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The
Redemption of Africa
and Black Religion



By St. Clair Drake

Third World Press, Chicago, Illinois 60619

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Out of his long and close involvement with the various historical strands of the Pan-African movement, and close to thirty years of uninterrupted teaching, publishing, and research in the area of African and Afro-American culture, now emerges St. Clair Drake's long-awaited study, **The Black Diaspora**, of which this BLACK PAPER is the first chapter to be published.

The Institute considers it most appropriate to have the work of such a crucial older brother in the struggle as the first product of our new venture in cooperative publishing with Third World Press. In this way we continue to seek to be attuned to the thoughts of the fathers while building new institutions towards the survival and prevailing of our children.

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7850 S. Ellis Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60619

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WTP

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Introduction

The richness and complexities which characterize so much of St. Clair Drake's work are fully evident in this Black Paper. For instance, while the essay produced here is currently identified as "Chapter XIX" in the first draft of a major work on the Black Diaspora, and is entitled, "The Redemption of Africa and Black Religion," it is obvious that we are really presented with three important, related thematic lines. The first sketches an overview of the development of African cultures in the New World. From that point of departure, Drake goes on to deal with the experience of black religion in North America and the Caribbean, indicating the crucial role of religion in our struggles towards freedom, identity, and self-determination. Finally, in one of the most original sections of the work, Drake deals with the development of a mode of thinking which he calls, "Ethiopianism," and the concept of "Providential Design" as developed in the centuries of our exile and returns.

Ranging from Africa along the triangular pathways of our sorrows and renewals, disregarding the walls of academic disciplines, Brother Drake establishes connections among our experiences which are crucial for our own inner clarity as African peoples. Many of these black connections of places are, of course, best viewed in Drake's own life.

St. Clair Drake was born in Suffolk, Virginia, and spent his early years there, as well as in Staunton, Virginia, and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. At the age of twelve he traveled to Barbados, the birthplace of his father, where he lived with his father's family for over a year, and where the Afro-West Indian way of life made an impression on him which he did not forget. At the age of fourteen, Drake returned to Staunton, Virginia, to live with his mother's people, since at this time his father became International Organizer of the worldwide Universal Negro Improvement Association of Marcus Garvey. During the 1926 convention of the UNIA, his