



Larry Baker #35021,
O.S.P. Correspondent

Behind the wall

Julius D. Snowden #38013,
Poetry Editor

"Who would have us, as we are?
Or sinking 'neath the load we bear.
Our eyes fixed forward on a star,
Or gazing empty at despair."
Alain Locke

To: Benjamin Hooks
Executive Director
National Association for the
Advancement of Colored People

To shake hands with a man that usually shakes hands with Presidents, Kings and royal dignitaries, was a rare and honorable privilege for me, personally.

What should have been more strongly publicized may have actually escaped this nation's eyes. "Benjamin L. Hooks' actions speak much louder than his words." Or was it too much of a major event for the news media to place before the nation's eyes? Was your concern for Black people in prisons too much of a humanistic fete for the American public to understand?

How you must have shocked the nation and the Convention when you stepped from the plane, with the decision that your first official act, was not to ascend upon the mass awaiting your arrival somewhere in Portland, Oregon, nor to go through the Convention's traditional ceremonies (such as accepting the keys to the city). But to drive straight to the gates of the Oregon State Penitentiary, only to knock upon its doors, and to greet a small group of your people who have been labeled "Societies outcasts" — the Black prisoners.

I only hope this act you displayed may be viewed by Black people in prisons throughout the United States — that the NAACP is in full



Michael Johnson and Larry Baker contemplate Hooks' visit.

recognition of their presence in crowded cells and you are calling upon your loyal chapters to respond to the social pressures which may have placed so many Black faces behind stone walls.

Your presence clearly displayed to me that now is the time that Black leaders in this country must start addressing themselves to this problem. We must no longer let this problem remain someone else's problem.

I pray you also focus your strength and attention upon Black youth for the sole purpose that we, who are their "roots" in prison have failed to demonstrate as shining examples, our "roots" displayed when chains and cages were the nature of the day... slavery.

A lot of people inside the walls and out have been responsible for the invitation extended to you. We are only thankful you answered our "beckon call" and gave us the sup-

port we need. You have also opened the avenue for other Black leaders to follow, by walking into America's prisons and jails to let people know some day this will be done.

But as you stated, it is we who must be willing also to help ourselves. Nothing comes free and easy, if it has real meaning.

Once again I can raise my eyes out of the dust, raise my head up high, straighten my back and walk like a man with the spirit bestowed upon Black people from birth.

Yes, Moses has come to the mountain and left his message and his mark... and fulfilled a dream.

"I only pray that someday my child can be worthy enough to fill your shoes, and if the day ever comes when he can look out over the mass of Black faces in a prison, that his eyes may never touch the eyes of your child."

Deon Washington asked that the NAACP help establish a half-way house in the Albina community.

Darrell Hughes told the group that never before had he seen a state where it is as easy for a Black to be railroaded to prison, where Blacks are so disunited. "I hope and pray you will use your time while you are here to investigate what is happening — the young men with long sentences — or changes that wouldn't stand up in court in another state."

Hooks went to O.S.P. at the invitation of the inmates legal process class, coordinated by Larry Baker. The inmates had the full support of Warden Hoyt Cupp, Director of Corrections, Robert Watson and the Governor's office. They also received letters of support from thirty public officials and from the Oregon NAACP Branches.

Ms. Berna Plummer coordinated the efforts outside the prison and

Larry Baker from inside. Charles Keaton, Director of Rehabilitation, directed the activity for the institution.

Charles Keaton, Director of Rehabilitation, told the *Observer* that he was pleased that Hooks visited the penitentiary and hopes that the visit will focus the local community's eyes on the needs of the Black prisoners.

"We need to get people out of prison and help them stay out. We need Black people to help us. We can train men for jobs but we can't place all of them. We need jobs — good jobs, not mopping out restaurants for minimum wage.

"We need local Black people that will take a real interest — make a commitment of some time and effort. They need to come into the prison and get to know the men — to be there to help after they are out.

"Many men come back because when they get out they go back to their old friends and get in trouble again. There is no place else to go. They need to know people who can help them find a new social group, a new way to live.

"I am looking forward to a new, favorable relationship with the Portland NAACP. I am really glad Hooks came and I believe his visit can have some positive results."

Hooks said of his visit to the penitentiary, "I always have mixed feelings when I go into a prison. There is so much talent going to waste behind locked doors, and you have to consider how it would be to be locked up for years.

"On the other hand, there is much to be done, both inside the prison and in the community. We can work with the men to try to make rehabilitation work. Rehabilitation is a state of mind — we have to reach the emotions and the mind."

Hooks said he feels assured that the local Branch will begin to work in the prison, to help prisoners with their adjustment back to the community.

Ex-prisoner designs MUNTU

Lou Gossett, who played "Fiddler" in *Roots*, and Sam Lax, jeweler and former inmate at San Quentin, introduced MUNTU, a new symbol for Black Americans. MUNTU, the Swahili word for "soul" or "essence of humanity," was created in San Quentin eleven years ago.

The symbol superimposes a map of the U.S. on a map of Africa. The symbol born eleven years ago in San Quentin was the result of the need of Black prisoners for an identity — to express their sense of self. Drawing a pencil sketch, Lax showed the symbol around and when it was accepted he made them in his cell at night out of metal from the prison shops, a blowtorch made out of a Zippo lighter, and soft solder from the electrical shop. An assistant psychiatrist provided a jeweler's saw and blades. This continued until his release in 1969.

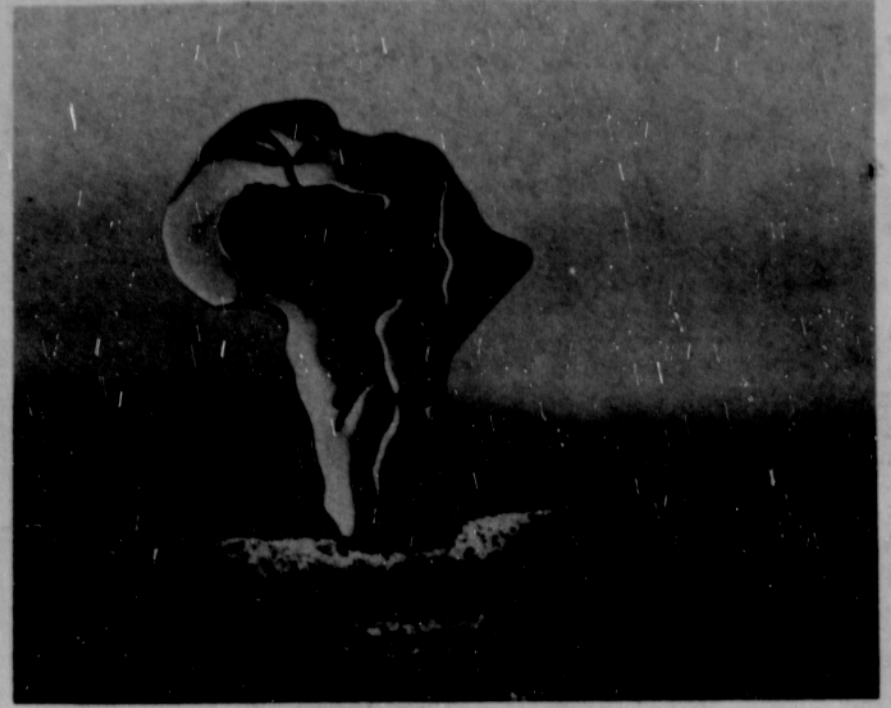
Convinced that the symbol would sell, and denied bank loans, Lax and his wife mortgaged their home and put their resources into production.

He hopes that one day millions of Black Americans will wear the symbol with pride.

Uhuru sponsors 'Together'

The O.S.P. Uhuru Club will hold a "Togetherness" at the Open Door House of Prayer, 348 N. Fremont on July 15th at 6:00 p.m. The evening is an effort to involve families, so children are invited.

Recognizing the fact that forced separation brings additional stresses on the family, the Uhuru Club invites the community to attend "Together". For information call 282-9774.



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Hooks visits OSP inmates

(Continued from Page 1 Column 3) volved in cases of prison conditions. Among the problems seen are the unequal numbers of Blacks sentenced, conditions inside the penitentiary, and imbalance in supervision personnel.

J. Nathaniel Jones, NAACP Legal Counsel, said a major problem is the location of prisons in small towns or rural areas so the staff reflects the community. Although inmates may be predominantly minorities the staff will be mostly white.

In response to discussion of hoped for involvement of local NAACP Branches with the inmates, David Knighten said, "There are plenty of community leaders, they just aren't here."

Reverend John Jackson, president of the Portland Branch committed himself to take a more active role in involving the community with the inmates.

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Facts of Importance

VOLUME II JULY 1978 SERIES I

Most questions asked regarding our June statement in the "Observer" were: How do we treat persons afflicted with alcoholism?

We treat alcoholism by the uses of a four phase modality, Phase A through D, along with the Triple R concept (Rights, Respect, and Responsibility).

PHASE A:
When persons come to the EXODUS program as clients they start out in Phase A. After the intake procedure, various crises, emergency and supportive help is provided; further diagnosis is recognized, while a certain amount of confidence develops between the client and the EXODUS program. During this phase the client is prepared to enter Phase B.

PHASE B:
Here the client makes a commitment to adjust his habits one at a time to a more constructive and productive selection through process counseling and other supportive prescriptions. The Triple R (Rights, Respect and Responsibility) concept is used as a measuring model by which the client can objectively balance his Rights to his Responsibilities through Respect. At present we have no Phase B clients.

PHASE C:
After a client has successfully gone through Phase B he enters Phase C, which is a direct supportive service to help the client when he runs into difficulties regarding job, family or friends.

PHASE D:
Is a forever follow-up service to let the client know that, even though he/she has completed the EXODUS program, if help is ever needed we are here, and no "blame factor" is at stake. This is done through periodic mailings and group activity invitations.

The EXODUS program has been in existence for almost four months. It has gained approximately 110 clients, and has expanded to include a day care facility and a residential center.

Yes, we are effectively treating alcoholism by the hour, by the day, by the month. Our clients appreciate your support, contributions and donations.