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National Black United Front:
2nd National Convention July 2-5, 1981, New York

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Free Amiri Baraka!

INTRODUCING THE BLACK NATION

The need for a publication of this kind should be obvious to anyone seriously involved in almost any facet of Afro-American life, culture or scholarship. One characteristic of an oppressed people is that they have few formal and organized instruments of positive expression, and so the oppressors inundate them with cultural aggression and distorted history and negative images of themselves.

The purpose of *THE BLACK NATION* is to help in the liberation of the African-American nation, to be an aid in the struggle of that nation for self-determination in the Black-belt South and for equality and political power for Black people wherever they are in the U.S.

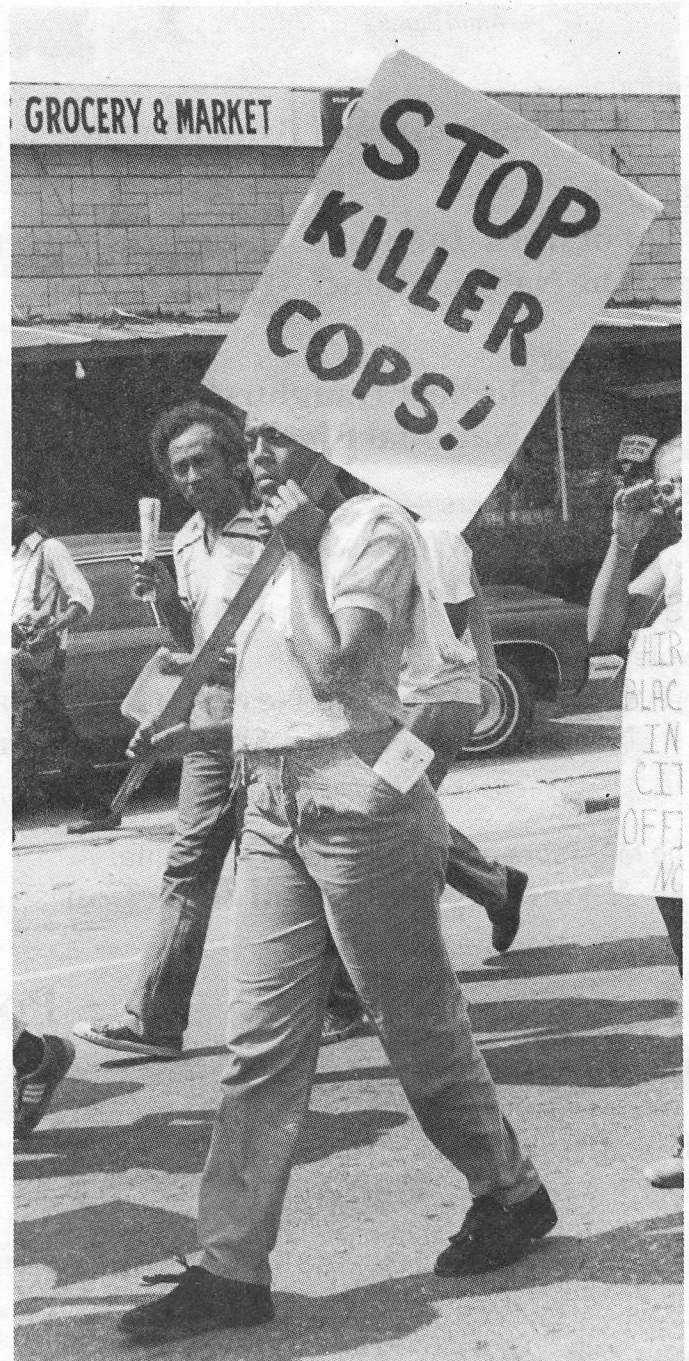
First, we should be clear: to those of us who are associated in the publishing of this magazine, Black people, the African-American people in the U.S., comprise an oppressed nation, whose site is the Black-belt South of the U.S. where 60% of us still live and where 80% of us were born.

We feel that the Afro-American nation has the right to self-determination, the right to decide what our relationship will be with the U.S.

It should be obvious that self-determination for the Afro-American nation cannot come with the present system. So that the Black Liberation Movement for self-determination, i.e., Land, Political Power, economic self-sufficiency, equality, is a revolutionary struggle. A struggle that can be won only with the destruction of U.S. imperialism!

The publication of *THE BLACK NATION* will carry essays, articles, poetry, graphics, editorials, interviews, any form we come in contact with that will help in raising the national liberation consciousness of the African-American nation, and in so doing, help develop the level of revolutionary consciousness of Black people and of the masses of people in the U.S. in general. It is our view that the Black Liberation Movement, though an independent revolutionary movement, is part and parcel of all the just struggles being waged in this country against the white racist monopoly capitalist class who are the rulers of the U.S. We believe that just as the liberation and self-determination of the African-American nation are certain, so too is the victory of the broad masses of American people!

The fundamental weapon of Black liberation is the united front of all the classes and organizations and individuals in the Afro-American nation and oppressed nationality objectively struggling to smash Black national oppression and win self-determination. For this reason, *THE BLACK NATION* will try to draw on this broad united front for contributions to the journal, which means we will be publishing a wide divergency of views and stances within the united front of struggle against Black national oppression.



Wrightsville, Georgia, 1980. In recent years there has been an upsurge in Black struggles in the South, the homeland of Black people in the U.S. (UNITY photo)

Black Struggle in the 80's

AMIRI BARAKA

The present condition of the African-American people is reflected generally by the state of the Black Liberation Movement (BLM). Though the movement, through its various organizations and formations, is in a number of ways more focused politically than the totality of the Black masses. But the BLM is merely an organized reflection of the Black masses, and in a general sense they are one and the same.

The BLM has still not recovered from the furious attacks mounted against it by the state in the 60's and 70's. If the attacks seem to have abated, it is only to the extent that the BLM itself has been in some ways quiescent.

The state's attacks, as characterized by the FBI's Cointelpro program, eliminated two maximum leaders, i.e., Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, and murdered many, many others, imprisoned and exiled others (some of whom are still locked up or still facing various charges or are still fugitives, e.g., Assata Shakur, Huey Newton, Sundiata Acoli, Geronimo Pratt, Dhoruba Moore) while buying in diverse ways, still others (Cleaver, Abernathy, etc.).

What disorientation that was not caused by the state attacks arose from primary internal contradictions which could not be corrected because of a general lack of scientific organization in the BLM. Most organizations were loosely formed and even those that were more tightly knit and focused had more or less eclectic ideological aspects that contributed to various kinds of inconsistent or ineffective policies.

The resulting disorientation of the BLM was the disorientation of the Black masses — and even more confusing and disheartening was the growing perception by the Black masses of a clearly distinct set of political goals between themselves and sectors of the Black petty bourgeoisie, who at one point had seemed to function as mass leaders.



Amiri Baraka

(UNITY photo)

For instance, the various electoral political figures and cultural and academic personalities who at one point were identified with the struggles of the Black majority, who later clearly isolated themselves from the masses in selfish pursuit of the limited goals of the Black middle class. Too often, once they had gotten elected, or appointed to top token positions or similar roles, their real connection with Black people was over, in any positive way.

In the last few years there has been a steady build up of forward motion in the BLM, the most politically focused aspect of the Black National presence. And this too has been merely in reflection and extension of the sharpening movement observed among the whole of the Black masses.

The ideological struggles that characterized the BLM in the late 60's (between "revolutionary" nationalists and cultural nationalists) or in the mid-70's (between emerging Marxists and nationalists) — part of a series of primary internal contradictions inside the movement itself (tho admittedly pushed by the state) — have in some measure leveled off. Though the basic

struggles continue and will continue, until the disappearance of classes! Since that is the basic cause of these struggles, the conflicting ideologies of various classes within the Black Nation and Black oppressed nationality in the USA.

But now, at the beginning of the 80's, these struggles have passed their fireworks period (for this generation) and have moved to higher levels and lower levels. Higher levels because now there is some organizational stability out of which to project certain views and the organizations do not fear being exposed to opposing ideological views — as much. Lower levels because some of the conflicting entities have ceased to exist.

At the higher level this means that the possibility of a revolutionary led National Black United Front (NBUF) is more likely since the prerequisite for such a Front is that it draw advanced forces from every sector of the BLM who can work and fight together against a common enemy, despite differences of ideology! There is no doubt that ideological struggle will go on in any legitimate BUF, but around concrete issues rather than rigid abstractions. But this is a good thing and actually such open struggle in full view of and with full participation of the Black masses is absolutely necessary to insure the continuous strengthening and ideological, political and organizational strengthening of a NBUF.

Important to such open, healthy development in the BLM is opposition to sectarianism (attempted domination of a United Front by one ideological or organizational grouping) and the small group mentality. We must understand and put into practice in our inter-organizational and United Front dealings that there are many variations of different ideologies within the BLM, and while the overall struggle of the African-American Nation is a National Democratic struggle and the BLM can be characterized as a National Liberation movement, the Black masses are not formally focused in any one ideological formation. So that the open ex-

change of views in the BLM, most effectively in the context of an organizationally focused NBUF, could only strengthen the positive aspects of all the various ideological formations and give the Black masses a chance to compare the goals and programs of these formations, at the same time all working commonly around those issues where practical agreement could be reached.

The development of a formal NBUF (in 1980) is positive for this reason. The 1972 formation of the National Black Assembly out of the National Black Political Convention as well as the formation of the African Liberation Support Committee, were positive attempts to pull together mass NBUF's of diverse ideological and political formations. But by the mid-70's these groupings had seriously declined in national impact because of the problems mentioned before. One clear problem was the failure of the Black working class to be able to actually lead these formations, and this was partially because of the serious errors made by those who claimed to be representatives of that class within those United Front structures. And there were other errors by other forces in those fronts.

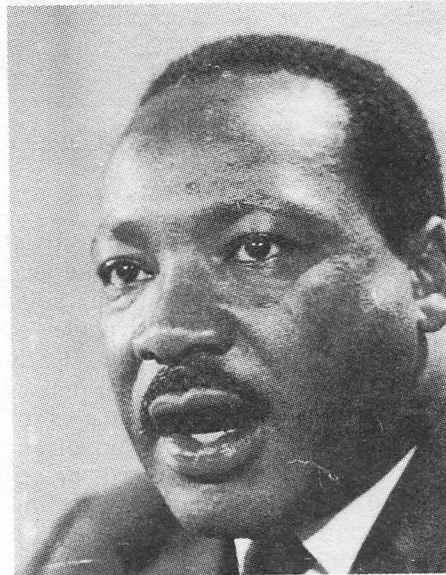
But generally speaking, aside from both the Left and Right errors of Marxists (one group trying to cadrefy the United Front, another group tailing middle forces and bowing to spontaneity) there was also the political vacillation, sectarianism and elitism of petty bourgeois elements including the tailing of electoral politicians by certain nationalist elements as well as open careerist manipulations by others. All this in addition to the basic continuous attacks by the state.

Today, one senses a general maturity in the BLM that should at least allow a greater degree of open discussion and joint work within the BLM without the kind of unprincipled and sometimes deadly interplay that went on earlier. (Although there are a few isolated, insignificant elements who seem to want to maintain the sectarianism, elitism and isolation of the Black movement from the Black masses, but this element and tendency were generally repudiated by the successful formation of the NBUF last summer.)

A Black United Front exists objectively in the African-American Nation and Black Liberation Movement consisting of all those objectively in opposition to Black national oppression



(Above) Malcolm X advocated Black liberation by any means necessary. (Below) Martin Luther King popularized direct action in the movement for Black civil rights.



and struggling for Self-Determination. The formal organization of a NBUF (such as done in 1980) is an important step in trying to raise the level of political consciousness in the BLM and focus the concerns and mobilize forces in the same areas and around the same issues on a national scale. It is critical for such a formally organized NBUF to exist and it is also important that all aspects of the Black Nation be represented in such a Front, except the traitors.

The objectives of the BLM today must be first the general recognition of the fact of our condition and the climate of U.S. society in the 80's. The spreading and dissemination among

the Black masses of the fact that the BLM is a National Liberation struggle, a National Democratic struggle for Self-Determination, Land, Political Power, Economic Self-Sufficiency, Democracy and Equality is the principal work of the most advanced forces in the BLM. Part of this advanced group's work must also be to point out ceaselessly the interconnection between the Black struggle for Self-Determination and all the other peoples' struggles in the U.S. against exploitation and National Oppression. And wherever possible to seek out allies and make coalitions with those groups.

In fact, we must demonstrate the international interconnections of our struggle with the struggle of the people of the third world against U.S. Imperialism and Soviet Social Imperialism, as well as show the connections with the struggles of workers and oppressed nations and peoples everywhere.

But such work can only really take shape as the work of a broad based NBUF, so that the building of such a front and work by various formations in bringing this consciousness and action into being is critical.

Organization for Self-Determination and Political Power is what we mean. And a NBUF is the basic organization within the BLM to further such aims.

Our organizing cannot take place in a vacuum. We must understand how the extreme and rapid rightward motion of the U.S. bourgeoisie, represented by the Reagan regime, affects African-American people. The various struggles against budget cuts for instance, which will affect health, education, welfare, food stamps, employment, housing, the arts are key issues for Black people as well as other oppressed nationalities and working people generally. But obviously Blacks and other oppressed nationalities will be hit first and worst. All these issues are areas of needed organizing where it is possible to mobilize the masses. A national focus to local and regional struggles is what is demanded that we organize.

The Reagan rightward swing attacks every aspect of bourgeois democracy and for Black people who have never been full recipients of even this basic illusion of capitalism the present undermining of such "humanistic" capitalism crushes us even further under an openly repressive, reactionary and racist society.

The increase in police murders, growing numbers of unsolved murders

and attacks on Black people, the rise of the Klan and Nazis (allowed to murder young radicals on national tv and escape punishment) lynchings, the restoration of the death penalty, the attempt to re-pass the omnibus crime act — the son of S-1 — under new designation, the re-organization of HUAC under the notorious racist Strom Thurmond, all these are dangerous examples of the repressive tide of right-wing and anti-Black actions, visible under Carter, but reaching alarming proportions under Reagan.

The white racist monopoly capitalist class who rules America will stop at nothing to preserve their rule and the existence of monopoly capitalism, not even *fascism*! The BLM is a revolutionary movement because Black Self-Determination can only be the result of revolutionary struggle. In any move toward a fascist U.S. it should be obvious that African-Americans would be the object of intense repression! We are the historical and classic scapegoats of this society. Decaying capitalism, as shown in Germany and elsewhere, brings fascism. The ghetto dwellers of Europe, because they lacked sufficient national consciousness, were not sufficiently organized and principally because their Communist parties had been seriously undermined by social-democratic collaboration with a bourgeoisie speeding toward fascism, were slaughtered almost with impunity. A word to the wise!

As to the strategy and tactics of the BLM, clearly that strategy is the forma-

tion of a NBUF of all classes, organizations and individuals committed to destroying the oppression of the African-American people and fighting for Black Self-Determination.

Tactically, the question is to identify and mobilize around the major issues and organize locally at the grass roots level while at the same time linking up the struggles of the Black masses to those legitimate struggles of the Black

petty bourgeoisie and Black Bourgeoisie that also affect the Black working class.

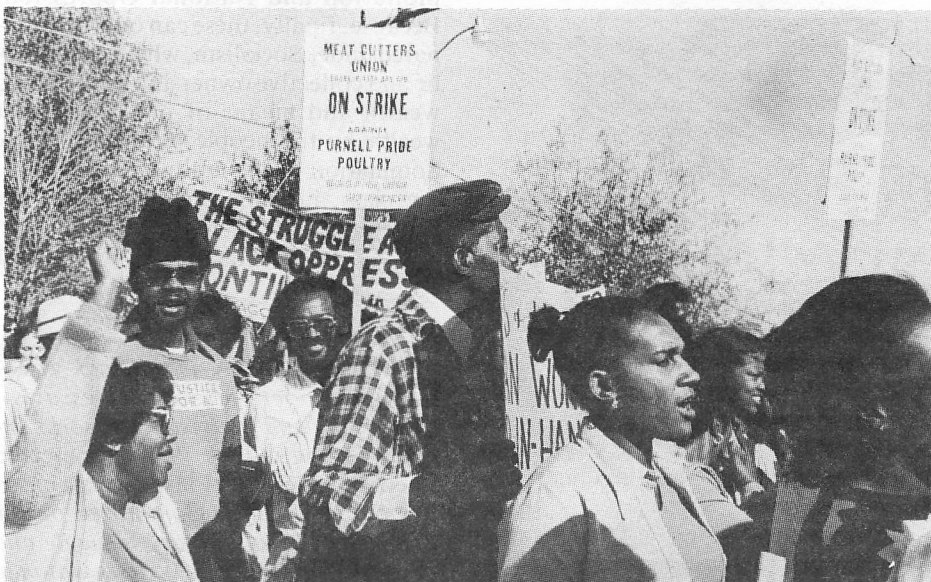
The actual NBUF is and will be an objective correlation of class forces within the African-American Nation and oppressed nationality. Strategically, we must seek to organize all those who can be organized and our tactics must flow from this understanding, seeing the basic democratic struggle of the whole Black Nation as part of a single unbreakable revolutionary fabric.

So that we must support the struggles and even help organize the Black bourgeoisie where their own interests coincide with the needs of the African-American Nation. We must support the struggles of the Black middle class (petty bourgeoisie) where their interests coincide with the interests of the Black masses.

For instance, the lack of imagination and failure of the Black bourgeoisie to aggressively invest in the Black community and keep their capital circulating progressively within the African-American Nation has serious repercussions on the rest of that nation. The Black bourgeoisie could create businesses meeting Black peoples' needs at a much higher and more developed level than they are doing and at the same time create employment and help consolidate Black National Consciousness.

The Black petty bourgeoisie with their small businesses, skills, education and academic and cultural concerns must also be encouraged to focus these upon the needs of the African-American masses. And just as the Black bourgeoisie should be building Black industry, commerce, communications and cultural development as *profit making* enterprises, producing new products, establishments, record companies, film corporations, radio and tv stations, restaurants, supermarkets, bookstores, publishing companies, fast food concerns, the Black petty bourgeoisie must be utilized to manage these enterprises and utilize their skills as they are now utilized by U.S. monopoly capitalism in every field we can name.

As a catalyst for the onward and upward motion of all class forces in the African-American Nation, the BUF must try to make certain that the focus and concern is upon the needs of the Black masses. But even more, it must be obvious that the Black masses, specifically their working class, must lead such



(Top) Black Human Rights demonstration, New York City, November, 1979. (Bottom) Black workers taking part in United League march in Tupelo, Mississippi, 1978.

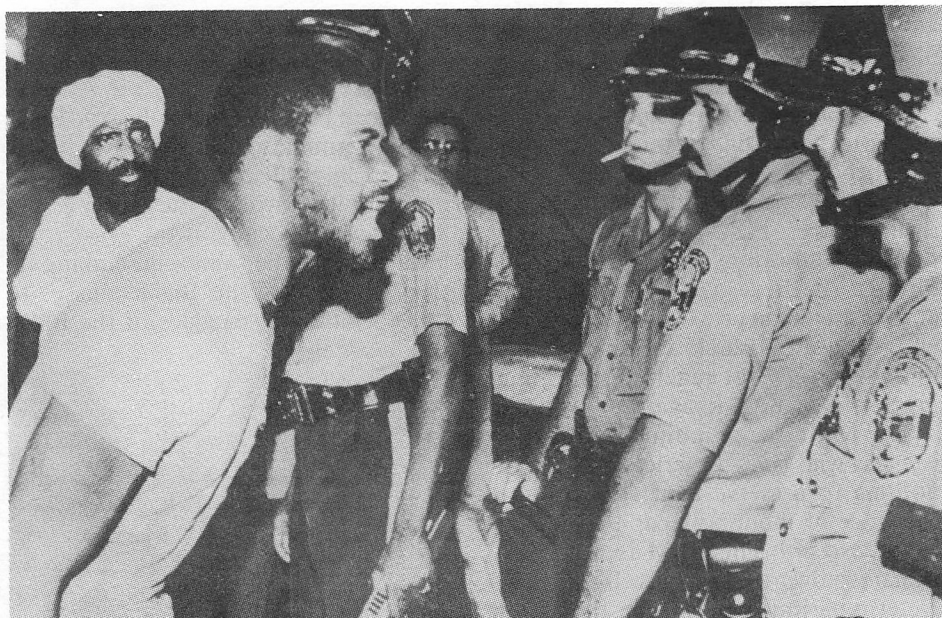
(UNITY photos)

a Front if it is to take a revolutionary direction and not settle for reforms which like the reforms fought for in the 60's and the 70's can be taken back by the white racist monopoly capitalist ruling class by the 80's.

My view, as a Communist, is that without the leadership of the working class, the most consistently revolutionary class, that not even the problems of the Black bourgeoisie and Black petty bourgeoisie can be dealt with thoroughly and that the BUF itself would seek mainly reformist goals rather than carrying the Black Liberation struggle out to the end — Self-Determination, Land, Political Power, Democracy!!

The struggle for democratic reforms and equality is a day to day process involving the Black masses throughout the U.S. To oppose the struggle for reforms is to oppose the struggle for Self-Determination! But the reforms must be fought for in a revolutionary way and even given concessions we must instruct the masses that without revolution such reforms are very short lived, as we see from the fate of those gained in the 60's.

The Black Liberation Movement is in essence a democratic struggle, not a struggle for Socialism. Although it is fought against the same class of enemies who must be smashed if Socialism is to be brought in reality. And it should be obvious that without smashing the White Racist Monopoly Capitalist Class, Black Liberation cannot come to be. The African-American people, even in control of the Black Belt South, would have a very limited Self-Determination while the U.S. monopolist class still existed.



The 1980 Miami rebellion was widely supported by Black people in Liberty City and throughout the country.

And even further, no nation is free of exploitation, even an African-American Nation under the control of an African-American ruling class, under capitalism. Ultimately, the Black masses are not looking to exchange white racist imperialist domination with Black capitalist domination.

The Black Liberation Movement is part and parcel of the struggle by the majority of U.S. people to smash exploitation and National Oppression which can only be done by the elimination of monopoly capitalism and the white racist monopoly capitalist class that benefits from its existence. The

BLM through its United Front must be able to enter into alliances and coalitions with any group whose interests coincide with its own.

The Marxist view is that ultimately the objective allies against U.S. monopoly capitalism, i.e., the multinational working class and oppressed nationalities, will one day become conscious allies, but only under the guidance of a multinational Marxist-Leninist Communist Party. A party that will lead by its stand, its views and its action and in so doing give leadership to the various movements in this country fighting against monopoly capitalist exploitation and National Oppression. Because, finally, these can only be eliminated under Socialism, which is the public and collective ownership of the social wealth and means of producing that wealth by the people by means of the domination of the multi-national working class, i.e., the dictatorship of the proletariat.

NEWARK JUNE 30, 1981



Self Determination means the struggle for land and power in the Black Nation in the South. (UNITY photo)

AMIRI BARAKA is a Black revolutionary poet, jazz critic, essayist, playwright and activist. His works include *Home*, *Blues People*, *Selected Poetry* and *Selected Plays*. He is a member of the Central Committee of the League of Revolutionary Struggle and Secretary of the Black Writers Union in New York City. He currently teaches Afro-American Studies at the State University of New York at Stony Brook.

THE PERSECUTION OF AMIRI BARAKA/LEROI JONES

For over two years the New York State legal system has harassed, persecuted and attempted to incarcerate revolutionary writer and activist Amiri Baraka, on a charge of resisting arrest. The charge stems from an incident in June of 1979 where the New York Police Department brutally beat Amiri and his wife Amina. Since that time they have hauled Amiri in and out of court, tried and convicted him in December of 1979 and sentenced him to serve 90 days at Rikers Island prison, he has been out on appeal, spending month after month in and out of court. He has been ordered to serve the time and his current stay of sentence runs out on October 16, 1981.

This attack upon one of the foremost Black writers of the last 20 years is nothing new. Black artists and intellectuals who have had the courage to speak out on behalf of the masses of Black people are always attacked. Black artists and intellectuals who have been willing to sacrifice lucrative careers and put their work at the service of Black people have been hounded and harassed to their death by the U.S. government and its various agencies. Some of our greatest artists and intellectuals have had to suffer tremendously for the choice they made to be artists for the people. As Paul Robeson said, "The artist must take sides. He must elect to fight for freedom or slavery. I have made my choice. I had no alternative." And it was because of his

choice that Paul Robeson was hounded until his death in the middle 70's by the U.S. government. W.E.B. DuBois, Richard Wright, Langston Hughes, James Baldwin and countless others have all been attacked and harassed by the U.S. government. But, the true Black artists find courage in the courage of Black people to resist our oppression and fight our enemies. And because of this we continue to produce these great thinkers, these poets of the people, generation after generation.

Amiri Baraka has made his choice. For it, he faces the forces of the U.S. government, who have used COINTELPRO against him, as well as other forms of harassment. But, he like others finds courage and draws strength from the masses, who have month after month and week after week all across the country written letters, made phone calls, circulated petitions and protested this attack upon him, an attack on us. We must continue to fight. This is the beginning of another wave of attacks upon our people. Only through mass action has he been able to stay free, and only through mass action will he continue to stay free, only through mass action will we gain our freedom.

THE BLACK NATION encourages all people to continue to support Bro. Amiri Baraka in his fight against the New York State legal system.

Flame

*And it's familiar
this fact of flame
of indulging images
the salty dust devil winds
spitting into silver helmets
through shit splattered wings
the beginnings and endings
in which i salute the sun
because i know it has to come today
because a dream is like a nail
because this room peels back the hole in my cup
and so i tell you whoever you are
plastic pen, paper, dictionary
i tell you
the policemen sing*

*the sanitation men whistle
the distended body of military parades
fly flags in wounds of dead words
and the sad look of tribal warfare
points every second between sockets
into the same flame of the zero hour
and i know it has to come from me*

— Jayne Cortez

JAYNE CORTEZ is a poet who lives and works in New York City. Her books include *Scarifications* and *Mouth on Paper*.

FORWARD TOGETHER! BACKWARD NEVER!

For one year now, the National Black United Front (NBUF) has been active in organizing Black people across the United States. It has struggled hard to build (as was mandated by its first National Convention, June 1980) a local base for a mass progressive activist united front of Black people struggling in the U.S.

The NBUF represents one of the most important contemporary movements of Black people in the United States. It was born out of a need for unity and a need for struggle. It came into existence as a result of hard work and a sincere desire on the part of the organizers and supporters to meet the 1980's with all of its challenges with a new sense of unity and a weapon of organization that can help bring that unity about.

The NBUF has tremendous potential for two reasons. It has come at a time when the oppressive conditions of Black life in the U.S. demand that all of us, all of those serious about the survival and victory of Black people, must get involved in the struggle to unify our people. A time full of racist hatred and violence. A time of severe economic crisis and attacks upon the Afro-American people. A time when the unity of our people is a must, a necessary condition that we have to wage a successful fight.

The NBUF has tremendous potential because the leadership and the people organizing on the local levels do so with a seriousness and dedication to building a Black united front that allows for both older veterans of the Black Liberation Movement as well as newer activists all across the United States to participate. This has been demonstrated at both the first and second national conventions where hundreds of

local activists came together from all over the country, many of whom are just becoming active for the first time as well as many more who have been active since the 1960's.

The NBUF has continued to have a larger impact on the Black Liberation Movement as it continues to build step by step a progressive activist approach to the movement. It must continue to struggle to have a broad appeal in order to bring in different sectors of the Black Liberation Movement, ensuring its united front character. The work of the NBUF has continued to grow and is proving successful. The national response initiated and coordinated by the NBUF to the wave of racist violence sweeping the country is an important contribution to the struggle of Black people, and it is that type of action that will give rise to the growth of the size and the influence of the National Black United Front in the coming years. The work of the NBUF will once again bring international attention to the plight of Black people in the United States also has important ramifications and gives strength to our movement.

The NBUF is now into its second year of action, of motion forward. It is a time of growing conflict and growing struggle. It is a time of gathering the forces of Black liberation, a time of building structures, organizations and institutions of struggle to wage the fight. Wage the fight with all of us, we can unite to do so. It is a time of unity, a time of unity, a time when we must build the NBUF as an expression of unity. A time when we need the NBUF to continue to grow, as other grass-roots movements in this country that are on the rise. A time when we must organize and move FORWARD TOGETHER! BACKWARD NEVER!



THE BLACK NATION Interviews

Rev. Herbert Daughtry, Chairman of the National Black United Front

Rev. Daughtry, could you give us some of the history of the development of the National Black United Front, its current work and how you see its development in the next year?

Yes, we started obviously with an idea in terms of how we could organize a National Black United Front. The concept of a National Black United Front is not new; it follows a long history. So we were just thinking of how to revive the idea. Others were doing the same thing across the country. But, for whatever reason, it seems as though we were in a better position to try to bring it off.

In the middle of 1979 we had some people come down from Philly, from the Philadelphia Black United Front — Milton Street and some of the people I think from the Save the Land organization. And we talked to some at that point about a National Black United Front meeting and organizing together. And then later that year, when the National Black Human Rights Coalition had pulled together a march at the United Nations, there were some people who were at that march, Charles Koen, Alfred “Skip” Robinson, and so we talked with them about the possibility of a National Black United Front.

What we were trying to do was identify people who had some local involvement so that we wanted to move slowly, but, we wanted to identify people who were involved locally. In the early part of 1980 we met in New York, in Brooklyn.

But, in the meanwhile, we also met with the people from Washington, D.C., because we were there for the International Review of FBI Activities in the 60's. At that meeting, was Maulana Karenga, Dr. Rashdeen representing the Nation of Islam, Jitu Weusi, and Bob Brown representing the All African People's Revolutionary Party. We met at that point and agreed that what we would do is call for a conference of national unity. But, I remember distinctly,



Reverend Herbert Daughtry
(THE BLACK NATION photo)

and it became a bone of contention later on, and I'm glad that we were able to refer back to the minutes of that meeting, I remember emphasizing that we ought not to call that meeting a Black United Front meeting, because it would have been insincere insofar as we were already meeting with people at that level. And particularly some of these people being the superstars, would now come in as the National Black United Front or the Organizing Committee of the National Black United Front, as we were calling ourselves. So I argued strenuously that that division be kept, and there was an agreement that it would be. That group, we called the National Forum on Black Unity, met in Chicago for a weekend. At that meeting were many other persons — Imari Obadele, Amiri Baraka, and a host of people who had come out of the 60's, because we were trying to maintain the continuity.

We met again, the Organizing Committee, now constituting Philadelphia, Florence Walker; Mississippi, “Skip”

Robinson; Cairo, Charles Koen; and Ron Herndon out of Portland, Oregon; and New York — the five of us met on the Organizing Committee and then called for the National Organizing Convention. The National Organizing Convention took place in June 1980. There were over 1,000 people present representing over 35 cities and four foreign countries. Two things that the convention did which I think were very significant and demonstrated a lot of wisdom. One was that after considerable debate, struggle, the convention adopted a constitution as a working document, as a working paper, and mandated that there should be regional constitutional conventions where people would have ample time to debate and to discuss the constitution, and that everything would be temporary at that point. And secondly, the convention mandated that the organizing go on on the local level.

And we went forward from there. There were several other resolutions that we adopted. One was to support the Wrightsville struggle in Johnson County, which we did. Another was the Sanderson Farms chicken farm in Mississippi, which we did. In addition to that, we did several things. One was the National March Against Racist Violence, which took place April 4. And then in preparation for that, we did a national hearing on racial violence in February 1981, here in New York. The work of BUF expanded phenomenally, because now we have 16 certified chapters, we have a presence in over 35 cities, presence being anything from a representative to an organizing committee or BUF in formation.

The final thing I say on the history that I think is very significant is our international links. In the course of BUF work, we have been as vigorously pursuing the international linkage as we have in building deeper and deeper into the local communities. The NBUF has been invited to Iraq, to Libya, to Grenada by



New York Metro BUF celebrates its first anniversary, 1979.

(photo: L. Peek)

the government in official functions. BUF has travelled to Mexico, to Cuba, to Puerto Rico in various kinds of programs — to Trinidad, to Britain, to France in various kinds of conferences and programs.

And I think that in the last couple of months that year of work was crowned with two very significant invitations. One was from the United Nations in cooperation with the Organization of African Unity, which extended an invitation to NBUF to participate in an international conference on sanctions against South Africa. This was one of the most exciting and most challenging conferences that I'd ever been in, for the simple reason that we were permitted full privileges of participation. We could argue our point, and in fact we did participate in the formulation of the final statement coming out of that very illustrious body. We were instrumental in getting included into the political commission's statement a recognition and an appreciation for the Black Liberation Struggle's contribution to African liberation, progress and independence. And the final invitation which was a kind of, one might say, a reward for a year of intense struggle, intense travel

and intense output, was the invitation from the Organization of African Unity which took place in Nairobi, Kenya on June 15–27. We returned on June 28, and the conference (National NBUF conference — *ed.*) was July 2, so it was a kind of crowning of a year of struggle, work, commitment.

What do you see as being the difference in the movement for the National Black United Front today, and say, the movements of the 60's and early 70's?

Well, at the top of the list, I would say that there is a greater feel for solidarity now. I think that Amiri Baraka was right in the presentation the other night, in some of our childishness, there were people who were just becoming African, and suddenly anyone who didn't adhere to what they perceived to be Africanness were somehow European. Some people had just begun to discover Karl Marx, and now everybody who did not adhere to some form of Marxism were opportunist. And of course, in the mix of all that, there was a lot of name calling — “pork chop preachers” and “cultural nationalists” and “narrow nationalist,” and people were just slinging around a lot of names.

What it did, obviously, it made everybody vulnerable to the kind of penetration which now we've come to see emanated from the FBI. I think nowadays, I would be particularly sensitive to it, being a preacher. What we have seen is a willingness of people to strive toward solidarity. And this conference, I think, again is a culmination of that.

What do you see as some of the similarities between now and the earlier periods — not just the 60's, but even back further during the Garvey Movement, the Harlem Renaissance? What lessons do you think we need to retain and use from those periods?

I think one of the similarities would be Black unity, Blackness. Whether you talk about it from the Black church of the antebellum years, through Garvey, through even the Nation, there's always been a strand, a motif of Africanness.

I think the willingness to struggle — more than we realize, we have inspired other movements with our willingness to struggle. And that's why so often white folks have to be near us, because we've always been willing to engage in struggle, and our struggle has always been (and I want to say this in a sense

that everyone can say yes to) in the highest moral sense. We have not struggled to keep people subjugated, we have not struggled to oppress people. Our struggle has always been to lift the shackles off ourselves, and in the process, out of that fervor, other people have drawn fire, and have used many of our techniques — the whole boycott, march and civil disobedience, while not new, I think that we have brought it to a level and shown some effectiveness with it. So there is similarity on that question, willingness to engage in struggle. I guess some of the similarities would be at the same time, very interestingly enough, the whole religious dimension.

Could you tell us more about your particular theology, some of your views on the relationship between religion or the type of ministry you practice?

First of all, let me put it into a Biblical context, and then from there to a church context, or what we would call an ecclesiastical context. Biblically, what Europeans did with the Bible is what they've done with everything. They took it and made it promote their interest. We understand this as it relates to the land and as it relates to resources. We know that Europeans take stuff and use it for their own interest, and we need look no further than Africa. Well, they did the same thing with the Bible. They took passages that were there, and they didn't twist them or change them, they simply interpreted them in a way that our people internalized them to their own self-destruction.

For example when I grew up, they used to say that Ham was cursed. And therefore all Black folks are cursed. We used to bemoan the fact that we are Ham's children. But interestingly

enough, even the Bible, if you go and look at the Bible and read, Ham's children, the offspring of Ham, you find that all the offspring of Ham were the builders of civilizations. That wherever civilizations occurred were Black places. And so that really Blackness pervaded the book, and the authors were very clear and wanted it understood that the origins of God's dealing with humankind took place in Blackness. So that from the very beginning, all of us understood that in Blackness is God.

Now with that bit of background, we had our history intact. We didn't have to run from those arguments that we



(Top) The BUF spearheaded demonstrations against racist violence in Crown Heights, New York, 1978. (Bottom) The BUF march in St. Louis was part of the nationally coordinated April 4, 1981 March Against Racist Violence.

used to have, and they were hot and heavy, particularly for people in the Nation, and particularly for people who had suddenly gotten African, and anything that was European was out. There was no reason now for throwing out the Bible, because that was part of our culture.

Now with that bit of background, the Black church understood this, and that's another kind of lie, misinformation, you were fed. That the religion of Christianity was the slave masters' religion, and that people who adhered to that were docile slaves. That's a lie. If you look at the fact that we must be the only people, as I've indicated, whose religion has been legislated against. In the Nat Turner rebellion, the governor of Virginia said that every preacher east of the Blue Ridge was in on the plot. The Methodist Church was banned. And every one of those uprisings was immediately followed by a wave of legislation forbidding our people from practicing religion. So it was clear that religion was not docile, and that the slave masters knew it wasn't docile, and that's why they prevented, or tried to prevent the practicing of it.

The other thing I weigh and I argue sometimes, is that whatever tactic we talk about employing, whatever strategy we talk about employing, I would identify the Black church as having been in the forefront of creating and in some cases implementing. But an exception maybe is the class analysis as we think of it today. Although I think that in its very fundamental form, even that was talked about and tried to be implemented.

There isn't anything new about Malcolm X's rifle clubs. Black churchmen had long since taken up rifles. There's nothing new about Black power. Black churches had long since offered that. There is nothing new about what to do with white folks. Man, that argument has been around as long as Rev. Henry Highland Garnett had it out with Frederick Douglass in the abolitionist movement. All these kinds of things that we argue about today, they argued about in the Black church. And even to the name — a few years ago we got around to wondering what are we going to call ourselves. But if you look at the church, it had no such confusion. The African Methodist Church, The African Episcopal Church, The African Methodist Episcopal Church, The African Free Society — everything they named, they named African. So that they were clear about their iden-

tity, armed with that kind of Biblical knowledge, armed with the church ecclesiastical history, then it was clear we needed to try to link that Africa to the modern struggle in which we are engaged.

And thus, it took a long time, almost 15 years, I've been at it now for 23 years. So almost 15 years was just barrenness, because I lived in a kind of no-man's land. I was distrusted by my religious brothers and sisters, and suspected by those who were not religious. So I thought I had no place to go. The only people who seemed to recognize what we were wrestling for was the white liberal churches, so I spent a lot of time in the World Council. I was invited all over the world in various kinds of lectures and things, and they seemed to be more appreciative of what was developing, unfortunately.

What do you see as the future conditions of Black people and the objectives of the Black Liberation Movement today? A lot of people raise a lot of different things, some say go back to Africa, some people say go back to the Caribbean, some people say integrate, or separate, but how do you see the realization of the liberation of Black people and the ultimate objectives?

I would like to set that in the vaguest terms as possible, frankly, because of my role. I think that I have tried to do that, and I think that perhaps that has contributed to some people feeling comfortable with me. I've not tried to espouse one position against another. I will state some things that most people would at least go that far, some might want to go further.

I do see an intensification of the repression domestically, that is, in the USA with Ronald Reagan. I think that we have come now to what I think that the imperialists have come to see that there isn't that much further they can back up, and therefore they've got pitched battles along the present lines. And not just fortifying, but taking the initiative. And I think that that's what Ronald Reagan is all about. He has decided that he's going to go down swinging. So domestically, we see this in terms of the deterioration, what is obviously a genocidal policy and program. Because you don't have to cut peoples' throats to kill them, you just simply terminate those things that keep them alive. So in these very sophisticated times, we see that kind of genocidal program and policy.

Internationally, you see it in South Africa, where Reagan has indicated very clearly that he intends to go down swinging with the apartheid regime in South Africa.

However, paradoxically, I also see a solidarity emerging among people of African descent. In Paris, at the international conference for sanctions against South Africa a resolution was adopted calling South Africa the outlaw of the world. And there were only four nations which did not attend the conference — the USA, Israel, South Africa and the Federal Republic of Germany were not present. What you have then is a sharpening of the lines, and you do have the solidarity of the people of African descent.

So I see an intensification in the near future, I see the imperialist fascist forces gearing up for the battle, I see

the progressive forces, the progressive moral forces, equally gearing up for the battle, and I think the conflict is going to come unless it becomes very clear that the tide of history is against the Ronald Reagans and the apartheid regime. But I don't see that they're going to back out.

Now I see that our role is to do what we can within the belly of this beast. This is not to negate the position of going back to Africa, it is not to negate the land question, It is not to negate any question. The fact of the matter is that whichever way we move on that, we've got to move in solidarity with each other. And we've got to struggle around the local issues in the community. It doesn't make any difference if we don't have something to eat, don't get the police off our backs, if we don't protect ourselves from the KKK, we're not going to even be around to talk about the land question.

So as far as the NBUF, as I see it, is that we move with the most massive kind of front to challenge, confront, resist the present world economic order as it is manifested here in the United States. We call upon all the assistance from international sources and from our own resources here in this country.

REV. HERBERT DAUGHTRY is a grass-roots leader who has travelled extensively in the U.S. and the world lecturing on Black liberation and social justice. He is the Chairman of the *National Black United Front* and National Presiding Minister of the House of the Lord Church.



The NBUF mobilized a contingent for the September 1980 march for Freedom, Justice and Equality in Wrightsville, Georgia.

(UNITY photo)

The Bitter River

(Dedicated to the memory of Charlie Lang and Ernest Green, each fourteen years old when lynched together beneath the Shubuta Bridge over the Chicawhatchee River in Mississippi, October 12th, 1942.)

*There is a bitter river
Flowing through the South.
Too long has the taste of its water
Been in my mouth.
There is a bitter river
Dark with filth and mud.
Too long has its evil poison
Poisoned my blood.
I've drunk of the bitter river
And its gall coats the red of my tongue,
Mixed with the blood of the lynched boys
From its iron bridge hung,
Mixed with the hopes that are drowned there
In the snake-like hiss of its stream
Where I drank of the bitter river
That strangled my dream:
The book studied — but useless,
Tools handled — but unused,
Knowledge acquired but thrown away,
Ambition battered and bruised.
Oh, water of the bitter river
With your taste of blood and clay,
You reflect no stars by night,
No sun by day.*

*The bitter river reflects no stars —
It gives back only the glint of steel bars
And dark bitter faces behind steel bars:
The Scottsboro boys behind steel bars,
Lewis Jones behind steel bars,
The voteless share-cropper behind steel bars,
The labor leader behind steel bars,
The soldier thrown from a Jim Crow bus behind steel bars,
The 15¢ mugger behind steel bars,
The girl who sells her body behind steel bars,
And my grandfather's back with its ladder of scars,
Long ago, long ago — the whip and steel bars —
The bitter river reflects no stars.*

*“Wait, be patient,” you say.
“Your folks will have a better day.”
But the swirl of the bitter river
Takes your words away.
“Work, education, patience
Will bring a better day.”
The swirl of the bitter river
Carries your “patience” away.
“Disrupter! Agitator!
Trouble maker!” you say.
The swirl of the bitter river
Sweeps your lies away.*

*I did not ask for this river
Nor the taste of its bitter brew.
I was given its water
As a gift from you.
Yours has been the power
To force my back to the wall
And make me drink of the bitter cup
Mixed with blood and gall.
You have lynched my comrades
Where the iron bridge crosses the stream,
Underpaid me for my labor,
And spit in the face of my dream.
You forced me to the bitter river
With the hiss of its snake-like song—
Now your words no longer have meaning—
I have drunk at the river too long:
Dreamer of dreams to be broken,
Builder of hopes to be smashed,
Loser from an empty pocket
Of my meagre cash,
Bitter bearer of burdens
And singer of weary song,
I've drunk at the bitter river
With its filth and its mud too long.
Tired now of the bitter river,
Tired now of the pat on the back,
Tired now of the steel bars
Because my face is black,
I'm tired of segregation,
Tired of filth and mud,
I've drunk of the bitter river
And it's turned to steel in my blood.
Oh, tragic bitter river
Where the lynched boys hung,
The gall of your bitter water
Coats my tongue.
The blood of your bitter water
For me gives back no stars.
I'm tired of the bitter river!
Tired of the bars!*

—Langston Hughes

LANGSTON HUGHES was one of the most prolific of all Black writers, a major figure of the Harlem Renaissance. His works include poetry, fiction, historical writings, drama, essays and music.

“Don’t be shocked when I say I was in prison. You’re still in prison. That’s what America means: prison.”

—Malcolm X

Dessie X Woods is Free!

DESSIE X WOODS

On Thursday, July 9, 1981, Dessie X Woods was freed from prison after six years of unjust incarceration. She was imprisoned for defending herself against a rape attempt by a white insurance salesman on June 16, 1975. Throughout her imprisonment, Dessie X Woods suffered tremendous brutality and harassment, both physically and mentally, as recounted below in a statement by her in a recent conversation with members of the Afro-American Justice League.

*Through the years, brothers and sisters throughout the U.S., and especially the National Committee to Defend Dessie X Woods, worked tirelessly for her release. They, like Sister Dessie, have remained strong and active. THE BLACK NATION joins with all others in celebrating this victory and finally being able to say **DESSIE WOODS IS FREE!***

The Supreme Court acquitting me of armed robbery, I don’t feel that that’s justice. From the beginning, I was indicted for murder and armed robbery. The jury found it impossible to reach a verdict, but we were not guilty. There was just one person (on the jury) that wanted to find us guilty. So the judge had put a shotgun on the jurors and told them to go back, and said “You’d better come out with something!” And they came out with the wrong verdict! I don’t feel there’s justice for Black people in the Georgia penal system.

The Black women, we outnumber them (white women) eleven to one in prison, and we stay in prison. No breaks for Black people in prison. I know white women who are in prison for killing little bitty babies, and they don’t stay there but a year before they go to the halfway house. Unless you go along, be an Uncle Tom, a real, real Uncle Tom, (Black women) would not receive anything like the halfway house.



Dessie Woods

(THE BLACK NATION photo)

The National Committee (to Free Dessie X Woods — *ed.*) for so many years wrote letters to Carter and asked Carter for my release, and asked him to look into my case, but he never did anything. He ignored all the letters and petitions that were presented before Carter’s administration. But he let this Black woman go for blowing a brother’s head off, to be a babysitter, a nanny for his daughter. There’s no justice in this system for most Black people.

I was transferred to Central State where they really torture you bad. I was tortured till my body was swollen very, very bad. The people who are nurses and doctors are the worst of all. They take human beings and turn them into something worse than an animal, or make you look like an animal. I was paralyzed from my left side down, just from one shot. I’m stiff on one side still.

Then in 1976, when I was in segregation, two white men came in to hang me. A white woman gave me drugs, but I woke up, and I was still drugged and everything. The lights were out and the officer was walking around with a flashlight. I sat up on the bed, and I was sleeping, but I started jumping up and down, trying to get myself together and figure out why they drugged me. Later on that morning, two white men came in

and when they put a flashlight on me, I jumped up because I knew what it was about. When I jumped up, they ran, they took off. I reported it. The warden told me, “There ain’t nobody trying to hang you.” Later on that day, I told all the girls about it. Some of the women, they saw the white men running down the hall, and people were getting upset about it. The warden called me back in his office the next morning, and they put me back in segregation again.

So I think we’ve got to change the system. I think we have to control our own lives, because the U.S. government does not do justice.

After my speaking tour, I’m going to come back and we’re going to try to clean up Atlanta. I feel you all have a good thing at the Afro-American Justice League. We should work in the Black community and work together. I think we all can work together as one, we all believe in the same things.

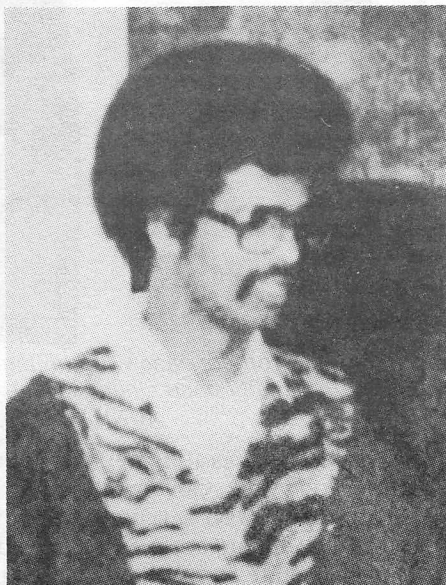
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THE BLACK NATION
P.O. Box 127, Oakland, CA 94604

Notes on the Pontiac case: Genocide and the New Afrikan (Black) National Liberation Struggle in North America

← CHOKWE LUMUMBA

The largest death penalty case in the history of civilian courts in the United States of America has now come to an end. On May 9, 1981 after two years of pretrial hearings and seven months of trial and after only 2 hours of jury deliberations a jury of seven New Afrikans (Blacks born in America) and five white Americans found ten Pontiac Brothers not guilty of killing three white prison guards from Pontiac Prison in Pontiac, Illinois. Less than thirty days later murder charges against six other Pontiac Brothers were dismissed after State Prosecutors from Livingston County, Illinois announced that they would discontinue prosecution. The Pontiac six like the Pontiac ten were charged with killing three white guards in 15 different ways. In announcing its decision not to prosecute the last six Pontiac Brothers the Prosecutors conceded that they had been thoroughly beaten in the trial of the Pontiac-10. Prosecutors moreover acknowledged that the defeat, after the expenditure of millions of dollars in tax money for prosecution, left little doubt in their mind that continued expenditures in prosecution of the Pontiac-6 would be both expensive and futile. Their conclusion was supported by the fact that the witnesses and "evidence" against the six was essentially the same as that unsuccessfully introduced by the state against the Pontiac-10.

Both the not guilty verdict on May 9, 1981 and the subsequent dismissal of charges against the six on June 1, 1981 were greeted by thunderous applause and shouts of joy by a courtroom packed with family, friends and supporters of the Pontiac Brothers. Defendants and their predominantly Black legal team likewise showed jubilation at their victory with an exchange of embraces and



Chokwe Lumumba

visible sighs of relief.

The significance of the Pontiac-16 case however cannot alone be gleaned from the applause of Pontiac supporters or the emotional responses of attorneys or of the Brothers themselves. A review of the history of the Pontiac Case, an analysis of the states' purpose in prosecution and a sketch of the involvement of Black Liberation forces in the defense of the Pontiac Brothers are all essential to understanding the critical importance of the case and the larger issues which surround it.

Pontiac Brothers Rebellion and Trial

It was July 22, 1978 when over 1,000 prisoners rebelled at Pontiac Prison. In the aftermath of the rebellion the state suffered not only the death of three guards but the injury of three others and the loss of millions of dollars in property damage. That men would and did rebel at Pontiac took no one seriously by sur-

prise. The prison held nearly 2,000 prisoners although it was originally built for only 600 over forty years ago. It was a prison where the food was putrid, where living conditions failed to meet most international and national standards for upkeep of prisons, and where racism was rampant. Eighty per cent of the prisoners were urban New Afrikans (Blacks), while 90% of the guards were rural white Americans. In 1977 the United States Justice Department had actually filed suit against Pontiac Prison and other Prisons in Illinois. The suit was dismissed after settlement was reached between the State and the United States Federal Government. The conditions however never improved.

Indeed prisoners had notified the Governor of the State at least a year before the rebellion that conditions were intolerable and noted that intense violence was inevitable if improvements were not forth coming. The director of Prisons, Charles Rowe, admitted shortly after the rebellion that the Pontiac rebellion had been expected. He said, "You can only crowd so many people into a warehouse for so long before something happens." The state's Governor Jim Thompson initially also conceded that bad prison conditions had precipitated the July 22, 1978 rebellion. Later however Thompson reversed his position. Apparently moved by the realization that acknowledging the truth did not aid his political ambitions as a right wing white politician, he set the facts aside and commenced a course of actions designed to rescue the state from its responsibility in the matter.

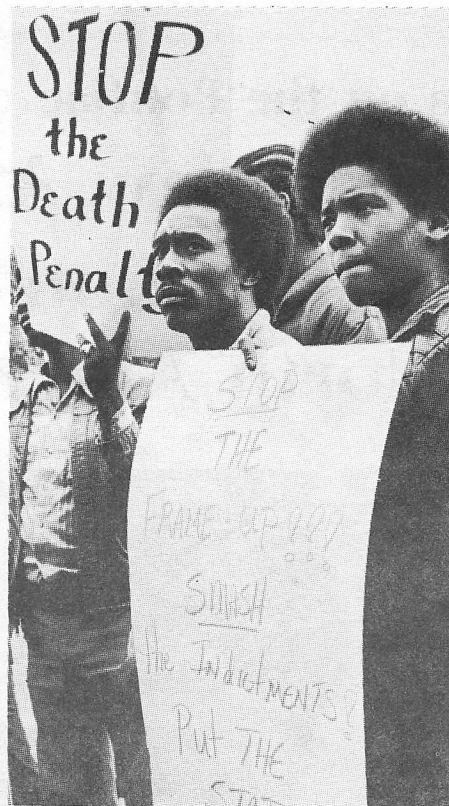
Thompson's essential strategy became to seize New Afrikan prisoners as scapegoats for the July 22, 1978 uprising and the precipitous factors preceding it. Thompson and state agents under his command first dispatched an all white gang of State Law Enforcement Investigators to Pontiac Prison to find prisoners who could be used in this po-

litical ploy. He also dumped the director of Prisons Charles Rowe who had commented on the causes of the rebellion, and put one of his office boys, Gail Frazen, in his place. The State investigators and the prison authorities teamed up to maintain the prison on one of the most hideous deadlocks in recent history.

This deadlock continued for eight months. During this time men were locked generally two per cell in 5ft by 8½ feet cells for 24 hours per day. Sharing space with a sink, a toilet and bunk beds, they remained in this cramped condition for twenty-four hours a day without exercise, showers, soap, toothpaste, cigarettes, family visits, a change of clothes, telephone access, and other necessary personal hygiene items, communication aids and physical outlets. In fact medical care was only afforded for those with life threatening emergencies, and guards with absolutely no medical training were left to determine when such emergencies existed. Attorneys were denied access to the prison for several weeks. A Court order was necessary to get attorneys inside. Meanwhile broken windows from the rebellion in each cell were not repaired. Insects and rain joined the men in their cells in the hot season, and cold air and snow did likewise in the cold months. Guards fed men unsanitary food in paper plates, which were folded and slipped through prison bars causing much of the food to drop to the floor.

Guards refused to supply garbage bags for several months and refused to pick up garbage throughout the deadlock. Garbage reached knee high levels, and rats and vermin of all sorts ran amuck. The stench was unbearable. Men literally went mad in this situation. One psychiatrist who viewed the prison during deadlock said that the deadlock conditions were inherently coercive and mentally destructive. Some men who lost their mental orientation during the deadlock threw feces on the walls and it was left there for all the prisoners to endure. Even one of the Investigative agents admitted that the deadlock conditions were absolutely inhumane. Eventually after eight months the deadlock was ended by order of a Federal Court as a result of a legal suit.

By its end, however, the deadlock had fully served its purpose. It was used like the rack and screw to torment prisoners and squeeze statements out of them. Those who cooperated were transferred out of prison to minimum security institutions. The state also



The Pontiac Brothers case was the biggest death penalty case since slavery. (UNITY photo)

awarded any cooperating persons with paroles, good time, Governor's pardon and/or money. Over seventy thousand (\$70,000.00) dollars was eventually paid out by the State to its witnesses. The money was used for a variety of purposes ranging from dope purchases, to travelling expenses for family members and girlfriends of state witnesses and travelling expenses, housing, and clothes for the witnesses themselves.

Through these tactics the State developed statements against a multitude of prisoners. Eventually thirty-one prisoners were indicted. Of course none were white. They were all New Afrikan (Black) except for three Latinos. The indictments were split into two general groups. Seventeen men — all black — were indicted on 15 counts of murder. Each was accused of killing three prison guards five different ways. The other fourteen were indicted on non-capital offenses ranging from arson, and burglary, to mob action and assault. Most of the fourteen were tried before all white juries or white judges in small or moderate size Illinois towns. About half have been acquitted and half convicted. Many of these convicted were found guilty of charges less serious than those with which they were charged.

Most of the attention in the case went to Chicago. There in a Court Room de-

signed to seat only 50 spectators, and which had a glass partition between the defendants and the spectators the Pontiac Seventeen began and completed pretrial proceedings. During this pretrial the prosecutorial pay offs and deadlock conditions already noted above were disclosed to the trial Judge Ben K. Miller. Judge Miller, a white racist himself, denied the motions to dismiss the case on grounds of misconduct, and actually condoned the prosecution's practices. Indeed Miller denied over three hundred motions submitted by the defense and held nine different defense attorneys in contempt when they protested his apparent prosecutorial bent. Almost every motion the Prosecution tendered to Miller was granted. Miller consistently throughout the pretrial and into jury selection attempted to intimidate defense lawyers, with contempt citations, fines and threats of removal from the case. Not the least of the tactics utilized by Miller was a refusal to give defense Counsel equitable pay (each defendant was indigent and required appointed Counsel) and by his refusal to pay National Council of Black Lawyers Attorneys Lewis Meyers and myself anything at all at the outset of the case. Miller claimed that his refusal to pay Meyers and myself rested on the grounds that neither Meyers nor I were Illinois Attorneys. However ample precedent was cited to show that outstate Attorneys had received Court Appointment in other cases. Moreover absolutely no precedent or law precluded such an arrangement.

Despite the inequities which multiplied throughout the proceedings the Pontiac Case eventually concluded in a victory for the defense. The prosecution, the Judge and the Governor were all soundly defeated. Jim Thompson's strategy was turned on its head. Not only must he now answer to Illinois voters and his big business benefactors for malfeasance in allowing a prison to explode, thereby taking the lives of three white guards, injuring three more and costing over \$6 million in property damage, but now he must also explain how a three million dollar prosecution failed to put a single New Afrikan scapegoat into the electric chair.

A particularly sinister state strategy to avail itself to the fascist, and genocidal tendencies of Illinois white population failed in the Pontiac case.

At the outset of the prosecution of the Pontiac Case the State's strategy was simple and clear. For the death of three white prison guards, for the injury of

three others, for property damage, for the purpose of the State saving face and most of all to preserve the order of things (oppression, oppressive prison conditions etc.), 31 Pontiac Brothers would have to pay. The price for the seventeen would be their lives.

Indeed the State was not extravagant in thinking that the prosecution of 31 Black and Latino Prisoners, and the execution of 17 Black men among them, would be a price the white racist state and the predominantly white racist population of Illinois would gladly pay to preserve the colonial order.

(To preserve the colonial order means to maintain and insure the order of things whereby a black population stays totally and miserably under the domination of a white nation. To preserve this colonial order means to leave Black people in sociably destabilizing conditions which are historically rooted in the international banditry of Euro American slave trade and Anglo-American slavery and national subjugation of the New Afrikan Nation (the nation of Black people in North America). To preserve the colonial order means to insure that the majority of people who are imprisoned continue to be Black and that the Black prison majority is kept in check — regardless of the inhumane prison conditions. To preserve the colonial order is to discourage rebellion. In a few words to preserve the colonial order in the State of Illinois and in North America,

was and is to keep things as they are.)

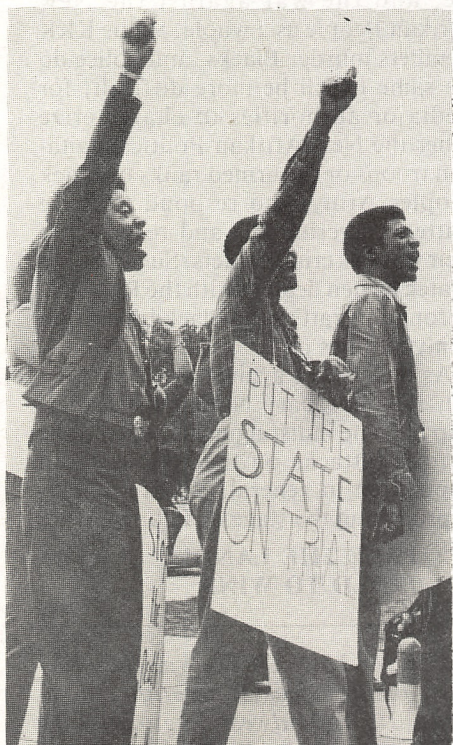
In 1978 and in 1981 racist white Government and right wing white organizations and individuals are engaged in a variety of actions designed to preserve the colonial order. These actions make the Pontiac prosecution look mild.

In the past three years white American Governments have dispatched killer-soldier cops who have beat and murdered our people with impunity in Los Angeles, California; New York, New York; Detroit, Michigan; Jackson, Mississippi; Miami, Florida; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Chicago, Illinois and in a host of other places from border to border and coast to coast. The same governments have cut social programs leaving the survival of large masses of the New Afrikan population in doubt. Meanwhile Black men are murdered in Buffalo, New York, with their hearts cut from their chest, the KKK shoots Black women in Chattanooga, and in Greensboro kills a Black member of the Communist Workers Party on T.V. Black Children are gunned down in Boston, choked to death in Oakland, California, and murdered in Wrightsville, Georgia. In Dade County Florida a 14 year Black girl is raped by the police. The list goes on. These are acts of racist terror, and when viewed with governmental policy of cutting social programs, mass incarceration of New Afrikan men and women, forced sterilization and economically

compelled abortion and birth control, these acts can only be seen as the sordid work of genocide.

The U.S. government's genocidal policy and these terrorist acts of organizations and individuals have received the tacit and often open and broad support of the white masses in the 1970's and receive it now. Only toward Atlanta, (where police, FBI, the media, and crystal ball readers are consciously building a tale of a Black boogie-man to account for the murders of nearly 30 children and young adults) is there even the slightest pretense of general white concern over the contemporary murder of Blacks. And that pretense is only slight. It is also hypocritical. It is really designed to confuse New Afrikans as to the source of the current reign of terror, and to re-engage the New Afrikan population into a maze of self-doubt and debasement. Meanwhile the KKK wages a race war against us and openly prepares for the same in armed camps, some of which are within 100 miles of the Atlanta City border. The KKK's race war is the same as Reagan's war against terrorism and local and state American authorities' war against crime. These different names are different promos for the same war. The KKK, Reagan and the local and state authorities are all on the same side. We are the other side.

With such a state of affairs outside the courtroom, the Prosecution's at-



Black people turned out in large numbers to free the Pontiac Brothers and to expose the racist and inhuman conditions inside the prisons. (UNITY photos)

tempt to open the doorway to mass executions inside the courtroom with the Pontiac case is certainly no surprise.

What did surprise the prosecution in this case however was the manner in which the beleaguered New Afrikan Community, New Afrikan Lawyers and the Pontiac Brothers themselves responded to the State's attempted mass execution.

New Afrikan Community groups through the Illinois Prison Coalition, the Pontiac Brothers Defense Committee, the Concerned Friends and Families of the Pontiac Brothers and the National Conference of Black Lawyers Community College of Law responded to the prison deadlocke with demonstrations and a campaign to pull Black Lawyers into the eventual criminal trials. Meanwhile white lawyers from the Peoples Law Office filed a suit against the deadlocke at the direction of the Pontiac Prisoners Organization and the New Afrikan Prisoners Organization. The suit brought an end to the deadlocke but only after 8 months.

What eventually proved fatal to the state strategy in the Pontiac Prosecution however was the nuclear organizing forces and momentum which grew out of the early deadlocke and pre-indictment struggle.

The nuclear organizing forces set in motion by the hideous deadlocke set the stage for unity among the Pontiac Brothers long before the indictments were returned and before the identities of the persons the state would indict were known. Although shaken from time to time, the unity among the Pontiac Brothers extended from day one of the indictments to the end. This unity among young men most with little prior political relationship to each other was critical. To break it would pit one defendant against the other and provide for the state, a field day. Ultimately only one of the Brothers — one of the 17 murder defendants — turned states evidence. The unified stand of the others, and the payoffs received by the turncoat minimized any damage that the actions of the one traitor had on the Pontiac defense and political struggle.

Another extremely important aspect of the political organizing in the case is that at the center of it was revolutionary and progressive nationalists. Although the precise forces involved varied from time to time the New Afrikan revolutionary and progressive nationalist leadership was maintained at all times in some form. At the beginning the National Conference of Black Lawyers

Community College of Law Cadre, and New Afrikan Prisoner Organization (NAPO) provided this leadership. The NAPO cadre was later joined by Afrikan Peoples Party Cadre, and at a critical point our cadre from the Provisional Government of the Republic of New Afrika became involved in political organizing and on the legal team. The Nation of Islam and Citizens for Self-Determination and a host of other local groups also aided. The Black United Front nationally and locally gave some support. The National Black Human Rights Coalition generously contributed. These contributions brought both local and national support.

Most of these groups including the Provisional Government, were short on resources, however the combination of forces provided the desired results. Together these forces were able to draw support and participation from prisoners, family and friends of prisoners, churches, the nationalist community, from Black lawyers, and from national revolutionary, nationalist and progressive New Afrikan organizations and individuals.

This type of leadership meant that the Pontiac Case would not only be a criminal trial, but a conscious battle in the National liberation struggle for New Afrikan People. This type of leadership also put the white support which came in proper focus. White organizations like the Pontiac Prisoners Support Coalition, the May 19th Communist organization, the John Brown Anti Klan Committee, and Prairie Fire were asked to Organize in the White Communities. They did so. Many White multinational groups contributed by sending their Black members to work on the case in the Black community or in some instances their Black cadre came on their own accord. White or multiracial groups like the National Alliance Against Racial and Political Repression which refused to accept New Afrikan Leadership over the case, and insisted on its white Cadre working in the Black Community (thereby relieving them of the priority to organize their own white mothers and fathers and neighbors) were oftentimes at odds with the Pontiac Brothers and the Black Community Committee and the White Committee. Consequently their role in the case was negligible. The participation of the highly visible Negro "leadership" like Jessie Jackson, Vernon Jordan, or Benjamin Hooks and any of their organizations was non-existent. Indeed Jackson who is located right in the City of

Chicago never even responded to Pontiac Brothers Defense Committee letters asking his assistance.

The revolutionary nationalist and progressive New Afrikan leadership of the Pontiac Case makes the State's defeat in the Pontiac Case a particularly bitter pill for it to swallow. What this means is that in this instance the state has been decisively defeated by the very forces which it endeavored so hard to destroy through the Counterintelligence Programs and other CIA, FBI, and police programs of the 1970's.

These North American Colonial forces will not take this lightly. The war which they have been waging against the New Afrikan Liberation Movement can be expected to intensify. This intensification will not enjoy one of the advantages it had in the 1970's however. In the 1970's the WAR of repression was launched upon a New Afrikan Liberation Movement which was isolated from the masses due to various reasons. Some of the reasons are chargeable to the U.S. government and media offensive against the movement, some of the reasons are the fault of the movement, or forces within it.

What's important to note however at this time is that the U.S. policies and current New Afrikan revolutionary methodology will make it impossible to separate the WAR against the leadership from the New Afrikan Liberation struggle, and the war against the New Afrikan People as a whole. While KKK members murder Blacks, and police do the same it will be more difficult, for media or authorities to characterize either the New Afrikan Political agitation troops or the armed ranks of Black Peoples Army who respond to these matters, as criminals and to pass off their work as criminal acts. Such was the strategy when dealing with the RNA-11, Geronimo Pratt or the Black Liberation Army in times past.

As the attacks against the New Afrikan Revolutionary Nationalist leadership become indistinguishable from the terrorist attacks on the New Afrikan population in general. We are quickly approaching the stage of Peoples War.

**FREE THE LAND!
BUILD TO WIN!**

CHOKWE LUMUMBA is a veteran activist in the Black Liberation Movement. He is Midwest Regional Vice President of the Republic of New Afrika and one of the attorneys for the Pontiac Brothers.

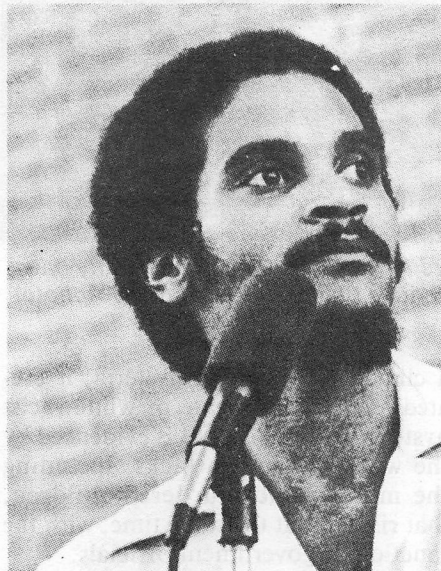
The Massacre of Black Children in Atlanta: A Warning and a Call to Action!

MICHAEL SIMANGA

Over and over again for two years now, Black people have been reminded of the brutal reality of Black life in the United States. Over and over we have had to watch the news media report that another Black child has been murdered in Atlanta. Over and over the questions of who and how long are being raised in the hearts and minds of Black people all across the country. Black people are being sent a message in America today.

Once again Black mothers/women must look with despair and grief upon the children of our nation. They must look at the babies who they have birthed and who represent the future of our people, and face the terrible reality that they may lose their child to the viciousness of America's racist sickness. Once again Black mothers, just as they had to watch our children snatched from them in slavery and sold off or murdered, now must watch again as our children are snatched and murdered. Black mothers who have nurtured our people and raised a nation, must now be reminded that a Black life that they have brought into the world is not guaranteed to reach its adulthood. Black people are being sent a message today.

Once again Black fathers, men, must look upon our people and feel the despair of a people without power. They must once again be taunted by the white racist capitalist that denies them their humanity. They are being ridiculed and made a mockery of, projected to the world as unable to care for their families or protect their children. They are being told that the racist sickness in America is so powerful that it can take the children and murder our young men and there is nothing that a Black man or woman can do. Black people are being sent a message today.



Michael Simanga
(THE BLACK NATION photo)

Once again the fact that the most distinguishing factor of Black life in this country is racist violence is made crystal clear. Black life has never been valued in America, and our people have always been murdered here. We have always had to bury our children. Generation after generation, we have had to bury our children and our young people, murdered by a racist exploitive system.

But, whether it was lynchings, or police murders of our youth, the bombing of four little girls in Birmingham, the Scottsboro boys, or the lynching of Emmet Till or the systematic murder of the young men and women of the Black Panther Party, we have had to bury our young.

But, in recent times, no single issue has touched and moved the Afro-American people as the issue of the missing and murdered children in Atlanta. There has been no issue, no crime against our people that has aroused and stirred the masses as much as that of the massacre of Black children and young men in Atlanta. Even

though in the same two year period there has been a dramatic increase in the attacks and racist murder against Black people in the U.S., none of those issues has moved our people like the violence against us in Atlanta. From one end of the country to the other, racists have perpetrated violent acts on Black people, cross burnings, bombings, beatings and shootings, some leading to death have marked the 80's already. But, it was the issue of the missing and murdered children that brought the question of racist violence clearly into focus. Black people are being sent a message today.

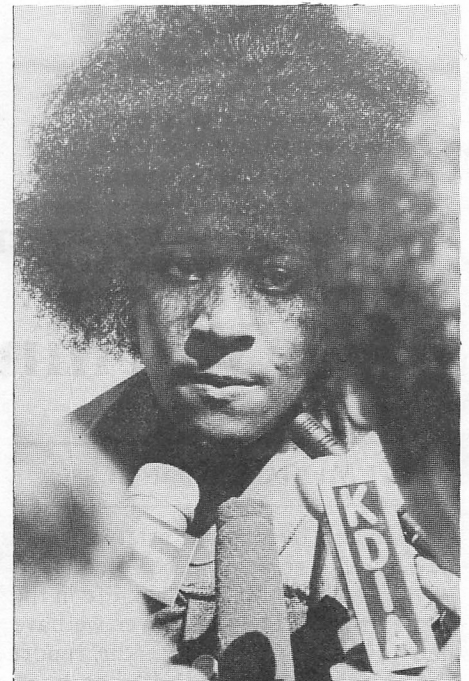
The Afro-American people are being sent a message today. A message of terror. A message of violence and murder against our people. A message being told to us through every act of racist violence. A message that is the clearest in Atlanta, Black people are being sent a message. We are not guaranteed a future in America, the murder of our children is synonymous with the murder of our future. The murder of Black children in Atlanta is both a warning and a call to action!

The wave of racist hatred and violence that is sweeping the country is a direct result of the decline of the U.S. economy and status as a world power. Racist hatred and violence directed at Black people (and other third world people) is a policy of the U.S. government and ruling class. In case after case of racist violence and attack against Black people the federal government has done nothing to stop it and in fact has helped to promote it, especially in the case of the missing and murdered children of Atlanta.

In the continuous murders of Black people all across the country in the last two years the federal government has stood by and watched court decision after court decision let racist murderers go free after killing or attacking Black people. In the case of Arthur McDuffie, in Miami, in the case of a



The Afro-American Justice League and others in Atlanta's Black community have taken to the streets to stop the murders of Atlanta's Black children. (UNITY photo)



Venus Taylor, mother of Atlanta murder victim Angel Lanier, on a speaking tour in Oakland, California. (UNITY photo)

19-year old Black man lynched in Alabama, in the case of four Black women gunned down by the KKK in Chattanooga and on and on. The federal government through its inaction has shown that it actually agrees with the activities of these murderers. It has been revealed in recent years that the federal government has historically been a part of organizing the racist groups like the KKK and helping them in their attacks on Black people.

In the case of the missing and murdered children. The federal government sat by and watched, and refused to offer any substantial assistance to the city of Atlanta to conduct an investigation of the murders. None of the major political candidates running for the presidency gave any of their campaign time to the question of what will be done about Atlanta. The entire last year as Black families and Black people all across the country grieved over the massacre of Black children, the federal authorities and white politicians were more interested in exploiting the Iranian hostage situation, in order to whip up and revive an American patriotic hysteria. They were hoping to give a shot in the arm to a dying U.S. capitalist and racist spirit. But, for us, for the Afro-American and other third world people, we understand that American patriotism and white racism are the same thing. As the federal government and U.S. ruling class used the Iranian crisis to whip up

a climate of patriotic hysteria, it created a stronger climate of white racist hysteria in the U.S. that is evidenced by the wave of racist attacks, including the missing and murdered children, that rises about the same time, with the sanction of government officials.

Under two administrations, both Carter's and Reagan's, the federal government did not see fit to offer any assistance to the city of Atlanta. It was only after mass pressure mounted and forced the issue on a national level, did they respond. It was only after people all over the world began to ask what is happening in Atlanta and why isn't something being done, did the federal government act.

But, even then they responded in the same cold and callous manner in which they always respond when it is a question of Black people's lives. Even then they did not give up anything without first publicly humiliating Black people, by making Black public elected officials beg and go through one procedure after another, one meeting after another, one committee hearing after another, before they gave a measly 1.5 million dollars.

The president got on national news media and acted like he was really concerned about the suffering of Black people in Atlanta and throughout the nation. He only acted like it because he is an actor. All the while he was acting like he wanted to help, while he was making the Black officials beg for

what rightfully belongs to us anyway, he was sending 30 million dollars to prop up a fascist government in El Salvador. Obviously the lives of Black children are not high on his list of priorities.

In addition to the federal monies, there is also the involvement of the FBI in the case. Supposedly the most sophisticated investigative body in the world. Yet, the FBI has not only been unable to solve the crimes (it is questionable whether that is their intent). When two bodies were discovered in January of 81 the FBI with other local law enforcement officials removed the remains and destroyed the crime scene prior to the arrival of the county medical examiner. A move that is not only stupid but illegal under Georgia law.

The FBI has also been a part of the slander, lies and attack upon the character of Black people and especially Black parents. The director of the FBI implied in a national news conference that they had evidence that the children were being killed by their parents or other members of their families. A few days later an agent of the FBI in Macon, Georgia, stated that they had evidence of some of the children being murdered by their parents etc. An obvious lie. But more than a lie, a vicious racist depiction of Black parents as murderers of our own children. When it is they, the federal authorities who have always had the blood of our peo-

ple on their hands. The missing and murdered children is both a warning and a call to action.

The majority of the white news media has also played a part in the continuous distortion of the situation in Atlanta. But, even more than distorting the facts, they have continued to paint a picture of the children and young men who have been murdered as criminals, homosexuals or mentally incompetent. The white media establishment has sought to discredit the families of the children who are active in bringing national attention to the issue, and to prop up a group of negro leaders that they feel are the responsible elements of the Black community. They have displayed a lack of respect for Black people and have clearly demonstrated the extent of their involvement in promoting a climate of racist hatred in this country. By attacking the families, portraying the victims as low-lives, and then propping up some old negro yes men and women, they feel that they can control the masses of Black people. They think that they can destroy Black people's concept of themselves, destroy the basis of any mass movement, discrediting the issue by slandering the victims and their families, making them unworthy of support. If that fails, they feel they can rely upon their negro puppets to keep the masses under control. Black people are being sent a message today. The missing and murdered children: a warning and a call to action.

The conduct of the negro leaders has been totally disgraceful and disgusting in the issue of the missing and murdered children. For month after month, none of them would say or do anything about the issue, even tho several of the parents had gone to them asking their support. It was only after mass pressure began to mount in Atlanta and around the country, did they get involved.

Even then their involvement was more from the standpoint of trying to stop and/or curtail the movement of the masses than to try and give leadership and strengthen the masses in their movement. They continually tried to upstage the parents to project themselves as the leaders. They opposed raising the issue as one of racist violence. They attacked those who did, and they attempted to put themselves at the head of the mass movement, opposing any attempts to organize the people to defend themselves, and protect their children. They have consistently opposed placing any blame for the situation on the federal government or the system of racism and exploitation in this country.

Even with all their government support and media publicity, the negro leaders have been unable to stop the movement of the masses. They have been unable to put themselves at the head of the movement. It has become clearer and clearer that they cannot and will not lead the Afro-American people in the fight against the crimes of racist violence, tho they sometimes do some-

thing positive. They have not and will not lead us in the struggle for real liberation. We are being sent a message. A warning and a call to action.

The Afro-American people have arisen in our thousands and tens of thousands around the issue of the missing and murdered children. An issue that was brought to the attention of the country and the world through the work, initially of the families of the slain children, and especially the mothers, Black women. Poor and working class Black women stood up and shouted out to the country that our babies, our future, was being murdered in Atlanta. A mass movement began to take shape, at the grassroots level. All over the country, green ribbons appeared as a symbol of strength and solidarity, of grief as well as protest over the murder of our future. The issue of the missing and murdered children caused thousands of Black people to take to the streets and demonstrate in large and small numbers in cities from coast to coast. Rallies and meetings were held, fundraisers and literature was produced to bring out the information that the white racist media wouldn't. Done primarily by grassroots community forces and broad coalitions of all kinds.

An important part of the growing mass movement was the constant call from the grassroots, from progressive and revolutionary activists for the unification of the Afro-American people and the growing consciousness

Home

*Reach into the southern soil
to acquaint yourself with
your ancestors*

*Till the land for future crops
and hear the mourns and screams
from yesteryear*

*Swim in the Mississippi and
find history's unforgotten millions
Lift a hand full of southern soil and
in it you find the hearts and blood
of our people.*

—Sababa Akili

SABABA AKILI is a poet and organizer living in Atlanta, Georgia. He is a member of the League of Revolutionary Struggle, the Afro-American Justice League, and a co-founder of the Black Fire Poetry Theatre.



Black sharecroppers have a right to the land they till.

about self-defense in the face of this genocidal act and the wave of racist hatred and violence that is sweeping the country. This call could be heard in demonstrations of support and solidarity around the country. Some liberals and their negro friends interpreted this as being an attempt to divide the people, when it was a time for people of all nationalities to come together.

It is true that people of all nationalities, ages, and religions were horrified by the mass murder of Black children in Atlanta. In fact you would have to be a totally sick human being to not be opposed to the murder of children, and those racist groups like the KKK and Nazi's and the other forces of racist reaction that fit that category. People of all nationalities have expressed their support in various ways. It has been a positive and good thing.

Yet, it must still be said and advocated and fought for. The unification of the Afro-American people as an absolute necessity, an absolute requirement for the ending of racist violence. The Afro-American people are under attack as a people. We are being told through the issue of the missing and murdered children that we are not guaranteed a future in America. We must organize ourselves and fight as a people. We must respond as a people to the attacks on us as a people.

The Afro-American people must praise the work of the Committee to Stop Children's Murders (the organization of the families), for their tireless efforts to bring the issue to the country and awaken the people to the plight of our children. Even with all the problems and difficulties the committee has had, we should still support them. And see their work as a part of the growing grassroots movement among Black people.

The responsibility for the murder of our children and young people in Atlanta must be placed on the shoulders of the U.S. government and white racist ruling class in this country. It is they who have advocated and created a climate of racist hatred and violence that is killing and attacking our people all across the U.S.

The white media establishment has implied over and over again that it is probably someone Black that is killing the children of Atlanta. Now with the arrest of a young Black man (at the time of this writing), charging him in the killing of a 27-year old Black man, who was the 28th victim, there is even more of an attempt on the part of the white media establishment to project the missing and

murdered children as just another case of Black people killing their own.

We must continue to place the responsibility where it lies. Even if it is a Black person responsible for some or all of the killings, the fact is that America so destroys the dignity and humanity of the Afro-American people with its racism and exploitation that it creates the basis for that kind of sickness to exist. A Black man or woman who would be so sick as to kill their own children, once again speaks to the message of our



(Top) New York City, 1981. (Bottom) The fight for Atlanta's Black children is a fight for the future of Black people in the U.S. (UNITY photos)

future being destroyed, of hopelessness and despair turned into violent self-hatred.

The arrest of Wayne Williams, done with much media fanfare, was a carefully orchestrated action on the part of the federal government and the other police agencies and the white media establishment. There has been a virtual news blackout in areas outside of Atlanta. In Atlanta, the news media has tried and convicted Wayne Williams already. Several police agencies including the FBI, immediately after his arrest, withdrew some of their forces assigned to the task force, clearly to imply that the murders had been solved. The media began to promote that most Black people were relieved at the arrest of Wayne Williams and believed him to be guilty. They also began to run editorials, and other types of news stories attacking the Committee to Stop Children's Murders.

The effect of all of this and more is to portray the issue as one of just another case of Black people killing other Black people. Arrest a Black man on very little evidence, attack the grassroots forces who have been organizing a mass movement to bring attention to the issue, and discredit them, downplay the issue. The move is designed to throw confusion into the movement of our people, to diffuse our struggle.

We must not forget the history of our people in this country. We must not forget all the Black men and women who are in prison for no other crime than being Black. We must continue to demand that the killers be found. We must de-

mand that the white media establishment stop their attacks upon our people through slander, lies and innuendo. We must demand that they stop the trial of Wayne Williams in the press. But, most of all, we must remember that it was a mass movement that brought the issue to a head in the first place, and only a massive movement of our people will continue, must continue the struggle against racist violence, we must continue the struggle to stop the murder of our children, the murder of our future. Because, we know the responsibility the government has for the death of our children, we know the responsibility the KKK has for the death of our children, the death of our people. We know the responsibility that America has for the death of our people, and the murder of our future.

The fact that there is a widespread growth of white racist organizations that not only preach racist hatred and violence, but actively organize for it and carry it out daily has been washed over again and again in the course of the massacre. There has been no investigation of the KKK and other right wing racist, violent organizations who advocate the murder of Black people. In some of the prisons, Black prisoners have told how there was cheering and signifying on the part of white racist inmates and guards when there were announcements of another child being found dead. The government cannot continue to treat us as political fools. We understand why there is no tying of the racist organizations to the investigation because it would reach into the highest levels of government itself. Because to really conduct an investigation that is designed to put a halt to the murder of Black people, there would have to be an investigation of the government itself. It is clear that we cannot look to them to stop the murder of our people, the murder of our children, the murder of our future.

The terrible tragedy of the missing and murdered children of Atlanta is a warning to us. It is a warning to the Afro-American nation, to the Afro-American people. A warning that tells us of the violence and bloodshed in the days ahead. A warning that tells us that it is time for us as a people to unite in order to gather our collective strength, because our collective weakness while we remain disunited cannot protect our people. Cannot put an end to the murder of our children. A warning that tells us even the existence of Black elected officials who have, to one degree or



another, participated in the investigation, but who have also spent a considerable amount of time attempting to keep the masses of Black people cool and under control — a warning that tells us even they are powerless, really, even they cannot stop the murder of our people. Even they will be obstructed and sabotaged, as they have been by the federal government.

A warning that tells us we don't even know all the genocidal plans for us in the 80's. We don't even know yet the depth and degree of what led to the slayings of our children and young men. A warning that tells us we had better move, get in motion, initiate some action!

The missing and murdered children is a call to action. Black people, as they have begun, must continue to rise up. There is a growing mass and grassroots movement in the U.S. that is necessary and timely. It is a movement that led to the thousands of Black people who rallied to the side of the mothers of the

murdered children. A movement that told the negro leaders to leave Liberty City when they were sent there by their masters after the Miami rebellion. A call to action is being issued. A call that demands that we understand that this is not the end, but the beginning of a hard and difficult time for our people in this country. A call to action, to prepare, to organize and prepare to defend the lives, rights and property of Black people by any means necessary. A call to action that demands that we teach our children the reality of being Black in the U.S. and the necessity for them to be taught to fight mentally, spiritually and physically, the oppression and genocide against Black people. A call to action that says come, gather our people together. We are under attack as a people, the government will not protect us, they too attack us and harbor our attackers. We must protect ourselves.

A call to action that says only when the Afro-American people have self-determination, real power and land to control the destiny of their own lives, will we be able to put an end to racist violence and the murder of our people.

A call to action that says we must see the 80's as a time of decisive struggle, of intense conflict, and we must rise to the occasion, with all the fury that the Afro-American people are capable of. We must rise with all the determination shown by our people to refuse to be conquered, even in the face of the murder of our children.

A call to action that says we are tired of burying our young who have been murdered by this system. We are tired of seeing them gunned down, lynched and stolen from us. We are tired of them being violated over and over again and denied their humanity. They are our future. America is sending us a message: We are not guaranteed a future. They are killing our children and sending us a message.

The missing and murdered children is a warning and a call to action!

June 1981

MICHAEL SIMANGA is a Black revolutionary writer and activist. His works include *Black Blood Runs Red* and *Lady I Need a New World to Love You In*. He is a member of the *League of Revolutionary Struggle* and the *Chairman of its Afro-American Commission*, *Chairman of the Afro-American Justice League*, and *co-founder of the Black Fire Poetry Theatre*.

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