BLACK AUGUST

What will *you* do?

Malik Muhammad

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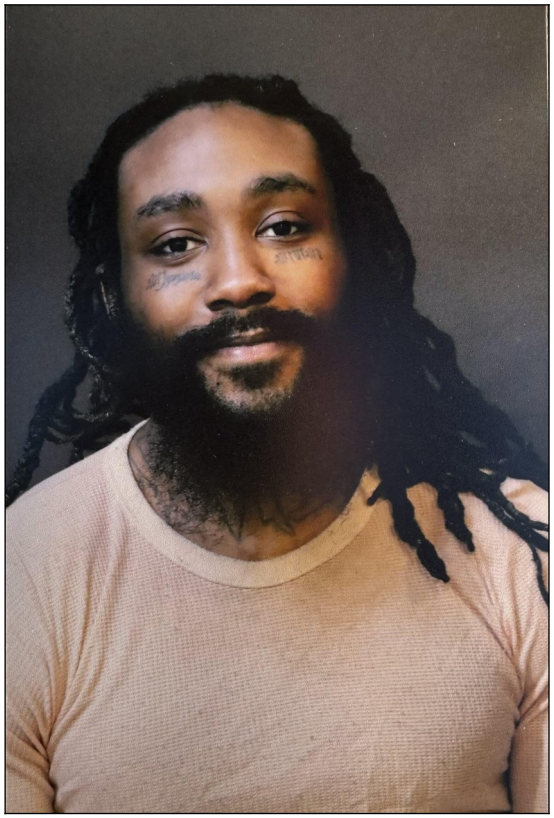
As Black August approaches, I am reminded of the sacrifices of our revolutionaries, and our duty. To fight AND to win, as Assata said. The fascist police states repression is intensifying steadily. The violence of the military industrial complex spreads round the world threatening WW3 daily. The climate disaster we stare down daily is fueled by capitalists' insatiable greed and need for "more." What that "more" is I couldn't say. The prison industrial complex warehouses black and brown poor people in a slow genocidal death march as the arm expands to immigration warehousing. These telecom and prison services companies exploit our people, squeezing every last dime from us, as they take our lives in here too.

So what DO we do? We do our duty. "It is our duty to fight AND our duty to WIN!" That's what Assata reminds us to do: fight and win. And what a privilege it is to fight. The carceral state's repression has claimed the lives of many, from turtle island defenders to prairieland defendants. Persecuted for their action, their resistance. We can say they did nothing wrong, but even in doing that, we enforce the state's narrative that some things are OK and some are not. The state is an unjust beast, its violence a repressive tool that will not spare you, whether you move a box or shoot a gun or vote the wrong way. The state is on the hunt for dissidents.

So what do we do? We do our fucking duty. Our siblings sitting inside with decades or even for just a single day should not be made to wait for us to be "ready" for abolition. Oppression is here now, abolition is needed now, not tomorrow. Not one more should be dragged away by the state. Smothered without air to breathe. Soul and life force sucking.

While reading Martin Sostre's biography with some siblings here inside SCDC, a part that stood out was Martin speaking on his being upset at the long arm of the political part of prisoner support and the absence of the militancy. At a time when Assata was sprung and those who carried out that daring liberation were hoping it'd ignite a movement and spark peoples' minds, he saw as they soon found out, that the movement lacked much needed teeth. There's an enormous focus on publications and print media, uplifting voices from the inside and even legal action for redress of conditions – *still* -- prison is prison and we are abolitionists, are we not? Did Assata say it was our duty to fight and sustain? Fight endure? No, she emphasized our duty to WIN.



Malik Muhammad is an incarcerated writer, artist, musician, anarchist, father, and friend. Through their art and writing, Malik exposes the cruel conditions of prisoners in amerika and speaks to the inevitability of liberation through love and relationship. Their art and voice not only transcend the prison walls, but the barriers between us — cutting directly down to what it means to be human and what we owe each other.

https://malikspeaks.noblogs.org/

Reading List

William C. Anderson, “The Nation on No Map” (2021)

Kuwasi Balagoon, “A Soldier’s Story” (2001)

Lorenzo Kom’boa Ervin, “Anarchism and the Black Revolution” (1979)

Garret Felber, “A Continuous Struggle: The Revolutionary Life of Martin Sostre” (2025)

Eugenia Ginzburg, “Journey into the Whirlwind” (1967)

George Jackson, “Blood in My Eye” (1971)

George Jackson, “Soledad Brothers” (1970)

We do not win against the fascists if all we do is sustain our revolutionaries until their deaths inside. Keeping them comfortable -- but ONLY within the confines of what the STATE ALLOWS. Canteen, calls, tablet time – sure, all things the state can profit from and will HAPPILY take your money for. But a political prisoner once said the best thing his support crew got him while inside was gunpowder and parts to make a gun. And so he did. Our duty is to fight and to win, the state is no omnipotent beast, not all powerful or inevitable. There was a time before and there will be a time after. That AFTER will not come without a push, a shove off a 30-storey building. It takes action; our people require that direct action, that immediate redress. The state kidnapped, ransomed, extorted and held hostage those you love, those who were undertaking their DUTY, what do we do? We do our duty, we fight and we win.

August 3rd approaches, commemorating the Underground Railroad’s existence. Think about that: the path to liberation was laid and paved in desperation for freedom and all these years later on, these modern plantations continue? We in the movement allow ourselves to just sustain them and attempt to bargain with the state for our fallen? If this country and its repressive tactics of labeling of any dissident as “Antifa” says ANYTHING, it’s that it doesn't matter WHAT you do, you WILL be hunted, branded and persecuted by the state... so go big or go home, right? Where would the movement be today if our underground railroad meant that IF the state catches you, freedom will loom large, just on the cusp? If we could say "hold on Sib, we’re coming for you" -- oh how bold our action might be! How scared the state would be to find that their MAIN tool of repression, incarceration with decades-long numbers, falls flat before our revolutionaries because our movement has teeth, because our movement doesn't seek comfort INSIDE, but seeks liberation and freedom! Freedom for our people outside and abolition of the state everywhere! For the love of the people, freedom, and liberation, and because to do our duty and to do it well and WIN is the calling.

It’s the demand of Assata, Afeni, Mutulu, Martin Sostre, Hampton, Huey, Guevara, Tupac, George and Johnathan Jackson, Fleeta Drumgo and Clutchette, Harriet Tubman, Marcus Garvey -- it is not an ask; it’s a demand that we do our duty and do it well.

Black August approaches, days of significance fill the month, a black history month the state will not give us --and that's what makes it all the more special. Like Juneteenth prior to the state giving it to us, it's special because it's ours. We decide what's important and relevant to us.

Black August is important for political education, physical fitness and unity. The three pillars of black August that should extend outside of these gates and fences and walls. Why? Because the underground railroad was not established by those not physically capable and fit. It was not established by those not versed in the systems of constraints, legal apparatus and cohesion that bound us into slavery. It was not functioning for so long without unity among those free and those held hostage enslaved.

George Jackson is largely honored during Black August as he should be, being a fine example of what a black man should be. Steadfast and resolute. His example left for us a map to freedom, but he got the map from those who tread the path before him. Our people plotted this path with the stars, with our hair, seeking freedom is in our blood. As a people, we know what we must do. As abolitionists, we know what we must do. As revolutionaries, we KNOW what we must do. We must do our duty. A people cannot be so repressed that they cannot fight back. Inside and out, we must prepare. Build and establish these networks and roads, maintain them and act. Oppression is here now, it's only intensifying. Our people and planet is dying. What will YOU do?

Regimen

For Black August, work out in groups of no less than two. 100 reps of something per day. Collective reps will be reflected in the date's significance (e.g. August 1-2, 1943 Harlem race riot = 1943 reps). It is not about what YOU can do but what we can do together OK? So link with people to do these reps, get 5 and divide it however you can.

Political education as well, at least one hour of study and reading per day together. Get a group, read and hold open discussion, discuss the date's significance and what sparked it. No one knows everything, but everyone knows SOMETHING, and collaborative group discussions can spark ideas and create paths yet to be trod.

Unity is the most important pillar of Black August to me. Unity with your cohort outside AND your siblings inside. Learn and get to know your siblings, those around you. You're more apt to fight and protect and defend the sibs you know than ones you don't.

"Learn to see me as a brother instead of two distant strangers and that's how it's supposed to be / how can the devil take a brother if he's close to me?" – Tupac Shakur

Mentally fit, physically capable, and united together. That's what's it's about.