

THE BLACK PANTHER

INTERCOMMUNAL NEWS SERVICE



PUBLISHED WEEKLY BY THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY

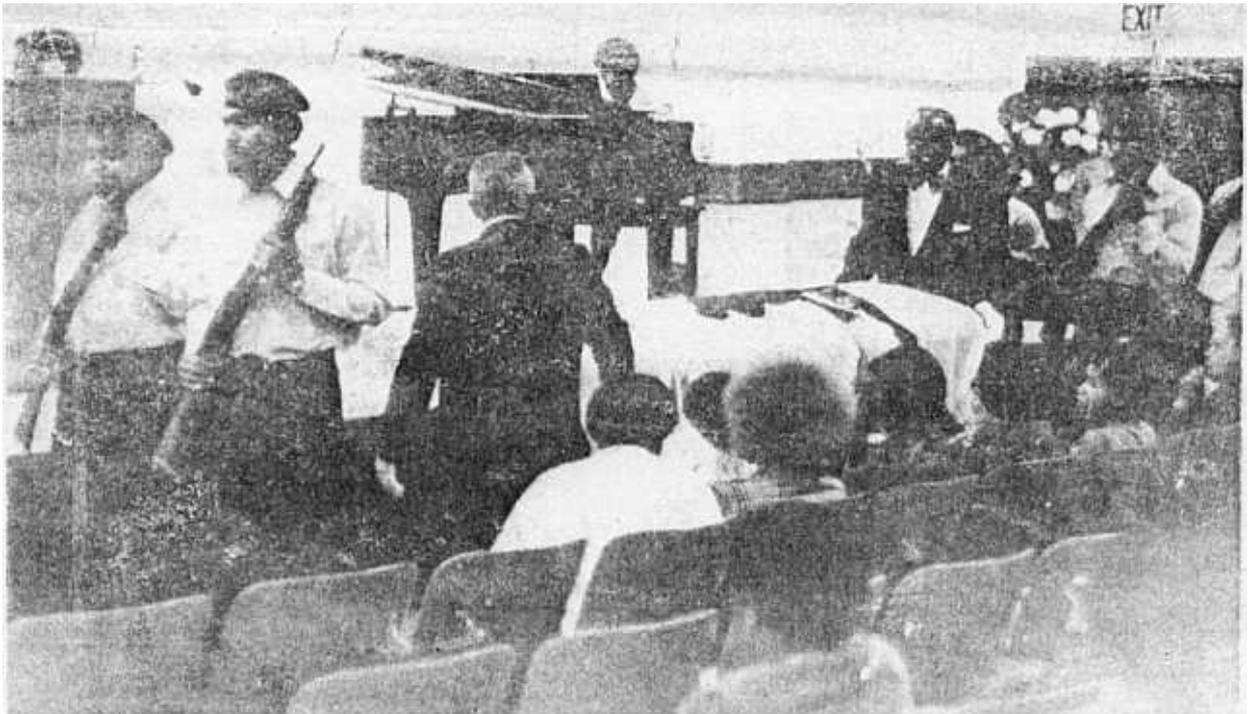
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VOL. XII NO. 16

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 1974

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REVOLUTIONARY MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR BRUCE (DEACON) WASHINGTON



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Oakland, Calif. 94621



HELD AT SON OF MAN TEMPLE

REVOLUTIONARY MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR BRUCE (DEACON) WASHINGTON

(Oakland, Calif.) - Revolutionary Memorial Services were held last Wednesday afternoon at the Son of Man Temple for Bruce Lee (Deacon) Washington, a beloved 26-year-old comrade of the Black Panther Party shot in the back while protecting children from wild gunfire at a teen dance on Friday, October 5. Comrade Deacon died in the early morning hours of Saturday, October 6, after fighting for his life for more than eight hours on an operating table at Highland Hospital.

The Revolutionary Memorial Services began as the flag-draped casket bearing the body of Bruce (Deacon) Washington was brought, in silence, into the Temple auditorium, ceremoniously flanked on all sides by a special Honor Guard comprised of four Black Panther Party members who had known and worked with Comrade Deacon in the early development of the Philadelphia Chapter of the Party in the late 1960s and here in Oakland.

As the top of the casket was raised and the flag, bearing the emblem of a large solid, black panther was pulled back, the Son of Man Temple Choir, dressed in black robes, stood

and softly but firmly sang the very meaningful ballad, "We Are Soldiers":

*"We are soldiers
In the army
We have to fight*

Although we have to die.

*We have to hold up the blood-stained banner,
We have to hold it up until we die..."*

Deacon had been an original member of the Son of Man Temple Choir, and had actively recruited others with whom he came in contact to join.

Following the Choir, Brother Emory Douglas, the internationally-acclaimed People's Artist for the Black Panther Party, read a selection from *Revolutionary Suicide*, written by Huey P. Newton, the Party's leader and chief theoretician. The passage which Brother Emory read was appropriate, for Comrade Deacon was conscious of the dangers involved with his work in the Black Panther Party, but as all who knew him will readily testify, Comrade Deacon refused to compromise his own integrity and dignity:

"...Revolutionary suicide does not mean that I and my comrades have a death wish; it means just the opposite. We have such a strong desire to live with hope and human dignity that existence without them is impossible. When reactionary forces crush us, we must move against these forces, even at the risk of death..."

The moving poem, "For Deacon," read by Sister Ericka Huggins, was filled with words expressing a realism that could not be denied:

*We come into life
without a wish,
a dream,
a desire.
life is so simple—to eat, to sleep
then with knowledge comes
pain
life is no longer simple—
how do we eat?/where do we
sleep?
we think
we want to do*

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CHARLES JACKSON (center) sings "Tobacco Road," the favorite song of Black Panther Party fallen Comrade Bruce Washington



BRUCE (DEACON) Deacon officiated his funeral

REVOLUTIONARY MEMORIAL SERVICE

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE
*—something,
 change things.
 life is complex—
 to struggle, to die.
 so we struggle*



Brother EMORY DOUGLAS reads selection from Revolutionary Suicide.

*we regain what we lost,
 we take what we never had,
 we keep what is ours,
 as men and women.
 we wish for happiness,
 we dream of peace,
 we desire freedom.*

*we will have food
 shelter
 clothing
 justice*

*we will control our lives.
 and if some of us must die, it will be so that
 our children and theirs will live—a simple
 life.*

A new, beautiful and inspiring ballad written and sung by Ms. Elaine Brown, "We Can Do Anything," had an even more powerful meaning to it, coming as it did when the president of the Son of Man Temple Swingers was unable to finish her statement, leaving the stage in tears. Without mincing any words, young sister Rose had been explaining the events which took place at the Swingers-sponsored teen dance that Friday night, and, obviously holding back her tears, was speaking of the deep mutual love between Comrade Deacon and the Swingers group when she could not go on. It was Ms. Brown's first performance of "We Can Do Anything," and

she sang it in an emotional style that was unforgettable.

The message for the Revolutionary Memorial Service was delivered by Reverend J. Alfred



Black Panther Party members carried Comrade Washington into the funeral home



WASHINGTON sacri
cting youth.



Members of Honor Guard stand at attention as ELAINE BROWN sings, "We Can Do Anything."

FOR BRUCE (DEACON) WASHINGTON

th, pastor of Allen Temple Baptist Church East Oakland. Drawing on a parable concerning the relationship of the arch-traitor as to Jesus, Pastor Smith declared that



casket of Bruce (Deacon)
of Man Temple.

"There are still some Judases in our midst," and commented that "We must all come to understand the true meaning of calling ourselves Brother and Sister." Describing Comrade Deacon as a revolutionary, Pastor Smith ended his moving message expressing the hope that the constructive programs for which Comrade Deacon dedicated his life would continue to develop and grow, serving the interests of the community.

Following his delivery of the eulogy, which described in glowing terms Comrade Deacon's commitment to the people, Brother Charles Brunson read two messages that the Party had received:

Dear Elaine,

We are together once again as comrades and friends to mourn the death of yet another beloved brother. You must know that only the need of another brother or sister who is still alive would interfere with my standing and walking proudly beside you today.

Amid the enormous sadness of this week let us not forget who we are and why we are here. Our work must go forward despite the seemingly impossible obstacles placed in our way by the power of our oppressors.

The future belongs to the children — it is our duty to follow the examples and capture the spirit of all our fallen brothers and sisters.

*All Power to the People,
Charles R. Garry
Attorney, Black Panther Party*

Bruce Washington served his community in vitally needed programs. It is our hope that the tragedy of his death will not result in cessation of these programs, but inspire renewed efforts as a memorial to his life. We join his family in their sorrow.

Congressman Ronald V. Dellums and Staff

Brother Brunson also mentioned that the American Federation of Teachers, Local 771, had made a contribution to the Community Learning Center in memory of Bruce Lee Washington.

The Revolutionary Memorial Services ended as Ms. Brown, accompanied by the Son of Man Temple Choir, sang, "We Shall Meet Again." Haunting words of struggle and sacrifice flowed throughout the auditorium and the audience stood silently and respectfully as the casket was removed. That evening Comrade Deacon's body was flown to his family in Philadelphia for funeral and burial services.

Bruce (Deacon) Washington was a revolutionary, a member of the Black Panther Party. He will not be forgotten.

ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE