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A Soldier's Story

*The Making of a Revolutionary New Afrikan
Freedom Fighter*



A MEMORIAL TRIBUTE to

KUWASI BALAGOON

Revolutionary New Afrikan Freedom Fighter

Dec. 22, 1946 - Dec. 13, 1986

December 21, 1986
Harlem, New York

TRIBUTE TO KUWASI BALAGOON

Welcome and Freedom Fighter Libation

New Afrikan Youth: Sing "Righteous Soldiers"

Video—October 20, 1986 Interview of Kuwasi

Comments

Chokwe Lumumba, Chairman, New Afrikan People's Organization

Judy Holmes, Resistance Law Office

Julio Rosado, Movement for National Liberation, Puerto Rico

Poetry

Readings from *Soul of the BLA*

Nkechi Taifa, Provisional Government, Republic of New Afrika

Prison Notes

David Gilbert, Anti-Imperialist Political Prisoner

Mutulu Shakur, New Afrikan Prisoner of War

Cultural Presentation

"Love In Need of Love," by Marc Carrie and Kokayi Patterson

Eulogy

"The Making of a Revolutionary New Afrikan Soldier:

The Man, The Soldier, The Humanist"

Ahmed Obafemi, New Afrikan People's Organization

Commemoration from Auburn Prisoners

Remarks from Diane Weems Ligon, Kuwasi's Sister

Presentation of the New Afrikan Flag to Family

New Afrikan People's Organization Anthem

"Come Together Black People"

Honor Guards in Absentia

Sekou Odinga

Nehanda Abiodun

Abdul Majid

Marilyn Buck

Assata Shakur

David Gilbert

Bashir Hameed

Mutulu Shakur

Judy Clark

Silvia Baraldini

Chui Ferguson

This tribute was organized by the New Afrikan People's Organization with the help of many comrades and friends.



DRAWING by KUWASI BALAGOON

Statement to New Afrikan Freedom Fighters Day, 1983

Revolutionary Greetings Brothers and Sisters:

On the 3rd Anniversary of New Afrikan Freedom Fighters Day I'd like to extend my feelings of comradeship and optimism.

That the Government of the United States or any government has the right to control the lives of New Afrikan People is absurd and has no basis in principled reason or justice or common decency. Only New Afrikan people should govern New Afrikan people, in the manner that we collectively as a people deem correct.

This being so and that on top of forcing us to live as a colonialized people, the government of the United States has been and is practicing genocide against us, it is our right, duty and natural inclination to defend ourselves and provide for the safety and well being of our people. As Marcus Garvey stated, We cannot leave the fate of our people to chance.

The necessity of building a people's army to carry out armed struggle and a mass movement to build the infrastructure for the superceding society must be explained to the masses of our people. We must organize this, our army and our total revolution along principled lines that will deliver us as a people to land ample enough to support our population in order to obtain our self-determination. It is either liberation and self-determination for us as a people or more colonial degradation and genocide. These are the choices.

If we choose to live, we must carry on a revolutionary struggle to completion, guard against corruption and liberalism in our ranks and be consistent in building not only the means of cutting ourselves free of America but of securing our survival and self-determination by building the superceding society to provide for the needs of our people. As a better organized, more politicized and security conscious approach must be developed in building our army, a more grassroots basic approach must be developed to deal not only with the political mobilization of the masses but the needs surrounding our day to day survival. We must build a revolutionary political platform and a universal network of survival programs, along with the army.

Imperialism must expand or die and even as the pigs escalate their military and political offensive, they have lost their grip increasingly throughout this world, despite their wolf tickets because the peoples of Cuba, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Libya, Angola, Tanzania, Vietnam, Cambodia, Nicaragua, Grenada and other lands have put their heads and hearts together, to devise no nonsense methods to drive the Americans out.

If we do the same, we will obtain the same results. In fact we will obtain greater results because our liberation would mean a greater decline to imperialism than any of the previous people's victory, and reaction would be weakened to a corresponding extent.

There is no way for us as a people or any of us individually to correspond our conditions to those we desire, we have NEVER known freedom—however we will know freedom. We will win.

Love, Power & Peace by Piece

Kuwasi Balagoon

Black revolutionary soldier Kuwasi Balagoon died on Dec. 13 at the Erica County Medical Center in upstate New York. He had been moved there from the New York State penitentiary at Auburn where he was incarcerated for his political-military work in behalf of Black Liberation.

Balagoon was born Donald Weems on Dec. 22, 1946 in Lakeland, Maryland, the youngest of three children of Mary and James Weems. His parents and two sisters, Diane Weems Ligon and Mary Day Hollomand, still reside in Maryland. Kuwasi attended Fairmont Heights High School.



Kuwasi with his father and sister, Diane.

named in a federal conspiracy rap to bomb shopping centers and police stations. It was in the intense atmosphere of an 18-state alarm to pick up these 21 Panthers and vicious FBI and police attacks against Panthers throughout the empire, that Brother Kuwasi would elude arrest and go underground. All 21 defendants would be found not guilty on all counts. His latest arrest (he escaped from prison two times) would occur in Dec. 1981, when he was arrested and charged with participation in the Brink's armored car expropriation attempt of October of that year in Nyack, New York.

In the show-trial on charges arising from the Brink's action, Balagoon would uphold a Prisoner-of-War position and refused to participate in the trial. He openly acknowledged that he was a soldier in the New Afrikan Freedom Fighters Unit of the Black Liberation Army (BLA), a political-military clandestine organization formed in 1971 to defend Black people and to fight for Black people's liberation. This Unit is said to be responsible for the liberation of Assata Shakur.

Balagoon was also a contributing author of the book *Look for Me in the Whirlwind*, and has written many poems, short stories and political articles published in several Black, U.S. and Canadian journals and newspapers.

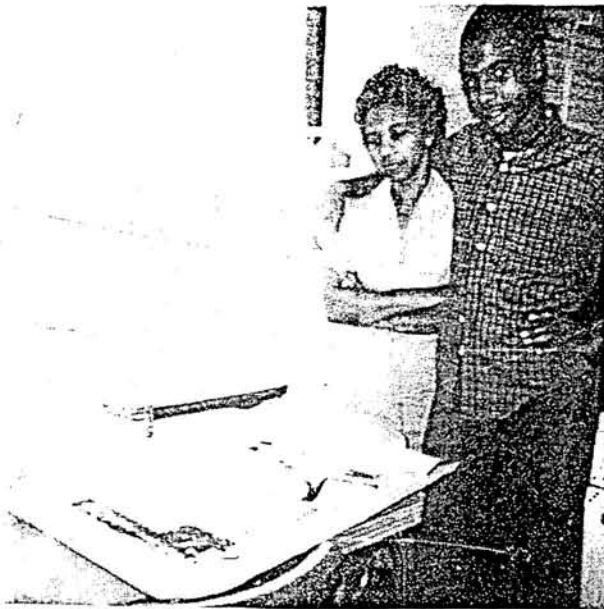
Balagoon was loved and respected by many as a dedicated fighter for freedom. His spirit will live in the people's struggle for a new and better world.



Kuwasi in the army in Germany.

—New Afrikan People's Organization

FREE THE LAND!

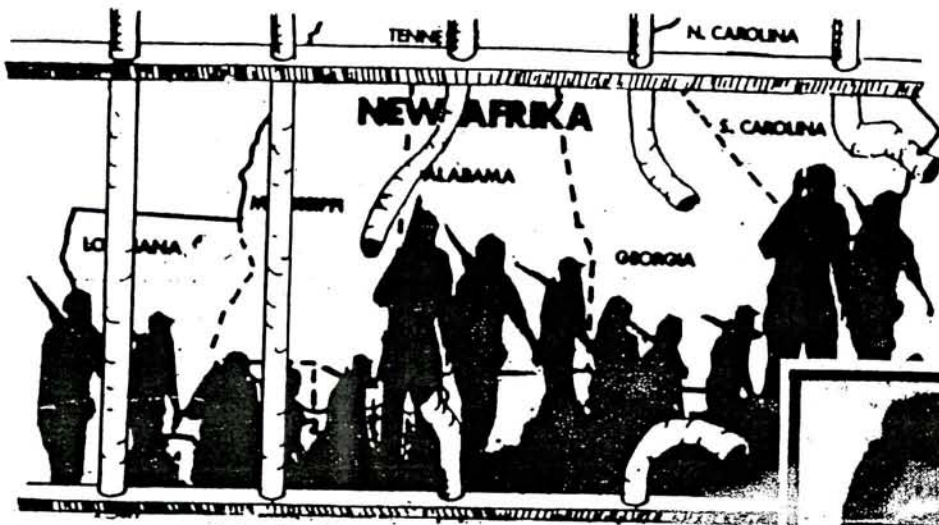


Kuwasi and his mother on his sixteenth birthday. Kuwasi with sister, Diane, prior to moving to New York in 1968.

"The U.S. doesn't intend to make fundamental changes, it intends to bully New Afrikans forever and maintain this colonial relationship based on coercion, or worse, a 'final solution.' This means that some New Afrikan soldiers like myself must make our stand clear and encourage New Afrikan people to prepare to defend themselves from genocide by the American nazis—study our mistakes; build a political program based on land and independence; a counterintelligence program to ferret out traitors like Tyrone Rison, Sam Brown and Peter Middleton and be ready to fight and fight and organize our people to resist on every level. My duty as a revolutionary in this matter is to tell the truth, disrespect this court and make it clear that the greatest consequence would be failing to step forward.

i have thrown my lot in with the revolution and only regret that due to personal shortcomings on my part, failure to accept collective responsibility, and bureaucratic, hierarchical tendencies within the BLA, i haven't been able to contribute as much as i should or build a better defense against my capture due to denial of fuse. i am confident that my comrades still at large will correct their thinking and practice through criticism/self-criticism and begin to strike consistent blows at the US imperialist. i wish i could inspire more people, especially New Afrikan people, to take the road to liberation, and adequately express my contempt for the US ruling class and its government. Other than that, i have nothing else to say."

—Kuwasi Balagoon, from his opening of the Brinks trial



Kuwasi Balagoon

your honor
 since i've been convicted of murder
 and have taken the time to digest
 just what that means
 after noting what it means to my family
 and how it affects people who read the newspapers
 and all
 i see now, that i've made an awful mistake!
 and didn't approach this matter of a trial
 in a respectful, deliberate or thoughtful manner
 didn't take advantage of the best legal advice
 and based my actions on irrelevant matters
 which i can see now in a much more sober mind
 had nothing to do with this case
 i must have been legally insane thinking about:
 the twenty five murders of children in Atlanta since Wayne Williams capture
 the recent murder of a man in boston by police
 the two recent murders of two in Chicago by police
 the shooting of the five year old little boy in suburban calif
 the lynchings in Alabama
 the mob murder of a transit worker in Brooklyn
 the murders of fourteen women in Boston
 feeling that this is evidence of something
 and that there must be a lesson in all this—i though murder was legal.

—Kuwasi Balagoon