

National Conference of Black Lawyers September 2011 Calendar

Kwame Nkrumah was born **September 21, 1909** in Nkroful, Gold Coast. He was an influential 20th century advocate of Pan-Africanism and founding member and chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). His early formal education was in Ghana, but he received a Bachelor of Arts degree in the United States at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania. Kwame Nkrumah returned to Gold Coast in 1947. Through his leadership, Ghana gained its independence from Britain in 1957 and Nkrumah became Ghana's first president. Kwame Nkrumah's tenacity in breaking the chains of British domination of this African nation serves as inspiration in the fight to gain freedom for political prisoners Sekou Kambui, Leonard Peltier and all US political prisoners.

Sekou Kambui was born **September 6, 1948** in Gadsden, Alabama. In the early 60's he participated in the civil rights movement by mobilizing youth and providing security for meetings of Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and other local organizations. He relocated to Detroit where he became a member of the Republic of New Afrika (RNA) and later, became involved in both the Chicago and New York chapters of the Black Panther Party. He was also a member of the Black Liberation Army (BLA). Sekou's life took a dramatic turn when in January 1975, he was arrested for allegedly failing to yield and running a stop sign. A pistol was found in his car and he was charged with the earlier murder of two Klansmen. The trials, like those of other cointelpro era political prisoners, were conducted with disregard for constitutional rights and protection of the accused. Some witnesses were threatened and forced to provide false testimony against Mr. Kambui. Other alibi witnesses were threatened by the FBI to the point where they had to flee Alabama, depriving Sekou of what has been reported as solid defenses that he was nowhere near the scene of the murders. Further, the pistol found in the car was never, reportedly, conclusively linked to the murders for which he was tried and convicted. While incarcerated, Sekou has won several civil actions against various correctional facilities for abusive treatment, medical malpractice and abusive segregation. He has been denied parole 5 times in 10 years.

Leonard Peltier, born **September 12, 1944** in Grand Fork, North Dakota, is a Native American political prisoner. Leonard was very active in the American Indian Movement (AIM). Mr. Peltier has been sentenced to two consecutive terms of life imprisonment for murder in alleged shooting of two FBI agents during a 1975 raid of the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation at Wounded Knee, South Dakota. Numerous doubts have been raised over Peltier's guilt and the fairness of his trial. Three witnesses who placed Peltier at the scene, citing torture by the FBI, later recanted their testimony. Ballistics evidence favorable to Peltier, reportedly was withheld from the jury. The Pennsylvania Parole Commission which presides over the Lewisburg prison where Leonard Peltier was incarcerated, denied him parole in 1993. The Commission has stated that it recognizes the prosecution has conceded the lack of any direct evidence that Peltier personally participated in the executions of the two FBI agents. Despite this, Mr. Peltier remains

incarcerated and has a projected release date of 2040 when he is 106 years old. The continued incarceration of Sekou Kambui and Leonard Peltier raises human rights violation, particularly under the Convention against Torture (CAT) and Committee To Eliminate Racial Discrimination (CERD).