



Still Angry—After All These Years

by Robert Dannin and Jolie Stahl

between two European countries. To get there you have to follow a winding road that mimics the course of a once-powerful glacier that has carved dramatic scenery into the surrounding limestone cliffs. St. Anthony built a cloister nearby. Fall off the narrow steps leading down to his hermitage and the only tangible evidence of your existence will be the strain of your vocal chords echoing off the sunbaked, almost-white rock.

Cox is not quite a hermit or a monk, but seclusion has been the basis of his life since 1970.

As a field marshal of the Black Panther Party, Cox spent frantic weeks flying coast to coast trying to heal political rifts that erupted inside the party. At the height of power, the Panthers were besieged by bitter, government-instigated in-fighting. Eventually, the organization broke apart, but not before some of its members evaded arrest, prosecution, jail and death by going into exile.

DC led the Algiers section of the party then went underground in Paris. Except for a brief trip when he entered and exited the United States incognito, DC has been in France ever since.

After various odd jobs, DC established himself as a professional house painter. In the often-insurrectionary atmosphere of Paris, he had to remain very cautious, never traveling on public transportation and staying indoors after dark. Except for a few close friends and occasional contact with home, anonymity was his adopted lifestyle. There were years of back-breaking labor that earned him the cash to buy and renovate his small mountain redoubt.

DC now works with a group of social-science researchers who are gathering data about women's rights throughout the Mediterranean and Middle East. At home he is putting together a computer data base about the history of African American revolutionary movements.

Despite age, he has changed little since the writer, Tom Wolfe, described his "hard-rock look."

DC speaks French as if it were his native language. Our English conversation—the first interview he has given in 20 years—was often punctuated with *français* when he wanted to emphasize a point. He still harbors the same rage over the injustices that led him to the Panthers more than 20 years ago.

D.C.: My name is Donald Cox. To people in New York, where I spent a year from April of 1969 until May of 1970, I'm known as D.C. I was the field marshal of the Black Panther Party and was based at the Harlem office. I've been in exile since May of 1970.

Q.: What have you been doing in exile, first in Algeria and then in Paris?

D.C.: In Algeria, I participated in the creation of the International Section of the BPP and was one of its representatives at our embassy in Algiers. After the split in the BPP and its demise, I resigned from all political associations and left Algeria in 1972. I returned to Algeria as an individual political refugee in 1974 and worked as an industrial photographer and was responsible for the photographic laboratory of the National Steel Society until 1977. I came to Paris, France, in 1977 and worked as a free-lance photographer, then I began remodeling apartments. I now earn my living creating a data base at the documentation center of an association of women living under Muslim laws. So far, the association covers 21 countries.

In terms of my political activities, I have recently created an association called Black America Database, BAD. I'm putting all the data I've gathered

a computerized data base in order to gain efficiency in its manipulation. I am primarily interested in African (on the continent and of the diaspora) resistance to European domination from the middle of the 15th century, when the Portuguese arrived in West Africa, up until today.

The first official project since BAD's creation is the compilation of a list of all political prisoners in the United States. I am particularly concerned with the way Black political prisoners seem to be neglected, ignored, forgotten or unknown. In most countries freedom fighters are considered as heroes by the general population, but in the U.S. they are ignored. So, I want to compile a list, and hopefully, it can be used to draw attention to their cases.

Q.: Although we don't have any statistics for political prisoners in the United States, one thing that can be said about most of them is the motivation in a struggle for social values and ideals during the 1960s and 1970s. Do you think the time has come to declare an amnesty for these people?

D.C.: Of course! Using standards from other countries, there should have been amnesty by now. In France, for

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