

April 1, 1969

STATE REPRESENTATIVE DAISY ELLIOTT

State Rep. Mrs. Daisy Elliott (D-Detroit) today said that the machine gun shooting at New Bethel Church and forced entry into the private offices of the Rev. C. L. Franklin by members of the Detroit Police Department has caused a great deal of concern among the many responsible citizens of the community.

"This incident which was the result of a Detroit police officer being fatally wounded and another shot can only serve to further strain police-community relations in the already tense city of Detroit."

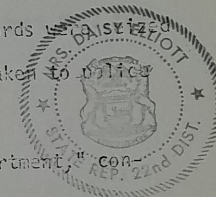
Mrs. Elliott went on to say that "the much publicized national conference of the Republic of New Africa (R.N.A.) ended in horror as many innocent persons inside the Church were shot or wounded when the Detroit police entered the building on the pretext that the gunmen had gone into the Church."

"I visited the Church after the incident and was greatly shocked to see such a beautiful edifice with blood stained carpets and bullet riddled pews which went the entire length of the church, even up to the pulpit. In fact, even the keys of the Church organ were silenced by police bullets. Outside of Rev. Franklin's office a heavy, metal, bank-like door was shot from its hinges so that the police could gain entry to his private office."

"Rev. Franklin's private papers as well as church records as a result of this blatant case of breaking and entering and taken to police headquarters."

"I have today condemned the action of the police department," continued Mrs. Elliott, "and sent a telegram to the Mayor of Detroit, Jerome Cavanagh, demanding a full scale investigation of this bloody incident."

"Rev. Franklin should receive full compensation for damage done to the church and his own private property." "This is clearly another case of police harrassment of black Americans with the intent of wantonly destroying that which they own. The shooting of the police officer was unfortunate, however, this is



yet another example of a pre-planned attack by the Detroit Police Department in an attempt to breakup a meeting of black citizens in order to get the names and addresses of those in attendance."

Rep. Elliott stated further that, "it is simply amazing that a Police Department which is normally very lax in answering calls and complaints from private citizens in this area was able to arrive on the scene only seconds after the shooting started. I cannot believe that it was a matter of luck that such a large number of forces were available for action on that short a notice."

I personally believe that this is just another example of a case in which the Detroit Police Department has openly declared war against Black private citizens. The Department has continuously disregarded the constitutional rights of Black people by steadfastly refusing to grant them the right to a peaceful assembly. The fear of invasion by the Police Department which Black people must daily operate under is overpowering. It is no wonder that young Black people are taking up arms to protect themselves from death and to attempt to secure their constitutional rights which all Americans supposedly have."

Mrs. Elliott concluded by saying "the Police Commissioner and the Mayor should be made aware that the Black citizens of Detroit will protest this type of action. We can no longer live in such fear."