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Black Autonomy Federation
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Community Control of the Black Community
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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 ‘Blood in my Eye’

The idea behind a mass commune is to create a dual power structure as a counter to the government, under conditions, which exist now. In fact, Anarchists believe the first step toward self-determination and the Social revolution is Black control of the Black community. This means that Black people must form

and unify their own organizations of struggle, take control of the existing Black communities and all the institutions within them, and conduct a consistent fight to overcome every form of economic, political and cultural servitude, and any system of racial and class inequality which is the product of this racist Capitalist society.

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

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

The commune is a staging ground for Black revolutionary struggle. For instance, Black people should refuse to pay taxes to the racist government, should boycott the Capitalist corporations, should lead a Black General Strike all over the country, and should engage in an insurrection to drive the police out and win

oppressed. Once the latter has been so effectively manipulated and controlled by 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 teach 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.

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

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 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 be 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.