS, COSPONSORS, VENDORS**  
Hilltop Lounge & Lower Level Plaza

2:00 PM - 5:00 PM      **MEETING AND TRAINING OF CONFERENCE FACILITATORS**  
West Ballroom

5:00 PM - 6:30 PM      **DINNER BREAK**

7:00 pm - 10:00 pm      **CULTURE: THE SOUL OF OUR STRUGGLE**  
CULTURAL AND POLITICAL EVENING  
East/West Ballroom

## SATURDAY NOVEMBER 14, 1992

9:00 - 11:00 AM      **EAST/WEST BALLROOM      SESSION 1 — OPENING PLENARY**  
Let the Truth be Known: Lessons of History for the Freedom Struggle

9:00 AM - 7:00 PM      **REGISTRATION**  
Second Floor Lobby

9:00 AM - 9:00 PM      **DISPLAYS, COSPONSORS, VENDORS**  
Hilltop Lounge & Lower Level Plaza

11:15 AM - 12:45 PM      **STRATEGIES OF OPPRESSION, STRATEGIES OF STRUGGLE: NATIONAL CONTEXT**

Session 2	Forum	From Firewater, to Crack
Session 3	Room 148	What Befalls the Earth
Session 4	Auditorium	Disease and Disease Experiments
Session 5	East Ballroom	Struggles of Working Class Women
Session 6	West Ballroom	Gangs and the Crisis Facing Youth



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## SATURDAY NOVEMBER 14, 1992

2:00 - 3:30 PM

CULTURE AND IDEOLOGY: TRANSFORMING TOOLS OF OPPRESSION INTO  
TOOLS FOR LIBERATION

Session 7	East Ballroom	History and Multiculturalism in the Curriculum
Session 8	West Ballroom	Culture and Religion: A Double-Edged Sword
Session 9	Auditorium	Information Imperialism—Media and the New World Order
Session 10	Room 148	Battling the Professional Liars Among Us:
Session 11	Forum	Hip Hop Culture and Rap Music

3:45 - 5:15 PM

STRATEGIES OF OPPRESSION, STRATEGIES OF STRUGGLE: THE GLOBAL CONTEXT

Session 12	Room 148	The Technological Revolution: Earth Will Never be the Same
Session 13	East Ballroom	The Global Economic Crisis: Who Will Pay the Debt?
Session 14	West Ballroom	Rumors of War: Whose New World Order?
Session 15	Auditorium	The Big Rip-off—Strategies of Dispossession and Conquest
Session 16	Forum	US Foreign Policy and African Peoples: Haiti

5:30 - 6:45 PM DINNER BREAK

7:00 - 9:00 PM

EAST/WEST BALLROOM

CULTURE: FROM RESISTANCE TO REVOLUTION

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## SUNDAY NOVEMBER 15, 1992

7:30 - 8:00 AM

AUDITORIUM

SPIRITUALITY IN PRACTICE

8:00 - 9:15 AM

BREAKFAST

9:30 - 11:00 AM

HISTORY LESSONS FOR TODAY, ACTION FOR TOMORROW

Session 17	West Ballroom	We've Met Before: African and Indigenous Relations
Session 18	Auditorium	From Primitive Communalism to Scientific Socialism
Session 19	East Ballroom	500 Years of Fighting for Our Lives: Woman and Youth
Session 20	Room 142	African American Struggles for Human Rights in the Americas
Session 21	Forum	Cotton Fueled the World: The Role of the South
Session 22	Room 148	Education in Crisis

11:00 - 11:45 AM WEST BALLROOM

SLIDE PRESENTATION & BOOK SIGNING

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12:15 - 1:45 PM

THE FREEDOM FIGHT FOR THE 21st CENTURY: CREATING A LIBERATION LEGACY

Session 23	East Ballroom	Street Heat and Rebellions: Confronting Police Brutality
Session 24	West Ballroom	The Ballot and the Bullet: Electoral Politics and Power
Session 25	Auditorium	We've Fought Before and Won!
Session 26	Forum	From Planation to Factory to the Streets: Black Workers
Session 27	Room 148	Where Do We Go From Here? Coalition Building

2:00 - 4:00 PM

EAST/WEST BALLROOM

SESSION 28 — CLOSING PLENARY

THE FUTURE IS IN OUR HANDS: NO JUSTICE, NO PEACE!  
Closing Ceremony: Alliance of Native Americans



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Our special thanks to Howard University faculty and staff, Carole K. Mauge-Lewis, graphic artist and James Davis, Department of Romance Languages.

## ***The Big Rip-off — Strategies of Dispossession and Conquest: The Land Question Revisited***

The most devastating form of colonialism was "settler colonialism" that usually involved a program of genocide against the indigenous population. This took place throughout the Caribbean, in the United States, Australia, South Africa, and Palestine. The main demand for the survivors of this "colonial holocaust" is to reclaim their land. The seizure of land by colonialism was by force, and thereby was illegal and immoral.

Another form of appropriation was in the politics of incorporating a country as an overseas extension or "department" of the colonizing country. This is the case with the domination by the USA over Puerto Rico, and by France over Martinique and Guadeloupe.

Within the USA the most glaring injustice is the absolute illegal violation of virtually every treaty between the Native Americans, The Red Nations, and the US government. The Indian people have been forced to live on reservations (not unlike the apartheid land policy of native homelands in South Africa), and a systematic policy of institutionalized genocide was unfolded that included extraordinarily high rates of illnesses like TB and alcoholism.

The hope of emancipation after the civil war was in the promise of each ex slave getting "40 acres and a mule." Instead, Blacks were locked into a sharecropping tenancy system made brutal by lynching and peonage.

Ultimately, the public ownership and utilization of all land for the good of everyone is the only solution.

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5:30 - 6:45 PM DINNER BREAK

## *United States Foreign Policy and African Peoples: The Case of Haiti*

Haiti has the distinction of being the only successful African slave revolt in the New World (its past), and the poorest country in the African Diaspora (its present).

The Haitian revolution took place from 1790-1803. This weakened France and forced Napoleon to sell Louisiana to the US in 1803. This inspired the slaves in the US and led to revolts, especially the case of Denmark Vesey in 1822. Further, against racist sentiment, President Lincoln recognized the Republic of Haiti in 1862, and 17 years later Frederick Douglas was named US Ambassador. But the US, as an imperialist power, was destined to seek domination and in 1915 the US Marines invaded Haiti.

After decades of domination by the Duvalier family, the winds of revolutionary change are blowing in Haiti once again. Mass insurgency has challenged the military rule and the country is quite unstable. The great hope was the election of President Aristide, but the military forces seized power in a counterrevolutionary coup d'etat. The hypocrisy of the US government is that it has opposed illegal military governments in some countries, but it does little to oppose the military junta in Haiti. Furthermore, the US absorbs immigrants from some countries but it treats Haitian refugees as criminals and sends them back to prison, torture, and murder.

The issues we face are the following: 1. How can we support the Haitian revolution?; 2. How can we oppose the racist policies of the US government regarding reinstating the legal president of Haiti (Aristide) and admitting the political refugees? The progressive movements in the USA have to reach out and build unity with the Haitian population in the USA.

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**5:30 - 6:45 PM DINNER BREAK**

**SEE PAGE 66 FOR DETAILS ON SATURDAY EVENING AND SUNDAY MORNING ACTIVITIES**

## ***We've Met Before: Relations of Africans With Indigenous Peoples of the Americas and the Caribbean***

Not only do African peoples and the indigenous peoples of the Americas and the Caribbean have **common problems** today, but to a great extent they share a **common history**. Furthermore, this conference is dedicated to **searching for common solutions**.

There were African visits to the Americas before 1492. But after Columbus invaded, by 1600, 90% of the indigenous people in the region had been killed. In many places the genocide was virtually total! By this same time over one million Africans were enslaved in the region. In this context Africans and Indians were forced to endure slavery, and as a result they combined forces to fight for freedom.

The result of the last five hundred years has resulted in Black and Indians having many of the same problems in terms of health, social life, political powerlessness, economic dependency, etc. Moreover, many Black people and Indians have married and combined their communities through shared families.

There is a need for a revolutionary program to fundamentally transform this society and correct past mistakes. No revolution can take place unless there is mass mobilization of the indigenous peoples, mutual respect between all nationalities, and political unity based on a common program of action.



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## ***From African/Indigenous Communalism To Scientific Socialism***

This conference is based on the search for a society free from racism, class exploitation, and male supremacy. All social systems are based on economic systems, and therefore our search for freedom from exploitation and oppression in society is connected to our search for a new political economy as well. The purpose of an economy is to organize people for the production, distribution, and consumption of what they need to survive and develop a good standard of living, quality of life.

The History of traditional society has origins in an economy organized around collective responsibility and sharing. Life was hard and therefore to survive everyone had a role to play, a job to perform in the interest of the overall common good. In return, the material benefits of the society were equitably distributed so that the distribution plan was of benefit to all. This has been called communalism.

Today, the potential of modern economic life is at such a high level of production that no human being should be forced to suffer or do without any necessities of life. This potential is based on the capacity of the most advanced science and technology. However, in the world today there are famines, and millions of people are forced to do without the most simple supplies of food, clothing and shelter. This results from technology serving the greed and power for ruling class interests as opposed to a plan for the well being of everybody.

Communalism was spontaneous, it was a natural economy based upon very rudimentary technology. We need a scientific analysis of contemporary conditions to help us develop a plan to replace the capitalism that exists. The only way to get what we want is to have a plan and then to fight for it.

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## ***500 Years of Fighting for Our Lives: Women and Youth***

The fight for full and equal rights by women in the US has been a long and hard struggle that continues at this present time. The new phrase "the feminization of poverty" sums up the terrible truth that a majority of children face economic and social insecurity, and when children are in single parent female headed households they are likely to be locked in a vicious cycle of poverty. The proposed Equal Rights Amendment to the constitution placed an abstract principle on the agenda, but the problems of poor and working women are concrete examples of economic exploitation. Concrete problems require concrete solutions.

There are many current policy issues that are very important. The fight against discrimination in the workplace impacts all working women. This is about equal pay for equal work, the end of sexual harassment, the need for maternity and paternity leave, and a removal of "the glass ceiling." Additional issues involve expanding and humanizing the welfare system, including income transfers, public housing, health care, food programs, etc. The fight for abortion rights continues.

The National Organization of Women has initiated a new political party, The 21st Century Party. This is a crucial move and will lead to greater mobilization. What kind of political party will meet the needs of women?

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## *African American Struggles for Human Rights in the Americas*

International law makes a distinction between human rights and political rights. Every human being has rights that must be protected regardless of the laws and traditions of any society. There are obvious examples of human rights violations, including slavery, genocide, and starvation. These are summed up in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Every society has its own laws, and it is entitled to decide its own legal structure based on the right to national sovereignty. However, the international community should and does debate issues, regardless of the sovereignty of a country, when it is possible that the country is denying its population human rights. Consider the following issues:

1. The United Nations has declared Puerto Rico to be a colony and that all colonies should be granted independence. This is a political right.
2. The US has committed genocide against its minority nationalities and denied any vestige of self-determination. This is generally true for all indigenous peoples in the hemisphere.
3. Human rights are impossible for the millions of people trapped in poverty, farmers with no land, labor with no jobs, and everyone with limited health care, education, and all other serious welfare services.

What is the role of the United Nations? What new forms of international organization are needed?

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## *Cotton Fueled the World: The Role of the South*

For most of the 19th century the southern region of the USA produced most of the world's cotton and provided the main basis for investment, industrial production, and export. In fact, it was cotton that provided the basis for the industrial revolution as it first took place in England and thrived on the basis of slave produced cotton.

Cotton is no longer king. It is produced in other parts of the world, and synthetic cloth has challenged it in the market place. The result is that the southern region has been trying to diversify its economic since World War I.

However, the slave legacy of the south has kept the south in a pivotal position relative to economic and political power in the USA. The people are disproportionately poor and uneducated, and the state and local governments have provided the least of all of the social safety net provisions than in any other region. This has set up the basis for a virtual dictatorship of monopolistic control.

The level of economic exploitation is so high in the south that whoever controls the southern economy is in a position to influence national politics. This reflects the fact that the south has been a regional political bloc dominated as a from of monopolistic control, and in some place it has been a virtual dictatorship.

On the other hand, this is the region with the greatest concentration of Black people and therefore if Black people move in this region then it is likely to impact the country. The 1960's demonstrate this. Further, on the basis of class and race factors, if Blacks and whites can unite in the south in a common struggle then it is likely to have a very dramatic impact on the entire country and world.



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## *Education in Crisis: Who Will Pay?*

The purpose of education in every society is to prepare people to lead lives that are socially productive. More specifically, education functions to train people with technical skills, and to reproduce relations of class power, i.e., everyone is trained for a job, but the majority are trained to work for others while a few are trained to rule. The technological base of the economy has been revolutionized and is forcing all of education to be changed accordingly. Both aspects are critical, technical skills (the mastery of computers, chemistry, etc.), and power (the mastery of organizational skills, critical thinking and strategic planning, etc.).

Industrial capitalism laid the basis for universal public education. This was dramatically demonstrated by the freed slaves in the US who fought to bring free universal education to the south. The crisis today is that the capitalists believe that because the work force they will need in the future will be smaller the public schools are no longer needed. So, as the old society degenerates through planned neglect, plans for the new society are ominous indeed.

The capitalists plan to privatize education, and use tax money through a voucher system to give middle class families a choice to finance their children in private schools. On the other hand, working class and poor people will be given a generic education designed for social control and the acceptance of institutionalized genocide.

The critical task is to save and transform public education based on financing from everyone, more from the rich than the poor, including the transfer of wealth from suburbs and high income areas to the inner cities until every school is small and of high quality.

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## ***Street Heat and Rebellions: Confronting Police and State Brutality ... Can Revolution be far Behind?***

The ruling class uses the state (police, courts, jails, etc) to maintain "law and order" in its own interest. State agencies recruit and train people who in turn develop a subjective unity based on a common interest. The Los Angeles police department is an example of how the police frequently become a militarized bastion of fascism in which racism leads to a vicious pattern of abuse against Black and Latino people.

When economic crisis is coupled with outrageous abuse by state agencies, especially the police, people fight back. Cuts in employment, welfare, and public housing have forced people to take to the streets and build tent cities. Militant organizations have been developed by the homeless, the welfare recipients, by the hungry, and the unemployed.

A rebellion is a continuation of politics in the form of spontaneous violence. This jumped off in the 1960's (e.g., Watts in 1965 and Detroit in 1967), and has begun again in the 1990's (especially the South Central rebellion of April-May 1992 and the 30 or so cities that followed). These rebellions reject continuing to work within the system, but it is not yet a planned revolutionary insurrection to seize power.

Rebellions are schools of war, and when the conditions continue to exist veterans of a rebellion one year can be revolutionary freedom fighters the next year. Rebellions are spontaneous but revolutions have to be planned. The link between the two is based on the strategic science of organization and politics, and the tactical art of political action.

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## ***The Ballot and the Bullet: Electoral Politics and the Question of Power***

The US political system is based on the "consent of the governed." This political principle is the historically specific "con game" of industrial capitalism. But, it was fought for and not given. Voting was a demand made by the working class, by Black people, by women, and by youth to insure mass participation in the political process. However, the capitalist class manages to control the political system based their wealth and economic control. This political control of the state includes the police and the armed forces. What the working people are usually able to do is choose between the options set forward by different sections of the capitalist class.

In theory the workers can unite and vote the capitalists out of power. This has never happened in history and is not likely to without violent resistance. The capitalists would never allow this as it would mean the working people would have the power to take the wealth and use it for their own good — good schools, good hospitals, good housing, etc.

Malcolm X was very clear when he said that change would come from the ballot or the bullet. Since he said that, people have been led to use the vote, overwhelmingly to elect Blacks, Latinos and workers to offices as representatives of the existing capitalist parties. We've gone as far as we can go. The next step is to fight to establish an independent party for working and poor people of all nationalities. This party will fight to take power in this country, utilizing the vote when possible and necessary, but also everything else. The new party for working people must fight for power "by any means necessary."

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## *We've Fought Before and Won!*

It is important to remember that resistance has been part of every historical epoch. The fight against slavery is a glorious record, and even after emancipation the freedom struggle continued in many ways. And, now the struggle continues.

Within the overall record of resistance there are times when decisive battles are possible, battles for revolutionary change. These are rare moments in history and involve an all inclusive process including politics and economics. We are in the midst of an economic revolution that is pushing the society toward a deep and irreversible crisis. Within this crisis, more and more, the politics of revolutionary struggle emerges as a reasonable response by the masses of poor people fighting for a decent life.

The Cuban revolution is the one point of opposition to the counterrevolutionary power of the US in this hemisphere. The Cuban revolution deserves to be defended by all progressive people in the US.

We have fought before and won. What are the lessons for our struggle in this period? Is revolution possible?



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## ***From Planation to Factory to the Streets: Black Workers and Class Unity***

Our history has been shaped by the forces of the world economy, and this includes Black, Latino, and Native peoples in the Americas and the Caribbean. The avaricious search for gold and animal fur resulted in genocide against the native peoples. After the hostile seizure of land, a so-called "new world" was created based on the brutal slavery of the African on sugar and cotton plantations. These plantations were the main source of wealth in the Americas until the 20th century. Everybody in the Black Belt South, the heart of plantation life in the USA, Black people and white people, share a common bond of culture and life style.

Factory work and life in the city broke down differences between peoples and forged common class identities. Even with residential segregation and the retention of different national forms of culture, the profound impact of capitalism has been to produce a homogenization of people into an American working class. While this is not complete, a comparison of people today and 100 years ago will reveal a dramatic transformation in this regard.

However, in today's crisis there are two motions that point in the opposite direction. On the one hand there is a new wave of third world migration to the USA so that there are new and relatively self contained national groups (e.g., Dominicans, Haitians, Salvadorians, etc.). On the other hand the economy is throwing people out of work into the street, and therefore the forces of proletarianization have been replaced by the terrible spontaneity of street life. Here the discipline is directly from the state (police, public housing, welfare, etc.).

Today the task is to develop strategy and tactics for the struggle to make a revolution in this country based on these complex class and national factors. Whether the fight is against the factory bosses or the police, the issue is who has the power and who is going to benefit from the wealth of the society.

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## ***Where Do We Go From Here? Coalition Building***

The most fundamental principle of politics is the necessity for unity. This is a critical underlying issue for all politics, especially the politics of resistance by poor and working people, especially the liberation politics of Black peoples, Indian peoples, and Latino peoples. *Strategy* (the science of developing long terms goals, forces to be united, and organizational forms for the mobilization of these forces) and *tactics* (the art of short term planning and implementing of political action) require unity, *unity in thinking* and *unity in acting*.

We are the majority of people in this country, in every country, and in our many and diverse organizations we are fighting back. The major strategic task at hand is to unite all poor people fighting for fundamental change. Can we expect people to think exactly alike? Of course not. Can we expect people to do exactly the same thing? Of course not. What can we expect? What can we work for? What unity is possible?

We can see unity on an issue by issue basis, on the local level and on the national level. There are coalitions that focus on the fight against homelessness, or the welfare system, or public housing, or educational cut backs. There is a need for such issue oriented coalitions on every major problem we face. But today, we need more than this!

We need to build local coalitions of the main militant grass roots revolutionary fighters on all issues, individuals and organizations. We need mass public forums (like this conference) to promote broad community dialogue based on mutual respect and a legitimate desire to unite people in the battle for freedom. We need the formation of local "war councils" that can be linked together in a new movement. If politics is the art of the possible, then the politics of coalition building will make a new movement possible. **FORWARD!**

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## ***The Future is in Our Hands: No Justice, No Peace!***

This conference has been a comprehensive look at the many problems we face, both in the historical context of the last 500 years, and in the current situation as we make efforts to build movements of unity and resistance. This last plenary is for all of us to bring our thoughts together into concrete action plans. The central question is clear:

### **WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?**

We want all action oriented conference participants to attend this closing plenary and to participate in the discussion. Many people will leave, but we hope everyone who is serious about building a new movement, creating new forms of struggle, will make plans to stay. Please prepare to speak about these questions:

1. Please describe the issue(s) that you are most concerned with?
2. In your local area, what forms of organization have been developed to deal with these issues?
3. What kinds of people and resources have united in this effort?
4. What have you learned at this conference that will help you when you return to this work?
5. How can we work together in the future?

If you don't have an opportunity to stay for this final plenary, or you don't get an opportunity to speak, please send answers to these questions to the conference organizers. We are serious, and we seek unity of action.  
**FORWARD!**

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**SUNDAY NOVEMBER 15, 1992**

### ***Spirituality in Practice***

**7:30 - 8:00 AM** AUDITORIUM  
**8:00 - 9:15 AM** BREAKFAST





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