

ATTICA DEFENSE SPLITS ON FUNDS

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Man Cites Other Defendants
in Charging Check Misuse

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By Peter Kihss

split in the ranks of the leading Attica "brothers" — men facing murder and other charges growing out of the 1971 prison riots—came to light yesterday, with detectives investigating alleged misuse of checks intended for their joint defense.

Robert Murray, counsel for the Freedom National Bank, said he had referred charges that some checks were forged to detectives of the 28th Precinct, with headquarters at 229 West 123rd Street. Mr. Murray, reached at his home, said he could not recall the number of checks or the amount involved.

The rift had been disclosed by Frank Smith, who calls himself Big Black, in a newsletter on Herbert X. Blyden and Roger Champen. All three and two others, Eric Jomo Thompson and Bernard Stroble, who also uses the name of Shango Bahti Kakowana, have been indicted for kidnapping and murder of two other Attica prisoners during the September, 1971, prison rebellion.

Refuses to Cooperate

In the Attica News, published by Attica Now, an activist defense group, Mr. Smith — writing as Big Black — said "Roger Champen and Herbert X. Blyden are not to be trusted with any monies given for Attica nor will I do any work with either of them."

Paul Chevigny, court-appointed counsel for Mr. Blyden, said yesterday that "as far as I know, Mr. Blyden didn't steal anything," and "I don't know that there is any truth" to the charges by Mr. Smith.

Counsel for Mr. Champen could not be reached, nor could Lennox Hinds, national director of the National Conference of Black Lawyers, 126 West 119th Street, who was quoted by Mr. Smith as describing as a forger an \$8,000 check made out to the Attica Brothers Legal Defense through the conference's account.

Mr. Smith did not say where any of the proceeds had wound up. But he said "a collective of workers called Attica Now" had been formed in Buffalo, and urged that funds be donated to it, or to the Attica Brothers Trial Office, which he said he had "agreed to oversee" for the disbursement of defense funds, or to the Prison Law Collective Foundation.

Mr. Blyden had been particularly notable as a spokesman for inmates during the prison riot. Last June, he delivered a seconding speech for the nomination of former United States Attorney General Ramsey Clark for Senator from New York at the Democratic state committee.

Altogether 41 men are still facing legal action on Attica indictments. Last year the State Legislature appropriated \$750,000 to pay defense fees, but some lawyers say they have had great difficulty obtaining any of the allocation, which gives them \$9.15 an hour for time in court and \$10 an hour outside.