

# City of Detroit

## INTER-OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

TO: Richard V. Marks

DATE April 9, 1969

FROM: Lonnie Saunders

SUBJECT: Interview with Attorney Milton Henry,  
Vice President of Republic of New  
Africa in his office on April 8, 1969  
Re: The Linwood Avenue-New Bethel  
Church Incident of March 29, 1969

Representatives of the RNA convened in Detroit from all sections of the U.S. The various regional units were asked and elected to send members of their Black Legion groups.

For the three days ending March 29, 1969 the RNA group rented and used the hall above the Dexter Waverly Market on the N.W. corner of Dexter Avenue and Waverly Street. The Legionnaires drilled openly with their carbines in front of the hall and on the opposite side (the east) of Dexter Avenue.

Attorney Henry ate at the Red Satin Restaurant on the evening of March 29 and proceeded to New Bethel Church arriving after 7:00 p.m. There were something like 7 to 8 Legionnaires present during the evening, armed with carbines. Mr. Henry was next to last on the program of speakers. Immediately after the benediction he followed a prearranged procedure:

He left by the side rear exit from the church into Linwood Avenue, with an armed guard on each side of him. Three armed guards were stationed beside the church, evenly spaced from front to rear. The RNA's Queen Mother was seated beside the building. As cars were parked at the curb, a guard who was in charge of his car had parked it in waiting midway of Linwood Avenue, opposite the exit used by Attorney Henry. The guards and Attorney Henry drove north on Linwood Avenue until they had almost reached the first corner past Philadelphia Avenue. At this point they heard pistol and rifle shots, turned and saw that a police patrol car had crashed at an angle into Master Craft Cleaners. Upon the urging of the guards, the group continued on their way. (Attorney Henry later learned from the Queen Mother, who witnessed the shooting, that the patrol car which was occupied by patrolmen Czapski and Worobec stopped opposite the guard nearest the front of the church, one patrolman left his car on the run with pistol in hand and exclaiming to the guard, He was followed closely by his police partner. The guard fired a volley from his carbine at both men. Subsequently, all 3 guards escaped, initially on foot.)

Attorney Henry's car turned from Linwood east on Burlingame Street. At about this point, he noticed he was being followed. He let the two guard-passengers out at Burlingame and La Salle Blvd. where one lived. (This house was searched by the police in the next few minutes; Nothing was found.) Having discharged his passengers, Attorney Henry continued east then north opposite the Lodge expressway to Webb Ave. and east across the Webb overpass and part of the way down the entrance ramp. A police car containing a Negro officer flagged him down and was joined by several other police cars of all types with policemen fully armed with pistols and rifles. They asked him out of his car, searched it thoroughly, including the trunk, and also his person and brief case. They announced simply that policemen had been shot. Finding



nothing, they permitted Attorney Henry to leave. He proceeded northward on the expressway, picked up his wife, returned to the Mauna Loa to attend an affair for the Fres Bien group. On a hunch, he soon made some calls and learned that the church was in some way involved in what he had observed upon leaving. He drove back toward the church at about 1:00 a.m., but could not get closer than 1½ blocks away in any direction.

Attorney Henry called the Police Department for information but was supplied none. Then he telephoned Detroit General Hospital and learned of the admission of several RNA members as patients. He visited the patients and observed that they were chained to their beds and Mr. Dawkins was quite badly wounded, having been shot while near the pulpit at church and again at a different location in church.

#### Other Observations

1. Attorney Henry observed that in other major cities contacts were made with the police in advance and no trouble was ever experienced. Although someone had erred in neglecting to make such contacts with the Detroit police, they must have observed the Legionnaires drilling and could have ordered putting their rifles away if they preferred this—especially since he and others were well acquainted with Inspectors Harge, Evans, etc.
2. All in attendance at the New Bethel Church meeting were thoroughly searched for weapons before being admitted.
3. The group at no time experienced obvious surveillance and no harassment from the police prior to the fatal shooting.
4. Attorney Henry expressed absolute certainty that nobody had fled into the church for sanctuary.

#### Additional Information Supplied to L. Saunders by Atty. Milton Henry on 4/10/69

1. He did not know when the 3 guards were stationed outside the church on the evening of the slaying.
2. The crashing sound of the police patrol car as it struck the cleaners was the noise, more than gunfire, that caused him to look to the rear from his car one block north of New Bethel.
3. What happened to the Queen Mother after her witnessing the shooting of Czapski and Worobec? She is about 70. She was awaiting transportation away and eventually to New York. She apparently went unnoticed and, hence, was not arrested or bothered.
4. He heard that a second scout car was seen following Czapski's, but did not see it himself. He could not recognize this car as civilian or police. He saw only its lights.
5. As many as 4-5 police cars stopped him at Webb and the Lodge Expressway, all types; the officers had carbines and long pistols.
6. The 2 guards whom he dropped off on the way to the expressway were not arrested, nor was anything found in searching the house.