

THE STRUGGLE OF THE REPUBLIC OF NEW AFRICA

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Source: *The Black Scholar*, Vol. 5, No. 9, THE BLACK FAMILY (June 1974), pp. 32-41

Published by: Taylor & Francis, Ltd.

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41065737>

Accessed: 26-12-2018 23:51 UTC

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# THE STRUGGLE OF THE REPUBLIC OF NEW AFRICA

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ONE WEEK AND one day after Labor Day last September a Mississippi federal judge with the coincidentally malevolent name of Nixon—District Judge Walter L. Nixon, Jr.—closed the final chapter in part one of the legal struggles of the RNA-11. Last year three of the RNA-11—Brother Vice President Hekima Ana, 29, of Milwaukee; Brother Offogga Quddus, 25, of Camden, N.J.; and Brother Karim Njabafudi, 17, of New Orleans—had been sentenced to life in prison by the state of Mississippi, for murder. Brother Addis Ababa, 24, of Detroit, had received two ten-year terms for assault. All are members of the Republic of New Africa (RNA).

Brother Hekima's wife, Tamu Sana, 24, also of Milwaukee, had been released by the state after ten months in prison. Brother Chumaimari Askadi, 20, was released after 13 months, and I was released in April 1973 after nearly 20 months. As slim-to-non-existent as the legal evidence had been against the Brothers sentenced to Parchman Prison farm, it had been even slimmer against the rest of us. I and three others, for instance, had been at another location when the infamous August 18, 1971, police-FBI attack, which led to the prison sentences, took place at the RNA's government residence in Jackson.

(The three arrested with me—Sister Information Minister Aisha Salim, 25; Brother Tawwab Nkrumah, 27, Minister of Defense for Jackson; and Brother Spade de Mau Mau, 25—were released on *habeas corpus* action

after six weeks at Parchman, and were charged with only a ridiculous, police-face-saving gun charge. But, once it was determined that Tawwab had been defense minister in Jackson, he was indicted like the rest of us on state charges of murder, assault, and waging war against the state of Mississippi and federal charges of conspiracy to assault federal officers and to possess incendiaries and a machine-gun. Tawwab, however, at liberty by that time, remained—and remains—at liberty.)

All the charges grew out of a persistent campaign of the white power structure—led in Mississippi by the state attorney general, A. F. Summer, and FBI Chief Elmer Linberg, with the support of then U.S. Attorney General John Mitchell—to smash the RNA. The RNA had returned the struggle of Africans in America for independent land to a point of on-site confrontation, after 105 years, in March 1971. At that time, on 20 acres being purchased by the RNA from a black Hinds County farmer named Lofton Mason, We consecrated the land as El Malik, the capitol site of the still-unliberated nation.

We had said publicly that We were not declaring the land independent, though We would fence it and guard it just as ordinary business corporations do all over America. But the whites, understanding the psychological impact of our land move better than most of our people, panicked. They induced Mr. Mason to abrogate our land deal, issued a state injunction against our returning to the land (We shall, of course,

IMARI ABUBAKARI OBADELE, I, is President of the Republic of New Africa (RNA). On August 18, 1971, the RNA Residence in Jackson, Miss., was raided by police and FBI agents who were allegedly seeking a fugitive. Gunfire was exchanged and a policeman was killed and two others wounded. As a result, 11 RNA citizens were arrested and jailed on charges of murder, assault with a deadly weapon and "waging war against the State of Mississippi." Subsequently, some charges were dropped and some RNA citizens released after serving jail terms. But three have been sentenced to life imprisonment, one received two concurrent 10-year prison terms and three still face murder charges. Released on bail in April 1973, Obadele and six

other RNA members were tried shortly afterwards on federal charges of conspiracy and assault, found guilty and sentenced to terms ranging from three to 17 years. Released on an appeals bond, Brother Imari is now waging a campaign to have the convictions reversed by the Mississippi Supreme Court and the U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. The appeal is expected to come before the courts this September. Further information can be obtained from the RNA at P.O. Box 465, Jackson, Miss. 39205. (Note: In this essay the word "We" is capitalized and "I" is lower-cased because, according to Brother Imari, "It is a principle of New African thought that the community is more important than the individual.")

## by IMARI ABUBAKARI OBADELE, I

return—on conditions satisfying to all black people), and heightened their campaign of press vilification. For our part, the leaders of the RNA Provisional Government understood the dimensions of our struggle; We simply pressed on.

Our basic work in Mississippi was to organize people for a plebiscite, a freedom vote, to declare the black western third of the state, along the Mississippi River from Memphis to the Louisiana border, the Kush District, independent. Before the plebiscite there is to be a Reparations Election: a vote to be used as a testing and training exercise for the coming plebiscite, but a vote to mobilize black demand for reparations—millions of dollars from the U.S. government without strings—to be used for the building of New Communities. Also the reparations election is to create a Black Assembly, a body of blacks to seek reparations and to guide cooperative black economic development.

In June 1971, undaunted by Attorney General Summer, We held the first neighborhood reparations elections. In July We quietly bought a few acres from a black cooperative in north Leflore County, and in the same month, rallied the people behind us with a People's Court.

**I**T WAS THUS that in August the FBI and the Jackson Police—having despaired of finding,

as Jackson Mayor Russell Davis was to say later, any "legal means of driving the RNA out of Jackson"—decided on an old-fashion, surprise armed attack. They realized, as they continue to realize, that every moment of continued RNA presence in Mississippi diminished the power of that fear by which whites hold the black counties enthralled. Our success in that summer of 1971 dictated their rashness.

Or was it, from their point of view, rashness? One year earlier that summer Jackson police and Mississippi Highway Patrolmen in all their fierce armor, had lined the street before the modern high-rise girls' dormitory at Jackson State College and, on signal, raked the building and the surrounding area with riot-gun fire: double-ought buckshot. None of the students was armed, but two young black males died and a number of other sisters and brothers were wounded. The police department and the highway patrol coolly stood the weight: Congressional outrage and black memorials across the country. It was all ruled justifiable. After all it was Mississippi, the murder state.

So, maybe there was no rashness in their conception of the armed attack on the RNA Government Residence in Jackson on Wednesday, August 18, 1971. In that summer, an election year in Mississippi with Charles Evers running for Governor and blacks daring to contest some 200 positions, whites had begun their reign of terror. All the country knew of the wanton murder of Jo Etha Collier, a 19-year-old high school graduate shot

down by white thugs as she stood with other youth on a corner in her hometown of Drew, Mississippi. But a man named Willie had been slain and left on the railroad tracks in Cleveland, Mississippi, and hardly anyone outside of the state knew about it. Nobody knew about the deaths of Eddie McClinton or Edgar Higganbottem. Up in Washington, D.C., Dr. Aaron Henry, steadfast and courageous president of the state NAACP, testifying on Mississippi's continuing defiance of the voters' rights act, implored the Civil Rights Oversight Subcommittee for intervention:

I humbly request this Committee to use its influence in getting a federal investigation conducted. The nation has responded to the tragedy of the night of May 25, when in Sunflower County a young lady, Miss Jo Etha Collier, within an hour after her high school graduation as an honor student, was gunned down on the streets of Drew, Mississippi. Three white males are being held in jail, charged with this crime.

Yet, I repeat, no investigation has been made into the killing of Mr. McClinton. The sheriff of the county is determined to keep this killing quiet, as the accused killer is reported to be a member of his family.

It appears that the Justice Department and the local and national press are cooperating with the sheriff in the scheme, as neither has said a word about him.

Dr. Henry added: "I personally notified the FBI on the state level and the Justice Department on the national level. I talked to the mother of the victim, the wife of the victim, and two witnesses to the shooting, just before leaving Mississippi, and learned they have not been contacted by anyone concerning this tragedy. I then called the FBI and was informed that no investigation has been ordered into the killing of Mr. McClinton."

Later we were to learn, at this very moment the FBI in Mississippi had been ordered to investigate the RNA Provisional Government and had spent over 1,000 man-hours trying to determine "some violation of the law." They had failed—so they invented one.

Earlier in the year a young man named Sylee (sn Jerry Steiner), who had been

wanted in Michigan for a filling station robbery-murder, surfaced in Milwaukee. The RNA federal trial showed that Sylee had been identified to the Milwaukee FBI as the wanted Michigan man by their paid informer, Thomas "Snoopy" Spells, in the spring. Spells testified he had warned the FBI that Sylee "was a very, very sick man" who promised to do "some awful things to white people when he got to Mississippi." Nevertheless, the FBI made no arrest and allowed the suspected fugitive, who, like Spells, had affiliated with the RNA, to go to Mississippi, to the RNA's People Center Council convention in Jackson on July 17, 1971.

Informer Spells testified he promptly advised the FBI's key RNA Mississippi agent, George Holder, that the suspected fugitive was in Mississippi at the RNA residence. For, Sylee had indeed received permission to stay at the RNA residence a while, sell newspapers and do door-to-door work in the reparations campaign. The FBI, knowing Sylee's wanted status, was evidently delighted. George Holder acquired a fugitive warrant. He could have come to the house and knocked on the door. He could have contacted Attorney William Miller, RNA Justice Minister, or any black lawyer in town and gotten their assistance in serving process at the RNA house. They could have chosen a dozen ways to arrest Sylee or present service at the RNA house without endangering the un-involved brothers and sisters—including the four-month-pregnant wife of Offogga Quddus, Njeri, 19—who lived there.

Worse, on the morning of the attack Sylee was not to be found at the house: he had been suspended and no longer lived there.

None of this mattered. It was summer—August 18, 1971, murder season in Mississippi: the thing was to get into the house, kill some gun-toting fear-defying black nationalists and their women, and then take the heat coolly: a few anquished cries from Congress (maybe); some black memorials in cities around America. Taken coolly. As usual.

AND SO THEY gathered at six in the morning,

at FBI headquarters. And so they came, at 6:30 in the morning, with split second timing, with their tear-gas rockets and double-ought buckshot and the guns to fire them, and their bullet-proof vests and helmets and magnums, and their armored car with its gun ports and men inside and mounted gas guns, and their ambulance, and every man in place around the white frame house with its huge back yard, in an instant; and all the streets sealed off for blocks, 28 men at the Lewis Street Residence and only about 12 surrounding the RNA office on Lynch street several blocks away, a stone's throw from Jackson State College, where nobody much was expected to be.

And back on Lewis Street, all ready for the turkey-shoot, white men in their umpire-vests down behind cars, and the blue light atop a police car almost in front of the house spinning and flashing, all in this one instant when everyone is suddenly in place and the heavy voice is on the bullhorn, barking at the sleeping house and all the neighborhood: "This is the police and FBI. We have the house surrounded. Everyone come out with your hands up. You have sixty seconds. You have forty seconds. You have twenty seconds." And then: "You have 15 additional seconds to come out or gas will go in." And then, on the walkie-talkie, the lighter voice of Linberg, saying, to the men at the back of the house: "Okay. Put in the gas." And then the exploding of the gas rockets, and then the sound of them crashing into the back bedrooms. And then gas going into the front. And then firing. Some like rifle-fire. (The police and FBI have shotguns, gas guns, magnums, no rifles, they testify later.) And everyone is firing. All hell has broken loose.

It is a turkey-shoot. Or was supposed to be. Only there is this thing about a fiery furnace. And it is not a turkey shoot. Something is wrong. The walkie-talkie hums amid the gun-fire: two policemen have been hit, and an FBI agent, but on the air it is hard to tell; it sounds as if many white lawmen are going down, and above the other noise and fire there is, for awhile, this maddening sound of da-da-da, da-da-da, that breaks from the house like the sound of automatic fire you

have heard in Vietnam or on the range. And the tank comes up before the front of the house and fires its gas cannons at the house, and the ambulance comes up, shielded by the tank, because in the street a police lieutenant in plainclothes lies, his helmet torn rudely away, he is bleeding and dying; and he should have been alive because he knew better, he had known the leaders and could have come there without gun or tank or bullet-proof vest that had proven so useless.

And the firing at the house goes on. And there is this thing about Daniel and the fiery furnace. And onto the yawning lawn in the back of the house, comes the courageous six-foot-one Addis Ababa, his hands up as he squat-walks out under the three-foot elevation, surprising his attackers, calling, "Hold your fire! Hold your fire! We're coming out." And they come out, the seven of them: five young men and two young women, from the secret escape tunnel under the house, that had saved them from the fiery, gas-filled furnace, to be laid out spread-eagle on their faces, and kicked—even the pregnant Njeri—and walked on and threatened, while the gassing and shooting at the house continues, then taken up front and trussed and sat on the curb where the neighbors watch, their only way of helping, and their lives are spared because on the bullhorn someone is barking, "Obadele, we know you're in there. Come on out or you're going to be killed!"

Only Obadele is not in there. He is out, on Lynch Street, but they do not know it yet on Lewis Street, because on Lynch Street they have watched the arrival of the police-FBI and as they move in on the office, Obadele walks right out on them, demanding their process, surprising them. The four here, too, are put in the street spread-eagle on their faces, while the white lawmen invade and seize the office, but there is no shooting here, and these men do not know Obadele by sight.

It is not according to script. Afterwards, some black people in Mississippi believe they have seen a sign, a sign in this summer of the death of Brother Higganbottem and Brother McClinton and Brother Willie and Sister Jo Etha, this summer one year after

the Jackson State Massacre. I, too, believe We have been given a sign.

And maybe the white power-structure believes this too. They send Hekima and Offogga to prison with life sentences and, despite rising black outrage in Mississippi they send 15-year-old Karim away for life too. But they stop here. It is for Walter Nixon to seek to finish in his court what the surprise dawn attack could not do on August 18, 1971. And so Phase One ends: technically Chuma, Njeri, and i still face state murder and assault charges. If they wish, they can still try us. But Njeri, like Tamu, received three years from Nixon; Chuma received five and i—like Offogga, Hekima, and Addis—received 12 years. We think for practical purposes, the first phase is over. Legally We now open the battle in the appeal courts, state and federal. Politically—in our relentless struggle for independent land here, a struggle in which the RNA Provisional Government has not only endured these past two trying years, but has surmounted them—We also pass into the second phase.

**B**ACK IN 1967 i wrote an essay, a thin book, called “War In America.” The fundamental proposition of that essay was that there is war in America—war of the white power structure against the subjugated African, begun in the slave trade and continued through today—and that that war has always been violent. That fundamental proposition remains, of course, true. I went on to suggest, as part of the fundamental proposition, that the black man’s activity had largely been defensive, though there have been times, as in the so-called riots of 1919, when the black man fought back magnificently, doing much damage to whites and their property. I suggested that after the very necessary and matchlessly sublime decade of Non-Violence, the African in America, with the beginning of the urban rebellions in New York in 1964, had returned to the use of the gun, to the use of violence as a programmed ingredient in his campaign to survive and win the war in America, always violent, which whites have forced upon us.

I think that proposition also remains true.

In Mississippi, 18 years ago this past September, a 14-year-old boy from Chicago, visiting his grandfather in Tallahatchie County, was abducted from his home at night by a band of white night-riders including the husband of a woman at whom the boy was supposed to have whistled or looked or touched or sassed. Emmett Louis Till was shot, mutilated, and dumped into the Tallahatchie River. He became a national symbol of Mississippi horror, a focus for the revulsion of decent people to the gross inhumanity of white society in this worst of states.

Something else seemed to have happened in Mississippi. During the trial of the white general store-keeper from Money, Mississippi, who had led the lynching—a trial which saw all of the lynchers set free—it developed that the boy had been taken from the house upon the demand of the night-riders; he had been delivered to them by his grandfather, who had had an old shot-gun in his house but who had not fired a shot in defense. It was not that people in Mississippi did not understand and even, to a degree, sympathize with the pressures upon the old man—sixty years of fear, the need to keep the house from being burned down and everyone killed—but something happened in Mississippi. Blacks quietly armed. It was as if the whole race collectively vowed: Never again!

During the hard and often bloody civil rights era in Mississippi, which followed, non-violence was tolerated and embraced, but retaliatory black violence lingered always below the surface. In the last days, during the Meredith March in 1966, the Mau Mau, black Mississippi brothers who were determined that the non-violent suffering of our people should not reach certain levels, joined the Meredith March at key points along the way, walking with King and Stokely. And then in 1968, when night-riders came to the home of Vernon Dahmer outside of Hattiesburg to chastise him for his assistance to his people in voter registration, Dahmer, unlike the old man in Tallahatchie, fought back with his rifle and indomitable will. They burned his house and inflicted on him wounds that

took his life. But he saved his family. Something had happened in Mississippi.

Thus, when the cadre of the Provisional Government of the Republic of New Africa surfaced in Mississippi in early 1971, We represented a logical evolution of the freedom struggle: the non-violent era to the era of the Freedom Democratic Party to the era of the independence movement. And our bringing of the concept of self-defense was nothing new.

**I**NDEED, THE original and most courageous era of black self-defense had occurred in 1866. During Grant's military successes in the Mississippi valley thousands of black slaves had left the plantations—freeing themselves, as DuBois so eloquently points out in *Black Reconstruction*—and joined themselves to the Union Army. They served as scouts, spies, teamsters, cooks, farmers, and, after the Emancipation Proclamation of January 1863, as soldiers.

By 1864 Grant's man, John Eaton, head of the "Department of Negro Affairs," had settled many thousands of non-combatant ex-slaves on black-run plantations and in black towns adjacent to the river. As in the east, where General Sherman had issued his famous Field Order No. 15, giving the South Carolina Sea Islands and land for 30 miles along the river over to the occupation and control of former black slaves, John Eaton's program in Mississippi embraced the daring concept of "colonization." In fact the word was used again and again, in speech and document and report.

The land, being the land of the rebellious Confederate states, was ultimately deemed to be in territorial status (as opposed to "state" status) and therefore, according to the U.S. Constitution, under full control of the Congress. The Union Army, acting for the President and the Congress, gave land in Mississippi and South Carolina-Georgia to the blacks, excluded all whites except necessary military personnel, and made the black governments subject only to the Army and the land title subject to the ultimate disposi-

tion of the U.S. Congress.

It was the Congress which, in 1866, after this experiment in self-government had run successfully since as early as 1863, betrayed the blacks. The Congress gave its power over the Confederate land to the new, madly anti-black President Andrew Johnson, successor to the assassinated Lincoln. Johnson promptly gave title to the black-occupied lands to white former slave-lords. But, when the ex-slave-lords and U.S. marshalls and the Union Army came to take back the lands, the blacks—in place after place—took up arms and resisted: resisted the very authority and the very power of the United States.

This was in 1866, and an important legal fact was extant. These Africans in America were not United States citizens. Their freedom, under U.S. law, had come about, as historian Lerone Bennett makes clear, by a series of acts dating back to the first Confiscation Act in 1861; there was a second Confiscation Act in 1862. In part, these acts were designed to meet DuBois' phenomenon of slaves freeing themselves: slaves simply fleeing the plantations and attaching themselves to the Union Army the moment the Army came near. The acts said that any slave that came within the reach of the Union Army could be freed as contraband if it were deemed the slave had been used in support of the Confederate war effort.

Next came the Emancipation Proclamation in January 1863, which freed slaves in areas then in rebellion. Finally in December 1865 the Thirteenth Amendment became law. It freed all slaves in America. This was eight months after the end of the Civil War. But the overwhelming truth of all these acts was that they had freed the African but had given us no social or political rights in the American community. None of these acts—not one, including the Thirteenth Amendment—made the freedman a citizen, or even tried to.

We were simply freed and left, becoming a new class of freed persons, on American soil through the Thirteenth Amendment—conceded illegality of international kidnapping and piracy. But We were not U.S. citizens.

The 1866 Civil Rights Act attempted to

impose U.S. citizenship on the freedman, but, considering a doctrine well laid out by the U.S. Supreme Court in the Dred Scott decision, the Congress recognized that, without a Constitutional Amendment, it was then as impossible for the general government to introduce the African to American citizenship by a mere act of Congress as it was for a single state by an act of its legislature to introduce the African into American citizenship. Thus, in 1868, the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified; this Amendment attempted to drape American citizenship around all the freedmen born on American soil. (It failed, of course, because the Amendment could not impose citizenship on a group of free persons—free by American law for over five years—without the consent of the group. And we were never asked for our informed consent.)

What is important here is that in 1866 the freedmen settled on the lands in the Mississippi Valley (and in South Carolina-Georgia) were not U.S. citizens. Further, the lands upon which they were settled were in territorial status and therefore free from U.S. Constitutional restraints regarding the way in which “new states” are to be formed out of old. It must also be remembered that all this was taking place—in 1863-1866—at a time that was barely 16 years removed from the establishment of Liberia as an independent black republic. (In 1822 a group of free blacks were settled, with help of the U.S. government, private white groups and themselves, on land purchased on the west coast of Africa; 25 years later, this American-subject colony was an independent nation.) All this is to say that when Eaton and Sherman and their functionaries spoke of colonization on these far western lands (Mississippi) and the land of the South Carolina-Georgia Sea Islands—which blacks had developed and where white traitors had brought death and misery to Union soldiers and their families, while gallant black soldiers fought and bled for the Union—they were engaging in no accidental choice of words.

And when the blacks took up arms against the United States in 1866, they were defend-

ing not only their personal farms; they were defending their independent black governments, the first governments of the New African nation in North America.

It is possible that these black governments might have evolved simply into black states in a reconstructed union of the United States, had Congress followed the Army's lead and pursued a democratic course. These black governments, on the other hand, might have evolved, like Liberia, into independent New African States sharing borders with the United States like Mexico and Canada. Andrew Johnson's racist action, however, giving the land over to the ex-Confederates and thereby calling for the death of the black governments, precipitated the people of these communities, the New African nation, into full rebellion and thus struck for independence, establishing—though they lost this war—the legal foundation of the New African nation in Mississippi (and in South Carolina-Georgia). This is a badly distorted, generally ignored, portion of African history in North America.

**Y**ET THE DISARMING of black people in Mississippi was not complete at this point. After the year of death and repression brought on by the Johnson Reconstruction and the empowerment of the Black Code-writing white government in 1866, the Congress took control of the South in 1867, using the Army. And Congressional Reconstruction, with blacks politicking and voting and participating, came in.

The next eight years were the luminous era of State Senator Charles Caldwell and his black militia who for a brief while kept white vigilantes in check; of arms in black homes and under black frock-coats, of gracious and often eloquent, always courteous black men, who bore their arms and shot back and out-shot whites who would dare attempt to intimidate them at the polls or rallies or picnics or in the night-hours at their homes. It was the era of U.S. Senators Hiram Revels and Blance Kelso Bruce and Congressman John



Roy Lynch; of Lt. Governor Alexander K. Davis, Secretaries of State James D. Lynch and James Hill, Superintendent of Education T.W. Cardozo, and Speaker of the Mississippi House of Representatives I.D. Shadd—all black men.

But it was in 1875, in preparation for the state elections of that year—indeed, in preparation for the Presidential elections of the following year in which Rutherford B. Hayes would sell out Reconstruction and Africans in America—that the whites of Mississippi disarmed and terrorized the blacks. A memorable U.S. Senate Committee's investigative report tells of the trapping and murder of Senator Charles Caldwell, of the organization of Democratic Party gun clubs among the whites, the outright murder of scores of black people, the thorough terrorizing of the black population and the bold theft of the state elections of 1875.

Blanche Kelso Bruce, chosen for a six-year U.S. Senate term in 1874 would remain in office until 1881, and John Lynch would serve out his term in Congress through 1876. In the state government James Hill would remain Secretary of State until 1876. But it was in 1875 that terror brought its ugly offspring—fear and servile acquiescence—to the blacks of Mississippi. In this year the whites took our guns. In this year the whites went into town after town and took out the entire black leadership—ten persons here, five there, a dozen here, thirty in one place—and slew them in cold blood. We bowed down. The Union Army, deliberately stilled by Washington, stayed in their camps and did not even look. We fought back as we could, unprepared for the intensity of white organization and white bestiality, unprepared to be deserted by the Army. And in the end we bowed down. In 1877 Rutherford Hayes, a compromise President, removed the Army altogether. We had no choice: at least those who stayed. (And many did not stay.)

The desertion of the U.S. Supreme Court in the 1890's was almost academic for blacks in Mississippi. When *Plessy vs. Ferguson* was uttered in 1896 we had already been castrated in Mississippi 21 years. We were still

bowing down or leaving, and bowing down until we could leave, when the old man gave Emmett Louis Till to the Tallahatchie lynchers in 1955, 80 years after the castration of 1875.

But it had been 80 years during which, in Mississippi, the lynching of blacks for "impudence," for sullen looks, for the mad fantasies of silly white women, for commission and omission had become an entrenched way of life for blacks and whites alike. So that it seemed that veritably no other way had ever been known—Charles Caldwell and Bruce and Lynch, all non-existent imaginings—and no other way could ever be.

**T**HAT IS WHY in Mississippi we celebrate Medgar Evers—who would die by an assassin's bullet in June 1963, five months before John Kennedy. We celebrate Medgar for his clear intelligence, his indomitable will, his boundless mission-blessed courage that, in his work as NAACP field secretary, took him into all those back-wood places he travelled, all those counties where the 80 years of fear and servile acquiescence hung heavier than the air, were more real than sunlight. Medgar and those like Reverend Herbert Lee who gave their all, including their lives, between Emmett Till and June 1963, carried our dignity and our hope in this state at a moment when there was little help from anywhere.

Death in Mississippi—unjustified death, undeserved death, suffered by Medgar and Reverend Lee, and Goodwin, Schwerner and Chaney, a host of others—and the work of Martin Luther King and Fred Shuttlesworth and the death of Kennedy brought the Voters Rights Act of 1965, a breath of life for the blacks of Mississippi, a hope that friends might once again be found and, to a point, relied upon, in the seat of United States power.

But all the struggle has left with us an incapable message: rely on oneself! We have dreamed magnificent, unselfish dreams—only to alter reality by small fractions. It is, I suggest, because too often we have not re-

lied enough on self. Yet i think We, together, know this now. A few weeks before the attack on the RNA Government Residence in Jackson, the NAACP's astute Washington lobbyist Clarence Mitchell was meeting with the same Civil Rights Oversight Committee addressed by Aaron Henry, a Committee with several friends, and delivering these bitter, candid words:

I am unhappy because Martin Luther King is now dead because of the operation of the same set of circumstances and the same kind of climate that We are now confronted with. You see, you are talking to somebody who has dealt with Attorneys General, starting with Ramsey Clark, Sr., and coming forward to the present Attorney General, and somebody who has dealt with Presidents of the United States from President Franklin Roosevelt right on up to President Nixon, and i know as a matter of fact that the Government of the United States has not protected the colored people in exercising their constitutional rights.

In almost every instance that i know of personally where my friends and associates have been killed, the government of the United States was to blame because of inaction, and i think We might as well face up to that fact that We have got to stop letting these things go by.

All i am saying is that We are always going to be in the ranks of those who are for law and order, but the government and everything else had better face up to the fact that Americans, even though they have got black skins, are not going to be forever pushed around by arbitrary actions in the States and indifferent people up at the national government. (Hearings Before the Civil Rights Oversight Committee, May 26, June 2, 10, 1971. Serial No. 8. Page 233.)

Thus, the history of our struggle in Mississippi assures us that violence—a War in America conducted by whites against blacks—is a continuing part of the milieu in which We must function, fighting for freedom. It is likely that whites, civilians or police-FBI, will again be disposed to move against us unjustly, as they did at Medgar Evers' house, at Vernon Dahmer's house, at Jackson State College, on the streets of small Delta towns, at the RNA Government Residence. We have no choice but to do as blacks

in Mississippi have done here for 20 years, since the old man delivered his grandson to night-riders in Tallahatchie County: to keep sure arms in our homes and use them surely. And this too: better tunnels for better escapes!

**I**N MISSISSIPPI freedom fighters face, as the RNA-11 travail proves, vindictive judges and juries for merely exercising the right of self-defense. Still, like all those who have worked here before us, We have no choice but to go forward in the face of these odds, working, as ever, to bring to our aid dedicated lawyers and informed public opinion.

And, finally, We cannot ignore the lesson of 1875: the possibility of whites in this state, with the acquiescence of the U.S. federal government, organizing a massive and ruthless armed opposition to black freedom. Those who are concerned with the military defense of black people, and this includes all of us, must not again be caught unprepared for such an eventuality. Indeed, when Judge Nixon sentenced the RNA-11 for acts relating to self-defense, he unwittingly sent a message to the Black Underground Army. The state and federal sentencings of the RNA-11—persons who were carefully pursuing legal political activity—are saying to the Black Underground that in Mississippi you risk no more for an attack on a deserving enemy than for defense of yourself.

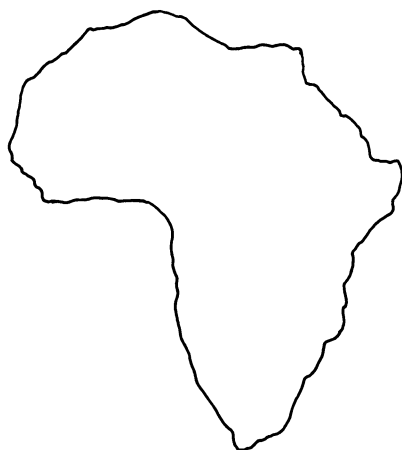
And yet violence is not the guiding motif, or even the dominant theme, of the plans of the Provisional Government of the Republic of New Africa as We enter Phase Two of the struggle for independence. Violence threads the background, and the possibility of it cannot be ignored. But our major work now is the establishment of cooperative farms across the state, owned by blacks in America's ghettos as well as the people here on the land, as the basis for establishing a full-range of cooperatively owned industry and modern New Communities. Our work is the holding of a reparations election—an election in which people create an independent Black Assembly and vote support not only for the

RNA's 200-million-dollar, 20 New Community pilot project for the Deep South, but vote support for the RNA's 57.5-billion-dollar Anti-Depression Program. The Anti-Depression Program would fund several thousand modern New Communities, farms and industry across the Deep South, and place a billion-dollars, without strings, into the hands of black community groups throughout America to be used by blacks to improve the quality of black life.

All black people in America are New Africans, citizens of the Republic of New Africa, born that way, unless they consciously decide not to be. Some of us may never wish to come to the independent nation once it is free. Many of us will. In any case, as We enter Phase Two, the work of the

Provisional—or “temporary”—Government of the still subjugated Republic of New Africa will be to persuade the majority of the people on the land, beginning first with the Kush District, and to persuade many still in America's great black ghettos to exercise the rights of their New African citizenship. It will be our work to persuade and to build, and to persuade through building, so that our dispossessed people in this strange land will not only escape the worse of America's coming economic “re-adjustment,” through our cooperatives, but will enjoy—perhaps before America's 200th anniversary in 1976—a beautiful life in our own independent, powerful black nation.

**FREE THE LAND!**



## Research in African Literatures

A Biannual Journal

Published by the  
African and Afro-American Studies and Research Center  
The University of Texas at Austin

**Subscriptions:**

1 year--\$ 6.00

2 years-- 11.00

3 years-- 15.00

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