

PANTHERS IN MEXICO

by LONDON WILLIAMS

In keeping with its policy of attempted isolation and suppression of the growing black liberation struggle, the racist U. S. government flexed its international muscle the week-end of August 10th thru 12th, and prevented a three member Black Panther delegation from visiting Cuba at the invitation of Cuban Premier Fidel Castro and the Cuban people. The groundwork for the trip had been planned out a few weeks earlier when members of the Central Committee of the Black Panther Party took the case of our Minister of Defense, Huey P. Newton, to the halls of the United Nations in New York and talked with some of our brown brothers in the Cuban mission. The week of August 16th thru 24th was to be proclaimed worldwide as "The Week of Solidarity of the Asian, African, and Latin American People With the Afro American People in Their Struggle Against Violent Repression." The purpose of our trip was to be educational. We were to carry to the Asian, African, and Latin American peoples the true story about the conditions black people are subjected to in racist decadent America and how in ever-increasing numbers more and more of our black brothers and sisters are turning to the teachings of Huey P. Newton, picking up the gun and using it, in return we would get a chance, first hand, to examine and study for ourselves the country and the people of Cuba, a country and people free of the domination of racist American imperialism. A country and people that have taken up the gun and now realize their own destiny. A country of truly free people. That was to be our mission.

For this purpose, George Murray, David Hilliard, and myself, left from San Francisco Airport, Friday night, July 10th, on a Western Airlines jet for Mexico City where we were to spend the night before traveling on to Cuba in the morning. From the moment we set foot outside the airport in Mexico City until we arrived in New York a day and a half later, both David and myself were for the major part completely ignorant of what was being said around us. Neither David nor myself could speak Spanish and from the airport on, we relied heavily on brother George to help us to what was being said, George easily hailed a cab at the airport and we were soon on our way into town to the hotel. Once the cab driver found out that brother George could speak Spanish, he gave up on his meager attempts at speaking English and began to speak nothing but Spanish. In between the chattering of our cab driver and his laughter, George managed to explain part of what was being said and pointed out to us. The cab driver wanted to know if we were athletes there to train for the olympics and George had answered no we weren't there for the olympics, but we were in training. When questioned about discrimination in Mexico, the driver said there was absolutely no discrimination in Mexico, however later on he admitted that there were some hotels where Blacks were not allowed to register. When David told George to ask him whether or not that was discrimination the driver simply shrugged his shoulders and laughed. That's the way it went all the way into town and to the hotel. Every now and then George would point out certain places to us but for most of the ride I sat back, watched the long rows of white brick walls roll by and wondered about the people and country of Mexico.

When we left the hotel around 9:00 Saturday morning, I remember the weather was hot, the sky was smoggy and the streets were filled with taxi cabs and people rushing by in all directions at once. At first it seemed like utter chaos and confusion, all noise and flashing colors. Then things began to take on a shape and a rhythm. There were women selling flowers on the streets, flags flying from buildings and in the background we could hear music being played in the square. Later, in a cab on our way to the Cuban Embassy we were to find out that this square, only a week before, had been part of the scene of bloody students' rebellions that had rocked Mexico City for nearly two weeks.

There seemed to be new construction going on everywhere. In almost every block new buildings were going up and old ones were coming down. The more I saw of Mexico City the more it began to amaze me. Modern buildings here, up to date advertising equipment there and modern gas stations. Then slowly out of the back of my mind, images of Racist America began to drift through my head, but why here in Mexico and why now? At first I began to wonder if maybe I was tripping. Then the images began to match, the picture became clear and WHAM it hit me right in the face. I could have been riding in downtown Oakland, the only differences were that instead of seeing black and brown men slaving their lives away, in muddy holes, shoveling dirt, there were Mexican brothers working their lives away in holes in the streets, instead of the sidewalks being filled with a sea of worn black faces and voices downtown shopping and being robbed by the vicious white merchant class, there was a multitude of friendly laughing brown faces and above them all like a menacing monster, loomed the overbearing presence of U. S. imperialism. The new buildings and stores had American names. The cars that were advertised on billboards were American. In fact the cigarettes, wine, whiskey, clothing and even the soap that was advertised was American, not to mention the thousand and one beauty aids, all the way from lady clairol to Avon calling. American ownership and control was plainly visible in everything. And the people! The ones working in the ditches were Mexican, the ones pumping gas were Mexican, the taxi drivers were Mexican, and the boys shining shoes were Mexican. It was just as though nothing had changed except the color of the people. Instead of arriving in an area of relative safety, as some people are apt to imagine Mexico to be, we had merely crossed from the Black colony of Afro America into the Brown colony of Mexico. All of the hum and rhythm of life that we saw in Mexico city was just another of the working parts of U. S. imperialism. There must have been a thousand cabs in the streets that day and believe me riding through traffic in Mexico City is like nothing else in the world. There are only about 3 or 4 red lights in the whole city and no stop signs at all. At most intersections it is first come first served. The trip to the Cuban Embassy was much like the trip from the airport. The cab driver talked to George in Spanish and George pointed out various landmarks to us. One of the things we saw that stuck in my mind was the housing development that was built by funds received under the five alliance for progress that the Kennedy's backed so strongly. There they were like a sore thumb about 12 square blocks of drab looking four story housing projects like those of west Oakland or any

the Mexican bourgeoisie, who were the only ones who could afford them. And what of the rest of the Mexican people, the lower income people, the unemployed, the old and helpless, to this our driver pointed to the rows and rows of plain white-washed brick walls and said that on the other side, hidden from view were the pasteboard houses of the Mexican peasants. The Mexican Terms who had sold out to U.S. imperialism have found the U.S. remedy for handling problems very convenient. It is sometimes easier to cover up or camouflage the problem than it is to correct it and sometimes much cheaper too. Just as Mayor Daley of Chicago saw fit to put up redwood fences to hide the sight of the horrid and decrepit slums, and living conditions of black people from the eyes of the delegates to the Democratic convention, the Mexican authorities have row after row of eight foot high brick walls to hide the wretched living conditions and dilapidated shacks, into which most of the Mexican population are crowded. The olympic visitors will see only the glittering outer shell of the monster that is the brown colony of Mexico. Soon we arrived at the Cuban Embassy and once inside, it was like breathing fresh air after running through clouds of dust holding your breath; or finding a calm friendly island in a violent sea filled with whirlpools and sharks. The Cuban consulate received us warmly and made us feel like we were truly at home. He then went busily about preparing our visa and letters of introduction. On the wall in the background was a large red picture of Che. Just as the Chinese have a name for the year so do the Cubans and in bold letters at the top of the official Cuban stationery was written "The Year of the Courageous Guerrilla." After finishing our papers the consulate explained the rest of our trip to us and said that by 2:00 that afternoon we would be in Cuba and that a reception was waiting for us at the airport. With this he wished us well and sped us on our way. When we left the Embassy, I remember feeling a sense of urgency. The atmosphere had changed. There were three uniformed Mexican policemen standing on the corner and for the first time we saw Mexican soldiers riding in jeeps and trucks. Unlike the other times it took a long time to hail a cab. It was as though they all had something else to do or somewhere else to go.

We finally caught a cab and started on our way to the airport for the final leg of our trip. This time the cab driver was not as friendly and talkative as the others had been and so we rode to the airport in almost complete silence. We got out of the cab, paid the driver, picked up our bags and headed for the Air Cubana ticket agency and then it happened. We were surrounded by 12 men of various nationalities, dressed in plain clothes and looking like Elliot Ness and the Untouchables. In typical Elliot Ness style, one grabbed my right arm. Another my left arm, one stood in front of me with his hand inside his coat, told me not to move and that I was under arrest and another one searched me from behind. The same thing was done to George and David and then we were all handcuffed and manacled together. When we asked them what they were doing and for some identification all they showed us were 38's and 14 shot 9 M/M's. In righteous gangland fashion we were kidnapped from the airport at gunpoint, loaded into the back of a dirty white station wagon with 8 armed men driven to a secluded portion of Mexico City, and rubbed of our money, papers, cameras, tape recorders and books. In the station wagon while we were being ripped off at the airport I had thought about how there were plenty of people around us who could have helped, but like some of our misguided brothers and sisters in racist America, refused to get involved and even go so far as to completely turn their backs so as to purposely not see anything. We told the pigs who had kidnapped us and robbed us we wanted to see the American Ambassador and they said that was where they were taking us. When the car stopped they ordered us to get out. When I looked out the window all I could see was rows of those white brick walls. I told one of the pigs that it didn't look like the U.S. Embassy to me and asked him just what was going on. All he said was that he had his orders, for me to stop asking questions and to get out of the car. That may seem like a simple thing, to get out of the car but due to the manner in which we were manacled together, it was a difficult task. George was on my left side and my right hand had been handcuffed across my body to George's right hand and David was in the same awkward position on George's left. When we got out of the car we were taken and lined against a wall and questioned about why we were in Mexico. We told the pigs we were students there to study and they told us yes, they knew, we were red students, members of the Black Panthers. When we wouldn't tell them anything other than we were students they photographed us and told us that if we ever returned to Mexico we would be jailed for the next five years. Refusing to answer our questions they then proceeded to escort us back to the airport and up the runway of a nonstop jet to New York. Our passports were placed in our pockets, our unwelcome guides said Adios and we were airborne on our way to New York.

International U. S. imperialism had made itself more clear to us. The reasons for what happened to us were crystal clear. We were stopped from going to Cuba because this racist U. S. government doesn't want any genuine ties of friendship established between Black revolutionaries in this country and the revolutionary peoples of Cuba. We were threatened at gun point as a further attempt at threatening and stifling the leadership of the peoples vanguard. The Black Panther Party however refuses to allow itself to be bullied and intimidated by the racist pigs who control this country or their international goons and lackeys who protect their right to plunder the world. We believe in the teachings of our Minister of Defense, Huey P. Newton, that "the spirit of the people is greater than the man's technology" and that "if there is to be revolution there must be a revolutionary party, a vanguard party." And in keeping with these teachings during "the week of Solidarity of the Asian, African, and Latin American people with the Afro Americans in their struggle against violent repression," August 18 thru 24th, George Murray, Minister of Education, of the Black Panther Party, and Captain Joudon Ford, of the New York chapter, carried to the entire people of the world, over radio Havana, the true story of Brother Huey P. Newton, the Black Panther Party, and the growing Black liberation struggle here in racist, decadent America. Black people will be free.

Power to the People,
Black Power to Black People
Deafening Drums to the Oppressed



BOLIVIAN GOVT. QUESTIONED IN DISAPPEARANCE OF LEFTIST LEADER

Events in Bolivia have become a focus of world attention since the death of Che Guevara in that country. At the present time, Latin union members and leftists are deeply concerned about the arrest and strange disappearance of Isaac Camacho, a leader in the miners' unions in the Bolivian tin mines of Siglo XX and Cutavi.

According to these sources, Camacho was taken prisoner by the military forces of the Bolivian government after the "Massacre of San Juan," June 24, 1967. Since that date, the fate of the union leader has been unknown.

The government, after repeated questioning by the opposition in Parliament, declared, by way of a government ministry, that this leader had been expelled to the Republic of Argentina. University students made an investigation of this statement, however, and their evidence indicates that the miner Camacho was and is not to be found in Argentina.

This, they say, has also been affirmed by the Federal Police of Argentina and by the Bolivian embassy in Argentina.

Camacho, a leader of the unions in the mines, is also a militant of the Partido Obrero Revolucionario (Workers Revolutionary Party — the Trotskyite party of Bolivia) and he was well known in Bolivia as an intransigent opponent of the present government there.

In Bolivia, especially in the University and in the workers' sector, there is great fear that Camacho has been assassinated — the reasons are numerous.

Along with being a staunch enemy of the military regime of General Barrientos, Camacho is the only witness to the political assassination of Cesar Lora, political leader of the m. i. s. Lora was assassinated, Latin sources state, on direct orders from General Barrientos on July 29, 1965.

Hang-ups?...not us!

The Black Panther Party doesn't care if you have a process, nig or baldhead, also if you dig ditches, sell cars, eat pork, go surfing, talk nine languages, sell dope or dip snuff, if you are unemployed, hustling, running or just here.

We, "The Black Panther Party," say--Welcome Home Brothers and Sisters and Lets do it Together.