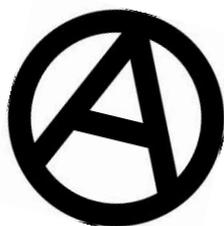




Black Autonomy Federation Radio

PRESENTS

// **BLACK AUTONOMY**



LORENZO KOM'BOA

Some - usually comfortable Black middle class professionals, politicians or businessmen who rode the 1960s Civil rights movement into power or prominence - will say there is no longer any necessity to struggle in the streets during the 1990s for Black freedom. They say we have "arrived" and are now "almost free." They say our only struggle now is to "integrate the money," or win wealth for themselves and members of their social class, even though they give lip service to "empowering the poor." Look, they say, we can vote, our Black faces are all over TV in commercials and situation comedies, there are hundreds of Black millionaires, and we have political representatives in the halls of Congress and State houses all over the land. In fact, they say, there are currently over 7,000 Black elected officials, several of whom preside over the largest cities in the nation, and there is even a governor of a Southern state, who is an African-American. That's what they say. But does this tell the whole story?

The fact is we are in as bad or even worse a shape, economically and politically, as when the Civil rights movement began in the 1950s. One in every four Black males are in prison, on probation, parole, or under arrest; at least one-third or more of Black family units are now single parent families mired in poverty; unemployment hovers at 18-25 percent for Black communities; the drug economy is the number one employer of Black youth; most substandard housing units are still concentrated in Black neighborhoods; Blacks and other non-whites suffer from the worst health care; and Black communities are still underdeveloped because of racial discrimination by municipal governments, mortgage companies and banks, who "redline" Black neighborhoods from receiving community development, housing and small business loans which keep our communities poor. We also suffer from murderous acts of police brutality by racist cops which has resulted in thousands of deaths and wounding; and internecine gang warfare resulting in numerous youth homicides (and a great deal of grief). But what we suffer from most and what encompasses all of these ills is that fact that we are an oppressed people - in fact a colonized people subject to the rule of an oppressive government. We really have no rights under this system, except that which we have fought for and even that is now in peril. Clearly we need a new mass Black protest movement to challenge the government and corporations, and expropriate the funds needed for our communities to survive.

Yet for the past 25 years the revolutionary Black movement has been on the defensive. Due to cooptation, repression and betrayals of the Black Liberation movement of the 1960s, today's movement has suffered a series of setbacks and has now become static in comparison. This may be because it is just now getting its stuff together after being pummeled by the State's police agencies, and also because of the internal political contradictions which arose in the major Black revolutionary groups like the Black Panther Party, Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC or "snick" as it was called in those days), and the League of Revolutionary Black Workers. I believe all were factors that led to the destruction of the 1960s' Black left in this country. Of course, many blame this period of relative inactivity in the Black movement on the lack of forceful leaders in the mold of Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Marcus Garvey, etc., while other people blame the "fact" the Black masses have allegedly become "corrupt and apathetic," or just need the "correct revolutionary line."

Whatever the true facts of the matter, it can clearly be seen that the government, the Capitalist corporations, and the racist ruling class are exploiting the current weakness and confusion of the Black movement to make an attack on the Black working class, and are attempting to totally strip the gains won during the Civil rights era. In addition there is a resurgence of racism and conservatism among broad layers of the white population, which is a direct result of this right-wing campaign. Clearly this is a time when we must entertain new ideas and new tactics in the freedom struggle.

The ideals of Anarchism are something new to the Black movement and have never really been examined by Black and other non-white activists. Put simply, it means the people themselves should rule, not governments, political parties, or self-appointed leaders in their name. Anarchism also stands for the self-determination of all oppressed peoples, and their right to struggle for freedom by any means necessary.

So what road is in order for the Black movement? Continue to depend on opportunistic Democratic hack politicians like Bill Clinton or Ted Kennedy; the same old group of middle class sellout "leaders" of the Civil rights lobby; one or another of the authoritarian Leninist sects, who insist that they and they alone have the correct path to "revolutionary enlightenment"; or finally

building a grassroots revolutionary protest movement to fight the racist government and rulers?

Only the Black masses can finally decide the matter, whether they will be content to bear the brunt of the current economic depression and the escalating racist brutality, or will lead a fight back. Anarchists trust the best instincts of the people, and human nature dictates that where there is repression there will be resistance; where there is slavery, there will a struggle against it. The Black masses have shown they will fight, and when they organize they will win!

A Call for a New Black Protest Movement

Those Anarchists who are Black like myself recognize there has to be a whole new social movement, which is democratic, on the grassroots level and is self-activated. It will be a movement independent of the major political parties, the State and the government. It must be a movement that, although it seeks to expropriate government money for projects that benefit the people, does not recognize any progressive role for the government in the lives of the people. The government will not free us, and is part of the problem rather than part of the solution. In fact only the Black masses themselves can wage the Black freedom struggle, not a government bureaucracy (like the U.S. Justice Department), reformist civil rights leaders like Jesse Jackson, or a revolutionary vanguard party on their behalf.

Of course, at a certain historical moment, a protest leader can play a tremendous revolutionary role as a spokesperson for the people's feelings, or even produce correct strategy and theory for a certain period, (Malcolm X, Marcus Garvey, and Martin Luther King, Jr. come to mind), and a "vanguard party" may win mass support and acceptance among the people for a time (e.g., the Black Panther Party of the 1960s), but it is the Black masses themselves who will make the revolution, and, once set spontaneously in motion, know exactly what they want.

Though leaders may be motivated by good or bad, even they will act as a brake on the struggle, especially if they lose touch with the freedom aspirations of the Black masses. Leaders can only really serve a legitimate purpose as an advisor and catalyst to the movement, and should be subject to

immediate recall if they act contrary to the people's wishes. In that kind of limited role they are not leaders at all - they are community organizers.

The dependence of the Black movement on leaders and leadership (especially the Black bourgeoisie) has led us into a political dead end. We are expected to wait and suffer quietly until the next messianic leader asserts himself, as if he or she were "divinely missioned" (as some have claimed to be). What is even more harmful is that many Black people have adopted a slavish psychology of "obeying and serving our leaders," without considering what they themselves are capable of doing. Thus, rather than trying to analyze the current situation and carrying on Brother Malcolm X's work in the community, they prefer to bemoan the brutal facts, for year after year, of how he was taken away from us. Some mistakenly refer to this as a leadership vacuum." The fact is there has not been much movement in the Black revolutionary movement since his assassination and the virtual destruction of groups like the Black Panther Party. We have been stagnated by middle class reformism and misunderstanding.

We need to come up with new ideas and revolutionary formations in how to fight our enemies. We need a new mass protest movement. It is up to the Black masses to build it, not leaders or political parties. They cannot save us. We can only save ourselves.

What form will this movement take?

If there was one thing learned by anarchist revolutionary organizers in the 1960s, you don't organize a mass movement or a social revolution just by creating one central organization such as a vanguard political party or a labor union. Even though Anarchists believe in revolutionary organization, it is a means to an end, instead of the ends itself. In other words, the Anarchist groups are not formed with the intention of being permanent organizations to seize power after a revolutionary struggle. But rather to be groups which act as a catalyst to revolutionary struggles, and which try to take the people's rebellions, like the 1992 Los Angeles revolt, to a higher level of resistance.

Two features of a new mass movement must be the intention of creating dual power institutions to challenge the state, along with the ability to have a

grassroots autonomist movement that can take advantage of a pre-revolutionary situation to go all the way.

Dual power means that you organize a number of collectives and communes in cities and town all over North America, which are, in fact, liberated zones, outside of the control of the government. Autonomy means that the movement must be truly independent and a free association of all those united around common goals, rather than membership as the result of some oath or other pressure.

So how would Anarchists intervene in the revolutionary process in Black neighborhoods? Well, obviously North American or "white" Anarchists cannot go into Black communities and just proselytize, but they certainly should work with any non-white Anarchists and help them work in communities of color. (I do think that the example of the New Jersey Anarchist Federation and its loose alliance with the Black Panther movement in that state is an example of how we must start.) And we are definitely not talking about a situation where Black organizers go into the neighborhood and win people to Anarchism so that they can then be controlled by whites and some party. This is how the Communist Party and other Marxist groups operate, but it cannot be how Anarchists work. We spread Anarchists beliefs not to "take over" people, but to let them know how they can better organize themselves to fight tyranny and obtain freedom. 'We want to work with them as fellow human beings and allies, who have their own experiences, agendas, and needs. The idea is to get as many movements of people fighting the state as possible, since that is what brings the day of freedom for us all a little closer.

There needs to be some sort of revolutionary organization for Anarchists to work on the local level, so we will call these local groups Black Resistance Committees. Each one of these Committees will be Black working class social revolutionary collectives in the community to fight for Black rights and freedom as part of the Social revolution The Committees would have no leader or "party boss," and would be without any type of hierarchy structure, it would also be anti-authority. They exist to do revolutionary work, and thus are not debating societies or a club to elect Black politicians to office. They are revolutionary political formations, which will be linked with other such groups all over North America and other parts of the world in a larger

movement called a federation. A federation is needed or coordinate the actions of such groups, to let others know what is happening in each area, and to set down widespread strategy and tactics. (We will call this one, for want of a better name, the "African Revolutionary Federation," or it can be part of a multicultural federation). A federation of the sort I am talking about is a mass membership organization which will be democratic and made up of all kinds of smaller groups and individuals. But this is not a government or representative system I am talking about; there would be no permanent positions of power, and even the facilitators of internal programs would be subject to immediate recall or have a regular rotation of duties. When a federation is no longer needed, it can be disbanded Try that with a Communist party or one of the major Capitalist parties in North America!

Revolutionary strategy and tactics

If we are to build a new Black revolutionary protest movement we must ask ourselves how we can hurt this Capitalist system, and how have we hurt it in the past when we have led social movements against some aspect of our oppression. Boycotts, mass demonstrations, rent strikes, picketing, work strikes, sit-ins, and other such protests have been used by the Black movement at different times in its history, along with armed self-defense and- open rebellion Put simply, what we need to do is take our struggle to an new and higher level: we need to take these tried and true tactics, (which have been used primarily on the local level up to this point), and utilize them on a national level and then couple them with as yet untried tactics, for a strategic attack on the major Capitalist corporations and governmental apparatus. We shall discuss a few of them:

A Black Tax Boycott

Black people should refuse to pay any taxes to the racist government, including federal income, estate and sales taxes, while being subjected to exploitation and brutality. The rich and their corporations pay virtually no taxes; it is the poor and workers who bear the brunt of taxation. Yet they receive nothing in return. There are still huge unemployment levels in the Black community, the unemployment and welfare benefits are paltry; the schools are dilapidated; public housing is a disgrace, while rents by absentee landlord properties are exorbitant-all these conditions and more are

supposedly corrected by government taxation of income, goods, and services. Wrong! It goes to the Pentagon, defense contractors, and greedy consultants, who like vultures prey on business with the government.

The Black Liberation movement should establish a mass tax resistance movement to lead a Black tax boycott as a means of protest and also as a method to create a fund to finance black community projects and organizations. Why should we continue to voluntarily support our own slavery? A Black tax boycott is just another means of struggle that the Black movement should examine and adopt, which is similar to the peace movement's "war tax resistance." Blacks should be exempted from all taxation on personal property, income taxes, stocks and bonds (the latter of which would be a new type of community development issuance). Tax the Rich!

A National Rent Strike and Urban Squatting

Hand-in-glove with a tax boycott should be a refusal to pay rent for dilapidated housing. These rent boycotts have been used to great effect to fight back against rent gouging by landlords. At one time they were so effective in Harlem (NY) that they caused the creation of rent control legislation, preventing evictions, unjustified price increases, and requiring reasonable upkeep by the owners and the property management company. A mass movement could bring a rent strike to areas (such as in the Southeast and Southwest where poor people are being ripped off by the greedy landlords, but are not familiar with such tactics. Unfair laws now on the books, so-called Landlord -Tenant (where the only "right" the tenants have is to pay the rent or be evicted) should also be liberalized or overturned entirely. These laws only help slumlords stay in business, and keep exploiting the poor and working class. They account for mass evictions, which in turn account for homelessness. We should fight to rollback rents, prevent mass evictions, and house the poor and the homeless in decent affordable places.

Besides the refusal to pay the slumlords and exploitative banks and property management companies, there should be a campaign of "urban squatting" to just take over the housing, and have the tenants run it democratically as a housing collective. Then that money which would have gone toward rent could now go into repairing the dwelling of tenants. The homeless, poor

persons needing affordable housing, and others who badly need housing should just take over any abandoned housing owned by an absentee landlord or even a bearded-up city housing project. Squatting is an especially good tactic in these times of serious housing shortages and arson-for-insurance by the slumlords. We should throw the bums out and just take over! Of course we will probably have to fight the cops and crooked landlords who will try to use strong-armed tactics, but we can do that too! We can win significant victories if we organize a nationwide series of rent strikes, and build an independent tenants movement that will self-manage all the facilities, not on behalf of the government (with the tricky "Kemp plan"), but on behalf of themselves!

A Boycott of American Business

It was proven that one of the strangest weapons of the Civil rights movement was a Black consumer boycott of a community's merchants and public services. Merchants and other businessmen, of course, are the "leading citizens" of any community, and the local ruling class and boss of the government. In the 1960s when Blacks refused to trade with merchants as long as they allowed racial discrimination, their loss of revenue drove them to make concessions, and mediate the struggle, even hold the cops and the Klan at bay. What is true at the local level is certainly true at the national level. The major corporations and elite families run the country; the government is its mere tool. Blacks spend over \$350 billion a year in this Capitalist economy as consumers, and could just as easily wage economic warfare against the corporate structure with a well planned boycott to win political concessions. For instance, a corporation like General Motors is heavily dependent upon Black consumers, which means that it is very vulnerable to a boycott, if one were organized and supported widely. If Blacks would refuse to buy GM cars, it would result in significant losses for the corporation, to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars. Something like this could even bring a company to its knees. Yet the revolutionary wing of the Black movement has yet to use boycotts, calling it "reformism" and outdated.

But far from being an outdated tactic that we should abandon, boycotts have become even more effective in the last few years. In 1988, the Black and progressive movement in the United States hit on another tactic, boycotting

the tourist industries of whole cities and states which engaged in discrimination. This reflected on the one hand how many cities have gone from smokestack industries since the 1960s to tourism as their major source of revenue, and on the other hand, a recognition by the movement that economic warfare was a potent weapon against discriminatory governments. The 1990-1993 Black Boycott against the Miami Florida tourism industry and the current Gay rights boycott against the State of Colorado (started in 1992) have been both successful and have gotten worldwide attention to the problems in their communities. In fact, boycotts have been expanded to cover everything from California grapes, beer (Coors), a certain brand of Jeans, all products made in the country of South Africa, a certain meat industry, and many things in between. Boycotts are more popular today than they ever have been.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. recognized the potential revolutionary power of a national Black boycott of America's major corporations, which is why he established "Operation Breadbasket" shortly before an assassin killed him. This organization, with offices in Chicago was designed to be the conduit for the funds that the corporations were going to be forced to pour money into for a national Black community development project for poor communities. And although he was assassinated before this could happen, we must continue his work in this matter. All over the country Black Boycott offices should be opened! We should build it into a mass movement, involving all sectors of our people. We should demonstrate, picket, and sit-in at meetings and offices of target corporations all over the country We must take it to their very doorstep and stop their looting of the Black community.

A Black General Strike

Because of the role they play in production, Black workers are potentially the most powerful sector of the Black community in the struggle for Black freedom. The vast majority of the Black community is working class people. Barring the disproportionate numbers of unemployed, about 11 million Black men and women are today part of the work force of the United States. About 5 -6 million of these are in basic industry, such as steel and metal fabrication, retail trades, food production and processing, meatpacking, the automobile industry, railroading, medical service and communications.

Blacks number 1/3 to 1/2 of the basic blue-collar workers, and 1/3 of clerical laborers. Black labor is therefore very important to the Capitalist economy.

Because of this vulnerability to job actions by Black workers, who are some of the most militant workers on the job, they could take a leading role in a protest campaign against racism and class oppression. If they are properly organized they would be a class vanguard within our movement since they are at the point of production. Black workers could lead a nationwide General Strike at their place of work as a protest against racial discrimination in jobs and housing, the inordinately high levels of Black unemployment, brutal working conditions, and to further the demands of the Black movement generally. This general strike is a Socialist strike, not just a strike for higher wages and over general working conditions; it is revolutionary in politics using other means. This general strike can take the form of industrial sabotage, factory occupations or sit-ins, work slowdowns, wildcats, and other work stoppages as a protest to gain concessions on the local and national level and restructure the workplace and win the 4-hour day for North American labor. The strike would not only involve workers on the job, but also Black community and progressive groups to give support with picket line duty, leafleting and publishing strike support newsletters, demonstrations at company offices and work sites, along with other activities.

It will take some serious community and workplace organizing to bring a general strike off. In workplaces all over the country, Black workers should organize General Strike Committees at the workplaces, and Black Strike Support Committees to carry on the strike work inside the Black community itself. Because such a strike would be especially hard-fought and vicious, Black workers should organize Worker's Defense Committees to defend workers fired or black listed by the bosses for their industrial organizing work. This defense committee would publicize a victimized worker's case and rally support from other workers and the community. The defense committee would also establish, a Labor strike and defense fund and also start food cooperative to financially and material support such victimized workers and their families while carrying on the strike.

Although there will definitely be an attempt to involve women and white workers; where they are willing to cooperate, the strike would be under

Black leadership because only Black workers can effectively raise those issues which most effect them. White workers have to support the democratic rights of Blacks and other nationally oppressed laborers, instead of just white rights campaigns" on so-called "common economic issues," led by the North American left. In addition to progressive North American individuals or union caucuses, the labor union locals themselves should be recruited, but they are not the force to lead this struggle, although their help can be indispensable in a particular campaign. It takes major organizing to make them break free of their racist and conservative nature. So although we want and need the support of our fellow workers of other nationalities and genders, it is ridiculous and condescending to just tell Black workers to sit around and wait for a "white workers vanguard" to decide it wants to fight. We will educate our fellow workers to the issues and why they should fight white supremacy at our side, but we will not defer our struggle for anyone! WE MUST ORGANIZE THE GENERAL STRIKE FOR BLACK FREEDOM!

The Commune: Community Control of the Black Community

"How do we raise a new revolutionary consciousness against a system programmed against our old methods? We must use a new approach and revolutionize the Black Central City Commune, and slowly provide the people with the incentive to fight by allowing them to create programs, which will meet all their social, political, and economic, needs. We must fill the vacuums left by the established order... In return, we must teach them the benefits of our revolutionary ideals. We must build a subsistence economy, and a sociopolitical infrastructure so that we can become an example for all revolutionary people."

- George Jackson, in his book 'BE'

The idea behind a mass commune is to create a dual power structure as a counter to the government, under conditions, which exist now. In fact, Anarchists believe the first step toward self-determination and the Social revolution is Black control of the Black community. This means that Black people must form and unify their own organizations of struggle, take control of the existing Black communities and all the institutions within them, and conduct a consistent fight to overcome every form of economic, political and cultural servitude, and any system of racial and class inequality which is the product of this racist Capitalist society.

The realization of this aim means that we can build inner-city Communes, which will be centers of Black counter-power and social revolutionary culture against the white political power structures in the principal cities of the United States. Once they assume hegemony, such communes would be an actual alternative to the State and serve as a force to revolutionize African people-and by extension-large segments of American society, which could not possibly remain immune to this process. It would serve as a living revolutionary example to North American progressives and other oppressed nationalities.

There is tremendous fighting power in the Black community, but it is not organized in a structured revolutionary way to effectively struggle and take what is due. The white Capitalist ruling class recognizes this, which is why it pushes the fraud of "Black Capitalism" and Black politicians and other such "responsible leaders. These fakes and sellout artists lead us to the dead-end road of voting and praying for that which we must really be willing to fight for. The Anarchists recognize the Commune as the primary organ of the new society, and as an alternative to the old society. But the Anarchists also recognize that Capitalism will not give up without a fight; it will be necessarily to economically and politically cripple Capitalist America. One thing for sure we should not continue to passively allow this system to exploit and oppress us.

The commune is a staging ground for Black revolutionary struggle. For instance, Black people should refuse to pay taxes to the racist government, should boycott the Capitalist corporations, should lead a Black General Strike all over the country, and should engage in an insurrection to drive the police out and win a liberated zone. This would be a powerful method to obtain submission to the demands of the movement, and weaken the power of the state. We can even force the government to make money available for community development as a concession; instead of as a payoff to buy-out the struggle as happened in the 1960s and thereafter. If we put a gun to a banker's head and said "Yore know you've got the money, now give it up," he would have to surrender. Now the question is: if we did the same thing to the government, using direct action means with an insurrectionary mass movement, would these would both be acts of expropriation? Or is it just to pacify the community why they gave us the money? One thing for sure, we definitely need the money, and however we compel it from the government,

is of less important than the fact that we forced them to give it up to the people's forces at all. We would then use that money to rebuild our communities, maintain our organizations, and care for the needs of our people. It could be a major concession, a victory.

But we have also got to realize that Africans in America are not simply oppressed by force of arms, but that part of the moral authority of the state comes from the mind of the oppressed that consent to the right to be governed. As long as Black people believe that some moral or political authority of the white government has legitimacy in their lives, that they owe a duty to this nation as citizens, or even that they are responsible for their own oppression, then they cannot effectively fight back. They must free their minds of the ideas of American patriotism and begin to see themselves as a new people. This can only be accomplished under dual power, where the patriotism of the people for the state is replaced with love and support for the new Black commune. We do that by making the Commune a real thing in the day-to-day lives of ordinary people.

We should establish community councils to make policy decisions and administer the affairs of the Black community. These councils would be democratic neighborhood assemblies composed of representative elected by Black workers in various community institutions-factories, hospitals schools-as well as delegates elected on a block basis. We must reject Black Mayors and other politicians, or government bureaucrats, as a substitute for community power. We must therefore have community control of all the institutions of the Black community, instead of just letting the State decide what is good for us. Not just jobs and housing, but also full control over schools, hospitals, welfare cents, libraries, etc., must turned over to that community, because only the residents of a community have a true understanding of its needs and desires.

Here is an example of how it would work: we would elect a community council to supervise all schools in the Black community. We would encourage parents, students, teachers, and the community at-large to work cooperatively in every phase of school administration, rather than have an authority figure like a principal and his/her uncaring bureaucratic administration run things as are done at present. The whole Black community will have to engage in a militant struggle to take over the public

schools and turn them into centers of Black culture and learning. We cannot continue to depend on the racist or Black puppet school boards to do this for us.

The local council would then be federated, or joined together, on a local level to create a citywide group of councils who would run affairs in that community. The councils and other neighborhoods collectives organized for a variety of reasons would make a mass commune. This commune would be in turn federated at the regional and national level the aim being to create a national federation of Black communes, which would meet periodically in one or a number of mass assembly meetings. This federation would be composed of elected or appointed delegates representing their local commune or council. Such a national federal of communes would allow community councils from all over North America to work out common policies and speak with one voice on all matters affecting their communities or regions. It would thus have far more power than any single community council could. However, to prevent this national federation from bureaucratic usurpation of power by political factions or opportunistic leaders, elections should be held regularly and delegates would be subject to recall at any time for misconduct, so that they remain under the control of the local communities they represent.

The Black community councils are really a type of grassroots movement made up of all the social formations of our people, the block and neighborhood committees, Labor, student and youth groups, (even the church, to a limited degree), social activist groups, and others to unite the various protest actions around a common program of struggle for this period. The campaigns for this period must utilize the tactics of direct mass action, as it is very important that the people themselves must realize a sense of their organized power. These grassroots associations will provide to the usually mass spontaneous actions, a form of organization whose social base is of the Black working class, instead of the usual Black middle class misleadership.

The Anarchists recognize these community councils as being a form of direct democracy, instead of the type of phony American "democracy," which is really nothing but control by politicians and businessmen. The councils are especially important because they provide embryonic self- rule and the

beginnings of an alternative to the Capitalist economic system and its government. It is a way to undermine the government and make it an irrelevant dinosaur, because its services are no longer needed.

The Commune is also a Black revolutionary counterculture. It is the embryo of the new Black revolutionary society in the body of the old sick, dying one. It is the new lifestyle in microcosm, which contains the new Black social values and the new communal organizations, and institutions, which will become the sociopolitical infrastructure of the free society.

Our objective is to teach new Black social values of unity and struggle against the negative effects of white Capitalist society and culture. To do that we must build the Commune into a Black Consciousness movement to build race pride and respect, race and social awareness and to struggle against the Capitalist slave masters. This Black communalism would be both a repository of Black culture and ideology. We need to change both our lives and our lifestyles, in order to deal with the many interpersonal contradictions that exist in our community. We could examine the Black family, Black male/female relationships, the mental health of the Black community, relations between the community and the white establishment and among Black people themselves. We would hold Black consciousness raising sessions in schools, community centers, prisons and in Black communities all over North America-which would teach Black history and culture, new liberating social ideas and values to children and adults, as well as counseling and therapy techniques to resolve family and marital problems, all the while giving a Black revolutionary perspective to the issues of the day. Our people must be made to see that the self-hatred, disunity, distrust, internecine violence and oppressive social conditions among Black people are the result of the legacy of African slavery and the present day effects of Capitalism. Finally the main objective of Black revolutionary culture is to agitate and organize Black people to struggle for their freedom.

As Steve Biko, the murdered South African revolutionary, has been quoted as saying:

"The call for Black consciousness is the most positive call to come from ally group in the Black world for a long time. It is more than just a reactionary rejection of whites by Blacks... At the heart of this kind of thinking is the

realization by Black that the most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed. Once the latter has been so effectively manipulated and controlled, try the oppressor as to make the oppressed believe that he is a liability to the white man, then there is nothing the oppressed can do that will really scare the powerful masters... The philosophy of Black consciousness, therefore, expresses group pride and the determination by Blacks to rise up and attain the envisaged self."

By the "envisaged self," Biko refers to the Black self, a liberated psyche. It is that which we want to rescue with such a Black consciousness movement here in America. We need to counter Black self-hatred and the frivolous "party mentality. We also want to end the social degradation of our community, and rid it of drug addiction, prostitution, Black-on-Black crime, and other social evils that destroys the moral fiber of the Black community. Drugs and prostitution are mainly controlled by organized crime, and protected by the police, who accept bribes and gifts from gangsters. These negative social values, the so-called "dog-eat-dog" philosophy of the Capitalist system teaches people to be individualists of the worst sort. Willing to commit any kind of crime against each other, and to take advantage of each other. This oppressive culture is what we are fighting. As long as it exists, it will be hard to unify the people around a revolutionary political program.

Building A Black survival program

But there must also be some way to ensure their economic survival, in addition to providing new cultural role models. It is then when the Commune, a network of community organizations and institutions, assumes its greatest importance. We will build a sociopolitical infrastructure to intervene in every area of Black life: food and housing cooperatives, Black Liberation schools, people's banks and community mutual aid funds, medical clinics and hospitals, rodent control and pest extermination programs, cooperative factories, community cultural and entertainment centers, the establishment of an intercommunal electronic communications network, land and building reclamation projects, public works brigades to rebuild the cities, youth projects, drug clinics, and many other such programs.

All these programs satisfy the deep needs of the Black community, but they are not solutions to our problems, because although we can build a survival economy now, we have to realize it will take a social revolution to overthrow Capitalism and obtain full economic self-sufficiency. But they will help us to organize the Black community around a true analysis and understand of their situation. This is why they are called survival programs, meaning surviving under this system pending a social revolution.

Building consciousness and revolutionary culture means taking on realistic day-to-day issues, like hunger, the need for clothing and housing, joblessness, transportation and other issues. It means that the Commune must be in the vacuum where people are not being properly fed clothed, provided with adequate medical treatment or are otherwise being deprived of basic needs.

Contrary to the rhetoric of some leftist groups, this will not make people passive or just dependent on us. Rather than struggling against the government and demanding those things, it inspires confidence in the revolutionary forces and exposes the government as uncaring and incompetent. That is more of an incentive for the people to revolt and overthrow the government than balding political pep rallies, giving speeches, running for public office, and publishing manifestos and resolutions or party newspapers and other garbage (that no one reads but their own members), like most Black and radical groups do now.

We need a new way of confronting our oppressed situation. We need to unite out people to fight, and to do that we need to educate, agitate and organize. That's the only way we'll win a new world. What follows is an example of the and of survival program I mean:

1. We must have community control of all businesses and financial institutions located in our communities, and for those businesses not working in our best interests or not returning some of its revenue back to the community, we will seize said businesses and turn them into community cooperatives and mutual aid banking societies.
2. We must have community control of all housing and major input in all community planning of Black communities. If a piece of property or house is owned by a slumlord (either a private Realtor or government agency), we will seize it and turn it into community housing cooperatives. We oppose

Urban Renewal, spatial decomposition, yuppie gentrification and other such racist schemes to drive us out of the cities. We must have complete control of all planning boards affecting and concerning the Black community. To enforce these demands, we should lead rent strikes, demonstrations, armed actions and urban squatting to drive landlords out and take over the property.

3. We must have an independent self-sustaining economy to guarantee full employment for all our people. We demand that the U.S. government provide massive economic aid to rebuild the cities. The government spends billions per year for the Pentagon killing machine. At least that amount should be redirected to meet the needs of America's oppressed communities. Ghetto housing must be rebuilt and turned over to the occupants. Adequate jobs and services must be provided to all community residents including first preference for all construction jobs in the Black community, when public works brigades are assigned to rebuild the cities. We must fight for Black grassroots control of all government funds allocated to the Black community through a network of mutual aid banking societies, community development corporations, and community development credit unions.

4. Reparations: the Big Payback. The United States government and the rich class of this country has stolen and oppressed Africans in this continent for decades. They worked our ancestors as slaves, and after slavery they continued to oppress, murder and exploit our people, on down to the present day. We must build a mass movement in our communities to compel the government and the rich to provide the means for our community redevelopment. They owe us for centuries of abuse and robbery! We must demand that reparations, in the form of community development money and other funds, be provided and placed in credit unions, cooperatives, and other mutual aid institutions in the Black community, so that we can start to obtain some measure of economic self sufficiency. Yet we know that they won't give the money to us. We must fight them for it, just like we must struggle to overturn the system of wage slavery today.

5. End police brutality. We must organize self-defense units to protect the Black community and its organizations, and remove the State's police farces. We demand criminal prosecution and jailing of all brutal or killer cops. No jurisdiction for the State's judicial system in Black liberated zones.

6. We must undertake a large-scale program to train Black people as doctors, nurses and medical paraprofessionals in order to make free quality medical and dental care available to Black people. We must demand that the government subsidize all such medical and dental training, as well as for the

operation of clinics, but Black people themselves must establish and run the free medical clinics in all Black communities whether urban or rural. This would include community anti-drug programs and drug rehabilitation clinics.

7. We must establish a Black community-controlled food system for self-sufficiency and as a way of fighting to end hunger and malnutrition, including a trucking network, warehouses, communal farms, farmers' cooperatives, food cooperatives, agricultural unions, and other collective associations. This will include a protest campaign challenging the theft of Black farmland by agribusiness corporations and rich white "land barons" and reclaiming it for our projects. This is especially important now that the U.S. has entered an economic crisis that will not be able to provide for our needs. We must force the government to provide the money for many of these projects, to be administered under our total control, instead of by a government agency.

8. The Black community must have control of its entire educational system from the nursery school through college. We must establish a Black Liberation educational system which meets the training needs of Black children, prepares them for job training and future economic security, service to their community, and gives them a knowledge of themselves and an understanding of the true history and culture of African people; as well as a program of adult education for community people whose earlier educational opportunities have been stunted. We should demand free higher education for Blacks and other minorities at full government expense, including remedial training programs for all who wish to qualify.

9. We must demand and fight for the release of all Black political prisoners and victims of racial injustice, we must investigate and review the cases of all such prisoners who are the victims of government political repression and racist frame-ups, and lead a mass campaign for their release. Some of our best revolutionary organizers are rotting away in the prison houses of this land.

10. The central demand is for Black control of the Black community, its politics and economy. We have to take over the cities, establish municipal communes, and exercise self-government, as a vital step. We are the majority in many of the major cities of this country and we should be able to control our own affairs (or at least obtain some autonomy), but as we should now be aware we won't ever get this community social power by voting for some Black Capitalist politician, or from passively depending for "salvation" on leaders of one sort or another. We have to do it ourselves if we are to ever get on the road to freedom.

The Need for a Black Labor Federation

The demand for Black labor has been the central economic factor in America; it was Black labor that built the foundations of this nation. Beginning with slave labor in the Old South on plantations, then with sharecropping and other farm labor after the Civil war, successive migration to the North and working mills, mine and factories during a 40 year period (1890- 1920), and on down to the present day, Black labor is important to the functioning of the Capitalist economic order. Almost from the beginning, Black workers have organized their own Labor unions and worker's associations to represent their interests: the National Colored Labor Union in 1869, the national Colored Farmer's Alliance (Populist) in the same year, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters in the 1940s, the league of Black Revolutionary Workers in the 1960s; the United Construction Workers Association and the Black and Puerto Rican Coalition of Construction Workers in the 1970s, and on down to the present day with such unions or associations as the Black Workers for Justice and the Coalition for Black Trade Unionists. Some of these were unions, some were just associations of Black workers in existing unions. (NOTE: In addition to Black organized or led labor federations in the 1870s, there were 90,600 Black workers in the Knights of Labor in the 1880s and at least 100,000 in the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) in the 1900s.

In fact, the trade unions would not even exist today if it were not for the assistance and support of the Black worker. Trade unionism was born as an effective national movement amid the great convulsions of the Civil War and the fight to end slavery, yet Black workers were routinely excluded from unions like the American Federation of Labor. Only militant associations like the Knights, IWW and the Anarchist-initiated International Working People's Association (IWPA) would accept their memberships at all. This continued for many years, until the founding of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) began its campaign of strikes, sit-downs, and other protest actions to organize the unskilled industrial workers. Black labor was pivotal in these battles, yet has never fully reaped the benefits. In fact, the Labor bosses betrayed them when the CIO was beaten down in the 1950s.

You would think that American labor movement would see it as criminal or racist to ignore these fellow workers today in that fashion. But even now there is no labor organization in the U. S. which gives full representation and

equal treatment to Black workers. The fact is that even with some Black Labor officials in office, Black workers receive far fewer union benefits than white workers, and are trapped in the most low-paid, tedious and dangerous jobs, even though they made substantial economic gains during the 1960s.

The majority of the Black masses are in the working class. Because of the role they play in production, Black industrial and clerical workers are potentially the most powerful sector of the Black community in the struggle for Black liberation. As the victims of inequality in the economy, Black workers have already begun to organize for their interests and protect their rights on the job, even if the union is conservative and won't fight the boss. They have formed union caucuses and even independent labor unions where necessary. Of course, the unity of Black and white workers is indispensable to combat and overthrow Capitalism. But where white workers are now privileged and Black workers are penalized, Black unity and struggle must precede and prepare the ground for any Black-white unity on a broad scale. Black caucuses in the Unions can fight against discrimination in hiring, firing, and upgrading, and for equality of treatment in the unions, now, while white workers still have yet to widely support democratic rights for Black and other oppressed nationalities. Black Caucuses are important. Where they are part of organized labor, they should strive to democratize the unions, regenerate their fighting spirits, and eliminate white job trust practices. These Black caucuses in the unions should demand:

1. Rank and file democratic control of the union.
2. Equal rights and treatment for all unionists; eliminate all racist practices in the labor movement.
3. Affirmative action programs to redress past racist employment practices, end racial discrimination based on seniority and other ploys.
4. Full employment for all Blacks, women, and other non-white workers.
5. A 20-30 hour workweek with no reduction in pay.
6. The right to strike, including wildcat strikes without union sanction.
7. Speedier and fair grievance procedures.
8. An escalator clause in all union contracts to ensure automatic wage adjustments to keep up with the rising cost of living.
9. Full payment of social security by employer and the government. Full unemployment compensation at 100 of base pay.
10. Minimum wages at union scale.

11. Prevent runaway shops, phony bankruptcy, or "strategic plant shutdowns" by companies without notice to union or to gain advantage in contract negotiations.

12. A public works program to rebuild the Black and other inner-city communities, and to provide work for Black workers.

13. Worker's self-management of industry by factory committees and worker's councils, elected by the workers themselves.

In addition to the union caucuses, Black working people need a national Black workers association, which would be both a revolutionary union movement to do workplace organizing, but also would be a mass social movement for community organizing. Such a movement would combine the organizing tactics to both the labor and Black Liberation movements. It is not designed to drive Blacks out of those unions where they are already organized, but would rather serve as a tool to multiply their numbers and strength, and turn their unions into militant, class struggle instruments.

The League of Revolutionary Black Workers, which organized Black auto workers during the late 190s provides an example of the type of organization needed. The League, which grew out of its major affiliate, the Dodge Revolutionary Movement (DRUM), was undoubtedly the most militant Black Labor movement in American history. It was a Black labor federation which existed as an organized alternative to the United Auto Workers, and was the inevitable step of taking the Black Liberation struggle to the industrial shop floor, the point of production, and Capitalism's most vulnerable area.

The League had wisely decided to organize in the Detroit automobile production industry. This was an industry where its workers were an important part of the workforce and also in the Detroit Black community, where the League united the struggle in the factories with that of the Black struggle as a whole. It quickly became a major force in the workplace and in the streets as many of its cadres organized on college campuses and in the Black inner-city areas. It had the potential to become a mass nationwide Black working class movement, but this potential was stifled through political faction fights among the leadership, lack of a solid organized base in the factories; company/UAW/and State repression, organized racism and lack of cooperation among white workers, and other such reasons.

Eventually the League split into mutually hostile factions and died, after less than five years of existence.

Even though the League was at best a revolutionary syndicalism organization, and later a rigid Marxist-Leninist organization, (and their adoption of this later authoritarian ideology, with its ideas of purges and unquestioned leadership, directly lead to its demise), there is much that Anarchists and radical Black labor activists can learn from the League. The main thing is that Black workers can and should be organized into some sort of independent labor association, in addition to or even in lieu of, their membership in organized labor unions and especially where the unions are of the sellout type and discriminates against Blacks. Also it is much easier for Black workers to organize other Black workers and their community in support of strikes and workplace organizing. That is precisely why we need to establish a group like the League today, but as an Anarcho-Syndicalist organization, so as to avoid the past pitfalls and ideological squabbles of Marxism-Leninism- Simply stated what would be the program of a newly formed National Federation of Black Workers?

1. For class struggle against the bosses.
2. To organize the unorganized Black workers ignored by the trade unions.
3. For workers solidarity among all nationalities of workers.

It should be an International Black Labor Federation!

From Detroit, Michigan to Durban, South Africa, from the Caribbean to Australia, from Brazil to England, Black workers are universally oppressed and exploited. The Black working class needs its own world labor organization. There is no racial group more borne down by social restraint than Black workers; they are oppressed as workers and as a people. Because of these dual forms of oppression and the fact that most trade unions exclude or do not struggle for Black laborer's rights, we must organize for our own rights and liberation. Even though in many African and Caribbean countries there are "Black" labor federations, they are reformist or government-controlled. There is a large working class in many of these countries, but they have no militant labor organizations to lead the struggle. The building of a Black workers' movement for revolutionary industrial sabotage and a general strike, or organize the workers for self- management of production,

and so undermine and overthrow the government is the number one priority.

What would an international Black labor federation stand for? Firstly, since many Black workers, farmers, and peasants are not organized at all in most countries, such an organization would be one big union of Black workers, representing every conceivable skill and vocation. Also such an organization means the worldwide unity of Black workers, and then, secondly, it means coordinated international labor revolts. Capital and Labor have nothing in common.

The real strength of workers against Capital and the imperialist countries is economic warfare. A revolutionary general strike and boycott of the multinational corporations and their goods by Black workers all over the globe is how they can be hurt. For instance, if we want to make Britain and the USA withdraw financial and military support from South Africa then we use the weight and power of Black Labor in those countries to wage strikes, sabotage, boycott and other forms of political and economic struggle against those countries and the multinational companies involved. It would be a power to be reckoned with. For instance, coordinated actions by trade unions and political action groups in that country have already caused major-policy changes, a full-fledged general strike would likely lead to the total economic collapse of the racist South African state, especially if such strikes were supported by Black workers in North America.

In addition to asking the Black workers to form their own international labor federation and to organize rank-and-file committees within their existing trade unions to push them into a class struggle direction, we also invite Black workers to join Anarcho-Syndicalist labor organizations like the IWW and the Workers Solidarity Alliance, the American section of the International Workers' Association, which is based in Paris, France. But, of course, it is not intended to drive Black workers out of those unions where they are already active, but would rather serve as a tool to multiply their number and strength in such unions, and make them more militant.

Unemployment and Homelessness

In the first three months of 1993, the U.S. Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics listed official unemployment rates at about six million persons or just seven of the labor force. Under Capitalism half that figure is "normal" and nonsensically is considered by Capitalist economists as "full employment" even though this is millions of people consigned to economic poverty of the worst sort. But the government figures are intentionally conservative, and do not include those who have given up actively searching for jobs, the under employed (who can't make enough to live on), the part-time workers (who can't find a full time or steady job) and the homeless of which there are now between 3-5 million alone.

Of the 6 million people that the government does count as jobless now, less than 3 million are given any unemployment compensation or other federal or state aid; the rest are left to starve, steal or hustle for their survival. A person without a job under the Capitalist system is counted as nothing. Every worker has the human right to a job; yet under Capitalism, workers are dismissed from employment in times of business crisis, overproduction, depression or just to save labor costs through less workers and more speed-up. And some workers cannot find jobs in the Capitalist labor market because of lack of skills, or racial or social discrimination.

But the government's figures lie, private researchers state that the total number of people who want full time jobs and thus cannot find them amounts to nearly 14.3 million persons. Clearly then this is a crisis situation of broad proportions, but all the government is doing is juggling and hiding figures. But the figures do show that Blacks, Latinos, and women are bearing the brunt of the current depression. The National Urban League in its "Bidden Unemployment Index" (included as part of its annual "State of Black America" report) reports levels of 15-38 percent for Black adults 25 and older and incredible levels of 44-55% for teens and young adults 17-24 years. In fact, Black youth unemployment has not declined at all since the 1974-1975 recession. It has stayed at an official level of 35-40 percent, but in the major cities like Detroit, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Los Angeles, the real unemployment rate is more like 70 percent. For Black youth the unemployment rate is three to five times higher than that of white youth.

Capitalism is making economic exiles of Black people as a whole. The fact is that unemployment is concentrated in the Black and Hispanic communities, and is greatly responsible for the most destructive tendencies inhuman relations and deteriorating neighborhoods. Crime, prostitution, suicide, drug addiction, gang fighting, mental illness, alcoholism, and the break up of the Black family, and other social his-all are rooted in the lack of jobs and the denial of essential social services in their communities. It is actually racial genocide in the form of social neglect.

Unemployment is profitable for the bosses because it drives down the wages of workers and helps the employers to keep the workforce under control through this "reserve army of labor," which are allegedly always ready to scab. Because of pervasive discrimination against Blacks, Latinos and other nationally oppressed workers, including higher levels unemployment-the jobs they do get art generally on the bottom rung. This is also profitable for the boss, and divides the working class.

Homelessness is just the most intensified form of unemployment, where in addition to loss of job or income, there is loss of housing and lack of access to social services. There are now millions of people homeless since the last 15 years, because of the Capitalist offensive to destroy the unions, beat back the gains of the civil rights struggle, and do away with the affordable housing sector in favor of yuppie gentrification in the cities. You see them in cities, big and small, and what this reflects is a total breakdown in the Capitalist State's social services system, in addition to the heating up of the class war waged by government and the major corporations, It shows, more than anything, that Capitalism worldwide is undergoing an international financial panic, and is really in the beginning stages of a world depression. In addition to the 90 million persons who live below the poverty line and three to five million homeless in the U.S.; there are another 2.7 million homeless in the twelve nations of the European community, and 80 million people am living in poverty there, with millions more in the Capitalist countries of Japan, Korea and other parts of Asia. So although Black workers must organize and fight against homeless and unemployment in the U.S., clearly there must be an international movement of workers to fight this economic deprivation, as part of the overall class struggle. In every city in North America, the Black workers movement should organize unemployment councils to fight for unemployment benefits and jobs for the jobless, the building of decent,

affordable low-income housing and an end to homelessness, as well as against racial discrimination in jobs and housing. Such councils would be democratic organizations, organized on a neighborhood basis, (to ensure that it would be under the control of the people, and against infiltration and takeover by liberal or "radical" political parties, or co-optation by the government), which would be federated into a citywide, regional, and national organization. That organization would be a national Black unemployment league, to create a mass fight back movement in this depression. It would be made up of Black community unemployed councils from all over the country, with delegates elected from all the local groups. Such a national organization could meet to map out a large-scale attack on unemployment, as well as serve as a national clearinghouse on Black unemployment conditions.

On the local level in the Black neighborhoods, it would be the community unemployment councils which would establish food and housing cooperatives, lead rent strikes and squatting, initiate land and building reclamation projects, establish producer and consumer cooperatives, distribute food and clothing, and provide for other services: they would establish neighborhood medical clinics for free treatment of the homeless and unemployed, rodent control programs, etc., and they would deal with community social problems (brought on by unemployment), and other issues of interest. They would build hunger marches and other demonstrations and carry the people's wrath to various government offices and to the businesses of the rich. Not only would the unemployment councils be a way of fighting for jobs and unemployment benefits, but also the councils would be a way to obtain a great deal of community self-sufficiency and direct democracy, instead of totally depending on city hall, Congress or the President, and help lead to the kind of confidence among the masses that a Black municipal commune becomes a serious possibility.

One of the most important functions of an unemployment movement is to obtain unity between the employed and unemployed or homeless, and workers solidarity across race lines. The employed and unemployed must work together to struggle against the Boss class if they are to obtain any serious gains during this period of economic crisis. Workers who are on strike or protesting against the boss would be supported by the unemployed, who would even man the picket lines with them and refuse to scab. In turn

the workers would form unemployed caucus in their trade unions to allow union representation of these workers and also force such unions to provide food and other necessities, make funds and training available to the unemployed, as well as throw the weight of the unions in the fight for decent jobs and housing for all workers. The Capitalist bosses will not be moved otherwise. MAKE THE BOSSES PAY FOR THEIR ECONOMIC CRISIS!

Here is what a united movement of workers and homeless must demand:

1. Full employment (zero unemployment) for all workers at union wage.
2. Establishment of a shorter workweek, so that workers would be paid at the rate for 40 hours of work for 20-30 hours a week on the job.
3. End homelessness, build and make available decent affordable housing for all. Repeal all loitering, anti-panhandling and other laws against the homeless.
4. End the war budget, and use those funds for decent, low-income housing, better schools, hospitals and clinics, libraries, parks and public transportation.
5. End racism and sexism in job opportunities and relief benefits.
6. Jobs or a guaranteed income for all.
7. Full federal and state benefits for unemployed workers and their families, including corporate and government funds to pay the bills, rents and debts for any laid off worker, and unemployment compensation at 100% of regular paid wage, lasting the full length of a worker's period of unemployment.
8. National minimum wage set at prevailing union entry wage.
9. Government and corporate funds to establish a public works program to provide jobs (with full union rights and wage scale) to rebuild the inner cities and provide needed social services. The program and its funds should be under the control of committees democratically elected from poor and Black neighborhoods, so as to avoid "poverty pimps" and rip off job agencies, or government bureaucrats.
10. Free all persons in prison for crimes of economic survival.

These, and the demands previously mentioned, are merely a survival program and agenda for unemployed workers; the real answer is Social revolution the elimination of Capitalism, and workers' self-management of the economy and society. This is a vital first step however. There would be no

unemployment or social need for wage labor in an Anarchist-Communist society.

Crimes Against the People

It is the rich who decide what is or is not a crime; it is not a neutral designation. The laws are written to protect the rich and those who act as agents of the State. But most personal crimes are not committed against the rich, they are usually inaccessible. It is poor and working class Black people who are the major victims of violent crime. The Black female is the primary victim of rape and abuse by the Black male in this country. The Black male himself is the leading homicide victim in the U.S. by another Black man like himself, and sadly our children are among the leading victims of child abuse, many times by his or her own parents. We do not like to think of these things in the Black community, but we are battering and killing ourselves at an alarming rate. This is not to deny that the Capitalist social system has created frustrating, degrading conditions of life that contribute to this brutality and fratricide, but we would be lax in our humane and revolutionary duty if we did not try to correct this problem on the short-term, and also make Black people assume responsibility for our actions. I am not talking some Black conservative or "law and order" garbage here, but rather recognition of fact that we have a problem.

We have an external and an internal crisis situation facing us in our community. The external crisis is racism and colonialism, which works to systematically oppress us and is responsible for whatever internal crisis there is. The internal crisis is the result of an environment where drugs and violence (both social and physical) are rampant, and life is sometimes considered cheap. Black-on-Black crimes and internal violence are destroying our community. It is undoubtedly self-hatred and the desperate economic and social conditions we live under which makes us prey on each other. Drugs, frustrated rage, prostitution and other vices are symptoms of oppression.

We kill, beat, rape and brutalize each other because we are in pain ourselves. Thus we are acting out anti-social roles defined for us by someone else, not ourselves. In our pain and confusion we strike out at convenient and familiar victims; those like ourselves. They are ordinary Black people who steal and

rob just to survive under this system, because of that unequal distribution of wealth. Further, for some of us, in our desire to "make it" in Capitalist society we will stop at nothing, including murder. And finally, there are those who do whatever they do because of drug addiction or mental sickness.

Whatever the reasons, we have a serious problem that we must remedy because it is tearing away at the moral and social fabric of our community. It will be impassible to unite Black people if they are in fear and hatred of one another. It is also obvious that the police and government rectify this problem and that only the Black community can do so. The courts and prison prevent the situation from recurring. Therefore what can we do?

It is the community, through its own organizations of concern, which will have to deal with this problem. Community self-managed programs to work with Black youth gang members, (a source of much violence in the community), rather than the military approach of calling in the cops, empower the community rather than the racist prison bureaucracy and the cops. Also, the community-run drug rehabilitation groups, therapy and counseling groups, and other neighborhood organizing help us to effectively deal with the problem of internal violence and hopefully defuse it. Most importantly it involves the community in the effort.

But we cannot totally depend upon counseling or rehabilitation techniques, especially where there is an immediate threat of violence or where it has occurred. So, to insure peace and public security, a Black community guard service would be organized for this purpose, as well as to protect against the white Power structure. This security force would be elected by local residents, and would work with the help of people in neighborhoods. This is the only way it would work. It would not be an auxiliary of the current colonial occupation army in our community, and would not threaten or intimidate the community with violence against our youth. Nor would such a community guard protect vice and organized crime. This community guard would only represent the community that elected it, instead of city hall. Similar such units would be organized all over the city on a block-by-block basis.

Yet the Anarchists go further, and say that after a municipal commune is set up, the existing courts must be replaced by voluntary community tribunals of

arbitration, and in cases of grave crimes, connected with murder, or offenses against liberty and equality, a special communal court of a non-permanent nature would be set up. Anarchists believe that antisocial crime, meaning anything that oppresses, robs, or does violence to the working class must be vigorously opposed. We cannot wait until after the revolution to oppose such dangerous enemies of the people. But since such antisocial crimes are a direct expression of Capitalism, there would be a real attempt to socialize, politically educate and rehabilitate offenders. Not by throwing them into the white Capitalist prisons to suffer like animals and where, because of their torture and humiliation, they will declare war on all society, but by involving them in the life of the community and giving them social and vocational training. Since all the "criminology experts" agree that crime is a social problem, and since we know that 88 percent of all crimes are against property and are committed in order to survive in an economically unjust society, we must recognize that only full employment, equal economic opportunity, decent housing and other aspects of social justice will ensure an end to crime. In short, we must have radical social change to eradicate the social conditions that cause crime. An unequal unfair society like Capitalism creates its own criminal class. The real thieves and murderers, businessmen and politicians, are protected under today's legal system, while the poor are punished. That is class justice, and that is what Social revolution would abolish.

But understandably, many persons want to end the rape, murder, and violence in our communities today, and wind up strengthening the hands of the State and its police agents. They will not get rid of crime, but the cops will militarily patrol our communities, and further turn us against one another. We must stay away from that trap. Frustrated and confused, Black people may attack one another, but instead of condemning them to a slow death in prison or shooting them down in the streets for revenge, we must deal with the underlying social causes behind the act.

Anarchists should begin to have community forums on the cause and manifestations of crime in the Black community. We have to seriously examine the social institutions: family, schools, prisons, jobs, etc. that cause us to fuss, fight, rob and kill each other, rather than the enemy who is causing all our misery. While we should mobilize to restrain offenders, we must begin to realize that only the community will effectively deal with the mater.

Not the racist Capitalist system, with its repressive police, courts and prisons. Only we have psychology and understanding to deal with it; now we must develop the will. No one else cares.

Instead of eye-for eye punishment, there should be restitution to the victims, their families or society. No revenge, such as the death penalty will bring a murder victim back, nor will long-term imprisonment serve either justice or the protection of society. After all, prisons are only human trashcans for those that society has discarded as worthless. No sane and just society would adopt such a course. Society makes criminals and must be responsible for their treatment. White capitalist society is itself a crime, and is the greatest teacher of corruption and violence.

In an Anarchist society, prisons would be done away with, along with courts and police (except for the exceptions I have alluded to), and be replaced with community-run programs and centers interested solely with human regeneration and social training, rather than custodial supervision in a inhuman lockup. The fact is that if a person is so violent or dangerous, he is probably mentally warped or has some physical defect anyway, which causes him to commit violent acts after social justice has been won. If such people are mentally defective, then they should be placed in a mental health facility, rather than a prison. Human rights should never be stripped and he should not be punished. Schools, hospitals, doctors and above all social equality, public welfare and liberty might prove the safest means to get rid of crimes and criminals together. If a special category such as "criminal" or "enemy" is created, then these persons may forever feel an outcast and never change. Even if he or she is a class enemy, they should retain all civil and human rights in society, even though they of course would be restrained if they led a counter-revolution; the difference is we want to defeat them ideologically, not militarily or by consigning them to a so-called reeducation camp or to be shot like the Bolsheviks did when assuming power in Russia in 1917.

There are two major reasons why activists in the Black community as we move to change society, its values and conditions, must immediately take a serious look and act to change the political debate around crime, prisons and the so-called criminal justice system. Those two reasons hit right home! One is because during any given year, one out of four Black men in this country is in prison, in jail on parole, or probation, compared to just one of every fifteen

white men. In fact Blacks make up 50-85 percent of most prison populations around the U.S., making a truism of the radical phraseology that "Prisons are concentration camp for the Black and poor." It may be your brother, sister, husband, wife, daughter or son in prison, but I guarantee you we all know someone in prison at this very minute! The other primary reason Blacks have a vested interest in crime and penal institutions is because by far, most Blacks and other non-whites are in prison for committing offenses against their own community.

Prisons are compact duplicates of the Black community, in that many of the same negative and destructive elements that are allowed to exist in our community and cause crime, especially drugs, are in prison in a more blatant and concentrated form. To call such places 'correctional' or 'rehabilitative' institutions is a gross misnomer. Death camps are more like it. These prisons do not exist to punish everyone equally, but to protect the existing Capitalist system from you and I, the poor and working class.

The high rate of recidivism proves, and the so-called authorities all agree, that the prison system is a total failure. About 70 percent of those entering prison are repeat offenders who commit increasingly serious crimes. The brutality of prison experience and the "ex-con" stigma when they are finally released make them worse. Basic to solving these crucial problems is organization. The Black community and the Black Liberation movement must support the prisoners in their fight for prisoners human rights. They should fight for the release of political prisoners and victims of racial injustice. They should also form coalitions of groups in the Black community to fight against the racist penal and judicial system, and especially the unequal application of the death penalty, which is just another form of genocide against the Black race. And finally, and maybe most importantly, local community groups must begin programs of re-education with brothers and sisters in prison because only through planned, regular, and constant contact can we begin to resolve this problem that so directly touches our lives. Abolish prisons.

The Drug Epidemic: A New Form of Black Genocide?

One of the worst forms of criminality is drug dealing, and it deserves some separate comments all its own. There is a negative drug subculture in the Black community that glorifies, or at least makes acceptable, drug use, even

though it is killing us and destroying our community. In fact, every day we read of some junkie in our communities dying over an overdose of drugs, or of some street corner drug dealer dying from a shootout over a dispute or tip-off during a drug deal "gone sour." The tragedy of the latter is that, these days, innocent victims - children or elderly people - have also been gunned down in the crossfire. The drug addict (the new term seems to be "crack-head") is another tragic figure; he was a human being just like anyone else, but because of his oppressed social environment, sought drugs to ease the pain or to escape temporarily from the "concrete jungles" we are forced live in the urban ghettos of America.

With the introduction of crack, a more powerful derivative of cocaine, which made its appearance in the 1980s, even more problems and tragedies of this sort had developed - more addicts, more street gang killings, and more deterioration of our community. In the major urban areas there have almost always been drug uses, what is new is the depth of geographical penetration of crack to Black communities in all areas of the country. But the spread of crack is just a follow-up to massive government drug peddling that began at the end of the decade of the 1960s. The white House is the "rock house," meaning the U.S. political administration is behind the whole drug trade. The U.S. government has actually been smuggling drugs into this country for many years aboard CIA and military planes to use as a chemical warfare weapon against Black America. These drugs were mostly heroin imported from the so-called "Golden Triangle" of Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War. But with the introduction of crack cocaine, there was no need to import drugs into the country at the same extent as before, because it could be chemically prepared in a mainland lab, and then distributed immediately. Crack created a whole new generation of drug clients and customers for the drug dealers; it was cheap and highly addictive.

Crack and other drugs are a huge source of profits for the government, and it keeps the Black community passive and politically indifferent. That is the main reason why we cannot depend upon the police force and or the government to stop the drug traffic or help the victims hooked on drugs. They are pushing the drugs to beat us down, on the one hand, but the State is also made more powerful because of the phony "war on drugs" which allows police state measures in Black and oppressed communities, and because of millions of dollars in government monetary appropriations made of "law

enforcement" agencies, who supposedly are putting down the traffic in drugs. But they never go after the bankers or the big business pharmaceutical companies who fund the drug trade, just the street level dealers, who are usually poor Blacks.

Unemployment is another reason that drug trafficking is so prevalent in our communities. Poor people will desperately look for anything to make money with, even the very drugs that are destroying our communities. But if people have no jobs or income, drugs look very lucrative and the best way out of the situation. In fact, the drug economy has become the only income in many poor Black communities, and the only thing that some people perceive will lift them out of lives of desperate poverty. Clearly, decent jobs at a union wage are part of the answer to ending drug trafficking in our community, rather than a dependence on police, courts and the State. The cops are not our friends or ally, and must be exposed for their part in protecting the trade, rather than suppressing it.

Only the community can stop drug trafficking, and it is our responsibility however you look at it. After all, those junkies are our brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers, neighbors and friends; they are no strangers. We must organize to save their lives and the life of our community. We must establish anti-dope programs in Black communities all over the country. We must expose and counter the government's role as pusher of dope, along with that of the police as protector of the drug trade. But also we must be prepared to help the drug victims with street counseling, street clinics (where they can clean-up and learn a trade and the sociopolitical reasons for drug use), propaganda against drug use, and other activities.

Junkies are the victims of the drug society, which thinks it's cool to use drugs. Children are some of the biggest victims of drug dealing, when they are tricked or forced (by economic necessity) into using or selling it. The users and dealers both are victims, but the dealers are something else than entirely innocent. Even though that Black on the corner selling dope bags is a victim himself of the economic and political system which makes him do it, dope dealers are a corrupt, dangerous breed who must be stopped. Many people have been killed or seriously injured for naively trying to oppose dope dealers, and make them leave their neighborhoods. Therefore, whereas the policy with junkies would be more benevolent and understanding, with dope

dealers we must be cautious, and even ruthless when it is called for. We need to try to win them over first with an economic and political program to draw them away from the (hug trade, but many of the dealers are so violence prone, especially the "big shots" (who are also protected by the cops) they must be opposed by both military and political means.

We are not advocating the summary murder of people, but we are saying if it takes death to bring about a change in the community, so be it! The issue of death is essentially an issue of who is doing the dying. It can be direct and exercised against the death merchant, or it can be indirect and exercised against our youth-if we let it. To be aware of a dangerous situation and not move to change it is to be as responsible for that dangerous situation as those who created it in the first place.

Listen, I don't want to simplify this problem by saying that just kill a few street-level dealers and that will end it. No it won't, AND WE DON'T WANT TO DO THAT ANYWAY! They are just poor people trying to survive this system, just pawns in the drug game whose lives don't matter to the big Capitalists or government. When they say so these street level dealers will be killed or imprisoned, but the drug peddling system will go on. This is a sociopolitical problem, which can best be addressed by grassroots organizations. But it's the corporate and industrial backers of the drug trade (not just the corner dealer) that not only must not only be exposed, but must be moved on. In addition to educational, agitation and other action, there must be military action by revolutionary cells.

The underground actions which we are asking people to move an can be carried out by a relatively small group of dedicated people, a revolutionary cell of armed fighters, who have been trained in guerilla tactics But even these small groups of people must have the support of the neighborhoods in order to function, otherwise people will not know it from another violent gang. Once this social cohesiveness exists among the community, then we can begin to put this proposal into action against the most violent, high-level drug dealers. We are addressing ourselves to what can be more or less be considered to be guidelines for dealing with the problem on a neighborhood or community-wide level then at a national level:

1. Set up drug education classes in the community, for the youth especially, to expose the nature of the drug trade, who it hurts, and how the government, banks, and pharmaceutical companies are behind it all.
2. Exposure of the death merchants and their police protectors. (Photos, posters, fliers, newsletters, etc.)
3. Harassment of the dealers; i.e., threatening phone calls, knocking the drug "product," have citizens marching inside their "place of business," and other tactics.
4. Set up drug rehabilitation clinics so that junkies can be treated, can study the nature of their oppression, and can be won over to revolutionary politics. We must win people away from drug use and to the revolution.
5. Physical elimination of the dealer; intimidation driving him out a neighborhood or out of town, beatings, and assassination, where necessary.

DOPE IS DEATH! WE MUST FIGHT DOPE ADDICTION BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY! DO ALL YOU CAN TO HELP YOUR PEOPLE IN THE ANTI-DOPE WAR!

African Intercommunalism

The Anarchist ideals lead logically to internationalism or more precisely trans-nationalism, which means beyond the nation-state. Anarchists foresee a time when the nation-state will cease to have any positive value at all for most people, and will in fact be junked. But that time is not yet here, and until it is, we must organize for intercommunalism, or world relations between African people and their revolutionary social movements, instead of their governments and heads of state.

The Black Panther Party first put forward the concept of intercommunalism in the 1960s and, although slightly different, is very much a libertarian concept at its core. (This used to be called "Pan Africanism," but included mainly "revolutionary" governments and colonial or independence movements as allies). Because of the legacy of slavery and continuing economic neocolonialism, which has dispersed Blacks to every continent, it is feasible to speak of Black international revolutionary solidarity.

Here is how Anarchists see the world: the world is presently organized into competing nation-states, which though the Capitalist Western nations have

been responsible for most of the world's famine, imperialism and exploitation of the non-white peoples of the earth. In fact, all states are instruments of oppression. Even though there are governments that claim to be "workers states," "Socialist countries" or so-called "Revolutionary governments," in essence they all have the same function: dictatorship and oppression of the many over the few. The bankruptcy of the state is further proven when one looks at the millions of dead over two world wars, sparked by European Imperialism, (1914-1918 and 1939-1945), and hundreds of "brush wars" incited by the superpowers of the West or Russia in the 1950s and continuing to this day. This includes "workers' states" like China-Russia, Vietnam-China, Vietnam-Cambodia. Somalia- Ethiopia, Russia-Czechoslovakia and others who have gone to war over border disputes, political intrigue, invasion or other hostile action. As long as there are nation-states, there will be war, tension and national enmity.

In fact, the sad part about the decolonization of Africa in the 1960s was that the countries were organized into the Eurocentric ideal of the nation-state, instead of some sort of other formation more applicable to the continent, such as a continental federation. This, of course, was a reflection of the fact that although the Africans were obtaining "flag independence" and all the trappings of the sovereign European state, they in fact were not obtaining freedom. The Europeans still controlled the economies of the African continent, and the nationalist leaders who came to the fore were for the most part the most pliable and conservative possible. The countries of Africa were like a dog with a leash around its neck; although the Europeans could no longer rule the continent directly through colonial rule, it now did so through puppets it controlled and defended, like Mobutu in the Congo, Selassie in Ethiopia, and Kenyatta in Kenya. Many of these men were dictators of the worst sort and their regimes existed strictly because of European finance capital. In addition, there were white settler communities in the Portuguese colonies, South Africa, and Zimbabwe, who oppressed the African peoples even worse than the old colonial system. This is why the national liberation movements made their appearances in the 1960s and 70s.

Anarchists support national liberation movements to the degree that they struggle against a colonial or imperialist power; but also note that in almost every instance where such liberation fronts have assumed state power, they have become "State Communist" parties and new dictators over the masses

of the people. These include same who had engaged in the most epic struggles, but also include many based on the most obvious military dictatorship from the start. They are not progressive and they tolerate no dissent For instance, no sooner had the MPLA government been in power in Angola, than it began to arrest all its left-wing ideological opponents (Maoists, Trotskyites, Anarchists, and others) and to forcibly to quell strikes by workers for higher pay and better working conditions, calling such job actions "blackmail" and 'economic sabotage.'" And with the Nito Alves affair and his alleged coup attempt, (Alves was a hero of the revolution and a popular military leader), there was the first party purge of opponents in the new government. Something similar to this also took place when the Sandinista National Liberation movement took over in Nicaragua in the 1980s. None of this should seem strange or uncharacteristic to Anarchists, when we consider that the Bolshevik party did the same thing when it consolidated state power during the Russian Revolution (1917-1921).

Countries such as Benin, Ethiopia, the People's Republic of the Congo and other "revolutionary" governments in Africa, are not in power as the result of a popular social revolution, but rather because of a military coup or being installed by one of the major world powers Further; many of the national liberation movements were not independent social movements, but were rather under the influence or control of Russia or China as part of their geopolitical struggle against Western imperialism and each other. This is not to say that revolutionary movements should not accept weapons and other material support from an outside power, as long as they remain independent politically and determine their own policies, without such aid being conditional on the political dictates and the "party line" of another country.

But even though we may differ with them politically and tactically in many areas, and even with all their flaws after assuming State power, the revolutionary liberation fighters are our comrades and allies in common struggle against the common enemy - the U.S. imperialist ruling class, while the fight goes on. Their struggle releases the death grip of U.S. and western imperialism or as Anarchists more precisely call it Capitalist world power), and while the fight goes on we are bound together in comradeship and solidarity. Yet we still cannot overlook atrocities committed by movements like the Khmer Rouge, a Marxist-Leninist guerilla movement in Cambodia, which just massacred millions of people to carry out rigid Stalinist political

policies and to consolidate the country. We must lay this butchery and other crimes committed by State Communism bare for all to see. We do not favor this kind of revolution, which is just sheer power seeking and terrorism against the people. This is why Anarchism has always disagreed with how the Bolsheviks seized power in Soviet Russia; and Stalin's butchery of the Russian people seems to have set a model for the State Communist movements to follow over the years.

The national liberation fronts make one basic mistake of many nationalist movements of oppressed peoples, and that is to organize in a fashion that class distinctions are obliterated. This happened in America, where in the fight for democratic rights, the civil rights movement included Black middle class preachers, teachers and others, and every Black person was a "brother" or "sister," as long as they were Black. But this simplistic analysis and social reality did not hold for long, because when the Civil rights phase of the American Black struggle had spent itself, class distinctions and class struggle came to the fore. They have been getting sharper ever since. Although they are Black mayors and other bureaucrats, they merely serve as pacification agents of the State, "Black faces in high places." This neocolonial system is similar to the type of neocolonialism which took place in the 3rd World, after many countries had obtained their "independence" in the 1960s. Europe still maintained control through puppet politicians and a command of petty bourgeois class, who were willing to barter the freedom of the people for personal gains. These people merely preside over the misery of the masses. They are not a serious concession to our struggle. They are put in office to co-opt the struggle and deaden the people to their pain.

So while Black revolutionaries generally favor the ideas of African intercommunalism, they want principled revolutionary unity. Of course, the greatest service we can render the peoples of the so-called "Third World" of Africa, Asia and Latin America, is to make a revolution here in North America - in the belly of the beast. For in freeing ourselves, we get the U.S. imperialist ruling class off both our backs. We wish to build an international Black organization against Capitalism, racism, colonialism, imperialism, and military dictatorship, which could more effectively fight the Capitalist powers and create a world federation of Black peoples. We want to unite a brother or sister in North America with the Black peoples of Australia and Oceania, Africa, the Caribbean and South America, Asia, the Middle East, and those

millions of our people living in Britain and other Western European countries. We want to unite tribes, nations and Black cultures into an international body of grassroots and struggling forces.

All over the world, Black people are being oppressed by their national governments. Some are colonial subjects in European countries, and one or another of the African States exploits some. Only a Social revolution will lead to Black unity and freedom. However this will only be possible when there exists an international Black revolutionary organization and social movement. An organization which can coordinate the resistance struggles everywhere of African peoples; actually a network of such organizations, resistance movements, which are spread all over the world based on a consensus for revolutionary struggle. This concept accepts any level of violence that will be necessary to enforce the demands of the people and workers. In those countries where an open Black revolutionary movement would be subjected to fierce repression by the state, such as in South Africa and in some Black puppet dictatorships in other parts of Africa, the Caribbean, and Asia, it would be necessary to wage an underground resistance struggle. Further, the state has grown more and more violent, with widespread torture and executions, prisons and maximum police controls, spying and deprivation of democratic rights, police brutality and murder. Clearly such governments-and all governments-must be overthrown. They will not fall due to internal economic or political problems, but must be defeated and dismantled. So we call for an international resistance movement to overthrow governments and the system of Capitalist world government.

But even in the Western imperialist countries, we must recognize the legitimacy of revolutionary violence. When such forms of revolutionary action are required, however, a clear difference should be seen among revolutionaries between simple terrorism without popular support and coherent political program and guerilla warfare arising out of the collectively felt frustrations of the common people and workers. The use of military methods would be necessary in a case where the violence of the state made it imperative for Black revolutionaries to defend themselves by taking the armed offensive against the state and the ruling class, and to expropriate the wealth of the Capitalist class during the Social revolution.

The Black liberation movement needs an organization capable of international coordination of the Black liberation struggle, a world federation of African peoples. Although this would not just be an Anarchist movement a federation like this would be made effective than any group of states, whether the United Nation or the Organization of African Unity, in freeing the Black masses. It would involve the masses of people themselves, not just national leaders or nation states. The military dictators and government bureaucrats have only proven that they know how to spend money on pomp and circumstance, but not how to dismantle the last vestiges of colonialism in South Africa or defeat Western neocolonialist intrigues. Africa is still the poorest of the World's continents, while materially the richest. The contrast is clear: millions of people are starving in much of Equatorial Africa, but the tribal chiefs, politicians and military dictators, are driving around in Mercedes and living in luxury villas, while they do the bidding of West European and American bankers through the International Monetary Fund. They are part of the problem, not part of the solution!

Our ideas about the importance of intercommunalism am based an a firm belief that only a federation of free peoples will bring true Black power to the masses "Power to the people" does not mean a government or political party to rule in their name, but social and political power in the hands of the people themselves. The only real "people's power" is the power to make their decisions on matters of importance, and to merely elect someone else to do so, or to have a dictatorship forced down their throats. True freedom is to have full self-determination about one's social economic and cultural development. The future is Anarchist Communism, not the nation-state, bloody dictators, Capitalism or wage slavery.

Armed Defense of the Black Commune

"Our insistence on military action, defensive and retaliatory, has nothing to do with romanticism or precipitous idealist fervor. We want to be effective. We want to live. Our history teaches us that the successful liberation struggles require an armed people, a whole people, actively participating in the struggle for their liberty!"

- George Jackson, quoted in Blood in my Eye

We must organize self-defense units to protect the Black community and its organizations. It is the police and the government who are the main perpetrators of violence against Black people. Every day we read of the police murdering and maiming the people in our community, all in the name of "law and order." This police brutality has included the use of deadly force against children as young as five years old and elderly persons over 75 years old! We must disarm and demilitarize the police, and force them to leave our community. Perhaps this can be done after a rebellion or insurrection drives them out, or perhaps they will have to be driven out by a street guerilla force, like the Black Liberation Army tried to do in the 1970s. I have no way of knowing. I just know that they have to go. They are an oppressive occupying army, are not of our community, cannot understand its problems, and do not identify with its people and their needs. Further, it is the corruption of the cops that protects organized crime and vice in our community, and Capitalism with its exploitative economic conditions which is responsible for all crime.

Existing police forces should be replaced with the Black community's own self-defense force, made up of members of our community elected or appointed by their neighbors to that position, or from an existing street guerilla force or political organization if the people agree. They would be subject to immediate recall and dismissal by the Community Control boards of an area. This is only so that we will have community control of the self-defense force, begin to deal with fratricidal Black-on-Black crime, and be able to defend ourselves from white racist or police attacks. With the increase of white racist violence today, and the possibility of white mob action in the future, usually in the name of "law and order," this community self-defense force is most important. The only question is: can we do this now?

We exist now under conditions of nominal legality and civil rights, but at some stage in the process of building up our farces, his inevitable that the white power structure will recognize the danger to itself represented by such a free Black commune, and will then try to forcibly repress it. We must have the self-defense capability to resist. This concept of organizing a self- defense force accepts any level of violence that will be necessary to enforce the demands of the people and workers. Yet these self-defense forces would not a 'party vanguard," a police force, or even a standing army in the Statist or usually thought of sense; they would be a Black Peoples' militia, self-

managed by the workers and community itself: in other words, the people-in-arms. These militia organizations will allow us to engage in offensive or defensive actions, either in general community defense, or as part of an insurrection or underground resistance.

But what do we do right now in conditions of legality, to reclaim our community from violent racist cops? Do we sit around and debate the appropriateness of military preparation, when the enemy is our community now, committing rape and murder of Black people or do we hit back? How do we even get the idea across to our people and start to train them for paramilitary operations? On a mass scale, I advocate the immediate formation of defense and survival skills study groups, under the guise of gun clubs, martial arts societies, wilderness survival clubs or whatever we need to call them. A thorough understanding of marksmanship, ammunition fabrication, demolition and weapon manufacturing is minimal for everyone. In addition, we should study first aid pertaining to the rather traumatic injuries sustained from gunfire and explosives, combat communications, combat weapons, combat tactics for the small group, combat strategy for the region or nation, combat intelligence of police and military activities among other subjects. These subjects are indispensable if am live underground or during a general insurrection.

We should put emphasis on the purchase, collection, duplication and dissemination of military manuals, gunsmithing textbooks, explosive and improvised demolitions manuals, police and government technical manuals, and pirated editions of right-wing manuals on the subject (since they seem to write the best material in this area), and also begin the study of how to build intelligence networks to collect information on the rapidly growing Skinhead and other totalitarian racist organizations, along with intelligence and counter-intelligence information on the government secret police and law enforcement agencies, like the FBI, CIA, ATF, etc., and on any and every other subject which could be of use to us in the coming struggle.

Even though in the United States, development of military skills and self defense is simpler than many other countries because arms and ammunition are widely available, it is logical to assume that the arms situation will soon be so tight so as to make firearms virtually unobtainable, except through an expensive Black market because of the government's "war an drugs" and

other proposed gun control legislation to prevent street violence," or so they say (Do you think the sporting goods stores will be open during an insurrection?) Therefore we should learn to use machine tool technology to produce our own weapons. Perfectly adequate firearms may be produced using a minimum of machine tools, providing the individual or group is willing to do the necessary studying and preparation. It is not enough to know a little about these subjects; it is a matter of future survival - of life and death that one be highly proficient.

I am not advocating the immediate waging of urban guerilla warfare, especially where there is no mass base for such activities. What I am advocating at this stage is armed self-defense and the knowledge of tactics to resist military aggression against the Black community. It is a foolish and unfortunate trait among Anarchists, the white left and sections of the Black movement to condemn the study of military tactics as premature or adventuristic, or on the other hand, to cast oneself into a blind fury of bank expropriations, kidnappings, bombings or plane hijackings. Too many people in the movement have a death trip approach to guns - they assume if you are not "fooling around," then you should prove your convictions via a suicidal shootout in the streets. It doesn't have to be that way.

But the Black movement doesn't even have the luxury of such tepid debates, and must have an armed defense policy because America has a long tradition of government political repression and vigilante paramilitary violence. Although such attacks have been directed primarily at Blacks and other oppressed nationalities in the past, they have also been directed at labor unions and dissident political groups. Such violence makes it absolutely necessary to acquire familiarity with firearms and military tactics. In fact, the Black Resistance movement that I spoke of earlier should think of itself as a paramilitary movement, rather than a strict political association.

We must assert our rights to armed self-defense and revolution, even though it is true that there is a lot of loose talk about guns, self defense, revolution, "urban guerilla warfare," etc., in the Black and radical movements, but with very little study and practice in handling and using weapons. Some of the same folks think "picking up the gun" means that you pick one up for the first time on the day of an insurrection or confrontation with police. This is nonsense and is the real "revolutionary suicide," you could get led not

knowing what you are doing. But many instances attest to the fact that armed community self defense can be carried out successfully, such as the MOVE resistance in Philadelphia, the Republic of New Africa armed resistance in Detroit and Mississippi and the Black Panther cases. Even as important as the act of defense itself is, is the fact that these instances of successful self - defense have made a tremendous impact on the Black community, encouraging other acts of resistance.

Insurrection

But what is a rebellion and how does it differ from an insurrection? An insurrection is a general uprising against the power structure. It is usually a sustained rebellion over the course of days, weeks, months or even years. It is a type of class war that involves a whole population in an act of armed or semi-armed resistance. Sometimes mistakenly called a rebellion, its character is far more combative and revolutionary. Rebellions are almost totally spontaneous, short-term affairs. An insurrection is also not the revolution, SINCE REVOLUTION IS A SOCIAL PROCESS, RATHER THAN A SINGLE EVENT, but it can be an important part of the revolution, maybe its final phase. An insurrection is a planned violent protest campaign which takes the spontaneous revolt of the masses to a higher level. Revolutionaries intervene to push rebellions to insurrectionary stage, and the insurrection on to a social revolution. It is not small, isolated pockets of urban guerillas taking actions, unless those guerillas are part of a larger revolt.

The importance of recognizing the true differences of each level can define our strategy and tactics at that stage, and not lead us prematurely into a full offensive, when the enemy is not yet weakened enough by mass action or political attacks. The importance of also recognizing the true causes of the revolt cannot be understated. Anarchist revolutionaries intervene in such struggles to show people how to resist and the possibilities of winning freedom. We want to take the people's rebellions against the state and use them to weaken the rule of Capital. We want to create resistance on a longer term and to win liberated zones. To disconnect these communities from the state means that these rebellions will assume a conscious political character like the Palestinian Intifada in the occupied territories controlled by Israel in the Middle East. Creating the possibility of a Black insurrection means popularizing and spreading the various rebellions to other cities, towns and

even countries, and increasing them in number and frequency. It also means consciously nullifying the power of the state, instead of temporary revolts against it, which ultimately preserves its power. There must be a deliberate attempt to push the government out of existence, and establish People's Power. This has not yet happened with the various Black revolts we have seen since 1964, when the first such modern revolt erupted in Harlem, NY.

In the 1960s, the Black communities all over the U.S. rose up angrily with massive rebellions against the state demanding racial justice. After the Harlem revolt, for the next four years major rebellions shook the U.S. in the Watts section of Los Angeles, Detroit, Chicago, and hundreds of other North American cities. Isolated acts of police brutality, racial discrimination substandard housing, economic exploitation, "the hoodlum element," a breakdown in family values, and a host of other "explanations" have been put forward by liberal and conservative sociologists and others commissioned by the state to whitewash the true causes. Yet none of these revealed this as a protest against the Capitalist system and colonial rule, even though the social scientists "warned" of the possibility of a new outbreak of violence.

Once again in the Spring, 1992, we saw a massive revolt in Los Angeles, whose immediate causes were related to the outrageous acquittal of 1 Angeles policemen who had brutally beaten Rodney King. But there again this was just an immediate cause acting as a trigger; this revolt was not a sympathy revolt on behalf of Rodney King personally. The cause of this rebellion was widespread social inequality in the Capitalist system and police terrorism. This time the rebellion spread to 40 cities and four foreign countries. And it was not just a so-called "race riot," but rather a class revolt that included a large number of Latinos, whites and even Asians. But it was undeniably a revolt for racial injustice first and foremost, even if it was not just directed against white people in general but the Capitalist system and the rich. It was not limited to just even the inner city in the Las Angeles area but spread even to white upper crust areas in Hollywood, Ventura, and beyond This was the beginning stage of class warfare.

If an underground military force existed or a militia was assembled, it could have entered the field of battle with more weaponry and advanced tactics. As it was the gangs played that role, and played it very well. Their participation is why it took so long to put the rebellion down, but even they could not

prevent the reestablishment of white power in South Central Los Angeles. Not just because of being militarily out gunned, but because they had no revolutionary political program despite all their rhetoric of having been radicalized Also the state came down extremely hard on the rebels. Over 20,000 persons were jailed, 50 were killed and hundreds wounded.

Could a liberated zone have been won, so that dual power could have been established? That possibility existed and still does exist if the people are properly armed and educated Mass resistance with heavy military weaponry may have won serious concessions, one of which is to pull back the cops. We don't know that, this is purely speculation. We do know that this is not the last rebellion in L.A. and other cities. They may come much quicker now that the genie of urban revolution of the bag again. We can only hope and prepare. ONWARD TO THE BLACK REVOLUTION!

PART 2:

Thank you for responding to "Black Capitalism" pt. 2. I am glad to see us really discussing these matters, which are not in any way mere abstract questions, but rather go to the fundamental question of what kind of society do we really want? One which has classes of desperately poor and excessively rich, one which has all economic power in the hands of a white [or some day Black] elite, or one where the needs of the people are met and we are all on the same economic level.

I do not accept elitist arguments of a "talented tenth", "better class of Blacks", or the "incurable poor". This type of argument shows that it is only thinking "within the box", that is within the confines of the present capitalist system, which *creates* crime and deprivation. Capitalism creates inequality, and poverty creates a lack of culture. Somebody said to me a long time ago, ignorance is merely lack of knowledge, while stupidity is total foolishness. Many of our people are politically ignorant to the workings of this system, and they are being debased, but they are not stupid. Ain't no mystery to this ya'll, don't get to think that you are something special, you could be the same as any of the least of our people.

Remove the conditions of oppression, and any of our people in the most degrading of conditions, can ascend to any social station in life, even higher

than many of you looking down your noses at the poor. They can be the next Malcolm X, Martin Luther King or whomever we exalt as Black leadership. Middle class Black people have got to put aside their own class blinders and prejudices against their own people. It is oppressive, plantation thinking ("house nigger vs. field niggers"), and keeps us from accepting our people where they are.

Seems to me, our task as Black activists, people who say they love Black people, is to fight for the uplift of all our people, not feed them to the white government and its prisons and graveyards. We cannot get our liberation without fighting for the liberation of the poor, so let's organize the 'hood.

PART 3:

You know, everybody looks down their noses at poor Black people. They fault them for their own poverty, suffering and even deaths. They "lie, cheat and steal," both the smug well-to-do whites and suburban upper class Blacks say about the poor. They, of course, feel themselves every bit superior to "those people." If they hear about the mass of Black youth now gone off [or going] to prison, if Black people are homeless and living in the streets, or if they are slain by a racist cop, then good enough for them! "They deserve it" say the Black bourgeoisie, "they are incorrigible" say the white politicians, or they "sell drugs" say the Uncle Tom preachers. To all these folks, the cops are "just doing their jobs" to stop crime and keep them safe in their middle class enclaves. They feel that "tough policing" is the way that you have to handle poor folks. "Come and get 'em, boss!"

Black TV commentator and conservative spokesperson Tony Brown even says that the Black upper class has "no responsibility" for the plight of the urban poor and Black working people, and that we "cannot save them."

He also says it is "useless" to fight racism, that Black people should be working on Black economic empowerment [most likely provided by his "Buy Freedom" investment plan]. He further says, [as do many Black and white conservatives] that two-thirds of Blacks living in America are now in the middle class, living comfortable lives "much better than our parents ever did."

But think about this: today's Black middle class is really equivalent to the lower or middle levels of the traditional white working class of the 1960s. I mean, just check it out: A Black man with a college degree still makes only 75% of the salary of a white male high school or trade school graduate, and Black women only make 50-60% of that. Hey, some middle class Black folks are now so poor or severely experiencing the economic downturn due to the capitalist economy that they may actually be back living with their parents! After all, we are living through some seriously hard times, which even affects the lower and middle Black middle classes, along with the Black poor.

In fact, if any of the folks in the lower middle class lose their weekly paycheck, they will likely find themselves in the same place Black poor folks are: the sidewalk. People are barely making a sustainable income off what in an previous economic period would be a decent middle class income. Even \$50,000 does not go very far these days for a family of four [!].

Because of the transformation of the capitalist economy and more poverty, we have to rethink many of these economic issues instead of just accepting Tony Brown's, the white conservatives', or the government's own arguments as to who is in the Black middle class and therefore "doing good." Brown claims that Black people have "hundreds of millions of dollars" coming through our hands each week, and that all we have to do is save it and use it for his "Buy Freedom" plan. He chastises us for "blowing the money", which could be used for racial uplift.

Well, most Black people don't have any disposable income. It goes for rent or mortgage, food or clothing, or other expenses to survive in a modern society. Most people are not "living large," certainly not enough where they have money to contribute to Tony Brown's [or anybody else's] flawed "vision." The thing about Black capitalism [and capitalism generally] is that it uses myths, lies, scapegoating, confusion, and even our own racial loyalty to scam us and pick our pockets.

Like the old 19th century Black leader, Booker T. Washington, Brown claims that we don't have to engage in grassroots political struggle against racism or the capitalist system. He and other Black capitalist pitch-men in this period seem to feel that if we all just work to get rich, then we will *automatically*

get respect from the white power structure and thus end racism, [and by extension, poverty itself]. It's not going to happen that way.

The answer is not Black capitalist entrepreneurialism. We will not get free by "buying into" [or out of] the capitalist system, no matter how many times Tony Brown or some other capitalist scam artist says it. But unfortunately, until this system completely caves in or we wake up and take action to eliminate this corrupt system, many Black folks will be fooled by the idea that we can become capitalists ourselves to employ one another or trade among ourselves as a viable "Black market," and thus buy our way free of this system. But it ain't happening. It defies the laws of economics, politics, and even common sense. It's opportunism and demagoguery for people like Tony Brown to stand up and say this just to get our money. We are going to have to *fight* this white system, and nothing will change that. There is no easy way out.

But then I believe that Black radicals have to start to speak up against such nonsense, when we know it misleads the masses of our people, and provide an alternative, a transitional program for *survival pending social revolution.* I will begin to do that in my next series of columns. I hope it will spark discussion like these articles on Black capitalism have done. More important is that I hope it will start more grassroots organizing in the hood.

AUTHORITARIAN LEFTISTS: KILL THE COP IN YOUR HEAD

Produced by the staff of *Black Autonomy*, A Newspaper of Anarchism and Black Revolution. First printing, April 1996.

It's difficult to know where to begin with this open letter to the various European-american leftist (Marxist-Leninist and Marxist-Leninist-Maoist, in particular) groups within the United States. I have many issues with many groups; some general, some very specific. The way in which this is presented may seem scattered at first, but I encourage all of you to read and consider carefully what I have written in its entirety before you pass any judgments.

It was V.I. Lenin who said, "take from each national culture only its democratic and socialist elements; we take them only and absolutely in

opposition to the bourgeois culture and bourgeois nationalism of each nation". It could be argued that Lenin's statement in the current Amerikkkan context is in fact a racist position; who is he (or the Bolsheviks themselves) to "take" anyone or pass judgment on anyone; particularly since the privileges of having white skin are a predominant factor within the context of amerikkkan-style oppression. This limited privilege in capitalist society is a prime factor in the creation and maintenance of bourgeois ideology in the minds of many whites of various classes in the US and elsewhere on the globe.

When have legitimate struggles or movements for national and class liberation had to "ask permission" from some eurocentric intellectual "authority" who may have seen starvation and brutality, but has never experienced it himself? Where there is repression, there is resistance... period. Self-defense is a basic human right that we as Black people have exercised time and time again, both violent and non-violent; a dialectical and historical reality that has kept many of us alive up to this point.

Assuming that this was not Lenin's intent, and assuming that you all truly uphold worldwide socialism/communism, then the question must be asked: **Why is it that each and every white dominated/white-led "vanguard" in the United States has in fact done the exact opposite of what Lenin Proclaims/recommends when it comes to interacting with blacks and other people of color?**

Have any of you actually sat down and seriously thought about why there are so few of us in your organizations; and at the same time why non-white socialist/communist formations, particularly in the Black community, are so small and isolated? I have a few ideas...

I. A fundamentally incorrect analysis of the role of the white left in the last thirty years of civil rights to Black liberation struggle...

By most accounts, groups such as the Black Panther Party, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, American Indian Movement, and the Puerto Rican Independence Movement "set the standard" for not only communities of color but also for revolutionary elements in the white community.

All of the above groups were ruthlessly crushed; their members imprisoned or killed. Very few white left groups at the time fought back against the onslaught of COINTELPRO by supporting these groups, with the exception of the smaller, armed underground cells. In fact, many groups such as the Progressive Labor Party and the Revolutionary Union (now known as the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA) saw the repression of groups they admired, and at the same time despised, as an opportunity to assert their own version of “vanguard leadership” on our population.

What they failed to recognize (and what many of you generally still fail to recognize) is that “vanguard leadership” is developed, it doesn’t just “magically” happen through preachy, dogmatic assertions, nor does it fall from the sky. Instead of working with the smaller autonomous formations, to help facilitate the growth of Black (and white) self-organization (the “vanguard” leadership of the Black masses themselves and all others, nurtured through grassroots social/political alliances rooted in principle), they instead sought to either take them over or divide their memberships against each other until the group or groups were liquidated. These parasitic and paternalistic practices continue to this day.

The only reason any kind of principled unity existed prior to large-scale repression is because Black-led formations had no illusions about white radicals or their politics; and had no problems with kicking the living shit out of them if they started acting stupid. Notice also that the majority of white radicals who were down with real struggle and real organizations, and were actually trusted and respected by our people, are either still active... or still in prison!

II. The white left’s concept of “the vanguard party”...

Such arrogance on the part of the white left is part and parcel to your vanguardist ideas and practice. Rather than seeking principled partnerships with non-white persons and groups, you instead seek converts to your party’s particular brand of rigid political theology under the guise of “unity”. It makes sense that most of you speak of “Black/white unity” and “sharp struggle against racism” in such vague terms, and with such uncertainty in your voices; or with an overexaggerated forcefulness that seems contrived.

Another argument against vanguardist tendencies in individuals or amongst groups is the creation of sectarianism and organizational cultism between groups and within groups. Karl Marx himself fought tirelessly against sectarianism within the working class movement of 19th century Europe. He was also a staunch fighter against those who attempted to push his persona to an almost god-like status, declaring once in frustration “I assure you, sir, I am no Marxist”. It could be argued from this viewpoint that the “vanguardist” white left in the US today is generally, by a definition rooted in the day to day practice of Marx himself, anti-Marx; and by proxy, anti-revolutionary.

Like your average small business, the various self-proclaimed “vanguards” compete against each other as well against the people themselves (both white and non-white); accusing each other of provacteurism, opportunism, and/or possessing “the incorrect line” when in fact most (if not all) are provocateurs, opportunists, and fundamentally incorrect.

The nature of capitalist competition demands that such methods and tactics be utilized to the fullest in order to “win” in the business world; the white left has in fact adapted these methods and tactics to their own brand of organizing, actively re-inventing and re-enforcing the very social, political, and economic relations you claim to be against; succeeding in undermining the very basic foundations of your overall theory and all variants of that theory.

Or is this phenomenon part and parcel to your theory? In volume four of the collected works of V.I. Lenin, Lenin himself states up front that “socialism is state-capitalism”. Are you all just blindly following a dated, foreign “blueprint” that is vastly out of context to begin with; with no real understanding of its workings?

At the same time, it could be observed that you folks are merely products of your environment; reflective of the alienated and hostile communities and families from which many of you emerge. American society has taught you the tenets of “survival of the fittest” and “rugged individualism”, and you swallowed those doctrines like your mother’s milk.

Because the white left refuses to combat and reject reactionary tendencies in their (your) own heads and amongst themselves (yourselves), and because

they (you) refuse to see how white culture is rooted firmly in capitalism and imperialism; refusing to reject it beyond superficial culture appropriations (i.e.-Native American “dream catchers” hanging from the rear-view mirrors of your vehicles, wearing Adidas or Nikes with fat laces and over-sized Levis jeans or Dickies slacks worn “LA sag” style, crude attempts to “fit-in” by exaggerated, insulting over-use of the latest slang term(s) from “da hood”, etc), you in fact re-invent racist and authoritarian social relations as the final product of your so-called “revolutionary theory”; what I call Left-wing white supremacy.

This tragic dilemma is compounded by, and finds some of its initial roots in, your generally ahistorical and wishful “analysis” of Black/white relations in the US; and rigid, dogmatic definitions of “scientific socialism” or “revolutionary communism”, based in a eurocentric context. Thus, we are expected to embrace these “socialist” values of the settler/conqueror culture, rather than the “traditional amerikkkan values” of your reactionary opponents; as if we do not possess our own “socialist” values, rooted in our own daily and cultural realities! Wasn’t the Black Panther Party “socialist”? What about the Underground Railroad; our ancestors (and yes, even some of yours) were practicing “mutual aid” back when most European revolutionary theorists were still talking about it like it was a lofty, far away ideal!

One extreme example of this previously mentioned wishful thinking in place of a true analysis on the historical and current political dynamics particular to this country is an article by Joseph Green entitled “Anarchism and the Market Place, which appeared in the newsletter “Communist Voice” (Vol #1, Issue #4, September 15, 1995).

In it he asserts that anarchism is nothing more than small-scale operations run by individuals that will inevitably lead to the re-introduction of economic exploitation. He also claims that “it fails because its failure to understand the relation of freedom to mass activity mirrors the capitalist ideology of each person for their self.” He then offers up a vague “plan of action”; that the workers must rely on “class organization and all-round mass struggle”. In addition, he argues for the centralization of all means of production.

Clearly, Green’s political ideology is in fact a theology. First, anarchism was practiced in mass scale most recently in Spain from 1936–39. By most

accounts (including Marxist-Leninist), the Spanish working class organizations such as the CNT (National Confederation of Labor) and the FAI (Federation of Anarchists of Iberia) seized true direct workers power and in fact kept people alive during a massive civil war.

Their main failure was on a military, and partially on an ideological level: (1.) They didn't carry out a protracted fight against the fascist Falange with the attitude of driving them off the face of the planet. (2.) They underestimated the treachery of their Marxist-Leninist "allies" (and even some of their anarchist "allies"), who later sided with the liberal government to destroy the anarchist collectives. Some CNT members even joined the government in the name of a "united front against fascism". And (3.), they hadn't spent enough time really developing their networks outside the country in the event they needed weapons, supplies, or a place to seek refuge quickly.

Besides leaving out those important facts, Green also omits that today the majority of prisoner support groups in the US are anarchist run or influenced. He also leaves out that anarchists are generally the most supportive and involved in grassroots issues such as homelessness, police brutality, Klan/Nazi activity, Native sovereignty issues, [physical] defense of womens health clinics, sexual assault prevention, animal rights, environmentalism, and free speech issues.

Green later attacks "supporters of capitalist realism on one hand and anarchist dreamers on the other". What he fails to understand is that the movement will be influenced mostly by those who do practical work around day to day struggles, not by those who spout empty rhetoric with no basis in reality because they themselves (like Green) are fundamentally incapable of practicing what they preach. Any theory which cannot, at the very least, be demonstrated in miniature scale (with the current reality of the economically, socially, and militarily imposed limitations of capitalist/white supremacist society taken in to consideration) in daily life is not even worth serious discussion because it is rigid dogma of the worst kind.

Even if he could "show and prove", his proposed system is doomed to repeat the cannibalistic practices of Josef Stalin or Pol Pot. While state planning can accelerate economic growth no one from Lenin, to Mao, to Green himself has truly dealt with the power relationship between the working class and the

middle-class “revolutionaries” who seize state power “on the behalf” of the latter. How can one use the organizing methods of the European bourgeoisie, “[hierarchical] party building” and “seizing state power” and not expect this method of organizing people to not take on the reactionary characteristics of what it supposedly seeks to eliminate? Then there’s the question of asserting one’s authoritarian will upon others (the usual recruitment tactics of the white left attempting to attract Black members).

At one point in the article Green claims that anarchistic social relations take on the oppressive characteristics of the capitalist ideology they’re rooted in. Really? What about the capitalist characteristics of know-it-all ahistorical white “radicals” who can just as effectively assert capitalistic, oppressive social relations when utilizing a top-down party structure (especially when it’s utilized against minority populations)? What about the re-assertion of patriarchy (or actual physical and mental abuse) in interpersonal relationships; especially when an organizational structure allows for, and in fact rewards, oppressive social relationships?

What is the qualitative difference between a party bureaucrat who uses his position to steal from the people (in addition to living a neo-bourgeois lifestyle; privilege derived from one’s official position and justified by other party members who do the same. And, potentially, derived from the color of his skin in the American context) and a collective member who steals from the local community? One major difference is that the bureaucrat can only be removed by the party, the people (once again) have no real voice in the matter (unless the people themselves take up arms and dislodge the bureaucrat and his party); the collective member can receive a swift punishment rooted in the true working class traditions, culture, and values of the working class themselves, rather than that which is interpreted for them by so-called “professional revolutionaries” with no real ties to that particular community. This is a very important, yet very basic, concept for the white left to consider when working with non-white workers (who, by the way, are the true “vanguard” in the US; Black workers in particular. Check your history, especially the last thirty years of it.); i.e.- direct community control.

This demand has become more central over the last thirty years as we have seen the creation of a Black elite of liberal and conservative (negrosie) puppets for the white power structure to speak through to the people, the

few who were allowed to succeed because they took up the ideology of the oppressor. But, they too have become increasingly powerless as the shift to the right in the various branches of the state and federal government has quickly, and easily, “checked” what little political power they had. Also, we do not have direct control over neighborhood institutions as capitalists, let alone as workers; at least white workers have a means of production they could potentially seize. Small “mom and pop” restaurants and stores or federally funded health clinics and social services in the ‘hood hardly count as “Black capitalist” enterprises, nor are any of these things particularly “liberating” in and of themselves.

But white radicals, the white left of the US in particular, have a hard time dealing with the reality that Black people have always managed to survive, despite the worst or best intentions of the majority population. We will continue to survive without you and can make our revolution without you (or against you) if necessary; don’t tell us about “protracted struggle”, the daily lives of non-white workers are testimony to the true meaning of protracted struggle, both in the US and globally. Your inability or unwillingness to accept the fact that our struggle is parallel to yours, but at the same time very specific, and will be finished successfully when we as a people, as working-class Blacks on the North American continent, decide that we have achieved full freedom (as defined by our history, our culture, our needs, our desires, our personal experiences, and our political idea(s)) is by far the primary reason why the white left is so weak in this country.

In addition, this sinking garbage scow of american leftism is dragging other liberating political vessels down with it, particularly the smaller, anti-authoritarian factions within the white settler nation itself and the few [non-dogmatic and non- ritualistic] individuals within todays Marxist-Leninist parties who sincerely wish to get away from the old, tired historical revisionism of their particular “revolutionary” party.

This seemingly “fixed position”, along with many other fixed positions in their “thought”, help to reveal the white left’s profound isolation and alienation from the Black community as a whole and its activists. Yet, many of them would continue to wholeheartedly, and retardedly, assert that they’re part of the community simply because they live in a Black neighborhood or their party headquarters is located there.

The white left's isolation and alienation was revealed even more profoundly in the criticisms of the Million Man March on Washington. In the end, the majority of the white leftist critics wound up tailing the most backward elements of the Republican Party; some going as far as to echo the very same words of Senate majority leader Bob Dole, who commented on the day after the march that "You can't separate the message from the messenger." Others parroted the words of House majority leader Newt Gingrich, who had the nerve to ask "where did our leadership go wrong?"

Since when were we expected to follow the "leadership" of white amerikkka; the right, left, or center without some type of brutal coercion? Where is the advantage for us in "following" any of them anywhere? What have any of them done for us lately? Where is the "better" leadership example of any of the hierarchical political tendencies (of any class or ideology) in the US and who do they benefit exclusively and explicitly? None of you were particularly interested in us before we rebelled violently in 1992, why the sudden interest? What do you want from us this time?

Few, if any, of the major pro-revolution left-wing newspapers in the US gave an accurate account of the march. Many of them claimed that only the Black petit-bourgeoisie were in attendance. All of them claimed that women were "forbidden" to be there, despite the widely reported fact that our sisters were there in large numbers.

"MIM Notes" (and the Maoist Internationalist Movement itself) to their credit recognize that white workers are NOT the "vanguard" class: yet because they themselves are so profoundly alienated from the Black community on this side of the prison walls they had to rely on information from mainstream press accounts courtesy of the Washington Post. And rightfully alienated they are; who in their right mind actually believes that a small, "secret" cult of white campus radicals can (or should) "lead" the masses of non-white people to their/our freedom? Whatever those people are smoking, I don't want any! I do have to say, however, that MIM is indeed the least dogma addicted of the entire white left milieu that I've encountered; but dogma addicted nonetheless.

I helped organize in the Seattle area for the Million Man March. The strong, Black women I met had every intention of going. None of the men even

considered stopping them, let alone suggesting that they not go. Sure, the NOI passed on Minister Farrakhan's message that it was a "men only" march, but it was barely discussed and generally ignored.

The Million Man March local organizing committees (l.o.c.'s) gave the various Black left factions a forum to present ideas and concepts to entire sections of our population who were not familiar with "Marxism", "anarchism", "Kwame Nkrumah", "George Jackson", "The Ten-Point Program", "class struggle", etc.

It also afforded us the opportunity to begin engaging the some of the members of the local NOI chapter in class-based ideological struggle along with participating community people. Of course, it was impossible for the white left to know any of this; more proof of their profound isolation and alienation. At the time, despite our own minor ideological differences, we agreed on one point: it was none of your business or the business of the rest of the white population. When we organize amongst our own, we consider it a "family matter". When we have conflicts, that is also a "family matter". Again, it is none of your business unless we tell you differently. How would you like it if we butted in on a heated family argument you were having with a loved one and started telling you what to think and what to do?

This brings me to two issues that have bothered me since January, 1996. Both comments were made to me by a member of Radical Women at the International Socialist Organization's conference at the University of Washington. The first statement was: "I don't recognize Black people as a 'nation' like I do Native people."

My first thought was "who the fuck are you to pass judgment upon a general self-definition that is rooted in our collective suffering throughout the history of this country?"

She might as well join up with the right-wing Holocaust revisionists; for this is precisely what she is practicing, the denial of the Black holocaust from 1555 to the present (along a parallel denial, by proxy, of the genocide against other non- white nations within the US). Our nationalism emerged as a defense against [your] white racism. The difference between revolutionary Black nationalists (like Huey P. Newton and the Black Panther Party) and cultural nationalists (like Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam) is that we see

our nationalism as a specific tool to defend ourselves from groups and individuals like this ignorant person, not as an exclusive or single means for liberation.

We recognize that we will have to attack bourgeois elements amongst our people just as vigorously as we fight against white supremacists (“left”, “center”, or “right”). The difference is that our bourgeoisie (what I refer to as the “negrosie”) is only powerful within the community; they have no power against the white power structure without us, nor do they have power generally without the blessing of the white power structure itself. Our task, then, is to unite them with us against a common enemy while at the same time explicitly undermining (and eventually eliminating) their inherently reactionary influence.

The second stupidity to pass her lips concerned our support of Black-owned businesses. I pointed out to her that if she had in fact studied her Marxism-Leninism, she would see that their existence goes hand-in-glove with Marx’s theory that revolution could only ensue once capitalism was fully developed. She came back with the criticism, “Well, you’ll be waiting a long time for that to happen”.

Once again, had she actually studied Marxism-Leninism she would know that Lenin and the Bolsheviks also had to deal with this same question. Russia’s economy was predominantly agricultural, and its bourgeois class was small. They decided to go with the mood and sentiments of the peasantry and industrial workers at that particular moment in history;..seize the means of production and distribution anyway!

Who says we wouldn’t do the same? The participants of the LA rebellion (and others), despite their lack of training in “radical ‘left-wing’ political theory” (besides being predominantly Black, Latino, or poor white trash in Amerikkka), got it half right; they seized the means of distribution, distributed the products of their [collective] labor, and then burned the facilities to the ground. Yes, there were many problems with the events of 1992, but they did show our potential for future progress.

Black autonomists ultimately reject vanguardism because as the white left [as well as elements of the Black revolutionary movement] has

demonstrated, it erodes and eventually destroys the fragile ties that hold together the necessary principled partnerships between groups and individuals that are needed to accomplish the numerous tasks associated with fighting back successfully and building a strong, diverse, and viable revolutionary movement.

The majority of the white left is largely disliked, disrespected, and not trusted by our people because they fail miserably on this point. How can you claim to be a “socialist” when you are in fact anti-social? How do you all distinguish yourselves from the majority of your people in concrete, practical, and principled terms?

III. Zero (0) support of non-white left factions by the white left.

I’ve always found this particularly disturbing; you all want our help, but do not want to help us. You want to march shoulder to shoulder with us against the government and its supporters, but do not want us to have a solid political or material foundation of our own to not only win the fight against the white supremacist state but to also re-build our communities on our own behalf in our own likeness(es).

Let white Marxists provide unconditional (no strings attached) material support for non-white factions whose ideology runs parallel to theirs, and let white anarchist factions provide unconditional (again, no strings attached) material support for factions in communities of color who have parallel ideologies and goals. Obviously, the one “string” that can never be avoided is that of harsh economic reality; if you don’t have the funds, you can’t do it. That’s fair and logical, but if you’re paying these exorbitant amounts for projects and events that amount to little more than ideological masturbation and organizational cultism while we do practical work out of pocket or on a tiny budget amongst our own, it seems to me that a healthy dose of criticism/self-criticism and reassessment of priorities is in order on the part of you “professional revolutionaries” of the white left.

If the white left “vanguards” are unwilling to materially support practical work by non-white revolutionary factions, then you have no business showing your faces in our neighborhoods. If you “marxist missionaries” insist on coming into our neighborhoods preaching the “gospel” of Marx, Lenin,

Mao, etc, the least you could do is “pay” us for our trouble. You certainly haven’t offered us much else that’s useful.

To their credit, the white anarchists and anti-authoritarian leftists have been generally supportive of the Black struggle by comparison; *Black Autonomy* and related projects in particular. Matter of fact, back in October of 1994 in an act of mutual aid and solidarity the Philadelphia branch of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) printed the very first issue of *Black Autonomy* (1,000 copies) for **free**. One of their members actually got a little upset when I asked how much we owed them for the print job. In return (and in line with our class interests), we allied ourselves with the Philly branch and others in a struggle within the IWW against the more conservative “armchair revolutionary/historical society” elements within its national administrative body.

Former political prisoner, SNCC member, Black Panther, and Black autonomist (anarchist) Lorenzo Kom’boa Ervin credits the hard work of anarchist groups in Europe and non-vanguardist Marxist and anarchist factions in the US for assisting him in a successful campaign for early release from prison after 13 years of incarceration.

In no way do we expect you or anyone else to bankroll us; what I am offering is one suggestion to those of you who sincerely want to help; and a challenge to those who in fact seek to “play god” with our lives while spouting empty, meaningless rhetoric about “freedom”, “justice”, “class struggle”, and “solidarity”. To those people I ask: Do you have ideas, or do ideas have you? Actually, a better question might be: do you think at all?

IV. Bourgeois pseudo-analysis of race and class.

It only makes sense that the white left’s analysis of race and class in amerikkka would be so erroneous when you’re so quick to jump up and pass judgment on everyone else about this or that, but deathly afraid of real self-criticism at the individual or collective level; opting instead to use tool(s) of self-criticism as a means to reaffirm old, tired ideas that were barely thought out to begin with or by dodging real self-criticism altogether by dogmatically accusing your critics of “red-baiting”. Clearly, it is you who “red-bait”

yourselves; as the old saying goes, “Those who live in glass houses should not throw stones!” Action talks, bullshit walks!

Some of the more backward sections of the white left still push that old tired line “gay, straight, Black, white, same struggle-same fight!” Nothing can be further from the truth. Sure, we are all faced with the same “main enemy”: the racist, authoritarian state and its supporters; but unlike white males (straight or gay) and with some minor parallels to the experiences of white women, our oppression begins at birth. This is a commonality that we share with Native people, Hispanics, Pacific Islanders, and Asians.

As we grow up, we go from being “cute” in the eyes of the larger society, to being considered “dangerous” by the time we’re teenagers. As this point is driven home to us day in and day out in various social settings and circumstances some of us decide, in frustration to give the white folks what they want to believe; we become predatory. This dynamic is played out in ghettos, barrios, chinatowns, and reservations across the country. Even those of us who choose not to engage in criminal activity, or aren’t forced into it, have to live under this stigma. In addition, we as individuals are still viewed as “objects” and our community as a “monolith”.

We then enter the work force...that is, if there are any jobs available. It is there that we learn that our people and other non-whites are “last hired, first fired”, that our white co-workers are generally afraid of us or view as “competition”, and that management is watching us even more closely than other workers, while at the same time fueling petty squabbles and competition between us and other non-white workers. Those of us who are fortunate enough to land a union job soon find out that the unions are soft on racism in the workplace. This only makes sense as we learn later on that unions in the US are running dogs of capitalism and apologists for management, despite their “militant” rhetoric.

Most unionized workers are white, reflective of the majority of unionized labor in the US; who constitute a mere 13% of the total labor force. This is why it is silly for the white left to prattle on and on about the labor “movement” and about how so many of our people are joining unions. That’s no consolation to us when Black unemployment hovers at 35% nationally; many of those brothers and sisters living in places were “permanent

unemployment” is the rule rather than the exception, and many more who find work at non-union “dead end” service industry jobs. One out of three of our people is caught up somewhere within the US criminal “justice” system: in jail, in prison, on parole, on work-release, awaiting trial, etc as a direct result.

In addition, many white workers are supportive of racist Republican politicians, such as presidential candidate Pat Buchanan, who promises to protect their jobs at the expense of non-white workers and immigrants. What is the white left or the union movement doing about all of that?

It shouldn't be surprising that the white left still preaches a largely economist viewpoint when it comes to workers generally, and workers of color in particular. This view is further evidence of not only your own deviation from Marx, but also from Lenin, by your own varied (yet similar) definitions.

Lenin recognized why the majority of Russian revolutionaries of his time put forward an economist position: “In Russia,...the yoke of autocracy appears at first glance to obliterate all distinction between the Social Democrats organization and workers' association, since all workers associations and all study circles are prohibited; and since the principle manifestation and weapon of the workers' economic struggle, the strike, is regarded as a criminal (and sometimes even as a political) offense.”

In this country, the distinction between the trade unions and revolutionary organizations is abundantly clear (even if some groups like the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) still fail to make the distinction themselves) and the primary contradiction within the working class is that of racial stratification as a class weapon of the bourgeoisie and capitalists against the working class as a whole.

Yet, the white Left (along with the rest of the white working class) fails to see its collaborationist role in this process. And this goes right back to what I said earlier in this writing about the need for a serious historical and cultural critique amongst all white people (and not just the settler nation's left-wing factions) that goes beyond superficial culture appropriations or lofty, dogmatic proclamations of how committed you and your party is to “racial equality”. To even consider oneself “white” or to call oneself “white” is an

argument FOR race and class oppression; look at the history of the US and see who first erected these terms “white” and “Black”, and why they were created in the first place.

I remember last summer, around the fourth of July, I had a member of the local SWP try to tell me that the American War of Independence was “progressive”. Progressive for whom? Tell us the truth, who were the primary beneficiaries of the American Revolution? You know the answer, we all do; only a total, unrepentant reactionary would lie to the people, especially on this point.

Howard Zinn, in his work “A People’s History of the United States”, points out how early 20th century historian Charles Beard found that of the fifty-five men who gathered in Philadelphia in 1787 to draw up the US Constitution “a majority of them were lawyers by profession, that most were men of wealth, in land, in slaves, manufacturing, or shipping; that half of them had money loaned out at interest, and that forty of the fifty- five held government bonds, according to records of the [US] Treasury Department. Thus, Beard found that most of the makers of the Constitution had some direct economic interest in establishing a strong federal government: the manufacturers needed protective tariffs; the moneylenders wanted to stop the use of paper money to pay off debts; the land speculators wanted protection as they invaded Indian lands; slave-owners needed federal security against slave revolts and runaways; bondholders wanted a government able to raise money by nationwide taxation, to pay off those bonds.

Four groups, Beard noted, were not represented in the Constitutional Convention: slaves, indentured servants, women, men without property. And so the Constitution did not reflect the interests of those groups.” (Zinn, pg.90)

Come to terms with your white skin privilege (and the ideology and attitude(s) this privilege breeds) and then figure out how to combat that dynamic as part of your fight against the state and its supporters. Your continued backwardness is a sad commentary when we uncover historical evidence which shows that even before the turn of the century some of your own ancestors within the white working class were beginning to take the first small steps towards a greater understanding of their social role as the white servants of capital. A white shoemaker in 1848 wrote:

“...we are nothing but a standing army that keeps three million of our brethren in bondage... Living under the shade of Bunker Hill monument, demanding in the name of humanity, our right, and withholding those rights from others because their skin is black! Is it any wonder that God in his righteous anger has punished us by forcing us to drink the bitter cup of degradation.” (Zinn, pg.222)

We can even look to the historical evidence of Lenin’s time. Prior to the publishing of Lenin’s “On Imperialism”, W.E.B. DuBois wrote an article for the May, 1915 edition of the Atlantic Monthly titled “The African Roots of War” in which he vividly describes how both rich and poor whites benefit from the super- exploitation of non-white people:

“Yes, the average citizen of England, France, Germany, the United States, had a higher standard of living than before. But: ‘Whence comes this new wealth?’ ...It comes primarily from the darker nations of the world-Asia and Africa, South and Central America, the West Indies, and the islands of the South Seas. It is no longer simply the merchant prince, or the aristocratic monopoly, or even the employing class that is exploiting the world: it is the nation, a new democratic nation composed of united capital and labor.”
(Zinn)

Yet, the self-titled “anti-racists” of the left continue on with their infantile fixation on the Klan, Nazis, and right-wing militias. Groups that they say they are against, but in fact demonstrate a tolerance for in practice. Standing around chanting empty slogans in front of a line of police separating demonstrators from the nazis in a “peaceful demonstration” is contradiction in its purest form; both the police and the fascists must be mercilessly destroyed! As the Spanish anarchist Buenaventura Durruti proclaimed back in 1936 “Fascism is not to be debated, it is to be smashed!” There is no room for compromise or dialogue, except for asking them for a last meal request and choice of execution method before we pass sentence; and even that is arbitrary!

True, tactical considerations must be examined, but if we can’t get at them then and there, there is no “rule” that says we can’t follow them and hit them when they least expect it; except for the “rule” of the wanna-be rulers of the Marxist-Leninist white left “vanguard(s)” who only see the fascists as

competition in their struggle to see which set of “empire builders” will lord over us; the “good” whites who regulate us to the amerikkkan left plantation of “the glorious workers state”, or the “bad” whites who work us as slaves until half-dead and then laugh as our worn out carcasses are thrown into ovens, cut up for “scientific purposes”, or hung from lamp posts and trees. You people have yet to show me the qualitative difference(s) between a Klan/Nazi- style white supremacist dictatorship and your concept of a “dictatorship of the proletariat” in the context of this particular country and its notorious history. So far, all I have seen from you all is arrogance in coalitions, petty games of political one-upmanship, and ideological/tactical rigidity.

Let’s pretend for a minute that one of the various wanna-be vanguards actually seizes political power. In everyone of your programs, from the program of the RCP, USA to even smaller, lesser known groups there is usually a line somewhere in there about your particular party holding the key levers of state power within a “dictatorship of the proletariat”. Have any of you actually considered what that sounds like to a community without real power? Does this mean that we as Black people are going to have fight and die a second time under your dictatorship in order to have equal access to employment, housing, schools, colleges, public office, party status, our own personal lives generally?

Look at our history; over one hundred years after the Emancipation Proclamation (the 1960’s) we were still dying for the right to vote, for the right to protest peacefully, for the right to live in peace and prosperity within the context of white domination and capitalism. Today, after all of that, it is clear that the masses of our people are still largely powerless; we stayed powerless even as public schools were being desegregated and more of our elites were being elected to Congress and other positions. The same racist, authoritarian state that stripped us of our humanity was now asserting itself as our first line of defense of those hard-won concessions in the form of federal troops and FBI “observers” (who watched as we were beaten, raped, and/or killed) sent to enforce The Civil Rights Act of 1968 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

As we have seen since that time, what the white power structure grants, it can (and will) take away; we can point to recent US Supreme Court decisions

around voter redistricting as one part of our evidence. We can also look to the problem of mail and publication censorship in the US prison system (state and federal) that has come back to haunt us since the landmark 1960's first amendment legal challenge to the state of New York that was won by political prisoner and Black/Puerto Rican anarchist Martin Sostre. And then there's the attacks on a prisoners' right to sue a prison official, employee, or institution being made by the House and Senate. Give us one good reason to believe that you people will be any different than these previous and current "benevolent" leaders and political institutions if by some fluke or miracle you folks stumble into state power?

No "guarantees" against counter-revolution or revisionism within your "revolutionary" party/government you say? There are two: the guns, ammunition, organization, solidarity, political consciousness, and continuous vigilance of the masses of non- white people and the truly sympathetic, conscious anti-authoritarian few amongst your population; or a successful grassroots- based revolution that is rooted in anti-authoritarian political ideas that are culturally relevant to each ethnicity of the poor and working class population in the US. Judging by the general attitudes and theories expressed by your members and leadership, we can be rest assured that it is virtually guaranteed that the spirit of 'Jim Crow' can and will flourish within a white-led Marxist-Leninist "proletarian dictatorship" in the US. It's clear to me why you all ramble on and on about the revolutions of China, Russia, Vietnam, Cuba, etc; they provide convenient cover for you all (read: escapism) to avoid a serious examination of the faults in your current analysis as well as in the historical analysis of the last thirty years of struggle in the US.

These are the only conclusions that can be drawn when you all are so obviously hostile to the idea of doing the hard work of confronting your own individual racist and reactionary tendencies. When your own fellow white activists attempted to put together an "Anti-Racism Workshop" for members of the Seattle Mumia Defense Committee, many of you pledged your support (in the form of the usual dogmatic, vague, and arguably baseless rhetorical proclamations of "solidarity" and "commitment to racial equality") and then proceeded to not show up. Only the two initial organizers within the SMDC and two coalition members (neither affiliated with any political party) were there. Make no mistake, I have no illusions about white people confronting

their own racism; but I do support their honest attempts at doing so. Here we have a situation in which an ideological leap amongst the white left in Seattle may have been initiated; yet, the all-knowing, all-seeing “revolutionary vanguard(s)” of the white left were too busy spending that particular weekend picking the lent out of their belly buttons. Are we saving our belly-button lent for the potential shortages of food that occur during and shortly after the revolution [is corrupted by the mis-leadership of your particular rigid, dogmatic, authoritarian party]?

V. The bottom line is this: Self-determination!

For most white leftists, this means that we as Black people are demanding our own separate nation-state. Some of our revolutionary factions do advocate such a position. Black Autonomists, however, reject nation-statism [For more on that, refer to page 15 of any copy of Black Autonomy newspaper].

Regardless of whether or not the Black masses opt for a separate homeland on this continent or in Africa, we will be respected as subjects of history and not as objects that the state, its supporters, or the white left decides what to do with.

The answer to “the Black question” is simple: It is not a question; we are people, you will deal with us as such or we will fight you and the rest of the white settler nation...by any and all means necessary! We will not be cowed or dominated by anyone ever again!

Too many times in the course of American (and world) history have our people fought and died for the dream of true freedom, only to have it turn into the nightmare of continued oppression. If the end result of a working-class revolution in the United States is the continued domination of non-white people by white “revolutionary leaders” and a Left-wing [white supremacist] government, then we will make another revolution until any and all perpetrators and supporters of that type of social-political relationship are defeated or dead! Any and all means are completely justifiable in order to prevent the defeat of our revolution and the re-introduction of white supremacy. We will not put up with another 400+

years of oppression; and I'm sure our Native and Hispanic brothers and sisters won't tolerate another 500+ years of the same ol' shit.

Ultimately, "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure"; that's the main reason I decided to publish this, as yet another humble contribution to the self-education of our people. The second reason is to, hopefully, inspire the white left to re-examine your current practices and beliefs as part of your process of self-education; assuming that you all in fact practice self-education.

Reject the traditions of your ancestors and learn from their mistakes; or reject your potential allies in communities of color. The choice is yours...

"It is a commentary on the fundamentally racist nature of this society that the concept of group strength for black people must be articulated, not to mention defended. No other group would submit to being led by others. Italians do not run the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith. Irish do not chair Christopher Columbus Societies. Yet when black people call for black-run and all-black organizations, they are immediately classed in a category with the Ku Klux Klan."

-Kwame Toure (Stokely Carmichael), *Black Power*; Vintage Press, 1965.

For Further Reading

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Back From Hell: Black Power And Treason To Whiteness Inside Prison Walls

The federal penitentiary at Terre Haute, Indiana had the reputation of being the most racist and brutal prison in the federal prison system. The city of Terre haute itself had been known in the 1920s as one of the strongest base areas for the Ku Klux Klan in the Midwest. As I was to discover later, many prison guards were Klan members or sympathizers. There were no black guards at the time I entered it, in the summer of 1970.

The most famous inmate to do time at the prison was the 1950s rock and roll singer, Chuck Berry, during the early 1960s, and reportedly he spoke disparagingly about the state of Indiana for years afterward and said he would never have a concert in the city of Terre Haute. I do not know if this is true.

Usually racism is the best tool of the prison officials to control volatile prison populations. The warden and his guards intentionally keep up racial hostilities through rumors and provocation, and give a free hand within the prison to groups like the KKK and the Aryan Brotherhood to maim or kill Black prisoners. They use the racist white prisoners to confine both themselves and others, in return for special priveleges and the fleeting feeling that they are "helping" the "white race" maintain control. This is how the system imprisons whites and uses them in their own oppression. The officials can usually count on recruiting a steady supply of racist murderers and henchmen from the white prison population. But an important part of the plan is to beat down or silence anti-racist whites, in order to make sure

all whites toe the fascist line. In fact, without this conformity the whole plan would not work.

For years many black inmates had been beaten or killed at Terre Haute by both white prison inmates and guards. I knew from the stories I had been told by black prisoners in Atlanta that this was true. In fact, the black prisoners at Terre Haute had lived in total fear of the whites. I said “had” because by the time I got there things had started to change.

A group of young militant black prisoners had formed an organization called the Afro-American Cultural Studies Program (AACSP), which met every week and discussed black history and culture, as well as world current events. The prison officials hated the group but had to grant their charter because of a lawsuit filed against the Warden and the Federal Bureau of Prisons. But the Warden, John Tucker, said that if they started “acting militant,” he would grant a Klan charter for the racist white inmates — as if they secretly already didn’t have one! Warden Tucker had a well-earned reputation for brutality against black inmates. The older blacks told us “young bloods” all kinds of horror stories about Tucker, and about the Blacks killed or mutilated over the years by white guards and inmates. Black men were hanged, stabbed, thrown into a threshing machine, beaten with pipes, burned alive in their cells and murdered in every other way imaginable. tucker even had a group of white inmates who acted as his “hit men” against whites who refused to conform to the racist line. But the “young bloods,” and especially the black inmates from AACSP, would not be intimidated and vowed that they would fight back to the death. Shortly after I arrived in the prison, I threw in my lot with them.

At one of their meetings held each Thursday, I asked what I had to do to join. The gentleman who had been acting as the moderator, a short, dark, bald-headed brother from Detroit, whose name was Nondu, told me all that was necessary was to actively take part. I was introduced to all the brothers there — fifty in all — but especially to Karenga, a huge but affable brother from Cincinnati, along with his prison rap partener, a relatively smallish brother named Desumba, and then Hassan and Nondu from Detroit, all of whom were the principal AACSP officers.

They along with the general members, all welcomed me into the group and treated me like family. Karenga, the President of the group, actually became my best friend, and saved my life on more than one occasion.

These brothers all wore shaved heads, and were influenced by the 1960s cultural nationalist figure, Ron Karenga, along with the Cleveland, Ohio black nationalist Ahmed Evans (who, with his second in command, Nondu Latham, was serving life in Ohio state prison for killing several policemen in 1968), but their greatest influence was Malcolm X. I was not greatly enamored of Ron Karenga, who headed a Los Angeles-based group called "US" (United Slaves), which was implicated in the murder of two Black Panther Party members in 1969 and purportedly engaged in other internecine violence against the BPP. The Panthers believed that Karenga was a police agent, or knowingly allowed the crimes to take place because of some political sectarian reason. But my initial doubts did not stop me from taking part in the AACSP. It became my all-consuming passion while at the prison, and I would fight and die to defend it. In fact, I almost did make the supreme sacrifice.

We had to fight both the racist authorities and the white inmates on behalf of the black prison population, many of whom were intimidated into silence. We were bold and audacious, and carried on a virtual guerrilla war to strike back at the killers of black men, whether they were guards or inmates. The whites hated and feared us because we were ruthless in defending ourselves and punishing racists. There was no mercy. Our retaliation was always swift and bloody. Our kind of revolutionary blacks had never been seen before at Terre Haute, and it changed the status quo when we fought back. Many of the prisoners were white radicals who were in prison for anti-war cases, and they in turn began to educate other whites. The anti-racist organizing by white radicals was important because it ensured that white prisoners would no longer be indoctrinated or intimidated by the Klan as they had been for the previous thirty-five years at that prison. This re-education was something black revolutionaries could not effectively do alone, and prisoners began to check out books from the Black Culture library, to attend joint political study groups, and to try to understand in theoretical terms how racism was a way of enslaving us all — blacks and other non-whites as inferiors, whites as oppressors. They understood now how the Klan had been doing the bidding of the prison officials for years, just like the white workers

in society do the bidding of the capitalists. Fascist politics became not only unpopular but unsafe.

Guards used to the old regime decided to suddenly “retire,” and racist inmates begged to be transferred. The Warden and his staff were greatly alarmed, but powerless to take any action lest they precipitate a full-fledged riot, which would also get guards and staff killed in large numbers. The prison officials realized they were losing control, and began to panic. All prison officials know that if racism is surmounted, revolt is inevitable.

Then in September of 1971 the Attica prison revolt erupted in upstate New York, and riveted the attention of the entire world on the U.S. prison system. Revolutionary prisoners — black, Latino, and white — had taken guards hostage at Attica and were running the prison. This terrified prison officials all over the United States. It also pushed forward the prison struggle and made it a red-hot issue. Even after the repression of Attica, sympathy rebellions broke out all over the country, including at Terre Haute, where for the first time black, white, and Hispanic prisoners rose up to fight the prison officials. Buildings were torched or bombed, people tried to escape, strikes and industrial sabotage went on, and desperate hand-to-hand combat between guards and prisoners in the high-security L-unit was taking place, along with other acts of resistance which seemed to break out daily.

Warden Tucker and his staff panicked, and rushed to start building a new wing of high-security cells in L-unit to hold the “malcontents” in his prison. He then tried to provoke a confrontation, a “race riot” among inmates, but this didn’t work because we had chased away most of the racists, and had made alliances with progressive white and Latino prisoners. These prisoners, many of whom were schooled in revolutionary politics, wouldn’t fall for the old tricks. The Warden could not convince the white prisoners, who had now struggled and suffered next to us, to accept the old racist “hate bait.” They knew they were prisoners, and would not accept white skin privileges or resurrect the Klan to help the Warden run the prison. These white prisoners were standing up against their masters, and they were a different people entirely. They no longer saw anything in common with the Warden, not even “whiteness.” The black prison population had overcome its fear and insecurity to become the vanguard and the backbone of a serious threat to

the organized racial violence and repression which had ruled unchallenged for years.

Frustrated, Tucker then just told his officers to begin rounding up the AACSP leaders and throw them into the new security unit. But we had prepared for this eventuality, and had decided not to go down without a fight. So the first time they came for our leaders, it precipitated a twelve-hour standoff when we took over one of the prison units where most of them were, booby-trapped the doors with explosives and other traps, and held the unit guards hostage. The prisoners armed themselves with spears, knives, home-made dynamite, and other weapons.

Realizing how serious the situation had become, a truce was negotiated by Tucker for protection of our so-called constitutional rights to have disciplinary hearings for the leadership instead of just summarily throwing them into solitary, and for no reprisals over the protest. But this agreement for amnesty and standard disciplinary hearings with outside legal representation was swiftly broken as soon as the authorities re-took control of the institution. All of the known leaders of the AACSP, and their white and Latin Allies, were snatched up and rammed into high-security cells. The officials were thus satisfied that they had removed the threat, and that the absence of the first level of leadership would cause the group to collapse. But on the contrary, the organization never missed a beat. We had set up AACSP as an organization which had several levels of leadership; there was no primary leader. So as soon as the original founding leaders were removed, the secondary leadership took over. I took over as President, and the other slots were quickly filled by a new wave of leaders. We kept up the struggle, continued our weekly meetings, and began sending out a monthly newsletter to tell our outside supporters and the press what was going on.

We had always had a number of programs to help prisoners: a library of radical and black books, political education classes, literacy classes and job training, and we kept these going. We even demanded that officials allow us to take books and materials to those leaders in the solitary confinement units. The officials had to agree, since they saw they had failed to destroy us in the previous incident. Finally, after several months of this standoff, officials created another provocation by attacking one of the leaders in solitary, Brother Hassan. He was badly beaten when he objected to a guard

spitting and blowing his nose into the prisoners' food. We knew this was a set-up, so we did not violently respond. We demanded that the harassment cease, circulated a petition, and filed a lawsuit in the local court system. Even though we did not attack the guards like they wanted, they began to round us up anyway, claiming that we were "planning" to create a disturbance. The truth was the officials concocted this "conspiracy" to try to destroy the organization and justify these harsh security measures.

We were all thrown into the special security cells in L-unit and were only let out for showers and the law library. For twenty-three hours a day we were locked down in these cells, which were about the size of your bathroom. The guards taunted us by calling us racist and offensive names, and spitting and blowing their noses in our food. They would do this right in front of you hoping you would object so they would have an excuse to call you a "smartass nigger" and beat up on you. They would gang up and beat prisoners bloody, especially those they did not like.

After a discussion among the comrades in the unit, we decided to rebel against these conditions before things got worse and somebody got killed. As it was, Hassan was so badly beaten he required stitches and a back brace. One day when they opened the doors to take me to the law library, I knocked the handcuffs away, leaped out of the cell, hit one of the guards in the face with my fist and stabbed the other one in the hip with a knife. I tried to force them to open the security door to let all the prisoners out, but the guard who had the keys ran and threw them out the window into a hallway. So I was trapped along with them, and decided, in frustration to kill our keepers who had been tormenting us for weeks. I jumped on the guard I had punched, and stabbed him several times until the knife broke in his side. He screamed, "Don't kill me! Don't kill me! I've got a wife and three kids." I hit him again and again until he fell to the ground. Then I picked up a mop wringer to crush his skull, but the other guard attacked me from behind. I turned to hit him in the chest, and then we started to wrestle. Meanwhile the pig on the floor jumped up and sprayed my face with chemical MACE. I also had cut my forehead on the mop wringer, and blood flowed into my eyes, blinding me. I fought on in a blind rage! By this time the other guards in the hallway had been alerted and ran into the unit with riot equipment. They started to beat me, but the other prisoners in the unit broke their cell windows out and started throwing coffee mugs, glass jars, and other things at the riot squad as they dragged me

out of the unit, feet first, like I was some lifeless animal. But they were more afraid than I was, to see this stuff flying in the air at them, so they refrained from hitting me any more in front of the inmates.

I was dragged down the hallway by about six guards to the hospital where I was thrown into a “mental observation” cell on the second floor. They were treating me as if I had gone “crazy.” They ripped all of my clothes off of me, and then threw me naked into the cell. There was no bed, linen, toilet, or even a sink to wash my face — just a door, a window, a hole in the wall to “do your business,” and padding all over the floor and walls to either cushion these “crazy” inmates from injuring themselves when they run their heads into the walls, or to cushion the sound of blows by guards when they beat prisoners.

For the week I remained there, they would neither feed nor clothe me, and except for when they would open the doors to spray me with a high-pressured water hose, and then open the windows to freeze my ass off with a blast of wintry air, I was left alone night and day. I caught pneumonia as a result and almost died. When they saw I was real sick and that my death would cause the other prisoners to revolt, they decided to see that I got some kind of medical attention. They made arrangements to send me to the prison hospital in Springfield, Missouri. But even though I was being transferred by prison officials, who hoped to end the uprising, this did not happen. Although the prison officials ultimately took back administrative control from the “rioters,” the prison was never the same place. Because of the united prisoner population at Terre Haute, the prison had strikes and violent protests for years afterward. The unity of the prisoners made many things possible: the creation of the Indiana prisoners’ labor union, which fought for better working and living conditions, an end to the racially motivated killing and organizing by groups like the Klan, and of course better overall treatment. Some of the most brutal guards were fired or prosecuted after they had beaten or tortured prisoners, something which had never happened before.

Although I was to go through many years of torture at Springfield, Marion (Illinois), and other prisons, I lived through it all. I remember many things about those fifteen years in prison, but the struggle at Terre Haute, and how even whites who had been following the Klan line for many years rose up with the blacks against the prison officials was one thing I will never forget.

BLACK CAPITALISM // BLACK AUTONOMY

Writings from Anarchist Panther Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin

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Black Capitalism

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