

Of Marches And Mumia

LOOKING BACK AT THE MILLION YOUTH MARCHES; A PROTEST FOR ABU-JAMAL

Harlem, New York: Black Power versus Police Repression

SEPTEMBER 5, 1998, HARLEM, New York City: Many thousands of marchers converged on one of the cultural hubs of Afrikan-America this day to express their unity, their positivity, their discipline, their outrage and their resolve to resist racism, oppression and police intimidation at the Million Youth March (MYM-Harlem). And, thanks to the obstructionist efforts by New York Mayor **Rudolph Giuliani** and the New York Police Department (NYPD), the protesters were given a graphic example of just the type of oppression and intimidation this march was designed to protest.

The first thing one noticed about the atmosphere on Malcolm X Boulevard was the strong police presence. Uniformed officers were gathered in force at every intersection for at least six blocks from the main stage. Not only that, they were also stationed on the rooftops of the buildings, many of them dilapidated buildings, lining the Boulevard. Add to that the extensive use of barricades to keep the assembled marchers' movements tightly controlled, the announced ban on vendors and peddlers and the lack of Port-A-Pots, and a policy of intimidation and instigation toward violence begins to emerge. As *Bro. Hakim Muhammad*, President of *Umoja Nyumba Shule* and Defense Lieutenant of

[Please Turn To Page 2]

Atlanta, GA: A City Embraces a Call for Spirituality, Coexistence

SEPTEMBER 7, 1998, ATLANTA, GA: "Sweet Auburn" Avenue was the site of the culminating march of the Atlanta Million Youth Movement (MYM-Atlanta), a spiritual gathering that was as much revival service as MYM-Harlem was a Black Power rally.

There were a number of contrasts to MYM-Harlem. While the City of New York, in the person of Mayor **Rudolph Giuliani**, opposed the MYM at every turn, in the courts as well as with a show of police force, the City of Atlanta welcomed its MYM, with declarations of support and congratulations from **Mayor William Campbell** and the Atlanta City Council for the "God-centered youth movement", while the small contingent of police in Atlanta, no more than about a dozen or so in the immediate area of the stage, were in attendance for no purpose other than to insure the personal safety of the attendees and speakers. The primary security detail was staffed by several Sisters at the front of the stage, attired in the characteristic black fatigues of the Black Panther Party.

THE PROGRAM

The March festivities opened, as expected, with a prayer, though not as elaborate as the Christian-Muslim-Ancestral Afrikan prayers that opened MYM-Harlem. Those prayers were followed by a series of

[Please Turn To Page 5]

MUMIA ABU-JAMAL APPEAL DENIED BY PA. COURTS

On Friday, October 30, 1998, the Pennsylvania State Supreme Court voted to deny the appeal of death row Political Prisoner **Mumia Abu-Jamal**, who was convicted in 1980 of murdering Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner in a court proceeding that has been condemned by local, national and international activists and foreign heads of state as a sham, a frame-up, a kangaroo court, and an exercise in judicial racism of the highest order (See *KUUMBA Report* #5, February 1988, for more information on the case).

Thomas Ridge, the Republican pro-death penalty governor of Pennsylvania, has promised to sign Mumia's death warrant immediately after the courts verdict, saying that his "pencil is sharpened."

This decision validates, in the eyes of the Pennsylvania courts, the original conviction and death

sentence, saying that all of the prosecutions witnesses from the original trial were credible while all the defenses witnesses, many of whom came forward after the original trial was concluded to recant their testimony and who told of tactics of witness intimidation by police, were "not credible".

WHAT THE DECISION MEANS

Mumia now has between 30 and 90 days to file an appeal with the federal courts, while he is being moved to "Stage II" status on Pennsylvania's death

[Please Turn To Page 7]

In This Issue:

Contrasting and Comparing the MYMs ... **Page 6**
Remembering Baba Kwame Ture **Page 8**

Million Youth March-Harlem, from Page 1

the *Organization of All-Afrikan Unity/Black Panther Cadre* in Baltimore observed, "What they need to do is open up the middle and we wouldn't have the problems that were having on the side. ... But again this is all deliberate, getting us to be congested so perhaps something would break off, but we're not going to let that happen." As it turned out, the "encirclement" strategy failed: area churches opened their arms (and their rest rooms) to the marchers, and the few vendors who were present (selling books, T-shirts, posters and various other items such as red-black-and-green Afrikan Liberation flags) appeared to be free of harassment from the authorities.

Dr. Khallid Abdul Muhammad arrived shortly before the program began and was greeted by the crowd with hugs and kind words, as was **Bro. Malik Zulu Shabazz**, Washington, D.C. lawyer and the emcee of the program. In the meantime, march organizers continually exhorted the assembled crowd to maintain order and not cross the barricades, which would give the police an excuse to take action against them. As Bro. Malik observed of the "crowd control" measures, "Be understanding that we're dealing with a people that don't want us out here at all. ... Please bear with us. ... We are dealing with a beast."

The assembled crowd heeded his request, but was not intimidated by the police presence. Chants of "Say it loud, I'm Black and I'm proud" punctuated the air constantly during the moments leading up to the program, as did a fervent rhythm from the Afrikan drummers.

Finally, the barricades keeping the crowd from the street in front of the stage were removed, and the crowd filled the area carrying posters proclaiming everything from "We Love Our Youth" to "Justice For Abner Louima" (the Haitian man who was brutalized this past year in the custody of the NYPD).

THE PROGRAM

The program opened with prayers from the Muslim, Christian and Afrikan traditions, demonstrating the diversity among Afrikan people around the world.

A number of inspirational messages were offered from the podium. "You are not only the only tomorrow we have, you are the greatest this race has ever produced. It is because of what you are that they are so afraid of you," said one of the officiators of the Afrikan prayer to the youth.

The Boys' Choir of Harlem was present, and **Little Brother Damian** represented them as he said to our youth, often referred to as *Generation X*: "We need to begin the future *now*. ... As we stand here today, we are making tomorrow's history." He also clarified, for those

who attribute violence to our youth and nothing else, his interpretation of the phrase *No Justice, No Peace*: "If we don't get justice, you won't get peace of mind." He added, "We are the only group that kills and fights with each other. *Why?* We are the only group that had to get permission to be here today. *Why?*", referring to the various efforts to curtail the March's activities.

Bro. Malik next took the podium, comparing the Afrikans in America to the "lost sheep" in the Bible, having "lost our land, lost our language, lost our religion, our culture, our God, and many of us by the way we act, we've even lost our minds." He thanked God for the various freedom fighters, from Harriet Tubman to Malcolm X to Minister Louis Farrakhan (a show of respect and solidarity to the convener of the Million Man March in 1995 and supporter of the Million Youth March in Atlanta that same weekend), and finally for "that bold, bald-headed Black man", Dr. Khallid.

A variety of MYM-Harlem Black Power Organizing Committee Representatives from around the country attended, and some of them, including Bro. David Miller of the Baltimore MYM Organizing Committee, spoke at the proceedings, with frequent references to the conditions that face our youth today, to Mayor Giuliani's efforts to stop the MYM and the intimidation tactics being employed through the New York Police Department and to the resolve with which the marchers would press on despite the opposition, with a regular call-and-response of "Black Power!" and "Free The Land!" from the days of SNCC and the Black Panther Party in the 1960's.

Recurring themes were the need for a Black Nationalist perspective and the need to purge the ranks of leadership of "sellouts and Uncle Toms" who condemned such uncompromising leaders and programs as the MYM-Harlem, Dr. Khallid and other Black Nationalists.

Perhaps the mood can best be summarized by the following call-and-response: "I love myself. I love being Black. I love where I come from. I'm going to protect myself. I'm going to protect my community. I'm going to protect my elders. I'm going to fight my enemies."

The so-called "gangsta" and "hardcore" rappers who were not in attendance were challenged by Bro. Malik: "Y'all ain't hard enough to stand with us today so you really ain't that hard. ... We love you, but we know that there's a hidden hand of the White man ... controlling the distribution that only allow you to rap about things that are negative against our people. ... get with us if you're really hard."

A mass vote was taken on following the nationalistic lead of the Jewish community and seeking reparations "as you see the Jewish community squeezing every dime

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out of the banks in Switzerland ... *what about you*, Black man and Black woman? ... **We want full and complete reparations ...**"

Among the speakers that afternoon were **Dr. Leonard Jeffries** ("... we no longer need to talk about a curriculum of inclusion, we need to talk about and put in place in our homes a curriculum of *liberation* ... liberation from White supremacy ... from fear ... from miseducation ... from the inability to deal with our heritage"); **Dr. Yosef ben-Jochannon**; **Empress Phile Chionesu**, one of the conveners of the Million Woman March; the Community Mayor of Harlem, **Mother Sister Delores Blakely**; **Bro. Ted Sutton** from Baltimore, Maryland; **Bro. Troy Nkrumah** from California; **Spinderella** from the hip-hop group **Salt-N-Pepa** who made a brief appearance; the **Rev. Dr. Ishakamusa Barashango** from Philadelphia ("No people in their right mind celebrate their destruction. ... Stop celebrating White folks' holidays. ... Spend your money with your own people and it will come back to you. ... Spend your money with your enemy and you will never see it again!"); representatives of **Min. Silas Muhammad** and the Lost-Found Nation of Islam; **Baba Khallifah** of NCOBRA, the National Coalition Of Blacks for Reparations in America ("We have tried everything else ... integration ... assimilation ... it is now time to try

independence"); the **Rev. Al Sharpton** ("We don't march out of hate--we march because we love ourselves and love our children. ... This is a village of hope, not hate. ... This is where Paul Robeson was, this is where Malcolm was, this is where Queen Mother Moore was, Welcome to the Land of Giants. ... There are still some giants in Harlem and we will stand up for our young people!"); **Bro. Ras McPherson** from the Original Ethiopian Community in the West Indies; representatives of **Baba Kwame Ture** and the **All-Afrikan People's Revolutionary Party** ("We must bring conscious coordination to our struggle by joining permanent organizations"); two representatives of the Native American Indian community ("You are the only people we welcome to our land"); and finally, Dr. Khallid Muhammad himself, who spoke briefly just before 4:00. And then the drama began.

DR. KHALLID and the POLICE BEAT-DOWN

The police helicopters had been circling the crowd for some time. Dr. Khallid began his address, which was rather provocative as he challenged White and Jewish influence over Afrikan people's affairs as well as the intimidation tactics of the NYPD ("we have the right to defend ourselves ... we want you to be steadfast, look these bastards in the eye ... that *if anyone attacks you*, already decide who will disconnect the railing where you are and beat the hell out of them with it ... if they attack you, take their ... gun away from them ... Giuliani is known for taking his police and setting them off in riots ... took us to federal court ... appealed and we won, victory after victory, and if you attack us today, by the power of our God, we'll mop these ... streets with you! ... We came in peace, we came in unity, we came in love and they changed all of the rules"). The helicopters then began to "buzz" the crowd at a height of 25 to 30 feet. This tactic had the intended effect of creating tension among the attendees and diverting their attention skyward as the *real* action was unfolding behind the stage.

"They're trying to shut us down", Dr. Khallid said. "Now we're gonna ask the police, *Back your asses up*, and we will leave in peace; *back your asses up*, and we will leave in Black love and unity, but get the hell out of the way and let our people go, don't let nobody be arrested. If they grab anybody to arrest them and you know that it's a police riot, and it's against even White law, then we fight like hell with those who would fight against us!" As he finished his address with scathing criticisms of Black "leaders" who condemned the MYM, and as he asked the assembled crowd to disperse "in a very orderly way, with love for each other, don't push each other, don't trample each other ... go in the

way of love, go in the way of peace", the NYPD made their move.

"Around 3:45, the NYPD began to line up their riot police in full riot gear, they brought in 'paddy wagons' and backed them up to the back area of the stage," **Dr. Kwame SabakhuRa** of the **Organization of All-Afrikan Unity** stated after the march's end. "They then began to move out their community service people, and they proceeded to march on a line of Brothers. The Brothers had formed a line, shoulder to shoulder, to protect Bro. Khallid. ...



Dr. Khallid Muhammad (top); Rudolph Giuliani (left); Malik Zulu Shabazz (right)

The police came straight forward, straight up into the line, and began to push people out of the way. ... There were some batons raised, there was some chair-throwing, some bottles thrown, fistfights ... most of the Brothers were doing passive resistance. ... There were injuries. ... It was an unnecessary thing *because Bro. Khallid had already finished.*"

"We were told about 3:15, 'Look Brother, tell them on the stage, that at 4:00, *they are taking the stage* ... all of these are my police friends and I'm telling you that's what they're saying', so we said, Get the people, make them aware on stage," said Bro. Hakim Shabazz Muhammad. "It was an orchestrated, well thought-out design, a plan to instill aggression. ... We became front line fodder [at the rear of the stage]. ... I was pushed down into one of the metal barricades ... many were either pepper-sprayed, maced or hit with a club and taken away. ... It was an attack. Make no mistake about it, this was an all-out assault. ... They had the mace, they had the 'billy' clubs, they had the shields, they were just rolling people over, and then they actually put on the cuffs once they had anyone to the ground. ... Being that this took place in the back, so many people in the front didn't see it. ... I'm certain that Giuliani gave that word, that 'At 4:00 we will ensue martial law' and that's what it became, an all-out occupation." All of this was occurring as the police helicopters were continuously "buzzing" the crowd in front of the stage, further evidence that this was indeed a calculated, coordinated attack.

After the crowd had dispersed, the NYPD riot police lined up

at least three deep in front of and behind the stage, an evident show of force. "Most of the crowd is dispersed and the police presence is still here. They're ready for a few passengers (arrestees). Nobody wants to leave a job site without completing their duties," one person said.

Bro. Malik was seen walking away from the stage minutes after the police riot, a worried look on his face. Dr. Khallid evidently also escaped arrest or injury, although a warrant would later be issued for his arrest on charges of "inciting a riot", this despite the fact that the only rioters were the police themselves. According to witnesses, no verbal orders to disperse were given to the crowd or the speakers on stage. The police simply stormed the stage, shoved, beat and maced the participants.

MIS-INFORMATION AND SUCH

*There are three kinds of lies. ... Lies, damned lies, and statistics.
--Old saying, author unknown*

The Internet accounts early Sunday morning began: "Far fewer than the hoped-for 25,000 participants turned out for the Million Youth March ..." Even the *Baltimore Afro-American* Newspaper referred to estimates they received of "3,000 police officers for fewer than 6,000 participants." These gross misrepresentations are disturbingly reminiscent of efforts to diminish the Million Man March as well as the Million Woman March, both of which met their goals and then some. While Bro. Malik's statement "You are one million strong" at MYM-Harlem was hardly believable, one can forgive his over-exuberance. Indications were that the MYM drew far more than 6,000, and quite likely more than the "hoped-for 25,000". Such lowly estimates are evidently an attempt to discount the importance of the message of the MYM as well as the degree to which it resonated with the people. Though not nearly as big as the Million Man March (MMM) or the Million Woman March (MWM), this was clearly an important event, not to be taken lightly or trivialized as the media tried to do.

TACTICAL ERRORS

Were any mistakes made during the MYM-Harlem? In this writer's estimation, yes. The first, and biggest mistakes, were Giuliani's. He thought he could stop it. He was wrong. He thought he could intimidate the marchers and organizers. He was wrong. He thought he could incite the crowd to riot with the police's intimidating tactics. He was wrong. And, after the disturbance, he evidently thought he could get away with trying to pin responsibility for it on Dr. Khallid. Late reports that the charges of inciting a riot have been or will likely be dropped would indicate that he was wrong yet again.

Dr. Khallid did, however, commit one strategic error. While he was careful not to encourage wanton violence from the marchers, his words were, at times, caustic and defiant. Were the

assembled marchers not as disciplined, some of them could have felt the need to commit an act of aggression. Even so, the police attack could have been more violent, spilling out from the stage area into the crowd. That would have been an unfortunate thing for the MYM as well as a dangerous situation into which to place our youth, some of whom were as young as 8 years.

Dr. Khallid and Mayor Giuliani's jousting over the location, time, length and even existence of the MYM in court battle after court battle plunged the two of them into a personal game of "chicken" that no doubt led Giuliani to adopt some of the tactics of police intimidation and also led Dr. Khallid to practically *dare* the NYPD to give us all a taste of their "hospitality". The ill-advised, brutal, and almost certainly illegal police action at the end apparently signifies that Giuliani blinked first. Still, this was a dangerous situation for the marchers to find themselves in, especially since many were not the "No-Limit Soldiers" Dr. Khallid sought. Many were fathers and mothers with their children, hoping to see a part of history, looking for another dose of that magical MMM/MWM feeling. Thanks to the acrimony that had developed between Dr. Khallid and Giuliani, these *families* were placed in harms way *unnecessarily*.

THE TRUE VICTORY OF THE MILLION YOUTH MARCH-HARLEM

Perhaps the greatest triumph of MYM-Harlem was not the numbers of participants (which will always be in dispute), or even exactly what was said on the stage, or even whether or not the NYPD showed "their true colors" in the attack at the end. The greatest victory of MYM-Harlem is the fact that, despite the hyped-up tensions preceding the March, despite the intimidating police presence, despite the police attack, the assembled multitude *maintained their discipline and kept their cool*. Yes, two or three bottles flew in the air, and perhaps a chair or two took flight during the police-instigated melee on stage, but the apparently-hoped-for riot that the "buzzing" heli-

copters, the officers on rooftops, the barricades, the threats, and finally, the police attack were designed to inflame, *never materialized*. This is a tribute to the attendees who knew why they had gathered on Malcolm X Boulevard that day--not to party, not to trade hostilities with the police, but to receive inspiration and guidance from those whom they had chosen as leaders, and to demonstrate to the country their resolve to resist oppression while at the same time allowing all to see that Afrikan people have been, are and will continue to be among the most resilient, steadfast and *civilized* people on the face of the earth.

*"We are a loving people. We love anyone who loves us. But we **don't** love anyone who doesn't love us.*

*"We are a **non-violent** people. We are non-violent with anyone who is non-violent with us. But we are **not** non-violent with anyone who is violent with us."*

--El Hajj Malik Al-Shabazz (Malcolm X)



The MYM crowd carries the picture of Dr. Khallid Muhammad (top); an example of NYPD intimidation of protesters (bottom)

MYM-Atlanta, continued from Page 1

speakers who represented, in some ways, a Who's Who of the historical Civil Rights Movement: The **Rev. Jesse Jackson**, NAACP Executive Director **Kweisi Mfume**, The **Rev. Joseph Lowery** of SCLC and **Martin Luther King III** as well as The **Rev. Al Sharpton** and Harlem Community Mayor **Mother Sister Delores Blakely**, fresh from MYM-Harlem to offer their greetings to the assembled throng in a show of solidarity between the two marches ("... they may argue about what march. We need a hundred marches. ... We need to march until we all have jobs ... until the programs return to train and develop our young people ... until ... we're not building prisons and closing schools but building schools and closing prisons ... until justice rolls down like water and righteousness like a mighty stream. ... God didn't bring us this far to leave us now.")

The first major speaker for the program was Rev. Jackson, appearing surprisingly early in the proceedings. His oration began with his signature "I Am Somebody" call-and-response. His familiar refrain, "Down with dope/Up with hope/Stop the violence/Save the children/Keep hope alive" aroused some of the assembled crowd, even if it may have seemed well-worn to others. His address was to "Young America on the move", citing examples of Afrikans and Europeans marching, protesting and dying to wake America up. "Today we march because of the objective conditions of young Blacks. Every city I visit, they speak about a race gap ... about the computer literacy gap. ... First class jails and second class schools. ... Lift our youth up, don't lock them up, that's why we march."

Dr. Murad Muhammad from the **International Human Rights Association of America and Minorities (IHRAAM)** suggested that "the current form and content of our leadership is wholly inadequate to appropriately deal with the problems at hand. ... Instead of using outdated and domestically created civil rights law, which has been created to legitimize and maintain our historical oppression, we must begin to chart our own destiny for true liberation and self-determination within the context of international human rights law," reminiscent of the human rights-based liberation ideology of Ancestor Malcolm X.

Other speakers included **Bro. Carl Reading**, chief of staff of the **National Action Network**; **Bro. Dennis Rogers**, one of the conveners of the MYM-Atlanta; **Dr. Dorothy Height** of the **National Council of Negro Women**; the father of **Sister Kemba Smith**, currently imprisoned because of her involvement with a reputed drug dealer; and **Sister Ati Cushmeer-Muhammad**, president of the **Million Youth Movement**, who enumerated the five main points of the platform: spiritual, political, social, economic and educational development, with God at the base of all of it...If Hes not at the base of it we will not be successful...There is a global ten-year action plan...You must be a part of the ten-year action plan...You have to get involved in some organized effort to improve us as a whole. •

NAACP Executive Director Kweisi Mfume exhorted the crowd to forge ahead and take the reins of leadership: "they [your elders] have waited years for you to stand up and take control. This is your day and your movement!" He then introduced **Rev. Jamal Bryant** who delivered a spirited address to the "leaders of the new school ... business as usual is no longer acceptable. ... *Today is the last day* to think that the NAACP is not a revolutionary organization. ... This is not your grandmother's NAACP."

Several youth-oriented groups, from Afrikan-oriented dancers to gospel-inspired singers, took the stage to entertain the crowd, and rap artists **Goodie MoB** appeared, not to perform but simply to rap with, not to, the people ("From the first day of comprehension, when you're able to comprehend who you are and who you are *not*, the struggle begins. ... There's no legal age to start turning to another Brother and ... share your experience with them in order to make their travels a little bit easier. ... We're gonna have to do this hand in hand. ... Being a soldier doesn't mean you're expendable ... dying for the hell of it. Being a soldier means humbling yourself to a strategy, to a plan, and being instrumental in that work of God ... and it's gonna take all of us. ... What if they took your voice away? ... Realize that you do *have* one, and another second ain't promised to you. And for those of you who *know*, you *say*, *right now* ... or else you'll be transgressing and held accountable for all and any knowledge you could have shared. ... So [our young people] won't settle for what a 'nigga' is and what a 'nigga' has become, so his aspirations will be high to become Black again, to become God again").

Bro. Ashad Maliki Muhammad brought greetings from the Nation Of Islam Student Association. **Bro. Byron Garrett** ran down his rendition of "The A-B-C's of Life". **Bro. Ayembe Jean-Baptiste**, a youth speaker at the Million Man March, eloquently ran down much of the evidence of the oppression of Afrikan people ("We are being returned to slavery today in America. In the prisons our youth are almost fully employed while the leaders of industry reap tremendous profits. We must raise our voices against this exploitation. ... I am here today to appeal to you to struggle for our liberation. ... Stand up, you are being called"). **Bro. Bob Brown** brought greetings from **Baba Kwame Ture** and the **All-Afrikan Peoples Revolutionary Party (A-APRP)**, while pointing out the hypocrisy of the United States ("This country and its filthy capitalist system pays tribute to youth and then murders them, murders them in every corner of the world. ... This generation of Afrikan youth, like ours, must take up arms and fight in every corner of the world. ... We must demand of our leadership an Afrikan United Front"). **Sister Tameka X** brought further greetings from the NOI and **Minister Louis Farrakhan**.

A prominent feature of MYM-Atlanta was the consistent inclusion of youth in the organization of the march as well as among the speakers on stage.

The emcee for the day was BET-Teen Summit's **Prince De'Jour**, who spoke often of his transformation toward atonement and a more righteous, spiritual way of life from his time as a sex addict and especially thanked his wife for standing by him during his journey toward positivity. Interjecting doses of humor and spirituality, he kept the program moving from one speaker or performer to the next, as well as repeatedly encouraging the attendees to keep cool by drinking the water that was made available free of charge.

MYM-Atlanta ended with a prayer and the relatively-quiet dispersal of the crowd down Sweet Auburn Avenue to partake of some of the arts and crafts, food and other information booths set up at the edge of downtown Atlanta.



CONTRASTING AND COMPARING THE MILLION YOUTH MARCHES

As Afrikans living in America (or, as we are perhaps more widely regarded, American citizens), we have been taught to think in terms of “dualism”, e.g., good-vs-evil or bad, positive-vs-negative, activistic-vs-integrationist, Black nationalist-vs-assimilationist, etc. This “either-or” view is one which this writer is, with each passing day, finding more and more inadequate as it tends to do our people a disservice in too many ways. It leads us to consider only two choices as opposed to three, or four, or five. It also presupposes that, of the two choices given, we cannot choose *both*. However, in the interest of clarity, I shall begin this section with a cursory look at the “contrasts” between the two Million Youth Marches.

MYM-Harlem was as it was billed, essentially a Black Nationalist rally. Its basic purpose was to show America that Afrikan youth had long tired of being exploited, disenfranchised, disempowered, discriminated against, beaten by police, locked up in prisons and brainwashed by “the system”. Its theme, “Black Power in the Year 2000”, was very assertive, confronting the cultural war being waged against Afrikan culture and Afrikan youth, and unafraid to even point out our enemies at frequent intervals (White supremacy, police violence, the prison-industrial complex, “boot-licking” Black politicians, and specifically, Mayor Rudolph Giuliani and the NYPD). Its speakers, comprised mostly of Elders and leaders of Afrikan-centered organizations, basically represented the Black Nationalist and Pan-Afrikan movement. Its thrust was more activistic but included spiritual elements. Entertainment was omitted, partly because the city of New York wouldn’t allow it, partly to concentrate on its activistic theme. Its primary organizers, **Dr. Khallid Muhammad** and Attorney **Malik Zulu Shabazz**, were assertive on stage and even a bit confrontational. This had the intended effect of exciting the crowd in a positive way, but it also had a side-effect: the police, certainly already egged on by the efforts of Giuliani to first prevent and then intimidate the March and the marchers, were put on edge even more by the fiery speeches. The city of New York never officially embraced the March, and as 4:00 arrived, they evidently concluded that it was necessary to end it with a violent “beat-down”.

MYM-Atlanta was characterized as a “God-Centered Youth Movement”, and the various spiritual messages that were incorporated into the program kept that theme out front. The activism of MYM-Harlem was replaced by a determination to open minds, to resist oppression, to become aware of the forces that seek to curtail or destroy Afrikan culture and Afrikan youth, and to organize with ourselves and in coalition with other groups to overcome racism and oppression. The speakers represented more of the established “mainstream” civil rights organizations, from the NAACP to the SCLC, with representatives from the A-APRP and the NOI to give the proceedings a more inclusive and Afrikan-centered feel. The City of Atlanta and its police embraced the March, as did a variety of corporate sponsors, including Coca-Cola and C-Span-2, which broadcast the event. The assembled crowd, which had thinned out to some degree from its auspicious beginning, was allowed to disperse calmly and without incident.

During the weeks and months leading up to the two Marches, efforts seemed to be made to cause a “rift” between them. Tensions between followers of **Minister Louis Farrakhan** and those of Dr. Khallid Muhammad have been increasing since Dr. Khallid’s separation from the NOI years ago. Many who attended MYM-Harlem will no doubt characterize MYM-Atlanta as the “integrationist march”, and some of those who avoided MYM-Harlem referred to it as the “hate march”. Neither statement is in any way true. MYM-Atlanta was affiliated more with the historic integrationist-oriented civil rights organizations, but many of the speakers referred to the need of this new generation of Afrikans to stand up, take the mantle of leadership and be ready to fight, and Pan-Afrikanist roots were there, as represented by the A-APRP and others. MYM-Harlem was organized largely by the controversial Dr. Khallid Muhammad, who offered some of his fiery invective to Giuliani and the NYPD, but throughout the program references were made to our need to maintain a sense of righteousness and discipline, not being the aggressor but defending ourselves against violence, and the assembled masses heard, internalized and followed that advice even as the NYPD concluded their tactics of intimidation with the attack on the stage. Several speakers and attendees were at *both* Marches, including Mother Sister Delores Blakely of Harlem, Rev. Al Sharpton, representatives of the A-APRP and NOI, as well as this writer. Other writers appearing in Black newspapers available in print and over the Internet, defended the notion that having two such Marches was *not* divisive and was even a good idea.

In this writer’s opinion, the efforts to cause a “split” between the two MYM’s do a disservice to our people. It is a continuation of the “Willie Lynch Syndrome” that seeks to keep our people divided and conquered. Yes, I was more energized by MYM-Harlem. But many of us remain afraid of an uncompromising Black Nationalist perspective and no doubt found MYM-Atlanta an easier pill to swallow. Many of the same messages were at both Marches. Both set up standing committees to pursue their work into the next millennium. MYM-Atlanta preceded the Monday March with *three days* of workshops and organizing (Due to the inability to clone myself, I was unable to attend both the workshops *and* MYM-Harlem; that was one disadvantage of the scheduling of the two Marches). MYM-Harlem passed a mandate to their Black Power Organizing Committees to hold regular meetings, much as is being done by the Million Man March Local Organizing Committees (LOCs).

I see these two Marches as two sides of the same coin (Some of my friends will disagree with me). The conveners of both Marches have done a lot of work and plan to do more work. They are counting on us for support. Between those two Marches, there should be something for all serious Afrikan youth to look for and support, whether you be a “Black Nationalist”, or an “Afrikan-American Seeking Peace, Prosperity and Respect”, or “Just A Black Youth Trying To Survive”.

Too often we give excuses for not getting with a particular program. Our favorite sources of excuses often come from that dualism which I spoke of earlier. Most often the excuses range

from “they’re too hardcore” or “they’re too militant” or “they’re too aggressive” or “they follow Khallid” to “they’re too timid” or “they’re too integrationist/assimilationist” or “they’re not hardcore enough” or “they aren’t committed to Black Nationalism/Pan-Afrikanism” or “they follow the NAACP”. Now we have two Marches that are heading in the same direction (as were Malcolm and Martin) *from two different places*. A Pan-Afrikanist perspective, one that recognizes the oneness of Afrikan people around the world and our need to organize and struggle together for freedom from exploitation and oppression, is inevitable. Also inevitable is the need for us to realize that Afrikan people are one important part of a greater human family that must live in peace and mutual respect lest we all die in acrimony and violence. Both of these Marches seek to lead Afrikan youth in the direction of liberation and self-determination from slightly different starting

points. Actually, these two different-yet-converging themes have been in place for decades, even centuries. The two MYM’s only remind us of this truth by once again putting it into graphic focus for all to see. Perhaps that is the greatest lesson we can learn from these two Million Youth Marches--the very things we’ve been pining for to offer leadership to our people have been here all along; all they need are people to join and work with them.

Our excuses have run out. Our youth will wake up and will join and transform the organizations we created. They will develop the new ideas, show the backbone we have discarded, take the mantle of leadership, make things happen and leave those of us who are still asleep to sit on our porch-stoops, stare with bewilderment at the changes going on around us and chatter on like old fools.



Abu-Jamal’s Appeal Denied

continued from Page 1

row, which will mean the confiscation of his legal materials and the further restriction of whatever rights he had while on death row.

At the same time, Pennsylvania governor Ridge will set the date on which Mumia is to be executed. An earlier attempt by Ridge to silence Mumia forever was made in August of 1995; that execution date was postponed indefinitely because several appeals had already been filed by Mumia’s lawyers and also because of worldwide protests that were held, as well as appeals from foreign dignitaries and heads of state, to spare his life.

THE PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN

A fierce media blitz was undertaken over the last several months by the **Fraternal Order of Police (FOP)** and supporters of Officer Faulkner’s widow, which included full-page ads in the New York Times and other newspapers, in which Mumia was characterized as a cold-blooded killer who allegedly smiled menacingly at Mrs. Faulkner during an emotional moment in the original trial (the displaying of Officer Faulkner’s bloody police uniform as evidence by the prosecution; Mumia’s attorney, **Leonard Weinglass**, stated that Mumia was not even in the courtroom at that time, having been removed for protesting the proceedings). Mumia’s supporters, however, describe him as “an innocent man, a decent man” and as a target of the police and Federal Bureau of Investigation’s COINTELPRO or Counter-Intelligence Program (See **KUUMBAReports** #3 through #7 for various examples of Political Prisoners targeted through that and similar programs) because of his onetime membership in the Black Panthers, his continuing political activism, his journalistic accomplishments and his support of the Philadelphia Afrikan-centered “back-to-nature” revolutionary organization, MOVE.

The **International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal (ICFF-MAJ)** immediately sent out letters, phone calls and e-mails to all organizations and individuals sympathetic to Mumia’s cause, calling for press conferences, emergency meetings and plans for protests, starting with an October 31st press conference and a full-scale protest in Philadelphia on November 7th.

THE NOVEMBER 7TH PROTEST IN PHILADELPHIA

On Saturday, November 7th, a massive protest was held in Philadelphia to send a message to the Pennsylvania courts as well as Ridge that Mumia’s supporters will not tolerate this latest attempt to kill him. Representatives from the many chapters of the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, the Coalition to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal, the **Marshall E. Conway Support Committee**, the **All Peoples Congress**, the **Organization of All-Afrikan Unity-Black Panther Cadre, Refuse and Resist!** And its Youth Network, **Artists for Mumia Abu-Jamal (AMAJ)**, the **Nation of Islam, Jericho ‘98, MOVE** and a host of other organizations from across the country and around the world committed to the exoneration and freedom of Mumia and of all Political Prisoners converged on City Hall to vent their outrage at what has been called “a gross miscarriage of justice” by activist organizations worldwide.

The march began at the State Office Building at Broad and Spring Garden Streets and proceeded down Broad Street to the offices of the Philadelphia Inquirer where its editorial and reporting staff were referred to as “cowards. ... Why haven’t you informed the people about the facts in Mumia’s case? ... They didn’t even have an editorial questioning the decision. ... How can they call themselves journalists? ... Shame on you!” The protest continued to City Hall, where various speakers, including members of MOVE, turned their ire to State’s Attorney **Lynne Abraham**, excoriating her as a “Murderer” for her role in the 1978 attack on the MOVE house in Powelton Village, the 1985 bombing of the MOVE house on Osage Avenue and her dogged pursuit of Mumia’s execution: “We want to see Mumia’s poster 24 hours a day in every window in this country ... so every time Lynne Abraham gives a speech on the death penalty she is greeted by The Face of Justice.” Abraham, Attorney General **Janet Reno**, Ridge, Mayor Ed Rendell and President Bill Clinton were denounced for ignoring “overwhelming evidence of Mumia’s innocence over and over again.”

Those who were coming out in support of Mumia were praised as “people taking an active role in determining the kind of world they want to live in. ... We’re getting a piece of that here today.” The marchers then proceeded down Broad Street a few more blocks, back up 13th Street and across Market Street back to City

Hall, all the while chanting “Stop the Plot, Stop the Plan/The State’s Gonna Kill an Innocent Man. ... They Say Death Row/We Say Hell No. ... Brick By Brick, Wall By Wall/We’re Gonna Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!”

Organizing efforts to stop Ridge from carrying out his plan to execute Mumia are continuing. During the week from October 31 to November 7, protests, demonstrations, pickets of American embassies and emergency meetings were held or scheduled in places as varied as Albany, New York; New York City; Detroit,

Michigan; San Francisco, California; Los Angeles, California; Santa Cruz, California; Portland, Oregon; Seattle, Washington; Cleveland, Ohio; Madison, Wisconsin; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Chicago, Illinois; and even Oslo, Norway; Calgary, Alberta, Canada; and Cape Town, South Afrika. Further protests, press conferences and emergency meetings will be held in the near future as this situation moves toward an inevitable showdown between informed concerned citizens and the Powers That Be in the State of Pennsylvania.



REMEMBERING BABA KWAME TURE: A RELENTLESS VOICE FOR REVOLUTION

I first saw **Baba Kwame Ture** when I was in college in 1979. By this time he was no longer **Stokely Carmichael**, fiery civil rights activist and SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Commission) representative. He was no longer Prime Minister of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense. These accomplishments, though not forgotten, were all in his past. His present was about his life in Guinea, his acceptance of the mantle passed down to him by his namesakes, Ancestor, legendary Pan-Afrikanist and Ghanaian President **Kwame Nkrumah** and Ancestor and legendary Guinean President **Ahmed Sekou Ture**; his political philosophy of Pan-Afrikanism; and his organizing activities for his **All-Afrikan Peoples Revolutionary Party**.

He had been invited to speak at Shriver Hall of the Johns Hopkins University by the Black Student Union in the spring of 1979 for the BSU’s annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Lectureship, his address coming one day after poet **Haki Madhubuti** had spoken at the Levering Hall Auditorium on campus. While Baba Haki had been assertive, somewhat aggressive, and almost in-your-face with his activist message to his audience, Baba Kwame Ture was more statesmanlike as he sounded what would be perhaps the most consistent point of every speech he would make on the college circuit and beyond (including another appearance at Hopkins): Afrikan people will never achieve freedom, justice and equality in America or even in our own homeland *until we organize*. There were some who feared him for his message. Those in power will not loosen their grip easily, and Baba Kwame knew this.

Even as he waged what would be a losing battle against prostate cancer (a cancer which he had at least once opined had been “given” to him by the imperialist capitalist system), his stature remained impressive as he addressed the assembled students at Coppin State College this past February 13th (See **KUUMBAReport** No. 7), standing tall as ever at the podium, often repeating his key points several times--once to his left,

once to his right, and finally, directly facing the audience, as if to address the Four Directions as well as us--as he had the previous two times I had seen him.

After his speech, he was assisted into a wheelchair, one of the few outward signs of his failing health, and taken to Mondawmin Mall, where he greeted well-wishers, posed for photographs, and autographed updated copies of his 1967 book with Charles V. Hamilton, *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation*. My copy reads: “To my brother Cliff, Help us, organize us, Kwame Ture”.

I had heard and read that his battle with prostate cancer was not going well. I had not really known or learned much about him before, except what I had learned about his organization, the All-Afrikan Peoples Revolutionary Party (A-APRP) and my ongoing education about Pan-Afrikanism and “militant” politics over the last several years. Now I was meeting him again, after almost 18 years, and, as it turned out, for the last time.

I never had the opportunity to see **Dr. Chancellor Williams** (*The Destruction of Black Civilization, The Re-Birth of Afrikan Civilization*). I was able to see and hear **Dr. John Henrik Clarke** two times while he still walked the earth. I had three chances to meet Baba Kwame Ture. I try my best to

treasure and remember these encounters, and I also strive to appreciate the activists, educators and other giants we *still have*: writer and teacher **Dr. Yosef ben-Jochannon**, former political prisoner **Geronimo JiJaga**, current political prisoners **Marshall “Eddie” Conway**, **Leonard Peltier** and **Mumia Abu-Jamal** (who the State of Pennsylvania wishes to take from us), and many others too numerous to mention. As I have said before, we must remember our departed elders as we fight to support, free and (in the case of Baba Mumia) save the lives of those still with us who have sacrificed themselves for our mental, physical and spiritual freedom.

