

# **Black Capitalism**

Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin

2001

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# Part 1

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 be 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 wont 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), an 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 sates 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 am 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 wilting 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 mis-leadership.

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 any 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 our 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 kind 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 ills—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 are 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 are 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 helps 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 impossible 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 matter. 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 poison 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 out 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 cab 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 its 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 wan 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 some 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 there 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 are based on 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 forces, it is 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 be 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 we 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 on 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 Los 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 outgunned, 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 “incorrigible 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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.

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Black Capitalism  
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