



RAINBOW POWER!

AUGUST 1971

I want to take this space in my column this time to thank everybody who's been working on the *Free John Now!* campaign, all the people in the community who have supported it with their energies and their money and their beautiful selves, all the people who signed the ad in the *Detroit Free Press* or sent postcards and letters to the governor, all the people who've gone to the benefits and helped us raise the money we need to carry on our struggle against the anti-marijuana laws, and especially all the dynamite people's bands who have contributed their time and their powerful music over the past two or three months so we could have these benefits—there isn't anything I can possibly say that could express the gratitude I feel. I'm overwhelmed, that's all, and I just hope this thing works so I can be with you all again and tell you how I feel about it in person.

Genie, Skip and Sunny

I want to thank all the people who helped on the radio special, especially Bud Spangler and Jerry Lubin and Jim Dulzo, and the radio stations that played it for people to hear—WABX, WRIF, and WDET in Detroit, and WNRZ in Ann Arbor. All of this stuff is really important, and we have to understand that it goes far beyond being an individual thing—I'm not in here as an individual "criminal" in the first place, I think everybody knows that already, and if I *am* cut loose it won't be because the so-called "legal" system wants to rehabilitate itself by finally following its own laws. It'll be because the people have shown that they're hip to the separation/isolation ruse and refuse to let the state divide us and break us down into isolated individuals like it has to do if it wants to keep us in our place. That's what it's all about, and I'm just totally wiped out behind this campaign because it represents a real victory over the rock & roll imperialists and their running dogs in the courts and legislatures of Babylon.

See, even if I have to stay here in this penitentiary for a while longer, that is, even if the Supreme Court continues to violate the obvious will of the people and the terms of its own sacred "laws," we've still handed these creeps a tremendous defeat, we've still won a killer victory in our struggle for self-determination and freedom *as a people*, because instead of being divided and separated and reduced to pitiful little individuals interested only in our own security so we can be isolated and picked off one at a time as the rulers see fit, we're more together now, and stronger, and more unified than ever before, and we've really begun

to learn just how much power we have when we all move together and work with each other to deal with our own needs.

It's the benefits which are the most exciting indication of how much progress we're making, though, because it's precisely in the rock & roll bizness that the imperialists have been exerting the strongest pressure on our new communality, in a desperate attempt to keep us from building up any real self-determination power. Our bands are the strongest economic force in the rainbow colony, they represent our national wealth as well as our national spirit, and as long as the mother-country rock & roll imperialists can control the destinies of our bands they can control our national destiny as well. They use our bands against us most of the time, turning them and their music into commodities and the people into consumers, and they use the decrepit Hollywood s*t*a*r system to keep the bands separated from the people, and the people—who would otherwise come together in the music as natural brothers and sisters—separated from each other. The dual force of the music is thus doubly perverted—its potential as a powerful unifying factor (its political/spiritual force) is undermined, and its potential as the basis of our national economic development is almost completely destroyed.

But these benefits turn all that around—the bands return their music to the community and bring the people together, and they put their economic power directly in the service of the community, making it possible for us to begin to raise the sums of money we need to defend ourselves and to



Next page: Free John Sinclair concert, photo by David Fenton



start moving on our own to create the alternative institutions we need for our communal growth. The bands are *our own people* first of all, they've been ripped off from us and used against us in the past and they'll continue to be used against us until our community grows strong enough to be able to support them ourselves, but with the bands' killer participation in these benefits we've made a big step forward, a *huge* step forward, which will have an increasingly greater effect on our immediate future as a people. Because we've begun to reclaim our national resources from the tentacles of the octopus, we've really started *bringin it all back home*, we're laying the foundation right now for a whole new communal social order, and the closer the bands get with the people the faster we can grow into this beautiful thing we've all dreamed about so long.

Let me try to go into this a little bit deeper before I move on: as Frank Bach pointed out so beautifully in his Rock & Roll Dope column last issue, there is a very basic contradiction between our rainbow culture and the imperialist culture which envelopes us—our culture is about *unity*, while imperialist culture is about *separation*, and the only way the imperialist system can survive here in Babylon is by keeping us separated from each other. Once we start getting *together* with all the people who share a common interest in self-determination and freedom, starting with all our own people in the rainbow colony and eventually extending to all the people in the world who are oppressed by the imperialist system,

we begin to develop the economic and political power which will enable us to determine our own destinies and put an end to the imperialists' control over our lives. If we live as individuals or as fragmented little groups, each concerned only with its own immediate interests, we don't have any power at all, and the imperialist vampires and the snakes, rats and pigs who work with them can manipulate us at will. So their strategy at all times and on all levels is to keep us apart by any means necessary—even if it means putting some of us in cages like they keep me—and they've been doing a pretty good job of it ever since they began to realize that we really *were* getting it together.

This is particularly true in the rock & roll sector, because they realize how great a part the music plays in our lives and how powerful we would be if we could control all the aspects of our national music scene. They realize that the music is truly dangerous when it is an integral part of our communal life, when the musicians work for the people instead of for the mother-country middle-men, when the music comes directly out of the People and goes directly back to the people without anybody standing in between the bands and the people to rip off the Profits and carry them out of our community altogether. That's why they hate benefits and free concerts so much, because those forms show the people *and* the bands that the rock & roll imperialists are *not necessary*, and because benefits in particular enable the people to begin to amass enough capital to create institutions of their own which will put the outside exploiters right out of business.

They can see that if we were totally united with our bands—to the extent that *all* our musicians would play as many benefits for people's causes as the Up does, for example, we would be able to raise money for every project we decide to undertake—we could buy land and buildings, we could build recording studios and pressing plants and huge printing operations so we could produce all our own records, we could set up distribution networks and booking agencies and every thing else we need in order to gain complete control of our own culture, and there wouldn't be any more room for the rock & roll imperialists *at all*.

And if we had that kind of control over our music, that is, if we controlled every aspect of the music production business, we could develop the music and the whole culture which is based on the music along its highest and purest lines, so that rock & roll would be able to realize its full potential as a revolutionary form. We could do away completely with sit-down concerts which sap the people's energy and reduce them to consumers instead of raising their energy level and making them full participants in the process of creation. We could do away with the ridiculous prices which are charged for these concerts and for the records we live on—the bands wouldn't charge such exorbitant fees because the antagonism between the productive forces (the musicians) and the "owners" would disappear and the whole profit factor would be eliminated. The musicians wouldn't feel the need to "get rich" because they would be one with their people and would feel good living the way the rest of us live—

their needs would be taken care of, they would be full functioning members of their communities, and they would be free to play as much music for their people as they possibly could.

For the time being our bands will have to continue to work within the imperialist music industry in order to survive, because we can't provide for their needs yet by any means, but at the same time the bands can contribute their time, energy and genius to the rainbow self-determination movement, like they've been doing here in Ann Arbor and Detroit, to help us create the alternative institutions which will eventually bring about the kind of situation we all need in order to survive and grow. Once our bands realize, as so many of them are starting to realize now, that their interests are identical with the people's interests and not with those of the rock & roll imperialists, they'll find a lot more time to play benefits and free concerts whenever they don't have paying gigs, and they'll be able to contribute a lot more to the growth of our new society. Their music will get a lot purer, the people will get a lot farther out, our community will grow stronger and stronger, and all of us will be a lot better off. The only people who can possibly suffer from it are the vampires of Babylon, and they'll only get what they deserve.

None of this is going to happen overnight, and it might seem a bit ridiculous for me to be so excited about five or six successful benefits for my own Freedom Fund, where the money doesn't even go back into the community at all, but the point is, people, that





Left: David Sinclair, photo by Charles Auringer; right: Ed Sanders, photo by David Fenton

we've made a real breakthrough with these dances, we've started to bring our musicians back with our people and the people back together with each other in the music, and we've shown each other what we can do if we all work together like this. And all of this has happened after almost two years of the total douce, at a time when the established capitalist-run rock & roll institutions are collapsing all over the place, in the face of a general atmosphere of pessimism and frustration on the part of almost everybody in the whole community, and it just shows how much potential power we have even when things look worse than they've ever looked for us. That's why it's so beautiful to me, because it proves that all that pessimism is *wrong* and it teaches us that we really *can* get what

we need for ourselves if we use our own resources and put all our faith in the people. That's what it's all about finally—All Power to the People! Long Live Rock & Roll! Rainbow Power!!

Special thanks to the people's bands of Ann Arbor and Detroit: the Up, the Brat, Detroit with brother Mitch Ryder, Guardian Angel, Carnal Kitchen, Commander Cody & His Lost Planet Airmen, SRC (Blue Scepter), Amboy Dukes, MC5, Frut, Harvey Khek, Assemblage, Third Power, Salvage, Rumor, Iron Horse Exchange, Bad Luck & Trouble, the Bad Foot Blues Band, Pride of Women, Barbara Holliday, and all the other bands and musicians who have played in the benefit/free concert series this summer. Self-Determination Music!