



Positive Action

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The BLACK PANTHER PARTY 40 YEARS LATER



Also inside:

From COINTELPRO to the Patriot Act: The Use of the Grand Jury to Terrorize the Black Panther Legacy

The current phase of our movement is suffering a crisis of leadership. The end of the 1970's marked the end of a decade where the lessons of the civil rights movement, the teachings of Malcolm X and the strategy and tactics of Student Non Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) had culminated into the fearlessness of the Black Panther Party. The civil rights movement taught us our legal privileges, Malcolm gave us dignity and self respect and the Panthers expanded our understanding of community development and self defense.

In rural Alabama, the Lowndes County Freedom Organization was the first Black Panther Party. This independent African political party was founded in 1966. Later, Eldridge Cleaver went Lowndes County to write an article about this first BPP. When Cleaver and some other young brothers came down to the rural south they found the grassroots armed, organized and disciplined, leading their own organizations. They went back to Oakland and organized the second Black Panther Party.

This October 2006 marked the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Black Panther Party in Oakland, California. The legacy of the Panthers made the founding of Black Student Union possible and the creation of the first Black Studies programs. It also gave us the militancy and understanding that, "they can jail us but you can't jail our spirit"! But the fact that so many of our courageous leaders were assassinated, incarcerated and tortured by U.S. sponsored terrorism remains our biggest defeat of the decade of the 1960's.



FBI Chief J. Edgar Hoover vilified the Black Panthers as "the greatest threat to the internal security of the United States."

The terrorist strategy of the FBI led Counter Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO) effectively dismantled one of the most significant social movements of the 1960's. The Black Power movement was fueled by a young, militant force that touched ever corner of the African world. According to J. Edgar Hoover, head of the FBI from (1952-1965), the Black Panther Party was targeted as "the most serious threat to American security".

Over thirty years ago in 1973 thirteen brothers were arrested and some tortured in New Orleans in an attempt by the U.S. Police Intelligence Complex to smoke out others in the Black Power movement. Even though COINTELPRO 'ended' its operation in the 70's following a congressional commission, the FBI and the police in 2006 are still tying up 'loose ends'. This past June 2006 a synchronized attack came knocking at the doors of these former Panthers, Harold Taylor, John Bowman, Hank Jones, Ray

Boudreaux and Richard Brown. They were re-indicted under the San Francisco Grand Jury.

Now deputized as FBI agents, the same cops, Inspectors Frank McCoy and Ed Erdelatz, who arrested these Panthers in 1973, decided to re-open the old cases in 2006. Even though the brothers were acquitted, the Patriot Act now allows U.S. sponsored terrorism to continue the fight against the Panther legacy. The Patriot Act is an extension of COINTELPRO. There are several reasons the Patriot Act can be used to re-open cases. Two reasons are you are considered a; (1) Member of a terrorist organization, and (2) Person of interest. COINTELPRO was a program, the Patriot Act is law. COINTELPRO is legalized under the Patriot Act. The erosion of basic legal rights under this act must be alarming for all activist and organizers. The job of the enemy to keep the oppressed ignorant and afraid. But the enemy's fear is not our fear.

The fear of African male leadership, even when the leader is behind bars is still very real for America. The idea of knowing our legal rights, coupled with a "Malcolm" dignity and a "Panther" self defense is a combination too dangerous for African people to remember and re-learn. Why else would the Grand Jury re-indict these brothers? It is not enough that many of our leaders are still languishing behind bars the U.S. has to go after brothers now 60 years old, many ill

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Black Panther Party 40th reunion

In photos



The Legacy of Kwame Ture (formerly Stokeley Carmichael)

November 15, 2006, will mark the eighth commemoration of the death of Kwame Ture from prostate cancer. For those of us who had the opportunity to work with him, our memories are filled with thoughts of his influence in the Pan-African struggle for one unified socialist Africa. Unfortunately, most people who did not know and work with Kwame and/or any of the organizations he belonged to (specifically the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee -SNCC, Black Panther Party -BPP, and All African People's Revolutionary Party - A-APRP), are often forced to rely on capitalist media analysis for a framework of his contributions.

While attempting to avoid perpetuating the lies about Kwame presented in the capitalist press, we should explore several key points regarding Kwame's contributions to the African struggle. First, although the capitalist media discusses Kwame specifically as an icon from the 1960s Black Power movement, we want to make it perfectly clear that Kwame spent approximately seven to eight years within SNCC, and only a couple of years within the BPP. By comparison, he spent his last 30 years living in Conakry, Guinea, working to build the A-APRP. We believe this is significant because the quantity of time Kwame spent working to build the A-APRP reflects his increased consciousness over his work in the 60s. He grew to understand that Pan-Africanism, or one unified socialist Africa, was the natural growth and development of Black Power in the U.S. He learned that Kwame Nkrumah was correct when he stated that Pan-Africanism should be "the primary objective of all Black Revolutionaries"



and that this objective would be Africa's contribution "to the worldwide socialist movement, leading to world communism!"

Secondly, it is clear that today, the fruits of Kwame's work in Guinea are growing rapidly. The All African People's Revolutionary Party of Guinea (AAPRPG), the A-APRP chapter in Guinea, is one of the most rapidly growing and influential radical political formations in that entire country. It was Kwame's work in Guinea from 1968 to 1998 that contributed mightily to these developments. It was also Kwame's work within the A-APRP that contributed to the rapid growth and work of the A-APRP in Guinea-Bissau, Ghana, Sierra Leone, The Gambia, Senegal, Zimbabwe, and Kenya.

Third, this A-APRP growth in Africa represents the material progress of Kwame's life work to build the All African Committee for Political Coordination (A-ACPC). The A-ACPC was the brain child of Kwame Nkrumah in his classic book "The Handbook of Revolutionary Warfare." Written in 1968, the "Handbook" is a must read for all Pan-Africanist revolutionaries. The A-ACPC calls for the unification of all genuine revolutionary political parties into one committee to facilitate the governance

of Africa. The A-ACPC in its organizational form will represent the true existence of the All African People's Revolutionary Party as the political party for one unified, socialist Africa.

Those of us who know Kwame's work understand that one unified socialist Africa is the advanced progression of Black Power. One socialist Africa will eliminate the balkanization that has created 54 African countries and 120 countries that have sizable African populations. Instead, all of those people and resources will be united into one continental wide African government that will utilize socialist principles to meet the needs of the African populations who today suffer from so many health ills, lack of proper nutrition, poor education, lack of respect, and an overall absence of self determination and justice.

So, this November 15th (as well as this date in future years), as we contemplate Kwame's life work, let us remember that unlike many of his 1960s contemporaries, Kwame didn't sell out the revolutionary aspirations that were articulated during that time. He didn't settle for an elected office that would have brought him personal influence, but done little to eliminate the crimes brought about by capitalist exploitation. He didn't settle to become a professor or political pundit who analyzed the problems. Instead, he lived until his very last breath committed to the verse he was known within A-APRP circles for articulating; "some people seek to explain the world... We seek to change it." Jesse Jackson, upon visiting Kwame in Guinea during Kwame's last days, gave an interview days after Kwame's physical transition. In that interview, Jackson said "he was one who never compromised with American materialism." The task for Pan-Africanists and revolutionaries today is to

continue to avoid the temptation to compromise with imperialism. This is the legacy that Kwame's life has left for us.

Panthers

(Continued from page 2)

and disabled. The threat of re-indictment is a weapon of fear. But these brothers are fearless, they created the Committee for Defense of Human Rights in response these pigs attack.

Kwame Ture, former SNCC organizer, SNCC Chair, Panther and thirty year member of the All African Peoples Revolutionary Party (AAPRP) always used a slogan learned from Kwame Nkrumah, first president of independent Ghana. The slogan was "the secret to life is to have no fear". Today our enemy is U.S. sponsored terrorism and they are afraid of us. Most of all they fear our legacy to demand freedom, by any means necessary. We do not have a legacy of fear.

Fear breeds when we are in isolation from participating in our struggle. If brothers like Mumia Abul Jamal continue to speak out without fear, even though he is isolated and on death row, what excuse can we have for not participating in the struggle today? Even if we as a people have forgotten or have not learned from our history, the power of the Panthers legacy lives on. Support the, Committee for Defense of Human Rights (CDHR_RIGHT@hotmail.com). As always the AAPRP says join an organization working for African people. Get out of your fearful comfort zone and seek out others trying to address the problems of our people. Read a book about a revolutionary movement. Stop looking for the government to give us a break. Stop looking for a grant to write. Shake the fear! Break the isolation. There is strength in the masses of the people. The people are never afraid only individuals.



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PHOTO KEY:

1. The main events took place at the Malonga Arts Center in downtown Oakland, on the weekend of October 13—15.

DAY 1:

2. Opening the weekend series of panelists and individual speakers was a panel focusing on the media. From left to right, Stephen Shames, a longtime photographer of the Panthers, ex-Panther Elbert “Big Man” Howard, author of *Panther on the Prowl*, ex-Panther Melvin Dickson, editor of the *Commemorator* newspaper, and activist and writer Charles Aiken.

3.—5. The panel focusing on political prisoners featured activists at the forefront of one of our most important struggles. Ex-Panther Kiilu Nyasha (right, 3.), activist and political prisoner organizer, began by

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Kwame Nkrumah and One-Party State

By Nii Ardey Otoo

It is often said by some African intellectuals, that Kwame Nkrumah had his faults, as every human being and leader has. This statement is used to prepare the ground to criticize Kwame Nkrumah on policies he and the Convention's People's Party (CPP) introduced which his critics are not comfortable with. Unlike many heads of state, Nkrumah wrote more than twelve books in which he defended and explained his policies. This is why it is important for any intellectual who criticizes him to not only refute whatever policy they disagree with but also to show the alternative for future generations to learn from.

Among the so-called mistakes attributed to Nkrumah was the declaration of Ghana as a one-party state. According to imperialist propaganda, Nkrumah declared Ghana a one-party state because he wanted to rule Ghana without opposition. This cheap imperialist propaganda has gained credence from the pronouncements of some African intellectuals with neo-colonial leanings. Foremost among them is Professor Ali Mazrui of the State University of New York at Binghamton, USA. He is one who sees the multi-party system as something ordained by God.

The truth about electoral history in Ghana is that from 1951 until Nkrumah was overthrown by the American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Nkrumah and the CPP won every election held by overwhelming majorities. Even when the British colonialists jailed Nkrumah for three years, for publishing a so-

called seditious article in the Cape Coast Daily Mail, in the general elections conducted by the British, the CPP won the overwhelming majority of the votes. In the election, Nkrumah received the largest individual poll ever recorded in the history of Ghana: 22,780 votes out of a possible 23,122. This is because Nkrumah and the CPP chose the people first, while the opposition chose themselves first, before the people.

The declaration of one-party state by Nkrumah was not at all for any selfish reasons, as the imperialist propaganda wants us to believe. According to Nkrumah, the multi-party system is divisive and a newly independent state needs the energy and enthusiasm of all the people to move forward in all aspects of development. In a speech to the Indian Council on World Affairs, December 26, 1958, Nkrumah said "We, in Africa, will evolve forms of government, rather different from the traditional Western pattern, but no less democratic in their protection of the individual and his inalienable rights." In Nkrumah's book Africa Must Unite, he wrote, "If the will of the people is democratically expressed in an overwhelming majority for the governing party, and thereby creates a weakening of the accepted two party system, the government is obliged to respect the will of the people so expressed. We have no right to divide our mandate in defiance of the popular will of the people."

Nkrumah also wrote in Consciencism, "A people's parliamentary democracy, with a one-party system, is better able to express and satisfy the

common aspirations of a nation as a whole, than a multi-party parliamentary system, which is in fact only a ruse for perpetuating and covering up the inherent struggle between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots'."

In a speech to the National Assembly on 1st February 1966, twenty-three days before he was overthrown, Nkrumah warned with great alarm, "A one-party system of government is an effective and safe instrument only when it operates in a socialist society. In other words, it must be a political expression of the will of the masses working for the ultimate good and welfare of the people as a whole. On the other hand, a one-party system of government in a neo-colonial client state, subject to external pressures and control, can quickly develop into the most dangerous form of tyranny, despotism, and oppression. It can become, in the hands of a few privileged rascally-minded and selfish individuals in a neo-colonialist state, a weapon and a tool for suppressing the legitimate aspirations of the people in the interest of foreign powers, and their agents. I repeat that a one-party state can only function for the good of the people within the framework of a socialist state or in a developing state with a socialist programme. The government governs through the people, and not through the class cleavages and interests. In other words, the basis of government is the will of the people."

Kwame Nkrumah lived, schooled, and worked in both the USA and Britain. He studied the political systems of both nations. He discovered that both the Republican and the

Democratic parties in the USA represented the interest of the rich. Likewise, the Conservative and the Labor parties in Britain also represented the interest of the rich in their society.

In Class Struggle In Africa, Nkrumah wrote, "Every form of political power, whether parliamentary, multi-party, one-party, or an open military dictatorship, reflects the interest of a certain class or classes in society. In a socialist state, the government represents the workers and peasants. In a capitalist state, the government represents the exploitative class. The state then, is the expression of the domination of one class over other classes."

Through subversion, lies, corruption, the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and CIA pressures of all kinds, the enemies of African progress and political unification have influenced most African politicians and intellectuals by prescribing the multi-party system as the only form of political governance. Even though the effects of multi-party system have been disastrous everywhere in the developing world, any leader with vision and armed with an alternative form of governance, would be overthrown by the CIA. And that is what happened to Nkrumah.

Presently it is happening to Presidents Chavez of Venezuela, and Mugabe of Zimbabwe. Proper scrutiny into world political history, will lead one to discover that in the 20th century, great political strides were achieved with one-party socialist systems as forms of governance. This is what Nkrumah refers to as 'scientific socialism'. The former Union

of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) used a one-party socialist system to develop their country from a backward semi-feudal society, to a world super power in less than 60 years. It was on par with most of the advanced developed countries of the world, until Mikhail Gorbachev betrayed the socialist system of the USSR.

The People's Republic of China also used a one-party socialist-system to build their country from a peasant economy, to a great regional super power. It is now challenging the world's only super power in all aspects of science, technology, and business - this came about in less than 60 years. Vietnam also used a one-party socialist system to militarily defeat both French colonialism and USA neo-colonialism in the 20th century. And again, Cuba used a one-party socialist system to build their nation despite the embargo imposed by USA and her allies. Today, Cuban medical doctors are all over Africa and developing countries serving humanity.

In 1975, when 'Apartheid South Africa' invaded Angola from the South, and UNITA, a terrorist organization backed by the USA also invaded from the North, in order to overthrow the MPLA socialist government, Cuba sent 30,000 troops to repel both UNITA and the racist apartheid forces. Henry Kissinger, then US Secretary of State, was going from one African capital to another trying to have African leaders condemn President Fidel Castro, but they refused. Today, Cuba is the only free territory in the western hemisphere with a genuine, independent, self-reliant, economic system. It is not guided by capitalism, and it is worth studying, understanding, and emulating.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea), a small country half the size of Ghana, also used a one-

party system of governance to develop from a feudal peasant economy to a highly developed industrialized society. Again, this was done in less than sixty years. In 1973, the government abolished all forms of direct and indirect taxation, demonstrating its economic self-reliance.

Today, CIA propaganda tells us that the people of North Korea are facing massive starvation. The present hardship in the country is due to years of sanctions imposed by the US and its capitalist allies. Despite the sanctions and the US efforts at isolating the country, North Korea has been able to develop nuclear technology to the point of recently testing a nuclear weapon. It is clear that the true reason capitalist states impose sanctions is to reduce the speed of socialist development.

Kwame Nkrumah also used a one-party socialist system to lead the people of Ghana into nation building. In only nine years, Nkrumah and the CPP built the most modern road network in Ghana, including the Accra-Tema Motorway. Since his overthrow, other governments have not added even a kilometer. Takoradi Harbour was extended and the Tema Harbour, the largest artificial harbour in Africa, was built from scratch. The Akosombo hydroelectric project was also constructed under Nkrumah and the CPP government. Dr. K.A. Busia, then leader of the opposition, described the hydroelectric project as a "communist inspired prestige undertaking." This dam created the Volta Lake and it is the primary source of Ghana's electricity even today - forty years later. Other infrastructure built under Nkrumah and the CPP provided pipe-borne water, housing, schools and hospitals. Telecommunications and road networks were extended to rural areas of Ghana.

In education, Nkrumah and the CPP achieved more in nine years, than the British did

in 100 years of colonial rule: and more than all the successive governments after Nkrumah and CPP, be it military or civilian. There was free and compulsory education. Free education was provided from primary school to the university level. In addition, textbooks were supplied free to all pupils in primary, middle, and secondary schools. Night schools for adults, males and females, were created as part of the mass literacy campaign. The state farm corporation developed a 20-square mile rubber plantation. Soon after Nkrumah's overthrow, this valuable plantation was given to the Firestone Rubber Company of the USA. Even the prison system was improved under Nkrumah and the CPP government. Nkrumah and the CPP built the most humane prison in Ghana, Nsawam Prison. This is the only prison in Ghana that has recreational facilities, a church, a mosque, and a library. Today, it is overcrowded and antiquated, and as in so many other sectors of society, all successive governments after Nkrumah have turned a blind eye to the prison situation in the country. In short, Kwame Nkrumah laid the foundations for Ghana's development in every sector of the country.

The time has come for African students, intellectuals, and politicians, to stop analyzing Nkrumah through CIA propaganda. They must assess him based on his political and developmental programmes, and on his contributions to the political and economic advancement of Africa. Professor Ali Mazrui, one of the leading neo-colonialist intellectuals, still analyzes Nkrumah through CIA propaganda. In the 2002 Aggrey-Frazer-Guggisberg Memorial Lectures he delivered at the University of Ghana on March 11-13, he said so many backward things about Nkrumah, one student in the audience was compelled to ask, "Is this

man a CIA agent or on the CIA payroll?" Like a good servant, the professor sang his master's favorite tune. Ali Mazrui said, "Kwame Nkrumah was one of Africa's greatest sons, but he was not one of Ghana's greatest servants." Rubbish! Kwame Nkrumah served Ghana so much, he did not even get time to build a one-bedroom house for himself.

Nkrumah remains Ghana's greatest selfless servant. On the one-party system, Ali Mazrui said, "Nkrumah's policy of trying to create one Ghana by abolishing separate parties was usurpation." Ali Mazrui must be informed that the introduction of one-party state in Ghana was an act of Parliament. It was not a decision implemented by Nkrumah alone. In 1962, U. Thant, then Secretary General of United Nations, summed up the problem, which Ali Mazrui still can't comprehend. U. Thant said, "It is a mistake to assume that the political institutions of the newly independent states will be of the same type as those prevailing in Britain, or that there will necessarily be two main parties competing against each other for the votes of the people. The notion that democracy requires the existence of an organized opposition to the government of the day is not valid. Democracy requires only freedom for opposition, not necessarily its organized existence."

The multi-party system does not by definition mean democracy. Ali Mazrui espoused CIA propaganda by saying that, "The Nkrumah regime was sometimes also guilty of ethnic profiling, but perhaps never as blatantly." This is a blatant lie! It was the CPP government which introduced the Avoidance of Discrimination Bill to deal with the control of political parties based on tribal or religious affiliations. Its full title was "An Act to Prohibit Organizations Using or Engaging In Racial or Religious Propaganda to The

Detriment of Any Other Groups in the Community.” As far back as 1967, Kwame Nkrumah criticized articles written by Ali Mazrui. Nkrumah said, “Ali Mazrui is one of the Black neo-colonial intellectuals who writes what the white man wants to hear. His thinking is still being shaped by colonialism, and its influences. Actually, he is incapable of looking forward. He doesn’t seem to comprehend the future and its potentialities. In short, he still has the colonial mentality.”

One imperialist strategy in African politics is to brainwash us into believing that unless our constitution is based on an imitation of the Western Parliamentary system, we can’t engage in politics and democracy. This notion must be turned upside down. We must make our intellectuals rid themselves from this colonial mentality. Kwame Nkrumah devoted his life’s energy for Africa’s political freedom and unification. His achievements are there for all to see. Militants the world over admire how he

set colonialism ablaze in Africa. Nkrumah has shown us the way and we must walk it with confidence.

Colonial powers never educate their victims (those they called subjects) on how to win their freedom. But Kwame Nkrumah taught us how to do it. ‘Free market’, ‘privatization’, ‘NEPAD’, ‘Structural Adjustment Program’, ‘Highly Indebted Poor Country’, ‘globalization’, and ‘Millennium Challenge Accounts’ are all imperialist attempts to deceive Africans and to poison our minds to make us participate in our own exploitation. Nkrumah said, “There are only two ways of development open to an independent African state. Either it must remain under imperialist domination via capitalism and neo-colonialism, or it must pursue a socialist path by adopting the principles of scientific socialism.”

The choice is for us to make. Either we chose the freedom fighters path, or we follow the CIA Gospel, as preached by Ali Mazrui.

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listing the names of more than 100 of our current political prisoners. Pam Africa (left, 3.), co-founder of MOVE, is one of the most compelling advocates for Mumia Abu-Jamal. Ex-Panther Robert King Wilkerson (middle, 4.), one of the Angola 3, was released in 2001 after 32 years in prison. Chairman Fred Hampton Jr. (right, 4.) of the Prisoners of Conscience Committee is the son of slain Panther, Fred Hampton. Pierre Labossiere (left, 5.) of the Haiti Action Committee, spoke of the more than 1,000 political prisoners in occupied Haiti. And ex-Panther Nzinga Conway (right, 5.) spoke about her husband, ex-Panther Marshall Eddie Conway, who has been incarcerated since 1970 in a police frame-up.

DAY 2:

6. Ex-Panther Charlotte O’Neal gave a chapter history of Kansas City and discussed the United African Alliance Community Center (UAACC), an organization found and led by her and her husband Pete O’Neal, in Tanzania. Standing next to her is ex-Panther Billy X Jennings, a main organizer of the reunion events.

7. Kathleen Cleaver discusses the International Section of BPP. On the previous day, she presented a rare film documenting Eldridge Cleaver’s exile in Algeria, entitled *Eldridge Cleaver: Black Panther*.

8. Legendary artist of the BPP newspaper covers, Emory Douglas, gave a presentation of his work to a packed room.

DAY 3:

9.—10. The day began with a group photo at the Alameda County Courthouse in Oakland where, 37 years ago, Panthers rallied to protest the imprisonment of Huey Newton (see front cover). In the upper-right corner of the close-up (10.) is a shot of Malik Rahim, founder of Common Ground Collective in New Orleans.

11.—13. After the group photo, people gathered in Li'l Bobby Hutton Park (de Fremery Park, to the City of Oakland) for musical performances, food, raffles, and vendors. People looked at a display of photographs of political prisoners (12.), set up by ex-Panther Elder Freeman (13.).

14. One of the most inspiring performances of the day was by the young hip hop duo, Moral Imperative.

Photos by Nia Imara

Join the A-APRP!



If you are inspired by what you have read and are interested in learning more about or joining the A-APRP, then fill out this form and send it to us.

I want to join the A-APRP.

I want more information. Please contact me.

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