

# HARAMBEE

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Harambee Oakland, CA

Spring, 1979

## Black Students Should Continue to Serve People

The faces of the forty or more college students were serious and intent as they listened to the heavy-hearted voice of the motherly looking Black woman from Louisiana.

Gertrude Wilks, now Mayor of East Palo Alto, instrumental in the founding of the Nairobi Day School, and church and community activist since the early 1960's was the keynote speaker for the first Annual Black Students Organizations' organizing conference.

In a voice that gave one participant a "renewed kind of energy," Mrs. Wilks commended the aims of the conference and organizations represented.

"It was the students that in the 1960's got us up and started voter registration in the South! It was my kids that would not let me not do something for Black people."

Mrs. Wilks spoke on subjects ranging from organizing during the 1960's to Guyana (why and how), stressed a need for brain-power in the Black communities and more involvement in the political process. "All poor folks have is each other. There's strength in unity. We live in a crisis situation and have got to care about our future."

"Your lifes' destiny is being decided behind closed doors. You've got to become workers, doers, and planners that's what our communities ae suffering for."

Mrs. Wilks wants students to remember that it wasn't brain power or test scores that opened

the doors of colleges but people sacrificing and laying down their lives. She feels that some students receive their college education and take it where it is not needed.

One student referred to Mrs. Wilks' speech as a "correctly sober note to begin the conference on by linking the struggles of Black students present and past with the general struggles of the Black community." The audience was so moved that they gave Mrs. Wilks a standing ovation.

Mrs. Wilks ended by warning about "too many on and off revolutionaries and urged those present to wake up and organize before it's too late."



## APSU, MEChA Hail Network Founding

On behalf of the Asian Student Union at San Francisco State (University, ed.), I'd like to thank the organizers of this conference for giving us the opportunity to speak briefly and to express our solidarity with the brothers and sisters here today for the founding conference of the Northern California Black Students Organizations Network.

The ASU tries to meet the needs of Asian students at SF State. Just last year, we got together with other Asian and Pacific Islander student organizations and formed a west coast network called the Asian/Pacific Student Union. The APSU is part of the growing third world student movement — a movement of Asian, Chicano, Native American, and Black students fighting for our rights, making our education a relevant education, and building ties with our communities. Just last night, the APSU held a benefit dance for Chol Soo Lee — a Korean brother now in prison for a framed murder.

We may be a young movement, but we are a growing movement. Witness today's conference to build a northern California Black students' network! Building a movement is not an easy thing. It does not happen overnight. It is a process — a process that everybody in this room is participating in. It is a process of analyzing our strengths and weaknesses — building our strengths and overcoming our weaknesses.

Again, we express our solidarity to you today and hope to see a successful network of Black student organizations.

As the slogan goes, "The future is ours," but it's not going to be ours if we do not take up our own struggle in our hands. Nobody is going to give us nothing for free. We have to organize because *we* are the makers of *our* history!!

La Movimiental Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan, MEChA, is a Chicano student organization that formed when various La Raza organizations and community groups met at a conference to fight for ethnic studies and to fulfill the need for a statewide Chicano Organization.

The struggle to maintain MEChA has had its ups and downs. The road has not been smooth. We have had divisions and periods of sedation. But when trouble came — in the form of the Bakke Decision — MEChA was the first student group out demonstrating in the streets. We were only able to do this because we were a statewide organization.

Students, especially Third World students, need to be organized in a progressive movement. We are fighting a battle for our education. Not only for us today but for the brothers and sisters who are coming after us.

We are at a time when the gains our brothers and sisters of the 1960's won, are being taken away.

How many of us are facing the rising costs of tuition fees? How many of our programs and classes are being cut back or dismantled?

We are sick of hearing "cutback." Let's hear the word "organize."

Now is the time for strong student organizations. Now is the time to seek unity, to open methods of communications, to prepare for any attacks that will come down.

Now is the time to build Third World organizations, to build the Student Movement.

Today's conference is a significant step for the BSU and MEChA is proud to state our solidarity here today! Thank you, MEChA

## Building Strong Black Student Organizations

On May 12 and 13, the founding conference of the Northern California Black Student Organization Network was held at the Laney College Student Center. In an organization workshop in which Alameda, Laney, Sacramento City College, Sacramento State University, San Francisco City College, Stanford University and Los Angeles City College were represented, discussions focused on developing communications and programs to get Black student organizations known among the broadest sector of Black students on campus as possible and how to develop and raise political consciousness on campus.

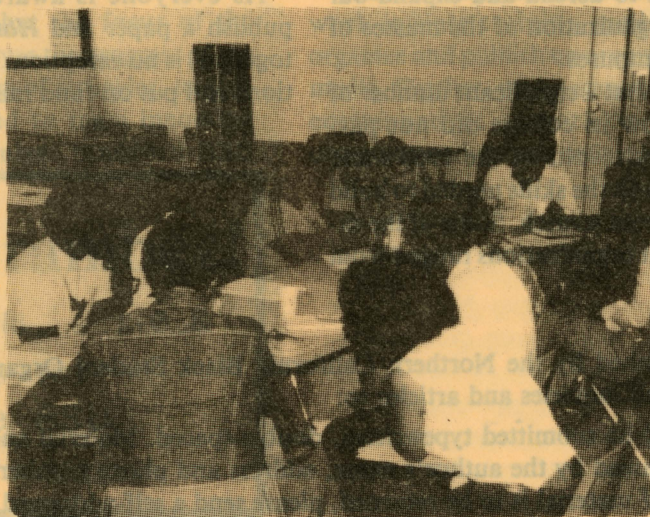
Most of the representatives directed their respective campus critiques at non-communication and lack of outreach to the student body and surrounding communities of the campuses. This problem was found to lead directly to the lack of involvement and commitment of a significant portion of the student body and community. The communications problem also hindered the progress of the development of programs and consciousness.

Therefore, the workshop's purpose was to

raise the consciousness level of the student body and the community through building and coordinating communications to these two audiences to a level that would promote and establish a need for commitment and involvement in BSUs, programs and activities.

Awareness events such as fairs, workshops, and public forums, which promote ethnic studies courses and the positive images of Black folk — "Black is Beautiful" — along with programs around Black literature were suggested as ways of concretizing this theme. Media and theater arts, i.e., skits that tie actors and audiences into the struggle and make issues more understandable were other organizing tools suggested. Popular movies were raised as a means of attracting and involving people in struggle. People suggested having film showings followed by discussions that isolate and criticize the negative portrayals of Black people in the media.

Black student organizations also looked at publishing independent newsletters to get their views out, as a means of marginally counteract-



## Editorial

# Conference Significant for Black Student Movement

The founding of a Black students' organizations network for northern California represents a positive step forward for the Black student movement. Students, particularly Black and other oppressed nationalities, have been organizing to maintain and expand special admissions programs, ethnic studies curriculae and adequate career programs throughout the state. These programs have come under attack by the ruling class, due to the general political and economic crisis in the U.S. as a whole. In California, under the guise of Proposition 13, the ruling class' attacks are more and more forcing Blacks and other oppressed nationalities to put organization at the forefront of the agenda.

The May 12-13 conference showed us that Black students throughout the state have common problems stemming from the same source. Our basic weapon to defend and expand our programs is the organization of the masses of students on our campuses.'

We summed up that a significant number of Black students now in college did not participate in the mass revolts of the 1960's and were not familiar with the skills needed to build up organizations from scratch. Some of the existing Black student organizations ranged from strong to weak.

***Harambee*** is published by the Northern California Black Student Organizations Network. Submit all inquiries and articles to:

All articles, should be submitted typewritten, double-spaced. Material and photos should be accompanied by the author's name, address and phone number. Do not send color slides. If material is to be returned, please send a self-addressed stamped envelope.

In the coming period, one of the primary tasks of the Network will be to aid students in acquiring rudimentary organizing skills, through workshops and ***Harambee***, to facilitate the building of strong mass campus organizations. Also, the articles coming from various campuses about their struggles and activities will serve as a tool for building individual campus organizations as well as being a communications source for Black students throughout the area.

The success of ***Harambee*** rests with Black students in California (and elsewhere). It is Black students on the various campuses who will submit articles, letters, etc. about the struggles and day-to-day survival of Blacks. In future issues, we would like to have some culture articles. Everyone should feel free to contribute regularly to ***Harambee***.

As everyone is aware it costs money to publish a paper and ***Harambee*** (let's all pull together) is no exception. Please send contributions and put on fund raisers on your campus.

## Harambee to Help Build Black Student Movement

The History-Media Workshop focused on setting up a process to help Black student organizations put out publications on their respective campuses, building a staff and establishing *Harambee* as the Network news organ and summing up the history of struggle on campuses and educating new students about the history of Black student organizations.

Discussion centered around the need for campus newsletters and publications and the importance of preparing the paper in such a way that it will reach those students on campus and in the sector of the community targeted.

Folk decided that an objective of a Black student organization should be to form Black institutions that reflect Black values that the Black student organization has accepted. Concrete ideas on how to utilize media and how to research and record Black struggles were discussed. The *Real News* of Stanford and the History of Stanford BSU were used as models for this.

It was pointed out that the focus of the history should be to analyze the progress of the BSU, to show the process of struggles, to promote Black values, and to train incoming students how to organize. Stanford BSU

published *The Black Community of Stanford, 1977-78* in 1978 as an initial effort to increase communication and develop an understanding of the Black student movement at Stanford. The contents of the book are a compilation of articles reflecting Black issues from the Black campus media, the general campus media and an explanation of the development of Black values, institutions, organizations, media and struggles on campus.

People united that campus newsletters should address day-to-day issues facing students, get involved in community issues and help organize students.

A few of the major problems facing Black student organizations at this time were funding and manpower. Only one campus had a newsletter, although another planned to publish one soon. Some organizations have to rely on the general campus media, which often distorts their positions if they print it at all.

The workshop recommended that the Network initiate training seminars on how to organize and publish an organ and utilize other media. Further, each campus agreed to build a correspondent network on their individual campuses and submit articles to *Harambee*.

### Build Harambee!

SEND DONATIONS, ARTICLE

CONTRIBUTIONS TO:

Laney College BSU

Oakland, Ca 94601



## Women's Revolutionary Role in the Struggle

Black women have traditionally served as strong supportive figures. History has shown them to be determined and persistent in the struggle to improve the situation of our people. However, even they have not been able to remain unshaken by the cloud of turmoil and confusion that constantly hovers over us.

Discussion in the workshop on Black women reveals that the role of the Black woman is changing within our student organizations. She now takes on the role of the leader, who will more often than not, turn over her public or very visible duties to her male co-worker. She is the sister who is too concerned with what the Black man thinks of her, and just doesn't have time to get involved. She is the woman so bogged down in just trying to survive, keep her head above water, trying to make ends meet, that she has lost sight of where she is going. She is the Black female who feels she can no longer work with her male counterpart. And the traditional Black woman she is becoming are fewer and fewer in number everyday.

It would be foolish to suggest that these changes just happened overnight. No, it is quite clear that they have been evolving for some time. But the more important matter at hand is why. Why have we changed — particularly when the change is not for the better.

The explanations are many but they, in essence, boil down to the same old thing — white society is doing a number on us. They are doing everything they can to pull us apart.

The Black female leader of an organization is extremely concerned about the notion

(generated by white society) that Black women go out of their way to make Black men seem less important. Thus, she overcompensates in the opposite direction and avoids public duties. This somehow will keep her from looking like she's taking away from the man's role (by white standards).

The sister so concerned about what the Black man thinks of her just does not realize that she takes on white attitudes and standards of beauty to please him. She can't appreciate her own natural beauty and he can't desire it because they're both operating off the white man's formula of "good and bad — attractive and unattractive."

The woman who has gotten so caught up in trying to get ahead has lost sight of what's keeping her back in the first place. The Black woman who has lost all respect for her Black men just can't see that she's only a pawn in someone else's game. Society has encouraged the Black man to live with senseless contradictions between his attitudes and his actions. The respect and concern he has for his sisters does not let him allow her to jump from man to man, bed to bed. Yet, the actions this society says are OK allow him to disrespect other women by jumping from woman to woman, bed to bed. It allows him to see Black women as sex objects first and a person much later, if at all. But worst of all, it confuses the man and the woman, to the point that they don't realize and stop what's going on. They have fallen victims to the white man's major tool "divide and conquer." There

# Malcolm X and Black Students

*"We are living in an era of revolution, and the revolt of the American Negro is part of the rebellion against the oppression and colonialism which has characterized this era . . ."*

*"This generation, especially of our people, has a burden, more so than in any time in history." Malcolm Speaks*

The teachings of Malcolm X were a guiding light to the Black students' organizations that were born during the fires of the late 1960's and early 1970's. In the North and West Black Student Unions, Afro-American Student Associations, and other Black student organizations formed on hundreds of campuses. In the South a powerful movement formed represented by such organizations as Save and Change Our Black Schools to preserve historically Black colleges and transform them into institutions that better serve Black students and the Black community. These organizations were at the forefront of the Black student movement — a movement which shook the very foundations of education in the U.S. These organizations were

born at a time that racists were firing guns into Black student residences, Black youth were dying in the jungles of Viet Nam by the thousands, poverty and national oppression in the ghettos were leading to massive urban rebellions, and Black students, teachers and parents were fighting at every level from kindergarten to graduate school for an education relevant and useful for Black people.

Black student organizations consciously adopted and organized around many of the teachings of Malcolm in order to better build the Black student movement — a component part of the overall revolutionary Black Liberation Movement.

Black students from Cornell University in NY to the campuses of the west coast, followed Malcolm's teachings and armed and organized themselves for self-defense in the face of racist mobs. Students at campuses such as Merrit and Laney Junior College in California followed the example of Malcolm's very life and waged an uncompromising militant struggle by any means necessary to achieve minimum basic rights for Black and other oppressed students. Understanding Malcolm's words that, ". . . ultimately, there will be a clash between the oppressed and those who do the oppressing . . . there will be a clash between those who want freedom, justice and equality for everyone and those who want to continue the systems of exploitation." Black Student Unions on campuses such as San Francisco State united with other Third World organizations and shut



# LACC

*"To be a Negro in this country and to be relatively conscious is to be in a rage almost all the time."*

**James Baldwin**

The truth of this quote becomes quite clear when everyone stops to take a look at the things going on around them. In the 1960's Martin Luther King and Malcolm X and quite a few others fought, marched, preached, and struggled to bring this type of consciousness to the masses of Blacks who were lost in the shuffle of racism and oppression. In the 1970's the same values that our freedom fighters fought for have been scratched from a new generation's consciousness, leaving them to shuffle with the lost.

If one were to stop and take a look at the things going on around LACC, a conscious person would most certainly be in a rage almost all the time. LACC is about 80% Third World, therefore, it would seem only natural that a separate and equal Ethnic Studies department exists at the school. This is not the case due to Proposition 13 and general cutbacks. Programs for ethnic cultural enrichment are the first to come under attack by the local and state governments. They use small student enrollments, and the number of students majoring in the departments to enforce these cutbacks. While this may be partially true, the administration is primarily at fault, because funds for curriculum advancement are redirected and hiring of faculty is determined by their own standards. For example, last semester over half of the Afro-American and Chicano studies courses were wiped out, and only one Asian studies course exists on this campus.

While this is one of the most costly systematic attacks on minority students, the imposition of admissions test, tuition, and increase of student fees are just as devastating. Historically, minority people have been systematically denied the right to higher education, through culturally biased admissions and IQ tests and unrealistic tuition and fees. The majority of students who attend community colleges are minority students. The impact of these policies would cutback enrollment and in particular minority students.

The Third World Coalition (TWC) with the activism of Black, Asian, and Chicano students and the Afro-American Student Alliance (AASA) have confronted a number of the issues mentioned above. Programs were held to raise the consciousness and affect a rage in faculty and students to increase their participation in the struggle to end these and other forms of oppression.

By way of political and educational programs, these organizations have met moderate success with these efforts. Most of the Third World Coalition's membership, coming from the Afro-American Studies class, have actively sought to build ties with the American Cultures Department (Ethnic Studies) and encourage student participation in the TWC. A program of last semester (Fall '78) that involved the United League of Mississippi tour at LACC was directed at relating the struggles of Blacks in the South to the issues of Black students at LACC. The guest speaker was Skip Robinson, president of the United League. Another program for last semester was directed at the Third World Strikes of the 1960's and the connection



## In Support of Southern African Liberation Struggles

The Network passed the following resolution in support of the political and military victory of the liberation forces in southern Africa, unanimously. In the brief spirited discussion prior to its passage, conference participants pointed out that there is a need for Black initiated and led support work on the respective campuses.

Also, a concrete proposal was passed to have people call the toll free number used to purchase Krugerrands, the gold coin sold by the oppressive regime in South Africa, and register their opposition to its sales here. The number appears daily in the *Wall Street Journal*.

Folk also encouraged campuses to initiate informational picket lines at jewelry stores that sell cheap diamonds from South African in the Black community on credit at usurious prices.

### DRAFT RESOLUTION ON SOUTHERN AFRICAN LIBERATION

Whereas Black people in the United States have struggled to reaffirm their proud African heritage and,

Whereas we support the growing unity between people of African descent within the U.S. and the sisters and brothers on the continent,

Whereas the struggles of Black people in the U.S. and Africa have long been connected in the hearts and minds of the people,

Whereas the liberation struggle of Africans in southern Africa can only bring closer the liberation of all oppressed people, therefore,

Be it resolved that,

1. The Northern California Black Student Network supports the liberation movements and organizations of southern Africa in their armed struggle for national liberation,

2. We fully support the political victory and military victory of the peoples of Southern Africa and their organizations,

3. That the Network support the liberation organizations recognized by the Organization of African Unity liberation support committee,

4. As Black students we have a special responsibility to initiate and lead campaigns of Black students in support of these struggles,

5. We see raising material support and mass action as the main ways of taking up support work for the national liberation struggles of Southern Africa, and each campus should strive to do this work.

6. That an important part of this struggle is education and we should educate our members and campuses around the issues of African liberation,

7. An important aspect of the struggle is building closer ties between Blacks in the U.S. and Africa and we should all take responsibility in building closer ties with students from Africa on our campuses,

8. We support the people of Africa in their struggle to build African Unity to oppose imperialism, colonialism, zionism and racism and their right to decide their own political and economic destiny!

**AFRICA FOR AFRICANS**



# Women's Revolutionary Role

surely will be no unity among us when there is disrespect and no trust between us.

This society has even made us blind to the things that concern us most. As reported, most Black males know very little about child care concerns and issues that are affecting more and more Black women everyday. Therefore, Black men and women have been isolated on an issue that has always brought us together — Black children our future.

There are no compact set of solutions that will solve everything tomorrow, but, there are beginning points. The first being that Black men and women (especially those in student organizations) need to get together and define

## Organize

ing the influences of the bourgeois media and to record the historical and current struggles of the campus and community.

Orientation programs for new students were suggested as a means of educating new folk about campus conditions and as a means of building Black student organizations. The new Network resolved to develop an orientation packet for the fall session.

Emphasis was placed on designing and implementing well done programs as opposed to having a lot of activities poorly done.

This workshop was viewed as a working discussion based on the practical needs of Black students. In view of the increasingly insidious

their own expectations and attitudes toward one another, instead of working off of implicit assumptions, which are usually white tools for separating. Secondly, Black women must begin to build much more positive self-images, which will help them realize the uniquely precious gifts they have to offer to our race. Thirdly, we must make conscious efforts to make the public events and duties of our organizations a process of shared work between men and women. Last, but certainly not least, we all must realize that the building of a race of strong Black people requires both strong Black men and strong Black women. We will have to play critical roles in the development and care of one another.

attacks, of which the decertification of Black Studies programs and classes, harrassment of students by campus administrations and the firing and laying off of Black teachers are only a few examples, it is absolutely necessary that we have strong, viable organizations! In this way, we have a tool with which to survive and to wage struggle. There are many brilliant examples of organized resistance, both locally and nationally.

We must constantly look to new and creative ways to involve the broadest sector of Black students, at the same time building upon our rich heritage of struggle and victory. Only in this way can we surge forward with greater assurance of victory.

# LACC

they had to obtain Ethnic Studies courses, the need for participation, and expansion and the future of Ethnic Studies courses.

This semester the theme of a recent program was a Commemoration for Malcolm X and that students should learn from Malcolm X to Defend Ethnic Studies. The program consisted of films about Malcolm, speakers, and poetry about the Black experience. Earlier this semester, the TWC along with the AASA headed a campaign against the imposition of tuition and the increase of fees.

The importance of Black students con-

## Malcom

down campus after campus for demands such as Black and Ethnic studies. Black students listened when Malcolm spoke of "internationalizing" our struggle and "linking the problem of racism in Mississippi with the problem of racism in the Congo and also the problem of racism in South Viet Nam."

The early divestment movement had its roots and the early African Liberation Day movement partially had its roots in the Black student movement of a decade ago. Black student organizations from SNCC (Student National Coordinating Committee) took an active part in support of the struggles of the people of Indochina.

Today, the very programs we fought for such as Black studies, special admission programs, etc. are being snatched away from us by the same racist exploitative forces we fought a decade ago. In response we see a building Black student movement in all regions of the country fighting for tenure for progressive Black professors, to preserve Black schools in the South, against the decrease in Black enrollment at predominantly white campuses, the general

consciousness and commitment is crucial to the advancement and freedom of their people. Students can use their skills in order to change the state of their race and to protect their various cultures. A large growth of leadership class, Blacks, who are dedicated, responsible, conscious and discipline are needed at the forefront of today's struggle. They will be the ones who will carry on the struggles of past freedom fighters and serve as a collective leadership because "a conscious and educated mind — is the most effective weapon in a revolutionary struggle.

cutback in the breadth and quality of education at all levels, etc. The Northern California Black Student Network is consciously trying to play its part in contributing to the rebuilding of the Black student movement.

We will have to reach and *exceed* the struggles of the late sixties and seventies in order to defend and expand programs, and institutions of relevance to Black students. To achieve our goals we must critically study the history of the student movement — learning from both the positive and negative aspects of that history. As Malcolm once said, that the study of history can best benefit Black people. As we rebuild the Black student movement, the life and teachings of Malcolm X provide us with an inspirational example to guide us day to day!

**LEARN FROM MALCOLM X!  
POPULARIZE THE REVOLUTIONARY  
STRUGGLES OF BLACK STUDENT  
ORGANIZATIONS OF THE LATE  
SIXTIES AND EARLY SEVENTIES!  
BUILD THE BLACK STUDENT  
MOVEMENT**