

FOR CHRIS' SAKE.

Dec 11, 1977

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We still don't know why the hell you went down  
But I doubt now if it makes much difference.

You were created by the System;  
You were destroyed by the System.  
Your anger, your rebellion,  
The dope and dealing,  
The hustles, street fights, the bars

Your intensity  
Your desire for justice

What can we say of that?  
How can we understand it?

You recognized in Jim Jones a Man of Justice  
But you couldn't keep out of trouble.  
You were full of an uncontrollable anger, system-bred;

A tough man  
A man of violence  
Anti-hero  
Black man  
Whose fury, explosiveness,  
and misdirection

Was created by oppression;  
~~Amxx~~ man of the streets;  
A man of the ghetto  
A young man, genius thwarted  
By drugs and outrage;  
A child of Amerikkka that has failed its children;  
A betrayed manchild seeking for justice.

And in the terms of blackpeople who will not, never not ever  
compromise with the System that has brutalized, enslaved,  
condemned, and exploited them, the System that has been  
shot into our veins with filthy needles,  
There is no justice without a god damn rifle barrel of vengeance!

We forgive you, Chris  
For your violence. It was  
Understandable, practically  
Honorable. Who could condemn you for being mad?

You never sold out to the System.  
You fought it with the meagre, horribly inadequate weapons  
They put at your disposal  
Weapons that were ironic tools of  
Self-destruction! planted in your powerful hands  
And the hands of millions of our brothers and sisters around the  
By your enemies! world  
(They are our enemies, too, Chris)  
Enemies of the People!

We forgive you, Comrade Chris,  
We forgive you for all your rebellion, your  
Crazynigger rebellion, your anger  
That broke through the dam of your better judgement.  
We honor your clear outrage that kept you hating the system!  
Just as we honor you for recognizing in the Leader, who  
You only imperfectly followed (like the rest of us) —  
The Father-Liberator who could heal the terminal wounds  
Made by Amerikka's long, twisted knives of death.

You died in the ghetto, the ghetto  
that you never could manage to find your way out of  
The ghetto that has claimed the best of our black manhood  
The poisonous Auschwitz of urban America,

Blotched all over the land like a blight,  
A pestilence of liquor stores, squalid churches,  
The stinking refuse of a dream that began in a nightmare.

You had the ghetto in your blood  
The streets in your bones,

You know your Leader loved you, Chris, even though you were  
A man who couldn't sustain the structure of revolution,  
He loved you through your madness because  
He knew that the White Man made you mad.

He loved you  
Though he told you that  
Your private, frustrated ghetto-guerilla war  
Against the system  
Was a revolution of mere anarchy.

Yet you knew your Dad,  
You loved the People's Liberator  
The only way you knew how,  
And we honor you for recognizing him,  
for the way you were sweet and kind to senior citizens  
For your gleaming, manipulative little-boy  
wonderful smile;  
You are our brother.

The turbulent, violent long night of your life is now over.  
You have finally found  
An enviable peace.

But the outrage that you couldn't contain, couldn't restrain --  
That outrage  
Is smoldering still in our hearts, black brother,  
As it smolders in the streets of San Francisco,  
In the alleys of Soweto  
Wherever the seeds of revolution are being sown  
By the oppressor.

We are grateful tonight that we have,  
As our Leader, Chris, and yours,  
The One who can temper that monstrous outrage, who can  
Channel it, direct it, heighten it, ~~gather~~ gather and refine it  
Into the Pure Flame of REVOLUTION.

Let our anger be touched by the refining fire of JIM JONES.  
And let us, in reflecting on the death of a terminal man  
Who was born into violence, and who was stalked by it,  
And swallowed up by it,  
Redeem our own outrage.

And let us be rededicated, as revolutionaries  
Under our Leader, our Protector  
Our Champion, our Liberator -- JIM JONES.

N113-79-6

Dick Tropp