Southern Exposure

$2.50

Southern Black Utterances Today

First

Blk riting is not always and only about writing. Frequently it's about flexin, clenchin, arresting mad underdevelopers. Sometimes it's smothered incense.

Second

While we were idling away in Lit 101, literature got amputated. They did a surgical job on fiction, too. Next thing you know, the family griot was a goon and Chester Himes was a bum.

(sonorously) "On the first day the Typewriter spoke."

(hysterically) "That's not literature, that's – (choose from "propaganda," "trash," "esoteric," and then add six to list).

Third

"We are a Southern People," says John Oliver Killens,

BUT

"our literature doesn't reflect this."

SEE

Addison Gayle's "Reclaiming the Southern Experience: The Black Aesthetic Ten Years Later" (Black World, September, 1974).

THEN

recall the orientation of literary journals re sections of the country

Then note

New York School of Black Writing (naturally)

Mid-West School (ah, yes)

West Coast School (uh-huh, I've been noticing)

Southern (you mean . . . ? When . . . ? Er . . . ahh . . . I know of about . . .)

Not to Mention

scene: city up North
lines: Country boy, where you from?
(followed by the Dozens and a Rumble)

Fourth

our motive is simple – to reconnect.

SO

This is to introduce a special issue of **Southern Exposure** which is devoted primarily to Black Southern writings. They're drawn from the community, that is, from the campus forces, the street forces, the prison forces, and from intellectual circles, as they say. If space had allowed us to open up and stretch out, we'd have included letters from behind the walls, annotated literary maps of Afro-America (that's the US South, the Caribbean, Northeast Brazil) on whose back feeds Euro-America, electronic scripts, barber shop scenarios, outdoors rallies, public hearings, meeting minutes, anecdotes from the laundromat and quilting bees, kitchen cables, checker-game palaver, ball-and-rope chants – all of which, together with the work featured here, would help inform/prepare us for what the new re-emergence (whatever that may mean) of the Southern Black School of Literature is all about. And which might galvanize some folk into launching an overall regional quarterly, at least an annual.

An energetic attempt was made to supply readers with information about workshops, presses, journals, contests and awards in the various regions of the South. But, ahh, our excavations and explorations and general rummaging about was all too brief. Hopefully, what we were able to assemble in the Resource Section in the rear will aid those of you/us interested in hooking up. We would like to thank especially the southern regional representatives of the National Black Writers Congress for their help, and we look forward to a productive year in which we, perhaps, may brainstorm on the regional journal idea.

Toni Cade Bambara,
Special Issue Editor

Leah Wise,
Project Editor

Southern Exposure would like to express its indebtedness to our first guest editor, Ms. Toni Cade Bambara. Writer/teacher/organizer, Ms. Bambara's articles, reviews, and short stories have appeared in numerous publications over the years including **Black World, Essence, Liberator, Liberation, New York Times, Washington Post, Redbook, Encore**, several high school texts and literature anthologies. She is the author of **The Black Woman, Tales and Stories for Black Folk**, and **Gorilla My Love**. She is currently working on a second collection of short stories for Random House. Formerly an associate professor of English at Rutgers University, she is currently writer-in-residence at the Neighborhood Arts Center in Atlanta.

Southern Exposure

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FROM OUR READERS . . .

Richard A. Sheridan of Louisville offers:

A suggestion: what about something on the law in the South, especially as it relates to retention of power by the established rural county governments, its abuses and its beauties? We're working on a case now through the federal courts that is going to change a lot of attitudes in the South regarding sheriffs and their power over county residents. (If we win it.)

We are considering several topics for future issues, including one on criminal justice and the law. In addition we hope to produce more general-interest issues that will cover a variety of subjects.

Louise Boyle, editor for the Cornell University Press and photographer:

I was delighted to see "No More Moanin'," your oral history of labor struggles during the Depression. It's quite an impressive issue. I took the photograph used for your cover at a meeting of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union held outside Parkan, Arkansas in September 1937. Norman Thomas was one of the speakers, another was a man trying to organize the auto workers in Memphis, and a third was a local minister. Priscilla Robertson and I were visiting Myrtle Lawrence (a remarkable woman) and her family. (Myrtle's face shows behind the right shoulder of the black man in the foreground, and her husband and son are at her right.) Mrs. Robertson interviewed and made notes while I took photographs. Her excellent story of our trip is still unpublished.

The Winter, 1976, issue will provide a contemporary examination of southern labor and a follow-up to many of the themes and situations discussed in "No More Moanin'." Hopefully, it will prove as useful a resource. Look for it.

Carey Rogers from Fayetteville, Arkansas:

I graduated from school in May and plan to stay in northwest Arkansas for a while; I'll probably go to graduate school next fall. . . . Since I will be here for some time, maybe I could work on getting *Southern Exposure* into the few bookstores in this area. I could only do it part time, but might have some success.

We are happy to have subscribers contact bookstores in their area, suggesting they handle Southern Exposure *or our special book-length issues. We even offer a small commission for your trouble. If you're interested, drop us a line.*

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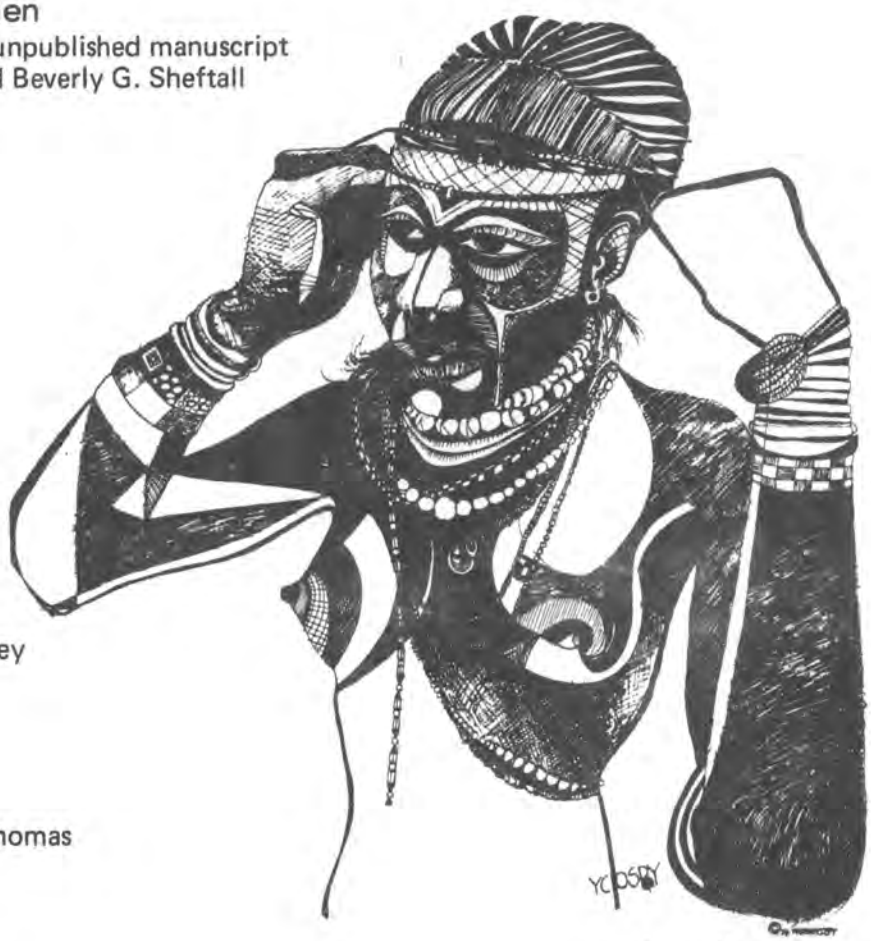

graphic by Yvonne Cosby

photo by Edmund Marshall

strangers in a strange land

by Addison Gayle, Jr.

Well before the twentieth century, Black people began an exodus from a South politically, socially and culturally dominated by such white terrorist organizations as the Ku Klux Klan and the Knights of the White Camelia. Utilizing every available avenue of escape—cars, buses, trains, on foot—they came North to settle in the urban areas of America and to confront the nameless future. In "Lenox Avenue Mural," Langston Hughes immortalizes their trek:

". . . dark tenth of a nation,
. . .
from Georgia Florida Louisiana
to Harlem Brooklyn the Bronx
but most of all to Harlem
dusky sash across Manhattan
I've seen them come dark
wondering
wide eyed
dreaming
out of Penn Station"

The new migrants brought their life style and culture with them. We know too that their ministers and lawyers, doctors and society people, bright young men and women, followed in hot pursuit. We have come to realize only recently, however, that the migration spurred the exodus of talented writers from the South, most of whom were determined, in the words of Richard Wright, "to fling myself into the unknown, to meet other situations that could, perhaps, elicit from me other responses . . ." Among those who were destined to become strangers in a very strange land were James Weldon Johnson, Zora Hurston, Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison, John Williams, Hoyt Fuller and Ernest Gaines. In concert with others, sometimes intentionally, sometimes not, these migrants were largely responsible for the Black Renaissance in letters, first in the 1920's and later in the 1960's; they were also, to a great degree, responsible for a regional hegemony over Black cultural artifacts which succeeded in directing the course of Black literature, not always towards laudable ends.

The Black novel might serve as an illustration. It began as a northern genre, created for the most part by exiled Southerners. William Wells Brown and Martin Delany were southern born, Brown a slave, Delany a freeman; both, however, fled from the South, from terror and oppression, and with the northern-born Frank Webb became the first novelists in America of African descent. Among them, they accounted for four novels: Brown's *Clotel* (1853) and *Miralda* (1861), Delany's *Blake, Or The Huts of America* (1859) and Webb's *The Garies and Their Friends* (1857). Each novel was imbued with protests, and those of Brown and Webb depicted images of Blacks modeled upon eighteenth and nineteenth century white stereotypes. Delany, the notable exception, modeled his characters upon rebellious Blacks, upon such paradigms as Nat Turner and Denmark Vesey. Their characters, however, were dedicated to overcoming oppression and tyranny and each maintained a proud dignity.

After the Civil War, the creative impetus which produced the Black novel shifted from North to South. The most talented of the novelists, Paul Laurence Dunbar, Charles Chesnutt, and Sutton Griggs, toiled in the southern vineyard and no matter how distorted the portraits, painted their men and women from those who inhabited the rural and urban South. Dunbar's personal problems precluded realistic evaluations of the life about him; the result was that in too many instances, his characters are less representative of Black Southerners than they are of men and women created from the furtive imaginations of white propagandists. Though Chesnutt and Griggs evidence similar influence by white propagandists, both rise above such influence and project images of the New Negro to come, modernize Delany's Blake, and bring forth into the twentieth century the aggressive Black, willing to lay manhood on the line against an oppressive society, determined to struggle for manhood rights. The southern-born Josh Green of Chesnutt's novel, *The Marrow of Tradition* is one such example. Bernard Belgrave of Griffs' *Imperium In Impirio* (1889) is another; and even young Joe Hamilton of Dunbar's *Sport of The Gods* (1902) emerges as a man/rebel intent upon breaking the mores and folkways of a tyrannical society.

The New Negro, therefore, was born on southern soil and if not for the great migration, might have reached a maturity solely lacking to the present day. For the cultural and literary exodus meant the breaking of ties, the loss of roots, of place—a central setting upon which the creative imagination might be anchored and nurtured. To be capable of capturing the southern life style of a people in moments of tranquil remembrance was not enough; the break with traditions, customs and folkways must inevitably lead to cultural amnesia. The Black writers who came North were migrants, and all too often divested of visions of the past; they were Black men and women thrust upon alien soil and forced to create out of the marrow of an alien and threatening environment. There is little wonder, therefore, that the Harlem Renaissance was a period of cultural schizophrenia, one in which Black writers moved, helter-skelter, in all directions.

The major participants of the Renaissance were cultural/literary migrants. Johnson, Toomer and Hurston were from the South; Hughes, Larsen, and Dubois from the east; Walrond and Mackay

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Addison Gayle, Jr., is the author of *The Black Aesthetic; Black Situation; Black Expression; Bondage, Freedom and Beyond: The Prose of Black Americans; Oak and Ivy: A Biography of Paul Laurence Dunbar.* His current work *The New Way of the New World* is a collection of essays on the Black novel in this country. Originally from Newport News, Virginia, Brother Gayle now lives in New York and is Associate Professor of English at Baruch (CCNY).

from the West Indies. Though McKay is able to retain an emotional identification with his homeland in the novel *Banna Bottom* (1933), the Black novelist, for the most part, was unable to remember the cultural milieu from which he came and unable also to comprehend the new culture of which he and his people had become a part. Due to the loss of vision engendered by the loss of cultural roots, he was forced to create a literature which distorted the reality of Black life – one designed to appease the atavistic yearnings of a white and Black middle-class audience.

Alain Locke, chronicler of the Negro Renaissance, writing in *The New Negro* in 1922, championed the migration, the new writer who had emerged as a result and the new literature itself: "The day of 'aunties,' 'uncles,' and mammies is gone . . . The popular melodrama has about played itself out, and it is time to scrap the fictions, garrote the bogeys and settle down to a realistic facing of facts . . . . A main change has been, of course, that shifting of the Negro population which has made the Negro problem no longer exclusively or even predominantly southern . . . . In the very process of being transplanted, the Negro is becoming transformed." On the other hand, Benjamin Brawley, a much more perceptive and abrasive critic, realized that the transformation bordered nowhere upon the idealism inherent in Locke's writings and perceptions: ". . . but while Uncle Tom and Uncle Remus were outmoded, there was now a fondness for the vagabond or roustabout, so that one might ask if after all the new types were an improvement on the old."

"The new types" were paradigms constructed in *Nigger Heaven* (1926) the novel published by Carl Van Vechten. Here are new images of a northern urban people: sweetmen, pimps, sensation seekers and hustlers; Black men and women, who, in Norman Mailer's phrase twenty years later, subsist ". . . for their Saturday night kicks, relinquishing the pleasures of the mind for the more obligatory pleasures of the body . . . ." Such images were adopted by some of the ablest of Black writers, by Langston Hughes, Claude McKay and Rudolph Fisher; their existence in Black literature was tolerated by the leading Black critics of the day, of whom Alain Locke was most representative.

The acceptance of such images reflects the effect of cultural shock and loss; it is a manifestation of the severity of the migration which forced men and women away from their source of creative inspiration, cut them off from the reality of the Black existence and forced them to adopt a new truth in a new cultural setting, to look at Blacks through lenses fashioned in a northern urban environment. With varying exceptions the literature which results is escapist, always fantasy-ridden, stereotypic and distorted. The southern heritage of trial and endurance, of the existential struggle which produced the heroism of Josh Green and Blake, the determination of a people to prove their valor against tyranny and oppression becomes subsumed under the search for eroticism and exoticism, for the life style of the hip and the cool, for the atavistic yearnings more germane to white than to Black culture.

Furthermore, a regional hegemony which persists still became manifest. The publishing companies, all white owned, were up North; Black critics plied their trade in journals, northern based and dependent upon a white and a middle-class Black reading public. Racist America demanded that the reality of the racial problem be fictionalized, and that Blacks be viewed not in heroic battle against the society, but in the pursuit of sensual and material objectives; aggressive images such as those of Josh Green and Blake were to be supplanted by those like Jake of *Home to Harlem* and Jim Boy of *Not Without Laughter*. The great migration which sent a people into a quest for freedom landed the Black writer in a bondage from which he has yet to escape.

The publication of *Native Son* by Richard Wright in 1940, at first glance, may tend to negate such assertions. Though the novel rescued Black writers from sensationalism and escapism, it did not move them towards explication of the realities of Black life; like its predecessors, it was marred by the influence of white propagandists. Despite the high acclaim in which the novel is justifiably held, to read *Native Son* at this juncture of Black history is to be in the midst of a people *sans* culture and history, one whose roots are not those stretching back beyond the diaspora, but those which begin and end in a northern urban setting. Bigger Thomas, the son of migrants, is the true migrant; he is an American creation – a desperately driven man, deprived of that strength which fueled Douglas and Garnet, Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman; he is one who has lost all cognizance of a previous history, who has become man alone, existing in an incomprehensible universe, robbed of the knowledge of that culture which served his ancestors.

Thus he is one of the two major paradigms handed down from Black writers of the past. Both are creations of a northern imagination, and both are representative to Black and white audiences alike of the twin dichotomies of the Black psyche: Bigger Thomas or the Scarlet Creeper: nihilism,

overwhelming frustration and anger, or the hip/cool life style of sensationalism and atavism. These are the offerings of the sons and daughters of those who began the great migration. Both are antithetical to Black history and culture, and yet they are the mainstays in the works of some of our most talented writers, offered in literature, upon stage and screen, as representatives of Black men and women, of their hopes and aspirations.

What then of the southern legacy? What of a set of values which taught a people to endure with dignity? Such offerings, to be sure, are to be found in the works of *some* Black writers. Jean Toomer and Zora Hurston are examples. The early part of *Cane* is a testament to the strength and endurance of a people and serves, with the second part, as a fictional example of what happens to a people who have lost a sense of the cultural milieu from which they sprang. The men and women of Zora Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* exhibit the courage and dedication to survival so much a part of Black history, past and present. Such novels were the exceptions, however, not the rule, and they were buried under the popularity of their more sensationalistic contemporaries.

The same is true of John Killen's novel *YoungBlood* which evidences southern heroism and courage with a depiction of Black people engaged in a never ending battle to overcome the strictures imposed by a tyrannical society. The novel was published during the period when Baldwin and Ellison were elected by the white literary establishment as ambassadors from the Black world to the white, and when such images as those personified in *Invisible Man, Another Country* and *Manchild in the Promised Land* were accepted as authentic representatives of Blacks. These were accepted despite the fact that *YoungBlood* was only the fictional representative of the courageous young people who marched with Martin Luther King, who chanted "Black Power" with Carmichael and Brown, who left heroic footsteps in the dust-caked towns of the South and the asphalt paved streets of the North as well.

The advent of the "New Black Arts Movement" in the 1950's engendered the hope that such cultural and literary sleight of hand by Black writers and the white literary establishment might be ended. The young people who followed the lead of Baraka, Fuller and Askia Toure were eager to step outside of American history and culture; they were ready to recreate the images and paradigms of old, to forge from the past the heroic legacy left by men and women who struggled unceasingly against the American Caesars. They were intent upon producing a new kind of Black literature, of offering different, more positive images. Their failure was magnanimous and not attributable to their dedication or their tireless zeal and energy. The problems resulting from the great migration remained as pressing in 1960 as they were in 1925. The lack of Black cultural institutions, of magazines and publishing houses, meant that cultural hegemony over the artifacts of Black people was still held by the oppressor; that white editors, like those of the *New York Times Review of Books,* still had the power to determine that *YoungBlood* was less representative of young Black men and women than Rufus Scott and Bigger Thomas; that competent Black writers like Paule Marshall, Ernest Gaines, Louise Merriwether and William Melvin Kelley were of lesser status than those who, in their works, depicted Black men as natural enemies of Black women, Black people as the major antagonists of Black heroes, and the American society as a benign, if not benevolent, society.

It is, of course, too late for speculation. Still, one is tempted to ask in hindsight, what might have been the status of Black literature had the migration never occured? Had men and women never forsaken the moral and ethical teachings of their southern ancestors, never become hypnotized by the materialistic offerings of northern whites, never lost that sense of morality and decency which served to distinguish, in sharp terms, the victim from the victimizer, would not our literature and our lot be better here among the barbarians?

One turns to the works of Killens and Gaines, Alice Walker and William Kelley for partial answers. Visions of a moral universe are still found in their works, of a place where people retain moral imperatives, where the prostitute is one who trades upon the misery of her people. Their men and women are paradigms of forced exiles from another land, who created a culture and history, artifacts and a life style to distinguish them from the arch-enemies of humanity. They possessed a love for life, a fidelity to the sanctity of the human spirit, a belief in the elevation of the human condition. Such people once walked among us, primarily along the dusty roads of the South and are still, as Toomer noted, a people upon whom "the sun is setting, but has not yet set"; hope, belief and faith persists despite all, and the young people in the colleges and in the streets who have novels, poems and plays flowering in their consciousness may yet forsake that migration of the mind which ruined many of their predecessors, may never become strangers to their history and culture, may remember Sterling Brown's admonition to old John Henry: "We had it once, John Henry, help us to get it again."

UP SOUTH!

by Michael Simmons

While growing up in Philadelphia with parents from South Carolina and Georgia, I always assumed that Blacks in the Southeast migrated to Philadelphia. Years later, as a young adult working with SNCC in the Deep South, I was surprised to find Black Southerners talking about moving to places like Cleveland, Gary and Chicago, and I was amazed at the number of Black Northerners my age who, like myself, were only one generation removed from the South. For the first time, I realized the scope of the twentieth-century Black migration.

In the last few years, another organizing experience in the South has led me to think again about migration patterns in the context of our struggle. I was involved with a workers' group in Seattle, Washington, which wanted to extend its organizing efforts into four central southern states, but which recognized the cautious reactions of the people there towards "outsiders." We suspected that many Blacks in Seattle had migrated from the four-state area, so we shared our proposed project with various church congregations in order to get names of their southern friends and relatives. From these names, we located the initial contacts who proved indispensable in establishing our immediate legitimacy in new communities.

That experience brought me to *Black Migration* by Florette Henri (Doubleday, 1975). Ms. Henri is less interested in tracing the actual geographic patterns of the dispersal than in analyzing the accommodation experience of Blacks who migrated North in search of improved employment opportunities, better schools and an end to discrimination. Nevertheless, her treatment of this important transition during 1900-1920 is instructive, particularly at a time when we are attempting to understand our history in order to plan for the future.

A boy is born in hard time Mississippi
Surrounded by four walls that ain't so pretty
His parents give him love and affection
To keep him strong, moving in the right direction
Living just enough, just enough for the city . . . .

Ms. Henri prefaces her main discussion with a brief account of the "Reconstruction." The experience of Blacks demonstrated that the Civil War had less to do with slavery as a question of equality than with a struggle between the economic interests of the North and the South. The 1877 Compromise was the beginning of that realization for Blacks, although it took nearly 25 years to completely reestablish white supremacy in the South. During this period Blacks witnessed the emergence of laws that restricted their participation in society, the establishment of a modified form of slavery known as sharecropping, and the rise of white terrorist groups dedicated to the suppression of Blacks. These events, culminating with *Plessey v. Ferguson,* left southern Blacks in 1900 with only the psychological benefits of emancipation.

The first two decades of this century were significant for America. Having consolidated a reunified state apparatus following the Civil War, America was geared toward further expansion. The subjugation of the Native American population had been completed and the military conquest of Mexican land achieved. Still America continued looking beyond its borders to increase the economic growth of the country. Thus, by 1910, the national wealth had doubled and by 1914 American investments abroad had increased five times their 1897 level.

His father works some days for fourteen hours,
And you bet he barely makes a dollar.
His mother goes to scrub the floors for many
And you best believe she hardly gets a penny.
Living just enough, just enough for the city . . . .

The technological age had arrived and along with it came the need for labor. While many people are familiar with the methods American businesses utilized to entice Europeans to immigrate, few realize that similar tactics were used to induce southern Blacks to migrate north. Ms. Henri describes how companies sent agents throughout the South, encouraging Blacks to

travel north to cash in on the guarantee of jobs, good housing, better schools and "equal opportunity." The South became so alarmed at the loss of its neo-slave populace that states passed laws to curb the activities of these agents. Many Blacks also contributed to the rise of the exodus fever, the most notable being Robert Abbott, editor of the Chicago *Defender.* Through his newspaper, Abbott acted as the unofficial organ of northern business, extolling the opportunities of the North and the need for Blacks to abandon the oppressive South.

His patience's long, but soon he won't have any
To find a job is like a haystack needle
Cause where he lives they don't use colored people.
Living just enough, just enough for the city . . . .

Newly arriving Blacks soon realized that, as Malcolm X once noted, they had arrived "up South." They found they "could always get some dirty, exhausting, low-paid work." In the plants, 90 percent of the Black industrial workers were common laborers; in the Chicago stockyards, the highest position a Black could obtain was subforeman of other Black workers, and that was an unusual occurrence. The European immigrants that arrived in America from 1900-1920 were not of "sturdy stock like Europeans from northern Europe," as Woodrow Wilson pointed out, but were often darker-skinned people from central, southern and eastern Europe who experienced discrimination similar to Blacks. Being placed on the same economic level as Blacks resulted in the new immigrants competing for the "negro jobs." Ms. Henri observes that "Italians, Sicilians, Greeks by 1910 were replacing Black barbers, bootblacks and drymen . . . ."

The lack of an economic analysis by both Black and European immigrants pitted the two groups against each other while big business picked and chose from the overabundant labor supply filling the cities. Black folk made the mistake of assuming that, because we were here first, we had some form of squatters rights over the newly arriving immigrants. Ms. Henri is correct in noting the tragedy of Black leaders who exhibited the same racist attitudes of the conservative nativist movement, accusing the foreigners of being disturbers of the peace and socialist agitators. Equally tragic was the racist attitude of the new immigrants who saw Black people as blocking them from carving their niche in America.

In the trade union movement this conflict between Black and immigrant labor intensified.

photo by Marion Post Wolcott/Farm Security Administration

Although the history of labor unions in this country cannot easily be characterized by a general statement, or a broadly racist label, race did play a prominent, negative role in the formation of unions. Black people often found that they were viewed "problematically." Black workers were restricted from joining unions and often were used as scabs during union struggle. Ms. Henri states that Blacks were members of some unions, such as the United Mine Workers, Teamsters and Longshoremen, in areas with large Black work forces, where the unions had to include them or lose control over employees. Unions, such as the Amalgamated Association of Steelworkers, the Hotel Employees and the Tobacco Workers, that refused membership to Blacks organized separate "lodges" which were under the jurisdiction of the nearest white local. Black unions formed in a number of trades with A. Philip Randolph's Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters being the most successful.

But Black unions made the same mistake as white unions. In accepting the basic economic tenets of American capitalism, they were merely jockeying for more of the economic pie. Rather than struggling for a just economic system that could provide for all, they defined their struggle as a battle over crumbs in an economic system that is premised on the exploitation of workers. Thus, the enemy became one's fellow worker, not the employer – which explains why attacks made on the employer seldom got beyond a bid for higher wages and benefits to a demand for worker control of plants, including what a plant produces.

His hair is long, his feet are hard and gritty
He spends his life walking the streets of New York City.
He's almost dead from breathing in air pollution.
He tried to vote, but to him there's no solution.
Living just enough, just enough for the city . . . .

Throughout *Black Migration* Ms. Henri documents the history of Black people attempting to participate in American society as equals. Her chapter on the Black experience in World War I gives a vivid picture of the extent to which we were willing to compromise basic humanitarian principles toward this end. I found it difficult to sympathize with my brothers who were so willing to be used as cannon fodder as a down-payment on equality. This attitude was and is responsible for Blacks being used to take the land from Native Americans and Chicanos (the Buffalo Soldiers), as well as from other Third World peoples (the Philipines, Santo Domingo, Puerto Rico, Korea and Vietnam). Domestically, we were proud to accept any high-level post regardless of task. For example, one of the "good negro jobs" during this period was Assistant Attorney General for Indian Affairs. Imagine us administrating the colonized for the colonizer!

Unfortunately, Ms. Henri never considers the possibility that Blacks were operating out of an incorrect framework. Instead, her book demonstrates how Black people defined the goals of freedom and opportunity in terms of the material benefits that dominate white society. Blacks failed to question how America's standard of living was achieved and how the subjugation and exploitation of peoples around the world provided it. Various movements, such as the Harlem Renaissance, exhibited a changing sense of how to take advantage of opportunities, but few questioned the nature of American opportunity itself.

As we look at history, however, we must always recognize that there are varied currents operating simultaneously within the mainstream. We need to know more to develop a complete understanding of those voices that did challenge American society and its operating principles. Nevertheless, Ms. Henri's account shows masses of Black people struggling through horrendous circumstances to advance themselves and their families the best they knew how. For this we have nothing to be ashamed of. But today we know better. As we have watched the bombings of the Vietnamese people over the past 15 years, the insidious American-sponsored coup in Chile, and the continual exploitation of Blacks and other Third World peoples, we can never again fight for our equality in ignorance. For achieving our own separate peace is merely the tacit acceptance of the exploitation of others. If our struggle is to win against exploitation, it must be joined with struggles of oppressed people everywhere.

I hope you hear inside my voice of sorrow
And that it motivates you to make a better tomorrow.
This place is cruel, no where could be much colder
If we don't change, the world will soon be over.
Living just enough, stop giving just enough for the city!!!

"Living for the City" by Stevie Wonder, from the album *Innervisions* © Motown Records, Inc., 1973.

Michael Simmons, originally from Philadelphia, came South to work with SNCC in the sixties and became involved in early draft resistance and anti-war activities, for which he did 2½ years in the joint. Currently, he's organizing workers' groups in the South.

THREE POEMS

when you told me
you
were going out west
to find
yourself
i thought . . . . . .
how far west you would have to go.
if you had
asked
i could have told
you
where you
was.

like the thoughts that
activate the hand or heart
to some fine beneficial action
i need to be of service.
i need to be of some indispensable usage
like the Nile serves Egypt
like the Mississippi serves New Orleans
i want to be important to your
welfare

once i captured someone to love
a wild bird in my hand
it sat still, motionless
save the incoherent heart beating,
it appraised me with wild
uncompromising eyes and
suddenly i became captive.

— Charles Freeney,
an archivist, orinthologist, singer, and supreme chef, has been known throughout the South (Georgia, Mississippi) since the early SNCC, SCLC days.

HEARING JAMES BROWN AT THE CAFE DES NATTES

Sidi-Bou-Said, Tunisia

Yes, brother your word had come
Don't want nobody
Give me nuthin
Crowning this hilltop, long ago's lighthouse
Open up the do'
Git it myself
Your word comes, thanks to God and Marconi
To this eyrie where I sit
Mint tea before, serenaded by caged birds
And the undulating arias of Arabia,
Her last vestige of empire.

In waves, over the waves it comes
Don't want nobody
Mingling with birdsong and arabesques
Give me nuthin
Floating over an Andulusian mise-en-scene
(I remember Cordova)
Open up the do'
It pierces the blanched housetops, the waiting sea
Git it myself

You moan, Dido plunges into the flames
You groan, Hannibal embarks
You shriek, Cato's vow is fulfilled
You sigh, the sea roars beside a silent shore

Flairing into this moment
Your voice, snatched from beyond Sahara's sands
Crosses the western sea, enters familiarly
This concatenation of Africa's time
Flavoring mint, infusing birdsong, merging into the endless vocalise.

— *Richard A. Long*
critic, playwright, archivist, educator, anthologist is author of the collection Ascending and Other Poems.

MOV'IN ON LYONS AVENUE

Come, let me tell you
of this life fore me,
broken some crooked time.
I think it must come smooth at death,
is what they say,
but the living of it
drives an old 1932 car,
cause I'm Black,
but mov'in, you understand.

Got to stand
after they done shot our leaders.
But we learn to drive the car better now.
All us hands is on the wheel,
and we learnt to discuss things
inside, like Brother Malcolm said,
but we sho got to be sure
that all the members is in
and hears whats yayed and what's nayed.

They got us on this trip right now,
that so down that it don't let nobody the race.
Its some kind of something, gov'inment mess.
You don't git no job 'less the money come through
and when you do git it, you come to find out,
the gitt'in of the money gon be left solely up to you!
And on the very tip top of all that,
we keep on mov'in!

But its in a circle,
what bothers me so bad,
cause I likes spirals myself, you understand.
Spirals go up.

We get caught sometimes in traffic,
if it ain't the red gun shoot'in at cha,
its the green gun that say GO
while they still got hand-cuffs lacing your body.
But some way tother we move!

Now I'm liable to be in jail
the next time round this year.
Cause it be, I done got a little hunger pain
in my gut, and polk don't git it no more.
Yeah, we have a pretty rough go,
but we do keep on mov'in.

—Janet A. Tarver
is formerly of the Black Arts Center of Houston, Texas.

the Rhythm of Black Personality

by Luther X. Weems

African people throughout the world have a worldview which is conceived as a universal oneness. There is an interconnection of all things which compose the universe. Pierre Erny (1973) observes that "the African cosmos is like a spider web: its least element cannot be touched without making the whole vibrate. Everything is connected, interdependent." This interconnectedness is conceived of as a kind of vitalism or life force which pervades all of nature: rocks, trees, lower animals, the heavens, the earth, the rivers, and particularly man, are vessels for this oneness which permeates and infuses all that is.

An African conception of personality must begin with such an elemental notion of the person. One cannot begin to speak of man without first speaking of this force which defines his continuity with all things within the world. The Dogon people of the Sudan refer to this force as *nyama* which flows with the blood in man's veins and connects his actions and circumstances with the functioning of things in general. The Bambara call it the *dya* which serves to unify all things in nature. The Akan of Ghana refer to it as a man's *kra* — his life force; it is a small bit of the supreme force that lives in every person's body (it is by definition what gives one life and returns to the supreme force when one dies). In the United States, this notion of such a universal force is most closely rendered by the American Blacks' notion of "soul." Despite the small variations in the conceptualization of this force, such a notion serves as the basic substratum for beginning to understand man.

Relationships between men and within men are regulated by notions of flow. Flow is rhythm and rhythm becomes a useful way of conceptualizing African people's rendering of the notion of personality. Definitions of personality in the West emphasize the uniqueness and the insularity of the individual. Because of the vitalism and rhythm which constitute the genetic structure and dynamics of life, it is essentially nonsensical to talk of a separate and isolated entity called self. When viewing African people one must understand self from what Wade Nobles (1974) has described as the ontogenetic concept of self, i.e., self as an interdependent entity shared with all members of the tribe. Rhythm, then, becomes a key concept in understanding the function of the person from the African perspective. The concept of vibration, movement or flow unifies all people and all things. Therefore, the point of emphasis for an African personologist would be the relationship between men, the interconnection between men, rather than accounting for the separateness or uniqueness of men.

The Person

From the perspective of the individual, the life process is regulated by his submission to the rules of life. The person maintains his internal rhythm by his observance of certain basic notions of self-respect and respect of others. The recognition of the universal life force which flows within himself is renewed through proper rituals which reinforce his interconnection with the tribe as a whole. On a very concrete level this is reflected in the considerable social orientation of African people. The very concept of hermitage among African people is synonymous with madness. The coming together and sharing with each other in a harmonious manner reaffirms the rhythmic flow between self and others. Dancing is highly symbolic and significant when viewed within this context. The rhythmic nature of music which shatters the illusion of insulation and fuses the listeners into a shared óneness becomes an affirmation of unity between the people. Throughout the world, social gatherings among Black people constitute a priority value. Dance is a ritual which actively symbolizes the reunification of the dispersed forces of oneness. The old pejorative of "natural rhythm" among Blacks and the mockery which has been made of Black ritual dance is a lack of understanding of the true symbolic meaning of rhythm and dance. It is particularly disturbing that dance which has such a high spiritual sig-

photo by Marion Post Wolcott/Farm Security Administration

nificance has become reduced to the level of carnal unification, which is the level of the Western cosmos. (In other words, dance is viewed by the traditional Western psychologists as a sublimination of aggressive and/or sexual impulses.)

With such an understanding of the African person, one is less likely to make the error often made by the European projectionist when he seeks to impose his world view on a distinct population of people. For example, when one appreciates the preeminent value of socializing among Black people, it is unlikely that one would seek to address symptoms of a disordered self by an imposition of isolation as a vehicle for reinstituting order within the self. It is interesting to call attention to the fact that mental disorders in the West are treated by an immediate isolation of the person from familiar people and contexts, whereas in African settings, the entire family is viewed as a participant in reinstituting health and order. There are interesting parallels of this notion of coming together as a curative force in all parts of the world where there are African people. During a time of sickness, the traditional treatment of the person often entailed congregating the tribe's herbalist, along with the religious leader, the elders and the immediate members of the family. Often to the accompaniment of drumming (a universal metronome of rhythm) and chanting, the treatment was executed by group participation. Such a congregation often continued until health had returned to the victim of illness. Forde (1970) observes in describing the Dogon:

> Disorder . . . which for an individual results especially from the breaking of the rules of life, prefigures the universal disorder which spreads by stages from the individual to his close kinsmen, his family, his clan, his people. But the disorder may be arrested and removed at any stage by appropriate rituals.

Even in the United States where the African people are most alienated from their true nature, one finds vestiges of this same pattern. It is considered a real contribution on the part of family members, friends and religious leaders to come and "sit-up" with the sick person. The participation in the cure by visitation and communion is still an important social value among Africans in the United States. One needs to make only a brief visit to a local hospital and watch the swarms of Black family members and friends who come to surround the ailing victim. This is to be contrasted with the Western emphasis on isolation, limitation of visitors and restriction of visiting hours for treatment of the ill.

An understanding of rhythm and communion might also correct many of the errors in educating Black youth which grow out of the imposition of alien concepts of personality onto the Black

student. With a notion of participation, one would see the inappropriateness of a teaching machine or a rigid lecture format as the method of choice in teaching Black people. One is appreciative of the retreat of the Black student from the classroom which forces dreaded isolation. The most common complaint about the Black student is the disorder caused by the excessive socializing which goes on in the classroom. From a perspective of rhythm, one is made aware of the unnaturalness of the classroom setting which fosters isolation rather than the eminent value of socializing. It is interesting to observe how the phenomenon of participation permeates Black group settings. In the pattern of call-and-response found in all settings from the fields to the church, political rallies to religious observance, the rhythm of shared participation becomes the tie which binds the diversification of function. The leader in his authority makes a call, the listener shares in the call by responding and supporting the call of the initiator. The rollicking cries of "Amen," "Right on," "That's right" which characterize the on-going support of the audience soon obscure the distinction between the speaker and listeners, and again the motif of oneness is restored. The key idea of this part of the discussion is that it is meaningless to conceptualize an individual personality among African people. When such insular notions are used as the basis for intervening into the life processes of Black people, one condemns himself to failure from the outset because such notions are alien to the nature of African people.

Kinship Patterns

The concept of unity or rhythm also explains African kinship patterns. The tribe obtains its group definition based upon its unitary genesis. A man without lineage is a man without citizenship, without identity and without allies. Nearly all tribes have a mythological system which defines their derivation from one stock. This becomes a critical notion for social organization and social control, as well as reinforcing the notions of rhythmic socializing described above. The often described extended family among African people is relevant to this notion of oneness. Among the Dogon, for any individual, all uterine kin represent femininity and all paternal kin masculinity. "A man calls all women who are uterine kin, whatever their age, mother (*na*); he calls all adult men of his patrilineal kin father (*ba*)" (Forde, 1970).

Such kinship patterns serve to reinforce the notion of interdependence which is derived from the notion of a single unifying life force which flows through all people and all things. Again there are derivatives of this notion found in Black Americans' family and social patterns. The extensive number of "distant" relatives who are incorporated into the nuclear family often baffles cultural aliens: the inclusion of fourth and fifth cousins into the immediate family fold is not unusual, particularly in rural settings of the United States. The use of "para-kinship" ties as described by Robert Staples (1974) in which males and females who are "unrelated" to one another "go for" or have "play" brothers and sisters who have the same loyalties and responsibilities as "blood" relations. Such relationships even further extend the far-reaching kinship patterns. Particularly among Black Americans, the pattern of referring to each other as "Brother" or "Sister" serves to foster that notion of kinship among all people. Such kinship ties and titles serve to reinforce the flow among all members of the group.

With such a perspective, the Black family is not subject to the considerable criticism it has received from scholars who have chosen to view the Black family as an aberration of the model European family which like its cosmology is much more closed and insular. White social workers, psychologists and educators have found themselves utterly confused when they have attempted to list, define, or describe Black families utilizing the guidelines which have grown from their own experiences. Such extended kinship patterns are as practical as they are spiritually and philosophically significant. Such patterns of kinship serve to establish an implicit social control and morality which make external coercion unnecessary in observing laws of human relationships.

It is particularly interesting to note that as these indigenous kinship patterns have begun to erode, there has been a parallel increase in disharmonious relationships among Black groups. The extensive documentation of Black-on-Black crime is the clearest example of the consequence of the erosion of natural patterns of being. Especially in the alien environments of Western cities, disharmony has resulted from the disruption of flow and interconnectedness. Continual contact with alien people with their media images and the resulting imitation, housing patterns, and the considerable stress and excessive crowding of urban life all serve to erode socially facilitative kinship patterns. There are few opportunities to reaffirm these ties and, as a consequence, one observes a kind of perversion of these natural patterns. The brotherhood of one's age group mutates into delinquent gangs which must defend

their territory as well as their identity in response to urban challenges.

The loss of spiritual definitions of kinship in lieu of the considerable material emphasis of the environment further serves to erode these relationships. Such kinship patterns have been successfully reinstituted and utilized as a means of social cooperation and social control only in those contexts where the concept of a unifying spiritual force has been reactivated. Certainly the Nation of Islam serves as the most dramatic example of the facility of unity within a context of a shared vitalism. It is precisely because of the activation of this spiritual vitalism that such a spirit of fraternity persists within the Nation while it erodes rapidly in more superficial contexts such as the attempt to use Africanity as a sufficient cause for unity.

Male-Female Relationships

The energy behind the unifying vitalism is maintained by the perpetual alternation or vibration of opposites which reflects a principle of twin-ness which ideally should direct the proliferation of life. "Nothing in the universe can be generated without the cooperation of complementary principles or 'twins' whose archetype is the feminine-masculine couple" (Erny, 1973). The fundamental law of creation is the principle of twinship. Even at the level of the individual, man is conceived of as possessing "two souls of opposite sexes, one of which inhabits his body while the other dwells in the sky or water and links it to him," according to the Dogon (Forde, 1970). "Man and woman are each provided with twin souls, one of each sex" (Erny, 1973). The very cohesion of man with nature, man with himself and man with woman is regulated by the principle of twin-ness and the attraction of opposites. "Diverse elements are bound to each other by meaningful relationships. They make a closely woven fabric formed by threads of warp and woof" (Erny, 1973).

The distinction between male and female is the essence of their union. It is in this area that the most serious toll of the slavery experience was taken. The traditional distinction of the roles between the sexes was obscured by the manipulations of the slave master. The persistence of the basic slavery social order, which has sustained the Black man in a subservient and dependent role while fostering the domination of the woman, has prohibited the return to more natural patterns of role definition. The absence of real masculine prerogatives for the Black man has left his role obscure, which in turn has obscured the role of his complement. In addition to this, an identification with the unisexuality of the alien culture which surrounds us has further obscured the distinction between the sexes. The pejorative quality of sexism has made the contrast of femininity even more abhorrent to the Black woman. Consequently, the alternation of opposites which should be personified in male-female relations is disordered. The cohesion which is achieved by the attractive force of opposites is disjoined by the confusion of roles.

In traditional society, male and female roles are distinct. The separation and interdependence of the sexes is a basic theme of their social organization and ritual. In some societies there is also a marked segregation of the sexes with men and women taking their meals separately, dancing in separate groups and on festive occasions they do not mingle but enjoy themselves in separate groups. The primary necessity to have independence before interdependence among Black men and women has confounded those relationships in the United States from the outset. Most conflicts between the sexes emanate either from the economic and status pressures of living in a passionately materialist culture or from the inevitable jealousies of the dependent and insecure.

Again, we find among the members of the Nation of Islam a return to the cohesive balance of opposites in the relationships between men and women. Without being relegated to an inferior status (on the contrary, the Muslim woman becomes the recipient of considerable exaltation), the woman is able to accept a submissive role to the man. The man must submit to real justice and learn to dominate without exploitation as a consequence of the independence which has freed him from the shackles of dependent oppression. With an appreciation of the implicit opposition of forces within their roles, they are free to develop individually and collectively in a mutually supportive direction. It is remarkable that submission which is a preeminent value among most Black people of the world has attained such a negative connotation as a result of its association with slavery and its aftermaths. As a result of the support which the opposites give each other, there is an equilibrium which the individual being conserves within himself. The individual is able to stabilize the twin souls within himself through achievement of the external stabilization in the balanced male-female relationship. In traditional societies, sexual mutilations are seen symbolically as producing within the person a definite disequilibrium, dispossessing him of one part of himself and compelling him to seek outside the human community and especially outside marriage that which he lacks.

photo by Russell Lee/Farm Security Administration

Religion

It is impossible to speak accurately of Black personality without speaking of Black religion. Sterling Plump (1972) observes:

> By Black Religion I mean those ways in which Black people in Africa and later in America, conceptualized to explain the universe and man's relationship to it and to subsequently govern man's relationship to man.

Religion became the rituals for regulating the rhythms of life which flow from the force of oneness which permeates all things in the Black man's world. John Mbiti (1970) says:

> . . . traditional religions permeate all the departments of life, there is no formal distinction between the sacred and the secular, between the religious and non-religious, between the spiritual and the material areas of life. Wherever the African is, there is his religion.

Certainly, the most consistent characteristic of Black people throughout the world is their fervent belief and practice in some form of religion. Though the practice comes in many forms, it consistently seeks to reaffirm the notion of oneness within and between men as well as with the source of divine force which flows through all men. Religion becomes the essential regulator for the rhythms of life which are subject to the distortions of material relativity. Religion is a primary vehicle for reaffirming through shared experience and contact the communality which exists between the people. It is the vehicle which unifies all of the community into a kinship of oneness.

Even the avowed Black atheist finds himself caught up in a religious drama, if he maintains any form of in-depth contact with Black people. "A person cannot detach himself from the religion of his group, for to do so is to be severed from his roots, his foundation, his context of security, his kinships and the entire group of those who make him aware of his own existence" (Mbiti, 1970). Certainly the history of the Black man throughout the world and in all eras has always occurred within a religious context. From the building of the Pyramids, throughout the rich kingdoms of the Black King Solomon, all along the Nile, throughout the Asian world and into North America, the Black man and his off-spring have all been involved in a religious drama.

If consistency, as documented by aeons of Black History, is a source of data about binding universal laws, then we should look to invariables in that history for definitions of Black normality. From such a perspective it would seem that the most normal life style for a Black person is a religious life style. What is meant by a religious life style is one which takes account of the unify-

ing strand between men and throughout nature; it should serve to unify men into a bond of oneness which confirms self through participation with others; it should regulate the rhythm of life and provide rituals which restore order when disorder occurs; it should be a vehicle for the management of interpersonal harmony; it should provide methods for management and mastery of the material universe.

The suggestion here is that the spiritual definition of self, which characterizes the African, requires that a conceptualization of the personality of the African utilize a spiritual cosmology. The material definition of self which predominates Western Psychology, from Behaviorism to libido, is inappropriate and inaccurate as definitions of African people. The application of any of these theoretical structures to the mind of the Black man necessarily presents an incomplete and inaccurate view of this man with universal dimensions. The psychology of the Black personality can be no less than a cosmology which takes account of the oneness of the African mind, the rhythms of the African spirit and the restoration of order where there is a disruption of rhythm.

Though this may sound unduly abstract and impractically philosophical, it in fact corresponds with the existent realities of the African's world. A survey of the attitudes of the majority of African people anywhere in the world would reveal those attitudes to reflect a religious conceptualization of their lives and their world. If a function of the psychologist is to help describe normative reality, there is no behavior which is more normative than Black religion. It is in religion or through religion that we find the source of leadership, education, counseling, recreation, birth and death for African people. It would not be far-fetched to assert that Black Psychology is Black Religion.

Conclusion

Rhythm is the pulse of the unitary vitalism which flows through and permeates the African's mind and world. It is manifested in everything from Black movements to Black speech and in more or less subtle forms in all aspects of Black life. It is simultaneously the essence of the oneness of the African wherever he is and the motivation for unification which characterizes the proverbial search for the African spirit. When disorder occurs – be it manifested physically, mentally or spiritually – the disruption emanates from a disturbance in the rhythm which is the African's gauge of oneness. Order is restored when he attains a reestablishment of social equilibrium with his Brothers and Sisters. The kinship patterns of African people are geared toward a maintenance of the same harmonious balance between the person and his nuclear group. The striving to extend that balance leads to indefinite extensions of the nuclear group itself. Male and female relationships acquire for the separate partners the same harmonious equilibrium to the extent that the polar oppositional forces of maleness and femaleness are complementary in the actualization of the separate roles. Briefly, happiness in such relationships is directly proportional to the degree to which the man is fully man and the woman is unambivalently woman. Intrapersonal and interpersonal harmony is mediated by religion which facilitates the unique qualities of rhythm and unity which characterize the motivational strivings of the African mind.

The essential point of this discussion is that we must reach beyond the materialistic and physical definitions of mind which characterize Western Psychology, and we must seek to understand the African mind within the context of its distinct characteristics and strivings. The concept of a unifying force or vitalism which pervades all of nature and particularly finds its highest expression in man along with its manifestation through rhythms represents the departure of the African personologist from the Personality theorist coming from the perspective of Western Psychology.

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"FLUGGLE-BOOGLE PERCEPTIONS"

dedicated to: Brother Freddie Hubbard

Red double-knit stretched T-I-G-H-T
and temptingly at his groin

Subtle promises of tenderness in
his eyes

Soft, yet gruff, voice makes a dedication . . .
to me; a tribute to Soul City,

As he twiddles with the red cloth
napkin, matching in color only
his heart's depth.

He slowly wipes the sweat away
and gives the audience one of *those*
grins, not a smile, just one of those
sly, arrogant grins,

The tune: RED CLAY

"Oh, Wow!" I whisper my surprise
and embarrassment,

Excitement sweeps down my spine,
I feel all damp . . . everywhere.

To answer his eyes, I purposefully
and slowly, light my cigarette
with the candle

He knows how I feel.

As I look away from the scented
candle and at my husband's nervous
gestures,
I wait for a stolen glance — Hard accomplishment . . .

For we are all on stage, "The Saga
of Soul Stirrings," performed for
Soul-*less* honkies who contentedly
pay the exhorbant prices to "slum"
with the "Hip-Black-Jazz-Lovers."

He keeps the moment unspoiled
by blocking out the un-reality
of the FROG and NIGHTGOWN,

drawing from Miguel Covarrubias, Negro Drawings, A. Knopf, 1927

His lower lip is wet and slippery
as he begins:

Soft, melodic lines established,
he wails, and weeps and hollers

Then, he teases a little while
Fantastic Control!!! Calm before
the storm,
As he leads me to the ultimate,
the highest pitch of excitement,
and
At the climax, he, *NO* — his horn,
NO, THEY are groaning, and
moaning
with
me
Umph, Umph, Umph, Umph!!

Four ounces of spit has oozed from
that hot horn, as I strain to read
the inscription through the mist in
my eyes.

I hear strains of gospel toward the
end . . . Back to the soft, melodic
lines.

From these roots: Red Clay, yea, MUD
The beginning and the End for us, for
Black folk.

Then, Aries is the beginning, and He knows,
and like he's moving us—
ONWARD
And they say Jazz is irrelevant
cultural nationalism

He takes us from clay to church,
to the fields,
and
in the horizon . . .
Earth . . .
Red Clay

It's a long and winding Road—
From Reformism to Revolution
From Struggle to Liberation
From Awareness to Action
From Red Clay to Church
to urban ghetto
to dope
And back to Red Clay

He gives to me this heritage
trip *and*
Love vibrations, besides:
A moment of Bliss
A moment tinged with Bitterness . . .
(the honky waitress got on my nerves)
A moment full of wonder
A moment of what might have been
But, the moments pass, and we have
Both share it—

Timing is a Bitch; And, "That" time is over,
We move on . . .
Blow-on, Brother-Man-Aries,
Blow Pure and Sweet—

I need some happy memories 'cause
the Red Clay Roads are Hard,
much too Hard,
To travel
Alone

April 1973
— Makeda
The poet Makeda, Jocelyn Myers, is currently in Soul City, North Carolina.

Blk Music:

How It Does What It Does

by Ojeda Penn

In the bulk of literature that exists on Afro-American music, not nearly enough has been said about the process of our music – how it is produced to do what it does and mean what it means. This dearth is the result of some obvious factors. One, for a long time our music was not deemed worthy of serious investigation. Two, the ethnocentrism of European and Euro-American investigators necessarily limited the nature of questions raised about the music and the kind of information sought. Three, since Afro-American music is performance-oriented and occurs typically within the context of an oral tradition, an improvisatory tradition, extra-musical questions are key. Only recently (thanks to the Western cultural bias) have the fields of kinesics, kinesthetics and musical therapy developed enough to offer some of the vocabulary necessary to even articulate the voluminous extra-musical features of our music. There are still "dormant" or "latent" areas to be developed that, again, will provide us with the vocabulary for clear musical review.

But for the most part, it is sheer ignorance about the aesthetic that governs Afro-American musical systems that is so depressing. Recently white critic Henry Pleasants argued in *Serious Music and All that Jazz,* "The jazz musician improvises time designated chords just as Bach and Handel did, the *only* difference being in the convention of chord designation . . . . The jazz musician has his own ideas and his own convention of melodic variation and embellishment, but the *purpose and the procedure are identical* with those of the Baroque musician." (Pleasants 50, emphasis mine).

Pleasants, in the grip of Euro-American centrism, is blind to the fact that the jazz tradition is fundamentally based on performance and improvisation. The European musical tradition he refers to is fundamentally dependent on the written score and the composer's intention. Clearly the jazz musician and the Baroque musician do not have identical purpose and procedure. The jazz musician will duplicate the material. Replication is key for the European, the process of collective transformation is key for the Afro-American.

The Afro-American musical process – a spiritualized interaction/happening between musicians first and then audience – utilizes particular features that characterize any number of aspects of our culture besides music: call and response, repetition, polyrhythms and polymeters, metronome sense and collective improvisation. The readiness of the musician to engage in the process depends on what went down in practice and prior performances. He/she practices to develop instrumental prowess/knowledge and the listening faculty.

We "practice" with or without our instruments, with or without music being played, in order to develop a particular listening ability: the ability to hear sound on the inside, from the inside, as well as from the outside. This in turn sharpens the anticipatory faculty – the ability to know/hear/guess where your fellow musicians are going. It enables us to retrieve from the inside the storehouse of sounds, riffs, relationships, harmonic textures *and* it summons up things never heard before. Armstrong, Fatha Hines, Tatum *et al* have all talked about trying to reproduce some statement, some sound, some performance in the head. Frequently, they reached it and/or discovered other new things in the attempt.

Like when I hear Coltrane, I recognize that the limits, the possibilities are further away than I had thought. Not simply the limits of the sax, but the infinite possibilities yet untapped but hinted at by

where he's gone. When I listen to Kenny Baron, the changes, the ideas, the rhythmic attack and the accompanying choreography, so to speak, inform me of the gap that exists between where I am and where he is and the road that needs to be traveled. What he pushes the piano to do also hints at the open frontier up ahead of him. It's this that pushes one to master the instrument.

In addition to the development of the inner ear, one also develops kinesthetic response by internalizing the sounds and physical behaviour — which equals musical behaviour of other musicians. When I listen to Herbie Hancock's "Maiden Voyage," for example, I not only hear/absorb the harmonies, rhythms, colors, textures, etc., I also take it all into the muscle system. I see/feel/do the Hancock body movements. My hands play along. I hum along. I'm moved to interact with the feeling of it, the underlying assumptions that produced the music and the performance. I think this is what most of us do. When Freddie Hubbard takes his stance, which I "see" with my ear, it's inevitable that the body moves to mirror the cockiness in some way, to interpret the sensual buoyancy with the body.

I would suspect that most of us have the capacity to get totally involved with a performance by, say, Miles, Coltrane, Cedar Walton and so forth, while our involvement in a performance by Horowitz, Van Cliburn, Peter Duchin or Andre Previn is one-leveled, the experience thinner. It fails to trigger cultural flashbacks that can catch us up in a whole environment. Compare Gladys Knight's "The Way We Were" to the Streisand version, for example. Or recall the way the Coltrane-Elvin Jones dialogue in "Chim Chim Cheree" summons up the Baptist Church. Or the way kids will mimic character types while listening to the records. The Afro-American music process is one that engages the ear, the body, the memory, the experiences because it attempts to project a total living reality.

The cut "Maiden Voyage" will do to illustrate the previous point made about the characteristic features of the Afro-American music process: call and response, repetition, polyrhythms and polymeters, metronome sense and collective improvisation. The interplay between Hancock and Hubbard (when Hubbard solos), or Hancock and Tony Williams (when Herbie solos), recalls the call-response pattern of our sermons as well as our choral music, which is based on a prior knowledge/participation in that performance. Repetition — whose purpose in poetry, design and rhetoric, as well as music, is to emphasize, to increase tension — is observable in Hancock's accompaniment where the piano's response is a repetitive pattern. Its other purpose is to force the caller to resolve the tension of the repetition by either capping it or taking it off somewhere — the new call then becomes emphatic through contrast with the earlier call-response pattern. But it has another function. It allows the caller, who is engaged in improvisation, a moment to think of something else to play.

Throughout the cut we also hear overlapping call-response, the answer beginning before the last syllables of the caller's statement have ended. In

contrast to these two possibilities, we turn to "The All Seeing Eye" where Wayne Shorter calls and Hancock's response is oblique; that is, he goes off to the side or further ahead, lays out a new direction. Obviously the oblique pattern gives little room for pause, requires some daring, certainly intensive listening.

Polyrhythms and polymeters are dependent upon one's metronome sense, one's grasp of beat. The particular use of upbeats in Hancock's

opening statement of "Maiden Voyage" illustrates Hancock's as well as the group's metronome sense and "trains" the listening musician (always practicing) to develop his own. McCoy Tyner's "Saharah" is a lesson in polymetric expressions of 6/4, 4/4 and 2/4. The polyrhythms and polymeters exhibited in this cut harken back, of course, to the mother tradition – the African drummer. The use of polyrhythms allows the members of the group to create/resolve/abandon/increase tension and to shape and reshape the density of the musical texture.

Collective improvisation, which has been an implicit aspect of our discussion all along, is both the goal and the path of our music-making tradition. It is the essence of Afro-American performance. The interaction of the soloist and the group, the internal interaction within the group, the interaction of the group and the audience. As a technique, an ideal and an occasion, collective improvisation offers the participants the opportunity for self-identity through self-expression within the context of the group. Contrasting any Afro-American performance steeped in the African tradition of collectivism with the performance of Afro-American musicians in a European context would yeild more in terms of understanding how endemic collective improvisation is in our music. The music of Nathaniel Dett, William Dawson and William Grant Still, for example, which utilize so many European forms and approaches ("purposes and procedures" as Pleasants might say) do not result in the realization of collective improvisation and therefore do not feel familiar or conjure up collective memory images, despite their integration of such Afro-American features as melodies. They made a decision to incorporate their Afro-Americanness (themes anyway) within a European frame to make their mark. (As might be expected, given the European music tradition, they were primarily composers and secondarily performers.) They made a class decision. Parker, Coltrane, Tyner and numerous others who were trained in, or trained themselves in, the European classical tradition, opted for another route. Rather than subsume the Afro-American in the European, they simply dealt with European sources as some among many.

The attitude "I am going to express myself on this tune" is a prerequisite for the successful appropriation/transformation of someone else's material. Participation in a culture that practices collective improvisation in so many areas activates that attitude, that drive for self-expression, transformation, inventiveness.

A concept borrowed from another discipline offers, I think, an approach to understanding Afro-American musical performance: continual flexibility in circularity. Dr. Wade Nobles, in conjunction with Dr. Sharon Brown, devised the concept to describe the dynamic functioning within the Black family – the fluid, flexible, interchangeable roles and functions of family members, the movement of concentric circles. Children as mothers, fathers nurturing, mothers assuming functions such as taking children to football games usually associated with fathering – in other words, the ability of each member of the family to do what others are "expected" to do both in conjunction with others and in their absence. There are no hard lines separating role functions but rather these are characterized by fluid and spiraling circles. In much the same manner, the five characteristics (call-response, etc.) rarely exist in a "pure" state and have rigidly defined purposes. It's the flexibility of each, the ability to combine/compound, to separate and rejoin that is the key to understanding the roles and functions that these techniques play in the Afro-American music performance tradition. The meaning of each depends on its interplay with others. Repetition is not just repetition, it is rhythmic, antiphonal, metronomic and encourages collective improvisation.

One of the primary goals of Afro-American musical performance, then, is the integration of the individual into the collective, by providing him/her with the opportunity for self-expression and interaction. Process, then, is the key to our musical aesthetic.

Brother Ojeda, musician/composer/teacher, is a Ph.D. candidate at Emory University in American Studies, and is presently performing as pianist/percussionist in Life Force, an Atlanta-based group. He is also musician-in-residence at the Neighborhood Arts Center.

LOVE POEMS BE BOPPIN

who said love poems
had to be stilled
by some set rhythmic form . . .
love oughta be yelled about
love oughta boogie down in poems
the maker of music
oughta be love
love is walkin a mile
for a puff of yo love
that's M-m-m M-m-m good
love is the number one brand
that sticks to yo arms
and is higher than the highest
high-priced spread
that is good to the last drop
love is you
lettin my fingers do the walkin
through the pages of yo blkmind
and the soft, tender touch
of an ebony child
love is blkman/blkwoman
together in love love
is
love is one–ness
and homemade biscuits
on visiting day
and the first smile of the sun
and Jesus sayin
"hey, y'all, yah i'm Black!"
love is respect
for yo woman
and yo brotha's woman
and yo brotha's brotha's woman
love is the choc'late warmth
that melts in yo heart
not in yo hands
love poems be boppin
unchained and runnin free

–Sybil J. Dunbar
is a member of the Southern University Writers Workshop in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

A POEM FOR MY BABY BROTHER WHO HAS GONE AWAY TO SCHOOL AND IS ON HIS OWN FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HIS LIFE

Baby brother,
keep an eye
on your mind,
  OR ELSE
They'll hide it
from you.

– Karl Anderson

graphic by Lucious Hightower

TWO REVIEWS OF CHILDREN'S BOOKS

by Ama Saran

all us come

All Us Come . . .

These three words lifted from Sister Lucille Clifton's new work best describe three recommended books for children: *Children of the Dragon* by Terri Karl and Gail Dolgin (People's Press, 2680 21st St., San Francisco, Calif. 94116), *Crocodile and Hen* as retold by Joan M. Lexau (Harper & Row) and *All Us Come Cross the Water* by Sister Lucille Clifton (Holt, Rinehart & Winston). These books offer similar lessons in struggle, the battle of people against violent oppression.

In *Children of the Dragon,* Vietnam is disrupted and divided by imperialists, raped of its natural resources while its human resources are ground into the mud of the country's crater-filled rice fields. In response to these crimes, the children wage counter-wars against the imperialists.

Simply told, but nonetheless explicit, this is a well-written account of a Vietnamese boy's evacuation from the city of Hanoi to the country to avoid the bombings. It affords us a vital historical overview of Vietnam's continuing struggle for *doc lap* (independence) and *tu do* (freedom) from China, the Mongols, Japan, France and, of course, the United States.

The story is spun colorfully but believably because of the many varied and active roles played by the Vietnamese, especially the children, in every aspect of their struggle. Everyone is bent on the task of improving what seem overwhelmingly horrible conditions of poverty, poor health and nutrition, illiteracy and of ultimately conquering the invaders who seek to enslave their country culturally, economically and politically. All fronts of the struggle are laid open; the sexist battle is not forgotten. Women are highly visible with considerable mobility, and are found everywhere productively working at numerous tasks with many holding responsibilities.

Children of the Dragon moves us easily into this shared-struggle as we eat breakfast from a bowl of bomb fragments, work in the gardens and rice fields, raise fish in ponds created from bomb craters, repair dike walls, dig fox holes underneath the school desks and travel to school camouflaged with palm leaves.

Personalization of struggle is what we experience page after page. This is most profoundly illustrated by the people's intimate knowledge of their leadership: "Uncle Ho" (Ho Chi Minh) who danced with the villagers, his "family." He is "a poet with the spirit of a dragon" whose words we feel as acutely as Brother Kim's burns and who in true revolutionary spirit encourages his visitors to sing rather than weep. The tale of "The Great Yellow Turtle" further sensitizes us to the reality of this struggle. Easily understood, it reaffirms the people's confidence in their collective ability to drive out all who would seek to divide and conquer the Vietnamese.

Crocodile and Hen presents a less intense yet similar theme of triumphant peoplehood. Here, the struggle is to close the gap created by artificial differences between two animals, animals who like people hold their differences in front of them as shields to substantiate their antagonisms. A closer analysis of these contrasts serves to obliterate them. The objective reality of their common condition now looms before them as the real enemy to be conquered. They both have to eat; thus they both hunt food. Their struggle however moves from the horizontal (the quest to devour each other) to the creation of a supportive alliance that would assure the continued existence of both.

Crocodile and Hen is very simply told and colorfully illustrated. Its repetitive narrative makes it easy for young children to read and remember the lesson of a mutual struggle against a common enemy.

Lucille Clifton's *All Us Come Cross the Water* also offers a lesson in positive peoplehood. Part of the struggle here is to remove the blinders from adult eyes and open them up to a child's reality — one that embraces an attitude of "I like me as I am."

A young brother asserts himself to counteract his teacher's banking method of instruction which moves to dump or deposit into a student's head simplistic notions that afford no real answers to the questions raised. These notions simplistically state, "We are from a great heritage and you must be proud of that heritage," and the teaching avoids the essential explanations of our responsibility as recipients of a great heritage. It is exactly this kind of explanation that the little brother demands. Seeking answers from his big sister and

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Sister Saran, one of our finest young educators, teaches at the Martin Luther King Community School, an independent Black school in Atlanta.

father alike, he is ignored. But Big Mama grounds his heritage in actual experiences of which she is an integral part. It is Big Mama who helps him fully appreciate his ability to search out a response to her question, "Who are you, boy?"

Tweezer, another friend, helps to develop further this brother's own answers to his questions of identity. With this support, he correctly mounts a successful campaign against his teacher's counter-productive educational methods. He moves off renamed and revitalized through his understanding of the vital linkages between all who come cross the water. His assertions assume a collective form as his friends embrace his pronouncement, "My name is Ujamaa and that means Unity and that's where I'm from."

Colorfully presented through the gifted artistry of Brother John Steptoe this book is too lengthy for most pre-schoolers and lower level primary children, but older children can move through it with ease.

Children of the Dragon, Crocodile and Hen and *All Us Come Cross the Water* are inextricably bound together through their common themes of struggling people defining their destinies. Themes of positive peoplehood asserting itself on every front enable them to collectively raise the slogan spread over all Vietnam, "Let Us Raise Our Heads."

graphic by Lucious Hightower

favorite stories

Stevie, story and illustrations by John Steptoe. Harper & Row, 1969. 21 pages.

Stevie is a favorite story of young children. Bobby's cornflakes get soggy as he reminisces about the time when little Stevie came to live with his family. Stevie's mother worked all week, so Bobby's family took Stevie in. Bobby recalls being aggravated by Stevie's imposition because Stevie breaks up his toys, stands on his bed with

dirty feet, follows him around, and, in Bobby's words, is just a "stupid and spoiled crybaby." One day, though, Stevie and his parents move away. Only then does Bobby realize that he and Stevie did have some good times, and Bobby concludes that Stevie "was a nice little guy . . . kinda like a little brother."

Brother Steptoe does a superb job of showing a meaningful relationship between two children. Although Bobby, who tells the story, did not totally appreciate the friendship that he and Stevie had at the time of their first acquaintance, in retrospect, he sees the meaningfulness of Stevie's visit.

The story is written in simple and realistic language. The story runs smoothly and continuously through Bobby's recollections and judgements of the events surrounding Stevie's visit. A reader/listener can easily relate to Bobby's true feelings due largely to Steptoe's sensitive use of young people's speech. In addition, Steptoe, who also illustrated **Stevie**, uses colorful and arresting paintings which suggest realistic images and settings (rather than photographic statements) that children can readily understand.

Overall, a high recommendation goes to **Stevie**. Its theme lends itself to helping children deal with similar conflicts that they may have, in terms of realizing what is good in a situation as opposed to seeing only what they feel is unpleasant. The book is useful then both because of its naturalness in language and behavior and because, like all Steptoe's work (**Uptown, Train Ride**), it "legitimizes" attitudes and feelings that are real but rarely discussed in traditional American literature for children.

na-ni, story and pictures by Alexis Deveaux. Harper & Row, 1973. 40 pages.

na-ni elicits a great deal of emotional response from the reader/listener. Na-ni is waiting on the curb in front of her family's New York apartment for the mailman to bring her mother's welfare check. Na-ni's mother has promised her a bike from the money, and Na-ni plans to fly away into the sky on it. Na-ni and her friend Lollipop watch and wait, and finally the mailman comes. Lollipop watches while Na-ni calls her mother to let her know that the check has arrived—and while a strange, lean man picks the mailbox lock and takes the checks. Na-ni concludes from the experience that "my bike is gone," and she wonders, "don't that man know I am his sister he steal from?"

The themes of excited anticipation and heartbreaking disappointment are explored by Alexis Deveaux in an unusual fashion. The story, although real to many people, has not previously been treated in such a fashion for children. Ms. Deveaux adds an outstanding dimension to the story through her drawings which are simplistic, yet daringly exaggerated. People have necks and heads, seldom any other parts. Buildings are disproportionate and unrealistically portrayed. But all drawings are recognizable, even to young people. Although some particulars of the story may not be viewed as "universal," the themes of anticipation and disappointment, especially as experienced by children, are.

The way in which language is used in **na-ni** leads to some slight confusion, but overall the book receives a high recommendation. Its unique plot gives children a new way in which to relate to an old theme, and its illustrations give children forms closely resembling their own drawings, making interpretations from the pictures relatively easy. They can gain some insight into their own anxieties and disappointments. Because Ms. Deveaux ends the story on a note of despair, the story will probably provoke inquiry and discussion on the part of young readers and listeners who tend to identify with the main character.

I Want To Be . . ., by Dexter and Patricia Oliver. Third World Press, 1974. 56 pages.

I Want To Be . . . is an alphabet book which is much more than an alphabet book. It is an alphabet book, a career book, a beautiful guide book. It describes in Black images 26 careers one can pursue, from architect to hydrologist to plumber to kinesiologist. It tells what the people would do, how work in the area would be useful to Black people, and it stresses the importance of present learning in order to be good at whatever career is chosen. Dexter Oliver adds a fantastic dimension with excellent black and white photographs of young Black people working in the area being examined.

The book, because of its style and type, has no plot. It is, though, highly recommended for Black children of all ages. It talks about unusual as well as familiar careers; it can be used as an aid to teaching the alphabet and/or reading; it continually emphasizes the importance of preparation and education. Further, it has an ethical viewpoint in that it defines work not in terms of money or status, but in terms of service to Black people.

Sister Wright is the communication teacher at the Martin Luther King Community School.

graphic by Lucious Hightower

images:us

The Following Poems Are From **Images: Us,** A Student Publication of Frederick Douglass High School in Atlanta, Georgia.

CONTAGION

i had for you
something i thought
was love

maybe it was

or

it could have been
physical attraction

(you know there's a lot of that
going around these days)

— Uhuru Ra

TRANSITION

i got an afro
but i remember when
i didn't have it

and i remember when
i had to put
Vaseline Petroleum Jelly
in my hair to keep it
as straight as a white lady's

and i remember back when
mama would straighten
me and my sister's hair
every Saturday night
then we'd go take a bath

and every time she'd send
us each to the tub with a warning
Don't you let that hair get wet
cause if you do, you're goin
to church the way it turns out

but that ain't so now
cause i got an afro

— Uhuru Ra

AND DEM DUDES

and dem dudes
on de cona
hang on de cona
sayin'

dey is
uptight, outasight
what's happening now
with de badest
rap dis side
of de Mason Dixon

and don't know what's happenin'
after their high

but dey still
jest go on sayin'
dey don't need
no leaders
'cause dey knows
where dey goin'

cause dey be flying
straight up
and ain't nowhere else to go
but
d
o
w
n

— Uhuru Ra

9/9/73

Now
You keep sayin'
"You holdin' up the struggle"
But You don't understand
That junkie, that wino — they all like they are
cause nobody gives a damn
You don't want to care or help them
You want somebody else to do it
You don't want the struggle to come so's they can get straight
But you want them to get straight so's the struggle will come
And then what?

— Jacqueline Barkley

She said
'Nigger'
was a controversial word
But
'Nigger'
ain't the controversy
It's
Niggers

— Jacqueline Barkley

and black children must go to school
because we need black knowledge
to survive
to love
and to live

black children must do more than learn
reading and writing and 'rithmetic
black children must learn to question
not to passively accept
black children must learn to analyze
to understand

black children must be educated
to govern
to love
to make peace
and to find freedom

and black children
must be BLACK children
because black IS beautiful
and black children
must be BLACK children
because black IS beautiful

— Jacqueline Barkley

ONE MORE DAY TILL THE REVOLUTION

I saw a young Black man
on the bus
The future was (is) in his face and hands
Our lives depended on him and others like him
He promised a beautiful liberated future
Until
He took out a pack of KOOL's
(the great menthol smoke)
Later
He will progress to pot
Then to coke
And then to hashish . . .
And the revolution will be put off
another day.

— Jacqueline Barkley

SEEPAGE

So much is lost between
the thought and the word—
Humiliating frustration to one,
but quite relieving
To my articulate adversary.

— W. O. McClendon

A STATE OF BLACKNESS

My freedom is within me and my people.
Hope is what keeps me pushing with the struggle.
Pride is what won't let me give up.
Being Black lets me know that only the strong survive.
Freedom is the state in which I want to live.
Hoping won't make this true, but struggling will.
Pride is a very powerful force; it keeps me going.
Being Black is Beautiful. And Black is what
I want to be.

— Robin Love

ME

That's me over there hiding behind
That big oak tree because I'm ashamed.
That's me there, running from what's
Really part of me.

That's me too. I'm looking for my
Future on the wrong road.
That's me again! I'm laughing because
I realized how stupid I was to
Be ashamed of what I really am.

This is me now full of pride, dignity and hope.
I've made it home.

— Elandis Willis

AND OUT OF DESPERATION

And out of desperation
we compose poems that will be read
we sing songs that will be heard
we love because it's so hard to do
we search for beauty because it's so hard
to find
we try to understand
when it's not hard to do
if you really try
but trying is the job

And out of feeling secure
we talk about what the people do
when the people is us

And out of desperation
we say things that mean so much
and yet nothing

And I write this poem
saying much of anything
and little of nothing.

— Aliya Rashida

graphic by Richard Powell

BEING ME IS A GAS

after mama died
daddy sent me and my brother to north carolina
to live with people he never even met
just cause he wanted to hurt my aunts, i think
but he hurt me and my brother too.

our aunts loved us more
cause they got on a train
and came all the way to north carolina
from pennsylvania
and took us back.

aunt marcie is our mama now
can't remember much about my real one
remember being taken to her room
to say goodbye
remember the good feel of her
remember girl cousin bobby jumping up
and down and screaming in her grief
remember crying and everyone thinking
my mother's death had upset me.
wasn't that
the measles had just got holt to me.

aunt clarissa was giving me and my brother a bath
together and, as usual, we was acting up

so she spanked us.

me . . . i hollared for my grandma
and she came running faster than a speeding bullet
up all 20 of those stairs, through the bathroom door
grabbed my aunt in the collar
pushed her up against the wall
and warned her
don't you be whupping my grandchildren.

aunt clarissa still whups us when we're bad
but now she makes sure the door is locked first.

we have an after hour place in our house; downstairs
we sell liquor, moonshine, beer and rooms.
sometimes i tiptoe down the back stairs and
watch the grown folks get drunk.

aunt marcie and aunt clarissa are always in control
they break up the fights and make anybody leave
who gets rowdy or cusses in front of us children.

graphic by Lucious Hightower

miss emma was sitting on the couch, drunk as usual,
and she peed on herself.

sister (she's not blood kin, that's just her name)
is drunk too and she's messing with her boyfriend, bemo.

he's been drinking some but not too much and is pleading
with her to leave him alone.

but she's hard-headed and as usual, drunk or sober
she don't listen.

so bemo knocked her down all 20 of those steps and
then ran down and kicked her in the stomach.

i'm learning lots of things even though i'm only
seven years old. i've learned that when i grow
up i'm not going to drink
or mess with people just to be messing
or have a boy friend that knocks me down
and kicks me, f o r a n y r e a s o n .

aunt clarissa slapped me today
cause i sassed her
but she apologized later
cause she said she had no
right to do that when she was drinking
but
she warned me
i'll slap you again
if you sass me again.

i accepted her apology
and her warning.

my brother and i fight all the time,
cause aunt marcie made me clean up his room,
cause he wears my white socks black,
cause he tries to kiss me and hug me
and
cause he gets on my nerves.

aunt marcie used to try and find out who
started the fight but it happens so
often, now she just whips both of us
with no questions asked.

my brother tries to run, talks back,
grabs the switch, pleads, i ain't gon'
do it no more aunt marcie, i ain't
gon' do it no more.

sometimes he refuses to cry, and when
you refuse to cry, grown-ups think that's
as bad as mumbling under your breath,
sucking your teeth, or talking back,
or all of them things. so when that happens
aunt marcie just keeps on with the switch til
he does cry.

his beatings take a long time.

me . . . i cry quick.

i'm really lucky to have almost all my aunts
cause i've learned so much from them

when i get grown i want to have big pretty
bowlegs like aunt clarissa
side burns that come down the cheeks like aunt julia's
a tiny moustache like aunt mary
and a pretty face like aunt clidie's
cause her face gets prettier every year

and i want to have good common sense like
all of them.

grandma has this big ugly corn on her little toe
and sometimes she can't hardly walk.

other times she wears men's shoes with
the toe cut out.

today she decided she was gonna fix that ole toe
she pulled a horsehair from the sofa cushion
tied it around that toe and every day she tightened
it just a little bit til' that ole toe came off

and her foot didn't even bleed.

now she keeps that ole toe in a jar of formaldahyde
but i don't like to look at it.

i don't like no parts of my grandma in a bottle.

— *Fay D. Bellamy*
has been in the South since early SNCC days and known primarily for her prison rights work. "Being Me" is her first crack at writing.

RAPE

Breast nourish the
grass with innocence.
her Self cries out in
water
knowing she has fulfilled
"Duty"
Yet, not wanting to be touched by
him.

Wet hair dries on
stones,
lips curse
  Death,
    her body,
      her Mind . . .

Did father say love
goes w/ this,
    Or did he say
Lust . . . . . ?

The hand covering her
  mouth—

    Warriors raped their enemy's "Property."

She made him bleed—

    Meant for only "One."

"I'll kill you if—"

    he kills her slowly,
    he kills her silently . . .

Snake lies next to her
acknowledging their familiarity.

    "They say we are friends . . ."
it coils in darkness,
she crawls in light.

    "Mama, you used to tell me
      free birds fly South,
      but prized birds are caged."

—Karen Mitchell,
a sophomore at Stephens College in Missouri, grew up in Holly Springs, Mississippi.

CLARA BELL

—Karen Mitchell

run, run,
goes Clara Bell
with her laughter
in accordance with my own.
quick, quick, yes her mind is not at home.

cry, cry
goes Clara Bell
weeping, looking for sympathy,
cries like a spirit moans.
sad, sad, but her mind is not at home.

play, play
goes Clara Bell
laughing with what she says
by putting it into a lighter tone.
funny, funny, but her mind is not at home.

sleep, sleep
goes Clara Bell
screams a many at times,
can't leave her here alone.
dreams, dreams, but her mind is not at home.

sing, sing
goes Clara Bell
with a different melody
this one called "Joan."
sweet, sweet, but her mind is not at home.

eat, eat
goes Clara Bell
smacking her blazing red lips
then throwing away the bones.
delicious, delicious, but her mind is not at home.

hear, hear
goes Clara Bell
listening to the mocking bird's
songs she has always known.
sounds, sounds, but her mind is not at home.

lost, lost
goes Clara Bell
hidden in this large world
where has Clara Bell gone?
look, look, but her mind is not at home.

crazy, crazy
is my Clara Bell.
where has her mind gone?
I just don't know.
poor, poor Clara Bell, her mind is not at home.

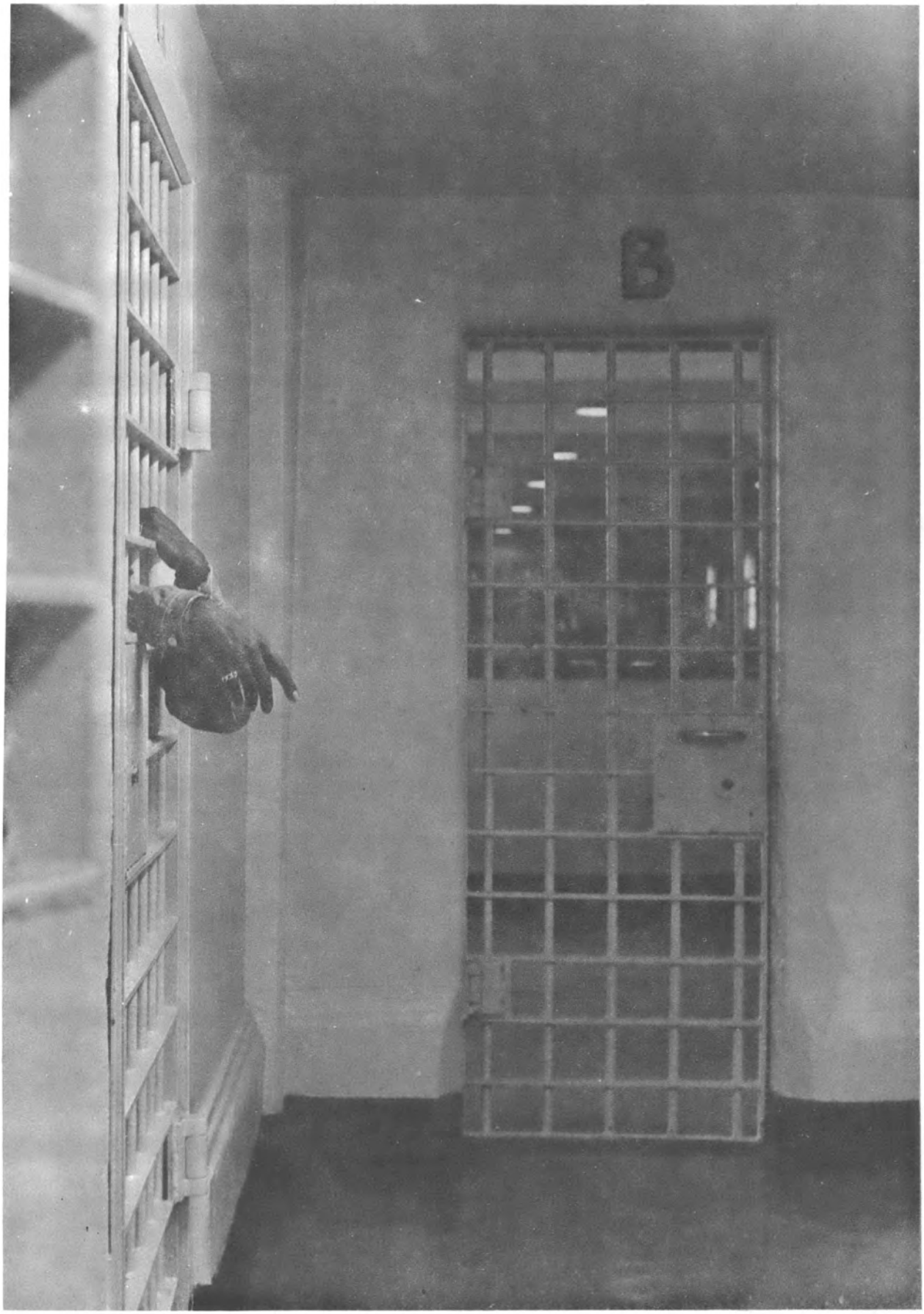


photo by Edmund Marshall

DREAMS

Some men dream of climbing mountains
but I dream of stepping up from the pit of hunger and being full
cause I believe that if I am full
I can climb a mountain

Some men dream of conquering outer space
but I dream of breaking these chains of materialistic desires
for I believe that if these chains are broken
my thoughts will elevate me to the top of the cosmos and beyond

Some men dream of finding the end of the rainbow
but I dream of someday looking up and just seeing the rainbow
for I believe that should I get a glimpse of the rainbow
I'll be already halfway there

Some men dream of getting rich
but I dream of getting enough money
to buy some matches
to set fire to expensive coattails

—*J. Floyd*
is a brother behind the
walls in Nashville, Tennessee.

The following excerpt is the opening section of Free The Land *by Brother Imari Abubakari Obadele, I, president of the provisional government of the Republic of New Africa. This manuscript, forwarded to the editors by Ken Lawrence of the Southern Conference Educational Fund, chronicles the events in Jackson, Mississippi in 1971 that led to the trials of the Republic of New Africa 11 and the RNA's continuing struggle to establish an independent black nation in the Five States of the Deep South (Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina). The manuscript was written after the FBI-police attack on RNA headquarters in Jackson, while Brother Imari was imprisoned awaiting trial. Mr. Lawrence is currently seeking a publisher to make the book available in its entirety.*

Our Brothers Were In Custody .... Again!

by Imari Abubakari Obadele, I

In my heart i knew this moment would come. I did not know how. I did not know when. I did not know which of our valiant, mostly young black brothers would be involved. I only knew that one day, some day soon, We would be face to face with armed white violence in Mississippi. And now it had happened.

I.

I was in New York when the word came. It was 1971, an ice-drizzly cold March night—at least in New York it was ice-drizzly cold. I had flown in from the Republic of New Africa's headquarters in green and sunny New Orleans, and now, accompanied by a half-dozen or so of the New York New Africans, i stood in a modest-sized conference room in one of the stolid, yawning, late-nineteenth century buildings on the Columbia University campus, addressing a small gathering of the black student union. In response to an urgent request from Brother Sekou—himself an undergraduate at City College and the chief officer, the Consul, for the Republic, or RNA, in New York—the black students at Columbia had quickly put together this speaking engagement as a means of channeling some funds into our treasury in these last days before our historic Land Celebration in Mississippi.

Now, someone came in and apologetically interrupted me: i was wanted on the telephone; yes, he believed it was important and i should take it myself. We had reached the point of questions and answers—there were always many questions as i moved about the United States, trying to make blacks realize that it really was possible for us to turn our provisional government into a *de jure* government, for us to free Five States of the Deep South as an independent black nation. I turned the questioning over to Sekou and went to the phone.

It was New Orleans. They had received word that our house in Bolton, a small town in the country outside of Jackson, Mississippi, had been raided by sheriff's deputies, the Highway Patrol and the FBI. There appeared to have been no shooting, but our brothers were in custody and all our arms and equipment were seized. In addition, two of our best men from Boston, arriving in Jackson with a station wagon full of communications equipment and guns, had been surrounded suddenly at a stoplight and arrested. There were no other details.

I put down the phone. I had taken the call in a booth. Beyond the glass Brother Geral, with his ubiquitous kit bag thrown over one shoulder, and several brothers on presidential security waited. I

Imari Abubakari Obadele, I

photos by Tom Coffin

stepped out into the large, rather dimly lit reception area where We had come. There were brown leather chairs scattered throughout the expanse on the edge of which We stood, an occasional student passing through to the outside doors on our right, bundling up against the wet driving cold, and an old white uniformed security guard who hovered nervously nearby, a sign of the times, product of the days of student riots and building seizures and black demands that no one was certain were really over. Behind us somewhere, on the other side of a tall and stolid door, Sekou dealt with the Eight Strategic Elements Necessary for the Establishment of an Independent Black Nation in America.

I told Geral what i had learned. He asked me if i knew what it meant. I said, not exactly. That was not wholly true. I did not know, as Geral's cool security-conscious mind sought to learn, whether the arrest of Hakim and Hassam in Jackson in the station wagon meant an informer was active in the Boston inner circle, whether the raid on the Bolton house was the enemy's initial move to sweep up our manpower and make good their boast that there would be no Land Celebration in Mississippi. But i did know what it meant. It was possible—given the failures of faith among our leadership that a year earlier had almost destroyed the Movement and ended by catapulting me into the Presidency—that at that moment, for that moment, i was the only one who did know.

I thought: so it has begun; it begins now. I knew what it meant. The contest was open again. Ninety-six years ago whites in Mississippi had crushed black power with a mighty upsurge of white violence in the months leading up to the state elections in November, 1875. We had not been prepared for their fury or their organization, and they had buried us.

We had had guns, some of us, a few guns. But perhaps We had depended too much on the Union Army, which Ulysses Grant, then U.S. President, permitted to look the other way. And Adelbert Ames, a white man whom the black poor in Mississippi had made governor, failed of resolve and disbanded the state militia, whose magnificent black troops under black State Senator Charles Caldwell had, for the short space they rode the Delta, made the white gunmen cower. So they assassinated Charles Caldwell, and they rode through Mississippi assassinating others: taking out five black men here, a dozen there, thirty at one place—coldly murdering the black leadership of whole towns, sending brave but out-gunned black men to hide and sleep in the woods and, finally, to leave the state, or remaining, make peace without honor. They buried us: Reconstruction's black mayors and sheriffs and supervisors and state representatives and senators and U.S. Congressmen and, yes, black U.S. Senators.

People like Reverend George Lee, murdered in 1954 in Belzoni, and Medgar Evers, murdered in 1963 in Jackson, and Martin Luther King and the young people of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, and Fannie Lou Hamer and Lawrence Guyot and Aaron Henry of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party tried to breathe life back into our dry bones; and, indeed, they had succeeded in connecting thigh bone to knee bone and had gotten us nearly upright on our feet. Still, there had been—and was—no resurrection. Mississippi violence and the threat of violence yet poisoned the breath of life for blacks. And it seemed clear there could be no resurrection, except by some fresh sacrifice of blood—and not black blood—to atone for the past, to free our black vitals from the parasitic tendrils of today's white oppressor.

I knew what it meant: it had begun, a new war in America, their campaign to check our new bid for black power.

We were, of course, very calm, Geral and i, like distance runners before a championship race across uncertain country, like the best of professional boxers. Calm but keyed inside. Expectant. Certain yet uncertain. Aware that time had finally carried Us to the doorstep of this contest of which We had dreamed, for which We had planned, and now there would be no more delays, no chance—even if We had wanted it, and We did not want it—of turning back.

We walked toward Sekou's conference room. I said to Geral: "I have to get back to Mississippi."

II.

I was to spend the night at the lovely, spacious Queens apartment of Sister Iyalua Akinwole. A school teacher, whose slave name had been Connie Hicks, Iyalua was about 38, a couple of years younger than i. Articulate and thoroughly committed to the struggle, Iyalua was fair-skinned but well built and cared for—a very good looking woman. She was also in the final stage of divorce and had found abiding love the second time around with Herman Ferguson, Adekouya Akinwole, a respected Brooklyn assistant school principal who had stood trial as a leader of the underground Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM). They were my friends, though We had known one another only since the Oceanhill-Brownsville school confrontation in Brooklyn in the fall of 1968 and though Herman retained a

long cautionary suspicion of what he believed to be the petit bourgeois inclinations of my brother Milton, Brother Gaidi, and myself.

But Herman was not in Queens now. He and Brother Umar Sharrief, a brilliant revolutionary youth whose slave name was Arthur Harris, had been convicted of conspiracy and when, appeals having failed, they were ordered to jail in late 1970, they apparently left the country. Iyalua lived with her fifteen year-old daughter, Nilaja, and Nilaja's friend and schoolmate, Bolanile Akinwole. Both of them, but especially Bolanile, were the leading edge of that precious generation of New African youth coming up: strong, dedicated, and without any hang-ups about their blackness or the necessity for all black people to work in a disciplined, unified fashion, without cease, for black liberation.

My first order of business at the apartment was to get more information on what had happened in Mississippi and put into motion those legal measures appropriate to the protection of the seized brothers. While i did this Iyalua worked on her other phone to get me air-scheduled out and to reach Brother Alajo Adegbalola, an RNA Vice President and our Defense Minister, in Boston. It was about ten p.m.

I found that William Miller, the Jackson attorney who had begun to do RNA work, was out of town at his office in the Delta. The best i could do was to leave word for attorneys R. Jess Brown and Jack Young, both veteran civil rights lawyers, to check the brothers at the jail and get back to me. There was, of course, no answer at either office; i reached their homes. But i could garner no new information on the brothers.

Meanwhile, Iyalua had been unable to schedule me out that night because of the lateness. I talked with Alajo; it was agreed We would coordinate our movement into Mississippi the next day, meeting at the Atlanta airport and flying together to Jackson. Alajo was a tough-minded veteran of World War II, having served with the crack black Ninety-Ninth Pursuit Squadron. In Boston he worked with OIC, a nationwide non-profit group set up by Reverend Leon Sullivan of Philadelphia to train blacks for jobs in such fields as business machines and electronics. Alajo, however, was deeply involved in the radical work of the Roxbury community. In addition to his RNA offices, he was a founding officer of the Boston Black United Front, and he hosted two popular radio shows, on which he was as well known by his slave name, Leroy Boston, as by his free name. Above all, Alajo constantly thought of the defense needs of our nation, was personally fearless, and ready for any necessary sacrifice. It was eminently wise, i felt, although annoyed at the delay, that We should travel South together.

After all, We did not really know what awaited us, and there was some reason to fear the worse. In the past four years, beginning even before the official founding of the RNA Provisional Government by convention and declaration in Detroit on March 31, 1968, i had personally seen to the erection of a legal construct designed to protect our operations and our personnel. It had begun with the publication of an essay, a slim book called *War In America*. Essentially what We did was this. We drew a line between underground work and overground work. We pointed out that overground work was legal under the oppressor's own law and that those engaged in overground work – that is, the work of the RNA Provisional Government – could not also engage in underground work. Though We acknowledged that our independence could not be won without a strong, intelligent underground army, it was necessary that the Provisional Government renounce any direction or control or, even, knowledge of the underground army. In this way We sought to sever the visible operations of the Movement, the officers and workers of the Provisional Government, from any connection of a legally actionable conspiratorial nature with the underground. Brother Gaidi, an eminent lawyer, had laid out these guidelines.

Next we moved to assure that our acts and work did in fact fall within the protection of U.S. and international law. A trained overground military force, an army, was the toughest problem. Given black folks' history in the South, given the way whites had organized into rifle companies aligned with the Democratic Party and under such innocuous banners as "The First Baptist Church Sewing Circle" and had by open violence crushed Reconstruction's black power not only in Mississippi but across the old Confederacy, We certainly could not dream of winning and holding the Five States of the Deep South without a strong overground army created before independence.

The answer was simpler in theory than in practice. First it was necessary to assure that the methods of the overground army neither undertook "to achieve a legal goal by illegal means," nor "to achieve an illegal goal by legal means." We, therefore, stated our goal of independence for the Five States in terms of "self-determination" for the people on the land and our method as "the peaceful organization of a plebiscite," a vote of the people, in order to get an expression of the people's self-determined will. Our prediction, of course, is that when the plebiscite is held, the people of the Five States will freely

vote for New African citizenship rather than United States citizenship, thereby passing sovereignty over the land from the government of the United States to the government of the Republic of New Africa.

The role of the RNA army, therefore, was and is a defensive one, to fend off unlawful attacks of whites trying to halt preparations for the plebiscite. Further, the army would not be called an army but the New African Security Force. This was a change from the more colorful nomenclature of "the Black Legion," which had been urged upon us by Brother Alajo after We had received a bad scare during the RNA constitutional crisis in 1969. At that time evidence mounted that a number of officers, including Mweusi Chui of Dayton, then Minister of Defense and commander of the Black Legion, had incredibly planned a *coup d'etat,* forgetting their subordination to civilian control. It was more than comic opera. The civilian structure survived the test, and i was elected President of the Third Provisional Government, but it was clear to us that if officers of a semi-autonomous military would attempt a coup at a moment when the nation held sovereignty over not one single inch of land, We could be in for real trouble once there was independence.

Thus, Alajo surfaced the concept of the People's Army, re-submerging the military back into the people, so that, although some citizens would have defense work as their primary mission, all citizens would technically be New African Security Forcemen and have some military training. There would be no military elitism and no question of civilian control.

Through all these steps, then, We had sought to surround our work and our personnel with the protections of U.S. and international law. We also taught, as cardinal to these protections, that black persons, as the descendants of kidnapped persons defrauded and held in America against their will, are on a different footing than any other aliens on these shores. When our ancestors were freed from slavery under American law, they were never asked what they wanted to do – whether become U.S. citizens, go back to Africa, go to another country, or set up an independent nation of our own on land in the Deep South which, over generations, had become our traditional home. We have never been asked. Thus, the plebiscite is an appropriate remedy for America's failure to ask our consent in the past. And this argument draws around us not only the protections of international law, not only the protections of the First Amendment – freedom of speech and the right to petition – but the protection of the Emancipation Proclamation, a legally important but neglected document, and the Thirteenth Amendment.

All this being said, however, We knew that legal correctness has never been sufficient to protect black people in America at any time. We knew that illegal arrest and prosecution and fraudulent imprisonment are not just acts involving the law; they are political acts. Murder, whether by lawmen or civilians, when used to destroy a cadre or assassinate leaders, is not simply an act of law but a political act. And political acts are often – always, when they involve murder – irreversible in their results.

Thus, a U.S. Senate Committee empowered to investigate the Mississippi elections of 1875 documented and condemned the murder and terror which delivered the Mississippi state government to white Democrats. The Committee went so far as to find that the consequent Mississippi state legislature was an illegal government and not entitled to recognition by the executive branch of the U.S. government. That was their official finding. But the illegal white Mississippi government, in power by fraud and violence, stayed in power as the *de facto* government, and its present lineal descendant – quite as illegal and quite as much the result of fraud and violence – remains in power today. With more than one-third of the population in Mississippi still black and at least twenty-five of the state's eighty-two counties counting large black majorities, Mississippi had but one black in the state legislature in 1971, Representative Robert Clark of Holmes and Humphreys Counties.

The point is that a determined political act, however wrong or illegal, can only be arrested by an equally determined and courageous judiciary and an equally determined and courageous executive. We knew that throughout the 350 years of black history in America, we have rarely had such combinations to work for black people. We knew it. The whites in Mississippi knew it. And so when they were not minded, the whites in Mississippi moved with swift and ugly political acts – fraudulent imprisonments, unlawful assaults, arson, murder – and then they stood the weight. Sometimes the weight was heavy, as when they killed fourteen-year-old Emmett Lewis Till and blacks and whites in America cried out in revulsion. They had to bring Emmett's killers to trial, but they stood the weight because they knew there was not a judiciary in America and not an executive – though the U.S. President was a white hero named Dwight David Eisenhower – determined enough or courageous enough to try to reverse the deadening results (increased black terror) of

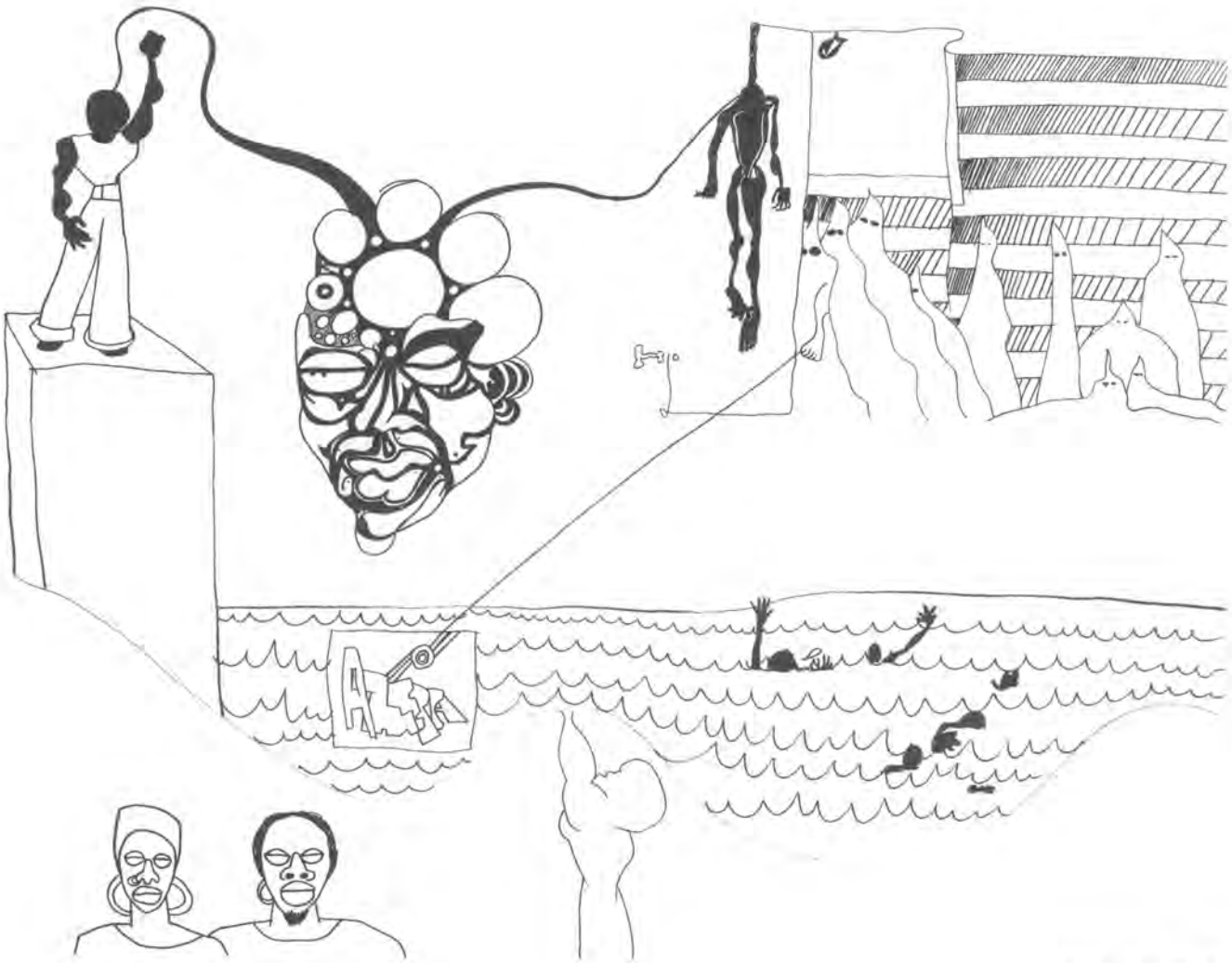
their base political act. They let the killers go scot free.

Usually the weight isn't much. They killed Lamar Smith on the courthouse lawn in Brookhaven in 1955 and his three murderers were not indicted. A white state representative, E.E. Hurst, shot Herbert Lee to death in 1961, and Hurst saw neither indictment nor trial. Both Smith and Lee were prominent men and worked for black voting rights. Medgar Evers, the incredibly courageous and spiritually lifting field secretary for the NAACP, was assassinated in his driveway by rifle fire in June, 1963, and the man who went to trial for the murder, Byron de la Beckwith, marked by all the evidence of guilt except a confession, was freed by a jury. Twice.

And now, barely nine months before this arrest of our brothers in Jackson, riot-equipped officers, all white, of the Mississippi Highway Patrol and the Jackson Police Department had lined up across from the high-rise girls' dormitory at Jackson State College, in this same city, and wantonly opened fire on summer-gathered students. They killed two students, both male, and wounded several others, male and female. But they stood the weight. There was a national outcry, and even Massachusetts Senator Edward Brooke, the only black now in the U.S. Senate, came to the campus. But nobody was indicted.

Thus, as i flew the cool, smooth Delta jet down from New York to meet Alajo in the Atlanta airport that night, i did not know, as Alajo could not know, what awaited us. If they were to stop the independence movement, i knew, sooner was better than later; with time – understanding that survival against them by itself meant a certain success – We could only grow stronger. I knew the value to them of delay, of assassination for this purpose. They had engineered the death of Malcolm X in February 1965 and made him a black national hero. But they had successfully delayed the Movement: three years passed before, in March 1968, we founded the RNA Provisional Government, at last carrying out what i understood to be the Malcolm X Doctrine. Often, flying down to Mississippi, i would have the feeling of flying into the valley of death. There was never any fear, however; for, though i would be forty-one in less than two months, i still had the faith of the young shepherd David who, some 2300 years ago, also wrote of going through the valley of death.

photo by Tom Coffin



drawing by Mkali

chemical zombie

by Louis X. Halloway (Maisha Ya Askari)

The following is an excerpt from an unpublished manuscript about Parchman Prison in Mississippi entitled Parchman Genocide. *The 100-page account of prison practices documents the genocidal policy/effect of what the author maintains is a plantation system rather than a rehabilitation center or correctional institution. The excerpt is a shocking, though not surprising, reminder not only of how drugs in general have been used as a genocidal tool, but how the African captives, in particular, were summarily drugged with opium during the period of slavery.* (Laudanum, opium dissolved in alcohol, was the traditional "tonic" for niggers.)

We would like to thank Ken Lawrence of the Southern Conference Educational Fund for bringing the manuscript to our attention, and we hope that the complete manuscript will soon be published.

That night I slept with no problems. Being in this hospital ward was a tremendous difference from the prison camp. After breakfast I was informed that I would be interviewed by the doctor at Camp 7 later that day. Camp 7 is supposed to be for people having nervous disorders; most call it the "nut ward." So I was going to see the Bug Doctor, huh? Either they believed I was crazy to tell these white people what I thought about their plantation set-up, or they would cleverly try to commit me permanently so I could be isolated and destroyed. Maybe they wanted me transferred to Camp 7 so that when I testified in court about the genocidal practices of Parchman, they could discredit my testimony by maintaining I was unfit to stand trial. It was now obvious to them that I didn't give a damn about aiding in the perpetuation of slavery – that I now demanded to be treated like a prisoner, with the rights and treatment my people pay taxes for me to receive.

On Saturday, January 8, 1972, about 1 p.m., I was taken to Camp 7. Right away I could tell that this was the most unique camp I had ever been at – possibly the most unique one on the farm. The entire atmosphere was filled with a morbid drowsiness. Most of the prisoners were walking around stone-faced and apathetic, or were drugged out on their beds. The hall-boy came to the door and yelled, "Pills!" Everyone got a cup of water and filed into the hall one at a time. After taking their pills, those apparently on heavy medication went back and flopped on their beds, and the rest started gambling or watched TV.

I noticed that all of the beds were hospital-types that could be adjusted. All of the mattresses were in good shape . . . and clean! Even the sheets, pillows and pillow cases were clean. Matter of fact, the whole place was clean and neat. Every bed had a footlocker where it was supposed to be. Each aisle had plenty of space and a bucket for trash or cigarette butts. This place was really odd.

But the most unique thing about the camp was that it was integrated. I mean truly integrated. No large-scale racial confrontation was feared because everyone was doped up, fed well and not forced to work. Prisoners who cause trouble are threatened with immediate transfer back to a work camp, or to the much feared Maximum Security Unit.

Only Blacks are full trustees and hold all the keys, guns and knives to the camp. There is no fence around the camp. Whites are half trustees and sleep locked up in the gunmen's cage. They do most of the labor, being cooks, yard-boys and general handymen, but are denied the freedom generally allotted to trustees. They are not allowed to carry anything much bigger than a pocket knife because they sleep with the gunmen. They have nothing to do with camp security.

I.

The back of the North End was completely sectioned off to make four rooms, two of which were used by the psychologist, or "Bug Doctor" as he is known by the inmates. A Black bodyguard stays with the doctor all the time he is in the camp. During an interview, he either stands by the door within calling distance or goes in with the visitor. It didn't surprise me that when my name was called, he followed me into the room. They considered me as one requiring close watch. The little office consisted of a desk and three chairs. The trustee sat in the chair behind me, and I sat in the chair in front of the desk. On the desk, half hidden, was a tape recorder and a microphone. The white man behind the desk was the Bug Doctor.

He stuck out his hand and said, "Hello, Mr. Holloway, I'm Doctor Ritter."

That blew his game from the start. No white man at Parchman calls those in captivity "Mr." and offers to shake his hand unless he is trying to throw him off guard. I just looked at him hard. He looked at my bald head, my head band, then at me, and slowly withdrew his hand.

"Well now, Mr. Holloway, the Superintendent has called me and told me to talk to you, that you had a problem."

"I don't remember asking to talk to you, but I do remember telling him he had a problem," I responded.

"Well, he told me to talk to you to see if I can be of some assistance." After a pause he said, "Do you want to tell me about it?"

"What are you talking about?"

He opened a file with my name and picture on it. Pretending to study it, he said, "Did you write the Superintendnet a letter requesting a transfer to the Maximum Security Unit?"

"You know I did."

"I have a copy of the letter here. You're pretty intelligent, Mr. Holloway. Why do you want to go to the lockup?"

"You've got the letter there. You can read."

"What do you mean by saying you are an irrational man," he asked, continuing to look down at my file.

I panicked. Did I say something as stupid as that? Something that could be used against me? On impulse, I reached across the desk and snatched the folder from his hands. There was a photostatic copy of my letter with a part underlined which read: *I'm tending toward irrationality.*

"You know you quoted me wrong," I said angrily.

"Well, what did you mean by it anyway?"

"See, you are constantly waving at that fly buzzing around your head. The more it persists, the more annoyed you get. Soon you'll become angry enough to do something irrational. The camps are much the same way to me – the overcrowding, the atmosphere, the filth, the food and the illegal rules. They annoy me, and I want to eliminate the annoyance."

"I see," Ritter nodded. "Why do you think we can't rehabilitate you?"

"I never said that. I said that unless a man takes the initiative, you can't rehabilitate him. There is no rehabilitation program here, and the environment runs counter to any program that I could set up to rehabilitate myself. Do you think you can do something about it since you're so concerned?"

"That's not in my department," he said shortly. "But I would like to talk with you a bit more on this. We have a pretty nice, clean camp here. What say you come and stay with us for awhile?"

"I don't want to stay at no nut camp. If I can't be sent to maximum security, then send me back to Camp B."

"This is not a nut camp. People come here and get a chance to rest their nerves and become more stable."

"Oh yeah, like those zombies you got out there not knowing whether they are coming or going?"

"They are not zombies!" he responded heatedly. "Some have problems worse than others, and I prescribe a little medicine to make them feel good and get well faster."

I was not convinced. "You can keep your camp and your dope, too. I wasn't a dopie out in the streets and I don't intend to be one now. Those people out there will suffer serious withdrawal consequences if they ever try to get off that dope. I'm not going to be your chemical zombie!"

By this time the doctor was highly agitated and red in the face. "I told you that's not dope. It's medicine. Can't you see I'm trying to help you? Don't you want to stay with us? We feed good, and we don't work you."

"Nope. Definitely not. If you are really concerned about helping me, then help the Superintendent make up his mind whether or not he's going to send me to maximum security."

He leaned back, sighed, and said, "Okay, Mr. Holloway. Thank you."

II.

When time came for those of us from other camps to return, it was discovered there was no transfer slip for me to return to Camp B. I knew from experience that one does not go from one camp to another without a transfer slip. Anyway, they said, it was too late to go to Camp B and I would have to stay the night.

After the others had left I was placed on the South End. Immediately I noticed that noise was kept at a minimum. The TV and radios were surprisingly low. I also noticed that every time the slightest noise was made the floorwalker would yell and be "shhhing" every few minutes. Rap Down came and I was given one of those clean beds – the cleanest one I'd had since my arrival at Parchman. I noticed that earphones had to be used on radios and that only two white prisoners in the entire cage had books.

The next day was Sunday. No transfer. None came on Monday. Dope was given out three to four times a day. Believe me, they had some of every kind of dope you can find – tranquilizers, heavy sedatives, quarter grain morphine tablets, thorazine pills. The prisoners stayed stoned to the bone! The medicine either kept them knocked out or reduced their movements to a slow shuffling action. You could hear people talking in monotones all day long. A few brothers must've had their medicine prescribed wrong because their bodies would go into convulsions and they would have to be rushed to the hospital. One brother got his medicine changed, but another was so scared to question the order of a white man that he just tortured himself.

Tuesday morning the Sergeant told me to get in the pick-up truck, and I unhesitatingly did so, thinking I was leaving. He took me back to the hospital. I thought that it was back to isolation.

We got inside and the Sergeant said to a male prisoner who was acting as a doctor's aide, "Here's Holloway to get his shots."

"What shots? What kind of trick is this?"

The aide went into the doctor's office getting

the shot ready, telling me that I was to have one a day.

I said, "Hold on buddy. What kind of shot is that?"

"Oh, just something to make you feel good," he said.

"Where's the doctor," I asked.

"He's not here, but he gave me orders about what to do."

"Wait a minute. You're not authorized to give me shots. No doctor is present. I've had no examination, and you haven't told me what that stuff is or how it's supposed to effect me."

The aide was completely furious by this time. "I told you this is something to make you feel good. These are the doctor's orders, not mine."

"You heard me the first time. And I already feel good!" I yelled.

He stomped out of the office, called the goon squad and security officers. Well, that would be the only way I would take it. They'd have to beat me down and force it on me. One thing for sure: I'd get that doctor's aide first and, if I had time, get the Sergeant for bringing me up here.

We had a stand-off in the hall, with me backed into a corner. "You still refuse to take the medicine?" the aide asked.

I thought fast. "There are only two ways I'd take that medicine. One, you give me a written letter stating that you have no license, but you have been authorized by the doctor to give me shots in his absence. Put down what kind of medicine it is, what possible side effects if any, who prescribed it, and that I had not been examined. Then sign it. I'll send it to my lawyer and if he says it's safe I'll take it. Other than that you'll just have to jump me."

That did it. They stopped and went into a huddle. I heard the Sergeant verify that I had a lawyer who stayed in close contact with me. Then a few of them went into the office and started typing.

The aide came back with a slip of paper which read something like, "I, the undersigned, refused to take the medicine prescribed to me by orders of the doctor, and hold myself responsible." It wasn't anything like I had said. I looked up at the goon squad and thought it best to sign anyway.

The Sergeant rushed me to his pick-up truck and started towards the administration building. We passed maximum security, and then for no reason he turned around and went back to camp, merely telling me I was wrong.

Well, I couldn't care less. I'd heard too many tales of how they'd take brothers who had given them trouble, beat them up so bad they'd have to go to the hospital, and thinking he's receiving medical attention, gets doped—a zombie. If they missed making you a physical zombie, then they'd try other means. They want to control you, and that's all. A zombie is a zombie.

III.

Well, now they had kidnapped me. Nobody knew where I was. I had no change of clothes or a toothbrush for four days. There was nothing constructive being done at all. It seemed to me that the only things we could do were eat, gamble, watch TV and drink pops. The medicine kept the majority of the inmates so dried out, they'd drink as many as seven or eight pops a day. Sports and exercise were very heavily frowned upon. One night Shooter threatened to shoot my feet off when he saw me doing a head stand around 4 a.m. To make matters worse, a fat hillbilly was transferred to Camp 7 and made floorwalker. The first thing he did was start rearranging the beds, loudly proclaiming, "I ain't going to sleep next to no niggers," almost causing a race riot. He was placed on strict orders to say nothing to me regardless of what he saw me doing and to tone down his rhetoric and open antagonism toward Blacks.

I noticed that the Sergeant would use little subtle threats to get different assignments done. No matter what type of work he wanted done, he'd get it done by light suggestions of transfers. He used that to get 100 percent participation for church services. He'd threaten people with a food cut, loss of their TV privileges, transfer, etc., and it was surprising how many submitted. Those that were reluctant were simply dragged out. When they came to me about going to church I told them that I couldn't believe in a religion where there was more lying, cheating, jealousy, hatred, discrepancies, perversions, misappropriation, racism and ignorance going on during the actual services than afterwards, that I would not allow myself to sit in such an atmosphere. I wasn't asked again.

I was also angry at the so-called "con-men" who were going around "playing on somebody." They would sell crushed aspirin for dope and tea for nutmeg to people who wanted to get high. I thought it a shame that while brothers were running around here conning each other out of nickels, dimes and cigarettes, the biggest con game in the world was being played on them.

The only things that I could do were sleep, read or go outside. Before long, I noticed that I was being closely and critically monitored. Somebody would always be looking at me from a window or a particular trustee would always be standing around watching me. If I sat down for a few minutes out of view from the inside, they

would actually come searching for me. I very seriously questioned whether or not I was becoming paranoid, so I pulled this trick about five times to prove I was under observation. I would be in the dining room one minute, outside the next, in the cage next or running around the building. Then I would duck around the corner of the building and sit down where I could not be seen. In less than 30 seconds the hall-boy or one of his flunkies would come running around the building and be frantically looking. After this happened again and again, I felt sympathy for them and went back to my business. While all of this was going on, the Sergeant thought I was becoming too energetic, so he called me out in the hall, and had the hall-boy give me a red pill. I asked what it was and he said thorazine. I looked at him real hard and gave it back. Man, Parchman had a million tricks all designed to exploit, retard and destroy a man!

IV.

One day as I was walking, I was thinking bitterly about being held captive by such a wicked enemy. I thought about the way white citizens of America lament at the top of their voices of the "foul" and "unjust" treatment of the prisoners in North Vietnam. They too are guilty of murder, robbery, theft, rape and all sorts of illegal activities and atrocities. Yet their families want communication. They want their loved ones to receive just and humane treatment. And all the time, thousands of Black religious, political and social prisoners are treated much the same way. There are no protest marches and loud lamentations of "foul" and "unjust" by white or Black people in support of us. Prisoners are not licensed to kill, rape or rob. Nor are we backed by the American government.

There is a white time and a Black time. White prisoners are free moral agents in Amerikkka and are prisoners by their own choice. Black prisoners have had no choices; they have been victimized and systematically forced into prison. Why then are the Black men and women in the outside communities so ashamed of us? Why so quiet? I'm so alienated from them that I might as well be on the other side of the world.

As I walked, I began to wonder how long it would be before they got me. I can't even begin to estimate how many brothers have lost their lives or are being completely controlled because no one cares for them. I believe that this place gets the overwhelming majority – at least 80 percent – in the end. I say this because the majority has become entrenched in wicked filth and total selfishness. Apathy for the next man is the practiced doctrine. "It ain't me, I'm doing my own time," is heard so much it's sickening.

The atmosphere here is not designed to make the individual a better man, not to rehabilitate, and not even to punish for some alleged evil or to rid society of dangerous elements. Rather, it is exclusively designed so that our enemy can legally *control* our lives. I mean every aspect! Our food, our work, our clothes, even the toilet paper we use or the soap we wash with is controlled and can only be obtained by the consent of the slave-master. One cannot step outside for a breath of fresh air without the consent of the slave master and then he is monitored. From the time we get up till the time we go to sleep, from religion to law, radio to the band, the cotton fields to the basketball court, from writing letters to conjugal visits, from how sick we can be to how we can exercise. All this is in the hands of a wicked and vicious enemy. Nothing can be done without their knowledge.

It is not even a secret that I am writing this. I'm being watched this very minute. The informers have long since told the slavemasters that I'm writing a bit out of the ordinary. Any Black man doing too much reading and writing automatically becomes a target of suspicion. I could have been stopped long ago or had my materials stolen. But who knows? Maybe their twisted egos will find something complimentary in this book. Maybe they feel the full significance of this will be missed, or that it will never be published. They know it though.

V.

Time wears one out. No one is an exception. Either you'll be brutally killed or you will be caught at a time when you are no longer able to ward off future attacks. After four or five years, who will remember me? I am disconsolate at the things I know they will do to a prisoner when they feel no reprisals will result, no publicity. As far as that is concerned, many prisoners hate to remember. It is a rare thing to find a prisoner who will tell his story, for if he is not still under the influence of the slavemaster, he is ashamed at how he responded when manhood, strength, courage and determination were called for.

"Power to the Prisoner!" That could mean the difference between life and death here. With just enough power to pursue human rights, we could come back to our brothers and sisters without wanting to hate, kill or destroy. If we had just enough power to do something for ourselves instead of our slavemasters, this zombie system could be destroyed forever.

graphic by Lucious Hightower

POEM FOR A LIGHT/WEIGHT SISTER SHO'NUFF GITTING DOWN IN THE HEAVY/WEIGHT DIVISION . . . OR, "BET ALL MINE ON THE LITTLE LADY WITH THE BIG HAND/BAG." (FOR SIS. ESTELLA HARRIS)

Fight time: Now! better git your bet down.
no peanuts, no popcorn, no hot dogs, no reserved
seats, no commercials,
no Buddy
its a brand new fight and a new style fighter,
yea. A real live non-spectator sport
what'cha could call a
Free for all, yeh. We're taking it out of the Madison
"Square Gardens"
into the streets _____ you could say _____
we'se taking it out of context . . . ain't we something . . .
adding new definitions/dimensions . . . disqualifying
vapid "Marquis of Queensberry" rules/injectin full bodied
Fanon logic/cong tactic and nigger git down, yeh.
Fight time. Now! bet all mine on sister/woman.
In this corner/black
back against the wall
wearing the red, black and green
nails unsheathed, teeth bared,
gitting down for the full count
the peoples/favored to win/revolutionary/vanguard Sister
woman on the rise-sparks flying from her
defiant eyes glued to the crown; the prize stolen 400
(odd yrs____ago.) and secreted beneath watery graves and
fetid cotton fields and
massa's whip and cloven hoofs and
foul stinking licentious rapes and
voluminous lies and Dreadful Scott decisions, yeh.
bet all mine on Sister/woman.

she moves _____ gracefully _____ slow-rhythmic
lightning fast/cat like/black/stalking motion
Ali Shuffles/Sister Style
(that's with the lee taken out and the all left in)
yeh, um putting all mine on sister woman.
feinting/jabbing her pen/right cross
counter revolutionaries glass jaws
float like a butterfly/sting like a bee/colony
brilliantly bobbing _____ wearing clear, decisive outlines
inspirational designs for 21st century spooks
who've sat by the door
for lack of
functional blueprints to act
Right on . . . on Sister/woman. yeh.
Fight time: now!
People lining up behind/beside the peoples
Choice/sister . . .
causing brother/man to take
second look's and vanguard positions yeh
creating from the nameless/faceless void
the terrible man/child yeh
Jon and George and Lil'Bobby
and Fred yeh, and Bunchy
and Doc' and Mark yeh, and
Featherstone and Cigarette, yeh,
and Cinque and yeh, them too.
and be ready
to give it back/double
off the top
at the finish
of the fight.

— *Brother Sambo-bey*
(a.k.n. Charles Gibbs) is doing his time at M.C.C. in Jessup, Maryland.

OUR BLACK LOVE IS FUEL FOR THE REVOLUTION

I do not give to you hats to cock ace deuce. And I know no slick words to say to watch bounce between us, to hang in mid-air to unite us in frustration.

I do not walk the streets of limbo to give to you coins that jingle in your pockets. You do not ask me to play at being the Happy Hooker and I will not ask or demand that you be Truck Turner. We will build no castles on needle-pricked veins and LSD-cooked brains.

No I will not smile as I hide you in the closet from the welfare agent, nor do I expect you to smile turn your head as I take the landlord to our bed.

The only thing I ever seen sparkle is the unshed tears in my mans eyes. The only stars I ever see is his Black/Hate/Love hitting me, and my own DEspair/DEsperation, shame cause I know being pregnant ain't nothing but a burden, and even the children look at me like I'm public enemy No. 1 as they watch me slowly growing bigger. But I keep on being strong and I don't bend and I don't break.

I know you are tired of being permanently part-time, but you don't bend and you sure don't break, somehow you keep right on being strong, even though I awaken sometime in the night and I kiss your cheeks and I wonder do you know that you cry in your sleep just like me.

But in the morning we rise together and we don't bend and we don't break as we watch the children all shiny and new off to school, then I watch you cut a new piece of cardboard for your shoes, put on your ten-year-old jacket like it's a bullet-proof vest, to walk tall, to walk proudly into the enemy camp.

No we don't bend and we shownuff don't break, somehow we keep right on being strong, cause we know, OUR BLACK LOVE IS FUEL FOR THE REVOLUTION.

— Sister Akua

TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY SPOOK

Sat by your grandmothers mother door
Sat by your grandfathers father door
Sat by your mamas father father door
Sat by your fathers mama mamas door
Spook sat, stood, standing now by
them doors.

Like the 17th century spook
Like the 18th century spook

19th century spook
Picked your cotton
Caned your sugar
Cut your grass
Wiped your child's ass
Cooked your meals
Washed your laundry
He worked your
Non-paying factories

Like the 17th century spook
Like the 18th century spook
Like the 19th century spook

20th century spook
Integrated your unions
Elected and protected
Your fascist government
Broke your picket lines
Dreamed your america
The beautiful dream
in a pent house slum
with wall to wall
roach carpeting
land of the free
home of the brave
and sweet mrs liberty

20th century spook
Believed in your
Democratic anglo saxon illusions
Fighting in the civil war
WW 1 and 2
Korea all the way to Vietnam
He loved you cattle prodding
Him in the ass
Your jail him kill him
Dog eat bomb his children
Kick stomp his woman war.

Like the 17th century spook
Like the 18th century spook
Like the 19th century spook
Like the 20th century spook

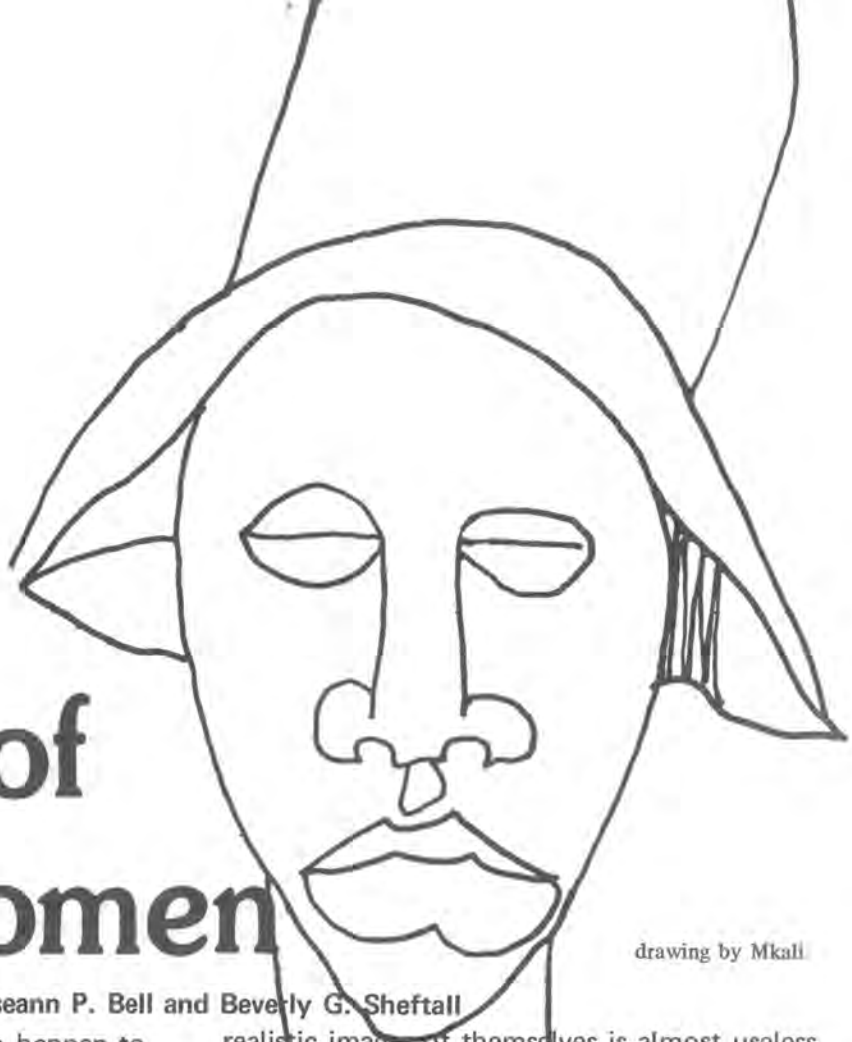
TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY SPOOK
Will be the BLACK LIBERATION
ARMY taking over—over throwing
The fascist myth, killing mrs
alberta vo5, ending the rule
of chase manhatten and your
Instant coffee dreams mr & mrs
america.

And pepto bismal will not
Help, alker-sazer will not
Save you, ban deorderant will
Not kill your death odor
And safe-guard will not wash
Away the smell of your rottening
corpse.

TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY SPOOK
Will fly the GREEN/RED/BLACK
Flag at half mast for the
Ending of you and the beginning
For him.

YEA,
TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY SPOOK
GON shoot off a TWENTY-ONE
GUN SALUTE, in honor of your
DEATH with his foot on your
GRAVE.

— *Sister Akua*
(a.k.a. Estella Harris) is conducting a summer workshop at the Atlanta Neighborhood Arts Center.



drawing by Mkali

images of black women

by Roseann P. Bell and Beverly G. Sheftall

"Hail, Hail America: What's gonna happen to you? . . . What's gonna be the fad next year . . .?"*

These questions raised by Zulema, a Black singer, are well suited to artistic concerns, especially those relating to images that shape and herald new "fads" in the literary and plastic arts. The death of some of the most damaging fads, i.e., stereotyped images of Black women, has been long in coming. But an iconoclastic effort to speed up the process – to tear down the old images and replace them with positive, realistic ones – is located in an unpublished anthology we have prepared titled *Positive Images of Black Women.*

Libraries, bookstores, art galleries and movie theaters are saturated with distorted images of Black women: respected and domineering servants; dynamic and creative whores; castrating wives and mothers; tragic mulattoes; cold and bitchy professionals; and liberated militants. These images of Black women may be seen as stereotypes (or even prototypes as, for example, in the case of Faulkner's Dilsey), but their worth to Black people in search of serious, positive, realistic images of themselves is almost useless.

Our use and understanding of the word "positive" implies that such things as emotional range and diverse manifestations of humanity within one character are necessary. Characters such as Eva in Toni Morrison's novel *Sula,* Janie in Zora Neale Hurston's classic *Their Eyes Were Watching God,* and Vyry in Margaret Walker's *Jubilee* defy those insecure critics who would lump them together in a one-dimensional category. These women are bigger than that. They are part of a tradition which has been ignored for political, economic and psychosocial reasons. It has never been this country's intent to suggest that non-white peoples (especially Black people) are human; to create or even allow for the production of literature which gives a human image of the carriers of the culture (Black women) would be incongruent with the larger aims of this society.

Despite these problems, a few radical, sensitive artists have seen and photographed in their writing some of Black realistic womanhood. Earl Conrad, for instance, has an essay on General Harriet

*From the album, *Zulema* (RCA APL1-0819-B).

Sisters Bell and Sheftall teach at Morehouse College in Atlanta and are currently attempting to publish and distribute the anthology described.

Tubman – a suffragette, a divorced woman (by her own choice), a military strategist, a civic performer and a revolutionary. Angela Davis' interpretation of the various roles that Black slave women held is poignant and sensitive, and Paule Marshall's short story, "Reena," gives further complementary focus to the complexities of Black life.

The paradox of this book's importance and "unpublished" status is compounded and aggravated because of the recent move to exploit all things female. Women's Liberation, Women's Studies, Black Studies and Ethnic Studies courses have created new opportunities for those who would readily commercialize rare bits of humanity. In the case of Black women, the thrust has been to locate the black woman, with no derivations and exceptions in model, within tightly drawn categories, some not dissimilar from those mentioned above. This is partly done through the nefarious publishing network which insists on guaranteed profits through sensationalism, not quality or truth.

Many professors, eager to put together an attractive syllabus for a non-traditional course in Women's or Ethnic Studies, hastily research existing works. Often, the result is the use of overexposed materials which have not been critically appraised or even analyzed for their obvious political, sociological, racial or economic meanings. Examples are the works of Watkins and David, *To Be a Black Woman,* and Carson's *Silent Voices.* Joining these two writers are the "classics" – the Black women of Faulkner, McCullers and even James Baldwin.

It should be apparent by now that the motives for publishing *Positive Images of Black Women* are complex. The matter of anthologists choosing readily available, overused works speaks not only to the issue of shoddy scholarship, but it attacts personal discrimination, world view and racial/political arrogance. Most whites who have bothered to "research" Black sources for their anthologies have ignored the vibrant critical statements about Black women and Black life featured in respected journals such as *The Black Scholar, Black World, Freedomways* and *Negro Digest,* preferring instead to go the route of the *New York Times Review of Books* or *Modern Language Notes.* Further, these same "researchers," when they have done actual field work, do not have the sensitivity to their subjects that is required in doing accurate, viable oral history/interviews. The editing-out process often results in major surgery being performed on the cultural message of the Black people who are being exploited. The nature of the questions asked, the alien intrusion on Black lifestyles, and the arrogant paternalistic mind-set of these cultural dilletantes results in distorted images. Frequently, the extent to which these problems manifest themselves in course syllabi is demonstrated in the way Black women are "tacked on" to the major focus of the course. In short, the lives of Black women even in a Women's Studies course or a women's section of a good bookstore, are not taken seriously.

Positive Images of Black Women does not solve all of the problems but it is a beginning. The most impressive beginning is the choice of the word "positive" in the title. Included in the anthology are those treatments of Black women which are non-stereotypical and which explore the full humanity of Black women in all their complexities. One-dimensional, narrow and distorted characterizations of Black women are deliberately excluded because they perpetuate myths about Black women which are damaging and degrading.

The book is divided into two major sections, appropriately called "Views from the Outside," which includes selections by Black males, white males and females, and "View from the Inside," which contains statements by Black women about themselves and other matters which deeply affect them. Among the authors featured in the first section are Larry Neal, Haki Madhubuti (Don L. Lee), Bernard Malamud, Eudora Welty and Lillian Hellman.

The second section includes, in addition to a limited number of essays and short fiction, a large number of poems from the Black Arts Movement. It was felt that the poetry, more than the prose, reveals the changing world view of Black women since the beginning of the Black Arts Movement. Somehow, poetry seems to be a better guage of measuring the complexities, subtleties, and nuances of what it means to be a Black woman in America. These poems provide insights into the often unspoken, hidden and unanalyzed aspects of the psyche of Black women. The poems lay bare those preoccupations and yearnings which are too much overlooked in works which attempt to present the Black woman definitively (such as Robert Staples' *The Black Woman*). Poets like Eloise Loften, Mari Evans, June Jordan, Carolyn Rogers, Gayle Jones, Jacquelyn Furgus Hunter and Francine Guy, because they understand the complexities of Black life, are included.

When this anthology is finally published, we hope it will provide those interested in seeing more positive images of Black women with alternatives to the negative images which fill the pages of required readings for scholars and students and which are the common fare for the general reader.

graphic by Lucious Hightower

graphic by Lucious Hightower

R.S.V.P.

People ought not
send out
invitations to join
them in pain.

— *Tina Smith*

JUST MESSING WITH ME

You entered my life at a
Time
When I wasn't bothering
Anyone.
Didn't even
Have the hots
But you came and
Gave me that.
Hey
I wasn't bothering you.

— *Tina Smith*
lives in Washington, D.C. and is the mother of one very beautiful, teenage daughter.

CONCURRENCE

Early
reddening day –
my blue old grandfather lowers himself
into the river
and bathes.
His bones are brittle,
and they crack when he bends.

Rushing from northern valleys,
the river slows,
mindful of this recurrent rite.

My blue old grandfather
is a humble man.
He understands the river's loneliness.

Single moments after
the river resumes its journey,
releasing the cleanness of pine tar, a soap.
And the vapors of union, cooling,
rise
as a fog.

–*Susan Dorsey*
is a member of the Southern University Writers Workshop in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

MY MOTHER

somewhere here
is this face
who grabs my everything
and takes me world hopping
and lets me see myself in
going up
way up
to the top of my be.

—*Janet A. Tarver*

ON A FORGOTTEN THEME

haunting realities kept crouched beneath
the foot of my mind,
pushing at my soul,
sucking at my breath.

and me the shrewd one
stomping all the arteries out,
stepping away from a tinge
of paradox lying in the mud.

I lay a pure silk scarf across and jump.

—*Janet A. Tarver*

THE ¾ths WATER OF YOU

Flavor overflow
catches me dry.
Its fall could not penetrate my shut pores.

The flow divided, saturates.
Tiny bubbles disguise themselves as air,
And slip in somehow,
The microscopic crystals melt
and reorder my life.
Them the water pearls of your being.

I splash around
in circles of your wet laugh
your long kisses,
your poetry fills my arteries
with the bubble
of your who you are.

¾ths water.
I can not swim!
Even the cities are flooded
and I wade through hoping
I can make it.
The "h" too bores
a wooden ring through the hole in my nose
marked, taken.

It's good,
the bath of knowledge
poured from your special cup,
adjusting automatically, to what
we both can take.

We say goodby on the shores of the future
Because we know presence is not needed,
Another time
Another place,
it will rain again.

—Janet A. Tarver

THE ABSENT BRIDGE

I sat before this
woman squinching her eyes
in my unfortunate direction.

I sat looking at the holes her
atomic words left,
could see clear through
to the other side of the world!

There were no pardoning words,
come suddenly swashing from my mouth,
I sat uncomfortable.
Silent.
Explicit.
Misunderstood.
Even reached across the erupted
river between.

She was black and just wouldn't hear of it.
Then she said, he said,
they probably did.
But I was the central issue,
the one that turned the motor on.

Black and so called educated, compromised.
But I had been born in a project,
moved out and there she still stayed,
accusing me of being her jailer.

I held no gun,
but pointed to the central cause.
I made more money than she did
and she did
all the work.

—*Janet A. Tarver*

graphic by Sandra Kate Williams

THE BATHERS

We turned to fire when the water hit
Us. Something
Berserk regained
An outmoded regard for sanity
While in the fire station
No one thought of flame
Fame or fortune did them

We did them a fortune. We did
Them a favor just being
Ourselves inside of them

Holy day children

In the nation coming your children will learn all about that

But the water creep about us
Water hit us with force.
We saw a boy transformed into a lion
His tail is vau the syllable of love
A master before fellow craft
The summit of the Royal Arch

Lotus. Mover on the face of the waters . . .

Sleepless Horus, watch me as I lie
Curtained with stars when ye arise
And part the skies. And mount the Royal
Bark

They said the ancient words in shameful English
Their hearts rose up like feathers

In the hidden place

And Horus step into the flood of noon
Shedding his light upon the worlds

It was in Birmingham. It happened.

Week after week in the papers
The proof appears in their faces

Week after week seeing the same moment grow clearer
Raising the water,

Filling the vessel. Raising the water.
Filling the the vessel

O electromagnetic Light shaduf!

Ancient hands bearing water
Ha

The star broke
Over the tub

All righteousness

Not deceived by sunshine nor the light
From a man's desire

Deceived by desire
So that in the moment
The people cast light from their bodies
"Light" being the white premeditation
The simplest fashion
What they want is light

Another source to equip
Their dry want

Want fire light. Space light
Discretions of neon

At least. So to appear natural
Where the sun is

360° of light

Consumed in the labors of comfort
That cries for the balm

Of all that is natural
Desire.

Bathing in the dark
The water glowing
In the plastic curtain
Suddenly heated

As another expels past satisfactions.
Cold as she washes gas tears
From her man's eyes. We hate you.

Hot on her soft thigh
Like the dog's breath at noon by the Courthouse

We hate you for that

But ancient hands raised
This water

As the street's preachers
Have a good understanding hear them

O israel this O israel that

Down here in this place
Crying for common privilege
In a comfortable land

Their anger is drawing the water
Their daughters is drawing the water

Their kindness is laving and
Oiling its patients.

That day
The figures on the trucks inspired no one

Some threw the water
On their heads
They was Baptists

And that day Horus bathed him in the water
Again

And orisha walked amid the waters with hatchets
Where Allah's useful white men
Came there bearing the water
And made our street Jordan
And we stepped into our new land

Praise God. As it been since the first time

Through the tear of a mother

1970

— *Lorenzo Thomas*
a regional representative of the National Black Writers Congress, is a member of the Black Arts Center in Houston, Texas.

TWO POEMS

(Blackwoman: How come we always get into a hassle?
Blackman: . . .
Blackwoman: We never used to hassle this way
before we started making love.
Blackman: No, I think, maybe . . .
it just didn't matter as much.)

ROUGH DRAFT:

Once toward the end of Civil Rights I wrote a poem called "To the last
of My White Boyfriends."
Now I say to you
To all my baad-assed half-assed ego trippin jive-ass revolutionary niggers
This poem
is for you.

So sit yourself down
Deal with it in whatever way you can
Because I have stood on my head and walked on the ceiling.

I have been kind and good
Understood
Fought back the tears of widowhood.

I have contrived myself
Deprived myself
I have allowed myself to be despised and yes,
Even dehumanized
So you could do the *man's* work you said you *had* to do.
I have earned the right, my man
To talk this way to you
An you ain gon' say nuthin
till I'm through:

Slipped gears, you and I.
A huge machine-created miracle immoral technological contraption
Put imperfectly together in the West.

Clanking along turning scraping slow-grinding down each other's mettle
Wear and tear and turning into junk.

Worlds ready to explode with the power of our contact.
Yellow, white and orange light blazing visions out across the sky
Illuminating our destruction as we demolish death.
Alien structures quake and falter
Are leveled crumbling to dust before the power
(slipped gears)
power
(slipped gears)

Power in the steady earth-refilling sound
Our footsteps make a path
Greening earth a New Way.

My body gathers up the sparks your vision gives off
Harbours all the cherished New Life of our dreams

Meadows turn green on either side of us as we walk by
(You do not see; your eyes are blinded by visionary sparks)
And trees nod new leaves to us as we go along the way
(You do not see)

Slipped gears. Imperfect contact.
Short-circuited the mechanism clanks along the way
I run clambering behind (you do not see).

Slipped gears.
The dream is good.
The vision lingers like an orange sunset
Spreading overflowing on each skyline of our New Attempts.

If we could just stop along the roadside long enough
Take it apart piece by piece
Looking anxious over our shoulder gleaming metal spread out all around us

Wondering how long
how long the orange sun will wait for us
to put it back together.

Slipped gears. (The dream is good).
Imperfect contact. (The vision lingers).

While black men stalk in circles blinded in the woods at night
We woman-wait by the roadside squatting
Our helpless hands filled with machinist tools
We do not understand
Our brimming eyes filled with sunset orange.

The dream is good.
The vision lingers.
The sun waits with us
And will not go down.

April 4, 1974
– Carolyn Fowler

REFERENCE POINT: A BLACK WOMAN SPEAKS TO HER MAN (Final Draft)

Let leisure-time metaphysical gentlemen
Write sonnets to their lady-loves
About the wandering needle of the compass
And the fixed point that draws the needle
Ever back to rest.

We don't have the time.
(The brother said: It's Nation Time.
And Malcolm's body lies bleeding on the floor)

You and I, looking out the kitchen door
know the Gentle Knight was really shucking his Lady
Love in all that fine conceited Renaissance-Man language,
and a really into nuthin cat behind the frilly gestures.

But still . . .
A universal motivation lies encapsulated in the cultural
forms (there are such things as archetypal images)

And I, a woman
Define my being in your burning, faltering, dimming,
blinding light

And cannot move, except you motivate me
And cannot radiate, except you fire me.

So therefore
Putting the thing in proper perspective that is, talking
about our own black selves my man and our black life:

Then I would say
Without the frills and finery we never owned

That I am for you Black Man
A fixed planet.
A never-moving star on your horizon.
(Turn your head the same way toward each
morning; you'll see me there)

I am
The tough and sometimes mad black nucleus around which
you describe ever-widening circles in never-ending spheres
of liberation. (I know your actions seem to take you farther
from me. But you are never really gone.
And your eyes are always fixed on me.

So go head on and do that
man's-work-you-said-you-had-to-do
(The Brother said: It's Nation Time)

Tell time by me.
Grow big by me.
Through despair and hesitation, measure the estimation
of your manhood by me.
(You'll see it in my eyes.
Keep your gaze steady on them when your
circles begin to zigzag.)

Take what you need from me. I am self-renewing and self-generating
And I will be there intact tomorrow when you look up
at the day.

Adjust yourself to the rhythms of the cosmos
by me.
Orient yourself toward your Black Destiny
by me.

August 28, 1974
— Carolyn Fowler,
one of our foremost literary critics,
has just completed a major study of
the Haitian author Jacques Romain.

GOLD

his children
he can't touch too good
with old yellow eyes
set back in deep
old black skin that's
use to coldness but
a body alone
(or even a tree for that matter
without something to hold sometime
cannot stand
a winter
a offspring)
from children
who come from him
bent black
sometimes spewing it
between gold teeth
that cost him
checks
received
for three fingers
missing
cut off in the U$A

cut off from
his children he is
unable to reach or rest
whole hands on their foreheads
under stylish afros and clenched fist
his children just don't feel
it take power to raise
an old black man's
bowed head

"I had my hair like that when I was comin' up,
but it wasn't called an afro then . . .
You just called it keepin' your head warm!"

he laugh it and talk it
he push it out
and smile it between three teeth
that are not gold
cause we don't own no gold
that he know about

– Melvin E. Brown

SURVIVAL MOTION: NOTICE

We gotta
put more in our
children's heads
than gold
teeth,
to
keep
blackness
to
keep
blackness
to
always
keep
it
from
turning around.

america's
got all kinds of
attractive distractive
colorful
freak image
clown clothed
hypnotic animal
music games
and rides.

and you
can lose a child
at a circus,
very
easy.

—*Melvin E. Brown*
of Baltimore, Maryland, is editor of Chicory *and author of* In the First Place *published by Liberation Press.*

AGRIBUSINESS COULD PUT YOU ON A DOG FOOD DIET

by George Harris

There is a growing and uneasy awareness that the welfare of our cities is linked to the options people have to stay in rural America. When the 1970 census data was released, we learned that 75 percent of the population is crammed together on only two percent of the available land. That revelation jarred a significant number of big city planners and politicians who were already pressuring Congress for relief from the decaying urban ecology, spiralling social and infrastructure costs, and fleeing middle-class taxpayers. For a brief moment, the urban lobby joined with rural legislators in Congress to identify a primary cause of the crisis afflicting both city and countryside in the pattern of rural-to-urban migration itself. Under the leadership of Senator Herman Talmadge of Georgia, this formidable alliance pushed through an important but little noticed piece of legislation – the Rural Development Act of 1972. Supporters claimed that the urban-bound migratory tides could be stilled if industry – and thus employment – could be brought to rural areas; the government could in one single bill promote both "balanced economic growth" and "balanced population distribution." That was three years ago.

Today, the fervor around these twin issues has largely vanished, but the realities that tie population distribution and economic development together, that inextricably bind the poverty of rural areas with the collapse of our cities, cannot be ignored. Note these facts:

1. *In the past 30 years (1940-1970) nearly 30 million Americans migrated from rural areas to the nation's major metropolitan centers.*
2. *Two-thirds of all substandard housing in the nation is in rural areas.*
3. *About half of all poverty in the nation is rural poverty.*
4. *There are fewer than 3,000,000 farms left in the nation, but slightly over one-third of these farms produce 90% of the nation's food and fibre.*
5. *Some of the most politically powerful organizations in the nation are organized around the production of food and fibre for example, milk, wheat, beef, paper/pulp, cotton, tobacco, and sugar; however, wage levels in agriculture are among the nation's lowest, and farm workers' bargaining rights are least protected by public policy.*
6. *Racial and sexual discrimination become more blatant the higher one goes in examining the structure of any rural-based industry. (Value-added profits escape black hands almost as soon as the products leave the fields.)*
7. *The medical profession has failed to provide adequate services (both qualitatively and quantitatively) to low-income residents and especially to rural minorities.*
8. *The rural share of some federal grant programs has been as low as 11%.*
9. *No American institution – not government at any level, not the organized church, not higher education (land grant colleges specifically), not the press, and certainly not private industry – has either definitively examined or effectively prescribed a resolution of rural poverty, which is particularly chronic in the South where the overall poverty rate is twice that of the rest of the nation.*

None of these facts is new to policy-makers. In fact, they have used them to justify or rationalize a mode of economic development and population

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drawing by Robert Rucker

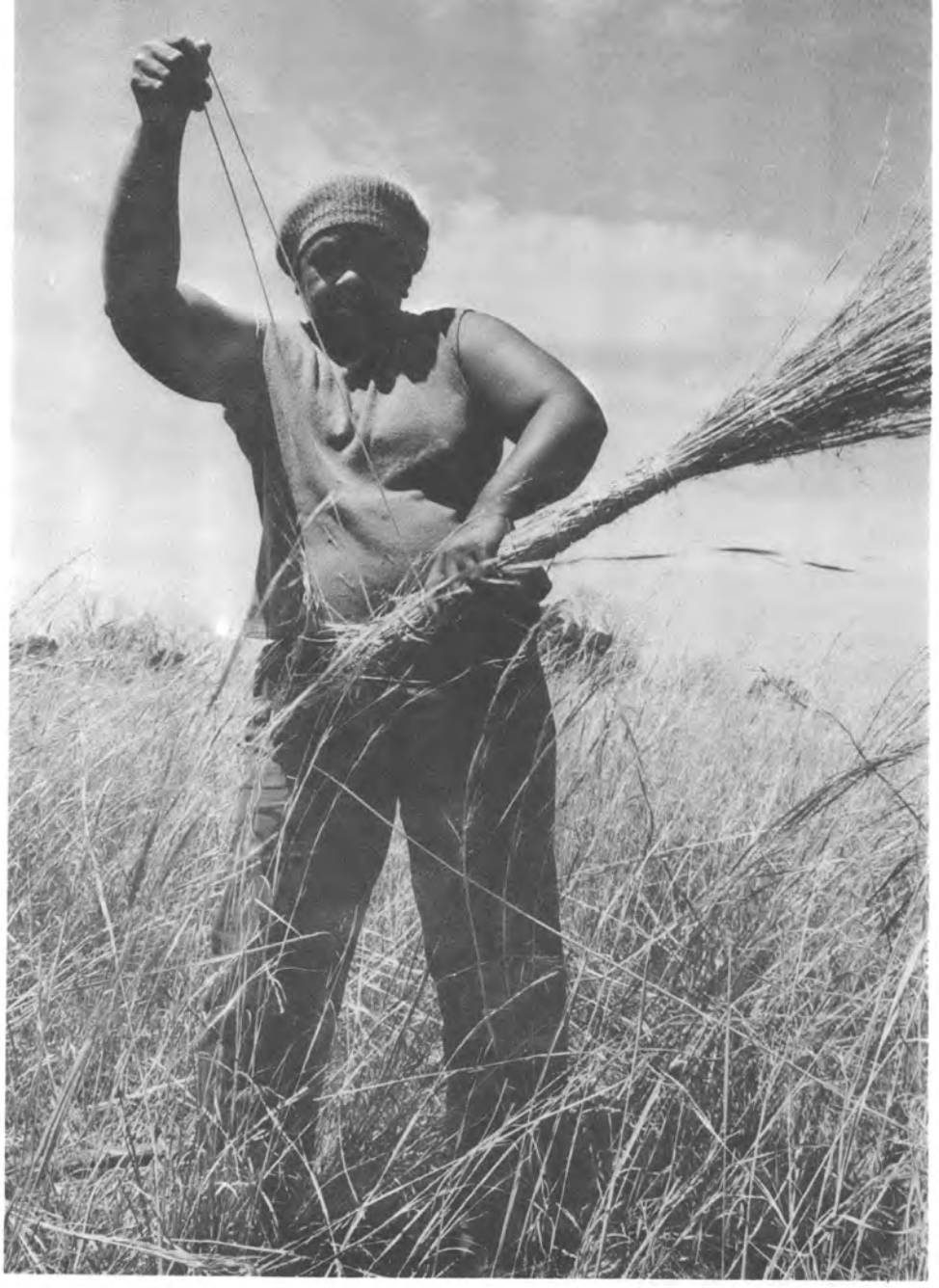
redistribution that features a further development of capital-intensive, machine-dominated industries with *no* corollary mode of human development. That contradictory path of development of machines over men is nowhere more apparent than in the field of agriculture. Throughout the economy, it is more profitable to employ capital than it is to employ people because modern tax policy gives businessmen a distinct advantage if they invest in machinery rather than hire more labor. But in agriculture, this absurd arrangement results in the displacement of thousands of rural families who are forced to migrate to the cities or struggle to maintain a marginal existence at home.* And, of course, the prime victims of this displacement are rural black folks. Rather than "develop" the potentials of people on their own land where they have roots, economic policy is structured to make the production of agricultural products more efficient and more profitable in terms of the capital invested. The resultant displacement of the "losers" is treated as a "social cost" that society must pay in exchange for its relatively lower-priced food, or so we are told. In fact, the food is not that cheap, industry is allowed to profit as a consequence of using machines instead of labor, and the government, meaning you as a taxpayer, is saddled with the costs of subsidizing the out-of-work or underutilized worker.

It is not necessary to elaborate on the economic and political forces which continue to orient rural development and agricultural production away from human considerations. They have been named time and time again (see: "Our Promised Land," *Southern Exposure*, Fall, 1974, and Sam Yette's *The Choice: The Issue of Black Survival in America*). The important thing to recognize is that for black people the application of industrial capitalism to agricultural production has most contributed to our oppression; and secondly, the struggle for liberation must both understand the dynamics of this oppression and the potential for exploiting our unique relationship to land and food production for absolute liberation. We have experienced the crushing weight of living as the "losers" in the civil conflict between the agrarian feudalists and industrial capitalists, as our history of agrarian peonage and forced migration will recall. Even as urban blacks, we continue to be among the losers, for we are forced as taxpayers to underwrite the federal policy that promotes agri*business*, as consumers to pay for artificially grown and priced food, and as urban residents to bear the bulk of the "social costs" of the migrating poor. What we must do for our own economic survival is develop an alternative interdependence between our rural and urban populations. The importance of controlling our own food is increased as we realize that we cannot depend on agribusiness to provide the safest or most nutritious food—a fact we can readily appreciate if we pause to remember the incidence of mercury in fish, cancer-producing substances in meat, chemical additives, dyes, waxes, seductively-packaged junk food, the dumping of milk, pirating of wheat, slaughtering of calves, and the plowed under fields. To the degree that agriculture becomes business, it possesses the power to manipulate your diet for its own benefit, to provide or not provide, or indeed, to put dog food in your bowl.

What I am suggesting is that we eliminate our dependence on industrial capitalism and the federal government for our food, and at the same time develop an alternative base for economic/political power in the rural lands. We have in the black community nationally enough funds to convert groups of black-owned farms into cooperatives, to transport, process, and market food to urban communities across the country. (I know of but one black cooperative effort that is seeking this direction—The Federation of Southern Cooperatives headquartered in Epes, Alabama—and to be sure, the problems involved are many; but the Federation is a testament that it can be done.)

But beyond the actual delivery of food through alternative economic structures, this process requires and fosters a change in attitude and approach, particularly on the part of urban blacks. We can no longer accept the priorities and role definitions of the established system. We can no longer isolate our lives around a quest for personal wealth. If money is the chief consideration in what we do with our lives, then a commitment to build a rural community is out of the question. We would instead chase after the very same urban industrialists who destroyed the strength of that community, who prefer machines over men, and who are only too glad to give us a few dollars to become a machine that can be turned on and off at their will. To make a vocational or strategic choice based on the availability of money is to flirt dangerously with the views and agenda of those most responsible for placing dog food on urban black tables with one hand while displacing rural black farmers with the other. The time to remove ourselves from this process is now, and the place to begin is with a new interrelationship between rural and urban black communities.

*For more on the implications of capital-intensive agriculture for surplus labor, see Edward Higbee's *Farms and Farmers in an Urban Age.*



Ola Chambers
Broom maker
Holmes County

"When you see the straw
turnin kinda brownish lookin
You ready to make it.
You go out in the sage
wring it
and get the grass out
and the weeds and stuff.
Plenty times you have to get a knife
and trim it down.
And then you have a cord there
Whatever you wrap it with
and you wrap it tight.
And then you put that string down
in the end
where the straw won't come aloose.
And you got you a broom."

Portions of this photo-documentation collection were on exhibit under the title *Mississippi: Tradition and Change* at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C. Worth Long, poet, field researcher for the Smithsonian, and long-time organizer in the South, recorded the text in conjunction with the Smithsonian's Division of Performing Arts and the Mississippi State Department of Archives and History. The photographs are by Roland Freeman, a Washington-based professional photographer whose works have appeared in leading publications and at numerous exhibits throughout the country.

mississippi black folklife

John "Matting" Ellis
Broom maker Holmes
Holmes County

"I'd get out on the street; I'd stand holl'in:
Broom man, broom man
Here's your broom man!
(People'd come running)
Here's your broom man!
(I keep that up practically all day)
Here's your broom man!
(And fore I'd know anything, I ain't got na'un.
They all gone.)"

Wilson Lee, Jr.
Wood carver
Washington County

"Lot a people don't understand
the beauty of wood.
Wood is a nature thing,
It's a natural thing.
It's like when I'm
Cutting a piece of wood,
When I'm carving,
It's best to be careful,
Because sometime I think
That wood has feelings, too,
Because anything on earth
Has got feelings, you know.
Wood has feelings, too
So you serve it; you don't
Do it right, you hurting it
In a sense. And then
Again you hurting your
Own self, because you haven't
Created anything.
I guess a lot of people
Don't look at wood
Like that."

Lee Willie Nabors
Chair and basket maker,
Chickasaw County

"I didn't ever see no man make a basket.
I always wanted to make a basket.
Papa bought a basket and I just looked at it.
That's the same way about chairs . . . I
just flat foot made a chair."

graphic by Lucious Hightower

PAN-AFRICANISM: a re-evaluation

by Richard A. Long

In some ways 1974 has been the year of Pan-African re-assessment. The calling and holding of the Sixth Pan-African Congress at Dar-es-Salaam and the extensive reporting of and reacting to it in the black world have brought Pan-Africanism to a high pitch of general awareness that it has not hitherto experienced. It is still safe to say, however, amid the hue and the cry, despite the intervals of intellectual and ideological flag-waving and stand-taking, that Pan-Africanism is still not a vital concern of the black man in the street. How many of the readers of *Ebony,* for example, are likely to have read carefully and pondered the implications of Lerone Bennett's report on the Sixth Congress? I leave the answer to your speculation and, I hope, to somebody's research.

Another graver issue raises its head. The fear has been expressed that many of the Afro-American brethren who attended the conference found the discussion halls less attractive than the other delights of Dar. In consequence, even the numbers who attended cannot be taken as prima facie evidence of commitment to whatever definitions of

Pan-Africanism might be adopted.

Finally, among the earnest, the dedicated, the agonized who followed the sessions from near or from afar, there were many whose knowledge of the real world, of the history of Pan-Africanism, of what is possible, with and for whom, was so incomplete and fragmentary as to make their interest a mockery of itself. I do not wish to imply for a moment that realism, in any conventional sense, was ever a requirement for the Pan-African commitment. Indeed, an anti-realism was almost necessary, but it was the anti-realism of those who in fact knew the real world and opposed their ideals to it.

The first wave of Pan-Africanism is summed up in the Pan-African Conference called by Sylvester Williams in 1901. It was a reaction on the part of articulate blacks of the diaspora to the carving up and conquest of Africa that had been unleashed by the Belgian intrusion into the Congo and the subsequent Berlin partition. It was a lonely protest, almost futile. Du Bois attended and was its secretary. The time was not propitious for another invocation of the spirit of Pan-Africanism until after the First World War, the first great cataclysm of Western imperialism. Du Bois, then acting upon two decades of close observation, thought it possible to motivate some tentative steps toward African political independence in the context of Western statism by influencing the treaty-makers to apply the Wilsonian principle of self-determination to Africa, which was of course not at all envisioned in President Wilson's proposals. The effort, idealism combatting realism, was not successful. The Pan-African Congress of 1919 was a bold and grand gesture. The succeeding three Congresses had less and less reverberation.

It does violence to a history of Pan-Africanism not to place Garvey in its full framework. The United Negro Improvement Association was another Pan-African venture, one based on mass feeling rather than on political awareness. It was another thrust from the diaspora to Africa in an attempt, more specific and passionate than that of Du Bois, to give utterance to black dignity despoiled first by slavery, then by colonialism. It was nevertheless a reactionary movement, seeking not to change the institutions of imperialistic capitalism, but merely to appropriate them from white hands to black hands. Garvey was a visionary, but never a revolutionary.

The Great Depression, the second cataclysm of Western imperialism, did not evoke any Pan-African surge, for the Pan-Africanism of the diaspora was essentially and ironically dependent on the ability of its protagonists to take trains and ships to meet and confer. The Depression considerably reduced that potential. Nevertheless I do not descry in this period any important impulse toward Pan-African activity in the diaspora.

At this point a major element in the record of Pan-Africanism must be faced. The impulse for Pan-African organization and action is itself a phenomenon of Western political dominance. There is no key or clue to it in the traditional political societies of Africa. Practically considered, when we speak of Pan-Africanism we are dealing with an impulse generated by blacks of the diaspora, outcasts from the only political systems they knew and valued. Impulse gives rise to two myths, a myth of combat and a myth of becoming. The myth of combat is directed against the white European hegemony of the post-medieval world. The myth of becoming is an idyllic myth of a peaceful world in which full political rights would be enjoyed by all black people, and it is based upon the assumption that black people, at least, would never interfere with the enjoyment of political rights of people of different color. I use the word myth here as a morphological term with no implication that the ideas so described lack the possibility of implementation.

The cataclysm of the Depression merged into that of the Second World War, and this in turn inspired the next surge of Pan-African activity and the Fifth Congress which was the first actually able to map strategies which would eventually bear fruit in the chancelleries of the West. Du Bois, already 80 years at this time, was an honored observer at the meeting, but not by any means a major mover or shaker.

There is a direct link between Nkrumah's participation in this conference and his subsequent international activities as Ghana's chief of state. The goal of Pan-Africanism was in no way served by the piece-meal liberation of bite-sized territories originally created in various colonial offices. The so called de-colonization of Africa was designed to be as undisruptive of world-wide arrangements as possible. On the other hand, apart from Nkrumah, there developed in Africa itself no Pan-African spokesmen who envisaged anything beside the patch-work quilt governments based on imperialism's handiwork. The Organization of African Unity, really the organization for African disunity, is obviously a formalization and an institutionalization of the patch-work system. Nevertheless there is a sense in which the OAU constitutes at least a putative realization of the earlier Pan-African ideal. Politically independent black African states sit down and deliberate and otherwise go through the motions of Western statism.

From the diaspora, once more has come the

demand, this time for a newer, truer, higher, purer Pan-Africanism. But since this call is now directed to active and functioning African states a world of questions has emerged, some of which must now be considered.

In what way or should Pan-Africanism consist beyond the attainment of political structures in which black people have the potential for self-expression? Obviously, if this were to be the only goal, the liberation of the remaining parts of black America under European domination, would be the remaining task of Pan-Africanism. Obviously, that is task enough. Equally obviously, the nature of the political entities and the quality of self-expression within them is left essentially untouched by a mechanical application of the principles. The actual reality of the present African states is not lovely to contemplate. And it is the fashion to leave to others the criticism of those states where authoritarianism, arbitrariness, and graft effectively serve to keep the majority of the population locked into a condition of colonial bondage.

If I do not read amiss, however, the new idealism of the diaspora, and an idealism which is found here and there in Africa by those who are mainly in exile from their homelands, the new goal of Pan-Africanism must be the liberation of black people. Here the ideal comes up fully against the African reality. For the people so glibly spoken of by the rhetorician are in fact peoples locked in immemorial and pre-colonial patterns of antipathy, enmity and mutual contempt. An attempt at creating a Pan-African strategy which ignores, underplays, or merely ascribes this situation to superogatory institutions is an evasion of reality, however fervent its idealism.

The interdependence of political expression and economic matrices was never lost on Du Bois and, a life-long socialist, he understood the oppression of Africa to be an expression of capitalistic expansion under the aegis of imperialism. What Du Bois and many thinkers from Marx to the present have missed is that capitalism, or more precisely human beings committed to the capitalistic mode of expression, have been able to modify and to generate structures which assure its continuation. And indeed, as I have already indicated, the Pan-Africanism of Garvey, and the only form up to now communicated to a mass (note, I do not say to the masses) was a capitalistic Pan-Africanism.

I have already said that Pan-Africanism in its original expression, and it is true today, is a myth of combat. What it has always combatted is the white European domination of blacks, which is based on a racist perception of humanity. Hence Pan-Africanism while possibly anti-capitalistic is certainly anti-racist.

It has been fashionable for critics of capitalism to perceive it as the creator of racism and to offer as a self-evident proposition that the demise of capitalism will automatically bring the cessation of racism. If there is any evidence in this matter, it clearly demonstrates the opposite. Racism is an independent current of the human spirit, which may live in symbiosis with any political or economic situation. It is indeed unhistorical to link it to any period or place. Its importance, its resonance, may vary as we shift our range of vision, but its relative permanence in the human equation can hardly be dismissed by those who think that theory should follow, rather than precede, observation.

To wed the new Pan-African vision to a hidebound theory of economic systems as some are proposing to do at this juncture is to abandon the struggle for a chimera. To ignore the nature of the clientele to whom the new Pan-African vision is directed is to essay an elitism which contradicts its own purposes. To fail to recognize the essential differences of the diaspora which has been the source of Pan-African energies and the African matrix to which it reaches out, and to fail to confront the psychological morass from which the diasporic energies proceed is to fail to advance Pan-Africanism beyond its 1945 stage. Pan-Africanism, a myth of becoming, must not be subordinate to the ideas, the institutions, the theories of the past. Rather it must hold fast to the dawn-like vision it presented to the hopeful eyes of those who greeted the twentieth century, and looking across a sea of gloom, saw not a gleam but a reservoir of hope and African fulfillment.

Pan-Africanism must not become the tool of doctrinaire nationalistism or internationalistism more concerned with the survival of forms than with liberation. Pan-Africanism, indeed, must not be considered as a means to the creation of new institutions, each potentially oppressive, but as a means of understanding and modifying existing institutions towards open-ended activity on behalf of the victims of racism and economic exploitation. The ultimate challenge to Pan-Africanism is to be unlike any force hitherto known in history in the hope that it will itself be a major innovation in human history and a source of endless hope and joy to the children of Africa.

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black people in CUBA

by Michael E. Fisher

A "sugar cane curtain" separates the United States from Cuba, an island nation just 90 miles off the coast of Florida. Not too many Americans have been to Cuba since Fidel Castro became Prime Minister in 1959, and relationships between that government and our own have been adverse for some 15 years. When most Americans think about Cuba, they think about Castro the "dictator," communism, political repression, sugar cane, rum or cigars, the Bay of Pigs invasion of 1961, the missile crisis of 1962, etc. Not many stop to consider the fact that Cuba became a possession of the United States after the so-called Spanish-American War of 1898, and that between then and 1958 the country was almost completely controlled and dominated by the United States.

U.S. corporations owned the major industrial, agricultural and utility firms, and to protect these interests the U.S. government manipulated the Cuban government at will. Rich North Americans had turned Cuba into their "island paradise," creating vast money-making enterprises around gambling, prostitution and drugs. For the Cuban people, U.S. control of their natural resources and their lives meant poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and hopelessness. Less than half of the school age children attended school; only one rural hospital existed in the country; and corruption pervaded the government. In January, 1959, when Fidel Castro marched into Havana at the head of the popular rebel forces, the seizure of power from the U.S. and its puppets opened the way for the Cuban people to develop an independent politics and an independent economy that could meet their needs. The United States had left them a stunted and deformed country politically, economically, technologically, culturally; reconstructing it would be the country's main task for many years.

Even after the new government was in power, the U.S. government, as it does in most of Latin America and in many other countries around the world, arrogated unto itself the right to determine the political and economic direction of that society, and financed the ill-fated invasion at the Bay of Pigs in 1961 (with the full approval of the "liberal" President, John F. Kennedy). Determined to remain a free people, the Cubans defeated the invaders in 48 hours. Humiliated, the U.S. continued to finance other mercenaries in the Escambray Mountains until they too were soundly defeated in 1965, fabricated the "missile crisis" and imposed an economic blockade. The U.S. government has also maintained the Guantanamo Naval Base on the island – with total disrespect and disregard for the rights of the Cuban people and international law, refuses to this day to permit materials and books about present-day Cuba into this country, and otherwise distorts the truth about the progress which is being made on the island.

Politics and economics in Cuba are now organized to serve the interests of the masses of people and not the rich few. Popular democracy is a reality and racism is being eliminated. Cuba is a nation in which government corruption and inefficiency are not tolerated as in the United States, where unemployment does not exist and prostitution, gambling, drugs, and other crimes are being wiped out of existence. Cubans do not pay taxes, yet health services are free, education – through the university level – is free, no one in the country pays more than 10% of their monthly income for rent, and, in fact, furnished apartments for people living in rural areas are provided, complete with TV's and refrigerators.

Education is so thorough and comprehensive that children can read and write when they are in the second grade and 98.5% of the people are literate – one of the highest rates in the world, surpassing even that of the United States! Women are rapidly being incorporated into the labor force and other parts of society. Doctors and other professionals are being trained on an ever-expanding basis. Many schools, hospitals and homes are being built, agricultural output has increased and is being mechanized, and the technical and fishing industries are growing very rapidly. All of this progress, and more, has been made even though Cuba is considered a poor, underdeveloped country and in spite of the U.S. government's policy of blockade and aggression against Cuba.

Black people played a significant role in the history and development of Cuba and many people ask how racism is being overcome and if black Cubans have also gained by the progress there. Historically, Cuba's development, especially with regards to colonization, was similar to that of the United States. That is, the country was colonized by a white European state (Spain in this case), a large majority of the original Indian inhabitants were exterminated, and African slave labor was used to develop the land and resources. There were slave rebellions and insurrections from the beginning, but it was not until 1869 that the movement began to crystallize. In that year slavery was abolished. In that year also, what Cubans refer to as their "First War of Independence" began, and continued for ten years. One of the historical facts which distinguishes the black situation in Cuba from that in the U.S. is that the independence movement and the struggle against slavery were always linked together. This is one of the reasons why Cubans do not use the category "race" as we do. They insist that what they refer to as the "Cuban Nationality" began when their three peoples (Blacks, Whites, Mestizos) first united in 1868 to struggle for independence.

After the First War of Independence periodic eruptions continued until full-scale war broke out again in 1865. During this entire period, the decisive participation of Antonio Maceo and Maximo Gomez, black generals, and the Mambesi troops, former slaves credited with organizing guerrilla tactics at this early period, were crucial to the victories being won against Spanish domination. "Maceo and Jose Marti (a white Cuban, now referred to as the Intellectual Author of the Cuban Revolution) challenged every expression of racism and discrimination in the ranks of the Independence Movement. They represented the unity and purpose of all Cubans in the struggle for liberty."[1] It was only the intervention of the United States in 1898 which prevented a final Cuban victory in that year. By 1901, the U.S. government could manipulate Cuban politics and economics at will. With this domination came attempts by the U.S. to instill racist attitudes and to use racism to divide the Cuban people against themselves.

Institutionally, these attempts were successful and racism became the official state policy.

> Many racist practices were transferred to Cuba from the United States. The U.S. controlled government set up discriminatory civil service practices and prohibited blacks, who had fought so hard for Cuba's independence, from even serving in the police force.
>
> Cuban blacks remained relegated to a position of second-class citizens . . . [and] suffered all the traditional forms of humiliation found in a racist society. They were burdened with the hardest, most unskilled and lowest paid work. Black women, with some exceptions – as in the case of entertainers – could aspire to no more than being a maid or wash-woman. Many were forced into a life of prostitution. The beaches, social clubs and many better neighborhoods were Jim Crow. Blacks had less opportunities for edcuation [and employment] than whites . . . [and] lived in the most miserable conditions . . .
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> . . . This condition of inequality in social, political and economic life continued throughout the entire period of the 'pseudo-Republic' and only ended with the triumph of the Cuban Revolution.[2]

With such conditions in existence, Fidel Castro and the new government which came to power in 1959 had their work cut out for them. The legal basis for institutional racism was immediately declared null and void and Fidel stated "one must place the stigma of public condemnation upon

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photo by Leroy Lucas

those who, so full of past prejudices, are unscrupulous enough to discriminate against or abuse some Cubans because of a lighter or darker skin." Cuban government policy assures equality for all and no racist can hope to maintain any position of authority in Cuba today. Through such policies, the prejudice which persists is being fast uprooted.

We can look also at the fundamental social and economic transformations which have been brought about by the Cuban Revolution to gauge the success of efforts being made to overcome the consequences of racism. In the early years of the new government, agrarian and urban reform laws helped black peasants and city dwellers as they did other Cubans. The Agrarian Reform Law redistributed land, while the Urban Reform Law "abolished the parasitic landlord class and lowered rents to ten percent (10%) of income."[3] Homes, schools and hospitals are being built around the island, especially in rural areas. Cubans are guaranteed employment and pay no taxes. Education, at all levels, and health services are free. In the schools and universities, blacks and whites are being educated on equal terms as doctors, engineers, agronomists, technicians, teachers and administrators. Beaches and social clubs which were restricted are now free and open to all Cubans. "Black Cubans today enjoy political, economic and social rights and opportunities of exactly the same kind as white Cubans. They too bear arms in the Cuban Militia as an expression of their basic rights. For these reasons, Stokely Carmichael once described Fidel Castro as 'one of the blackest men in the Americas.'"[4]

It would be a difficult task to name all the blacks in positions of authority in Cuba. Major Juan Almeida, for example, was one of the original guerrillas in the Sierra Maestra, and is currently a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of Cuba and the primary leader of Oriente, the province in which many black Cubans live.

Blacks in Cuba represent some 25-30% of the population. "The majority of the white population naturally predominates numerically in most spheres of activity, *but they do not hold dominion over blacks without regard to the latter's interests.*"[5] (emphasis added) The distinction between or among groups of people is lost in Cuba because power is equitably distributed among them. Blacks have achieved dignity in the process of the Cuban Revolution and, having achieved their rights, "can in fact afford to forget the category 'black' and think simply as Cuban citizens, as Socialist equals, as men,"[6] as women, and as human beings. Though there are still some problems with prejudice, "one must at least tentatively conclude that without discrimination, the institutionalization of racism, and the economic inequalities, the underpinnings and support of racist behavior are severely curtailed. In Cuba, at

least, the direction seems very clear . . ."[7]

The position of black Cubans on the question of race is very thought-provoking. They, of course, are very critical of racism. In addition, they have a very strong anti all-black mentality. Having had the opportunity to spend two months in Cuba in 1974, permit me to provide an example of that mentality. A brother from Peoples' College in Nashville, Tennessee, had some buttons which read, "La Revolucion Es Posible/ La Solidaridad Afro-Americana Con La Revolucion Cubana" ("The Revolution is Possible/ Afro-American Solidarity With The Cuban Revolution"). The immediate response of several black Cubans was, "Afro-Americans only – no! All Americans – yes!" While it was thought-provoking, it also reflected a degree of arrogance, or at least some misinformation, as they seemed to be looking at our predicament through the eyes of their experience and projecting a strong multi-national or multi-racial perspective. We must be able to look at the objective historical development of their situation, and they must be able to do the same for ours.

It was also interesting to note that most black Cubans do not wear naturals or Afros, and many women still use make-up which reflects Eurocentric standards of beauty. While Cubans in general sympathize with our situation, they consider the Afro a symbol of protest and resistance and insist that their society is developing in such a way that black Cubans have no reason to protest. While in Havana one Sunday afternoon, we met and spoke with a group of five black Cuban women with 'fros. They were quick to point out that they were not protesting conditions in Cuba, but were expressing solidarity with black people in America and patterned their hair styles after Angela Davis, who has been there several times in the past few years. They are, without a doubt, Cubans first, blacks second. They would question, very severely, a narrowly defined Pan-African approach to problems because they live in a very internationalist-minded country and relate strongly to all oppressed and exploited peoples around the world, regardless of their color.

As an expression of sympathy and solidarity with our struggle, Cubans of all colors celebrate August 18th (the anniversary of the Watts rebellion) as the "Day of Solidarity with the Afro-American Struggle." Similar days of celebration were held for the struggles in Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and Vietnam. They continue to be held for Chile, Palestine, South Africa and other areas around the world where people are being denied freedom and self-determination. Cubans thus consider themselves as part of the movement to create a new humanity based on truth, openness and criticism, and to develop politics, economics and culture so they serve the masses of people and not a privileged few.

Black Americans can learn many lessons from the Cuban Revolution, among them the need for revolutionary social and economic transformation of society in order to bring about fundamental changes in the way that people live; the importance of political socialization and the institutionalization of mass participation in decision making; and the necessity for high levels of spirit, enthusiasm, discipline and sacrifice to effectuate change. It is crucial to bear in mind too that in the revolutionary process it takes time to overcome backward attitudes and habits which have been taught or forced upon people for centuries. High levels of political consciousness do not come into being simply because they are declared. Further, given the nature of multi-national capitalism, it is necessary for all peoples engaged in struggle to develop an international perspective. An internationalist perspective does not mean one abandons or denies the particularity of the predicament of black Americans, but it helps ensure that our struggle remains in the "mainstream" of that oppressed and exploited humanity which is moving toward full and complete liberation. We must know and remember that "colour has become (significant) because (white people) found it convenient to use racialism to exploit the black peoples of the world . . . and that for . . . so long as there are people who deny our humanity as blacks, then for so long must we proclaim and assert our humanity as blacks . . ."[8]

So it is, then, that we have the experiences of two groups of black people which can be compared, Black Cubans and Black Americans. The historical developments of the two experiences are parallel, yet different. Both have many lessons to learn from one another and we must not permit the existence of the "sugar cane curtain" or any other obstacle unilaterally imposed by the U.S. government to prevent the mutual sharing of ideas, materials and experiences.

FOOTNOTES

1. Jordan, Carl (Prensa Latina), "Blacks in Cuba." *Latin America,* March 15, 1970, p. 1.
2. *Ibid.,* p. 2.
3. *Ibid.,* p. 4.
4. Rodney, Walter, *Groundings With My Brothers.* Reprint, 1970, p. 31.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*
7. Bambara, Toni Cade. "Trip to Cuba," *Liberation,* Feb., 1974.
8. Rodney, p. 39.

paper cut by Members of Peoples' Commune in Fatshen

china: lesson in revolution

by Leah Wise

One of the unpleasant conclusions I've been forced to draw, reviewing experiences on the campuses giving slide show presentations about my visit to the Peoples Republic of China, is that a large body of our students is ill prepared for struggle. They exhibit nonchalance, ignorance or myopic self-centeredness about the Vietnamese struggle, the Chinese Revolution, the Cuban Revolution, even the African liberation struggles which more immediately "involve" us, as students are prone to say (as though we need be concerned only with those areas where Black presence is manifest). This North American madness, a resurgence of individualism (Do Your Own Thing) and alienation (all too visible in the re-emergence of Greeks, hair dye, "career" mania), cynicism and defeatism all demonstrate a marked retreat from the 60's.

There are invaluable lessons for us in the revolutionary thrusts of this age. They clarify what revolutionary change entails, what it means to transform society and organize it around human need and human worth rather than around profit and material status. First and foremost they teach us that oppressed people can take control of their lives. Twentieth century revolutions in the Third World demonstrate that the capacity of ordinary people, systematically underdeveloped people, is limitless when they are armed with a win-mentality. And any examination of any of these struggles helps to bring sharply into focus who our enemy is.

I picture the map of the U.S. as an intricate network of hoses extending into the Third World: Brazil; Venezuela, Chile; Indochina, Thailand, South Korea; the Philipines; the oil nations of the Middle East and North Africa; Angola, Mozambique, South Africa, Zaire, Kenya; the West Indies. These hoses are one-way pipelines continuously sucking up others' resources and impoverishing the rest of the world.

But today the hoses are being axed. Vietnam,

Cambodia, soon Thailand. Venezuela and Argentina are picking up the ax. Mozambique, Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde Island and Angola have hacked the hoses off. Even Portugal, upsetting the NATO Alliance. And Italy may be next.

The reduction of hoses means a reduction in available goods here. So the overconsumption of the U.S. is being halted from without. But the U.S. is a junky and will fight to keep on mainlining. And because we are here sharing in the spoils, however unequally, we will have to choose sides. Either we support imperialism or we defeat imperialism.

What I've attempted to do in the following discussion of China—a frustrating task in selection for there is so much to say—is focus on those aspects of change crucial to our understanding of "revolution." Our task is not only to change the substructure and superstructure of capitalism (external order), but our consciousness/attitudes/behavior (internal order). A major aspect of our internal struggle is to overcome narcissism, opportunism, our self-obsessed American orientation and to develop a collective consciousness. One simple thing the Chinese have done is to design nursery smocks with the buttons in the back. Children then develop early the habit of attending to each other.

To Serve the People

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The revolution in China has created a new society that has a human orientation, first and foremost. China is not more concerned with productive, material growth than with human development, despite the fact that she is a poor and "underdeveloped" nation. The socialist goals of realizing the equality of man and developing the goodness of man are the principles that determine the priorities in that society. Thus, the number one priority in China is the task of serving the people. And the remarkable achievements in this area over the past 25 years prove that such an agenda, however tremendous, can be accomplished when the commitment of the government and the people is unified and serious.

The most pressing social problems, those that most abuse the masses of people, were solved first. Thus China, the world's most populated nation, has conquered the problem of hunger and starvation—a particularly extraordinary feat considering the fact that she was in worse shape than India 30 years ago. At that time China was extremely vulnerable to floods and droughts, conditions which historically had produced recurrent famines and plagues and had her limited resources thoroughly exhausted from more than a decade of war. Applying the highest standards of technology, science and education, the Chinese people mobilized en masse to harness the waters and build irrigation systems. Several times as we traveled across the countryside by train, we saw brigades of what looked to be a thousand workers, soldiers as well as peasants, digging canals. Most had shovels and pick axes. (The army, a peoples army, not only engages in such public works projects, but is totally self-sufficient, growing its own food and making its own clothing so as not to burden the people with supporting its needs.) Chinese fields depict intensive-yield, horticultural cultivation. The plots are small, allowing greater access for watering and weeding. On a vegetable commune east of Kwangchow we even saw individually tied cabbage plants growing. No land is wasted. Constant effort is made to utilize every available space, including terracing mountainsides and draining swamps. Further, no pesticides or chemicals are used in food production. Thus, unlike the common practice in the U.S., swapping health for volume in production is not viewed as a beneficial short cut. Even so food prices have continued to drop since the Revolution.

from Medical Workers Serving the People Wholeheartedly

Health care is another key area where determination and mass mobilization have produced enormous achievements. First, attacks were launched against widespread, infectious diseases. Result: no more venereal disease, small pox, malaria and polio. The "Ban the Fly" campaign typified the mass mobilization effort: everyone turned in a daily quota of dead flies until extermination was accomplished.

However, the anti-vice Banning Movement,

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which successfully rid China of drug addiction and prostitution, is perhaps the greatest testimonial to the ability of peoples government to eliminate social disease. In Shanghai, a city once known to the West as the players' capital of the world, we visited Ta Ching Lane, an area of the old Hwang Po neighborhood that before liberation boasted of an active nightlife of opium dens, ballrooms, brothels and casinos. We met with neighborhood workers, including former addicts and prostitutes, who described for us their former misery and how they overcame it. The first act of the new communist government was to outlaw the whorehouses and opium dens that had been licensed by the Kuomintang (KMT – the government led by Chiang Kai-Shek), the government import of narcotics, and all sale and use of dope. For three years the government allowed madames, pimps, proprietors, addicts and pushers to end their illicit activities on their own initiative. Then, in 1952, a broad mass campaign was organized. Ta Ching Lane was cordoned off, mass arrests were made and all opium and related paraphenalia confiscated. The government treated the prostitutes and addicts with medical attention, education and training. The special neighborhood committees that had been set up to help ferret out anyone involved with vice did propaganda work among drug addicts' families to encourage them to receive them back and help them break their habits. Prostitutes, many of whom had been sold into prostitution by their destitute parents, were allowed to return home to the countryside. The government's actions toward dealers, proprietors and pimps were more severe: education and prison terms, the length of the latter often being determined by the neighborhood residents. Those who confessed their crimes were labeled "bad elements" and allowed to reform through labor, which means they had restricted civil rights (couldn't vote, for instance) and were watched carefully by the general populace until the thorough reform of their anti-social habits could be adjudged on the basis of practice, not rhetoric. But, as Tchai Uh-mi, a former addict who couldn't successfully give up her habit before liberation because dope was always available, summed up: China could never have gotten rid of dope without a socialist government and mobilization of the masses, for Chiang Kai-Shek himself had been involved in the drug traffic. It's an instructive point, especially brought home as the U.S. Border Patrol fails to control low-flying, dope-smuggling planes, and then blames another government agency for their inability to use military equipment such as radar, sensors and faster planes.

Preventive medicine has received primary emphasis in New China, which makes sense if your priority is a healthy populace rather than a booming pharmaceutical industry as in America. Many simple preventive techniques are employed daily: morning exercises; the wearing of face masks when folks have colds to avoid spreading germs. For the same reason, stamps and envelopes must be glued and not licked. Eye massages are done twice a day in all the schools and in many factories where close-up work is performed, and are responsible for reducing the rate of near-sightedness nationwide by 70 percent.

The Chinese also pay close attention to occupational health. Special annual physicals are given by plant doctors, particularly in those industries where the work is known to be hazardous, like mines and mills. Moreover, their medical research focuses on the most prevalent job-related problems. Thus, it is understandable why the Chinese have achieved the ability to rejoin severed limbs, which occasionally occur from farm and industrial machine-related accidents, while our more technically advanced society has not. Fingers and hands, for example, can be rejoined within 36 hours of severance.

Believing good health to be a right rather than

a privilege, the Chinese have taken steps to make medical care available to all. First, medicine and medical attention are cheap – free to retired workers and factory workers and half price to their families. (I paid full cost when I saw a doctor in Peking: 30 jiao (15¢) for the visit, 70 jiao (35¢) for the medicine.) Commune members pay two yuan per year, or approximately 1.5% of their cash income, which is paid in addition to a grain allowance. (The difference is that communes are collectively owned while factories are owned by the state.) By encouraging greater use of the less expensive, traditional Chinese medicine – acupuncture and medical herbs – medical costs have been on a decline since liberation. Secondly, training medical workers is a priority. Not only has the training of Barefoot Doctors ("para - professionals" instructed in first aid, simple diagnosis and treatment) vastly increased the supply of medical personnel, but the streamlining of curricula has shortened the training period of doctors, thereby more rapidly expanding their ranks. These strides are all the more astounding when one learns that less than two percent of the population had ever seen a doctor prior to 1949.

"Serve the People" has not only guided the provision of social services in other areas such as housing (under rapid construction, but still a problem), education (free to all), welfare (guaranteed employment and retirement income equal to 70 percent of wages) and the construction of an emergency, underground tunnel system that will enable the masses to survive a nuclear attack, but has also characterized the policies towards China's 54 minority peoples. The Koreans, Tibetans, Ta, Li, Mongolians and other non-Han Asians, six percent of the population that occupies 60 percent of the land, had for centuries been brutalized and suppressed by feudalistic landlords, warlords and the KMT armies. The new policy of the revolution is that the nationals must be served first and foremost. Priorities in Han education are the government of their autonomously administered regions, development of socialist culture and socialist construction, and increase of their population growth – in marked contrast to the strict birth control policy toward the Han majority.

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The Peoples Republic has made the creation of a new socialist person its second priority. That task means developing a socialist consciousness in people, i.e. a sense of collective responsibility and self-reliance. If society is to serve the people, then the goal of everyone must be to work first for the general good, in the common interest, rather than out of personal motivation or concern, be it individual, family or department. Thinking of oneself first eventually breeds selfishness, opportunism, corruption and, ultimately, exploitation.

Moreover, if society is to espouse collective responsibility, it must be founded on collective participation. It is essential that the people themselves make the revolution (for it is their lives that they are to direct). Their wisdom and experience is manifold and important. Thus, leadership must not only rely on and learn from that wisdom, it must also nurture it, expand it. Furthermore, belief in self enables creative contribution. So the Chinese encourage initiative and experimentation. Mistakes teach and, therefore, are essential to growth (individual and state). Training the people to think politically and scientifically has facilitated the development of self-reliance, giving them the tools to do for themselves. Hence, the Chinese masses study the theoretical works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Mao and utilize the principles therein to solve daily problems. For them, dialectical materialism is not an abstract dogma.

Learning self-reliance also has unleashed boundless determination among the people. Remember that old dictum "Where there's a will, there's a way"? The Chinese have proven it over and over, accomplishing "impossible" feats. The Russians, Americans and Germans – the supposed technical giants of the world – had all said, for example, that it was impossible to construct a bridge over the Yangtze (now Chang) River, because the currents are too strong, the winds too high and the silt too deep. Yet again by mobilizing everyone (often in their spare time), the Nanking area residents built it anyway. Even the fact that they had to take a year off at the very outset of the project to develop the special grade of high tensile steel needed (the foreign contract for it was canceled . . . aah . . . mysteriously) did not stop them. It is out of such practice that expertise develops and clarity of direction emerges.

Leadership in China offers an interesting contrast to ours. For in China, leadership is comprised of exemplary individuals, those who demonstrate in deed and thought their socialist consciousness, initiative, talent and will to serve the people. They are the most disciplined, the most self-reliant. It is these qualities that determine membership in the Peoples Liberation Army (PLA) and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), which is one reason these organizations command such respect in the new society. Prospective members must first be recommended and voted on by their peers (e.g. fellow production team members or class-

mates) and by their production leaders or teachers and administrators. They are selected on the basis of their practice. And, in the case of the CCP, applicants must also undergo self-criticism before their production unit or class (or perhaps the entire school). Leadership by example!

But how does a society go about transforming behavior? The first job is to reorient thinking, to change attitudes from which undesirable behavior springs. The Chinese have employed the process of criticism and self-criticism to approach the task of thought reform (or socialization, if you will). By setting up the criticism/self-criticism process throughout the society – it is performed in regular group study sessions, in individual study and via rectification campaigns directed at criticizing a particular political line – the people of China examine themselves, their ideas and actions, according to the yardstick of what is best for the collective whole. Obviously, individualistic values and their influence on one's feelings and behavior must first be exposed, then addressed. The whole notion of thought reform clearly evinces a love of humanity and belief in the perfectability of man. The Chinese have a slogan: "Man's capacity for re-education is almost infinite." Their techniques show a desire to win: at all costs they are careful to avoid destroying a person's ego or self-esteem in the process. To win people you engage them, not badger them. It takes patience and time to discover root causes of conflict and to work out problems and differences. Discussion, debate, exposé and coaxing are the tenets of this process. Coercion works against you and, consequently, is denounced. Thought reform takes time, but is rewarding in human terms. And without it, the revolution could not prevail. (For a full discussion of the thought reform process as rehabilitation in prison, see Allyn and Adelle Rickett, *Prisoners of Liberation,* Doubleday, 1972).

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The third priority of the Peoples government is the resolution of contradictions in society and the elimination of social inequalities. The Chinese identify three main contradictions: urban vs. rural, industry vs. agriculture, and mental vs. manual labor, and view their resolution as important both ideologically and methodologically (as it relates to economic development).

Despite its enormous population, China is overwhelmingly a rural, peasant country. Over 80 percent of the people live in the countryside. As in most countries, the standard of living is lower among the farming folk than among city dwellers. (And since development has proceeded according to the principle of self-reliance, there are noticeable differences in economic welfare among the communes from region to region.) China's solution to these irregularities is to urbanize the countryside by setting up factories and to develop cultural (educational and commercial) centers. Thus the material benefits of city life will be available to the masses, without bringing the masses to the cities. Overcrowded population centers they don't want. In fact the migration trend is the reverse of what we experience here. City folk, particularly the educated young, are moving out to the countryside to help develop areas in greatest need, and factories, for example, are sending some of their best workers out to build similar plants "amidst the fields."

A rural country with agriculture the mainstay of her economy, China has felt the urgent need for industrial development to speed economic growth. However, the Chinese have sought not to let the exigencies of industrial growth preempt attention to the agricultural sector. (The people must be fed.) Their effort, then, is to make industry serve agriculture, rather than develop in lieu of it. Thus, technological innovations are geared to the needs of farming.

Eliminating the qualitative differences between intellectual and physical work is an essential matter in a worker/peasant society that is run by and for the laboring people. So values in China reflect the new order. The work of the masses is physical; therefore manual labor is respected, not despised. Intellectual talents are crucial, but useless without the capability of practical application. The children of China are trained that their country needs workers who can use both their muscles and minds. Intellectual, physical and political development, then, are equally stressed. The change in the status of work means that children are lauded for striving to be good carpenters as much as good architects, or good mechanics as much as engineers. (In fact the talent of the latter reflects the former.) Even more significant, the Chinese are breaking down the rigid role definitions of what the capabilities of workers and intellectuals are by, for example, incorporating the expertise of workers in matters of design and engineering and having the "experts" perform mechanical tasks. Further, the new status of workers is embodied in the literature and art of the new society, which thematically reflect worker consciousness, emotions and life experiences. The worker, then, is on the pedestal.

Revolution Is A Process

You miss the essence of the Chinese Revolution if you look only at its material achievements, for the process is equally important and instructive. And it is a process that the Chinese people learned about as they participated in it.

Clearly the task of transforming an entire society and establishing a new order that benefits the masses of people is an enormous undertaking. The task of change, however, was not directed and carried out by some benevolent leadership body, but by the people themselves. "Serve the People" was the dictum, yes, but rely on the people and learn from the people were equally important guidelines. "Dictatorship of the proletariat" means that the workers and peasants of China have become involved in and taken hold of the reigns of command of their lives – of their workplaces, of their neighborhoods, of their army, of their government – working for the collective need and benefit, rather than for individual interest and whim.

By the time of the Cultural Revolution in 1966, the Chinese masses understood that, above all, revolution meant hard work, initiative and self-reliance, demanding great zeal, commitment, sacrifice and study. It should be remembered that no one had a blueprint of how to make revolution, of how to go about making the necessary changes in the various aspects of society to correspond with the new values of equality and collectivity. Peasants were faced with the job of carrying out land reform, of figuring out an equitable distribution of property and implements and, later, of how to collectivize and organize communes. Similarly, university personnel – teachers, students and administrators – were charged with reorganizing their institutions according to the tenets of the new society. Some had expected the liberating army or Party cadre (person of authority) to come in and supervise the specific changes to be made for them. It was frequently a task that took a long time to work out, involving much trial and error. In the same vein, prison officials undertook the task of re-educating counter-revolutionaries and criminals, guiding them in the process of discovering the root of their thinking and recognizing how their self-orientation had led them to their criminal acts, to then transform those values to consideration of the common good. The officials had no training in psychology or group dynamics. They were guided only by their sense of humanity and belief in the potential worth of people, regardless of their previous characters and practices.

Thus, socialist transformation was not a process that could happen overnight. No instant formulas here. Contrary to my naive understanding, even the obvious economic changes that had to take place necessarily occurred in stages. During the transition period, 1949-55, the Peoples government followed a policy of using, restricting and transforming capitalists who owned and operated profit-making businesses. Initially, then, capitalist enterprises were allowed to operate and, at times, were even subsidized by the government. During the next ten years, known as the period of collectivization, some enterprises became wholly state-owned, some became operated by joint state/private management, while others became cooperatives, notably in the handicrafts field. The state, 1956-66, even paid 5 percent interest to the capitalists for their nationalized properties, which amounted to nearly $45,000,000 annually, although some refused the payments to avoid the stigma of a capitalist label. (Who, after all, would want to establish himself openly as a capitalist – the class enemy – in a worker/peasant society?) Land reform has occurred in similar stages. First working their own private plots, the peasants pooled the bulk of the land and worked collectively, while retaining small, private plots.

The amount of land under private cultivation has shifted back and forth, experimentation being the order of the day, although the consistent trend has been toward greater collectivization. Peasants often jointly work their private plots as they do the communal land, and in a few more advanced communes, like Tachai, private plots have been eliminated altogether.

Despite the involvement of the masses in making the revolution, the goals and successes of the revolution were not automatically guaranteed. Dictatorship of the proletariat was not an abstract ideal, but a reality, and one that could be subverted. The recognition of the vulnerability of the revolution was the main point raised by the Cultural Revolution in the consciousness of the Chinese people. This lesson was learned as the masses became involved in the process of criticizing bourgeois tendencies, tendencies that easily could have turned the revolution around, taking it down the path of restoring capitalism and primary consideration of personal and private interests. To defend the revolution against backsliding tendencies frequently meant the whole society halted (schools closed, production stopped) for criticism and cleansing. The Chinese masses involved in criticizing bourgeois tendencies did not immediately understand that they were waging a power struggle. The development of this consciousness was best illustrated in the state-

owned Shanghai #17 Cotton Mill, presented to us by one of the original six workers who started the criticism campaign there.

Beginning appreciably earlier than their counterparts elsewhere (July, 1966), six mill workers put up the first big character posters in their factory, exposing and criticizing the revisionist policies of the plant management and the plant Party (CCP) Committee for:

1) totally relying on the technocrats to run the factory, which was breeding the tendency toward bureaucratic entrenchment abdicating the decision-making role of the workers to the experts;
2) using material incentives and bonuses to "stimulate" production, which encouraged self-interested motivation among the workers;
3) promoting "bad elements"* (former criminals or class enemies reforming themselves through labor) to high positions, and employing an unprincipled process in awarding promotions;
4) generally following capitalist principles of development, using profit-oriented cost accounting and emphasizing production (quantitative) as the priority consideration.

Through constant debate and dialogue the Original Six, all of whom were CCP members, slowly gained support for their criticisms, although the response of the Party Committee (PC) was direct and threatening. First the PC tried to split the ranks of the six, criticizing them for publicly exposing matters that belonged in internal Party discussions. Next the PC threatened them with expulsion from the CCP, and later with imprisonment. Nevertheless, the six workers continued to put up critical posters and debated all the more vigorously. Their support grew. The PC then brought in a workers' team to oppose the revolutionaries, and, eventually, rival factions formed. The struggle intensified. When the revolutionaries began seeking out other revolutionary workers from different plants in Shanghai and set up a city-wide rebel organization, the PC turned skillfully to the tactic of economism, to corrupt the workers' revolutionary will. It tried to buy off the workers by raising their wages and welfare funds, and to disburse their leadership by offering them trips around the country to talk with other workers. (It's the same tactic that workers here fall prey to, one of the more notable examples being teachers who initially strike for better classroom conditions or more relevant, creative curricula and end up settling for higher wages and fringe benefits.)

Then, after reading the CCP Secretariat's telegram congratulating rebel workers throughout China for their criticism campaign and urging them to usurp power back from the capitalist leaders, the revolutionary workers of the Shanghai #17 Cotton Mill realized their struggle was of a more serious nature than they had initially understood. They were not just criticizing some aberrant practices of a few managers and cadre, who individually had begun to overlook worker interests. Rather, they were engaged in a struggle over *power,* and were fighting to save the revolution and workerscontrol. It was a class struggle. The individual managers were not making isolated errors; they were following *class* policies, policies emanating from their positions of power and privilege. So the workers returned the extra money and, with renewed vigor, continued their struggle, seizing control of their factory by January, 1967. A Revolutionary Committee made up of members elected from the masses of workers (and not necessarily CCP members) became the new management body of the mill, working in coordination with the Party Committee.

(Postscript: One of the Original Six was Wang Hung-wen, who is currently Vice-Chairman of the Peoples Republic. He holds that position, not because he's "popular," young (he's in his thirties)

Comrades Wang Hung-wen, Mao Tsetung, Chou En-lai on the rostrum at the 10th National Party Congress.

photos from the Tenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China

*There are two categories of criminals in China. The first is made up of counter-revolutionaries who commit such crimes as murder, arson, rape, corruption, treason and espionage with the aim of counter-revolution. The second category is labeled "bad elements" and consists of those whose crimes are of a less serious nature: theft, blackmail, assault and battery, or those who were confessed dope dealers, brothel proprietors, oppressive landlords and capitalists, etc. before liberation. Often "bad elements" have been allowed to work in general society and reform their bad habits and attitudes through labor.

and handsome or, as in our country, because he can raise money and launch a successful election campaign, but because of his political practice.)

The mill workers summed up for us the political lessons they learned from participating in the Cultural Revolution:

1) Understanding the complexity of class struggle is key to the survival of the revolution. The enemies of the worker/peasant revolution are the bourgeois elements who try to subvert the revolution precisely because they seek to maximize their privileged status and pursue personal interests, in total contradiction to the collective principles of the revolution. Therefore, the focus of the struggle for the working masses is power.
2) Contradictions still exist that have contributed to the creation of new, privileged classes and their accompanying self-interested mentality. As long as society is organized to compensate people according to their work (socialist state), rather than according to their need (communist state), the real qualitative and quantitative differences in the work people do will mean that those with greater responsibility and authority will receive greater remuneration. The status and privilege associated with authority, responsibility and a higher standard of living, eventually gets rationalized as a right. These differences will intensify class struggle and, hence, must be nullified. This change of consciousness in accordance with the change of role or status can be seen on our own turf in the example of a Detroit tenants' group that took over the management (not ownership) of their housing complex in 1971, striving to serve their fellow tenants justly, but ended up exhibiting the same insensitive and neglectful attitudes characteristic of the preceding managers against whom they had organized.
3) Given the existence of bourgeois elements and the rise of new privileged classes, the people must be vigilant to safeguard the revolution and guarantee the proletarian dictatorship. In the words of a new CCP member, "Our struggle must never cease. The moment we relax, we have lost. Revolution is a constant process."

Thus, there is no such thing as a complete and final reform. We were assured that China would have many more cultural revolutions. And sure enough, as we left the country in mid-January 1974, big character posters began going up again, criticizing the ideas of Confucius and Lin Piao (former head of the PLA). The campaign focused on exposing the intransigence of old ideas and force of habit, particularly as they relate to the issues of elitism and sexism, by linking the thought of Confucius, who set the 2000 year-old cultural tradition of social inequality, male supremacy and rule by a small, educated elite, with that of Lin Piao who attempted to restore the rule of a few (experts) over the majority. And today, more than a year later, a major campaign is being waged that is exposing and criticizing the notion of "bourgeois right," i.e. the right to privilege and a higher standard of living, espoused by the new privileged classes.

Significant changes were instituted during the Cultural Revolution to help insure the process of revolution and the commitment of cadre to the proletarian dictatorship. Study groups were set up throughout the society-at-large to arm the masses with the principles of Marxism/Leninism and Mao Tse-tung thought, in order to help them wage class struggle, as well as to solve everyday problems. The criticism/self-criticism practice was expanded to involve mass criticism of government policies and debates by disseminating documents of the National Assembly and the CCP Central Committee nationwide. Revolutionary committees, the administrative organs representing the masses, were set up in all institutions—schools, factories, communes, hospitals, dance companies, etc. Most important, cadre schools, which combined practical labor with political study, were set up to correct the orientation and attitudes of cadre (especially teachers) toward the plight of workers and peasants, by having them live with them and share their lives. In industry, cadre began performing physical work (8 hours per week) as part of their weekly duties. Moreover, work was reorganized so as to encourage and utilize the ideas, initiative and expertise of all the workers in solving the problems of development. Result: *Every* plant we visited was at least 35 days ahead of production.

Major innovations were experimented with throughout the educational system. In an effort to reduce the time spent at book learning, courses and school terms were streamlined. Practical labor became a fundamental part of the curriculum. We saw primary students in Nanking, for instance, making oil filters for the automotive industry and growing vegetables for their own consumption—the practical component of their course work. Student/teacher relationships improved through the practice of studying together, criticizing each other and jointly devising lesson plans and curriculum materials. Grades were abolished and open book exams instituted, in the belief that learning

how to retrieve facts is more important than memorizing them. Even more noteworthy, the learning/achievement of the entire class was made the responsibility of each student. The teaching method was also changed from one of lecturing or cramming to one of elicitation, in order to promote student initiative and inquiry. However the process of selecting students for post-secondary level study experienced the most significant reform. In an attempt to counter the trend of cadre's children having the greatest access to higher education (which only enhanced the perpetuation of the developing privileged classes) and to open up advanced study to the most worthy, all middle school graduates must work for at least two years before applying to college. They are selected for further study on the basis of their work (attitude, performance, creativity, theoretical knowledge) by their fellow workers who elect them to learn for the group.

If nothing else, the example of New China demonstrates that a society, even a poor, developing one, can meet human needs, if it is determined to organize and do so. Doing that for one-fourth of humanity is no small feat. Further, it shows that in a planned economy, inflation can be whipped – a remarkable fact given the current inflationary crisis of the wealthy capitalist nations. Development in China has depended on the initiative and self-reliance of the people. Solving problems has rested in their hands. A healthy people, the Chinese are energetic and secure – qualities which result from their sense of participation in and control of their lives.

It's hard not to be impressed. It's important, however, not to write off their brilliant example as "good for the Chinese," and irrelevant to us. Knowing of China assists us in developing a global perspective of our own situation. Some of the more prevalent (critical) notions in our community about "Communist China" are that freedom and opportunity are non-existent, no avenues of mobility are open to common people and ownership of personal things is prohibited. Each statement exposes our own misconceptions, about these concepts even more than they reveal our ignorance of China. Consider how we define freedom in this country. Beyond civil rights, we think of it primarily in individualistic terms – the freedom to do whatever we want at any given moment, to follow any and every whim (as long as it doesn't hurt anyone, although too often that notion gets compromised) and to become whatever we want. We do not define it as the right to eat, to be healthy, to realize one's creative and productive potential or to control and influence the quality of our lives. Democracy for us here does not mean we're in the driver's seat; it merely gives us the right to comment.

For years people have sacrificed and struggled, seeking better opportunities. But beyond the negative (the need to flee oppression and exploitation), how have we positively defined that goal? Opportunity to do what? To get ahead? Ahead of whom? To have a chance to "make it?" To work for oneself? For the most part, opportunity to us has meant improving our lot in terms of what white folks have, or getting a piece of the pie, i.e. partaking of the fruits of American imperialism. We have let a consuming, materialistic orientation deflect us from seeking power.

This blinding orientation encourages us to act, but not in our own interests. For years black people sought military jobs, for example, as good employment. Yet we failed to realize the purpose of the U.S. military presence abroad to maintain the free expansion of American business, to guarantee new frontiers for runaway shops. Those runaway shops cause unemployment here. When the progressive Allende nationalized the copper mines in Chile, which provoked angry outcries here, the copper mines in Idaho and Colorado reopened and miners went back to work. But after the counter-revolutionary coup, Anaconda *et al*, reactivated their operations in Chile, and the U.S. mines closed again. In our blindness, we often support our own impoverishment.

Thus, a world view clarifies for us who our enemy is. And, once we understand that, we can recognize our victories and re-invest in our struggle here.

paper cut by Members of Peoples' Commune in Fatshen

Unfortunately, there is not yet a comprehensive directory of on-going workshops and publications concerning southern Black literature. The following list was compiled from responses to our questionnaire sent to the southern Black colleges, from pouring over back issues of publications like Black World *and* Black Books Bulletin *and from conversations with friends. Undoubtedly, we've missed many, having found no quick systematic way of reaching all. Perhaps someone, someday, will take on the task. Here's at least a beginning effort to reconnect the network in the South that has disintegrated so since the sixties.*

Bibliographies and Directories

Center for Afro-American Studies (Atlanta University) Papers: *Afro-American Folk Songs* by Wendell Whalum; *Bibliography #7; Bibliography #11; The Sea Islands* by Mary Arnold Twining.

Survey of Black Publishing, *Black World,* March, 1975: an annotated directory of Black publishers.

Appendix of *The Black Poets,* edited by Dudley Randall (Bantam, 1972): lists publishers, periodicals, tapes and records, video tapes and films.

BANC! Fisk University Library's Special Collection: information on books, manuscripts, and archival collections.

Afram Associates Action Library, 168 E. 130th Street, New York, N.Y. 10037: directories, bibliographies, listings, papers of Black theses.

Georgia Federation of Early Childhood Education: catalogue of books, materials and records in the GFECE Resource Room; includes an index of publishers and producers of educational materials, school supplies and equipment and film companies. Contact Director Ashibe at GFECE, 1471 Gordon Street S.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30310.

Journals

Aftermath of Invisibility (actually an annual book), a New Orleans Writers Conference publication, Xavier University; Glenn Godfrey, editor.

Akini Isi (irregular), poetry books published by the Uhuru family, P.O. Box 26057, Dallas, Texas. Imani Pamoja, director.

Black Jewel (biennial), student publication of Shaw University, Raleigh, N.C.

Borotoria Review (quarterly), University of New Orleans.

Expressions: A National Review of the Black Arts, Pyramid Press, 3217 Melpomene, New Orleans, La. 70125.

The Fisk University Herald (biennial), student journal, Fisk University, Nashville, Tenn.

Images: Us (annual), a magazine of student poetry and illustrations. Douglass High School, 225 Hightower Rd., Atlanta, Ga. 30318.

Jackson State Review (3 times a year), Jackson State University, Jackson, Mississippi; Dr. A. Cavall, editor.

Livin Fat (quarterly drama review), Grambling State University, Grambling, La.; Judy Mason, editor.

New Orleans Review, Loyola University, New Orleans, La.

Nkombo (quarterly), Journal of Neo-Afrikan/American Culture; Ahidiana, Inc., P.O. Box 3472, New Orleans, La. 70117.

Phylon (quarterly), Atlanta University; John Reid, editor.

Roots (quarterly), Black Arts Center, Houston, Texas; Lorenzo Thomas, co-editor.

Scribia (annual), a student publication of Grambling State University, Grambling, La.; Herman Burns, editor. (Sponsors an annual poetry contest.)

Southern Review, Lousiana State University, New Orleans, La.

History/Biography

A Voice from the South by a Black Woman of the South, Anna Julia Cooper, Aldine Printing House, 1892.

All Gods Dangers: The Life of Nate Shaw, Theodore Rosengarten, A. Knopf, 1974.

Allies for Freedom: Blacks and John Brown, Benjamin Quarles, Oxford University Press. (See Robert Harris' review in the March 1975, issue of *Black World.*)

Crusade for Justice: The Autobiography of Ida B. Wells, Alfreda McDuster, Univ. of Chicago Press, new edition 1970.

James Weldon Johnson: Black Leader, Black Voice, Eugene Long, Univ. of Chicago Press, 1973.

Josiah Walls: Florida's Black Congressman of Reconstruction, Peter Klingman, Univ. of Florida Press.

Jump at the Sun: Zora Neale Hurston, Marian Murray, Third Press, 1975.

Paul Robeson: The Life and Times of a Free Black Man, Virginia Hamilton, Harper & Row, 1974.

Somebody's Angel Child: The Story of Bessie Smith, Carmen Moore, Dell, 1975.

Literature

A Many Colored Coat of Dreams: The Poetry of Countee Cullen, Houston A. Baker, Broadside Press, 1975.

Afro-American Writing, Richard Long and Eugenia Collier. Anthology.

Ascending & Other Poems, Richard A. Long, DuSable Museum of African Art Press.

Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman, Ernest J. Gaines, Bantam, 1971. (The recent showing of TV version starring Cicely Tyson, necessitated second printing of 550,000 copies.)

In Love and Trouble, Alice Walker, Harcourt, Brace & Jovanovich, 1974. Short stories.

In the First Place, Melvin G. Brown, Liberation House Press, 1974. Poetry.

Long Black Song, Houston A. Baker. Novel.

The New Negro Renaissance, edited by Arthur P. Davis and Michael Peplowi, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1975. Anthology.

Personals, Arna Bontemps, Broadside Press, 1975.

Rhythms of Resurrection, Larry Tyner, 955 16th Avenue, Nashville, Tenn. 37208. Poetry.

Train Whistle Couiter, Albert Murray, McGraw-Hill, 1974. Novel.

The Way of the New World: The

Black Novel in America, Addison Gayle, Jr., Anchor/Doubleday, 1975. (The most important statement on the Black novel, bar none.)

Workshops

Afro-American Art Museum Creative Writing Workshop (summer), Bishop College, Dallas, Texas; Harry Robinson, director.

Afro-American Festival, Afro-American Cultural Center, Charlotte, N.C., annual; Clara Lowry, Coordinator.

Atlanta University Arts Festival (Drama, Film, Music), Atlanta, Ga., annual.

Black Arts Center's Imagination Center (writers workshop), 2801 Lyons Ave., Houston, Texas, on-going.

Charles Gilpin Players, Prairie View A & M University, Texas, on-going.

Clark College Writers Workshop, Atlanta, Ga., annual.

The Fisk University Creative Writing Workshop, Nashville, Tenn., on-going; contact Phil Royster.

Jackson State University Film Workshop, Jackson, Miss., annual; Writers Workshop (focus on dialect in literature, survey of black literature), annual.

Lorton Reformatory Writers Workshop, Lorton, Virginia, on-going.

The Neighborhood Arts Center of Atlanta Writers Workshop, on-going.

New Orleans Writers Conference, Xavier University, New Orleans, La., annual.

Shaw Film Festival, Shaw University, Raleigh, N.C., annual.

Sudan Arts Southwest (drama group), Shape Center, 3815 Live Oak, Houston, Texas, on-going (also sponsors occasional writing workshops); Muntu Meloncon, director.

Tennessee State University Creative Writing Workshops, Nashville, Tenn,. on-going.

Young Black Writers Workshops (off-campus), on-going; contact through Southern University, English Dept., Baton Rouge, La., Charles Rowell, coordinator.

GRAPHIC ARTISTS

Lucious Hightower
print-maker-in-residence
at the Neighborhood Arts Center, Atlanta

Richard Powell
poet/artist,
Clark College graduate now at Howard

Yvonne Cosby
prints and stationary
available at Arts N' Things, Atlanta

Edmund Marshall
photography teacher at Clark College

Mkali
a.k.a. Daniel Sanders (1953-1974)
artist/poet/musician/cement mason
drawings from his Atlanta portfolio

Robert Rucker
farmer/artist, originally from Texas,
works on exhibit throughout Atlanta

Sandra Kate Williams
Atlanta artist from Florida
art teacher in public schools

BOOK REVIEWS

Books about the South continue to be published in large numbers and great variety as is reflected in this issue's book reviews and listing of new publications on the South which follows the review section. In our lead-off review, Allen Tullos, a staff member of the Institute for Southern Studies and a graduate student in folklore at the University of North Carolina, reviews the most widely publicized book about the South to appear in years—James Dickey and Hubert Shuptrine's Jericho: The South Beheld.

Black Fayette County, Tennessee, residents, in a unique review of a book in which they are the subjects, bring us the realities of their lives in the present-day South—lives in which racial discrimination, economic exploitation and political domination are still very much the central features. Viola McFerren and Magnolia Horton comment on Our Portion of Hell, *an oral history of the struggle for civil rights in their county. It is a struggle which has been theirs, one they know and one they are most qualified to speak of. Robert Hamburger, the young, white, civil rights worker and college teacher who collected the taped interviews which comprise* Our Portion of Hell, *adds to this unusual review his comments about what it was like for him to make this book.*

Paul Pruitt, a native Alabamian and a graduate student of southern history at William and Mary, comments on southern publishing houses' resurrection of regional history and tradition through the reprinting of old books, while reviewing one example of this "trend," Gray Ghosts and Rebel Raiders, *the story of guerrilla warfare during the Civil War.*

While the government and big business gear up to exploit the country's bicentennial commercially and politically, a group of true patriots called the Peoples Bicentennial Commission have been hard at work to prevent the event from becoming a sham and a disgrace. Len Stanley, a community organizer, health professional and member of the Chapel Hill, North Carolina Bicentennial Commission, surveys America's Birthday *and other PBC publications.*

The next issue of Southern Exposure, *a special number on photography, will not contain a book review section. We will return in the following issue. As always, we invite your comments, criticisms and suggestions.*

—Cary Fowler
Book Review Editor

Jericho: The South Beheld, by James Dickey and Hubert Shuptrine. Oxmoor House, 1974. $40-$60.

Because we become what we behold we must try to see the whole, the big picture, as truly as we can. By choosing to see chiefly the old, the abandoned, and the quaint, both Dickey and Shuptrine are in need of some exposure to another country than their Jericho. Their big book, pretty and technically well-crafted as it is, is filled with specimens seined from the eddies and backwaters of the South, avoiding both the mainstream and the currents of change. We are shown remnants—abandoned boats, barnacled cannons, broken wagons, busted plows and fences, empty barns, stumpy trees, sedated black folk, sleeping dogs.

Jericho is mostly Shuptrine's book—dozens of watercolors interspersed with Dickey's prose images and anecdotes. And indeed, there are fine and delightful, carefully worked paintings, joys to behold. Yet so many dimensions of southern life, dimensions that would have quickened the pulse, are outrageously absent. Where, in this Old Testament fantasy of Promised Land, are the pictures of the bondaged people who clamored and marched against the banty pharaohs of Dixie? Shuptrine's fascination with the loneliness and isolation of the very old and the very young ignores the full-grown determination as well as the warm-blooded passions of a generation of Southerners who are struggling for community. Where there is stuff for a Peter Brueghel—rallies, music making, revivals, festivals, marches—Shuptrine only once in a hundred and one canvasses shows as many as two people in the same painting. In a land known for sunshine, he sees dried flowers, bare trees, eternal autumn and winter. These are pictures of a gone world, backgrounded in several instances by a smokey-brown dust storm which moves ominously to blur across the life of the paintings, obscuring faces and gravestones, threatening us with emptiness, providing camouflage for the coffee stains.

For his part, flickering, swooping, and hovering, ex-fighter pilot Dickey invites us to spiral around the South, dropping in to capture a fisherman here, a car thief there, a Coca-Cola over yonder. There are no traffic jams, no prisons in Jericho that the effervescent poet cannot bubble away from. He proclaims what we have already seen in Shuptrine, "I make no pretense at thoroughness and pose no sociological implications." As with the watercolors, we celebrate what has been recorded, but wish the vision had been broader.

Starting from St. Augustine, the oldest, and moving through "the glass and chromium battlemented commercial Utopia" of Atlanta, Dickey gives slight suggestion that he is angered by the onslaught of homogenized culture and cancerous urban overgrowth. He uses his fine ear for southern speech,

"I knows what I knows, I knows it, and I been knowing it," to recreate anecdotal dialogue which is alternately humorous, moving, and over-blown.

Dickey chooses not to behold the bulldozer in the pea patch, the tracks of extinction leading from the nuclear reactor pits, or the violence of southern institutions. Rather, he loves to detail the confrontations of man versus alligator, coon, or crazed cow, the personal intensity of a jealous shooting, the recitation of a bank robber's crime.

Now and then there are tender, lyric passages, beautiful in their conception. Everywhere there is the southern obsession with time past—sundials, cemeteries, the Confederacy, ruins, old ladies and faded roses. Cornbread and okra recipes receive more characterization than civil rights leaders—"We don't usually like meetings." In *Jericho,* Dickey is moved mostly to description, not to prophecy, never to rage.

All of the inadequacies of the book which I have catalogued are no doubt seen as virtues by the authors, and their publishers—Oxmoor House of Birmingham. The printing of 150,000 *Jericho's* has successfully trumpeted down walls of resistance to southern book hustling. No doubt much of this glory should be wreathed around ex-adman Dickey's head.

A few years ago a group of New Southerners insisted that we must become enterprising and entrepreneurial and that we could no longer eat magnolias. Dickey and Shuptrine have shown that mixed with black-eyed peas, ham hocks and rusty cannonballs, the big green leaves and wide white blossoms make a fine bowl of pottage in a land called Jericho.

—Allen Tullos

Our Portion of Hell, by Robert Hamburger. Photos by Michael Abramson. Links Books, 1973. $4.95.

Fayette County, the third poorest county in America, lies in the southwest corner of Tennessee, a 40-minute drive from Memphis. In 1960, 257 Black tenants were evicted from their farms for registering to vote and spent the winter in a "Tent City" on the farm of Shepherd Towls, a small Black landowner. The Black merchants who supplied these families were boycotted by oil companies, local Coca-Cola bottlers and others. The entire Black community suffered extreme intimidation and hardship in an effort to survive.

After many visits to Fayette County during which he formed lasting friendships, Robert Hamburger recorded people's accounts of the civil rights activity that led up to Tent City and the events following that climactic winter. These first-person narratives, which document the evolution of a local civil rights struggle from the 1959 trial of a Black man for murder to the present, dramatically reveal the value of oral history.

Tent City represents neither a beginning nor an end, but rather one of those heightened moments which everyone remembers and from which people seem to measure "progress." Today, white farmers wistfully remember their old tenants before that winter and complain now of not having enough help. Black families recall the dangerous nights and the gunshots of those days but express more concern with integration of the schools and the PTA and with the progress of the new health clinic. The young, power-laden county judge admits he has modified his prejudices as a result of Hamburger's book, but he still remembers the trouble those people caused.

Southern Exposure *went to great lengths in an attempt to secure a review of this book (or even a comment we could print) from a white elected official or prominent citizen of Fayette County. Even though* Our Portion of Hell *has sold over 500 copies in this county which is scarcely accustomed to having a book pub-*

lished about itself, no white person we contacted would consent to be quoted.

Thus the book is reviewed by the people it is about, by the people it was meant for. Viola McFerren, who with her husband John kept the evicted families of Tent City supplied with food and gasoline, expresses her feelings about the book and their lives today. Magnolia Horton, a high school student at the time, who spoke in the book of the situation in the public schools, is now a college student at the University of Tennessee at Martin. She relates her own and others' reactions to the publication of the book. Finally, Robert Hamburger explains how Our Portion of Hell *came to be written and what the process was like.*

When I first saw the copy of Our Portion of Hell *I felt then that an important portion of the Civil Rights Movement here in Fayette County had finally been documented. People who had not known many facts about the movement would have a chance to read them for themselves. So many people on the local level have shown so little respect for the movement and the people in the movement that we felt that should they read this book they would get a hold of themselves and evaluate from whence they've come and how they got where they are.*

The reaction of some of the whites here is that this is the first time they've heard this side of the story. Some of them seemed very concerned. Many whites stopped by to pick up copies of the book. Others sent Blacks in to purchase the book for them.

We feel that it is too soon to say what effect Our Portion of Hell *will have on this county. So far as we know it is not available through the public school library in this county. Many people stated that they didn't know the pressure and reprisals were so severe. When taped interviews were being taken for the book, some of the people were evasive in fear that when the book was published there might be reprisals. After the book was published and no one lost their life, some of the same people say they were left out of the book.*

Fayette County is not an awakened county in spite of its past history. Many of the opportunities fought for and won in the early sixties are gradually being closed to us. However, the responsibility of holding the opportunities gained and gaining others remains the responsibility of the Black community.

Many Blacks placed in positions through the work of the civic organization seem to have forgotten how and when they got where they are. The people that are identifiable with the Civil Rights Movement are usually left out or shoved out of everything by local whites and many local Blacks.

Just this fall a group of Blacks placed on jobs with the anti-poverty program through the recommendation of the Original Fayette County Civic and Welfare League, who were unable to get jobs before, are now, according to the grapevine, promoting a financial boycott against the organization. These are people being paid to help the poor community. Yet all their activities and offices are in the white community and they too join in with pressure on the Black.

– Viola McFerren

It pleases me a great deal to know that Our Portion of Hell *is being read and is bringing about positive reactions. There have been remarks made disagreeing with the book, but that was expected. Some of the remarks made – better yet, one particular remark – was that the book was one-sided and told all the bad parts of Fayette County, Tennessee, and nothing good. My opinion of this is that there was no other way to print the book. Mainly because honestly speaking there is nothing too good about Fayette County. The only way Robert Hamburger and the people in the book could get their point over to the people was to do just that, print the worst. The most important thing, though, was to print the* truth.

When I received a copy of the book, it was like a dream come true. The only problem was that as I read page after page anger aroused inside of me. I was aware of the things going on that were told in the book, but to sit and read all those dramatic experiences and to know that they were still going on touched the very center of my brain which produced more and more anger.

Then, as if to think twice, I became angry at myself, my Black sisters and brothers and elders for letting such a thing happen in a county where as Blacks we are three to one in the majority. That was my opinion then – but now everything has changed. These almost hidden powers of the Blacks in Fayette County, Tennessee, are coming to the light. I can't say the welfare office is dragging in every poor Black woman and child and making their lives easier to bear, but the number has increased tremendously. There's still nothing valuable education-wise in the schools, but the Black students are now getting themselves together and making their own education, or joining a military branch of service or doing something worthwhile in their lives.

We still have to go into Memphis (which is about 35 or 45 miles away) for emergency health care but at least there is a hospital going up in the heart of one of Fayette County's poorest towns – Rossville. I felt that the book might have inspired some of these changes, but I must give credit to my mother and all the other hard working Black leaders that made the book as well as most of these changes possible.

The whites haven't changed tremendously and probably never will. I know for a fact the majority of the whites will die in ignorance and in hatred for the Black man.

The main thing we've got to do is deal with ourselves and then the white man, mainly because if we're not together – not only in Fayette County but everywhere – we'll never accomplish anything. That is why progress is so slow in the Black man's struggle – because we have those who love to be pampered by Mrs. Mary and Bossman Rhea, only in the end to get their asses beat. These are the people that deserve to be called niggers. This influenced me to write the following poem entitled "Niggers."

Niggers are true at heart
Jiving, conniving – niggers – one of a kind
All the time, so soulful, so boss
So for real . . . Bullshit.

Burning to a "T" with soul, so bold,
So C-O-L-D. You, you are the bad
Mother that's going around claiming
Your role in society. You flakey
Piece of dirt . . . forever will you
Be in a rut . . . niggers, known
To the world as a rubber gut.

Cunning, shy, dancing, singing,
Screaming to the top of their lungs . . .
Hey, I'm Bad; Hey, Jack, check this out;

Join me on my route to Never Never Land.
Don't be afraid take my hand,
To hell with the fellow man.
Join in with the Great New Nigger Band!

I know this poem is a bit harsh, but it is the truth. It is something that we've been running from entirely too damn long. We as Blacks, not only in Fayette County but everywhere, should get together and do it fast. Not tomorrow, not in the morning or the next day. Black People Get Involved Now!

Like Maggie Horton said in the book, Our Portion of Hell, *"This is it, this is our Hell, this is all I plan to go to: With the exception of a little more heat on our ass this is Hell right here."*

Black People you'd better take heed and get yourselves together now and fast. Get involved today! For this is Our Portion of Hell!

—Magnolia Horton

When I first visited Fayette County as part of a civil rights project in the spring of 1965, our good will was easily matched by our vast ignorance. About all we were sure of was that the Black community was struggling to achieve worthy goals and that powerful elements of the white community were actively obstructing them. If we were essentially right in this view of the situation, our broad overview of the struggle in the South did little to prepare us for sharing day-to-day life with the people in whose cause we believed. We rushed to the South because of what we saw on television and read in the newspapers. The media made it clear to us that the struggle in the South was our country's primary moral challenge. I suppose that many young people must have felt as I did — that it was time to abandon the passive role of concerned observers and time to engage in creative political action that would help to change the ugly world that we so knowingly criticized from the comfort of our college campuses.

Those who accused us of being outside agitators were right. Our support of an embattled Black community surely qualified us as agitators. And virtually every relevant aspect of our identities — the northern cities and suburbs in which we were raised, our education, our wealth, our religions, our life styles, our ineptitude at manual labor, our accents, our physical movements, our whiteness — all this marked us as outsiders when we entered the homes of Black families in the third poorest county in America.

As a political agitator, my involvement in Fayette County was minimal. The project I participated in lasted only a couple of weeks. It has been as an outsider confronting a new community, new friends and new truths about American life that I have gained what I have from Fayette County. Many students in the project had pursued an ideal and found a reality that seemed too complex and overwhelming. Most served their time in the South and never returned. I saw much that was ugly and painful, but I had exchanged too much thought and feeling with my new friends in Fayette County to simply return North and look for new political adventures.

Over the past nine years I have returned to Fayette County numerous times, not as a political agitator, but as a concerned friend, a familiar outsider. The past few years have been difficult for my friends. In 1969 John McFerren, the leader of the movement, was chased from the steps of the county courthouse and cruelly beaten by a hired mob. Within the space of a year Scott Franklin, a founder of the movement, and Shote Wilson were murdered. Many Blacks have given up and moved out of the county in search of work, greater comfort and safety. Others have left the fields and sought work as unskilled night workers in local factories. The unfamiliar mechanical rhythms of factory work, the odd hours and substandard working conditions are brutalizing them as surely as the mob that kicked in John McFerren's ribcage. Federal economic

"OUR LONG NATIONAL NIGHTMARE IS OVER..."

—PRESIDENT GERALD R. FORD

"NO WAY!"

—THE PROGRESSIVE

No way is the nightmare over. Watergate was only a small part of it; rising unemployment, skyrocketing prices, shortages of housing, gasoline, home heating fuels, grain, aluminum. . . . For millions, the American Dream is turning into an American nightmare.

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Why are we beset by a shortage economy, intractable inflation, a looming depression, and the threat of more Vietnams? **How** can we end the nightmare and restore the Dream? **What** needs to be done?

"Our society cannot continue indefinitely to decay. It seems virtually certain that if the Left does not begin to give voice and direction to the growing anti-corporate anger, then a right-wing politician like Wallace will, through demagogic appeals to fear and uncertainty. It is a crucial time in which to work and build."

Harry Boyte
"Prospectus for a New Party"
in *THE PROGRESSIVE*

"We must first understand that, at present, everything in the American empire is for sale: morality, the public interest, politicians. . . . The travesty is that those who brought us the Indochina war and the arms race, the body counts and the smart bombs, that those who call corporate imperialism economic growth and who starve our society for private profit, have been able to come forward as men of gravitas and decency."

Marcus Raskin
"The System Impeached"
in *THE PROGRESSIVE*

"Our prosperity was built on the quicksand of militarism and monopoly. We mortgaged our future to both — so that we could exact discipline for the Pax Americana; now we must pay the mortgage by lowering our standard of living. The 'Band-Aid' economics of President Ford, whose geniality temporarily obscured his Nixonite philosophy, cannot *begin* to solve the crises of an imperialist economy."

Sidney Lens
"Running Out of Everything"
in *THE PROGRESSIVE*

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assistance is dwindling; federal law enforcement went out when Nixon came in.

All this has happened and is happening, and my friends in Fayette County are still stubbornly struggling for simple political and economic goals that most of us take for granted.

Our Portion of Hell, an oral history of the civil rights movement in Fayette County, is an account of how one community has fared from the early years when civil rights was a national issue up to the present, when this struggle has been rendered virtually invisible by those who decide what news is worth reporting (and, I might add, what books are worth reviewing). My purpose in assembling the personal narratives that make up this book was not, primarily, to produce an historical document, but rather to assist my Fayette County friends in bringing their case before an audience that might otherwise exclude them from their image of reality.

It was particularly important that *Our Portion of Hell* create as much direct contact as possible between the reader and the people of Fayette County themselves. In some ways it might have been easier for me to simply sit down and write what I knew rather than go chasing around the unmarked roads of a county 704 square miles in size looking for the 35 men and women whose personal narratives make up the book. However, it would have been terribly inappropriate for me to describe the thoughts and feelings of people who have spent a good part of the past ten years thinking and feeling and talking about the movement that they themselves created. It is their community, their lives and their movement that the book is about – and it is their book.

I felt strongly enough about keeping myself out of the book to break my first publishing contract. My editor demanded that I do more to subdue my material. She suggested that I edit the narratives more aggressively and that I add a good deal more of my own commentary to the text. The general thrust of her criticism was that the book would be more palatable if I were to become a greater presence within the text; she wanted me to mediate between the reader and the spoken narratives. I tried unsuccessfully to explain the condescension and paternalism that such an approach implied. My friends in Fayette County can speak for themselves. They can communicate with clarity, intelligence, passion and humor. There is no need for a translator. Surely their indigenous movement has proven that they can speak for themselves. The civil rights movement in Fayette County has been a communal effort, and *Our Portion of Hell* is a communal undertaking that reflects the diversity of lives that gave the movement its strength. To read the book is to confront the people of Fayette County directly. There is no need for me to take you on a guided tour of history.

Just a few words about Viola McFerren and Magnolia Horton – a remembered moment for each of them. The day I interviewed Viola was pretty much an average day for her – getting the five children off to school, working twelve hours at her husband's store: pumping gas, cooking lunches, receiving deliveries, working the cash register, then meeting with various visitors to discuss details for a forthcoming meeting. When she sat down to talk to me she was exhausted. Her children were grouped close to her, and Harris, her youngest son, was sleeping in her lap. Viola and I have known each other since my first visit, so very little of her powerful narrative was new to me. But as she recounted the past – her paralyzing fear at the outset of the movement, the ugly, threatening phone calls, the attacks on her home and her husband, the cruel abuse of John Jr.

by school officials – as she told me all this with her children pressed close to her, I was deeply moved. Viola looked right at me, and simply, undramatically, she said, "It's not worth it, things as they are. Life's not worth living. So what does it matter if a few people have to go to make it better for others?" To live with such thoughts is difficult enough; to be able to share them with one's own children demands a strength of character that few people achieve.

I can also recall my interview with Magnolia Horton and her mother Maggie Mae. Their home seemed totally chaotic, exploding with children – children waking up, children going to bed; some bathing quietly, others noisily spilling into the house covered with dirt; children crying, laughing, yelling and silently staring at me. The door kept banging. Pokey was crying because Donald threw a live chicken at him. Jerry Jean, Irma Jean, Dorothy Jean, Caroline and Margaret moved in and out of the room on various errands. Little Tina had clamped her fingers in my beard and refused to let go. In the midst of all this I was taping my interview with Maggie Mae and Magnolia. At times we were virtually yelling at each other in order to be heard. When the interview began, I felt annoyed and distracted by all the noise and confusion, but as things went on I was drawn into Magnolia's story and I hardly noticed the confusion around me. What had seemed like pure insanity now seemed like a kind of family dynamic – a source of energy that gave Magnolia and her mother their sassy independence. The continual flow of family life around her has helped keep Magnolia going as she grew up during the difficult years of the movement.

Now when I stop by the Horton place for an afternoon and see little Tina, or Jermaine, or Pokey, Tony and Caroline careening about the house, I wonder when the joyful energy of their childhood will run up against the portion of Hell that still remains for them. I hope they will be as tough and proud as their older sister when they are finally forced to face the world, but there is no way to be absolutely certain. I am certain that twenty years from now they will have much to add to their family's account of the civil rights struggle in the South. And I wonder how many people will care enough to listen. There is so much all of us can gain if once again we learn to share our lives with one another.

– Robert Hamburger

Gray Ghosts and Rebel Raiders, Vols. I and II, by Virgil Carrington Jones. Mockingbird Press, 1975; with some thoughts on southern publishing.

As the Civil War Centennial approached, a number of books were written in celebration of either the Lost Cause or the Glorious Union. At least one writer, "Yankee" Bruce Catton, achieved a national exposure rarely bestowed upon an historian. The two volumes of *Gray Ghosts and Rebel Raiders* (which stand behind the Cause,

obviously) are products of such fratricidal enthusiasms. Both have been revived by Mockingbird Press of Covington, Georgia, as part of that company's attempt to interest southern readers in an increased paperback consumption of regional mythology. Should the books sell, the thin ranks of unreconstructed Southerners may take on some recruits.

Gray Ghosts is masculine romantic history. V.C. Jones brought considerable research and a grimly flamboyant style to the task of tracing the hit-and-run strategy of Mosby and other partisan rangers. For the present-day reader, Jones brings out one of the most revolutionary aspects of the Confederate national effort. His citizen soldiers wage a zealous guerrilla warfare that is all too familiar to Americans of the Vietnam era. Likewise the northern response to the rangers—terror campaigns and the "scorched earth" policy—is predictable to anyone familiar with counter-revolutionary tactics. Jones tries to be even-handed with the Yankees, but he clearly has no patience with the decision to destroy the Shenandoah country which Grant and Sheridan reached so easily in August of 1864. Biased or not, however, *Gray Ghosts* is a useful treatment of a particularly fleeting subject.

The work of Mockingbird Press is part of an interesting regional trend—the number of southern presses is on the rise, and reprints are evidently in demand. Mockingbird's inexpensive collection includes Ishbel Ross' spotty history of a woman spy, *Rebel Rose,* and Jesse Stuart's minor classic, *Taps for Private Tussie,* together with assorted Confederate memoirs. Using an entirely different approach, on the other hand, Beehive Press of Savannah is printing collectors' editions of such rare books as eighteenth century traveler Louis Milfort's *Sojourn in the Creek Nation,* and Joel Chandler Harris' *Uncle Remus* tales. And in Texas, Porcupine Press is reproducing nineteenth century southwestern works. In short, a number of people are investigating the original sources of the southern past. Since the older southern thought, from the level of court house talk to *The Sound and the Fury,* was framed in concrete images based upon an organic culture, the exposure of real sources may counteract some of the homogenized plastic Americana that entered the region during the sixties.

While southern publishing has grown, the collaboration of various organizations and presses has produced a remarkable crop of literary and cultural magazines. Young editors have reported unmanageable bursts of usable, unsolicited contributions pouring into their financially strapped offices. Critical victories are no substitute for sound planning, as the editors of *Southern Voices* discovered; but if the new magazines survive, they will make up an important part of a regional publishing establishment. Certainly the development of a responsible sectional voice could mean more than the pleasant spectacle of national uniformity on the retreat.

It seems that the larger nation alternately patronizes or preaches to the South. In popular white art, for instance, *Gone With the Wind* or Phil Harris singing "That's What I Like About the South" gave way to *Easy Rider* and Neil Young singing "Alabama." The current vogue for anything remotely down-home in rock music marks another turn in the cycle, just as the eager exploitation of this interest is typical of the pattern. Of course, it is even easier to point out the South's confused resentments to sermonizing from the northern media; witness the long career of George

Wallace. But resentment of exploitation and preoccupation with national dynamics diminish the continuity and development of worthy traditions and an unselfconscious southern culture.

Perhaps as the region's publishing organs improve, as original sources and serious popular journals encourage reflection, then Southerners may again rethink the old culture by contributing to it. If literate men can divorce themselves from exaggerating, or defending, or lamenting the demise of a regional consciousness, we may have a novel renaissance on our hands.

—**Paul Pruitt**

America's Birthday: A Planning and Activity Guide for Citizens' Participation During the Bicentennial Years, by Peoples Bicentennial Commission. Simon and Schuster, N.Y., 1974. 189 pages.

"I hope we shall crush in its birth the aristocracy of our moneyed corporations, which dare already to challenge our government to a trial of strength and bid defiance to the laws of our country."

Thomas Jefferson, 1814

Within a lively and impressive array of revolutionary quotes, posters and historical reenactments, the People's Bicentennial Commission has written an excellent community activity manual for the Bicentennial era. In fact, the PBC approach to community power structure research and populist programs are good guides for any community organizing effort, but the particularly creative way they have interwoven our revolutionary past and the issues of 1776 into analysis and programs for 1976 makes this book an indispensable counter to the red-white-and-blue "Sell America" corporate Bicentennial we will experience within the coming year.

America's Birthday begins with an historical overview of the issues of the American Revolution, written in strong language and interspersed with the stirring declarations of those times. The historical perspective strives to focus on the uprisings of the people themselves, and the issues pinpoint areas of vital concern today. The remainder of *America's Birthday* is divided into two basic sections: "Community Programs for a People's Bicen-

tennial" and "Student and Teacher PBC Programs." There is considerable overlap between the two, but both provide colorful ideas underpinned with important questions of political education which should constantly be raised.

In the Community Programs section, PBC provides several key strategic areas which could be the focus of campaigns, but their major program is comprehensive tax reform. The approach is primarily at the community level, using research to raise issues of property tax assessments and industry underassessments, regressive taxes, "Loophole" Bank and Trust companies, and questions of city services and schools—who benefits and who pays. But their hope is clearly for something bigger: "America in its Bicentennial years needs more than a movement for closing loopholes and 'distributing the burden more evenly'; we need Tax Equity for Americans—TEA—a new party, a movement that will treat tax reform as one aspect of a fight for genuine equality of property and power and against taxation without representation."

The student-teacher section is the best material in the book, and fortunately so, considering who will probably use it the most. It includes an excellent alternative curricula which examines educational structures (cooperation vs. competition, tracking, student bill of rights) as well as provides multitudes of questions for debate, community research, drama and art projects, and oral/visual history projects. Although the programs focus on high school students, there is also a section which calls attention to universities' impact on land development and housing in the surrounding community, on university connections to corporate research, and on investments of university funds.

America's Birthday and other of the PBC Common Sense publications have been criticized for being too media oriented, too shallow and opportunist a view of community organizing. Yet the very timeliness of the book is also its strength. The PBC has managed to pull together some creative channels for a growing anti-corporate, anti-capitalist sentiment at a point in our history when there is a ready-made arena. Every corporation, bank, insurance company, city hall and merchants association—not to mention schools and civic groups—will be selling themselves and their products via patriotism and bicentennialism. (It may even replace women's bodies this year as the primary advertising gimmick.) PBC anti-corporate education will be a valuable juxtaposition to the corporate onslaught and, consequently, a much-needed "opportunism."

For striving to revive a sense of pride and recognition of our revolutionary past, for exposing the vacuousness of those principles today in capitalist America, and for providing a creative set of tactics to heighten the contradictions—within which newly-aware people can actively participate—the PBC is to be commended.

—Len Stanley

SCEF Recipes: A Radical Cookbook. Available from the Southern Conference Education Fund, 3210 West Broadway, Louisville, KY 40211, for a $3.00 donation.

Short of money, we make do with beans, pasta, potatoes. We must stretch the meat and substitute proteins that cost less. Short of time, we open cans, throw things together. No one can come home from a picket line, a meeting, a session in court and start an elaborate composition.

—from SCEF Recipes: A Radical Cookbook

This is a practical cookbook for busy people—political people—for whom eating is not the sole reason for being, is not the end but the means. Such people demand good, nutritious food. But they don't have all day to fix it, nor do they have a sack full of money to purchase it.

SCEF Recipes was produced by the Southern Conference Education Fund and its friends. The recipes are clearly laid out, easily followed and devoid of *haute cuisine* lingo. Unlike most cookbooks that keep you running to the grocery store, you already have all the ingredients needed for most of SCEF's recipes. The book's several hundred recipes cover everything from soups, vegetables and main dishes to breads, desserts and party dishes. They're conveniently bound in a spiral notebook, allowing the book to lie flat so you can read and concoct at the same time.

Finally, SCEF tells you a little about the donors of each of the recipes so you know they come from friends rather than the laboratories of General Foods.

ANNE BRADEN'S SPAGHETTI — Anne Braden

"A natural for big crowds, of course, is spaghetti. Everybody knows how to fix this in some form, but lots of people say they like my sauce (nothing flatters a non-cook like me more than a compliment on a meal)."

2 pounds hamburger
2 or 3 large green peppers (when expensive, reduce amount)
3 or 4 large onions
oil
2 medium cans tomatoes
2 small cans tomato sauce
2 small cans tomato paste
garlic salt
pepper
oregano
1 pound spaghetti
grated cheese

Cut up peppers and onions, not particularly small. Put in skillet with cooking oil. When vegetables soften, add hamburger, crumbled. (When you have vegetarian guests, do the meat balls separately.) While hamburger is cooking, put tomatoes, sauce, and paste in a big cooker and season with a good bit of garlic salt, pepper, and oregano. When hamburger is done, dump it and vegetable mixture into the tomato mixture, and cook it together. Be sure to drain the grease off the hamburger first. Obviously, if it has time to simmer awhile it is better, but it can be served as soon as the spaghetti cooks. Add grated cheese in quantity desired.

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The Verse by the Side of the Road, by Frank Rowsome, Jr. E.P. Dutton and Co., 1966. $1.45.

This recently discovered little paper back is the definitive (published) history of the Burma-Shave signs – rural highway art supreme, before the interstates robbed the back roads of their traffic and signaled the demise of the tiny billboards. It includes all 600 Burma-Shave roadside rhymes – ones you've forgotten and the ones you missed – that were erected between 1926 and 1963 (when the company sold out to Philip Morris).

The book obviously wasn't meant for scholars, but Rowsome has put together an interesting and revealing narrative – corporate history told through jingles. At $1.45 it's the cheapest nostalgia on the market.

The Draftee
Tried a Tube
And Purred
Well Whaddya Know
I've Been Defurred
Burma-Shave

This Cream
Makes the
Gardener's Daughter
Plant Her Tu-Lips
Where She Oughter
Burma-Shave

The Whale
Put Jonah
Down the Hatch
But Coughed Him Up
Because He Scratched
Burma-Shave

Walker Evans: Photographs for the Farm Security Administration 1935-1938. A Catalog of Photographic Prints Available from the Farm Security Administration in the Library of Congress. Introduction by Jerald C. Maddox Da Capo Press, 1975. $8.95.

The treasured photographs of Walker Evans in *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* constitute only a small portion of the photographer's work in his most creative period. During 1935-1938, Evans took hundreds of pictures for the FSA, the majority of which remained heretofore unpublished. Now Jerald C. Maddox, the Curator of Photography at the Library of Congress, has produced a thoroughly documented catalog of Evans' photographs which promise to satisfy our curiosity raised years earlier by Evans' stark portrayal of the lives of tenant farmers in the Deep South. Over 550 photographs are reproduced in this volume and information is given on how to obtain prints from the Library of Congress.

Books on the South

This list is comprised mainly of works published since the last issue of **Southern Exposure** *or scheduled to be published by the end of July. The entries have been placed under several broad, loosely-defined categories for your convenience.*

Mention of a book here does not preclude its being reviewed in a future issue. Unsolicited reviews of publications concerning the South or of general interest to our readers are always welcomed. Preference is given to recently released books.

A selection of dissertations recently accepted for the Ph.D. degree is also given. Copies of the dissertations below are available from Xerox University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106, at a cost of $5 for microfilm or $11 for xerox copies, plus shipping and handling charges.

Biography and Autobiography

Booker T. Washington Papers: 1889-95, Volumes 3 and 4, edited by Louis R. Harlan et al. University of Illinois Press, 1975. $17.50.

Country Gentleman, by Chet Atkins and Bill Neely. Ballantine, 1975. $1.50.

The Dukes of Durham, 1865-1929, by Robert F. Durden. Duke University Press, 1975. $9.75.

Governors of Alabama, by John C. Stewart. Pelican, 1975. $12.50.

"Hodding Carter: Southern Liberal, 1907-1972," by James Robinson. Dissertation. Mississippi State University.

Lonely Hunter: A Biography of Carson McCullers, by Virginia Carr. Doubleday, 1975. $12.50.

Southern Ladies and Gentlemen, by Florence King. Stein and Day, 1975. $8.95.

Trial of Martin Luther King, by Alan Westin and Barry Mahoney. T.Y. Crowell, 1975. $7.95.

Us Poor Folks and the Things of Dog Flat Hollow, by Donald L. McCourry. Blair, 1975. $6.95.

Economics, History and Politics.

Alabama Constitutional Commission: A Pragmatic Approach to Constitutional Revision, by William Stewart, Jr. University of Alabama Press, 1975. $6.95.

Ants and the Elephants: The Changing Political Economy of Tobacco, by Charles K. Mann. Olympus Publishing Co., 1975. $7.95.

Black Economic Development, by Flourney A. Coles, Jr. Nelson-Hall, 1975. $9.95.

Black Employment in the South: The Case of the Federal Government, by R. Lynn Rittenoure. University of Texas Bureau of Business Research, 1975. Price not set.

Black Pastors and Leaders: The Memphis Clergy, 1819-1972, by David M. Tucker. Memphis State University Press, 1975. $8.50.

Civil Rights History-Writing and Anti-Communism: A Critique, by Hugh Murray, Jr. American Institute for Marxist Studies, 20 E. 30th St., New York, N.Y. 10016. 1975. $1.00.

Colony of North Carolina, by Dan Lacy. Watts, Franklin, Inc., 1975. $3.90.

Confederate Blockade of Washington, D.C., by Maryellis Wheels. McClain, 1975. $7.95.

Florida Adventures of Kirk Monroe, by Irving Leonard. Mickler House, 1975. $12.50.

Florida Experience: Land and Water Policy in a Growth State, by Luther J. Carter. Johns Hopkins Press, 1975. $15.00.

Four Centuries of Southern Indians, edited by Charles M. Hudson. University of Georgia Press, 1975. $3.00.

Georgia and the Revolution, by Ronald Killion and Charles Waller. Cherokee, 1975. $10.00.

Glory That Was Texas, June R. Welch. GLA Press, 1975. $12.95.

History of Education in McDowell County, West Virginia, 1858-1976, by Joseph Fridel. McClain Printing Co., 1975. $10.00.

History of Fentress County, Tennessee, by Albert R. Hogue. Reprint of 1916 edition. Regional Publishing Co., 1975. $10.00.

History of Fort Myers Beach, Florida, by Rolfe F. Schnell and Randy White. Island Press, 1975. $4.95.

History of Woodford County, Kentucky, by William Railey. Genealogical Publishing Co., 1975. $17.50.

Justice Accused: Antislavery and the Process, by Robert Cover. Yale University Press, 1975. $15.00.

Kennedy's Decision: The U.S. Sends Troops to Ole Miss, (Decision series). Chelsea House, 1975. Price not set.

Life of Nathan Bedford Forest, by Jahn A. Wyeth. Press of Morningside Bookshop, 1975. $20.00.

Locust Hill, by Mary W. Kirk. University of Alabama Press, 1975. $6.75.

Minority Studies: An Annotated Bibliography, by Priscilla S. Oaks. G.K. Hall, 1975. $28.00.

Mr. Charlie: Memoirs of a Texas Lawman, by Charlie E. Munson. Madrona Press, 1975. $8.50.

My Eighty Years in Texas, by William Zuber, University of Texas, 1975. $3.50.

"Myth and Agony: The Southern Woman as Belle," by Anne Ward Lyons. Dissertation. Bowling Green State University.

New Orleans: A Chronological and Documentary History, by M. Siegel. Oceana, 1975. $7.50.

"The New South in Black and White: Afro-American Fiction from the End of Reconstruction Until the

First World War," by Ronald Chandonia. Dissertation. Emory University.

North Carolina: Atlas of a Changing Southern State, edited by James W. Clay et al. University of North Carolina Press, 1975. $17.95.

"Northern Volunteers and the Southern 'Freedom Summers,' 1964-1965: A Social History," by Mary Rothschild. Dissertation. University of Washington.

"Old South, New South: Continuity and Change in a Georgia County, 1850-1880," by Frank Huffman. Dissertation. Yale University.

The Other South: Southern Dissenters in the Nineteenth Century, by Carl N. Degler. Harper-Row, 1975. $3.95.

Placenames of Georgia: Essays of John Goff, by John Goff. University of Alabama Press, 1975. $16.00.

Politics in the Border States: A Study of the Patterns of Political Organization and Political Change Common to the Border States – Maryland, West Virginia, Kentucky and Missouri, by John Fenton. Reprint of 1957 edition. Russell and Russell, 1975. $18.00.

"A Profile of Runaway Slaves in Virginia and South Carolina from 1730 through 1787," by Lathan Windley. Dissertation. University of Iowa.

"Race, Sex, Grade Level, and Disadvantageness in Feelings of Alienation Among Adolescents in a Southern School," by Walter Allen. Dissertation. University of Georgia.

"Regionalism in American Literature: Southern Local Colorists in an Industrial Nation," by Kathleen Light. Dissertation. University of Minnesota.

Revolutionary Virginia: The Road to Independence, the Committee and the Second Convention, 1773-75, a Documentary Record, Vol. 2, edited by Robert Scribner. University Press of Virginia, 1975. $20.00.

"Schools and Schoolmen: Chapters in Texas Education, 1870-1900," by Stewart Smith. Dissertation. North Texas State University.

Slavery: Its Origins and Legacy, by J.D. Duff and L.A. Greene. T.Y. Crowell, 1975. $3.75.

"South Carolina and the Issue of Internal Improvement, 1775-1860," by Norman Raiford. Dissertation. University of Virginia.

Southern Politics and the Second Reconstruction, by Numan Bartley Hugh Graham. Johns Hopkins Press, 1975. $10.00.

"Southern Senators and Isolationism: A Longitudinal Study," by A. Mario Periz-Reilly. Dissertation. University of Tennessee.

South Florida's Vanished People, by Byron Voegelin. Island Press, 1975. $2.95.

Strategies for Change in the South, by Thomas H. Naylor and James Clotfelter. University of North Carolina Press, 1975. $14.95.

Studies in Rural Development, (Studies in Human Resource Development). University of Texas Bureau of Business Research, 1975. Price not set.

"A Study of Outmigration of Workers from Southeastern Metropolitan Areas," by James Eblen. Dissertation. University of Tennessee.

Texas Traditions, by Ross Phares. Pelican, 1975. Price not set.

Understanding Texas Politics, by Richard Kraemer et al. West Publishing, 1975. $7.95.

U.S. Coal and the Electric Power Industry, by Richard Gorden. Johns Hopkins, 1975. $12.50.

Virginia Supreme Court: An Institutional and Political Analysis, by Thomas Morris. University Press of Virginia, 1975. Price not set.

Women's Legal Handbook Series on State Government Affirmative Action Programs Today, (18 volumes including coverage of AA in southern states). V. Ford Associates, 1975. Prices differ per volume.

Folklore, Music and Art

Crafts of Williamsburg, by the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1975. $4.95.

Early Georgia Portraits, 1715-1870, compiled by Marion C. Bright. University of Georgia Press, 1975. $25.00.

English Silver at Williamsburg, by John D. Davis. Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1975. $7.50.

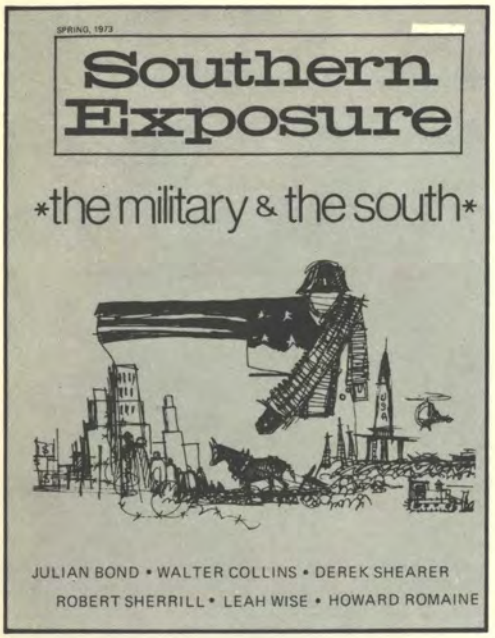
Garden Sass: A Catalog of Arkansas Folkways, by Nancy McDonough. Coward, McCann and Geoghegan, 1975. $4.95.

Stories of Georgia, by Joel C. Harris. Reprint of 1896 edition. Gale Research Co., 1975. $14.00.

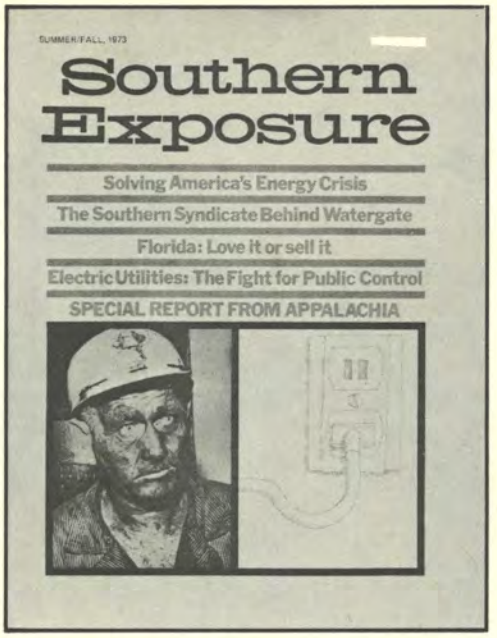
Geography

Southeastern States. Rand McNally, 1975. $3.95.

Southern Appalachians: A Wilderness Quest, by Charlton Ogburn. Morrow, 1975. $14.95.



Vol. I, No. 1. THE MILITARY & THE SOUTH. Julian Bond and Leah Wise on "Our Culture of Violence," New Orleans draft resister Walter Collins speaks from prison, an Atlanta Lockheed employee blows the whistle on the C-5A, Robert Sherrill talks with William Proxmire and Les Aspin, Derek Shearer on "Converting the War Machine." Plus a 40-page analysis of what defense spending means to the South. $2.50



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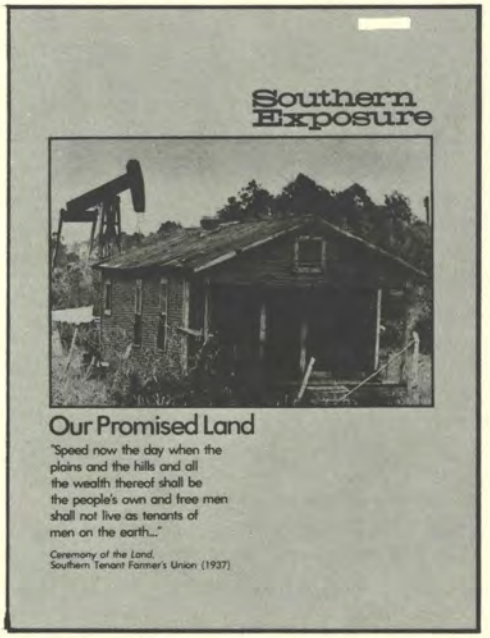

Vol. II, No. 2 & 3. OUR PROMISED LAND. A 225-page collection on our land, the foundation of Southern culture. Agribusiness vs. cooperatives, black land ownership, the Forest Service, land-use legislation, mountain development, urban alternatives, Indian lands. The voices of sharecroppers from Theodore Rosengarten's *All God's Dangers.* Plus a 65-page state-by-state examination of land ownership and usage, with charts of agribusiness, oil, coal, and timber company directorates. $3.50

Vol. II, No. 4. FOCUS ON THE MEDIA. Ronnie Dugger and the *Texas Observer,* the St. Petersburg *Times* reporting for the consumer, the early black press, Alabama's exclusively-white educational TV network, a woman reporter takes on *Atlanta* magazine, and alternative media projects throughout the region. Interviews with Robert Coles, Minnie Pearl, and Alabamian Cliff Durr, an early FCC commissioner. Plus detailed charts on who owns the media. $2.50