

Support Former Black Panther Herman Bell

Written by Robert ID2061

Sunday, 30 October 2005 04:39 -

Herman Bell was born and raised in the rural South by a large, loving but economically disenfranchised family. At the age of 7, his father came to take him to live in New York City, where he could have a better education. He spent the rest of his youth in the city, then came West via a college football scholarship. It was in the Bay Area that Herman was introduced to and became a member of the Black Panther Party. He participated in the Party's successful, self-sustaining community programs. Having been initially inspired by Malcolm X, like so many others, he went on to study the philosophies of national liberation movements which were coming to fruition around the world during the 1960s.

It was in the context of the onward march of human history and the rising tide of global Black consciousness that Herman began his organizing and activism in the Black liberation movement. In response to the growing strength of this movement, the FBI targeted the Black Panther Party and community leaders for neutralization and elimination. Herman, like so many others, was driven underground and became part of the Black Liberation Army. He felt that it was his duty to serve his community, as well as to maintain and uplift its dignity and life force, given that Black people have been so grievously abused and disrespected since they were forced to these shores as an inexhaustible supply of slave labor. Herman's affiliation led to his capture in 1973 and conviction in 1975 for the killing of two policemen in New York City in 1971. Herman's two co-defendants, Jalil Muntaqim (Anthony Bottom) and Albert Nuh Washington, were also convicted. All received twenty- five years to life sentences.

Herman, Jalil, and Nuh (known as the New York 3 (NY3)) received a hung jury at the end of their first trial.

So the government ramped up its efforts during the second trial by forcing one of the NY3's comrades, whom the government had brutally tortured, to turn state's evidence and offering to drop charges against another witness for her testimony. Year later during an appeal hearing, a federal judge found that a New York City detective perjured himself when he testified falsely about ballistics evidence at their trial. (The government illegally destroyed all ballistics evidence in the case during the course of the NY3's appellate process to gain their release.) Also, despite the secret involvement of the FBI and Nixon's White House in efforts to secure a conviction, the trial judge refused to allow testimony about the infamous COINTELPRO program. IN short, the government broke the laws of the United States over and over again in order to neutralize the NY3.

Herman Bell has spent most of his adult life in prison. He is an exceptionally compassionate

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man who has continued to grow and evolve in many progressive directions during this torturous 30-year span. He received both his Bachelors degree and his Masters degree in Sociology while in prison. He counseled countless others to complete their education as well.

In fact, Herman has always been such appositive influence, that he is held in high regard in the New York state prison system. As a football coach, he uses his pro-ball caliber football skills to channel prisoners' pent-up energies into a healthy, teamwork outlet. As a teacher, he has taught many Black Studies courses through the years, enabling the dispirited underclass of prisoners to see their lives within the context of their history and culture and to claim the dignity that is their birth right.

Nor has Herman confined his leadership kills behind prison walls. He is a positive influence on communities outside prison as well. In 1995, he met two environmental activist farmers from Maine, and together they created the Victory Gardens Project.

The VGP brought people together from diverse lifestyles and remote locations – the urban-rural connection – to plant, grow, tend, harvest, and then distribute free food to our communities. This life-giving project enjoyed eight successful seasons, with Herman as an active participant via his outreach and writings. In 2002, Herman joined with other U.S. political prisoners in a penpal dialogue with homeless children in New York City, which was made into a booklet for free distribution. In 2004, Herman came up with the brilliant idea of a school essay contest which was implemented by the Victory Gardens Project: children competed for 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th prizes for the best essay on a “contribution they made to their community without being asked,” just from their own motivation.

From 2002 on, Herman has been instrumental in the production of an annual political prisoner calendar with the help of Montreal activists. This extremely educational item has been distributed internationally, documenting the historic and current struggles and sacrifices of our imprisoned activists. The proceeds have consistently been dedicated to the support of various community groups.

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Herman, like so many others, was driven underground and became part of the Black Liberation Army.

Reminder: Support parole for former Black Panther Herman Bell!

Please Support Herman Bell's Parole Campaign

Dear Friend and Supporter

Herman Bell has been imprisoned for the past 32 years.

He is scheduled to re-appear before the New York State Parole Board in February 2006 for the second time since the inception of his state sentence. We are writing to request your support for his release.

Herman Bell has had an impressive institutional record and list of accomplishments in the course of the past thirty-two years of his imprisonment. Parole should be decided on the basis of one's record while in prison, rather than on one's charge of conviction. When Herman first went to the board two years ago, several prominent New York City newspapers carried daily hit pieces attacking him in his bid for parole. The NYC police union – the Fraternal Order of Police – held a press conference to launch a massive petition drive urging the parole board to deny his application. We have every reason to believe that these tactics will be repeated as Herman approaches his second parole hearing. Thus, your support is once again vitally needed.

Herman has risen above what would be the most difficult of circumstances for any of us to bear. He deserves to spend the rest of his days on the outside, bringing his copious skills and magnificent heart into our midst. Herman has a wife, Nancy, children – Kamel and his partner Kihana – and two adorable grandchildren to come home to. Herman's family is working hard to realize the day when he can walk out the prison gates. Won't you please join us? Here's what you can do:

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Write a letter in support of Herman's parole. Address is as: "To Whom It May Concern" or "Dear Parole Commissioner." Use the re: line of "Herman Bell, 79C-0262." Please send your letter to:

NY3 Freedom Campaign

3543 – 18th Street, Box #12

San Francisco, CA 94110.

We would like your letter as soon as possible, but no later than November 1, 2005, as we need to submit the parole package to the prison early in November. Here's some points you can touch on when you write your

letter:

-Please write about the nature of your relationship with or knowledge of Herman, and how long you have known him.

-Please include a statement about why you think Herman is ready to be released from prison.

Some facts you might want to include:

-He has been a model prisoner for 32 years; -He has completed his BA and MA in Sociology while in prison; -He has participated in many educational and cultural activities benefiting prisoners; -He is an accomplished football and basketball coach; through self-study, he has acquired knowledge of music theory and is mastering the flute; -He has a job, a loving family,

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and a place to live waiting for him upon release; -He deeply regrets any harm his political activities may have caused others; he is 57 years old and has had more than 3 decades to reflect upon how he can enrich his community with his coaching, teaching, and counseling skills; -He has already served over 32 years in prison – enough is enough.

Explain in your view there is a definite probability that, if released, he will live and remain at liberty without violating the law.

Please use your professional letterhead, if applicable.

We deeply appreciate you standing with us to honor and secure liberty for this wonderful, deserving man.

Please send in your letter as soon as possible.

Thanking you, sincerely,

Nancy Jacot-Bell and Kamel Jacot-Bell

<http://victoria.indymedia.org/news/2005/10/45219.php>

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/drumbeat-weekend_edition/

For more information on Herman Bell and other political prisoners Please Visit –

<http://www.thejerichomovement.com>

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