

March 5, 2006

TO: Mr. Paul Gustafson, Minneapolis Star Tribune, Minnesota
Mr. Nick Coleman, Minneapolis Star Tribune, Minnesota
Ms. Shannon Prather, St. Paul Pioneer Press, Minnesota

The Minneapolis Star Tribune and St. Paul Pioneer Press lead articles dated March 2, 2006, entitled respectively, 'Sackett Killer Gets Life,' 'Aging Cops Never Forget Their Fallen Comrade,' (Minneapolis Star Tribune), and '36 Years Later, Guilty' (St. Paul Pioneer Press) reek of inaccuracy and bias through their use of *innuendo* and *subjectivity* pertaining to the **grossly distorted, racist, and ridiculously absurd depiction of the "national leadership" of the former "Black Panther Party."** What also makes the aforementioned articles particularly odious is their not-so-veiled attempts to sully and distort the name and legacy of the Black Panther Party under the *guise* of honest, unbiased, balanced reporting. These articles were, in large measure, neither honest, unbiased, or balanced.

Reporting (by the Minneapolis Star Tribune) that Ronald Reed *allegedly* "advocated killing police in hopes of getting a Black Panther Party chapter in St. Paul," is a **complete red herring, and is utterly ridiculous**. Likewise, reporting (by the St. Paul Pioneer Press), as fact, the fundamentally flawed and racist *prosecutorial assertion*, that a then supposedly "angry 19-year old [Ronald Reed], killed [white police officer] Sackett to woo the national leadership of the militant Black Panther Party" is **absurd**, and is rooted in the fertile, ignorant, and/or racist imaginations of far too many people whenever reference is made to the Black Panther Party. Clearly, this is precisely what the prosecution, with the open complicity of much of the so-called 'news' media, bank[ed] upon: fear, ignorance, and racism. Moreover, there was absolutely **nothing** presented substantiating or even linking Ronald Reed [or co-accused Larry Clark] to ever having ever been a **member (or members)** of the Black Panther Party, nor has Reed, based upon media reports, ever said that he was a former member of the Black Panther Party. So, **why** does the media (including the St. Paul Pioneer Press and the Minneapolis Star Tribune) repeatedly insist upon linking Reed to the Black Panther Party? The answer is obvious: **There is virtually no surer way to discredit and/or convict a Black person of anything in Minnesota, than to link him or her in some way to the Black Panther Party.** For the record: It is well documented that the "national leadership" of the former "Black Panther Party" believed in adherence to the 'BPP Ten Point Platform & Program' {to reference, click on [BPP Ten Point Platform & Program](#) }, which included serving the Black communities through programs established by the Black Panther Party such as, The Free Breakfast Program For Children, Free Shoe Program, Free Clothing Program, Free Food Programs, People's Free Medical Research Health Clinic, and Free Housing Cooperative Program etc.. Notwithstanding and until, the **Black Panther Party was physically decimated through secretive, illegal, well documented, and now infamous** (and no doubt *ongoing*) nationwide COINTELPRO activities {reference [COINTELPRO Revisited by Brian Glick](#)} to "...discredit, frame, murder, imprison, and otherwise *neutralize*" it; the BPP "national leadership" in concert with rank and file members of the Black Panther Party, continued their efforts to serve the Black communities in this nation, to the ire and chagrin of the racistly hypocritical 'American' power structure. The sordid and biasedly lopsided reporting by your newspapers, as manifested in the above mentioned articles is **totally inexcusable**, especially in view of the fact that numerous well circulated books re the Black Panther Party are attainable (including: *Liberation, Imagination, and the Black Panther Party*--by Kathleen Cleaver & George Katsiaficas {editors}; *The Black Panther Party Reconsidered*--by Charles

E. Jones, Ph.D. {editor}; We Want Freedom: A Life In The Black Panther Party--by Mumia Abu-Jamal; Assata: An Autobiography--by Assata Shakur; To Die For The People--by [Dr] Huey P. Newton; Seize The Time: The Story of the Black Panther Party and Huey P. Newton--by Bobby Seale; The Black Panthers--by Gene Marine , **etc.**). The *reporting* in this matter, by *the St. Paul Pioneer Press and the Minneapolis Star Tribune* are *playing upon fear, stereotypes, ignorance, and racism* which have no place in, and nothing whatever to do with, honest or balanced journalism.

"Wannabe," or Scapegoat?/Racist Mockery

The Minneapolis Star Tribune had the unmitigated cheek to smugly, mockingly, and racistly refer to "Ron Reed" as a "...onetime Black Panther [Party] *wannabe* accused of plotting a murder that would 'put St. Paul on the map.'" **What precisely does the media mean by referring to Reed as a "Black Panther [Party] wannabe?" Is there such a thing as a Democratic [Party] "wannabe," or perhaps a Republican [Party] "wannabe," or a Green [Party] "wannabe?!" What an utterly ridiculous and racist assertion** for the media (and others) to make pertaining to the Black Panther Party!

No Balanced News Coverage / Fred Hampton & Mark Clarke

It is stunning, almost to being beyond belief, how the Minneapolis Star Tribune and the St. Paul Pioneer Press have managed to report on the trial pertaining to the slaying of a white St. Paul police officer in 1970, allegedly by what these newspapers *inaccurately and inappropriately* referred to as a "Black Panther [Party] wannabe;" *without* providing any equally important contextual description of the brutal government/police (COINTELPRO) officially documented police murders (less than a year earlier) in December, 1969, of Black Panther Party members Fred Hampton and Mark Clarke in Chicago. "Early in December, Chicago police conducted a pre-dawn raid, murdering Black Panther leader Fred Hampton in his bed. This was a part of a **nationwide pattern** in which that organization's [the Black Panther Party's] **leadership was physically decimated.**" {Reference the book entitled, SAYING NO TO POWER, by William Mandel [Introduction by Howard Zinn], page 418}. Somehow, the wrongful and well documented police murders of these two young Black men [Fred Hampton and Mark Clarke] who were in fact Black Panther Party members (and similar murders "nationwide"), simply and conveniently escaped mention by the Minneapolis Star Tribune and St. Paul Pioneer Press which however, had no problem whatsoever in disseminating mythical "Black Panther [Party] *wannabe*" nonsense and racist hysteria in the Ronald Reed case.

This kind of whimsically *sloppy, unbalanced*, and out-of-context journalism is constant, and it is no mere coincidence in Minnesota, or in 'America' as a whole. It demonstrates what Black people already know: that 'intrinsically white racist **American society far prefers** to have drug proliferation in Black communities and so-called 'gang violence' of Black youth overwhelmingly eliminating other Black youth;----than to have a national, community-based, politicized, deeply concerned, disciplined, youthful political party *in service to* the interests of Black people nationwide,---which is fundamentally **what** the Black Panther Party was, **and why** it was destroyed and **its true legacy remains under assault** by the majority of the 'white' news media (and government) in this nation, **to this very day**.

Where are your lead stories about the horrible **pain, loss, and grief** suffered, and *still* being experienced, by the community, families, and friends of Fred Hampton and Mark Clarke? **Where** are your front page stories about the murderers of Hampton and Clarke *going to prison* for their double slayings? **Why** has *no one* been convicted and gone to prison for these brutal murders (and for so

many others like them nationwide), despite the fact that judicial investigations have been conducted and *official* findings made, that Hampton and Clarke were in fact viciously and wrongfully slain by police assault?

It is the use of racist innuendo, fear mongering, unbalanced, and out-of-context reporting, as repeatedly demonstrated, by the aforementioned Star Tribune and Pioneer Press newspaper articles etc.; that continually and significantly serve to perpetuate injustice and "racial tension."

Enough Is Enough

There is a dangerous and ongoing pattern of media distortion and disinformation in Minnesota, particularly as it pertains to 'news' coverage about Black people. Repeatedly, as demonstrated in the Ronald Reed case and the *bogus* connection made to the former Black Panther Party, **the Minneapolis Star Tribune and the St. Paul Pioneer Press newspapers have demonstrated a propensity for presenting malevolent innuendo and bias, as if it were fact.** Apparently, like the cynically racist and hypocritical George W. Bush regime, the majority of the news media in Minnesota, and nationwide, have succumbed to the **fallacious** notion that a few well placed *negro* *surrogates* (or what the late Malcolm X referred to as 'house negroes') can be substitutes for *genuine* justice, accurate, complete, and unbiased journalistic reporting, particularly as it pertains to coverage about Black people.

As a Black political activist who has suffered wrongful imprisonment and torture at the behest of 'American' authorities, and as the only 'American' and former Black Panther Party member {reference book entitled, SAYING NO TO POWER, by William Mandel [Introduction by Howard Zinn], page 500}, to have *successfully self* authored a case to the *United Nations* HRC under international law {reference United Nations UNHRC case annex VII, comm. #R.7/27}, **I am only too aware** of *how the biasedly lopsided reporting* by a major segment of the so-called main stream 'news' media in this nation continually **reinforces white racism** and judicial injustice, and **perpetuates stereotypes** and in so doing helps to both rationalize and facilitate the ongoing disenfranchisement of the **majority** of Black people, and other people of color in the United States of America. This is precisely what the St. Paul Pioneer Press and the Minneapolis Star Tribune so *insidiously* achieved in the aforementioned lead stories in their unwarranted and not-so-subtle attacks upon the legacy of the Black Panther Party. Enough is enough.

It is past time that Black people stop being placed on the receiving end of the most malevolently lopsided, insidious, inaccurate, innuendo-packed, and biased journalistic reporting since the collapse of the racist, fascist 'Third Reich's' Ministry of Propaganda. It is also past time for you in the media to cease and desist in your unceasing racist attacks upon the legacy of the Black Panther Party and those who were its former members. Enough is enough.

The public at large, indeed all people of every color and ethnicity, deserve so much *better* from the 'news' media, including the St. Paul Pioneer Press and Minneapolis Star Tribune. Reporting by innuendo, subjectivity, and imbalance maintained under a veil of integrity is not journalism with integrity; in fact it is not honest or good journalism *at all*.

Sincerely,
Larry Pinkney

additional blind copies (sent for worldwide distribution)

cc: file copies