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PRESTON SPEAKS

By PRESTON DOBBINS

Editors Note: Preston Dobbins, former chairman of UNC's Black Student Movement, was in Asheville during the rebellion there. Here he gives an account of what really happened. He must face state and municipal charges involving the incident on Nov. 14. Nov. 30 is the trial for federal charges. His legal expenses will run around \$10,000. Anyone wishing to give assistance — please send donations to the BSM office care of the Carolina Student Union, Chapel Hill, N. C.

I am sure that most people presently reading this article are familiar with most of the facts associated with the "Asheville awakening." Looking quickly over the facts, here is what happened.

During the week of Sept. 22, a Black student was suspended from Asheville High for the remainder of the year by the principal when he allegedly entered the school with no books on. He left the school in disbelief and later told his fellow Black students what had happened.

They decided this was the last straw, that Black students had taken enough bullshit from the plain clothed pig school officials. At a meeting later in the week, the brothers and sisters decided to initiate the action with a class boycott to begin on Monday morning, September 29. It was a beautiful sight. By 9:30 A.M., practically all of the schools 300-400 Black students were standing on the front steps of the school waiting to present the principal with a list of grievances and demands. In normal pig fashion, the first thing he did upon coming outside was to order the students back to class.

They of course told him to go to hell. He then offered to negotiate with "one or two." They told him that they were hip to this white man's trick of trying to corner and word-wash one or two students and that he would have to talk with their chosen negotiating committee in the presence of the entire body of Black students present. It wasn't long before he realized that these students meant business and he wouldn't be able to huff and puff them into submission or trick them into compromise, as the pig establishment is wont to do.

It seems as though the ruling class and its pawns in this country will never learn that they cannot stop the legitimate movement of Black people to free themselves of oppression in any form and by any means necessary. So it wasn't really a surprise when the principal's next move was to call in the uniformed city pigs who were scared to death and therefore

especially dangerous. When they arrived, the "Pig in Charge" ordered them into line formatoin facing the Black students.

Once again the principal ordered them to return to class, once again they refused. The chief pig yelled "Charge" and fifteen mad animals began swinging clubs on brothers and especially sisters. There are hospital records to prove it.

But the brothers didn't take the shit laying down. They retaliated with bottles and bricks and soon the pigs were running and a few thousand dollars damage was done to school property. Pigs in local government weren't smart enough to even show an interest in solving the problems which led to the disturbances. They instead came out with the usual assy statement about how "law n' audu" would be preserved at any cost and how it was "a few irresponsible Black students" who started everything.

The mayor also declared the existence of a state of emergency in Asheville and proclaimed a 9:00 P.M.-6:00 A.M. curfew.

The following night, while discussing some matters relevant to the situation, Victor Chalk, a Black leader in Asheville, received word from his mother that she had been receiving phone calls from local Klan officials stating that neither she, her son, or the rest of her family would survive the night unless Victor would "cut that Black stuff out." Needless to say, she was scared.

Curfew or no damned curfew, we had to leave and check the situation out, especially when remembering that earlier in the night we had spotted several Klan pick-up trucks riding around with loaded rifle racks.

En route we were stopped by the pigs and subsequently jailed on curfew violations. They later claimed to have found a shotgun, shells, dynamite caps, fuse and flammable materials in the car. There is no doubt in my mind that we were set up and planted for the kill.

We of course did not realize that there were "incendiary devices" (a federal offense) in the car and not too many people search their car before using it every time. I for one will do so from now on however.

There are several interesting observations to be made. First of all, as Blacks and other oppressed minorities and groups in this racist country continue to escalate the battle for complete freedom, the oppressor will escalate his neo-facist ways to subvert and suppress the struggle. Also confrontations like the one in Asheville will serve to heighten the level of political awareness of our people so that we can more clearly realize the true nature of the

"Understanding is the best thing in the world," according to blues singer Ray Charles. And if understanding isn't possible, a little knowledge is better than nothing.

In the case of the BSM, UNC's Black Student Movement, a little of both would be timely since the University has opened its doors for another year of unexpected headaches.

Organized during the 1967-68 school year, the BSM has grown from anonymity into a position of power. A coup detat, lead by former chairman Preston Dobbins and Raleigh's own Juan Coefield, left the campus NAACP program without student support.

Kelly Alexander, president of the campus NAACP and son of the state NAACP head, became very alienated to BSM activities and continued to gallantly push for the more conservative actions and doctrines associated with his organization.

The time was ripe for change. The "Negro" label applied to the NAACP's title didn't sit well with the growing feeling of "Blackness" on the college campus at that time. That was the year a hassell erupted over the name "Negro," "black," or "Afro-American" all across the country.

The new organization sought new and bold leadership. This was found in Preston Dobbins, a forceful and energetic black transfer student from Chicago. The older black students on campus were ready for action, not talk. The freshmen were a new breed of black student. Unlike many in the past who "made it" to a good white school and had only self to think about, the freshmen were ready to fight for what they felt was right.

And fight was literally what they did. From confrontations with rebel campus fraternities to brushes with Chapel Hill and campus police, BSM members began to let campus officials know that there were Black students on campus.

The first year marked the type of spirit rushing throughout the blood of each member and set the stage for greater tasks in coming years. The Dixie flag burning parade during the death of Martin Luther King and the scattered trouble which ensued along with other minor incidents only set the stage for what was to come the following year.

Nobody can speculate whether or not the NAACP would have continued whether action brought about by the BSM would have been initiated but most Black students on campus have their doubts. One of the major hypothesis which permiated this group and others like them on other campuses was the feeling that nothing would ever be done without the threat of disruption and violence, and all too often state

pig establishment. These situations also serve to prove to our people that the political economic, social system of this country is incapable of real reform and that only through the complete overthrow of the system will we, the oppressed, become truly free.

And to those members of the pig establishment—oink, grunt, and stuff yourselves while you can, for the people are rising and pig season is near.

BSM: Only A Start

and local officials proved them right.

The things the BSM fought for this year were things that shouldn't have required force to accomplish. They were fights for just causes that most people wanted to ignore and sweep under a rug.

The Cafeteria strike, the fight for Black studies, the push for greater Black student enrollment and interest of the University in the surrounding community were things which left the white conservatives angered and the white liberals supporting but afraid of more than mere talk.

All of these things and more have since been instituted. The wrongs done to cafeteria workers were acknowledged, a Black studies curriculum with a major in African and Afro-American studies has been set up with a full department of Black studies just around the corner. Although still a ridiculous figure, Black enrollment is increasing and the student legislature appropriated funds to the BSM last spring for community work this fall.

Summer turns out to be a time for "getting oneself together for another year" say BSM members.

Under the leadership of Jack McClean, new BSM chairman, the group has continued to make plans during the summer lull. A community paper sponsored by the BSM, tutorial programs and guest speakers are only a few of the plans for the fall.

There is no rest in the case of the BSM and old members have already contacted incoming Black freshmen and transfers.

Because the BSM is a Black group it is bound to be unpopular in the state. There is no doubt about hatred held for the group, even though nearly all it has done has come about because of years of neglect and indifference towards wrongs in our society and culture.

The members of the BSM say this will no longer be tolerated. Come troopers, Chapel Hill police and campus officials the improvement of a Black nation stands before self-centered aspirations many students on campuses possess today.

It would be difficult to give the BSM a set ideology since each member is an individual and has different ideas and beliefs.

Usually, actions taken by the group are compromises reached after mass meetings. Every body's feelings have been taken into account. When all is said and done, however the group acts as a united front.

The fight against white racism and Black fear will continue this semester with bolder leaders. The need for discussion and communication with whites has not been forbidden and will continue. But when this procedure proves to be fruitless, as it has many times in the past, "by any means necessary" becomes the rule of thumb for party members.

Law and Order Who's Fooling Who

Why am I alive? While at Highland Hospital, a pig said to me: "You ain't going to be at no barbecue picnic tomorrow. You the barbecue now!" Why did Little Bobbie die? It was not a miracle, it just happened that way. I know my duty. Having been spared my life, I don't want it. I give it back to our struggle. Eldridge Cleaver died in that house on 28th street, with Little Bobby, and what's left is force: fuel for the fire that will rage across the face of this racist country

and either purge it of its evil or turn it into ashes. I say this for Little Bobby, for Eldridge Cleaver who died that night, for every black man, woman, and child who ever died here in Babylon, and I say it to racist America, that if every voice of dissent is silenced by your guns, by your courts, by your gas chambers, by your money, you will know, that as long as the ghost of Eldridge Cleaver is afoot, you have an ENEMY in your midst.

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"Choice of Perspectives"

