# Let Your Motto Be Resistance

## A Handbook on Organizing New Afrikan and Oppressed Communities for Self-Defense

On Occasion of the 170th Anniversary of Henry Highland Garnet's speech at the 1843 National Negro Convention entitled, "An Address to the Slaves of the United States". To read the speech visit http://www.blackpast.org/?q=1843-henry-highland-garnet-address-slaves-united-states.

## A Every 36 Hours Campaign Resource

Malcolm X Grassroots Movement

# New Afrikan Self-Defense Network Handbook

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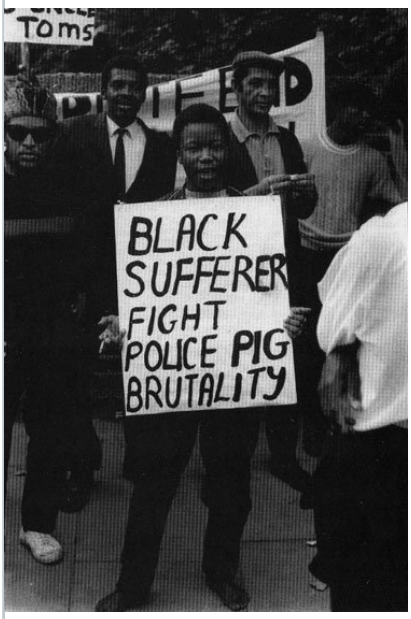



# Organizing

**Short Definition**

**Organizing is the process of uniting people around a common set of interests and beliefs, and building the structures they need to carry out democratically agreed upon strategies and programs of action to exercise their power to solve social issues or address their material needs.**

## The Crisis We Face

New Afrikan people[1] are in a heighted state of crisis. Since being brought to the shores of North America as captives from European wars of aggression we have constantly battled one crisis after another. However, there are times that are more critical and intense than others. We are presently living through one of these super-critical periods.

Since the 1980's and the start of the rollback of the social and material gains won by our people in the 1950's and 60's, New Afrikans have been confronted with the crisis of a slow, but calculated, genocide. After the urban rebellions of the 1960's capital (mainly multi-national corporations) contributed to this genocidal assault by introducing more computers and robots into the productive process and moving more and more of their factories overseas to eliminate the need for New Afrikan workers[2]. These moves displaced large sectors of the New Afrkan working class and turned many of our people into a disposable surplus population. To survive, large sectors of the New Afrikan working class were forced to engage the underground economy (drug dealing, hustling, prostitution, gambling, fencing, bartering, etc.) in the 1980's and 90's[3]. The government' strategy to deal with the problem of managing this growing population surplus was to criminalize more aspects of the underground economy, militarize domestic law enforcement, limit reproductive rights and warehouse increasing numbers of the disposable sectors of the working class in prisons[4].

Since the financial and economic collapse of 2008 and the reaction of sectors of the white settler population to the 2008 presidential election, the level of these genocidal assaults has intensified. We have been hunted and killed in cold blood by the US government in increasing numbers and herded into prisons like cattle in record numbers[5]. We are confronting the cold reality of a jobless future and permanent economic exclusion being imposed upon us by the forces of white supremacy, capitalism and imperialism and our youth are fighting among themselves and with the internalization of hopelessness with deadly consequence not seen since the late 1980's and early 90's during the height of the "crack wars".

Why we face genocide now:

- **The rapidly changing demographics of the US continental empire**. For the first time since the 1700's, within the next 15 to 20 years, the white settlers of North America will be out-numbered by non-whites[6]. A significant portion of white people are not only concerned about becoming a minority, they are outright scared. These fears stimulate different reactions, one of which is increased hostility to non-whites and targeted violence directed at New Afrikans and other colonized and oppressed people.
- **The militarization of society**. The US government started militarizing its domestic law enforcement agencies in the 1960's in response to the Black Liberation Movement. This escalation of repression expanded with the so-called "wars on drugs" and "gangs." This internal militarization expanded exponentially after the events of September 11, 2001. Since then the national security apparatus has grown unchecked and racial profiling has become accepted doctrine and practice targeting not only New Afrikans, but also Latinos, Arabs, South East Asians, and Muslims. These developments have fostered a "seek and destroy" mentality amongst the police and various other law enforcement agencies. The militarization of law enforcement has expanded to the rest of society so we find armed guards in schools and hospitals and transportation centers. Instead of seeking humane social solutions to social problems, the government and communities rely on the military and police[7].
- **Downsizing from the financial and economic crisis**. One of the major outcomes of the economic crisis is the implementation of severe austerity and the downsizing of social services and many police forces throughout the empire. Austerity measures place a greater strain on the police, as they have to do more with less to protect the have's from the have not's. These strains generate a siege mentality within law enforcement seeking to justify its funding and existence by engaging in more extreme patrol and control tactics in oppressed communities[8].
- **The promotion of reactionary and irrational politics**. Conservative political forces, particularly forces like the Tea Party and the Religious Right, have been escalating the promotion of their hostile and increasingly openly racist propaganda. This is creating an atmosphere of pervasive racial hostility and resentment throughout the empire[9].
- **Racial resentment and revenge**. Perhaps the greatest expressions of racial hostility are the countless attacks against US President Barack Obama as a symbol of Black progress and equality. Many forces associated with the military and the police throughout the country have been openly saying that they refuse to follow the orders of Obama's Justice Department and that they will take extreme measures to prevent their privileges as whites from being further eroded. Add this to the narrative that New Afrikans and Latinos are being awarded unjust privileges thru "affirmative action", are stealing decent jobs, and bankrupting the country with "special entitlement" programs, and it is clear that there is a climate of racial hostility the likes of which hasn't been seen expressed this openly since the late 1970's and early 80's[10].

- **The repression and criminalization of dissent**. In the wake of the various social eruptions against austerity like the Wisconsin workers fight back initiative and the Occupy Movement in 2011, the government responded by intensifying repression in 2012. It smashed the Occupy movements encampments throughout the empire, infiltrated it on a massive scale, intensified raids in immigrant communities, and escalated and intensified its "stop and frisk" and racial profiling operations and tactics in New Afrikan communities[11].

## A Massive Movement to Fight Our Way Out of this Crisis

These and other factors have created a political and social environment extremely threatening to New Afrikan people, particularly to our youth. The only way we are going to defend ourselves against these genocidal challenges is to create a massive social movement. We need a movement that strategically takes on the systemic oppression and exploitation that prevent New Afrikans from exercising self-determination and human rights.

In effect, the only way we are going to end this crisis is to fight our way out of it. In order to fight effectively we have to organize ourselves on a higher level. One of the critical areas where we have to step up our organizing efforts to be qualitatively more effective is in the

area of ***self-defense***. We have to be clear that we cannot and should not count on our enemies – like the courts, and other forces of the US government or transnational corporations - to protect us. We have to protect ourselves.

The Malcolm X Grassroots Movement (MXGM) believes that an essential part of our movement for survival must be ***Self-Defense Networks***.

We think there are two types of Networks that we have to build:

- **New Afrikan Self-Defense Networks**
- **Peoples' Self-Defense Networks**

**New Afrikan Self-Defense Networks** are alliances, coalitions, or united fronts of New Afrikan organizations whose purpose is to defend the New Afrikan community from external (the police, FBI, white terrorist organizations, etc.) and internal (agent infiltration, intra-communal violence, etc.) threats to its safety and security.

**People's Self-Defense Networks** are multi-national (or multi-ethnic and/or racial) alliances, coalitions, or united fronts whose purpose is to defend their communities against mutual enemies and threats and advance a common agenda based on shared interests, hopes, and aspirations.

The concrete information in this Handbook will help to organize Self-Defense Networks that have the capacity to challenge the containment strategies of the police and other government agencies and to transform our communities and the world by positively redirecting the political focus and energy of our youth.

## A Massive Movement to Fight Our Way Out of this Crisis

Let's be clear about the real threats we face. This clarity will shape how we unite people into organizations capable of effective self-defense.

- ***External Threats***. These are threats that emerge outside of the New Afrikan community by institutions and organizations designed to serve the interests of the US settler-colonial state, white supremacy, capitalism and imperialism. These institutions and organizations - namely government institutions like the police, sheriffs, FBI, Homeland Security, NSA, CIA, etc., and "civilian" organizations like the KKK, Skinheads, Minutemen, White Militias, and the Tea Party – are the greatest threats to our people. The governmental institutions have the power and ability, by virtue of their unlimited resources and social legitimacy, to control our life circumstances such as a how and where we live, work, play, and pray and restrict our movements and access to food, water, housing, education, health care, transportation, employment, democratic processes and human rights (particularly as it regards incarceration and deportation). These forces also have the power and ability to significantly impact and

- alter the internal dynamics within our community by privileging a few over the many with material and social rewards, getting a few of us to serve their interests against our collective interests, and creating confusion and disruption through agent provocateurs, set ups, and well coordinated strategies of disruption and counter-insurgency (like the promotion of crack cocaine into our communities in the 1980's).

- ***Internal Threats***. These are threats that emerge from within the community. They emerge largely from antagonisms and contradictions over resources, status, and power. Turf Wars, for resources and respect, are the most publicly graphic example of these threats. These wars are once again on the rise due, in large part, to the deepening economic and social crisis confronting our people. Gender based violence, including domestic violence, rape, sexual assaults, harassment and other assaults on women and LGBTQI members of our community are also on the rise, in large part due to the hyper-masculinity fueled by the economic and social crisis in this patriarchal society and aggressively encouraged by the glorification of war and militarization over the decades, and promoted by virtually all of the dominant communicative institutions of the empire to protect and promote its established order.

- ***Inter-Communal Threats***. These are threats that arise from antagonisms and contradictions between different peoples (nationalities, races, ethnicities) largely over resources, status, and power. They are also largely contradictions between competing classes that exist amongst the peoples, not entire peoples themselves – like the New Afrikan petit bourgeoisie competing with Latino and Asian petit bourgeois forces for control over access and position within small retail, service, or production markets. Most of these contradictions are created by the dynamic of hostile competition structured within the capitalist system to keep oppressed and exploited people from uniting against their common oppressors and exploiters. One particular inter-communal contradiction that New Afrikans need to pay particular attention to is between ourselves and Latinos. Latinos should be considered our strategic allies, given many of our common interests and shared histories of oppression and exploitation at the hands of the US government. But, there are many forces, both external and internal to our community, working diligently to keep us divided and antagonistic to each other.

We cannot meet these threats by ourselves alone. Given these complicated, inter-locking threats, we need to organize at three different levels to make our Self Defense networks strong enough to be effective.

- ***Build Our Independent Organizations***. Each of our organizations needs to reach, incorporate, and consolidate more people to enhance our individual capacities and effectiveness to implement our own political and social programs and make broader and deeper contributions to the liberation of our people.

***Any unarmed people are slaves, or subject to slavery at any given moment.***

**Huey P. Newton**

- ***Build Alliances, Coalitions, and/or Fronts***. None of our political and social formations has the ability to successfully defend our people from the external and internal threats that we face on their own. This means that we have to rely on each other to expand our overall reach, capacity, and power. This calls for building solid alliances, coalitions, and/or fronts based on a shared agenda, strategy, and principles to meet the needs of our people.

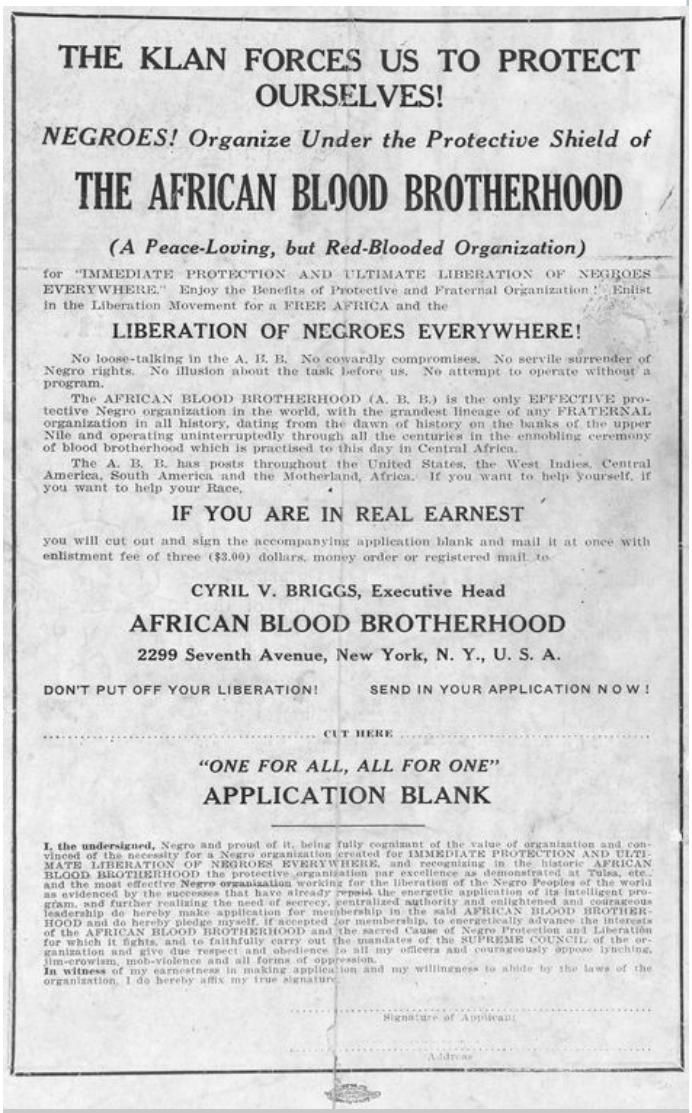
- ***Build the Broader Movement.*** Alliances, Coalitions, and United Fronts are also limited in their capacity and ability to create the broader social transformation that we need. Our organizations and coalitions must build and inspire mass movements that appeal to millions of our people. Those millions are not in political organizations. Only a mass movement will change their views of the system and compel them to act in concrete ways to transform it by organizing directly against its interests (copwatch, self-defense networks), disrupting its functioning (non-compliance campaigns), directly confronting its policies and structures (direct action and demonstrations of various kinds), or building autonomous institutions (people's assemblies).

Our organizing must aim for a balance between two strategic goals. First, we need initiatives to radically transform the social structures of the world to eliminate the systems of oppression like capitalism, imperialism, white supremacy, patriarchy and heterosexism that confine us to states of oppression and exploitation. Second, we need initiatives to transform ourselves and our communities through autonomous, self-reliant institution building, resource maximization, resource development, and community care.

# Honoring Our History and Building Unity in the Present

Self-defense strategy and organization in the year 2013 must take into account a set of challenges that were unknown in the 1960's. Today, *we live in an era defined by the "perpetual war" which the US government hypocritically labels the "war on terrorism"*[12]. *The US government is waging perpetual war on the various peoples', social, and religious movements that resist the imperialist world-system and the vicious neo-liberal capitalist order it is intent on imposing on everyone.* One of the by-products of this perpetual war is the creation of the largest and most invasive surveillance and spy systems in human history[13]. These systems include everything from spy satellites, police and FBI operated surveillance drones, and electronic tracking and monitoring via our cellphones, computers, smart tablets, passports, drivers licenses, email, Facebook, etc. The astronomical increase in incarceration of our people is an institutionalized aspect of this perpetual war. Add to this the extensive spy networks operated by the US government and you quickly realize that we don't live in a democracy, but a Garrison State.

The social and material interests of New Afrikan people are fundamentally irreconcilable with those of the US empire. And since the Black Liberation Movement has long been a target of suppression by the US government, we should be clear that *our people and our movement are some of the prime targets of this perpetual war.* We should not be blinded by the government's rhetoric about "protecting us against (Muslim) terrorists". We are also the targets of the Garrison State.



THE KLAN FORCES US TO PROTECT OURSELVES!

*NEGROES! Organize Under the Protective Shield of*

THE AFRICAN BLOOD BROTHERHOOD

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for "IMMEDIATE PROTECTION AND ULTIMATE LIBERATION OF NEGROES EVERYWHERE." Enjoy the Benefits of Protective and Fraternal Organization! Enlist in the Liberation Movement for a FREE AFRICA and the

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*"ONE FOR ALL, ALL FOR ONE"*

APPLICATION BLANK

I, the undersigned, Negro and proud of it, being fully cognizant of the value of organization and convinced of the necessity for a Negro organization created for IMMEDIATE PROTECTION AND ULTIMATE LIBERATION OF NEGROES EVERYWHERE, and recognizing in the historic AFRICAN BLOOD BROTHERHOOD the protective organization par excellence as demonstrated at Tulsa, etc., and the most effective Negro organization working for the liberation of the Negro Peoples of the world as evidenced by the successes that have already repaid the energetic application of its intelligent program, and further realizing the need of secrecy, centralized authority and enlightened and courageous leadership do hereby make application for membership in the said AFRICAN BLOOD BROTHERHOOD and do hereby pledge myself, if accepted for membership, to energetically advance the interests of the AFRICAN BLOOD BROTHERHOOD and the sacred Cause of Negro Protection and Liberation for which it fights, and to faithfully carry out the mandates of the SUPREME COUNCIL of the organization and give due respect and obedience to all my officers and courageously oppose lynching, jim-crowism, mob-violence and all forms of oppression.

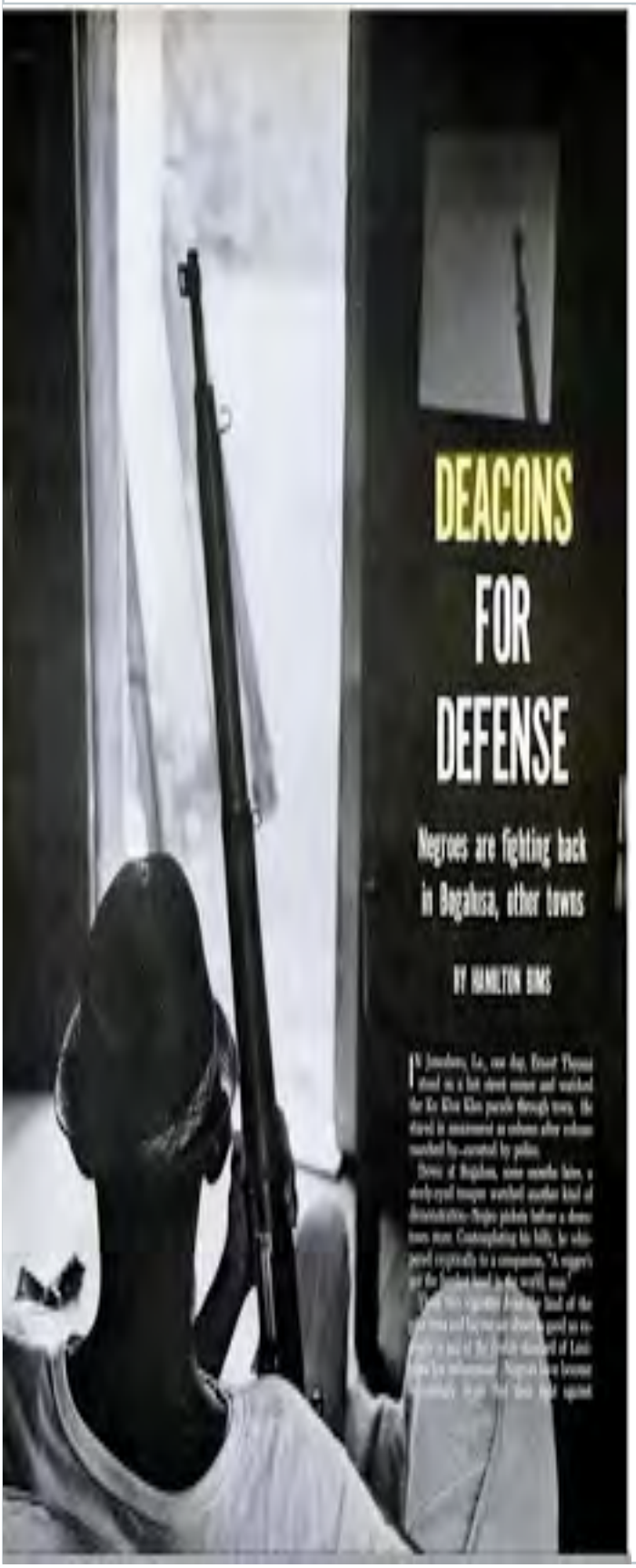
In witness of my earnestness in making application and my willingness to abide by the laws of the organization, I do hereby affix my true signature.

Signature of Applicant

Address

*It is war to the hilt against our rights and liberties, and against our very existence! With us it will be a fight for life as well as for rights. And to the race fighting against mighty odds for its existence the use of any and every weapon at hand is not only permissible but compulsory. With the murderer clutching at our throats we can ill afford to choose our weapons, but must defend ourselves with what lies nearest whether that be poison, fire or what. As soon as it is demonstrated that the United States government will not protect us in our rights, right then we must take steps to protect ourselves.*

Cyril Briggs




To protect its colonial possessions in North America, the US settler-colonial government has built the most self-penetrating and full-spectrum network of repressive enforcement in human history. They include the Police, Sheriff's, Rangers, Customs, FBI, Homeland Security (including INS), CIA, Secret Service, prison guards, as well as the numerous private security and other protective services employed in the service of protecting their possessions and the system of private property at the heart of capitalist production.

And to protect the imperialist system against the threats of national liberation and socialist revolution, the United States government has built a network of more than 1,000 military bases throughout the world, which it fortifies with a military budget greater than all the worlds military expenditures combined and the most destructive arsenal ever created[14].

Domestic containment and international containment are two sides of the same coin. Working in tandem to crush both internal and external resistance, these institutions and mechanisms have enabled the United States government to act as the imperial hegemon for nearly 70 years. US imperialism cannot be adequately understood, resisted, let along defeated, unless both of sides of this coin are addressed and confronted simultaneously.

However, the US government killing machine has never gone unchallenged. Repression breeds' resistance and the peoples', workers, women's and other social movements have always resisted the US Empire, both within its claimed territories and throughout the world.

The threat of our resistance is evident in the extent the United States government goes to suppress it. One glaring example is the prison-complex built by the settler-colonial Garrison state. The US government has built the most extensive prison-system – with the highest incarceration rates – the world has ever seen. This system serves two purposes. First, it aims to contain the resistance of the national liberation movements of Indigenous, New Afrikan, Xicano, and Puerto Rican people. Repression of the organized resistance of these liberation movements has resulted in the imprisonment of hundreds of political prisoners and prisoners of war from organizations like the American Indian Movement (AIM), Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM), Black Liberation Army (BLA), the Black Panther Party (BPP), Provisional Government of the Republic of New Afrika (PGRNA), MOVE, Armed Forces of National Liberation (FALN), etc. Second, it aims to warehouse and repress the more unorganized resistance of oppressed peoples to their economic dispossession and other forms of super-exploitation. This repression takes the form of the extensive criminalization of the underground economy and various strategies of survival employed therein (including immigration). Mass incarceration has resulted in the imprisonment, state supervision, or deportation of nearly 10 million people in 2012 alone![15]

As in the past, with the slave patrols, the Klan raids, the enforcement efforts of the apartheid police, the disruption and assassinations of COINTELPRO, etc., the US government uses every means at its disposable to contain and repress us. As we-organize our people on a higher level to defend themselves and remove the settler-government from our internal affairs, we must be prepared for even greater repression. This is why we must learn from the errors of the past, particularly those of the COINTELPRO era, and take our time to dig deep into the organizing of our communities in a systematic fashion.

When many think of self-defense within the Black radical tradition they think of individuals like Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Robert F. Williams, Malcolm X, Huey P. Newton, Kathleen Cleaver and Assata Shakur and paramilitary organizations like the Fruit of Islam, Black Armed Guards, Deacons for Defense and Justice, the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, the Black Legionnaires, etc. These types of formations have lost none of their relevance and we must learn everything they have to teach about their accomplishments and their weaknesses. But attempting to reproduce them is not where we should start or center our defensive organizing initiatives.

In our present era romantic and often hyper-masculine notions of self-defense centered on militaristic images, practices, and traditions can be very problematic. They can sometimes be a deterrent or a turn-off to large sectors of our people seeking to avoid unwarranted confrontations with the state. They invite an influx of agent provocateurs into our organizations and communities, and give the state an easy target and excuse for intensified repression before we have built the movement we need to defend ourselves. Their often-undemocratic practices have historically fostered hierarchy, patriarchy, and heterosexism. Rather, we must have a broad and dynamic understanding of self-defense that addresses the material and social needs of our people first and foremost and intentionally incorporates the positive and negative lessons of our historic legacy of struggle against white supremacy and genocide. And we must resolutely address the limitations and possibilities of our present era as determined by the interrelations between time, space, and social conditions (material conditions and the balance of political forces in particular).

Today, the foundations of our self-defense organizing must first and foremost be about *building community*, by intentionally and systematically struggling to forge "common unity" amongst our people on questions relating to our survival and overall well-being. This restorative orientation must start by acknowledging the reality that while New Afrikan people are still linked by the structural confines of white supremacy and national oppression and our common history, heritage, and collective interests, we have become more fragmented over the last 40 years.

This fragmentation expresses itself in the political divides that derive from the increasingly varied experiences and diverging interests produced by the growing class divide within our community. This divide forms along two lines. One is between the working and bourgeois classes of our people. The second is between the various sectors of the working class itself, those still incorporated into the wage-bound labor markets of the empire and those largely confined to the underground economy and its various enterprises and systems of survival.

Fragmentation also manifests in increased provincialism between individuals and sectors rooted in urban or suburban areas of New Afrikan concentration and those who live or were reared in more nationally, racially, and ethnically diverse environments, predominantly in suburban areas. Increasing religious, sexual, and gender diversity also has played a factor in our fragmentation. The incorporation of other communities of Afrikan descent from the continent, the Caribbean and Latin America striving to maintain distinct Afrikan identities and cultures based on their immigrant experiences complicate the task of building unity. We want to emphasize that the diversity of people from the Diaspora reflects variations of the genius and beauty of Afrikan people, which can only be negative if it is manipulated by the forces of imperialism and reactionary elements within our own communities to keep us divided and fragmented based on ignorance, false positioning, and short-term material gains.

This fragmentation can and must be overcome to stop the genocide being perpetuated against us by the forces of white supremacy and imperialism. However, we should not be under any illusion that we will ever unite all New Afrikan people. But, we must strive to unite the overall mass of New Afrikan people following the principle of "*uniting all that can be united*" to win self-determination.

Overcoming fragmentation as a critical element of self-defense *starts with community organizing*, but community organizing with clear goals and objectives. One of the goals is overcoming the increasingly divergent views our people have about the US government and the role of the state in general. Prior to the 1970's, there was a broad consensus amongst New Afrikan people that the US government was not an entity to be trusted, particularly as it related to respecting and protecting New Afrikan life.

As the legal structure of US apartheid was defeated in the 1960's and neo-colonialism became the new means of governing and controlling New Afrikan people, this perception began to shift. Many started to see the settler-colonial government as something that could be reformed to handle our problems, as New Afrikan congressional members, mayors, and city council members were elected and New Afrikan police were hired and incorporated into the colonial governance structures. With the growth of the underground economy and the predatory and misogynist anti-social activities and behaviors associated with it, many petit bourgeois and working class sectors of the community turned to the police to protect them. They considered the police and other government agents as the only "legitimate" force capable of protecting their lives and possessions. And to solve the social ills of "Black on Black" crime, intra-communal violence, gang wars, drug abuse, and sexual exploitation many began to support government initiatives like the "war on drugs" and "get tuff on crime" measures. Since the 1980's, many New Afrikan politicians' have voted to support the drug war, in addition to three strikes legislation, mandatory minimum sentencing, and increased prison spending. They have also supported other government strategies of containment, like the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 and the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996 that advanced the militarization of the police and promoted the warehousing of millions of our people in the prison gulags of the empire[16].

Our organizing work has to address and ultimately defeat this false notion. But, it must start by demonstrating that we can both curb police violence directed against us and solve our own problems relating to intra-communal conflicts and contradictions without the intervention of the state (like calling the police to address our disputes). In order to do this, we are going to have to organize a broad range of interlocking structures, like block committees, neighborhood councils, elder's councils, people's assemblies, and people's tribunals to jointly address our internal and external problems. These structures are just as important, if not more so in the present era, than the Copwatch, security teams, and militias that we need to fortify and/or (re)build.

***The poison and pollution of capitalist cities is choking us. We need the strong medicine of our foremothers to make us well again. We need their medicines to give us strength to fight and the drive to win. Under the guidance of Harriet Tubman and Fannie Lou Hamer and all of our foremothers, let us rebuild a sense of community. Let us rebuild the culture of giving and carrying on the tradition of fierce determination to move on closer to freedom.***

Assata Shakur

# Self-Defense: Strategic Goals and How we Reach Them

With the realities of our present age in mind, we propose the following strategic orientation for our self-defense organizing.

- ***Self-awareness***: We must elevate the national-consciousness of our people. On a community level, raising national consciousness entails deepening our collective sense of ourselves as a people who share a common history, identity, and destiny. On the individual level it also entails raising our consciousness on the practicalities of strengthening our personal and collective security practices (like sharing information, communicating with external forces, etc.). Self-awareness also entails:
  - Understanding the basis of internal and external contradictions (who's interests conflict with whom, who has historic differences with who, and why,.
  - Addressing unequal power relations internally (between men and women, heterosexuals and Queers, etc.) and externally (between bourgeoisie forces and the working class, and between oppressor nations and oppressed nations and peoples.

- ***Self-reliance***: Given that the imperatives of this work run counter to the interests of the state, capital, and the forces of white supremacy, we must rely on our own efforts and resources to achieve our goals. This does not mean that we should not accept the aid and solidarity of friends and allies, but any and all aid can only be accepted without conditions. In an era with non-profits and non-governmental organizations flooding the social-movements, we must be clear about not becoming dependent on funding from philanthropic capital to sustain and advance this work. And just as important, we must reject the non-profit model of organization building. We should reject the current expectation that we need grants and paid organizers to advance our work. If we are going to have paid organizers, these organizers must be paid the old fashioned way, from the dues we gather from the members and fundraisers we organize. The money and labor we need to be successful in these endeavors must come from the committee's, councils, and organizations themselves and supportive autonomous structures, like economic cooperatives, that we build to exercise our self-determination and eliminate the capitalist institutions that exploit us. We also reject the non-profit orientation towards politics that implies we can reach our goals through "polite work" rather than hard struggle.

- ***Mutual Aid and Community Accountability***: Building a successful self-reliant movement depends on how well we build a movement that cares for itself materially, socially, and emotionally. We need systems that address our material and social needs ranging from housing to psychological support. We also need accountability mechanisms that support people in rectifying their errors and transgressions against other members in the community via counseling and other methods of self-transformation. These systems will enable us to build the trust needed in the community for individuals and groups to make the material and social sacrifices needed to sustain and grow the autonomous and self-reliant organizations we need to liberate ourselves.

**Education Initiatives**

The political and technical education of our people is essential to the long-term success of our Self-Defense (or any other transformative) organizing initiatives. Our educational initiatives must not be top down, or purely expert driven initiatives. All of our people have skills and experiences, and it is incumbent upon the organizers to draw these out from our organizing drives and structure our exchange sessions in a manner that draws on our collective experiences and brilliance. In workshops, people may learn about and decide to join one of the other self-defense formations.

- *Know Your Rights* – These workshops are specifically tailored to educate people about what protections they have and what they can and cannot do in engagements with the police and other law enforcement agencies according to US Federal, State, and Municipal law. These workshops should also highlight the various contractions between many of the policies and tactics being employed by many local law enforcement agencies what is allegedly protected by the US constitution.
- *Human Rights Workshops* – These workshops should focus on educating people about their rights as human beings, particularly their rights to resist and to be self-determining that are above and beyond those stated in the US constitution.
- *Security* workshops – These workshops should focus on providing people with a framework on how to share information securely, how to be mindful of one's environment, and how to assess dangers and threats. They should also focus on providing people with a framework on how to effectively respond to threats.
- *Intelligence Gathering* – These workshops should focus on providing people with a framework on how to gather and share information and intelligence in a manner that is not accusatory and lending itself to the presentation of false accusations against others (such as agent baiting).
- *Self-Defense* workshops – These workshops should focus on providing people with the technical basics of how to defend themselves and others in their communities. This includes trainings in martial arts, firearms, etc.
- *Security* workshops – These workshops build on the self-defense workshops and focus on providing people with a framework on how to work in units or teams, and how to secure facilities, crowds, marches, and mobilizations against threats.
- *Emergency Response* – These workshops should provide people with a framework on how to establish mutual support networks to address various crises, how to communicate during these crises, and what goods and materials (like clean water, durable food goods, heat sources, weather resistant clothes, etc.) are needed in order to survive and overcome crises. These workshops should also develop essential triage and emergency medial skills amongst the people, so that they can effectively deal with health crises such as heart attacks, strokes, asthma attacks, complications related to diabetes, gunshot wounds, etc.

***I had reasoned this out in my mind, there was one of two things I had a right to, liberty or death. If I could not have one I would have the other.***

**Harriet Tubman**

**Formations**

In addition to building progressive and revolutionary organizations that address multiple issues, like the New Afrikan United Fronts, or multi-national People's Fronts, we must also build independent organizations that address specific self-defense needs:

- *Block Committee's* – These Self-Defense units on the level of an urban or suburban block and/or street should be the foundation of all our efforts. This type of organizing entails building deep relationships with our neighbors and their families, identifying mutual interests, and building clear lines of communication.
- *Neighborhood Councils* – These Councils are scaled up extensions of the Block Committee's, that unite several Block Committees into a joint structure that addresses the shared interests and needs of the community, including addressing complaints against the police or the government in general and resolving disputes within the community itself.
- *City Councils* – These Councils are scaled up extensions of the Neighborhood Committees that serve to unite the strategies and activities of New Afrikan forces throughout a city.
- *Elders Councils* – These Councils are composed of respected elders in a community that are organized primarily to offer advice on strategies of engagement with the state (particularly the police) and mediate intra-communal contradictions and disputes amongst the people.
- *Youth Councils* – Youth Councils are safe spaces for youth to assemble to both resolve their own issues and disputes and to formulate their issues and concerns relative to the health and well being of the larger community.
- *Survivors or Family Councils* –These Councils are composed of the victims of police violence, including the family members of those who were killed by the police or other law enforcement agencies. These Councils represent the interests of the victims to the community and should take the lead in the formulation of demands on the government, and the strategies and tactics that will be employed to attain justice.
- *Women's Councils* – These Councils are safe spaces for women to organize themselves to address their specific needs and issues. One of its primary functions will be to address issues of abuse and/or violence (domestic violence, assaults, rape, etc.) committed against women either by the police or other government agencies or by men in the community, including determining processes of rectification and healing.
- *People's Assemblies* – The Assemblies are designed to be dual power instruments that serve as direct vehicles of People's Power. These Assemblies would be called to develop and institute autonomous solutions to various social issues and contradictions and to develop and advance various demands on the state.
- *People's Tribunals* – These Tribunals are extensions of the Elder Councils, City Councils, or People's Assemblies and are communal spaces to gather evidence regarding police brutality and state repression to shape a People's response to these crimes against humanity to secure justice through the administration of Peoples Power via boycotts, divestment measures, and various types of sanctions that bring the state and capital to heel or transform them altogether.

- *Copwatch* – These are collectives drawn from our independent organizations and the various suggested committees that focus on monitoring the police and other law enforcement agencies operating in our communities, documenting their activities, and when necessary, intervening to prevent state abuses and repression. Copwatch initiatives should also provide various types of self-defense and security trainings, including "know your rights" trainings, and political education for the community.
- *Security Teams* – These are units that should be developed from our independent organizations and the aforementioned committees to secure our communities from various threats at public gatherings and events, to respond to forces that pose threats to the community, and to respond to social and natural crises that confront the community.
- *Militias* – Are in part extensions of our Security Teams, and serve similar social purposes. However, unlike the Security Teams they are organized more explicitly to educate and train the community in the arts of self-defense, defensive fortifications, and military operations. The other major function of the Militia should be to respond to major crisis like the floods in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina and the rebellion in Oakland, CA following the murder of Oscar Grant., to make sure our people's safety is secure and that the state is not abusing our people
- *Emergency Social Response Teams* – These Teams should respond to social crisis such as that posed by Hurricane Katrina, to make sure that in the midst of a crisis that our people are physically safe, treated with dignity, have food to eat, clean water to drink, are medically treated and provided with adequate housing. These Teams should be prepared to set up autonomous clinics and other emergency response operations following a catastrophe, like the Common Ground Collective and Peoples' Hurricane Relief Fund in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, or Occupy Wall Street after Superstorm Sandy in New York City.

All of the formations mentioned above are intended to be the essential building blocks and/or components of the New Afrikan or Peoples' Self-Defense Networks. These are ideal structures. Which ones you will be able to build in your community and cities will depend on the state of your community's collective will and capacities to act. And further, our will and capacity, however inexhaustible, will be shaped by structural dynamics, in particular the social conditions and social histories in each community, city, state, etc. What we have offered in this handbook are mere suggestions and/or guides to establish a firm foundation for this protracted work based on the best examples drawn from our peoples' history of revolutionary struggle and examples from revolutionary movements around the world.

***These facts the colored people, both North and South, should be hastily apprized of. They should be aroused from their sluggish indifference and drowsy dreaming, in every direction, and faithfully forewarned of the danger that approaches. Sound the alarm! Let the tocsin be heard in the rustling of every wind! Brethren, awake! Danger is at your door. Let us not destroy our cause by vain expectations, but stand ready for any emergency that may arise.***

**Martin R. Delany**

**Basic Outreach Methods to Facilitate Organizing**

In order to build the above mentioned formations, *we must reach and recruit people where they live, play, pray, and work*. What follows are a few basic pointers on how to do outreach[17].

| Method | Door Knocking | Street Outreach | Personal Visits | Meeting or Presentation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **What** | Going Door to Door in a Community | Meeting people where they hang out, gather, play or work | Meeting someone at their home or agreed upon venue for one on one or meeting with their family and/or friends | Meeting people during or after a meeting or presentation to a group of individuals or an organization |
| **Role of Organizer** | Have solid rap and talking points and hold peoples attention for short conversation and ask for a commitment | Have solid rap and talking points and hold peoples attention for short conversation and ask for a commitment | Build a deeper relationship by getting to know people, letting them get to know you, and engaging in deeper discussions on demands, programs, and campaigns and ask for deeper commitments | Share demands, programs, and campaigns with the group or organization and ask for commitments |

**Community Organizing Services**

The organizing and provision of various services like legal aid, communications, media mobilization, and documentation form another critical dimension to the success of our Self-Defense organizing initiatives.

- *Legal Aid* – We must organize a network of lawyers and legal aids that are willing to work in support of our organizing initiatives pro bono or at very affordable rates to give legal support to our community organizers and to those victimized by the police and various law enforcement agencies.
- *Human Rights Monitoring and Documentation* – Monitoring, that is assessing the compliance of the state or a corporation with human rights norms and law, and Documentation, focusing on presenting the abuses and exploitative dynamics and practices of these entities can be a powerful tool in the fight for justice. Monitoring



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and documentation can be used in courts of law, domestically and internationally, educating and informing broader audiences and shaping public opinion on various issues. We must always organize critical monitoring and documentation teams as part of our Self-Defense organizing work to ensure that the people's memories and reflections are not lost.

- *Communication Teams* – Communicating with our people, via autonomous media, social media, websites, newspapers, graphic art, music, etc., is fundamental to our education work, but just as important to our mobilization efforts whenever needed to confront police abuse and state repression. These teams must also be organized to facilitate ongoing communication between the various organizing committees listed in a given area, and where and when possible, regionally and nationally.
- *Media Teams*: Our Media Teams must facilitate our engagement with the corporate media. These Teams should help develop our mass messaging to make sure that much of our politics and principles if reflected in the mainstream coverage as possible. These Teams should also develop workshops that provide a clear orientation on how to develop everyone's skills to be effective spokespersons and to avoid the various traps and distortions that the capitalist media wants to pigeonhole is in.

**Elementary Demands and Campaigns**

A campaign is an organizing drive intended to attain a particular strategic objective. The suggestions listed below are not exhaustive, rather they are but a few of the many campaigns that could and ultimately must be waged to educate people, recruit new movement members, build mass support, and challenge the prevailing narrative that perpetuates the garrison state.

- *Police Control Boards* – Grassroots Police Control Board's are intended to serve as directly elected oversight and disciplinary committees on a city or municipal level. They have the power to monitor and reform policies and to discipline, fire, subpoena and prosecute police or other law enforcement agencies operating within their jurisdiction. Campaigns to institute Police Control Boards are designed to avoid the pitfalls of Citizen Review Boards. Over the last 50 years various movements and communities have demanded Citizen Review Boards that have been taken over by Mayors and other local officials. Mayors have appointed their own political cronies to protect the police and the status quo. We propose that our movement organize electoral campaigns or referendums that transform the Charters of Cities and Counties to establish Police Control Boards via the limited democratic means that presently exist. Electoral campaigns for Police Control Boards become vehicles for extensive outreach and education to move our base and shape public opinion. Campaigns of this nature will require grassroots fundraising to retain the integrity of the initiative and pay for media ads, etc. They will also require forming alliances with various forces in the city or region that share similar interests and the development of a comprehensive strategy that builds enough power to institute this structural reform.

***I advocated violent self-defense because I don't really think you can have a defense against violent racists and against terrorists unless your prepared to meet violence with violence, and my policy was to meet violence with violence.***

***Robert F. Williams***

- *Anti-Containment Campaigns* – These campaigns focus on stopping local, statewide, and national policies and programs that repress and displace our communities like racial profiling, check points, stop and frisk, weed and seed, gang injunctions, drug war policies, three strikes and zero-tolerance policies, etc. In addition to stopping these reactionary policies, we should also engage in proactive campaigns, like those that seek to abolish prisons.
- *Anti-Surveillance Campaigns* – These campaigns should focus on forcing the state to become transparent about its extensive surveillance infrastructure and operations, and organizing campaigns that demand that they be wholly dismantled. These campaigns can start with initiatives that publically expose the methods and tactics used by various government agencies to monitor our social activities. We must also develop and effectively utilize a national database that exposes the undercover agents and provocateurs used by the government to infiltrate, disrupt, and discredit our social movements (this must be done through extensive factual documentation and not innuendo which can be and is very destructive to our movements).
- *Demilitarization Campaigns* – These campaigns should focus on ending the military weapons and tactics used by domestic law enforcement. Law enforcement agencies throughout the US empire have enhanced their military capacities since the 1960's, primarily focused on containing and repressing the national liberation and progressive social movements. For their arsenals they have acquired and incorporated military assault rifles, tanks, combat ready helicopters, grenades, hollow point bullets, camera and satellite integrate surveillance systems, infrared equipment, and sonic and microwave crowd control equipment, etc. Tactically, they incorporated various strategies of counterinsurgency and pacification, including envelopment tactics that surround communities, check-points that control traffic in and out of a community, "weed and seed" programs that deliberately divide communities, gang injunctions that criminalize social relationships and customs (youth fashions, informal associations, etc.), "stop and frisk" tactics that allow for illegal searches and seizures on a massive scale, and initiatives like "Operation Ghetto Storm" intentionally designed to terrorize oppressed communities. These campaigns are intended to heighten the contradictions between the people and the state (i.e. the government) and put the questions of institutional racism, national oppression, and US imperialism at the center of public debate within the empire[18].
- *Anti-Drone Campaigns* – The introduction of surveillance and military drones over US held territories marks a critical new phase in the development of the repressive capacities of the US government. In order to preserve any notion of democratic space, we must launch local campaigns to resist the use of drones at the local and municipal levels and join or start campaigns that challenge their legitimacy and utilization throughout the empire.
- *Prisoner Defense Campaigns* – These campaigns should focus on defending a) our political prisoners, prisoners of war, and political exiles from ongoing prosecution and violations of international law, b) our prisoners from unjust prosecution and human rights abuses, and c) community members from entrapment, false imprisonment, and false prosecution. These campaigns should employ every means of struggle we have available to us, but should rely first and foremost on methods of mass struggle, rather than legalistic methods that appeal to the enemy's courts rather than the people.

- *Truth and Reconciliation Initiatives* – Dr. Mutulu Shakur and other New Afrikan political prisoners, prisoners of war, and political exiles are demanding that the US government commit to a process of Truth and Reconciliation similar to that employed in post-Apartheid Azania (South Africa) to address the governments human rights violations during the COINTELPRO era and provide amnesty for the political prisoners, prisoners of war, and political exiles whom the US government transgressed against during this era. These Truth and Reconciliation campaigns can and should be launched on a local and regional level, following the model of organizers in Omaha, Nebraska regarding the Defense of the Omaha 2, which have targeted the role of local police forces in collaboration with the FBI in infiltrating organizations like the Black Panther Party and the Revolutionary Action Movement, and setting these organizations up via provocateur actions. These campaigns are essential to holding the US government accountable and fortifying the will and confidence of the people in their right and ability to successfully resist. On the Federal level people should link with and support the Truth and Commission organizing process being driven by Dr. Mutulu Shakur[19].
- *National Plan of Action for Racial Justice and Self-Determination* – This campaign should be focused on building a movement with enough strength and power to force the Federal government to implement broad social reform program based on international law to combat institutional racism and it various manifestations and legacies in the US empire. The National Plan of Action for Racial Justice and Self-Determination is an outgrowth of the World Conference Against Racism (WCAR) in Durban, South Africa and the Durban Declaration and Program of Action (DDPA), and calls on the Federal government to commit to a transformative program of action to combat inequality caused by the legacies of colonialism, genocide, enslavement, and economic exploitation. In addition to campaigning for this demand on Federal level, we should also demand that city, county and state governments pass similar measures that respect, protect, and fulfill the full human rights of oppressed and exploited peoples.

## General Strategies and Tactics

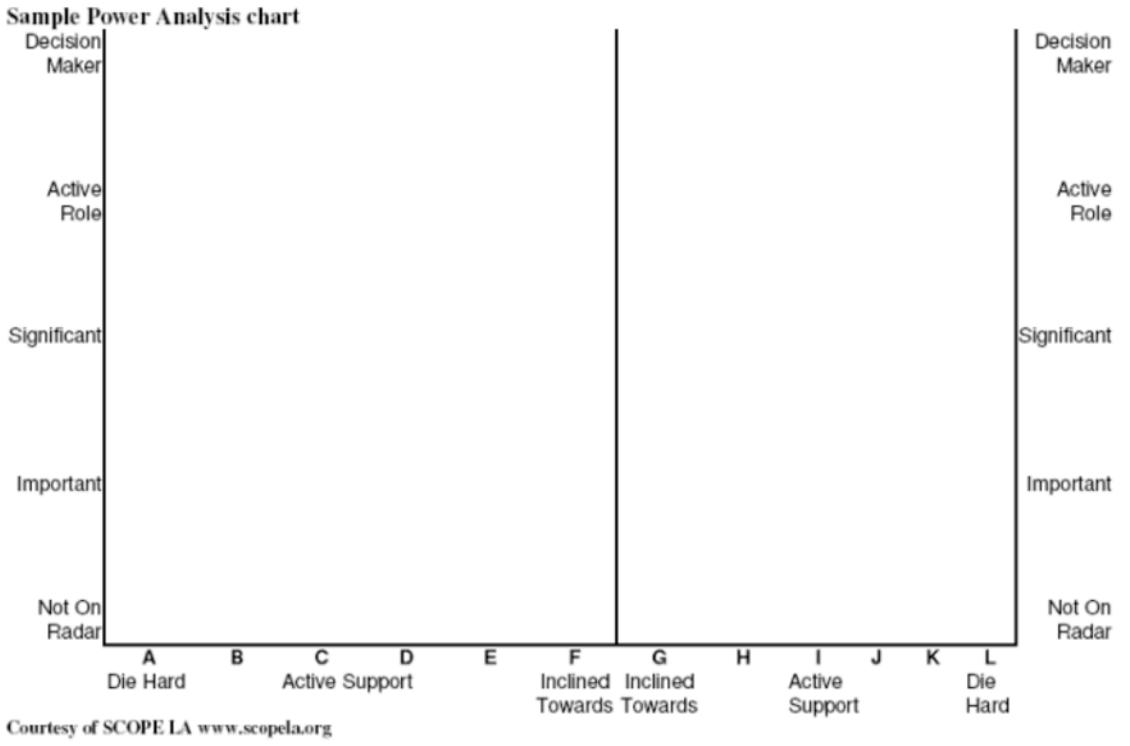
In order to win the basic demands listed above, we must develop comprehensive, but practical strategies and tactics to attain them.

One of the primary first steps for waging a wining campaign is clearly determining who supports what your advancing (your friends), who opposes it (your opponents and/or enemies), who is fundamentally indifferent, and who can possibly be moved to support your aims and objectives. With all of these forces you must then determine what are their strengths, what are their weaknesses, and what resources do they have at their disposal. Similarly, we must be equally clear about our strengths, weaknesses and resources. In order to do this, we strongly encourage everyone interested in building self-defense formations to engage in *Balance of Forces* or *Power Mapping* exercises to answer these questions. What follows is a sampling of how to conduct these exercises.

Balance of Forces or Power Mapping exercises chart a community's power structures and identify places of power and influence. This exercise also helps you determine the individuals and groups in your community who are affected by the issue and who can impact or

influence your opponent and/or enemy (like the police and the politicians who support them) via various strategies and tactics of resistance. You start the exercise by identifying all the individuals and groups in your community (like tenant organizations, homeowners organizations, community organizations, non-profits, unions, religious organizations and communities, politicians, political parties, professional associations, government institutions and organizations, businesses, etc.) who have or can be organized to exercise power or influence over your opponent and/or enemy.

A framework for doing this exercise and analysis is provided below[20]:




There are multiple ways to use this exercise. But, as it relates to formulating demands and campaigns the primary way to use this tool is to start by analyzing your enemies and/or opponents and what power and influence they have in general and over the issues you are specifically waging struggle over. You can start by asking some of these fundamental questions:

1. What power does your enemy/opponent have to meet your goals and/or demands? And by what authority?
2. What is your enemies/opponents history and background? Include significant individuals, specific organizations, and key social forces.
3. What is your enemies/opponents position on your goal and/or agenda? Why? How have they related to this goal and/or agenda in the past?
4. What is your enemies/opponents self-interest relative to this issue? And in general?
5. Who and what (as in organization, institution, socio-economic class, etc.) are your

enemies/opponents base and sources of support (i.e allies)?
7. Who are your enemies/opponents rivals and opposition?

This type of exercise can and should be done in a collective to deepen its analysis, including an analysis of your friends and allies and also of forces that are or appear to be indifferent.

In order to effectively use this exercise, you have to be able to determine the social connections that you've documented and uncovered to be able to figure out how to organize and mobilize people via your strategy to accomplish your goals. Figure out what forces have in common, where they differ, why they differ, and what can and will move them to alter or change their position. These are just a few of the questions that need to be answered. For a more thorough list of strategic questions please see the attachment listed as "*A Strategic Thinking Primer*"[21].

Once you have determined the interests of your enemies and friends, and clear on what are their strengths and weaknesses, you can then start developing and implementing an effective strategy and corresponding tactics.

The chart provided below is a starting reference for the development of general strategies and tactics[22].

| Method | Goal | Organizational Work | Organizational Capacity | Skill Development |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Direct Action** | Concentrate enough force to you're your enemy do what you want, via disruptions like demonstrations, strikes, boycotts, occupations, etc. | Building and mobilizing a substantive base | Turn out base for actions and make sure they have the training and ability to coordinate and manage confrontational actions | Outreach and Organizing Skill Development, Political Development to sustain engagement, and training and direct action tactics and coordination |
| **Legislative** | Move elected offices to support our agenda and demands via policy recommendations | Building relations with politicians and lobbying them | Organize the base to sustain protracted initiatives of engagement via phone calls, letters, action blasts, etc. | Skill development in how to lobby and how to engage elected officials on the basis of equality |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| enemies/opponents base and sources of support (i.e allies)? **Legal Advocacy** | Challenge various injustices via domestic or international legal remedies | Recruit lawyers and legal workers to support the organization, its program, and its leadership | Develop in-house legal analysis skills and capacity, make sure legal workers follow organizational strategy | Skill development in how to engage with professionals like lawyers and academics, and development in legal analysis, legal proceedings, and how to serve as plaintiffs, etc. |
| **Alliance Building** | Build alliances or fronts with organizations that share your politics, program, and principles to move your agenda, program, and campaigns | Build solid relationships with allies, engaged in joint work based on principle and shared interests | Members trained and prepared to engaged in relationship building and diplomacy | Skill development in how to be diplomatic, how to build alliances, and how to develop agendas, facilitate meetings, etc. |
| **Media and Public Education** | Get the media to cover your issues, work, and demands to educate the general public and gain support for the cause | | | Skill development in writing, doing media work, and public speaking |

**Mass Tactics**

Tactics are means of struggle employed in a campaign to achieve one's strategic objectives. What follows are some basic mass tactics that concentrate on non-violent and democratic means of struggle to gain the greatest degree of support and engagement from the masses of our people as is possible. These tactics can and should be employed to support our campaigns, and when appropriate to demonstrate our power to the state and capital to force them to make concrete concessions to meet our demands.

- *Boycotts* – This tactic calls on the masses to cease engagement with various state agencies and/or corporate entities. During boycotts, people withhold their support and/or patronage to disrupt their activities, curtail their operations, and hurt their profits in order to force them to comply with various demands for justice or systemic change. For example, we may not shop at various businesses or purchase various brands, or refuse to attend school or utilize services like public transportation, etc.
- *Divestment* – This tactic calls on the masses to cease investing their resources and labor in corporations and institutions that play a role in repression or are essential for the maintenance of the status quo. The primary objective is to interfere with the profits of corporations and to disrupt the financial flows of various institutions in order to force them to comply with our demands for justice and systemic change.
- *Sanctions* – In our current context, this tactic is a spin off from boycotts and divestment initiatives, wherein we seek to isolate various institutions and corporations by utilizing boycotts against other institutions and corporations that seek to do business with these entities. This tactic largely calls for shaming these corporations and institutions by highlighting their complicity with our main targets, and utilizing the boycott against them until they cease doing business with these entities to retain their brand name and market share.
- *Non-Compliance Campaigns* – This tactic calls on the masses to refuse to comply with certain laws, norms, and standards and calls on them to engage in mass civil disobedience by refusing to be obey the government until it complies with various demands. In practice, non-compliance campaigns can range from refusing to leave an occupied space when ordered to refusing to pay taxes, and a broad range of tactics in-between.

# Addressing Intra-Communal Violence

Despite the overwhelming containment strategies employed against New Afrikans by the US government and the forces of white supremacy, the cold and sad reality is that for decades many more New Afrikans have been killed at the hands of other New Afrikans than by agents of the state (regardless of nationality and race) or other enemy forces. Here we are speaking of direct killings, not the slow death being systematically committed against us by our enemies. This intra-communal violence is a product of our colonial socialization, the competition for scarce economic resources produced by our subjugation, and the internalization of white supremacy, patriarchy and other systems of oppression. The scale of the carnage we reap on each other makes us unintentional participants in our own genocide (for instance the most prevalent type of homicide against women is by partner or husband[23]). If the intra-communal violence and killings are going to stop then we are going to have to stop it, and not ask or depend on any outside entity to do it for us.

In order to address the question of intra-communal violence among New Afrikan people - turf wars, inter-personal violence, domestic violence, etc. - we must first expand our existing tools and strategies of self-defense and conflict resolution, and devise new ones. One means to do so, is to give special focus within our Self-Defense Networks to questions of community healing and conflict resolution in relationship to resource maximization and economic development. In order to end the violence, we are going to have to address the material constraints imposed on our people with the resources we have at hand. This means that we are going to have to do a much better job of organizing ourselves internally to maximize the use of the limited resources we do possess and use them strategically to access and produce more resources that will address our need for adequate income, housing, education, health care, food, water, and a healthy environment. This will require the creation of various types of cooperatives, land trusts, credit unions, and mutual aid societies.

***Every great dream begins with a dreamer. And always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the starts to change the world.***

**Harriet Tubman**

***Think and act on independent lines in this behalf, remembering that after all, it is the white man's civilization and the white man's government which are on trail. This crusade will determine whether that civilization can maintain itself by itself, or whether anarchy shall prevail; whether this Nation shall write itself down a success at self-government, or in deepest humiliation admit its failure complete; whether the precepts and theories of Christianity are professed and practiced by American white people ad Golden Rules of thought and action, or adopted as a system of morals to be preached to heathen until they attain to the intelligence which needs the system of Lynch Law.***

**Ida B. Wells-Barnett**

We are also going to have to draw our political and social leadership from new sources. We have to be intentional about uplifting and developing those members of our community who are the general victims of intra-communal abuse and violence, particularly women and members of the LGBTQI[24] sectors of the community. Building communities and movements that center the knowledge, wisdom, and skills of these sectors of the community are critical to the development of more holistic conflict resolution and healing strategies to quell the violence in our communities.

Campaigns to prevent intra-communal violence can target "set" or "gang" members and those on their periphery to produce community agreements, truces, and codes of conduct to mitigate and ultimately end community violence[25]. Education and moral persuasion campaigns can also be engaged when violence is committed. These campaigns can entail vigils, speak outs, community marches, and organized peace patrols to help prevent against retaliatory actions Community building initiatives, such as cookouts, block parties, cultural festivals, talent shows, sporting events, etc., that promote collaboration, social solidarity, and cultural dignity and combat the ills of rugged individualism and crass materialism that foster various kinds of violence should also be employed.

However, we have to recognize and be prepared to engage in substantial risk in this day and age in taking on this type of internal community organizing. We should have no illusions as to why more of it has not been done. The fact is a great deal of it hasn't been done because it often entails putting oneself in harm's way as a result of disrupting the economic activities and survival of various class and social sectors of our people. So, any serious organizing initiative of this type must be prepared to engage and address this risk.

However, given that the very survival of the New Afrikan community is in question, the risk is more than worth it. Community violence is a major obstacle and destabilizing factor in our organizing work and community building. To end intra-communal violence it is imperative that we take on this work guided by the teachings of George Jackson and his comrades in the California prison system in the 1960's and 70's. They aimed to "*transform the Black criminal mentality* (meaning anti-social, capitalistic, and predatory) *into a Black revolutionary mentality*"[26]. We have to move the Street Sets and the predominantly lumpen and disposable (to the capitalist system of production) class forces they represent from constituting a largely anti-social force into a revolutionary force committed to engaging in mass struggle and transformative social production for self-determination and liberation. This remains one of the primary tasks of the Black liberation movement as it continues to struggle to recover from the political defeats of the 1970's and 80's and the ongoing low-intensity, counterinsurgency warfare being waged against us from the 1960's to the present.

When we think about external violence perpetrated by the state and intra-communal violence it is important that we don't draw rigid dividing lines. A great deal of intra-communal violence associated with Turf Wars and competition for market share in the underground economy is directly tied to the United States government and its dominant role in managing the global economy. The government and the financial system it represents and protects are directly tied and profit from the lucrative underground economy ("illicit" and generic drugs, the sex trade, and various forms of indentured or slave labor). The government operates through various agencies, including the police, to ultimately control these markets. They employ means like spreading rumors and lies, set up operations and killings, jailhouse snitches, and market deals that favor one set over another, etc. So, in all reality, these two forms of violence are not as separate and distinct as they are portrayed[27].

**Internal Community-Building Measures to Prevent Intra-Communal Violence**

- *Youth Organizing* – In order to curb intra-communal violence amongst our people, we are going to have to make some heavy investments in our youth, as the violence is centered more and more amongst those between the ages of 12 and 25. It is imperative that we start providing avenues of social connection and validation for our youth that addresses questions of their identity and build sense of self, solidarity and community worth from the cradle on. Some means to do this include creating rites of passage and gender based groups, or sports teams and initiatives like the New Afrikan Scouts[28].

- *Cultural Work* – In order to reach the youth and sustain their attention, we have to commit ourselves to engaging in a more aggressive and robust struggle over the cultural products and images that are engaged and consumed by our people, and our youth in particular. We absolutely must not underestimate the power of popular consumer products like commercial rap and r & b, or the individualistic and culturally negating messages being promoted by Hollywood and corporate television that promote various forms of dysfunctionality to our youth. These influences profoundly affect the socialization of our youth, and the development of their aspirations, politics, and worldview. We have to be more deliberate about countering the anti-Afrikan and anti-human messages—especially of individualism, materialism and misogyny being perpetrated in popular culture. If we are to promote a culture of solidarity and resistance to oppression, we need to become more effectively organized in the area of cultural production and consolidate and focus our limited financial resources to begin to have a visible cultural impact. One example of revolutionary cultural production is the *Every 36 Hours CD project* produced by Nu Afrika Entertainment and the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement to support and promote the "*No More Trayvon Martins Campaign: Demanding a National Plan of Action for Racial Justice and Self-Determination*". This project brings home the fact that in 2012, "**Every 36 Hours**" a New Afrikan woman, man or child is executed at the hands of the police that occupy our nation and communities. This project memorializes our dead, calls for resistance to the occupation of our communities, and promotes concrete solutions to end our oppression[29].
- *Health and Healing Work* – Next to Indigenous Peoples, New Afrikans suffer from the afflictions of chronic diseases – hypertension, heart disease, diabetes, asthma, cancer, STI's, HIV/AIDS, etc. – more than any other people living within the US empire. New Afrikans also suffer an extremely high rate of mental illness and drug and alcohol addiction. These afflictions are a direct result of the stresses, strains, and exposures (from environmental racism primarily) produced by the colonial subjugation and the institutional dynamics of white supremacy that New Afrikan people are subjected to. Intra-communal violence is often a means employed by the oppressed to deal with the stresses of subjugation and the afflictions it produces. To reduce stress induced violence (as it will not be eliminated until national and social liberation are fully realized) it is critical that we promote individual self-care, community care, a healthy diet, exercise and physical training (yoga, martial arts, etc.), and non-toxic environments. It is also essential that we build our own clinics and health facilities to provide holistic, accessible and affordable health care for our people. These can be organized like the many free health clinics organized in our people's history, or the detox center organized by Dr. Mutulu Shakur, or the Health Missions organized by the Cuban government as part of their mutual aid and solidarity in places like Haiti, Venezuela, and throughout the Afrikan continent[30].
- *Prison Reentry Programs* – Developing and operating effective reentry programs are going to be essential towards ending intra-communal violence in our communities. A key part of these programs must be providing the men and women reentering society with viable economic means and substantive social engagement. We must create alternative economic networks, institutions, and systems that these brothers and sisters can plug into like urban gardens, farmers markets, cooperatives of various kinds, and

cooperative workers' initiatives and unions. If we don't work to provide these alternatives, we leave our people with the reality of the streets and its economic cycles that are highly dependent on interpersonal violence and super-exploitative means of exchange and production. In addition to the social aspects of cooperatives and other economic programs, prison reentry programs also must, on a cultural level, deliberately facilitate peoples' creativity and solidarity. For example, popular education and creative writing workshops are essential.

- *Conflict and Community Mediation* – These processes entail identifying and addressing interpersonal and intra-communal conflicts and contradictions, and devising mutually agreed upon methods to rectify and overcome these problems. These processes must be widely promoted and integrated into the core practices of our Block Committees, Neighborhood Councils, Community Councils, Elder's Councils. The committee's must stay attuned to the social activities and developments within their respective fields of operation and proactively seek out means to engage and resolve them.

***I met Marx, Lenin, Trotsky, Engles, and Mao when I entered prison and they redeemed me. For the first four years I studied nothing but economics and military ideas. I met Black Guerillas: George "Big Jake" Lewis, and James Carr, W. L. Nolan, Bill Christmas, Torry Gibson, and many, many others. We attempted to transform the Black criminal mentality into a Black revolutionary mentality.***

**George Jackson**

# Closing Notes

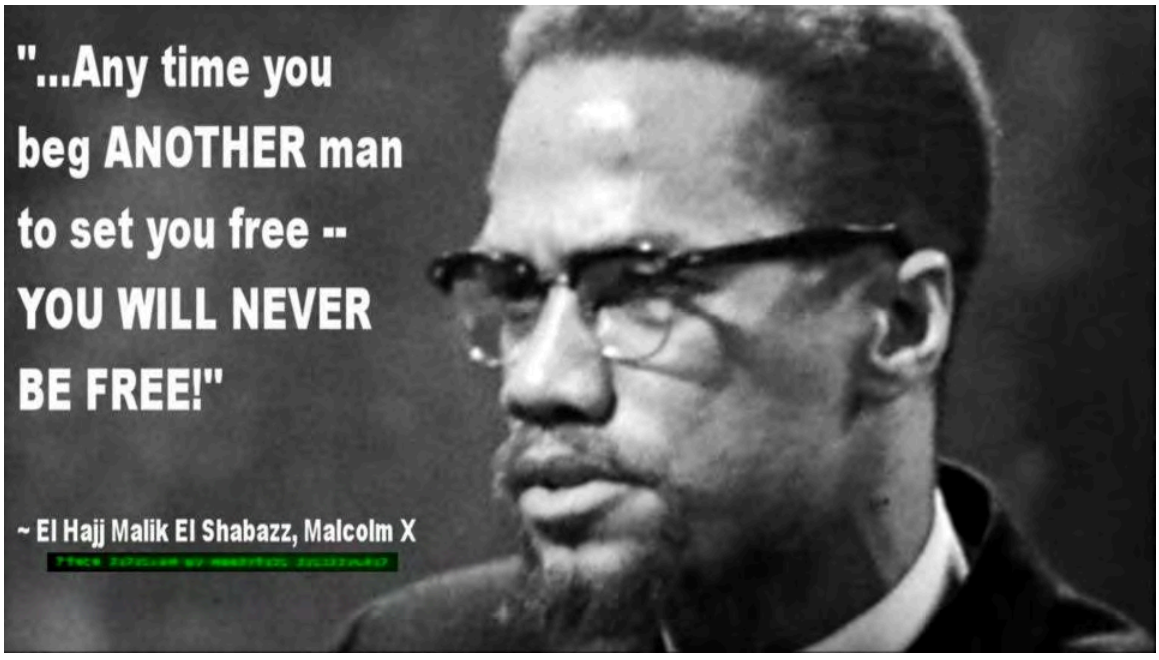
Given the cold facts demonstrating the systemic genocide being perpetrated against New Afrikan people, it is clear that we are in a state of war. In order to survive, and ultimately thrive, we must move from the passive state of being "*in war*", into the active, conscious, and engaged state of being "*at war*". To be "in war" means to be conscious of the aggressions being waged against us, both by external forces, in our case the US government and transnational corporations (i.e. capital), and internal forces as a result of the contradictions of our oppression or at the bidding of our enemies, but to be in a state of active denial and therefore unorganized to confront them. To be "*at war*" means to not only be conscious of these threats but also to be organized to engage, counter, and overcome them.

We believe this handbook provides an outline for how we can move from the position of being "*in war*", to being proactively organized to defend our persons and our rights. We also believe it provides a conceptual foundation for some of the basic infrastructure needed to advance our struggle for national and social liberation. However, the structures and institutions listed in this Handbook are in their elementary forms only vehicles of "*survival pending revolution*"[31]. They are suggestions that provide means for us to push back and survive the genocidal onslaughts being waged against us, but won't eliminate them in and of themselves.

We cannot be satisfied with half-measures and half victories. Being able to defend ourselves, having the right to vote in a settler-colonial empire, having access to employment under the capitalist system, are all necessary for our present survival, but do not amount to liberation. We must never forget that capitalism and imperialism are and have been more than willing to make various compromises, just as so long as they didn't ultimately wind up breaking the system. The defeat of US apartheid between the 1950's and 70's, which eliminated the visible manifestations of white supremacy while leaving its colonial and economic foundations in tact, was one such bend but don't break compromise, as was the so-called "New Deal" of the 1930's and 40's. *Ultimately, in order to eliminate police terrorism, state repression, economic exploitation, national oppression, patriarchy, white supremacy and imperialism we need a revolution – a national revolution to end our colonial subjugation and a social revolution to transform the economic, social, and ecological relationships we have with everything around us*. Despite its obvious shortcomings in regards to advancing a revolutionary program to address the limitations of our present state and conditions, this Handbook was written with the clear understanding that revolution is in order, and that order for it to happen, we are the ones who are going to have to make it happen, one step at a time.

Let's get to work!

Free the Land By Any Means Necessary!




***Written by Kali Akuno for the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement. Support provided by Arlene Eisen, Sacajawea Hall, Doug Norberg, Jamal P. Oliver, and Linda Tigani***

# Footnotes

[1] A New Afrikan is a person of Afrikan descent, particularly those historically enslaved and colonized in the Southeastern portion of the North American continent, that presently live under the colonial subjugation of the United States government. New Afrikan is the connotation of the national identity of this Afrikan people that recognizes our political aspirations for self-determination, national independence, and sovereignty.

[2] See "*Persistent Inequalities: Globalization and the Economic Status of African Americans*", by Clarence Lusane at http://racism.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1145:economic06-2&catid=50&Itemid=173 and "Race, Crime, and the Pool of Surplus Criminality: Or Why the War on Drugs was a War on Blacks", by Kenneth B. Nunn at http://scholarship.law.ufl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1178&context=facultypub.

[3] See "*The Underground Economy of the Urban Poor*", interview with Sudhir Venkatesh at http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=6195673, "*Hiding in the Shadows: The Growth of the Underground Economy*", by Friedrich Schneider and Dominik Enst at http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/issues/issues30/index.htm, and "*Inside the Shadow Economy: A Growing Underworld Bazar*", by Andrew Leonard at http://newamericamedia.org/2011/09/inside-the-shadow-economy----a-growing-underworld-bazaar.php

[4] See "Incarceration rate for African Americans now 6 times the national average", see Russia Times at http://rt.com/usa/incarceration-african-black-prison-606/, "*Genocide Against the Black Nation*" by Mutulu Shakur, et all, in Schooling the Generations in the Politics of Prison, "*The Third World at Home: Political Prisons and Prisoners in the United States*", by Ward Churchill in Cages of Steel: The Politics of Imprisonment in the United States, and "*Deadly Symbiosis: Rethinking race and imprisonment in 21st century America*", by Loic Wacquant at http://bostonreview.net/BR27.2/wacquant.html.

[5] See "Report on the Extrajudicial Killing of 120 Black People", by Kali Akuno and Arlene Eisen at http://mxgm.org/report-on-the-extrajudicial-killings-of-120-black-people/.

[6] See "The End of White America?", by Hua Hsu at http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2009/01/the-end-of-white-america/307208/, "The Last White Election?", by Mike Davis at http://newleftreview.org/II/79/mike-davis-the-last-white-election, "Civil War Over Gun Rights? Sheriffs war Obama they'll die to protect second amendment", by Megan Greenlaw, and "Civil War: Obama denies states' petitions to secede from the Union", by Tea Party.org at http://www.teaparty.org/civil-war-obama-denies-states-petitions-to-secede-from-union-18579/.

[7] See "*When the Police Go Military*", by Al Baker at http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/04/sunday-review/have-american-police-become-militarized.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0, "*How the War on Terror has Militarized the Police*", by Arthur Rizer and Joseph Hartman at http://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2011/11/how-the-war-on-terror-has-militarized-the-police/248047/, "*The Militarization of Local Police*", by Brad Lockwood at http://www.forbes.com/sites/bradlockwood/2011/11/30/the-militarizing-of-local-police/, "*How the Feds fueled the militarization of the Police*", by Justice Elliott at http://www.salon.com/2011/12/24/how_the_feds_fueled_the_militarization_of_police/, and "*A decade after 9/11, Police Departments are increasingly militarized*", by Radley Balko at http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/09/12/police-militarization-9-11-september-11_n_955508.html.

[8] See "*Cutbacks force police to curtail calls for some crimes*", by Kevin Johnson at http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/nation/2010-08-25-1Anresponsecops25_ST_N.htm, and "*The impact of the economic downturn on American police agencies*", by the US Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services at http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/files/RIC/Publications/e101113406_Economic%20Impact.pdf.

[9] See "*Yup, the Tea Party's Racist Study Finds (But, its Not Alone)*", by Seth Freed Wessler at http://colorlines.com/archives/2010/10/the_tea_party_is_racist.html, and "*Tea Party Nationalism*" by the Institute for Education and Research on Human Rights at http://www.irehr.org/issue-areas/tea-party-nationalism.

[10] See "*The Persistence of Racial Resentment*", by Thomas B. Edsall at http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/02/06/the-persistence-of-racial-resentment/.

[11] See "*What the FBI's Occupy documents do – and don't – reveal*", by Gavin A. Aronson at http://www.motherjones.com/mojo/2013/01/occupy-fbi-documents-naomi-wolf, "*FBI surveillance of Occupy Wall*

*Street detailed*", by Jason Cherkis and Zach Carter at http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/01/05/fbi-occupy-wall-street_n_2410783.html, "*FBI investigated Occupy as possible terrorism threat, internal documents show*", by Alice Hines at http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/12/23/fbi-occupy-wall-street_n_2355883.html, "*Is stop-and-frisk spreading to other cities?*", by Cristina Costantini at http://abcnews.go.com/ABC_Univision/bill-bratton-bring-stop-frisk-oakland/story?id=18314831, and "*Stop and Frisk may spread to other cities*", by Jamar Hooks at http://www.colorofchange.org/blog/2013/feb/7/stop-and-frisk-spreads/.

[12] See "*Repealing Obama's Perpetual War: Revoking the authorization for use of military force*", by Norman Solomon at http://www.globalresearch.ca/obamas-perpetual-war/5323590, "*How Perpetual War became US ideology*", by James Joyner at http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2011/05/how-perpetual-war-became-us-ideology/238600/, "*The President of Perpetual War*", by David Sirota at http://www.truthdig.com/report/item/the_president_of_perpetual_war_20130125/, "*The Sources of Perpetual War*", by Slouching Towards Columbia at http://slouchingcolumbia.wordpress.com/2013/02/07/the-sources-of-perpetual-war/.

[13] See "*Giving in to the Surveillance State*", by Shane Harris at http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/23/opinion/whos-watching-the-nsa-watchers.html, "*Everybody is a Target in the American Surveillance State*", by John W. Whitehead at http://www.huffingtonpost.com/john-w-whitehead/utah-data-center_b_1380033.html, "*US Terrorism Agency to tap a vast database of citizens*", by Julia Angwin at http://online.wsj.com/article_email/SB10001424127887324478304578171623040640006-lMyQjAxMTAyMDEwMzExNDMyWj.html?mod=wsj_valettop_email, and "*FBI's abuse of the Surveillance State is the real scandal needing investigation*", by Glenn Greenwald at http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/nov/13/petraeus-surveillance-state-fbi.

[14] See http://www.globalissues.org/article/75/world-military-spending, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_military_expenditures, and http://www.fas.org/irp/budget/index.html. One also has to factor in that the US government maintains a secret budget for military and intelligence expenditures that is not disclosed to the public, see http://www.theregister.co.uk/2009/05/08/us_dod_black_budget/ and http://www.wired.com/dangerroom/2009/05/pentagons-black-budget-grows-to-more-than-50-billion/. See also "*The Discrediting of US Military Power*", by Tom Englehardt at http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2012/10/discrediting-us-military-power-tom-engelhardt, "*Ron Paul says US has military personnel in 130 nations and 900 overseas bases*", by Truth-O-Meter at http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/2011/sep/14/ron-paul/ron-paul-says-us-has-military-personnel-130-nation/, and "*737 US Military Bases + Global Empire*", by Chalmers Johnson at http://www.alternet.org/story/47998/737_u.s._military_bases_%3D_global_empire.

[15] See "*Obama's unprecedented number of deportations*", by Tanya Golash-Boza at http://www.counterpunch.org/2013/01/25/obamas-unprecedented-number-of-deportations/, "*Incarceration Nation*", by Fareed Zakaria at http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,2109777,00.html, "*The cost of a nation of incarceration*", by Martha Teichner at http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-3445_162-57418495/the-cost-of-a-nation-of-incarceration/, "*New high in US prison numbers*", by N. C. Aizenman at http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/story/2008/02/28/ST2008022803016.html.

[16] See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Violent_Crime_Control_and_Law_Enforcement_Act, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antiterrorism_and_Effective_Death_Penalty_Act_of_1996, and "*Another Crime Bill*", by Mutulu Shakur at http://www-personal.umich.edu/~chunyun/CrimeBill.html.

[17] This diagram was adapted from a diagram originally developed by the Center for Third World Organizing (CTWO) reprinted in "*Stir it Up: Lessons in Community Organizing and Advocacy*", by Rinku Sen, Jossey-Bass Press, 2003

[18] See "*Overkill: The Rise of Paramilitary Police Raids in America*", by Radley Balko for the CATO Institute at http://www.cato.org/doc-download/sites/cato.org/files/pubs/pdf/balko_whitepaper_2006.pdf.

[19] For more information on the "*Truth and Reconciliation*" process being organized by Dr. Mutulu Shakur see http://mutulushakur.com/site/2011/05/towards-a-truth-and-reconciliation-commission-for-new-africanblack-political-prisoners-prisoners-of-war-and-freedom-fighters/. For some information on the Omaha 2, Ed Poindexter and Mondo we Langa, see http://www.examiner.com/topic/omaha-two-1/articles.

[20] This chart is taken from the website of the Praxis Project, but was originally developed by SCOPE based in Los Angeles.

[21] The "*Strategic Thinking Primer*" was developed by Kali Akuno for the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement

(MXGM) in 2000.

[22] This chart is adapted from one developed by Joan Minieri and Paul Gestsos in "*Tools for Radical Democracy: How to Organize for Power in your Community*", published by Jossey-Bass, 2007.

[23] See "*Domestic violence homicides*", by Domestic Violence Resource Center at http://www.dvrc-or.org/domestic/violence/resources/C61/#hom.

[24] LGBTQI stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex.

[25] See "*Code of the Thug Life*", by Mutulu Shakur and Tupac Shakur at http://www.assatashakur.org/forum/open-forum/9011-code-thug-life.html as an example.

[26] This quote is taken from "*Blood in My Eye*" by George Jackson.

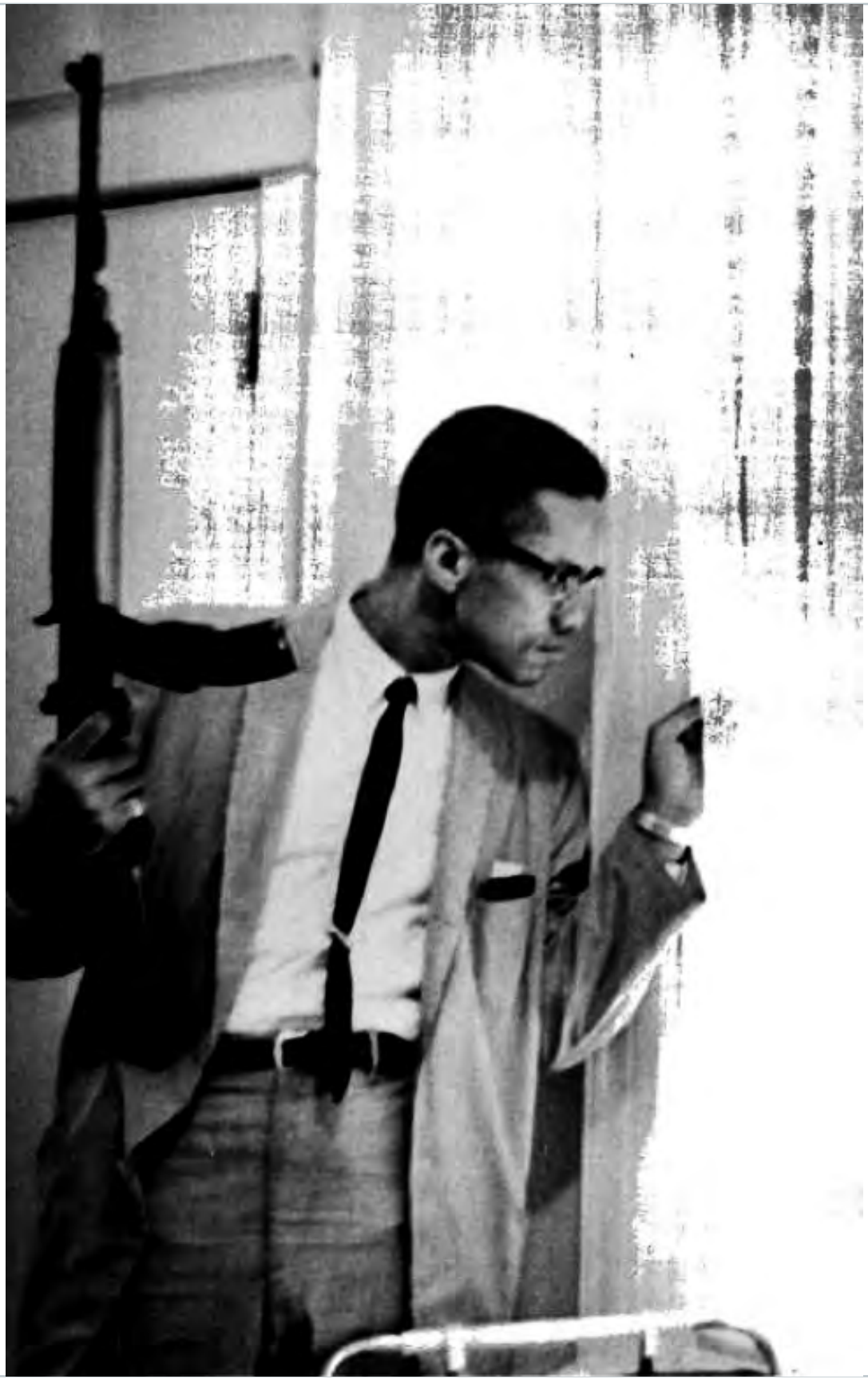
[27] See "*Whiteout: The CIA, Drugs, and the Press*", by Alexander Cockburn and Jeffrey St. Clair, Verso Press, 1998, "*Cocaine Politics: Drugs, Armies and the CIA in Central America*", by Peter Dale Scott and Jonathan Marshal, University of California Press, 1991, "*The Politics of Heroin in Southeast Asia*", by Alfred W. McCoy, et al, Harper and Row, 1971, and "*Dark Alliance: The CIA, the Contras and the Crack Cocaine Explosion*", by Gary Webb, Seven Stories Press, 1998. See also "Allegations of CIA Drug Trafficking" at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allegations_of_CIA_drug_trafficking for additional sources.

[28] See http://www.cadnational.org/ for more information on Camp Pumziko and the New Afrikan Scouts.

[29] See http://mxgm.org/every-36-hours-the-cd/ for more information on the Every 36 Hours CD Project.

[30] See "About Dr. Mutulu Shakur" at http://mutulushakur.com/site/about/ for more information about his Detox work. For an example of a BPP Free Health Clinic see http://www.itsabouttimebpp.com/Unity_Support/pdf/Dr_Tolbert_Small_Interview.pdf, and for other examples of BPP Health and Community Programs see http://www.stanford.edu/group/blackpanthers/programs.shtml and "*The Black Panther Party: Service to the People Programs*", by David Hilliard, University of New Mexico Press, 2008. And for information on Cuba's Health Missions see "Cuban medical internationalism" at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cuban_medical_internationalism and "The Cuban Revolutionary Doctor: The Ultimate Weapon of Solidarity", by Steve Brouwer at http://monthlyreview.org/2009/01/01/the-cuban-revolutionary-doctor-the-ultimate-weapon-of-solidarity.

[31] "*Survival pending revolution*" is a phrase made popular in 1970's by Huey P. Newton and the Black Panther Party. Hey sums them up with this quote: *"…We recognized that in order to bring the people to the level of consciousness where they would seize the time, it would be necessary to serve their interests in survival by developing programs which would help them to meet their daily needs. For a long time we have had such programs not only for survival but for organizational purposes. Now we not only have a breakfast program for schoolchildren, we have clothing programs, we have health clinics which provide free medical and dental services, we have programs for prisoners and their families, and we are opening clothing and shoe factories to provide for more of the needs of the community. Most recently we have begun a testing and research program on sickle-cell anemia, and we know that 98 percent of the victims of this disease are Black. To fail to combat this disease is to submit to genocide; to battle it is survival. All these programs satisfy the deep needs of the community but they are not solutions to our problems. That is why we call them survival programs, meaning survival pending revolution. We say that the survival program of the Black Panther Party is like the survival kit of a sailor stranded on a raft. It helps him to sustain himself until he can get completely out of that situation. So the survival programs are not answers or solutions, but they will help us to organize the community around a true analysis and understanding of their situation. When consciousness and understanding is raised to a high level then the community will seize the time and deliver themselves from the boot of their oppressors. "All of our survival programs are free. We have never charged the community a dime to receive the things they need from any of our programs and we will not do so. We will not get caught up in a lot of embarrassing questions or paperwork which alienate the people. If they have a need we will serve their needs and attempt to get them to understand the true reasons why they are in need in such an incredibly rich land. Survival programs will always be operated without charge to those who*



# General Principles and Protocols

None of the structures outlined in this work or the strategies and methods of struggle mentioned above will work without the establishment of clear operating principles and protocols. Principles and protocols are essential tools for building structure and accountability in our work.

To address our internal organizing needs principles and protocols should establish codes of conduct, how to raise constructive criticism, how to provide honest and reflective self-criticism, how to surface subjective issues like differing beliefs and opinions, and objective issues such as material limitations. They should also outline what dispute or conflict resolution mechanisms will be employed and how accountability processes and procedures will be structured and managed.

Our principles and protocols should also address how we aim to engage with the external world, particularly the US government and its agencies like the police. These principles and protocols should be designed to ensure our safety by providing concrete means on how to avoiding unnecessary conflict with the police and other law enforcement agencies, and how to respond appropriately in a collective manner when conflict does arise. Some of the things that should be addressed are how to respond to police aggressive and provocation, how to address police violence, how to deal with arrests, and how to maintain collective solidarity and mutual support in the face of government repression and imprisonment.

Each community should democratically determine its own principles and protocols. However, it is not always necessary to recreate the wheel in this field. There are numerous examples of general principles (which are called Operating Norms or Community Agreements by some) and protocols that organizers and communities can reference and borrow from to incorporate into their work.

For example, here are few of the general Operating Principles and Protocols employed by the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement.

1. Establish clear responsibilities, roles, and divisions of labor. Create space for everyone to participate in meaningful ways.
2. Establish clear lines of communication, be clear about what is public information and what is strictly internal and on a need to know basis.
3. Do your homework and be prepared on all occasions – know your enemy, know yourself, know your surroundings, and your socio-historic context.
4. Respect the rules and structures of the organization. Channel disagreements and disputes to the delegated individuals and structures designed to handle disagreements and disputes.
5. Honor everyone's time and commitment. Start engagements on time and end them on time.
6. Respect everyone's right to speak. Equal speaking time for everyone.
7. Challenge people's actions, ideas, and statements, not their character.
8. Challenge sexist and homophobic actions, statements, and assumptions.
9. Challenge liberalism – meaning don't go along to get along in the face of inappropriate or unprincipled behavior.
10. Assume responsibility for your statements and actions.
11. Honor Agreements.
12. Complete Tasks.

# Present Models of Organizing and Resistance

What follows are three examples of where elements of the organizing framework described in this Handbook have been practiced over the past 15 years. More extensive case studies can and should be done on all of these examples. But, what follows here are just short summaries of the histories and models of struggle employed in these cities with references for further study and modeling.

**New York City, NY**

In response to the February 4, 1999 extrajudicial killing of Amadou Diallo by the New York Police Department (NYPD) – who fired 41 shots at Diallo, striking him 19 times – a broad multinational mobilization occurred that posed the first major challenge to the NYPD since the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense and the social movements of the late 1960's and early 1970's. This mobilization employed mass demonstrations, sit-in's, and occupations, and incorporated a number of cultural workers, primarily hip hop artists, to produce cultural works that reached and educated millions. Out of this mobilization the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement (MXGM) and its allies, formed the People's Self-Defense Campaign (PSDC) and initiated Copwatch programs in several boroughs of the city. Over the past 13 years, PSDC and Copwatch have organized several permanent committees throughout the city, trained thousands in Know Your Rights advocacy, pursued hundreds of cases against police abuse, and fought against reactionary policies like "stop and frisk".

Resources:

1. Watch for Criminals, Watch for Cops http://www.indypressny.org/nycma/voices/190/briefs/briefs_2/.
2. Ethnography as Resistance http://year0.org/2013/02/02/ethnography-as-resistance-these-streets-are-watching/.
3. Telling Our Stories http://revolutionaryfrontlines.wordpress.com/2012/10/26/telling-our-stories-mxgm-member-talks-nypd-violence-and-calls-for-passage-of-the-community-safety-act/.
4. Copwatch: MXGM 3 on Brooklyn Review http://mxgm.org/copwatch-mxgm-3-on-brooklyn-review/.

**Oakland, CA**

In response to the extrajudicial killing of Oscar Grant by Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) police on January 1st, 2009, a broad, multinational mobilization occurred that shut down the operations of the city on several occasions in January and February of that year with massive demonstrations that brought the downtown area to a standstill, blockades of major intersections to curtail traffic and trade, sit-in occupations to direct the proceedings at city hall, and direct action on several select targets throughout the city to demonstrate the necessity for justice. Over the course of several months, core elements of the mass mobilization organized

themselves into a broad multi-national coalition to sustain the mass mobilizations, initiate a citywide organizing drive, and develop a unified strategy and program of action. This coalition was one of the first forces to call for and organize a general assembly, similar to those utilized by the Occupy movement in 2011, and to call for a "general strike" to ensure that its demands were met. This broad coalition, in addition to various organizations taking individual initiative, built a statewide "Justice for Oscar Grant Movement", that had a national and international following. Throughout 2009 and 2010 this movement employed a diversity of tactics to keep the pressure on the government, and ensured that the trial of Johannes Mehserle, the police officer who murdered Oscar Grant, was a political trail, even after it was moved from the Bay Area to Los Angeles in the attempt to protect the police. This movement and the pressure it was able to employ was the determining factor in ensuring the conviction of Johannes Mehserle in 2010.

Resources:

1. Documents written and compiled by the organization Advance the struggle http://advancethestruggle.wordpress.com/justice-for-oscar-grant/
2. "An Open Letter to the Oscar Grant Movement" by Kali Akuno http://navigatingthestorm.blogspot.com/2010/07/open-letter-to-justice-for-oscar-grant.html.
3. "Open Letter" Part 2 by Kali Akuno http://navigatingthestorm.blogspot.com/2010/07/open-letter-to-justice-to-oscar-grant.html.

**Anaheim, CA**

In response to the Anaheim, California Police Departments extrajudicial killings of two Latino men, Manuel Angel Diaz, 25 and Joel Acevedo, 21 on July 21st and 22nd, 2012 respectively, the Latino community in Anaheim engaged in a sustained direct action mobilization against the Police department and Anaheim city officials for well over two weeks. Latino residents and their allies used a range of tactics including marches, rallies, sit in's, a picket of Disneyland and occupations of intersections and police and city offices to ensure that business could not proceed as usual to guarantee that their issues were addressed. In addition to the intolerable police killing of at least five Latinos in the past year, the mobilizations drew attention to the vast inequality between white and Latino communities in Anaheim and the colonial status of Latinos who comprise 54% of the population and have virtually no representation in City government. Over the course of several months this mobilization for justice for the two stolen lives turned into a sustained political drive to transform the city by putting more Latino's into key political offices. As of February 2013, the drive for justice and accountability for the extrajudicial killings committed by the Police continue, as does the drive for political representation and more power within the framework of the Anaheim government.

Resources:

1. Anaheim: A Tale of Two Cities http://youtu.be/Nao4z6Dghco.
2. Latino protests in Anaheim continue http://www.latinopov.com/blog/?p=5891.

3. Can Anaheim repair a broken trust with Latino community? http://www.voiceofoc.org/oc_north/article_1a02233e-dbe1-11e1-813d-0019bb2963f4.html.
4. Unrest in Anaheim could lead to more Latino representation in the city http://www.voxxi.com/anaheim-latino-representation/.
5. Anaheim rejects proposal aimed at boosting Latino representation http://latino.foxnews.com/latino/politics/2012/08/09/anaheim-rejects-proposal-aimed-at-boosting-latino-representation/.
6. Another Injunction aimed at Anaheim gang http://www.ocregister.com/articles/gang-383703-members-injunction.html.

# A Strategic Thinking Primer

1. What is the issue/struggle?
2. What is the nature or make up of this issue/struggle?
3. What are the contradictions pertaining to this issue/struggle? What is the primary contradiction? What is the secondary contradiction?
4. What are the objective factors of this issue? What are the subjective factors of this issue/struggle?
5. Who or what are the motive forces of change in this struggle? (Primary)
6. Who are the opposing forces involved in this issue/struggle?
7. What are the contradictions between these forces? The primary contradictions? The secondary contradictions?
8. What is the history of struggle on this issue? What have been the critical moments of decision in this struggle?
9. What are the general aspects, tendencies, and features of this struggle? What are the specific aspects, tendencies and features of this struggle?
10. Why is this issue important to us? (Afrikan people, MXGM, etc.)
11. What are our interests in addressing this issue/struggle?
12. What are we fighting for in addressing this issue/struggle? In the short term? In the long term?
13. What are our strengths in addressing this issue? What are our weaknesses?
14. How do we build on our strengths? How do we address and correct our weaknesses?
15. Who or what are the motive forces of change in this struggle? (Secondary)
16. How do we relate to these motive forces or change agents?
17. Who are our friends? Why are they our friends? What are their expressed and real interests in this struggle? What are their short and long-term objectives? What are their strengths? What are their weaknesses?
18. Who are our enemies? Why are they our enemies? What are their expressed and real interests in this struggle? What are their short and long-term objectives? What are their strengths? What are their weaknesses?
19. Who are the neutral forces? Why are they neutral on this issue? Can they become our friends? How do we keep them from becoming enemies?
20. What factors in this struggle can we independently impact, manipulate, or change?
21. What do we need to know more about in this struggle? How do we obtain this information and knowledge?
22. What is the current balance of forces in the struggle? Who's winning or in possession of the momentum and initiative? Who's losing? Why?
23. How has this balance of forces shifted from the past to the present? What were the causes of the shift? What shifts can we anticipate in the future?
24. What space do we independently operate in?
25. What factors in this struggle can we independently impact, manipulate, or change?
26. What are our operating principles in this struggle? What are we willing to compromise? What are will unwilling to compromise?
27. Who should we be forming alliances with? Why? In the short-term? In the long-term?

28. Who should we be forming tactical alliances with? Why? In the short-term? In the long-term?
29. What space can we operate within with our friends and allies?
30. What factors can we collectively impact, manipulate or change?
31. What are our priorities?
32. What is our present capacity for action? How do we build our capacity? How do we not tax our exhaust our capacity?
33. What actions can we take? What actions should we take? What are the goals of our actions?
34. What are the positive possibilities of our actions? What are the probable negative constraints?
35. Who in our ranks will do what? When? Where? How? With what resources and supports? What additional resources and supports are needed?

# Know Your Rights Handouts

**Knowing Your Context**

ONLY use the MXGM – NYC People's Self-Defense and Copwatch materials attached as guides and examples.

Be clear that you have to do your own research on what is currently "legal" or "illegal" in your area regarding the provision of legal protections, i.e. your "rights". In practice, your civic right to monitor and document the police is largely determined by local political conditions. Given the uneven state of political organization throughout the empire, civil codes and laws laws are not uniform throughout the United States in this area. Rather, they differ from state to state, from county to county, and from city to city.

So, do your homework to clearly determine the limits of "legality" in your area of work and struggle so you are as clear as can be on what your facing. We also strongly encourage you to develop your own Copwatch and Know Your Rights materials to suite your local political and legal dynamics.

Finally, be sure to consult with local progressive and radical legal services in your area, get in contact with local legal clinics, or groups like the National Conference of Black Lawyers (NCBL), the National Lawyers Guild (NLG), and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), etc., to get their advice and bring them into the fold of supporting your organizing work.

# A Short History of Self-Defense Organizing in the New Afrikan Community

The following articles are only a brief sample of some of the critical works that explore our history of protracted struggle to defend ourselves from the forces of white supremacy and capitalist exploitation. These articles are from Akinyele Umoja from the New Afrikan People's Organization and the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement and New Afrikan Political Prisoner Russell "Maroon" Shoatz.

**Akinyele Omowale Umoja**

Akinyele Omowale Umoja is an educator and scholar-activist. Dr. Umoja has varied experiences as an educator. He has taught in secondary schools, alternative schools, and colleges and universities, as well as developed Afrikan-centered curriculum for public schools and community education programs.

Currently, he is an Associate Professor and department chair in the Department of African-American Studies at Georgia State University (GSU). At GSU, Umoja is responsible for teaching courses related to the history of people of African descent in Georgia, the Civil Rights Movement and other Black political and social movements, courses on the enslavement of African people in the New World, African religion and philosophy, and 19th and 20th century Black political and social movements.

Dr. Umoja's writing has been featured in scholarly publications as *The Journal of Black Studies*, *New Political Science*, *The International Journal of Africana Studies*, *Black Scholar*, *Radical History Review* and *Socialism and Democracy*. Umoja was one of the contributors to *Blackwell Companion on African-American History*, edited by Alton Hornsby; *The Black Panther Party Reconsidered*, edited by Charles Earl Jones; *Liberation, Imagination, and the Black Panther Party*, edited by Kathleen Cleaver andGeorge Katsiaficus; and "Malcolm X: A Historical Reader", edited by James Conyers and Andrew Smallwood. Umoja's first single authored book titled WE WILL SHOOT BACK: ARMED RESISTANCE IN THE MISSISSIPPI FREEDOM MOVEMENT is due to be published by New York University Press in April 2013.

Umoja has been active over thirty-five years in the liberation struggle of Afrikan people, particularly working with the New Afrikan Independence Movement. He is a founding member of the New Afrikan Peoples Organization and the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement. Brother Umoja has represented both organizations nationally and in international forums in the Caribbean, Africa, and Europe. He is particularly committed to work to support and gain amnesty for political prisoners and prisoners of war and to win reparations for Afrikan people. Umoja has also involved himself in the solidarity movement for democracy and self-determination of Haiti.

Dr. Umoja has been a contributor to commercial and popular documentaries on the

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Dr. Umoja has been a contributor to commercial and popular documentaries on the experience of the Black Freedom struggle. Umoja was a featured commentator on American Gangster Dr. Mutulu Shakur Season 3, Episode 6, which aired on November 8 2008. He also appears in "Bastards of the Party" (2006), produced by Anthony Fuqua and directed by Cle "Bone" Sloan, and Freedom Archives "Cointelpro 101" (2010).

**Russell Maroon Shoats**

#AF-3855
175 Progress Dr.
Waynesburg, PA 15370

Russell Maroon Shoats is a dedicated community activist, founding member of the Black Unity Council, former member of the Black Panther Party and soldier in the Black Liberation Army. He is serving multiple life sentences for an attack on a police station, which resulted in an officer being killed.

*Personal Background*

Russell was born August 1943 in Philadelphia. He was one of 12 children. At the age of 15 he became involved in a gang and was in and out of reform schools and youth institutions until the age of 18.

As a young man he married twice and became the father of seven children. In the mid 1960s Russell started becoming active in the New Afrikan liberation movement. He founded the Black Unity Council, which merged with the Philadelphia Chapter of the Black Panther Party in 1969.

Tensions were high in Philadelphia in the summer of 1970 because Philadelphia Police Chief Frank Rizzo had ordered a crackdown on militant groups in the run-up to the national convention of the Black Panther Party in Philadelphia on September 5, 1970.

Tensions intensified when police killed a black youth in Philadelphia. A retaliatory attack was carried out on a police station, killing officer Frank Von Coln and injuring one other.

The shooting of Von Coln prompted a 2 a.m. raid on the Black Panther headquarters in North Philadelphia. After the raid police officials allowed news photographers to take humiliating photos of the Black Panthers being strip searched on the street.

Russell and four others (who became known as the "Philly Five") were immediately charged with the attack. They went underground and continued to struggle for New Afrikan self-determination as part of the Black Liberation Army.

*Legal Case*

In January of 1972 Russell was captured. He was convicted of the attack on the police station and sentenced to life.

*1977 Prison Escape*

Russell escaped with three others from Huntingdon State Prison in 1977. Two were recaptured and the third was killed during the escape. Russell remained at large for 27 days, leading to a massive manhunt by local, state and federal forces, as well as citizen recruits from nearby white, rural areas.

From his capture in 1977 until 1989 Russell was shipped from state, county and federal prisons, kept in long-term solitary confinement the entire time. In 1979 he was forcibly transferred to the Fairview State Hospital for the Criminally Insane. While at Fairview he was forcibly drugged, which in one case lead to him being hospitalized when he was overdosed.

*1980 Prison Escape*

In March of 1980 he escaped prison with a fellow revolutionary after a New Afrikan activist smuggled a revolver and sub-machine gun into the institution. Three days later all three were captured after a gun battle with local, state and county police, and FBI agents.

*Camp Hill Prison Riot*

In 1989, Pennsylvania prison Camp Hill erupted in a riot because of overcrowding and inhumane conditions. Despite being held in a Dallas prison and having nothing to do with the incident, Russell was implicated in it and as a result was transferred to the notorious Marion Supermax prison over 1,000 miles from friends, family and supporters.

Supporters fought to have Russell removed from solitary confinement in Marion and released into general population. They were finally successful in December of 1989.

*Russell Returns to Solitary Confinement*

Unfortunately Russell was placed back into long-term solitary confinement in 1991 at SCI Greene in Waynesburg, PA. Despite still being held in 23 hour a day lockdown, Russell remains a committed New Afrikan freedom fighter.

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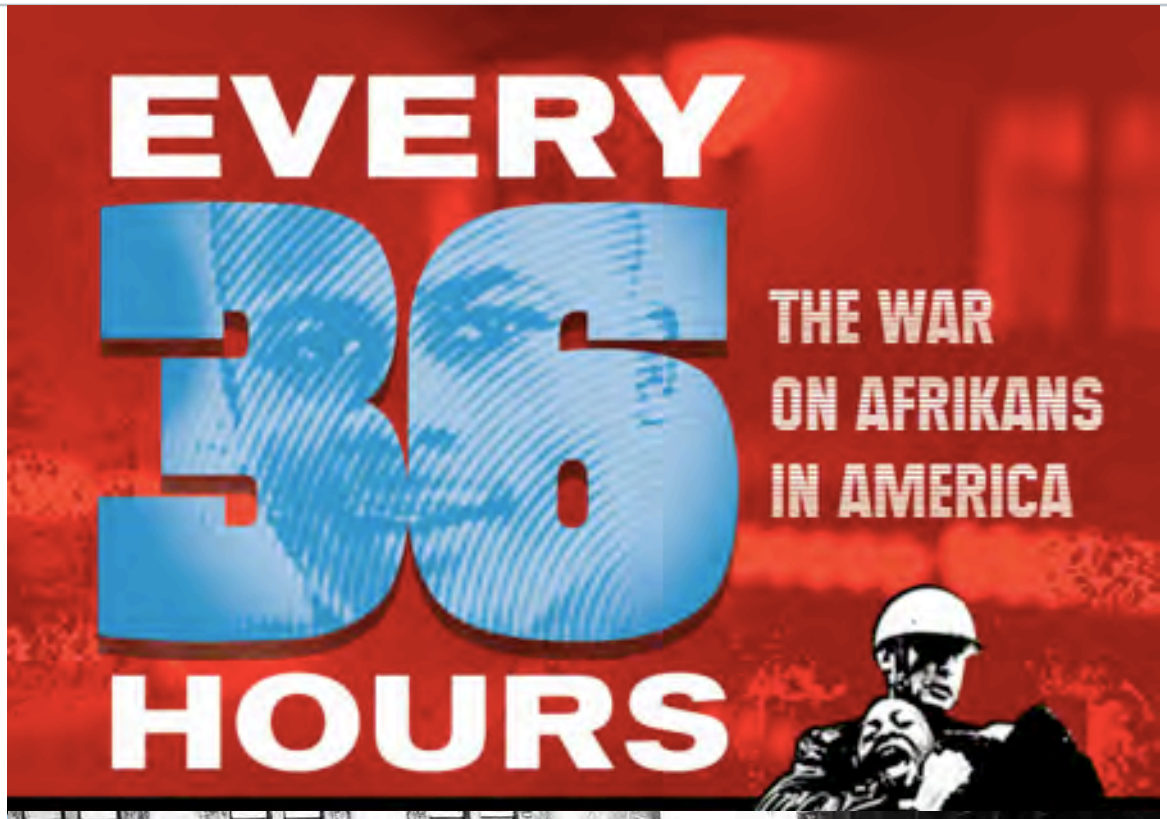

Malcolm X
Grassroots Movement

# KNOW YOUR RIGHTS IN A POLICE ENCOUNTER

*"If we're going to talk about police brutality, it's because police brutality exists. Why does it exist? Because our people in this particular society live in a police state."*-Malcolm X



## What is the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement?

The Malcolm X Grassroots Movement is an organization of Afrikans in America/New Afrikans whose mission is to defend the human rights of our people and promote self-determination in our community. We understand that the collective institutions of white-supremacy, patriarchy and capitalism have been at the root of our people's oppression. We understand that without community control and without the power to determine our own lives, we will continue to fall victim to genocide.

Therefore, we seek to heighten our consciousness about self-determination as a human right and a solution to our colonization. While organizing around our principles of unity, we are building a network of Black/New Afrikan activists and organizers committed to the protracted struggle for the liberation of the New Afrikan Nation – By Any Means Necessary!

## What is the Peoples Self –Defense Campaign

**The Peoples' Self-Defense Campaign (PSDC)** observes, documents, and prevents incidents of police misconduct and brutality through educating and organizing our community and supporting survivors/victims of this misconduct.

PSDC recognizes the right of all people to live free of oppression and human rights violations, as well as any community's right to observe and document abuse. People in communities of color are routinely stopped, searched, and detained without probable cause or reasonable suspicion. We believe that increased community control is one solution to this problem.

*MXGM'S PEOPLE'S SELF-DEFENSE CAMPAIGN*

# YOUR RIGHTS IN THE STREETS

**"The Police must obey the law while enforcing the law"**
(Earl Warren, Supreme Court Justice from 1954-1969)

People's experience when dealing with the police may vary. Whether those experiences are positive or negative, it's important that you know you rights. Knowing your rights can help youidentify illegal conduct by the police, and help you decide when it's in your interest to talk to them.

This handbook describes many of your rights when approached by the police, including when it's legal for the police to approach, stop, and arrest you. It gives you tips on how to deal with these situations, and what to do if you feel like your rights have been violated. It also answers many commonly asked questions about street encounters with the police.

## Always Remember:

- Police can always approach you and ask basic questions, like your name and address.
- If you don't want to talk to cops, you can always ask them if you are free to leave.
- You always have the right to remain silent, and in most situations you should exercise that right.



## Some of your constitutional rights

The constitution of the United States includes 27 amendments. Some of theseamendments, were added in order to provide additional rights to US citizens-rights that were not originally included in the constitution.Below are the 4th and 5thamendment rights, which are more important amendments that relate to police encounters on the street.

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**The Fourth Amendment:**

**Police cannot unreasonably search or seize (take) you and/or your property.**

*"the right of people to be secure in their person, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and in no warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by the Oath or affirmation and particularly describing the place to be searched, and person or things to be seized.*

---

**The Fifth Amendment:**

**You always have the right to remain silent when dealing with police!!!**

*"No person shall be held to answer for a capitol or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a grand Jury…nor shall any person…be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of the law: nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation"*

# The 4 levels of Police Inquiry

In New York, there are 4 different levels of street encounters with police. At each level, there is a different degree of police interference with your freedom: Level 1 is the lowest, and Level 4 is highest.

## (1)Request for Information

A level 1 request for information is when cops ask you for basic information like your name and address. Legally, cops need to have a reasons before they can stop you, but that reason doesn't have to be suspicion of a crime.

## (2)Common Law Right to inquiry

Level 2 inquiries generally include questions that are more detailed than level 1 questions. Police need a "founded suspicion" that criminal activity is going on.

## (3)Stop and Frisk

Level 3 stop means not only can the cops ask you many more questions, but at this point, you are not free to leave.

- Cops need reasonablesuspicion before they can stop you.
- Cops have reasonablesuspicion when they believed that you are involved in criminal activity that has occurred, is occurring, or is about to occur.
- Cops can only frisk you (pat you down) when they have reasonable suspicion to believe you are armed and dangerous.

## (4)Arrest

For a level 3 stop to become a level 4 arrest, cops need probable cause. Probable cause means that the cops are sure that you have committed a crime.



# Level 1: Request for Information

During a Level 1 request for information cops can ask things like your name, address, and your reason for being where you at that moment. Although cops have the right to answer you other questions, you do not have to answer questions other than name and where you live. You can refuse to answer other questions.

Examples of level 1 questions…

- "What's your name"
- "Where do you live"
- "What are you doing here"

**Tip:** In level 1 and 2 stops you are free to go at anytime. Always ask, "Am I free to go" If they yes, than you should leave, IF not than ask why (you have entered level 3)

# Level 2: Common Law Right to Inquiry

In a Level 2 encounter cops can questions you when they suspect that you have committed a crime or know something about one. Level 2 inquiries are more detailed questions designed to get answers related to whatever crime it is the cops think is going on. These questions may seem more confrontational than Level 1 questions. Again, ask if you are free to go, if so you do not have to answer these questions.

Examples of Level 2 questions

"Have you and your friends been getting into trouble lately?"

"Who is selling drugs here?"

"Do you have drugs on you?"

But: you should know that cops can detain you if they have evidence that raises their suspicion to level, which is on the next page.

Tip: You should never lie to a cop. Don't make up a name, address, or lie about your age. You can get into a lot of trouble. If you don't want to answer, you should ask if you are free to go. If you are, then you can walk away without answering questions.



# Level 3: Stop and Frisk

At Level 3, you are no longer free to leave. To get to a level 3 stop and frisk cops must have reasonable suspicion, which means they think you have committed, are committing, or about to commit a crime. Once this is established, they can detain (stop) you to frisk you on the outside of our clothes (pat you down) if they believe that you are carrying a weapon.

**HOWEVER THEY CAN ONLY LEGALLY GO INSIDE YOUR POCKETS WITH YOUR CONSENT!!!!**

It is illegal for cops to frisk you for drugs or anything else that is not a weapon. When frisking you, it is illegal for cops to go through your pockets unless they think that what they've felt is a weapon.

Tip: If the cops ask to go in your pockets, say that you do not consent to a search, if they continue to go into your pockets this is a violation of our 4th amendment rights.

Tip: If you are a female being detained, always ask for a female officer to frisk you, police officers must make an attempt to have a female officer frisk you.

# Level 4: Arrest

Cops need to have probable cause to arrest you. Cops have probable cause when they have evidence that makes them believe that you have committed, or about to commit a crime. When you are arrested, you are definitely not free to go. Cops have to read you your Miranda rights before they are going to question you about the crime that you are committing.

**But remember even under arrest, you do not have to answer their questions.**

Tip: just because you are in handcuffs does not mean you are under arrest. Handcuffs can mean that you are detained temporarily

Tip: Exercise your right to remain silent and DO NOT discuss your charges with the police. Only give name, address and Date of Birth. If you give a false name you can be charged with "False Personation", which is an A Misdemeanor.



# Arrest- Arraignment Chart

1) When taken to Precinct

----Police will ask you for name/Addy/SS/ DOB

-----Police will search you and voucher (store) your property

*You will be given a paper for your vouchered property you can pick up later. You Must have ID to get property at precinct*

**Note: contraband: (weapons, drugs,) will not be returned and will be held as evidence**

-------Police will process your information (to verify who you are and check for outstanding warrants)

--------You are allowed up to 3 in-state phone calls
***(DO NOT discuss your charges on the phone)***

---If you have been injured by the police, ask to go to the hospital.

**NEXT STEPS: (Desk Appearance Ticket(DAT) or Central Booking)**

If you receive a DAT, you will be released from the precient, but required to show up to court. If you do not get a DAT, you will be taken to Central Booking

Tip: If you don't show up to court for a DAT, it will turn into a warrant, and you will be arrested next time you are stopped by the police, even if you are not doing anything illegal!!!!!

# Central Booking and Arraignment

(page 21 has phone numbers for NY central booking units)

---Each borough has a central booking, where you will wait for arraignment

---You will be given a meal (cheese sandwiches if you don't eat meat

**Arraignment**: Formal court process where you are read the charges against you.

----Your Lawyer (court appointed or private) will discuss criminal charges and explain what you should expect when you go before the judge

----If the case isn't disposed of in arraignment, the judge may set bail based on

A. The seriousness of the case and/or
B. Your previous contacts with the criminal system.

If you've had recent bench warrants issued for not returning to court, even though the warrant was vacated, bail will likely be set.

----Unless you take a plea, you won't be asked to speak, so if you want to say something tell your lawyer. It's always a bad idea to say anything incriminating on the record hoping the court will understand.

**Tip: Arraignments go by fast, so if something happens that you don't understand or think may result in an unfavorable outcome, don't hesitate to ask your attorneyand always get your attorney's name and number!!!!!!**



# Police and Car Stops

If the cops legally stop you (i.e., you did not signal for a turn, speeding) they cannot search the trunk or glove compartment without your consent. To protect yourself do not consent to a search of your trunk or glove compartment.

When stopped, give the proper identification (license, registration, insurance) and always asked why you were stopped. If they refuse to tell you continue to ask in a calm fashion. YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO KNOW WHY YOU WERE BEING PULLED OVER. If you feel afterwards that the reason for car being pulled over was illegal please see page…

Anything illegal the police see in plain view of your vehicle, allows them to search your vehicle and possibly arrest you.

Tip: Always keep your doors locked and windows rolled up, so the police cannot come into your car without your consent.

Tip: If contraband (drugs, weapons, open containers of alcohol are found in the car, everyone in the car can be arrested, even if it's not yours.

# When Police come to your house

When police come to your house, they will either have a warrant, or there will be a call about activity in your house.

If they have a search warrant, that means they can legally search in your property for evidence (physical or a person) related to a criminal investigation.

**Always**
----ask them to slide the warrant under the door

----read the entire warrant, to see where they can search and where they can

----understand that anything illegal in plain view can get you arrested (even if it is not in the warrant)

If they do not have a warrant (for example there was calls about noise complaints, or domestic violence), police can arrest you for anything found in your house. Always step outside your door to speak with police so that there might be other witnesses outside of your house that can verify if police misconduct happens.

Exigent Circumstances: These are the only times you have to let police into your house.

If:
---The police are chasing someone and they run into your house

---The police believe that evidence is being destroyed

----The police believe thata crime is occurring your house when they arrive

**These are called exigent circumstances, where the police are allowed to search your house without a warrant!!!!**



# When cops break the rules: what can you do

1) **File a complaint with the CCRB.**

## New York City Civilian Complaint Review Board

**The CCRB is an independent non-police city agency (all members are non-police civilians). It has the power to receive, investigate, deliberate and recommend action on complaints against the NYPD misconduct (including: excessive or unnecessary force, abuse of authority)**

**Who can file a complaint?**

**You can file a complaint:**

**-at any age -in any language**

**-if you are in jail -anonymously**

**If you witnessed police misconduct (but are not the victim)**

**There are 5 ways to file a complaint**

- **Call 1-800-341-CCRB (2272)**
- **Call 311**
- **Go to the CCRB office 40 rector street 2nd floor NY, NY 10006 (M-F 8am-6pm)**
- **Send a letter to the above address**
- **File a complaint online at www.nyc.gov**

*MXGM'S PEOPLE'S SELF-DEFENSE CAMPAIGN*

# The Role of the Community

Since the question of police abuse is a community issue, it is in the interest of the community to prepare for the ever-increasing incidents of police brutality and wrongful death.

1. Institute a Rapid Response Team (this includes):

   - Doctors and lawyers who will respond quickly in these emergencies
   - Journalists who will come out to the scene and report these incidents as soon as they occur.
   - Develop and identify experts such as independent pathologists and investigators.

2. Raise Funds to pay for services needed to assist families and individuals who may need assistance. This kind of community support was used extensively in the South during the Civil Rights Era.

3. Community Patrols; Organize community members to do weekly patrols of the police while they are in the community. Take down badge numbers, names and take pictures so that you can keep a record of the known police in the community. Further get a camcorder and a scanner so that you can respond to police calls and monitor their behavior in the community.

**To get involved, call the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement: 718.254.8800**



## Resources if you feel you are the victim of police abuse

**Legal Help**

- Civilian Complaint Review Board 800.341.CCRB (2272) or call 311
- L.D. Favors Law Group 347-713-7061 www.ldfavorslawgroup.com/
- New York Civil Liberties Union 212.607.3300
- Neighborhood Defenders Service (Harlem Residents Only) 212.876.5500
- Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund 212.966.5932
- NAACP Legal Defense Fund 212.219.1572
- National Lawyers Guild New York Office 212.679.5100
- Lambda Legal Defense Fund 212.809.8585
- South Brooklyn Legal Services 718.237.5500
- Sylvia Rivera Law Project 212.337.8550

**Specifically for Youth**

- Urban Justice Center Lesbian and Gay Youth Project 646.602.5600

**Non-Legal Hotlines and Community Groups**

- Malcolm X Grassroots Movement 718.254.8800
- Justice Committee: 212-614-5343
- CAAAV Organizing Asian Communities 212.473.6485
- AudreLorde Project Center for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered ar Two-Spirited People of Color 718.596.0342
- Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence Project 212.714.1141

***If you need information about a friend or relative who has been arrested c Central Booking in your Borough***

| | |
|---|---|
| Bronx | 718.374.5880 |
| Brooklyn | 718.875.6586 |
| Manhattan | 212.374.5880 |
| Queens | 718.268.4528 |
| Staten Island | 718.876.8490 |

**This workshop handbook was developed by the Malcolm X Grassro Movement and made possible by the generous support of:**

***The Members of the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement***
***The New York Foundation***
***The Union Square Award***
***Community Training & Assistance Center***
***The North Star Fund***
***Active Elements Foundation***

If you need legal representation or advice on a police abuse or brutality case please call one of the following organizations:

Malcolm X Grassroots Movement
646-481-8136

Neighborhood Defenders Service of Harlem
(Harlem Residents Only)
212-876-5500

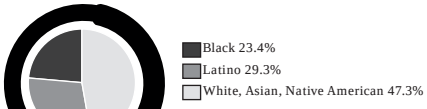
National Lawyers Guild
212-679-5100

New York Civil Liberties Union
212-607-3300

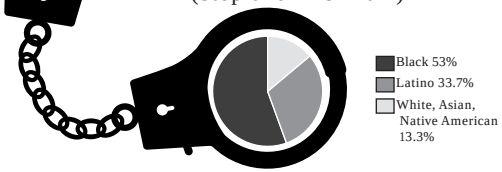
Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR)
212-614-6464

# NYPD Data 2010-2011

Total NYC Population (Census 2010)




Total NYC Police Stops
(Stop-and-Frisk 2011)




**Total NYPD Stop-and-Frisks 2002**

97,296

**Total NYPD Stop-and-Frisks 2011**

684,330 (603% increase)

Data taken from NYCLU
New York Civil Liberties Union (http://www.nyclu.org)

The Malcolm X Grassroots Movement is an organization of Afrikans in America / New Afrikans whose mission is to defend the human rights of our people and promote self-determination in our community. In order to survive as a people, it is necessary that we not only **UNDERSTAND OUR RIGHTS** but also **DEFEND THEM**.

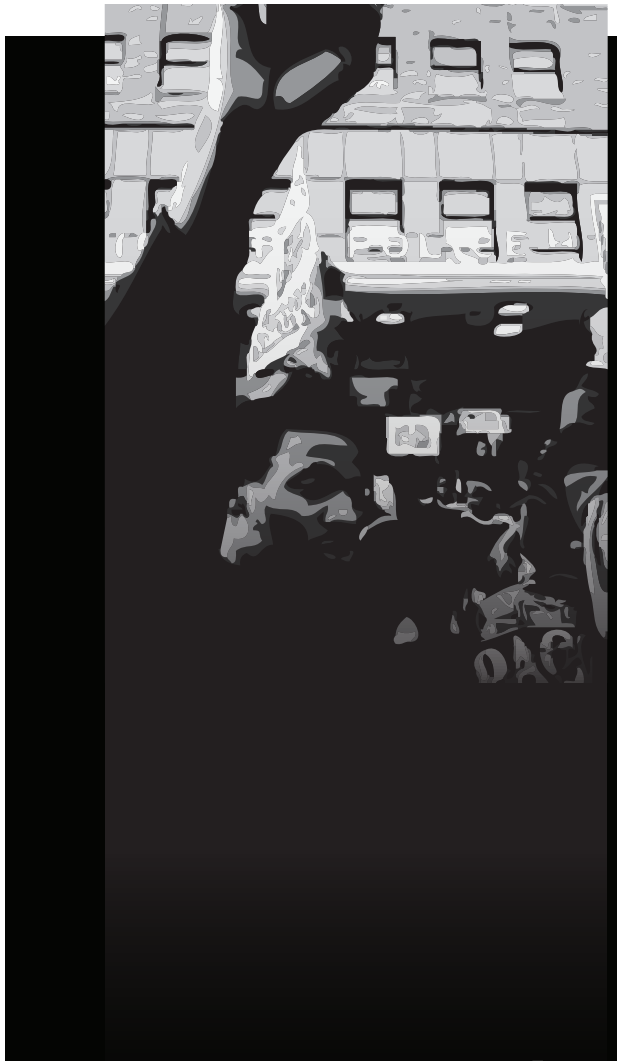
MXGM's People's Self-Defense Campaign (PSDC) observes, documents, and prevents incidents of police misconduct and brutality through educating and organizing our community and supporting survivors/victims of this misconduct.

## The Goals of PSDC

1. Immediately convict all police officers guilty of misconduct in our community.
2. Fire Ray Kelly and make the role of Police Commissioner an elected position.
3. Community Control: we determine how our community is policed.
4. Independent investigations of ALL Police killings.
5. End to militarized anti-crime programs such as Operation Impact.

*This program is not intended to engage police in conflict. It is geared to see that we are protected from widespread abuses that have become commonplace and have largely gone without punishment.*

**Malcolm X Grassroots Movement**
PO BOX 471711
Brooklyn, NY 11247
www.mxgm.org
(646) 481.8136



Do You Get **Harrased, Stopped**, or **Arrested** by the cops?

# Know Your Rights!

Malcolm X Grassroots Movement

Rev. 4/12

Every year thousands of people are improperly stopped, detained, arrested, brutalized and even murdered by the police. Young people of Afrikan descent are frequent targets of the cops. Although most cops don't respect them, you do have legal rights.

## IF THE COPS STOP YOU ...

- Stay calm; don't physically resist or run – you might get shot!
- Ask: "Am I free to go?" If they say yes, walk away calmly. If they say no, ask if you are "being detained".
- If you are being detained, you cannot leave until the cops say so, otherwise you will get arrested.
- Remember the badge number, name, and physical description of the cop(s) who stopped you.
- You are not legally required to show your ID or give personal information. However, if you do decide to talk, say as little as possible, and only answer their basic questions (name and address). Talking to police will NEVER help you.
- They can only LEGALLY search you if they think you are armed and dangerous.

## IF THE COPS SEARCH YOU

- They can only LEGALLY search you for weapons, NOT for drugs.
- Say loudly "I DO NOT CONSENT to this search" so that others around can hear you.
- Cops may search you illegally, but your lawyer might be able to get the evidence thrown out in court if the search was illegal.
- If you are a woman, you may request that a female cop search you (although this is not guaranteed).

## IF THE COPS ARREST YOU

- Don't say ANYTHING – Just ask for a lawyer! Don't talk to the police, speak on videotape, talk to a District Attorney, or other inmates about anything that has to do with the crime you may have been arrested for.
- You will be handcuffed, searched, photographed, and fingerprinted.
- Do not sign anything!! Cops are trained to trick you.
- You may not find out what you are being arrested for until your arraignment or desk appearance.

## IF THE COPS INTERRROGATE YOU

- Say the following: "I want a lawyer" AND "I am going to remain silent." These are your Miranda Rights and you MUST make those statements in order to exercise them. Don't forget!
- After making the above statements, the cops MUST stop interrogating you.
- Cops MUST read you your Miranda Rights before they interrogate you.

## IF YOU ARE IN A CAR ...

- If cops legally stop you and see something illegal in "plain view," they can search your car without a warrant.
- If cops legally stop you they can frisk the driver and search the passenger compartment – they CANNOT search your trunk. Even if they arrest you – they CANNOT search your trunk on the scene.
- However, if cops have reasonable suspicion that something in your trunk contains illegal contraband OR if the car is impounded, cops can search the ENTIRE car (including the trunk).
- Never consent to a search of your car – even if you have nothing illegal.

## IF YOU ARE UNDER 16 ...

- Cops have to make a "reasonable effort" to reach your parent/guardian before they can start interrogating you. Your parent/guardian is allowed to sit in the room with you while you're being interrogated.
- Remember that even if your parent/guardian is there, you should still ALWAYS ask to speak to a lawyer before answering questions.
- Cops can stop you if you are hanging out during school time or if they suspect you are a runaway.

Need info on a friend/relative who's been arrested? Call Central Booking in that borough:

Bronx: 718-681-0406

Brooklyn: 718-834-5318

Manhattan: 212-374-2921

Queens: 718-268-4498

Staten Island: 718-876-8493

**"If we're going to talk about police brutality, it's because police brutality exists. Why does police brutality exist? Because our people in this particular society live in a police state."**

*~ Malcolm X*

Malcolm X Grassroots Movement

# Cop Watch Program

**Equipment Required:**

| QUANTITY | ITEM |
|---|---|
| 2 | Camcorders |
| 3 | Walkie Talkies/Cell Phones |
| 3 | Tape Recorder |
| 1 | Cellular Telephone |
| 1 | Police Scanner |
| 2 | Copies of Police Patrol Guide |
| 1 | Mic Transmitter |
| 1 | 35mm Camera (optional) |
| 2 | Binoculars |
| 6 | Whistles (optional) |

- **Team Descriptions & Duties**

  There are three teams. When each team is operating at full capacity, total Police Watch personnel should total (9). There must be a total of (9) team members including one **legal panel member** in order for the program to operate. Under no circumstances will the program operate with less than a total of (9) team members.

  **Team One** is the primary team and consists of four members (A, B, C, & D). They are the first level of engagement. This team will be the first on the scene and will determine if further involvement

during police activity is necessary. Once they decide to activate Cop Watch, all eyes are on them.

**Team Two** is the secondary team and consists of three members (E, F, & G). They are ñback-upò for team one and will capture footage from a distance.

**Team Three** is at the base and consists of two members (H & I).

***Team Member Criteria ï** Persons participating in teams must:

- Be a member of the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement (except legal panel)
- Be 18 years or older
- Have no outstanding warrants in the United States or abroad
- If convicted of a crime, have completed sentence, parole or probation
- Be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident
- Have 20/20 vision or wear corrective lenses

****All Cop Watch Team Members/Patrollers must meet these criteria. However, there are ways that people who do not fit these criteria can and should participate***

- **Team Member Equipment & Duties**

**Team One**

**Team Member A**

- *Equipment:* Camcorder and extra battery
- *Duties:* Direct filming of agreed upon police encounters. Team member A must know confrontation statement verbatim. He/she should also be skilled in conflict resolution.

**Team Member B**

- *Equipment:* Mic Transmitter, Tape Recorder, Political Education Materials
- *Duties:* Disseminate Know Your Rights brochures and insure that Team Member Aôs filming is not interrupted. Member B is most likely to engage the police in confrontation. Therefore it is necessary for B to be well versed in search and seizure laws, and guidelines and laws pertaining to police practices and procedures, amongst other things. B should be able to articulate to the police and public the goals of the Cop Watch Program. B should also have the temperament and skill to verbally diffuse hostile situations.

**Team Member C**

- *Equipment*: Walkie-Talkie, Still Camera, Listening Device

- *Duties*: Maintain constant communication with Teams 2 and 3. Watch and listen intently to the interaction between Member B and the police. Carefully determine the level of the police interaction and be prepared to notify Team 2 to begin deployment and/or to notify Team 3 to initiate the rapid response network and deploy legal assistance.

## Team Member D

- *Equipment*: Valid Driverôs License with no outstanding infractions
- *Duties*: Operate the vehicle, which will contain Team One. Member D will insure that the vehicle is secured and in close proximity of the encounter site at all times. D should also be well versed in the target area.

### Team Two

#### *Team Member E*

- *Equipment:* Camcorder, and extra battery
- *Duties:* Film Team One and all police encounters. E must know confrontation statement verbatim. He/she should also be skilled in conflict resolution.

#### Team Member F

- *Equipment:* Walkie Talkie, Political Education Material, Binoculars
- *Duties:* Disseminate brochures and insure that E's filming is not interrupted. Team Member F is likely to engage the police in confrontation. If necessary, he/she will ñback-upò Member B and/or replace B if he/she is arrested. Therefore, it is necessary for F to be well versed in search and seizure laws, and guidelines and laws pertaining to police practices and procedures, amongst other things. F should be able to articulate to the police and public the goals of the Cop Watch Program. F should also have the temperament and skill to verbally diffuse hostile situations. While in the vehicle, F is responsible for communicating via walkie-talkie with the Team Three.

#### Team Member G

- *Equipment:* Valid Driver's License with no outstanding infractions
- *Duties:* Operate the vehicle, which will contain Team Two. Team Member G will insure that the vehicle is secured and in close proximity of the encounter site at all times. G should also be well versed in the target area.

### Team Three - Base

#### Team Member H

- *Equipment:* Scanner, Walkie-Talkie, Telephone, Rapid Response List, Media List
- *Duties:* Monitor the police scanner and communicate the information to C & F. H must be prepared to deploy Team member I (legal panel member) and to initiate the rapid response network.

**Team Member I ï Legal Panel**

- *Equipment:* Cellular Telephone
- *Duties:* Be on-call during patrols and prepared to respond to emergencies, travel to precincts and incident sites, and provide legal representation

**Legal Panel Description**

While putting together this program, we have identified a certain area in which we need assistance; one of these is that of legal counsel. We need to know the rights of people being stopped, searched, or arrested as well as our rights when conducting the Cop Watch Program. Specifically, legal team members will do the following:

1. Training patrol team members on relevant aspects of the law to prepare them to handle certain scenarios/confrontations

2. Be on-call during patrols and prepared to respond to emergencies, travel to precincts and incident sites, and provide legal representation

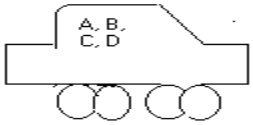
3. Provide legal expertise on the development and implementation of the Cop Watch Program and occasionally may be called upon to answer questions and provide additional training.

4. Participate/Volunteer every other month in a weekly ñ**Police Brutality** ***Free*** **Legal Clinicò** or MXGMôs Know Your Rights Workshop.

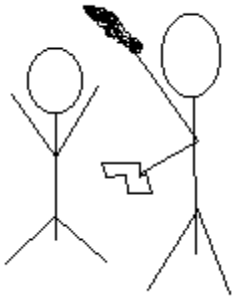
5. Regularly accept Police Misconduct Cases referred to her/him by MXGM.

## Cop Watch Diagram

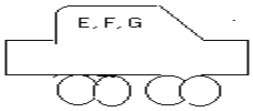
**Team One**



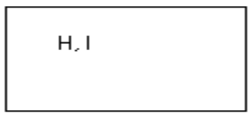

**Police Encounter**



**Team Two**




Team Three

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**Possible Scenarios for Discussion**

- ✓ Weapons drawn
- ✓ Cops beating up someone
- ✓ Stop and frisk
- ✓ Hot pursuit
- ✓ Arrest in progress

**Deployment Agreement**

- There must be a consensus from team member A & B to get out of the car
- Team member B only addresses the crowd as a group. He/she does not get into individual discussions while incident is occurring.
- Team member B does not address the police unless spoken to. Then, he/she can respond.
- If the cops tell us to leave, we would state that we have the right to be there.
- If the cops demand that we step back, we do so but refuse to leave because we have a right to be there.
- If the cops tell us to stop filming, we refuse to because we have the right to film.
- If a cop draws his gun and demands we put the camera down, we comply.
- If a cop pulls his nightstick and demands we put the cameras down, we step back and assess the situation and make a further judgment.
- If we are threatened with arrest, we refuse step back and explain that we have a right to be there and to film.
- If a team member is arrested, the member does not resist and all team move into rapid response mode.
- If cops are beating someone we determine a means for distraction, while at the same time, attracting the attention of the community.

# Proposal to Launch a Mass Campaign for Community Control of the Oakland Police Department

**Drafted by Arlene Eisen from the Malcolm X Solidarity Committee**

**Urgent Need for Political Action:**

For decades, the Oakland Police Department has served as an occupying army to prevent and suppress resistance in the Black and Latino communities of Oakland. Unfortunately many well-meaning people in the community have given a green light to police repression out of fear of violence and in support of "getting drugs out of the community". In the last ten years, with massive funding and personnel from Homeland Security, the occupation of communities of color has turned into a one-sided war.

This war is waged with:

- Mounting body counts of Black and Latino people executed by police without trial or any due process. [1]
- Saturation surveillance promoted and coordinated by Homeland Security in local "Fusion Centers". The SF Bay Regional Fusion Center has received millions of dollars to work with OPD "to empower front-line law enforcement, public safety, emergency response, and private sector security personnel to lawfully gather and share information to identify (and act on) emerging threats." [2]
- Police Department policy that promotes extrajudicial killings, brutality stop and frisk, gang injunctions, and mass incarceration.

This war by the OPD has not brought peace or security or the end of the ravages of the drug trade and addiction. Rather, it results in grief and separation of families, disintegration of communities and more violence and more drugs. The "war on drugs" not only escalates police violence and mass incarceration, it also results in more drugs and drug-related violence. The government, including the OPD, ultimately control drug markets and employ direct (the spreading of rumors and lies, set up operations and killings, jailhouse snitches, market deals that favor one set over another, etc.) and indirect (such as various forms of market competition that appear to be market driven) means to provoke and stimulate violence amongst our people. So, in all reality, both violence by police and "fratricidal" violence are not as separate and distinct as they are often claimed to be.

Clearly, despite the demonization of our young people, despite the lost and incarcerated lives, despite the waste of millions of dollars on militarization of the OPD, no one in Oakland is safer. We need a political campaign that relies on the community to solve problems; a campaign to overcome fear by educating and mobilizing community members to rely on community self defense and not rely on the oppressor. We can hold

[1] For details on Extrajudicial Killings by Police in the first half of 2012 see http://mxgm.org/report-on-the-extrajudicial-killings-of-110-black-people/

[2] (From Homeland Security's website) http://www.dhs.gov/state-and-major-urban-area-fusion-centers

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OPD accountable by instituting a Community Control Board that has the power and authority to hire, fire, subpoena, monitor, approve and disapprove budgets and policies.

**Advantages of a Referendum:**

This proposal for a Referendum Campaign is designed to complement other aspects of a comprehensive plan for community self defense. It is part of a mass campaign to force the government to respond to the National Plan for Racial Justice that communities are developing. Locally, we view the Referendum for Community Control of OPD as one part of a comprehensive strategy to resist police occupation of our communities. The same strategy includes community self-defense defense networks, an Oakland Copwatch and Peoples' Assemblies.

- We recognize that the rules of the electoral process are stacked in favor of the white supremacist ruling corporate/military elite. This is overwhelmingly true at the national and state levels. However, at the local level, a grassroots electoral initiative is less likely to be drowned in a sea of corporate money.

- Building a campaign for a referendum on a specific proposal is different from working for a political candidate. Our referendum is framed to meet the specific purpose of educating the community and demonstrating a way to institutionalize an end to the military occupation of our communities. The wording of the referendum is not open to being watered-down during the course of the campaign in the way that a candidate makes deals to win votes.

- The campaign to pass the referendum is a needed vehicle to counter fear-based solutions that, in the past, have been supported by well-meaning community members. Currently, while many in the community may hold vague anti-police attitudes, they passively support police atrocities as a "necessary evil". The referendum campaign will give us the opportunity to systematically educate and demonstrate that the OPD currently promotes violence.

- The Referendum Campaign will provide a specific, concrete vision of an alternative to the OPD waging war in our communities.

- The Referendum Campaign will require that campaign workers do massive and systematic outreach through door-to-door precinct walking, outreach tables at super-markets, malls and other spaces where people gather, speakers' bureaus to send people to churches, cultural and performance venues. Etc.

- The Referendum Campaign will build the movement for community self defense by involving new members and gaining generalized support from the community.

**Draft Referendum Proposal:**

Whereas:

*Insert stats on $$ spent on police, their hardware, surveillance, incarceration etc and stats that show violence how police don't help violence—(compare # of police per*

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*population in Oakland, changing over yrs with homicides, drug busts, brutality cases, extrajudicial killings.)*
OPD operates as an occupying army—equipped and following policies and supported by Homeland Security to repress communities of color. Repression brings more violence not peace.
Extrajudicial executions of Alan Bluford, Oscar Grant, Raheim Brown and others are the most blatant examples of the need for community control the police. Currently OPD serves the politicians and other representatives of corporate interests. We need to institutionalize control of the police by grassroots community members.

Therefore:

1. All Homeland Security Grants to OPD must be redirected to financing the Community Control Board (CCB) and to pay for implementing the policies and programs that the CCB decides are most likely to reduce violence by police and within communities of color.

2. A CCB must be established that includes representatives of the various constituencies in Oakland's Black and Latino communities and other oppressed groups. *(we need more discussion about how to define these constituencies but must be sure that Black and Brown youth; and families who have lost loved ones to police violence are each represented. We must decide on the total number of the CCB—recommend not less than 11 or more than 15.)* These representatives shall be nominated and elected by their respective constituencies every two years. No one shall serve more than a total of four years. They will be paid for their time and a budget will be available for staff that the CCB decides are appropriate.

3. The CCB shall meet as often as necessary to carry out its responsibilities and conduct monthly (*quarterly?)* community meetings to receive community input and report on progress.

4. The CCB has the power and authority to hire, fire, subpoena, monitor, approve and disapprove budgets and policies.

5. The responsibilities of the CCB include, but are not limited to the following:

    a. Overhaul all OPD racist policies, rules of engagement, training and rewards.
    b. Eliminate all the policies and procedures that sanction or encourage racial profiling of Black, Latino and other discriminated and targeted groups.
    c. Ensure that recruitment, training of new recruits, on-going retraining and evaluations of all members of OPD that identify racist assumptions and uproot them. The demonization of Black and Latino people and the concept of "suspicious behavior" must be deconstructed under the leadership of the CCB.
    d. Rewrite "rules of engagement" so that any member of the OPD who uses deadly force will automatically lose his/her job unless she/he can prove to

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the CCB (following just rules of evidence) that there was no other way to prevent the killing of a member of the public or OPD.

e. When a cop has killed or wounded an unarmed "suspect" or used excessive force to subdue a "suspect", that cop should be suspended without pay until the investigation is complete. If the cop is not cleared, he should be fired. (A number of killer cops are repeat offenders)
f. Review and identify all cultural and institutional supports that allow OPD to lie, cover-up, spin, justify and remain unaccountable for killing Black and Latino people. All actions of the OPD must be video recorded and made public.
g. The CCB will recommend local control ordinances and legislation that would specifically stop repressive policies like "stop and frisk", racial profiling, programs like secure communities or S COMM of Homeland Security, and local law enforcement collaboration with Fusion Centers.
h. The CCB will ensure the end unlawful searches and require all police to identify themselves whenever they interact with the public and explain their actions
i. CCB shall ensure new OPD policies and practices and training on how to deal with people exhibiting erratic behavior. The policy of tasing for compliance must be ended.
j. CCB shall oversee the elimination of gang injunctions and the special policing of "hot spots".
k. The CCB will create a Human Rights Commission that would legally be empowered to ensure that Oakland laws and practices comply with international law and standards of protection for oppressed peoples and groups (racialized communities, Indigenous peoples, oppressed peoples and nations, immigrants, etc.).
l. The CCB will work to organize and support (with redirected Homeland Security Funds) grassroots mental health crisis intervention, domestic violence prevention/control, drug prevention and rehab programs and mediation teams so families in crisis do have effective alternatives to calling 9-1-1 and inviting the police into their homes. Jails and prisons are flooded with people who need support for emotional problems. Treatment, not punishment is needed.
m. Overhaul policies that encourage and justify harassment, assault and murder by non-trained, non-accountable citizens.

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# "We Will Shoot Back" : The Natchez Model and Paramilitary Organization in the Mississippi Freedom Movement

Akinyele Omowale Umoja

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# "WE WILL SHOOT BACK" The Natchez Model and Paramilitary Organization in the Mississippi Freedom Movement

AKINYELE OMOWALE UMOJA
*Georgia State University*

Between 1965 and 1979, economic boycotts were a principal form of insurgency for Black activists in Mississippi. After 1964, in several communities, the boycott of White-owned commerce became the primary tactic utilized by human rights forces to disrupt the system of segregation. These boycotts relied upon paramilitary organization to protect the activities and leadership of the Mississippi freedom movement and the Black community in general and to sanction anyone in the Black community who wished to violate the boycott. This paradigm of economic boycotts supported by paramilitary organization was first utilized in 1965 in Natchez. Natchez is a commercial center in southwest Mississippi. The combination of economic boycott with armed resistance posed an effective coercive campaign to pressure the local White power structure for concessions demanded by the movement. The insurgent model of Natchez was replicated throughout the state, particularly in Black communities of southwest Mississippi.

**Between 1965 and 1979,** economic boycotts were a principal form of insurgency for Black activists in Mississippi. In that period, dozens of economic boycotts occurred in municipalities throughout the state coercing local White power structures to acquiesce to the demands of activists in the Black community. The economic boycott was a decisive maneuver to achieve concessions in Mississippi communities that were not possible to achieve through nonviolent action. In fact, after 1964, Mississippi boycotts were comple-

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mented by paramilitary organizations that were critical to the success of the boycotts.

The years following the Freedom Summer of 1964 represent a significant shift in the tactics of the civil rights movement in Mississippi. After 1964, in several communities, the boycott of White-owned commerce became the primary tactic used by human rights forces to disrupt the system of segregation. These boycotts relied on paramilitary organization to protect the activities and leadership of the movement and the Black community in general. Paramilitary forces were also organized to sanction anyone in the Black community who wished to violate the boycott. In contrast to earlier stages in the Mississippi movement, confrontational and inflammatory rhetoric and the open threat of a violent response were commonplace in human rights campaigns.

This paradigm of economic boycotts supported by paramilitary organization was first used in 1965 in Natchez. Natchez is a major commercial center in southwest Mississippi. Prior to 1964, the civil rights movement through the local National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), Council of Federated Organizations (COFO), and the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party was active in Natchez with limited success. The combination of an economic boycott with armed resistance posed an effective, coercive campaign to pressure the local White power structure for concessions demanded by the movement. The insurgent model of Natchez was replicated throughout the state, particularly in Black communities of southwest Mississippi.

The focus of this article is to identify the development of the boycott strategy with its emphasis on armed resistance in the Natchez movement. I will examine the origins and elements of the Natchez model and trace its development in other communities in Mississippi. This study relies on oral testimony and media accounts to reconstruct the development of insurgency in local communities.

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## A BACKGROUND TO THE NATCHEZ MOVEMENT IN 1965

Natchez is an important center in the history of Mississippi. Located in the southwest corner of the state of Mississippi, on the banks of the Mississippi River, Natchez is the county seat of Adams County. In the antebellum period, the Natchez elite were significant players in state politics. Natchez was the heart of the antebellum plantation economy of Mississippi. In the late 19th century and early 20th century, the Natchez elite's power and influence in the state diminished due to several factors. The Natchez elite's wealth and power declined due to natural calamities including floods and the boll weevil, depletion of the soil from repeated cotton crops, and the development of the delta as a center of wealth and privilege (Loewen & Sallis, 1974).

By the early 1960s, Natchez had developed a manufacturing base with industries such as Armstrong Tire and Rubber, International Paper Company, and John-Manville Corporation located in this "New South" city. The development of an industrial economy did not eliminate the institutionalized racism, which had its roots in slavery and peonage. In 1965, Adams County had a population of 37,730, and the city of Natchez had nearly 24,000 residents. People of African descent were 50% of Adams County's population. In Adams County, the median income for Whites was $5,600 per year and for African descendants $1,994. The large gap in median family income in the county between the White and Black communities clearly demonstrates the continuity of White supremacy in "New South" Natchez (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee Research, 1965).

COFO, a network of human rights groups active in Mississippi, attempted to establish a voter registration campaign in Adams County in 1963 but experienced little success. Natchez was considered a Ku Klux Klan stronghold. The Klan in Natchez was among the most violent and organized in the state. By intimidating local Blacks, the Natchez Klan played a role in COFO's lack of success.

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In spite of the terrorist intimidation of the Klan, COFO remained and attempted to build the local campaign to register voters. The local police seemed to offer no significant protection from the Klan. Natchez Police Chief J.T. Robinson was also a vocal advocate of White supremacy and had no problems using force to uphold the system of segregation. Although Natchez Mayor John Nosser called for racial tolerance, he had no effective control over the Natchez police or Chief Robinson ("Cops, Race," 1964; James Young, personal communication, July 28, 1994).

After Freedom Summer and the failure of the challenge to the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, the COFO coalition was unable to maintain its momentum in terms of providing statewide direction and coordination for the Mississippi freedom movement. COFO, particularly the Congress of Racial Equality and the SNCC, went through a crisis of direction after the major campaigns of 1964. As the COFO alliance took a back seat in terms of statewide coordination, the NAACP under the leadership of Charles Evers began to assert itself as the pacesetter for the Mississippi movement. Under Evers's leadership, the local NAACP chapters in various parts of the state began to mobilize and organize local Mississippi Black communities to challenge segregationist power structures throughout the state. This new momentum followed a different posture than that of COFO. To gain the demands of the movement, the boycott of White, particularly segregationist, enterprises was the primary tactic.

As in the past, armed self-defense would serve as a vehicle to protect the movement and its leaders and institutions. The nature of the armed resistance at this stage would take on a different character than that of the previous stage. Previously, Mississippi movement activists and supporters functioned as a civilian militia, participating in armed defense on an ad hoc basis in times of emergency or when information was provided concerning a particular threat. In the years following Freedom Summer, the function of armed defense was often placed in the hands of a paramilitary group whose role in the movement was the protection of movement leaders, demonstrations, and the Black community in general. In addition, with the elevation of the boycott strategy, there was a

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development of a coercive force in the movement that could harass or punish violators of the boycott and Blacks who collaborated with the White power structure. The ascendance of the leadership of Evers, the boycott organizing of NAACP activist Rudy Shields, and the development of the Deacons for Defense were closely related to the development of the Natchez model.

## CHARLES EVERS AND THE NATCHEZ BOYCOTT

Evers became a major leader in the Mississippi movement after the assassination of his brother Medgar on June 11, 1963, by White supremacist Byron de la Beckwith. Unlike previous Mississippi movement spokespersons, Charles Evers, in his new position, would openly advocate armed resistance. During a 1964 NAACP fund raiser in Nashville, Evers proclaimed, "I have the greatest respect for Mr. Martin Luther King, but non-violence won't work in Mississippi . . . . We made up our minds . . . that if a white man shoots at a Negro in Mississippi, we will shoot back" ("If White Man Shoots," 1964, p. 1).

Evers's involvement in the Natchez movement meant a more visible defense presence to counter the violent terror of the local Klan. According to NAACP activist Milton Cooper, a security team had developed around him, which complemented the presence of Evers. In the spring of 1965, Evers led a campaign to desegregate the hotels of Natchez. During this campaign, White hostility grew to the point where Evers's security team had to position snipers at the Holiday Inn where the NAACP leader was residing in Adams County. Later that same summer, an incident occured that sparked an acceleration of activity in Natchez (Milton Cooper, personal communication, July 23, 1994; Evers, 1976).

On August 27, 1965, NAACP leader George Metcalf was seriously injured when a bomb hidden beneath the hood of his car exploded after he turned on the ignition. Although Metcalf was fortunate enough to survive the blast, he had to be hospitalized, suffering from facial lacerations, a broken arm and leg, and other assorted

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cuts and burns. The explosion of Metcalf's vehicle occurred in the parking lot of the local Armstrong Tire plant. Metcalf had just finished a shift at Armstrong. The explosive was so potent that it completely demolished Metcalf's vehicle and damaged several other cars nearby. Because Metcalf was asked to work overtime the evening of the bombing, some local Blacks believed his supervisors had collaborated with the perpetrators of the bombing. The attack on Metcalf occurred 8 days after the NAACP submitted a petition on behalf of Metcalf and 11 other Natchez Blacks to the local school board to desegregate Natchez public schools on the basis of the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court case *Brown v. Board of Education*. Metcalf had also recently contacted the Adams County chancery clerk to seek compliance with federal voter registration legislation ("Desegregation Petition," 1965; Dittmer, 1994; Horowitz, 1965; "Natchez Mayor," 1965; James Young, personal communication, July 28, 1994).

The terrorist attack on Metcalf was part of a series of attacks, including house bombings and church bombings, initiated since the arrival of COFO in Adams County. On several occasions between 1963 and 1965, COFO workers and Black residents of Natchez were harassed and beaten by White vigilantes and hooded members of the Klan. On one Saturday evening in September of 1964, two explosions jarred the home of Natchez Mayor John Nosser and Black contractor Willie Washington. Nosser, an American of Lebanese origin, believed his home was bombed because he attempted to serve as a peacemaker during the racial hostilities of Freedom Summer. In January of 1965, Metcalf's home was also sprayed with gunfire from nightriders. Leading up to the bombing of his car, the NAACP leader was the target of several acts of harassment and intimidation at his home and his place of employment ("Leader Claims," 1964; "Natchez Bombing," 1964; "Police Push," 1964; "Two More Burned," 1965).

After the bombing attack on Metcalf, Evers assumed control of NAACP activity in Natchez and seized the leadership of the local movement. Evers did not take a nonviolent posture in asserting himself into the leadership of the Natchez movement. On the day of the bombing, Evers was quoted as saying, "There is going to be

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trouble, no question about that . . . . The Negroes have armed themselves" ("Natchez Mayor," 1965, p. 1). On the same day, Evers spoke to a rally in Natchez. While cautioning Natchez Blacks not to initiate violence against Whites, Evers stated, "If they do it any more, we're going to get those responsible. We're armed, every last one of us, and we are not going to take it" ("Natchez Mayor," 1965, p. 1).

## NATCHEZ AND THE MISSISSIPPI DEACONS FOR DEFENSE AND JUSTICE

Weeks prior to the bomb attack on Metcalf, a small group of Black men met secretly in Natchez to form a paramilitary organization. According to Natchez movement activist James Stokes, the Natchez paramilitary group was formed due to the perception among local movement activists and supporters that they could not rely on the police for protection. Most of the men were Black workers who had grown up in Adams County and had known each other most of their lives. These men were also either members or supporters of the local NAACP. The Natchez paramilitary group began to protect Metcalf, his family members, and his home prior to the bombing (James Stokes, personal communication, August 1, 1994).

The activity and the size of the Natchez group accelerated after the attack on Metcalf. On August 28, one day after the bombing attack on Metcalf, James Jackson, a local barber and one of the leaders of the Natchez paramilitary group, publicly announced that a chapter of the Deacons for Defense and Justice had formed in Natchez. The Natchez group had heard of the success of the paramilitary Deacons for Defense and Justice in Louisiana. The Louisiana Deacons had received national attention by neutralizing White terrorists in Bogalusa and Jonesboro, Louisiana ("Deacons and Their Impact," 1965; Reed, 1965). According to Bogalusa leader Robert Hicks, Evers requested that some of the Louisiana Deacons come to Natchez and help the establishment of the organization there. The day following Jackson's announcement, Charles Sims, the spokesperson for the Bogalusa Deacons, arrived in Natchez to

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discuss the formation of the Deacons for Defense in Adams County ("Bombing Angers," 1965; James Stokes, personal communication, August 1, 1994).

According to Natchez Deacons James Stokes and James Young, the Natchez paramilitary group decided not to affiliate with the Louisiana Deacons. Although Sims offered advice on how to set up a paramilitary organization, the Natchez group that felt they had little to gain from a formal affiliation with the Deacons. Stokes remembered Sims offering no significant material aid to the Natchez paramilitary group other than the use of the name Deacons for Defense and Justice. Sims stated that to use the Deacons name, the Natchez group had to pay a percentage of their dues to the Louisiana Deacons. The Natchez group rejected Sims's offer (James Stokes, personal communication, August 1, 1994; James Young, personal communication, July 28, 1994).

Although the Natchez paramilitary group decided not to officially affiliate with the Louisiana Deacons, they had no problem using their name. The Natchez group was known throughout the movement and the state, to friend and foe, as the Natchez Deacons for Defense and Justice. As they began to assist the establishment of other paramilitary affiliates across the state, the Natchez group helped form the Mississippi Deacons for Defense and Justice. By early October 1965, a little more than a month since the attack on Metcalf, the Natchez Deacons were visible on the streets of Natchez providing security at marches and demonstrations. Visible members of the Natchez Deacons wore overalls and a white shirt while conducting the organization's business of protecting the movement and the Black community (Horowitz, 1965).

As did the Deacons in Louisiana, the Natchez Deacons never revealed the size of their membership. This kept the Klan, local police, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) confused about the actual size and capability of the group. Organized much like a secret society, the Deacons realized that the less their enemies knew about them the better. Young, who joined shortly after the attack on Metcalf, revealed that the Natchez Deacons's actual size was about 10 to 12 men. As in Jonesboro and Bogalusa, a few central leaders were identified to represent the Deacons to the public.

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Stokes was appointed spokesman. Jackson was the first president of the Natchez Deacons. Young was selected secretary and was responsible for the development of the bylaws and the charter for the Mississippi Deacons. According to Stokes, "The strongest thing we had going for ourselves is that nobody knew, not even some of our members, how many men there were in the organization" (James Stokes, personal communication, August 1, 1994). The Deacons's concealing their size served as a weapon to instill doubt and concern in White supremacists because they really did not know what to expect from the Natchez paramilitary group (James Stokes, personal communication, August 1, 1994; James Young, personal communication, July 28,1994). Movement folks outside of the Deacons were not privy to the identities of the entire Deacon membership (Hollis Watkins, personal communication, July 13, 1994).

Because secrecy was essential for the mission of the Deacons, it was important that the organization selectively recruit its members and that its membership did not reveal its secrets. Because trust was an important factor for recruitment, the initial group only recruited men they had grown up with because they knew their backgrounds and characters. "Everybody we had, we knew," said Young. A Deacon recruit had to be sponsored by someone already in the group. Anyone with a history of abusing alcohol or a criminal past was not allowed to join. The Deacons did not want to have a member who could be easily compromised by police pressure (James Stokes, personal communication, August 1, 1994; James Young, personal communication, July 28, 1994). Before induction into the organization, a member was informed of the seriousness of joining the Deacons. The Deacons informed their recruits that revealing organizational secrets could result in death for the informant (Pincus, 1965; James Stokes, personal communication, August 1, 1994). The Deacons's internal security methods were apparently effective and prevented the Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission, the FBI, local police, and the Klan from receiving an adequate assessment of their size and capability. Also, to maintain security, a small group within the membership would make all of the plans. Individual members would know their assignments but not the entire secu-

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rity plan. This also prevented information from leaking to the opposition.

As earlier stated, there was a proliferation of arms in the Black community of Natchez in response to a White supremacist reign of terror, which heightened in Adams County around 1963. The Natchez Deacons believed that it was important for them to be well armed to meet the demands of protecting the Black community and the leadership and workers of the movement. One unidentified source in the Natchez Deacons revealed that the organization possessed "hand grenades, machine guns, whatever we needed." According to this source, only one store in Natchez would sell ammunition to the Deacons. If White supremacists knew the Deacons had a limited supply of ammunition, the Deacons's efforts would have been compromised. To counter this, the Natchez Deacons received ammunition from external sources (Evers, 1976; James Young, personal communication, July 28, 1994).

Mississippi law allowed civilians to openly carry loaded weapons in public. Citizens could also carry a loaded firearm in their vehicle as long as it was not concealed. This allowed the Deacons to openly carry guns to protect demonstrations, mass meetings, and community institutions. The public display of weapons by Black freedom fighters served to prevent attacks from White supremacists. The Deacons openly carried their weapons on marched demonstrations to protect movement activists and supporters from attack (James Stokes, personal communication, August 1, 1994).

On September 4, 1967, in Centerville, a small town in the southwest Mississippi county of Wilkerson, the Natchez Deacons, aligned with the Wilkerson County chapter of the Deacons for Defense, scattered a mob of White supremacists. After a member of the racist mob trained his weapon at participants in a demonstration for Black voting rights, 25 armed Deacons responded to prevent the demonstrators from harm (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1967). Deacon Young describing the situation that day stated, "We pulled in there and started unloading all of this heavy artillery and they loaded up and left" (James Young, personal communication, July 28, 1994). SNCC activist Hollis Watkins, also there that day, remembered the leader of the Deacons stating, "We represent the Deacons

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for Defense, if you come in here with that you're going to be in trouble" (Hollis Watkins, personal communication, July 13, 1994). According to Watkins, to a racist mob, hearing the name *Deacons of Defense* invoked was almost as effective in scattering the mob as guns (Hollis Watkins, personal communication, July 13, 1994).

The Deacons were not hesitant about using their weapons also. According to Stokes, Young, and Jefferson County NAACP activists Lillie Brown and Ed Cole, one evening in the late 1960s, the Natchez Deacons were asked to provide security in Jefferson County, just north of Adams, at a mass meeting in a rural church. An armed watch was placed on the perimeter of the church. Any White person coming after dark was considered suspicious, so White allies of the movement were asked to come to the meeting early. After the meeting started, a car approached the scene of the meeting. The security observed some Whites in the automobile coming down the road leading to the church with the vehicle lights out. One of the Whites in the vehicle was observed preparing to throw a Molotov cocktail. A Deacons security team, armed with a dozen shotguns, bombarded the vehicle, preventing the firebomb from even being propelled from the vehicle (Ed Cole, personal communication, July 24, 1994; Lillie Brown, personal communication, July 1994; James Stokes, personal communication, August 1, 1994; James Young, personal communication, July 28, 1994). The armed presence and preparedness of the Deacons prevented the movement in Natchez and in southwest Mississippi in general from being terrorized and intimidated. White supremacist terrorists also were on alert that any foray into the Black community or into the vicinity of movement activity was not without consequence.

Mississippi state officials opposed to the movement wished to find means to disarm the Deacons. FBI documents reveal that, on September 3, 1967, a proposal was forwarded, by an unnamed source, to the Governor of Mississippi to make it illegal for members of the Deacons for Defense in the state to possess firearms. On September 4, 1967, the same day as the confrontation between the Deacons and the White mob in Centreville, three members of the Deacons were arrested for illegal possession of firearms. The state district attorney for the southwestern district of Mississippi gave

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the Mississippi State Highway Patrol the "authority to disarm all members of the Deacons for Defense and Justice" (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1966, p. 8). Mississippi and other southern states made it illegal for anyone to transport rifles and shotguns in the cab of a car. These laws required rifles and shotguns to be carried on a rack on the back of a vehicle.

Although the Deacons experienced repression concerning their possession of firearms, being armed as an organized force served as an asset to the organization and the movement. The armed organized presence of the Deacons and their preparedness for combat, and the uncertainty on the part of Whites about the Deacons's capabilities, gave the movement a serious bartering chip. The presence of the Deacons combined with effective boycotts gave Evers and local leaders a position of strength from which to negotiate (James Stokes, personal communication, August 1, 1994; Ed Cole, personal communication, July 24, 1994).

The Natchez Deacons became an essential ingredient in the Natchez and the Mississippi movements. The Deacons provided the movement with an instrument to neutralize the violence of the Klan and other White supremacist civilians. The potential of the Deacons for defense and retaliation also gave Evers and other leaders more potency in their negotiating position with the White power structure and more boldness in their public statements. Without a doubt, the Deacons made the Natchez and Mississippi movements more effective.

## NATCHEZ, THE BOYCOTT, AND ENFORCING THE MOVEMENT

The day after the attack on Metcalf, on August 28, 1965, Evers and local leaders of the Black community presented "A Declaration of the Negro Citizens of Natchez" to Mayor Nosser and the Natchez city government. The declaration was a list of 12 demands for civil and human rights for local Blacks. The 12 demands included the desegregation of local schools, a denunciation by city

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officials of the Ku Klux Klan and other White supremacist groups, expanded employment opportunities for Blacks (particularly store clerks and police officers), police escort for Black funerals, and that local police and civil servants address Black adults as Mr., Mrs., or Miss as opposed to boy, girl, or auntie. The Black delegation gave Nosser and the city government until September 1, 4 days, to respond to their demands before the Natchez Black community would apply coercive action. According to journalist accounts of the meeting, one Black participant in the meeting threatened that "violence might ensue unless City government acted favorably on matters contained in the declaration" ("Board Rejects," 1965, p. 1; see also, "Board Meets," 1965; "Natchez Officials," 1965).

On September 1, 1965, the Natchez Board of Aldermen rejected the demands of the Black leaders ("Board Rejects," 1965). To ensure that no uprising occurred in the Black community, the Natchez government imposed a curfew from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. to restrict activity in the city during the evening and early morning hours. All alcohol sales were also banned during this time. Stating that Natchez was in "imminent danger of a riot," Governor Paul Johnson ordered 650 armed National Guardsmen to the city ("Curfew Set," 1965).

On hearing the decision of the Board of Aldermen and the restrictions imposed by state and local government, debate ensued within the Natchez movement on how to respond to the challenge. COFO and Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party forces wanted immediately to challenge the curfew with marches and demonstrations. There had been nightly mass meetings from the time of the bombing attack on Metcalf until the evening after the city government rendered its rejection of the Black leaders' demands. At each of the mass meetings, the consensus was that a demonstration would take place if the demands were not met. Evers, who announced a boycott of all White businesses on the evening of August 28, wanted to place emphasis on the boycott rather than demonstrate. Evers believed that the presence of the National Guard and the potential for violence created an unfavorable environment for demonstrations. Evers told those assembled that evening, "There is too much chance of bloodshed to ask you to walk

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down the streets of Natchez" ("National Guardsmen," 1965, p. 1). Evers won the debate and was able in the coming weeks to cement himself as the leader of the Natchez movement. When the National Guard left Natchez the following weekend, Evers approved demonstrations in Natchez, even in opposition to court order. By October 6, 1965, the Natchez Deacons secured these marches (Dittmer, 1994).

Although demonstrations were an important aspect of the Natchez movement, local NAACP leaders would credit the economic boycott as the decisive element of the Natchez campaign. The NAACP-organized boycott was very successful. Movement leaders claimed that the Black community's boycott of White businesses was nearly 100% effective. Names of Blacks who violated the NAACP boycott were announced at mass meetings (Dittmer, 1994; Evers, 1976). Violators of the boycott were not only isolated but also harassed by the enforcer squad that was organized by Rudy Shields. Shields, a Korean War veteran, had moved to Mississippi from Chicago at the request of Evers (Morris, 1971). Evers called Shields to Natchez from Belzoni, Mississippi, where he was working with the local NAACP. Shields's primary responsibility was to make the boycott successful. As one movement participant stated, "Rudy was mostly a boycott man . . . . Whenever you had a boycott, he was right up front" (James Young, personal communication, August 1, 1994).

Just as it was the Deacons's role to protect the movement and the community from external enemies, it was the responsibility of Shields and his squad to deal with internal enemies. The Natchez movement resorted to terror within the Black community to enforce its decisions. For those in the Black community who did not take seriously the edict of the NAACP and the Natchez movement, Shields and his squad provided coercive violence as an incentive. Movement activist Ed Cole offered, "Folks go shop, break the boycott, they didn't get home with the damn groceries . . . cause somebody was waiting for them when they got there" (Ed Cole, personal communication, July 24, 1994).

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The movement considered breaking the boycott a serious offense, and the violators had to be disciplined. With the sanction of the movement's leadership, Shields and his team were committed to punishing the violators. As Evers stated, "We didn't go around bragging about it, but we were ready to enforce those boycotts, to die if necessary" (Evers, 1976, p. 134).

State and local officials and law enforcement and local press often stated that the Deacons were responsible for the enforcement of boycotts. But, there seems to be a division of labor between the Deacons, who were solely responsible for the defense of the Black community and the movement from external enemies, and Shields's enforcer squad, which was particularly responsible for harassing and terrorizing Black people who violated the boycott. When asked if the Deacons enforced boycotts, Natchez Deacon Young responded, "We had another team out there. If you went in there [a White owned business] this time, after they [the enforcer squad] got through with you, you weren't hardly going back any more" (James Young, personal communication, July 28, 1994). According to Forrest County activist James Nix, after the boycott campaign in Hattiesburg in 1966, the enforcer squad was called "Da Spirit" ("An Oral History With James Nix," 2000; James Nix, personal communication, September 20, 1994).

The Deacons and the enforcer squad recruited different types of people for each respective organization. The Deacons tended to be adult males older than 30 who were considered disciplined, stable, and respected in the community. The enforcer squad tended to use working class males in their late teens to early 20s. As opposed to the older Deacons, the recruits of the enforcer squad tended to be considered less stable and from the more volatile elements of the community (Ed Cole, personal communication, July 24, 1994).

Although women were not recruited into the Deacons, females did play a significant role in enforcing sanctions on internal enemies. Women, young or old, were not included in Shields's boycott enforcers but were involved in punishing suspected female informers. The movement suspected that certain Black domestics were

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providing, either voluntarily or through coercion, information to the White power structure. A team of NAACP women was organized to physically discipline the suspected informants (James Stokes, personal communication, August 1, 1994).

The vigilance of enforcer groups certainly aided the Natchez movement in maintaining an effective boycott. On October 12, 1965, an NAACP delegation met with Natchez city officials. The NAACP delegation came from the meeting claiming victory, announcing that the mayor and the Board of Aldermen had agreed to most of their demands. Two days later, Natchez city officials denied agreeing to the NAACP's proposals. The boycott and marches continued. Within a 2-month period, 6 White-owned enterprises went out of business. Concerned that the boycott would effect the Christmas season, a significant number of White merchants gave their consent to the White power structure to negotiate with the NAACP. On November 29, 1965, the NAACP and the White power structure came to an agreement. The NAACP agreed to lift the boycott on 23 White-owned businesses in Natchez. In turn, the city of Natchez hired six Black policemen, desegregated municipal public facilities, and agreed to appoint a "qualified Negro" to the school board. The 23 White businesses conceded to hire or promote Black workers to the position of clerk. Although some in the local movement, particularly COFO and Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party forces, did not believe the agreement went far enough, the settlement was hailed nationally. The Natchez boycott strategy would be replicated in communities throughout southwest Mississippi.

Although not as visible as Evers, the Deacons, or the NAACP, the work of the enforcer squads, both that of Shields's squad and the NAACP women, was essential to the movement. The enforcer groups ensured accountability and respect for the decisions of the Natchez movement. If the boycott was almost 100% effective, recognition must be given to the work of the enforcer groups. Although this has escaped most accounts of the Mississippi movement, the participants in the movement, particularly those active in southwest Mississippi, recognize the significance of Shields and the enforcer groups he organized.

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## THE NATCHEZ PARADIGM AND THE MISSISSIPPI MOVEMENT

The formula developed in Natchez to combat the local White power structure and win concessions toward human and civil rights was used throughout the state, particularly in southwest Mississippi communities. Other local communities observing the success of the Natchez boycott, under the leadership of Evers and Shields, began to organize boycotts using the model developed in Natchez. The Natchez model had proven the necessity of using the threat of a coercive response to defeat external and internal enemies of the Mississippi freedom movement. Chapters of the Deacons for Defense and Justice and the enforcer squad, Da Spirit, were established in other local movements.

When Evers and Shields became involved in boycott campaigns in Jefferson and Wilkerson counties, the Natchez Deacons became directly involved in these local campaigns. Because Jefferson County (north) and Wilkerson County (south) were contiguous to Adams County, the Natchez Deacons could take up a major responsibility in these counties. According to Deacon Samuel Harden, Wilkerson County activists established their own chapter of the Deacons for Defense and Justice. Although they had their own chapter of the Mississippi Deacons of Defense and Justice, the Wilkerson Deacons received personnel and support from, and virtually came under the chain of command of, the Natchez Deacons. In both of these communities, Shields organized teams to enforce the boycott (James Stokes, personal communication, August 1, 1994; Lillie Brown, personal communication, July 29, 1994; Samuel Harden, personal communication, October 30, 1994).

In Claiborne and Copiah counties, local communities established local Deacon chapters that were autonomous from the Natchez group. When NAACP-led boycotts developed in Claiborne County and in the towns of Hazelhurst and Crystal Springs in Copiah County, these respective communities organized local chapters of the Mississippi Deacons of Defense and Justice. In all of these communities, the Deacons and enforcer squads were organized as part of boycott campaigns to pressure the White power

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structures to concede to demands similar to those presented by Black leaders in Natchez.

The Claiborne County Deacons for Defense and Justice was among the best organized and effective paramilitary organizations in the state. In 1960, Claiborne County had a population of 11,000, with 8,239 (76%) of its residents of African descent. During the same year, Claiborne's county seat, Port Gibson, had a population of 2,816. The population of Port Gibson was almost evenly divided between African descendants and Whites. There were no Black elected or appointed officials in the county. In 1966, prior to the initiation of the NAACP boycott of White merchants in Port Gibson, there were only seven Black registered voters in the whole county. Claiborne County is also the home of Alcorn A&M, Mississippi's first public Black college (Crosby, 1995, pp. 16-17; Devoual & Miller, n.d., p. 5).

The Deacons for Defense and the enforcer squads, now known as Da Spirit, were organized in Claiborne County after the Black community under the leadership of Evers and the local NAACP called a boycott on April 1, 1966 (Crosby, 1995, pp. 230-231; George Walker, personal communication, September 29, 1994). The Claiborne County Deacons were popularly known as the Black Hats. Friend and foe alike in Claiborne County called the local Deacon chapter the Black Hats because Claiborne Deacons wore a black helmet while on duty. Khaki pants were also part of their uniform. The Black Hats first appeared in public on April 1, 1966, the day the boycott was initiated in Port Gibson. The Deacons came out to protect the NAACP picket of White merchants in downtown Port Gibson. The pickets and the Black Hats remained visible in the Port Gibson streets for the next 3 years. The Deacons also patrolled the Black community during the evening, monitoring the activity of the local police, the Klan, and other White supremacists' forces. According to Deacon George Walker, the Deacons for Defense and Justice were committed that "another Neshoba County [where civil rights workers James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Mickey Schwerner were murdered]" did not happened in Claiborne County (George Walker, personal communication, September 29, 1994).

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The boycott of White-owned enterprises in Port Gibson lasted more than 3 years, driving several White merchants out of business. The boycott of White businesses in Port Gibson was definitely made more effective by the leadership of Shields and the activity of the enforcer squads. Shields organized a network of youth in neighborhoods throughout the county to harass violators of the boycott in their community.

Due to the solidarity of the Black community and the enforcement of the boycott, by 1969, several White merchants acquiesced and consented to hire Black workers. By this point, tensions had calmed, and the local movement decided to demobilize the Deacons. In April of 1969, the shooting of a Black man by White police sparked a near uprising by the Black community and the resumption of a full-fledged boycott. After the second boycott was called, the local movement leaders did not see the need to mobilize the paramilitary Deacons. By 1969, local Blacks had won several concessions from the White power structure and were beginning to participate in local government. Although the organized defense wing of the first boycott was no longer seen as necessary after 1969, the organization of the Deacons in Claiborne County is partially responsible for Black political gains in the county (George Walker, personal communication, September 29, 1994).

In a few cases, the Bogalusa Deacons were active in local Mississippi campaigns. In 1965, the Bogalusa group unsuccessfully attempted to establish Mississippi chapters of the original Louisiana Deacons for Defense and Justice in Natchez and in Jackson (James Stokes, personal communication, August 1, 1994; Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1965). The Louisiana Deacons were not active in Mississippi until 1966. In the early months of 1966, Bogalusa Deacon leader Sims and other Louisiana Deacons became active in a community campaign in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. The campaign was sparked by the murder of NAACP leader Vernon Dahmer, on January 10, 1966, by night-riding Klansmen ("Black Community Leader Killed," 1993; Ellie Dahmer, personal communication, July 27, 1994; "Malice Toward," 1966; "Nightriders Kill," 1966).

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In response to this brutal slaying, Evers urged an economic boycott to achieve the basic rights to which Dahmer had committed his life. Citing Natchez as an example, Evers stated, "The only thing the white man understands is the ballot and the dollar . . . . We're going to get both of them" ("Nightriders Kill," 1966, p. 10). Weeks later local leaders presented Hattiesburg and Forrest County officials with a list of demands, including employment opportunities in the public sector, the desegregation of public facilities, and implementation of federal civil rights and voting legislation.

The Bogalusa Deacons established a chapter of the paramilitary organization in Hattiesburg. Like Deacons groups in other southern towns, their basic responsibility was the protection of movement leaders, activists, and the Black community in general. Through contacts in the Deacons group in Hattiesburg, the Bogalusa paramilitary organization was able to establish a Deacons chapter in Laurel, Mississippi. In Laurel, the Deacons supported voter registration efforts and became the basis of the paramilitary organization of a labor movement (Hopkins, 1966).

Although the Deacons were initiated from Louisiana, like other communities implementing the Natchez model, Shields was involved in organizing the boycott enforcer squad in Hattiesburg. By the summer of 1967, Mississippi law enforcement surveillance revealed that the Black economic boycott in Hattiesburg was 100% effective. As previously stated, it was in Hattiesburg that Da Spirit received its name. James Nix, Hattiesburg organizer of Da Spirit, stated, "A spirit is something that you don't see. This is the reason for it . . . . We would harass people . . . . And this was our job" ("An Oral History With James Nix," 2000). In Hattiesburg, Da Spirit also aided in providing covert security for local movement leaders. The pressure of the boycott gradually won concessions from the Hattiesburg White power structure. As in other Mississippi communities, White merchants in Hattiesburg pressured political elites to negotiate with NAACP leaders to end the economic boycott ("Black Community Leader Killed," 1993; "An Oral History With James Nix," 2000).The Natchez model was applied throughout the state, particularly in southwest Mississippi. Whether organized by the Mississippi or the Louisiana Deacons, Black Mississippians

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organized paramilitary organizations to protect movement leaders and activists and the Black community during economic boycotts designed to win basic civil and human rights. Also, local leaders recognized, based in the Natchez experience, the necessity of a paramilitary enforcer squad, generally separate from the defense organization, to ensure accountability and solidarity in the boycott effort. The armed aspect of the Natchez model was essential for gaining basic rights in communities throughout the state.

## THE IMPACT OF THE NATCHEZ MODEL ON THE MISSISSIPPI FREEDOM MOVEMENT

The development of paramilitary organizations in the Mississippi movement signaled a new day in Black communities throughout the state. The capacity of the movement to protect itself and the Black community and to retaliate against White supremacist terrorists gave Evers and other Black leaders more leverage in negotiating with local White power structures. The ability of movement leaders to effect economic boycotts through solidarity and intimidation gave the NAACP even more negotiating strength. The Natchez model, combining economic boycotts with paramilitary defense and the potential for retaliation, proved more effective in winning concessions and social and cultural change on the local level than nonviolent direct action or voter registration campaigns depending on federal protection.The Natchez model served as the major paradigm for Black resistance in the state of Mississippi until the end of the decade. After Shields left Claiborne County, he helped organize economic boycotts in several Mississippi communities including Yazoo County, Belzoni, West Point, and Indianola. In each of these communities, Shields applied the Natchez model (Herman Leach, personal communication, July 30, 1994; Johnston, 1990, pp. 292-297). In the late 1970s, the United League of Mississippi in several communities in northern Mississippi, including Holly Springs, Okolona, Tupelo, and Byhalia, organized economic boycotts. The United League continued the armed tradition of the Natchez model in the economic boycott it had organized in

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northern Mississippi. The leaders of the United League openly declared the right of Black people to protect themselves and their movement. Members of the United League carried weapons to protect demonstrators from the Klan and other White supremacists, and in some cases they engaged in gun battles with racist Whites (Marx & Tuthill, 1980).

The insurgent movement in Mississippi demonstrates that the freedom movement could survive and grow only through reliance on economic coercion and armed resistance. Disenchanted with federal promises and expectations for external support and intervention, the Natchez model clearly demonstrates how local communities initiated social change primarily using their own resources. The Natchez model proved to be an effective disruptive campaign that forced White elites to negotiate with segregated Black communities. Along with other vehicles of collective action, students of the civil rights movement must study the Natchez boycott strategy to understand the elimination of de jure segregation in the South.

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# THE BALLOT AND THE BULLET
## A Comparative Analysis of Armed Resistance in the Civil Rights Movement

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**The June 1966 March Against Fear** from Memphis, Tennessee to Jackson, Mississippi represented a significant shift in the character and balance of forces in the southern civil rights movement. During a late night meeting in a Memphis church, Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) chairman Stokely Carmichael argued that White participation in the march be de-emphasized. Carmichael also proposed that armed security be provided by the Deacons for Defense and Justice, a Louisiana-based paramilitary organization. Floyd McKissick, the chairman of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), supported Carmichael's positions. Martin Luther King, Jr., the chairman of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, continued to argue for the practice of nonviolence and a multiracial emphasis in civil rights marches. Finally, though expressing reservations, King conceded to Carmichael's proposals to maintain unity in the march and the movement. The involvement and association of the Deacons with the march signified a shift in the civil rights movement, which had been popularly projected as a "nonviolent movement." Beginning with the sit-in movement of 1960 and the Freedom Rides of 1961, CORE and SNCC were two of the principal organizations committed to eliminating segregation in the South through nonviolent passive resistance. By 1966, both organizations had endorsed armed self-defense as a legitimate and viable tactic in the struggle to achieve civil and human rights (Hampton & Fayer, 1990; Sellers, 1990). Many CORE and SNCC

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activists in the deep southern and border states were armed by the mid-1960s, and had rejected nonviolence as a philosophy and the principal method of the civil rights movement.

The primary purpose of this research article is to examine the factors that contributed to the transformation of CORE and SNCC philosophy and strategy in the 1960s from nonviolence to one of embracing armed self-defense as a legitimate method in the pursuit of human rights. Both organizations accepted nonviolence as a philosophy at their inception but adopted more flexible tactics, including armed resistance, as the freedom movement developed in the 1960s. At the same time, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) maintained its adherence to nonviolence, never embracing armed self-defense as a tactic to defend political confrontations and other forms of activism. This article will also concern itself with what factors distinguish the transformation of SNCC and CORE from the adherence to nonviolence by SCLC.

This article will assert that different class orientations, leadership paradigms, organizing styles, and also the changing cultural climate were responsible for transforming the attitudes of SNCC and CORE's national leadership. Those factors contributed to transforming the views of leaders of SNCC and CORE leadership, many who had been committed to nonviolent direct action and had rejected all forms of armed resistance. These factors also nurtured the emergence of new social groups and ideological currents within the organizations. Particularly after 1963, many new participants with SNCC and CORE rejected nonviolence and embraced armed self-defense. A secondary and underlying focus of this article is to broaden the perception of the modern civil rights movement in the United States. The civil rights movement, particularly in the South, is often characterized as a nonviolent struggle. The use of armed self-defense, retaliatory violence, and other forms of armed resistance by civil rights activists and their supporters is often not acknowledged by scholars and the mass media. The modern civil rights movement was a social movement for basic citizenship and human rights employing many tactics, and although perhaps nonviolent direct action was more common, armed self-defense and other forms of armed resistance were at times employed as well.

## MOVEMENT LITERATURE AND THE DISTINGUISHING FACTORS OF DIFFERENCE

Much of the movement literature has attributed differences between SNCC, CORE, and SCLC to different factors. Among those factors that have been cited are class and generational differences in the leadership of the organizations and varied methodologies of organizing. Piven and Cloward (1979) attribute the radicalization of SNCC and CORE to a "growing frustration and militancy of younger members in the two organizations" (p. 152). Rudwick and Meier (1976, pp. 258-259) suggest that SNCC's rejection of nonviolence was the result of a growing influence of nationalist-oriented northern Blacks in the organization who differed from southern Blacks about the use of armed resistance. Jack Bloom (1987) gives multiple explanations of the political contradictions between SNCC and SCLC that included a contrast in the organizing styles of the two organizations and age difference. Both Bloom (1987) and James Forman (1972) argue that different class orientations and compositions created political conflict between SNCC and SCLC. In conducting a comparative study of the three organizations, this article will review each of the following factors: differences in age, region, ideological orientation of its leadership and membership, and styles of organizing and internal decision-making processes. Each of these factors will be examined to determine which were essential in the transformation of SNCC and CORE from solely nonviolent groups to the embrace of armed defense.

## THE PACIFIST ORIGINS OF CORE, SCLC, AND SNCC

Nonviolent direct action was at the center of the philosophy and program of CORE, SCLC, and SNCC at the inception of each organization. Armed self-defense was not officially considered a viable alternative for any of the organizations' leaders during their inceptions. CORE, founded in 1942, was the first organization committed to nonviolence to challenge racial segregation. CORE's original statement of purpose read that "CORE has one method-interracial, non-violent direct action." James Farmer, a founder and

leader of CORE, stated that the Gandhian principle of *Satyagraha* (nonviolent direct action) was "essential to the discipline" of CORE (Meier & Rudwick, 1973, p. 10)

Besides invoking Gandhian principles, SCLC, founded in 1957, emphasized the principle of Christian love in the desegregation fight. In its founding statement to the press, SCLC leadership made its position clear on nonviolence:

> Nonviolence is not a symbol of weakness or cowardice, but, as Jesus and Gandhi demonstrated, nonviolent resistance transforms weakness into strength and breeds courage in face of danger. (Carson, 1981, p. 23)

Although calling for Black people to confront segregation, "Even in the face of death," the Southern Leadership Conference declared, "not one hair of one head of one white person shall be harmed" (Rustin, 1971, p. 102). SCLC leaders felt it necessary to dissociate themselves from any retaliatory violence or form of self-defense by local activists and movement supporters, for Black people in general to win the public opinion battle with White segregationists. They believed that the use of force by Black people and the movement would only serve to alienate White liberal and the general White population (Garrow, 1986, pp. 329-330).

SNCC was founded in 1960 after a proliferation of nonviolent sit-ins at segregated lunch counters in the South, organized by Black college students. SNCC's founding statement also advocated nonviolence as the core of its organizational philosophy:

> We affirm the philosophical or religious ideal of nonviolence as the foundation of our purpose, the presupposition of our faith, and the manner of our action. (Carson, 1981, p. 23)

## THE TRANSFORMATION OF CORE AND SNCC

The challenge of nonviolent direct action in the White supremacist South had transformed the strategies and philosophical orientation of both CORE and SNCC by 1965-1966. Although both

organizations possessed nonviolent origins, by this time tension began to emerge in SNCC and CORE concerning complete adherence to nonviolence. Some suggest that from its inception, SNCC always had much of its membership opposed to nonviolence as a philosophy and the sole tactic of the organization. Many SNCC activists saw nonviolence as a tactic to be used when advantageous, but were willing to use other tactics. By 1964, SNCC members began to engage in debates concerning armed self-defense at the organization's National Staff meeting (Forman, 1972, pp. 374-375; Grant, 1998, pp. 196-197; King, 1987, pp. 310-325; Umoja, 1997, pp. 130-139).

By 1963, CORE also began to experience internal debate on the question of armed self-defense. At the CORE national convention of 1963, a special emphasis was placed on reinforcing the use of nonviolence. This emphasis was due to increasing support for armed resistance within the organization and the civil rights movement overall. CORE activists in the South had experienced the terror of the Ku Klux Klan and other White supremacist groups, receiving often less than minimal protection from the federal government or local authorities. In some cases, indigenous Black southerners protected the CORE workers, and a growing number of CORE workers in the South were arming themselves for protection (Farmer, 1985, p. 251; Moody, 1968, pp. 302-304). Understanding these and similar developments in the fall of 1963 and winter of 1964 CORE national leadership would reemphasize in policy statements the need for strict adherence to nonviolence (Meier & Rudwick, 1973, pp. 296-303; Sobel, 1967, p. 226).

The experience of both SNCC and CORE in organizing the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) in the Freedom Summer of 1964 affected the embrace of armed self-defense in both organizations in the deep South. In the Mississippi Black Belt, as in other southern Black communities, civil rights workers found much of the constituency of the movement willing practitioners of armed defense (Dittmer, 1994, p. 106; Umoja, 1997, pp. 96-98, 103-104, 106-110, 118-122). Whereas SNCC and CORE activists were frustrated by the 1964 Democratic Party Convention's

unwillingness to unseat the segregationist Mississippi state delegation in favor of the MFDP, they also suffered the wounds of physical abuse and the memories of several murders of Black Mississippians and civil rights activists.

By 1965, both the SNCC and CORE supported armed self-defense. National CORE leadership, including James Farmer, publicly acknowledged a relationship between CORE and the Deacons for Defense in Louisiana (Meier & Rudwick, 1973, pp. 398-399). After the Mississippi Freedom Summer, many of SNCC and CORE activists were armed in the deep South. By 1966, SNCC officials told participants in demonstrations that they had the option of using "any means necessary" to keep their march from being disrupted (Sellers, 1990, p. 163).

The CORE National Convention of 1966 proclaimed what was already a fact in its southern organizing. At this convention, CORE delegates voted to eliminate the requirement of chapter affiliates to adhere to "the technique of nonviolence in direct action." Another resolution declared the concepts of "nonviolence and self-defense are not contradictory" and self-defense was also a "natural, constitutional, and inalienable right" (Meier & Rudwick, 1973, pp. 414-415). Moreover, some local CORE affiliates were members of self-defense groups like the Deacons for Defense and Justice (Meier & Rudwick, 1973, pp. 414-415; Sobel, 1967, p. 377).

King and SCLC leadership stood its philosophical ground, a strict adherence to nonviolence. Although King compromised with SNCC and CORE on the involvement of the Deacons in the 1966 Mississippi March, he was greatly disturbed by their involvement and advocacy of armed defense (Garrow, 1986, p. 485). Attempting to encourage more expedient action on the part of the federal government after the Meredith March, King warned that "I'm trying desperately to keep the movement nonviolent, but I can't keep it nonviolent by myself. Much of the responsibility is on the white power structure to give meaningful concessions to Negroes" (King, 1968, p. 56). Consistent with King's sentiments, SCLC did not abandon its advocacy of nonviolence and did not publicly embrace armed self-defense.

## FACTORS EXTERNAL TO THE NONVIOLENT MOVEMENT

From 1964 to 1966, CORE and SNCC's national leadership significantly altered their views on self-defense. Certainly external factors played a major role in transforming the perspectives of these organizations, though alone that cannot explain this transformation. All three organizations were threatened by White supremacist violence. Each organization interacted with local forces within the southern movement that advocated armed resistance. In the 1960s, SCLC, CORE, and SNCC all existed in a cultural climate where radical voices were becoming increasingly popular, both nationally and internationally.

Yet, external factors alone do not explain why SNCC and CORE embraced armed self-defense, and SCLC maintained its position on nonviolence. Why were SNCC and CORE influenced by or changed consistently with the cultural climate, and SCLC resisted change? Examining external factors is not sufficient to identify the factors responsible for the transformation of SNCC and CORE. On the issue of armed self-defense, we must also look for internal factors to distinguish SCLC from CORE and SNCC on the issue of armed self-defense.

## INTERNAL FACTORS

### AGE

One important aspect of the study of collective action is the politics of age. Political sociologists have debated the relevance of generational differences and the impact of age on social change and consciousness. Three generational models of social change have been dominant in political sociology. The first paradigm of generational politics is the experimental model, which argues that "politically relevant experiences among members of the same age" group are the "necessary condition for the shaping of a generation." The life cycle model asserts that the individuals' social and political orientation changes as their personal roles and responsibilities change

and the individuals mature. Finally, the interaction model argues that generational conflict is "rooted in each generation's reaction against the values of the previous one so that there is a cyclical nature to social and political change" (Kilson, 1977, pp. 29-36).

Although many noted sociologists have supported one or a combination of the above arguments, others have asserted that generational factors are not independent variables, as are religion, social class, gender, or ethnicity. Martin Kilson examined the aspect of generational change among Black people during the 1960s. Using attitudinal surveys concluded in 1963, 1966, and 1969, Kilson asserted that there was not a clear pattern of generational differences among young adults, middle-aged, and elder Blacks (1977, pp. 29-36). This article agrees with Kilson's assertions. When examining the leadership of SNCC, CORE, and SCLC, there is not a coherent pattern of attitudes by leaders of different generations that demonstrate that age was a primary factor in these organizations embracing armed resistance.

SNCC was primarily composed of young people either enrolled in or old enough to be enrolled in college. CORE's national leadership and staff was a combination of young college-age activists, professionals, and middle-aged veterans of the civil rights movement in their 30s and 40s. SCLC's leadership was primarily composed of ministers over the age of 30.

Although CORE and SNCC were definitely younger organizations, age, independent of other factors, is not significant. CORE and SNCC both contained middle-aged leaders whose receptivity to armed self-defense was certainly consistent with the sentiments of younger members. Southern communities included several elders and mature adults who advocated and practiced armed resistance in their daily lives. The age assertion must explain why middle-aged veterans of the movement supported self-defense, whereas some of their younger counterparts supported nonviolence. Although SNCC and CORE were definitely younger organizations, the factor of age cannot be seen as a significant reason for the transformation of SNCC and CORE on the issue of armed self-defense.

**REGIONAL DIFFERENCES**

Was the embrace of armed defense by SNCC and CORE the result of influence by northern Blacks? The regional argument is implied by Meier and Rudwick (1976), who claim that CORE membership was predominately located outside the South and that SNCC's northern-born staff members were responsible for its "national thrust." According to Meier and Rudwick, "The Southern leaders (of SNCC), particularly those who had been profoundly implied with philosophical nonviolence, were more likely to retain original SNCC ideology (Gandhian nonviolence)." They also assert that one significant factor to SCLC's unwavering support for nonviolence is "its Southern base" (Meier & Rudwick, 1976, pp. 258-259).

There is no conclusive evidence that northern Blacks exhibit a greater propensity for militant armed resistance than southern Blacks. In 1963 and 1966, *Newsweek* magazine conducted a survey of more than 100 persons of African descent in various Black communities in the United States, who were asked the following question:

> Do you personally feel Negroes today can win their rights without resorting to violence or do you think it will have to be an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth? (Brink & Harris, 1964, p. 72)

There seems to be no significant impact that is regionally based determining one's perspective on armed self-defense. In 1963, 22% of the respondents from the nonsouthern states agreed that Blacks will have to use violence, with 21% of those in the South agreeing with this position. In 1966, 23% of the nonsouthern respondents embraced the necessity of an eye for an eye, as did 20% of their southern counterparts (Brink & Harris, 1964, 1966).

Elements of Meier and Rudwick's (1973) regional thesis do not apply to CORE and SNCC. In their own work on CORE, Meier and Rudwick documented support for armed defense among CORE's Southern staff, primarily composed of local southern-born activists. In their work, *CORE: A Study in the Civil Rights Movement 1942-1968* (1973), Meier and Rudwick state, "Among staff members

in Mississippi and Louisiana, continuing experiences with racists violence fueled the growing feeling that some sort of armed self-defense was necessary and legitimate" (p. 397). The alliance between CORE and the Deacons for Defense highlighted the support of southern CORE activists for the concept of armed self-defense as a complement to nonviolent direct action. A significant portion of SNCC's southern-born leadership and staff also supported armed self-defense. These examples clearly show that the idea of regional difference in determining movement support for armed self-defense is fatally flawed.

### CLASS AND IDEOLOGICAL ORIENTATION

Speaking in very general terms, the leadership of all three organizations was composed primarily of middle-class individuals. SCLC was initiated by newly emerging middle-class clergy who had not established dependent relations with the local White power structure in their areas. In the early 1960s, CORE and SNCC members tended to be what Inge Powell Bell characterized as "pre bourgeois," in transition from working class into middle class (1968, p. 75). As petty bourgeois intellectuals from working-class backgrounds, many Black activist students had not completed their "progress" into the Black middle class.

Although the leadership of CORE, SNCC, and SCLC was predominately middle class, we must not look at the Black petty bourgeois as a monolithic group. In *Race, Class, and Conservatism* (1988), political economist Thomas D. Boston identifies different strata in the Black middle class, distinguished by similar ideological orientation. Boston divides the Black middle class into three ideological strata: independent, dependent, and conservative. The independent stratum of the Black petty bourgeois is the "political and ideological left" of the class; its consciousness is oriented to "grassroots Black opinion, which is for historical reasons, most often very liberal or even radical at times." At the "center" of the Black political life, the dependent strata, while maintaining social ties and identification with the aspirations of the Black masses are also obligated to "pacify to anxieties of white society" from which

it draws political and financial support (1988, pp. 39-46). This tension creates vacillation in the dependent strata relative to militant collective action. Finally, the conservative sector represents the "far right of the Black Middle Class and Black society in general" and is characterized by its alienation from "Black public opinion" and consciousness.

The leadership of SCLC emerged initially as part of the independent strata as their political relationship with the executive branch of the federal government in particular, and external support in general, increased. The Kennedy and Johnson administrations and SCLC leadership developed and maintained a cooperative relationship in the early to mid-1960s. Although on several occasions King and SCLC did openly criticize the Kennedy administration for its inaction, their relationship was qualitatively different from that of CORE and SNCC. King and SCLC occasionally honored the Kennedy and Johnson administrations' requests to have moratoriums on civil rights demonstrations at critical periods in local desegregation campaigns. SNCC and CORE leadership did not enjoy amicable relations with Washington. In fact, SNCC and CORE were often seen as troublemakers by the executive branch during this period. According to King's biographer, David Garrow, President John F. Kennedy was pleased that SCLC rather than SNCC was leading the 1963 desegregation campaign in Birmingham. Garrow (1986) quotes Kennedy as saying "SNCC has got an investment in violence.... They're sons of bitches" (p. 296). During the 1964 presidential elections, both SNCC and CORE refused to honor a request by incumbent President Lyndon B. Johnson to place a moratorium on demonstrations. The Urban League, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and SCLC all agreed to honor President Johnson's requested moratorium to support his reelection efforts.

Although SNCC, CORE, and SCLC all had predominately middle-class leadership, their class orientations were different. SCLC's leadership's relationship with the executive branch places them in the category of dependent petty bourgeois. CORE and SNCC's growing antagonistic relationship with federal, state, and

local administration reflects their leadership's orientation as independent Black middle class. These differences in ideological orientation were significant in effecting the process of each organization. Given SCLC's relationship with the Kennedy administration, they were least likely to openly embrace activists who advocated armed self-defense. The leaders of CORE and SNCC's fundamental principle of philosophical nonviolence also made them initially uncomfortable of advocates of armed resistance. But due to CORE and SNCC's tenuous and adversarial relationship with the federal government, they had little to lose by associating themselves with often working-class advocates of armed self-defense. National leaders in SNCC and CORE recognized in dangerous Southern battlefields like Cambridge, Maryland, Danville, Virginia, and rural Louisiana and Mississippi that their nonviolent organizer's survival depended on indigenous armed militants. The orientation of SNCC and CORE leadership toward the perspective of the independent Black middle class made them more likely to embrace armed activists, because they realized that they would have to rely on local militants for protection as the federal government seemed unable or unwilling to protect them.

#### STYLE OF ORGANIZING

While organizing in the Black Belt, SNCC staff encouraged the development of indigenous leaders to create a "peoples movement without dominating it" (Forman, 1972, p. 255). Ella Baker's initial emphasis on a group-centered orientation rather than a leader-centered orientation was incorporated into the organizing style of SNCC. The southern staff of CORE would also adopt this orientation in its Black Belt organizing (Haines, 1988, p. 49). SNCC activist Robert Moses called its style of organizing the "community organizing tradition." Moses (1989) states that there were three elements that characterized the "community organizing model." First, there was the importance of organizers integrating themselves into indigenous Black southern households, an "informal absorption" into communities that allowed SNCC and CORE activists with

meager resources to survive in the Black Belt. Second, they tried to empower grassroots people (including sharecroppers, domestic workers, and farmers) by encouraging their involvement and leadership. Third, SNCC called for organizers to "cast down your buckets where you are," based upon the political, cultural, and social space in which the activists were organizing (pp. 424-428).

In contrast to the community organizing model of SNCC and CORE, SCLC and King relied on the community mobilization tradition. This model focuses on mass mobilizations to engage major national events, demonstrations, and marches and requires national leadership and national media. The development of King as a national and international personality played a decisive role in attracting large numbers of people for the major events and national media. Because of this, King and SCLC tended to make critical decisions in local civil rights campaigns, often subordinating local demands to the national objectives of achieving federal civil rights legislation. Some critics of King cited that SCLC often achieved victories on national objectives while failing to win the demands of local activists and communities. Although SNCC and later CORE chose to promote indigenous leadership, King was considered a messiah who could bring national media and federal attention to resolve local situations. Deference by indigenous leaders to SCLC's leader-centered approach allowed King to make major tactical and strategic decisions in movement campaigns without consulting local leadership.

The promotion of indigenous community organization and leadership made it difficult to maintain nonviolence as the only tactic of movement activity organized by SNCC and CORE. The community organizing perspective encouraged organizers to learn from the experiences and wisdom of local people and indigenous activists and to rely on their resources. In communities where activists and grassroots people relied on armed self-defense, it was difficult for SNCC and CORE, who were committed to nonviolence, to condemn the methods and actions of community people and encourage their initiative at the same time. In communities where there was a tradition of Black armed self-defense, the informal absorption of SNCC and CORE into these communities may have meant the

necessity to compromise their position on nonviolence. And nonviolence would certainly be questioned in communities where White supremacist terror was the order of the day.

### MODELS OF LEADERSHIP AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

The leadership models and organizational decision-making processes within CORE and SNCC varied from those of SCLC. All three organizations differed from the strong national bureaucratic processes of the NAACP. CORE, SNCC, and SCLC, however, all began as direct-action groups, seeing the legalism of the NAACP as insufficient to advance the national drive toward desegregation. At the inception of all three organizations, their founders had experience with bureaucratic national processes stifling local initiative and the ability to mount indigenous direct-action movements. CORE, SNCC, and SCLC all chose to develop organizational structures that would not inhibit direct-action campaigns; however, SCLC differed with the other two organizations, in terms of models of organizational structure, leadership, and decision-making processes.

King possessed "the ultimate power in the SCLC (Morris, 1984, p. 93). Several key SCLC leaders agreed that King had the power to initiate or veto policies on his own. Ella Baker, the former associate director and key administrator in the early years of SCLC, criticized SCLC's decision-making style. Baker believed organizational and movement decisions should be made collectively and the ultimate authority of SCLC should be its board of directors, not one charismatic leader (Dallard, 1990, p. 76; Morris, 1984, pp. 103-104; Mueller, 1990, pp. 60-62; Payne, 1995, p. 93). On the other hand, King's charisma and his public persona were, in fact, a definite asset to SCLC. Local SCLC affiliates believed that their organizing efforts were tremendously enhanced due to their association with King. The name Martin Luther King, Jr. attracted people, financial contributions, and publicity (Morris, 1984, pp. 92-93). Consequently, local SCLC affiliates often yielded authority to King when he was involved in campaigns in their local areas. Consistent with Black church culture and the experiences of church-based

movement, organizations believed that one central leader was necessary for success of the movement (Morris, 1984, p. 104). King's firm commitment to the philosophy of nonauthority within SCLC would make it difficult for advocates of armed self-defense to change the organization's policy.

The experience of CORE reflects a strong tradition of local autonomy and a relativity weak national bureaucracy. From its inception in 1942 to the 1960s, the CORE affiliates remained practically free to decide local actions within the context of the CORE constitution. Established as a secular organization in the liberal tradition, CORE maintained an executive that owed accountability to its entire membership. The National Convention, with representation from all CORE chapters, selected the national executive body, the National Action Council (NAC). Although CORE suffered from lack of local participation in national conventions, its leadership was sensitive to sentiments from its grassroots membership (Meier & Rudwick, 1976, pp. 238-260), and its executive officer did not possess veto power and was often challenged and criticized by other CORE leaders. The chief executive of CORE was evaluated and held accountable by the NAC and did not posses the ultimate power of his counterpart in SCLC.

SNCC, like CORE, maintained a flexible structure. Due to the demands of the movement, there was a call for a growing centralized administrative structure. At SNCC's inception, the group-centered approaches of Ella Baker would cement a collective leadership style in the organization. Though not without fault and difficulty, SNCC maintained through most of its organizational life a strong principle of collective leadership and decision making. Although strong personalities emerged within the organization, it was unusual for any of its leaders' ideas and proposals to be accepted without challenge or question. The strong anti-leader-centered tendency within SNCC made it difficult for any one individual to develop an unchallenged power base within the organization. Similar to CORE, SNCC leaders were subject to criticism, evaluation, and removal by their peers on the executive committee. Although the structure of Baker's group-centered leadership approach may have changed forms and names from 1961 to 1966,

the basic principle was maintained as a fundamental characteristic of the organization.

CORE and SNCC differed from SCLC in terms of leadership models and decision-making processes. CORE and SNCC decision-making processes seem to have been more collective and democratic in nature. In CORE and SNCC, the composition, consciousness, and ideological orientation of its voting membership had greater consequences on the organization than those of SCLC. As opposed to the Black church culture of SCLC, the more secular and democratic movement culture of CORE and SNCC empowered the active membership and workers of both organizations to transform the organization more rapidly from below than their counterparts in a leader-centered organization. As more of these members and workers began to support armed resistance, it was more difficult for SNCC and CORE to maintain their nonviolent stance.

In summary, SNCC and CORE's models of leadership and decision-making processes allowed for more open debate and discussion. Particularly as local activists, workers, farmers, and sharecroppers became involved in the organizational structures and the cultural climate began to shift, debate began to take place on the support of armed self-defense by the organized civil rights movement. SCLC's more hierarchical leader-centered approach would not allow open discussion that would allow dissidents to challenge the fundamental practices of the organization.

## SUMMARY

Evaluating the histories of SNCC, CORE, and SCLC, we can see what differences are critical in transforming the perspectives of groups previously committed to nonviolence to embracing armed self-defense. This evaluation reveals age, regional, and class differences as nonessential to distinguish SCLC from CORE and SNCC. Class orientation, methodology, and leadership models/decision-making processes do distinguish these organizations, however. The question we must ask is, How do differences, ideological

(class) orientation, methodology, and decision making/leadership models move SNCC and CORE, but not SCLC, to embrace armed self-defense?

In 1960 and 1961, the primary tactics of the civil rights movement organizations required the mobilization of dedicated, determined cadres to disrupt the institutions of segregation. These cadres would initiate the sit-ins of 1960 and jail-ins and Freedom Rides of 1961. The actions of the nonviolent cadres of SNCC, CORE, and SCLC would inspire a greater mobilization of mass participation in civil rights movement activity, particularly drawing from indigenous institutions, the Black church, and Black colleges—and the NAACP, SNCC, CORE, and SCLC could maintain the discipline of nonviolent direct action by the training and orientation of small groups of cadres who made a conscious choice to participate in the movement. The participation of preexisting organizations (churches and NAACP) and aspiring middle-class students would involve members of the Black community more likely to adhere to the principles of nonviolence advocated by the civil rights leadership.

In 1961, SNCC initiated community-wide direct action campaigns that involved sit-ins, mass demonstrations, mass arrests, and economic boycotts. The community-wide campaign asserted multiple demands for desegregation of public facilities, employment opportunities for Black people, and the establishment of biracial committees to coordinate integration of local private and public sectors. Voter registration projects were also initiated, often as a parallel activity to direct action. CORE also employed this method of organizing particularly in Mississippi and Louisiana, and SCLC in its campaigns in Birmingham and Selma. The community-wide campaigns involved a greater degree of community organization and participation. As the civil rights movement developed, its mass base expanded recruiting, involving elements of the Black community other than active Black church members, Black college students, Black professionals, and others, particularly persons with experience in the NAACP. The involvement of Black workers, high school students, and Black farmers particularly in SNCC, CORE, and affiliated organizations (e.g., Lowdnes County Freedom

Organization, Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, Council of Federated Organizations, Cambridge Non-Violent Action Movement) served to radicalize the movement. By 1965, the character and base of CORE and SNCC were significantly different. Although SCLC maintained, as argued by Morris (1984), a significant mass base and was not just a middle-class organization, its class orientation and hierarchical structure and process of operation prevented the type of transformation that occurred in CORE and SNCC.

CORE's members and leadership were predominately White middle-class individuals prior to the 1960s. By the summer of 1964, CORE membership was predominately Black (Bell, 1968, p. 14; Meier & Rudwick, 1976, p. 259). CORE's rapid inclusion of Black participants included all classes within the Black community, including Black workers, farmers, and high school youth. SNCC began as a group of predominately aspiring middle-class college students. The inclusion of non-college-educated southern Blacks had also rapidly increased within SNCC by 1964. By 1965, most of SNCC's executive committee was composed of Black southerners with only a high school education (Carson, 1981, p. 151; Forman, 1972, pp. 438-440). The rapid recruitment of grassroots, militant workers, farmers, and youth into SNCC and CORE created political tension in the organizations around the question of nonviolence. Many of these grassroots elements were not as committed to nonviolence as the founders of both organizations. Many new recruits were also not trained in nonviolent philosophy and tactics due to their rapid recruitment and the inability for their organizations to meet the demands of orienting new members. The leadership and organizers of SNCC and CORE were particularly sensitive to the sentiments of their growing mass base, which included support for militant armed defense. Due to SNCC and CORE's relationship with indigenous activism, it was difficult to condemn militant armed resistance by local Blacks. SNCC and CORE organizers found it difficult to impose the tactic and philosophy of nonviolence as a requirement of participation in the movement. The internal decision-making processes of CORE and SNCC allowed the voices of the supporters of armed self-defense to be heard in

organizational discussions and debates. As these organizations broadened, their mass base combined with environmental factors that question the logic of strict adherence to nonviolence, and armed self-defense was not only advocated but practiced.

The comparison of the experience of these organizations suggests that class orientation, methodology, and models of leadership and decision making are what separated SNCC, CORE, and SCLC. Due to these differences, SNCC and CORE's relationships with their mass base, particularly Black workers, farmers, and youth, served as agents of transforming these organizations. Even more importantly, these differences allowed them to question their commitment to the philosophy of nonviolence, and facilitated their receptiveness to armed self-defense. On the other hand, SCLC's class orientation (i.e., its relationship with the mass base and the U.S. government), its leader-centered method of activism, and its hierarchical models of leadership and decision making allowed it to maintain its advocacy and adherence to nonviolent direct action and distance itself from advocates of armed defense in the civil rights movement.

This study shows the diversity of the civil rights movement and the factors for the transformation of some of its key players. More serious analysis of the movement will allow historians and students to give a more sophisticated understanding of the heterogenous character of the activists and their mass base of the civil rights struggle. To understand the character of the entire movement fully, more attention must also be focused on local civil rights campaigns and their methods of struggle and survival. If not, the civil rights movement will not be viewed as an undertaking of hundreds of thousands of people who struggled with their means and understanding, incorporating nonviolent direct action and armed militancy, but the efforts of a few heroic individuals. In addition, one must make a critical analysis of the class orientation of the movement's leadership and major organizations. The history of the civil rights movement cannot be narrowed to the activities of a few heroic individuals, but must be inclusive of the efforts of tens of thousands of indigenous southern Black people and their influence on movement organizations and leadership. Including the

perspectives of the broad social base of the struggle to desegregate the South must revise the definition of the civil rights movement to include the role of armed militancy as a complement and alternative to nonviolent direct action. Only through understanding the role and participation of the southern Black masses in the civil rights movement can we understand the embrace of SNCC and CORE of armed self-defense by 1966.

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# Black Fighting Formations: Their Strengths, Weaknesses and Potentialities

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**Abstract** *Clausewitz observed that "war is an extension of politics." This paper argues that a fatal flaw among Black political organizations–with certain exceptions–has been their failure to adequately prepare for warfare in the service of self-defense and revolutionary struggles. The failure of the non-violent credo of the Southern Civil Rights Movement is examined as are exceptions to that credo, Robert F. Williams and also the Deacons of Defense. The Black Panther Party is analyzed as a political force unprepared for the violent confrontations it faced, and the Black Liberation Army is found to be militarily relatively sophisticated but lacking a necessary popular base. As a result of the above history, today no "fighting formation" remains to lead and organize the young African men and women prepared to fight for their survival.*

A study of the various Black political organizations in the United States between the years 1960 and 1994 will reveal a number of "fighting formations." These formations were usually offshoots of larger organizations that had been further divided. As such, they were not primarily envisioned as fighting groups. This lack of original dedication to a "fighting mission" will help elucidate organizational strengths, weaknesses, and potentials (or loss of same). Not included in this study are the non-political Black fighting formations found amongst the street gangs, or those dedicated to criminal activity. However, they will be mentioned as they relate to the lost potential amongst Black political fighting formations.

For the most concise writings on the philosophy of warfare (ultimate contributing factors, and the many and varied dynamics), we must look to Sun Tzu (ca. fifth century, BC) and Karl von Clausewitz (19th century, AD). Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*[1] and von Clausewitz's *On War*[2] are widely recognized by military practitioners of all countries and races as two of the best volumes available.

There have been many outstanding military practitioners of African descent: Thutmose III (the first imperial conqueror); Ramses II and Ramses III (consistent subduers of the barbarian and savage hordes of Europe and Asia); the Queens, Ann Nzinga, and (the) Candace(s) (Ethiopia and Angola); Hannibal Barca (of known fame); Shaka Zulu (warrior *par excellence*); Toussaint Louverture and Antonio Maceo (who outwitted and outfought vastly superior European armies in Haiti and Cuba). Also included among these are the outstanding guerrilla leaders amongst the maroons and the African anti-colonial fighters (it should,

[1] Sun Tzu, *The Art of War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984).
[2] Karl von Clausewitz, *On War* (New York: Viking Press, 1983).

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however, be remembered that "guerrilla warfare" is only a subdivision–sometimes a forerunner–of "total war," although this form of warfare is sometimes all that is required). Unfortunately, the superlative accomplishments of these African practitioners of the "art of war" are not available to us.

Sun Tzu's *The Art of War* instructs: "... war is a matter of vital importance to the state: The province of life and death; the road to survival or ruin. It is mandatory that it be thoroughly studied." Similarly, *On War* asserts: "... war is an extension of politics; politics by different means." Both authors point out the connection between politics and warfare, and the relative importance of each. For the purposes of this discussion we shall define politics as the science and art of governing people. It must follow then that those involved in political affairs must recognize that they will, very likely, be required to pursue their political objectives by different means in order that the journey along the road to survival not detour along the road of ruin. Warfare!

This cannot be a haphazard or belated consideration; rather, strict attention to these principals is required to avoid total destruction (the result of non-violence). Therefore, all of our Black political organizations should have been designed to include a military component from the outset. The primary mission of this component would have been thorough study and preparation for war ... from the very beginning! This presupposes political and military leadership sagacious enough to discern the long-range interests of their people, and the conflicts they might potentially encounter in pursuing these interests. In other words, our Black political organizations should have known to build a military component capable of defending our people from attack as they struggled to free themselves from all forms of domination and oppression. Sadly, this was never done; let us now examine what was done.

With the exception of the paramilitary "Fruit of Islam," due primarily to the tireless efforts of the Nation of Islam's Malcolm X, there was no Black fighting formation in 1960. Unfortunately, the Fruit of Islam's efforts were centered primarily around internal security and static defense of organizational leadership and property. They were further hobbled (in qualitative development) by their unwillingness to become actively involved in the struggle for civil rights, where all the action was! Subsequent events would expose their weaknesses. To their credit, they had perfected a method of recruiting, organizing and training (although little training was provided) that was unparalleled until the present. The secret of their success was in recruiting efforts that targeted the most downtrodden members of the Black community. Among these were drug addicts, prison inmates, prostitutes, and the destitute poor. It took a great effort to recruit and organize these people; however, once they were brought firmly into "the midst," they became loyal and devoted members of their new (psychological) family. By the time the Nation of Islam had "fished" them in (out of the mud) their biological families had, for the most part, turned their backs on them in despair. They were kept under close supervision and provided with the means to acquire such necessities as food, clothing, shelter, security and entertainment–usually social fellowship guised in religious trappings. The Nation provided for them everything that a well functioning family would provide.

The Nation itself was nationalist in tone; however, no strategy was implemented toward achieving nationalist goals. The first dictum was clearly not observed: "... war is a matter of vital importance to the state ... it is mandatory

that it be thoroughly studied." This is not merely an arbitrary opinion. This assertion is supported by an examination of activities during their early days in the 1930s until the present. It simply does not take 60 years to build military capability, particularly if it is a priority! To be fair, they had hardly been idle. Ongoing battles against government infiltration and manipulation, along with petty jealousies and rivalries amongst their leaders, fragmented energies that could have been more productively directed.

The Civil Rights Movement was launched in 1955 with the Montgomery, Alabama bus boycott. It quickly took off and spread throughout the South. In addition to the local groupings who (in some cases) had already been active in their communities, a number of other organizations began to emerge on the national scene by 1960: the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), the Urban League, and the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) had been around since the early 1900s. Between 1955 and 1965 all of the major action in the Black freedom struggle took place in the South. The aforementioned organizations led these struggles. It should be noted here that all of these organizations professed non-violence as their strategy; however, each ultimately relied on someone's armed forces to protect them. In most cases, reliance upon the United States government was met with disastrous results. Calls to the FBI for protection would result in calls from the FBI to local police contacts (card carrying Ku Klux Klansmen), or undercover agents/operatives in the Klan who would subsequently organize a violent episode, e.g. shooting, burning, bombing, etc. In their lack of preparedness and dependency these organizations violated every rule in the art of war. Instead of observing the dictum, "destroy your enemy and preserve yourself," they were helping their enemies to destroy them! This pattern was carried out, to some degree, when the US government provided marshals or federal troops. However, the heroic sacrifices that were heaped on the rank and file, mostly Black men, women and children because of this cowardly, ignorant strategy, did force a number of social changes. During this period these same groups did engage in a few noteworthy incidents of fighting involving (armed) subdivisions and offshoots.

The Monroe County, North Carolina NAACP branch was headed by a Black man named Robert F. Williams. This brother saw early on that his NAACP chapter could not survive, without significant casualties, unless they were willing to abandon the non-violent approach and adopt an armed self-defense posture. Williams believed strongly that all Blacks in the US should adopt armed self-defense. His work mirrored these beliefs, and the Monroe County NAACP chapter was armed and trained. This preparation is undoubtedly responsible for their survival in a number of shootouts with the local Ku Klux Klan (citizens and police).

Williams could not, however, facilitate widespread acceptance or adoption of his methods. His chapter was therefore isolated, and after a "so-called kidnapping" of some white people he was forced to leave the country. Williams continued his work in exile by traveling throughout Africa and China in an attempt to garner support for the struggle in the US. He became a nationalist and published a paper called *The Crusader*. In this paper, Williams advocated the overthrow of the US through guerrilla warfare. A number of years later he

returned to the US as head of the revolutionary Republic of New Afrika (RNA). Williams was able to stay out of prison because the RNA successfully exposed and diffused the trumped-up kidnapping charge.

In the meantime, the "Deacons for Defense and Justice" were organized in Louisiana and Mississippi. The Deacons were not a subdivision like the Monroe County group; instead, they were an offshoot, and consequently free to act independently of the non-violent leadership. Their mission was armed self-defense; they were recruited, organized and trained solely for that purpose. Accordingly, the Deacons were much more advanced, militarily speaking, than any other (part-time) gun toting Blacks in the civil rights struggle. For example, while civil rights groups posted marshals with armbands, the Deacons employed roving patrols armed with automatic rifles. The Deacons were responsible for the sophisticated security and communications net around some of the most important marches. After a few skirmishes and firefights with Klan members and night riders (part-time Klansmen afraid to show their colors during daylight), the racists had no choice other than to allow the Deacons a great deal of latitude. Unfortunately, the Deacons had relatively limited potential for growth because of the Civil Rights Movement's overall strategy of reliance on the US government for protection.

Rural Mississippi had also made believers of the young SNCC cadre. SNCC started its "Mississippi freedom summer" campaign in 1964 as non-violent activists. Reeling from the deaths of their comrades and supporters (Chaney, Goodman, Schwerner *et al.*), and the raw terror of the police and Klan/night rider attacks, all of SNCC's cadre took up arms by the time they left Mississippi. H. "Rap" Brown, SNCC leader, was arrested when a rifle and banana clips were found in his luggage after a flight from Mississippi. SNCC even changed its name to the Student National Coordinating Committee—dropping the "non-violent." Unfortunately, it was too little, too late. The momentum was beginning to shift to the cities of the North and West. One last effort by SNCC in 1965 centered around organization of "The Lowndes County Freedom Organization." Their emblem was "The Black Panthers" (no real association with the later Black Panthers). The Lowndes county group subscribed to armed self-defense from the beginning. However, despite experimentation with the Black Power slogan, they were unable to make any real progress because their political goal was still civil rights.

The Watts, California rebellion of 1965 signaled a significant shift in the momentum of the Black struggle to the cities. Within two years there would be a number of major rebellions in the big cities, and many smaller rebellions in smaller towns. This was a qualitatively different situation no longer marked by peaceful demonstrators seeking to acquire their civil rights. These rebellions were massive and widespread: New York, Philadelphia, Birmingham, Newark (34 dead), Detroit (43 dead), Watts (26 dead), and in all cases hundreds wounded, and massive property damage. The keen political observer could not miss the parallels between these rebellions and those that had preceded revolutions and armed struggles in other countries.

It may be obvious to the reader that this equation was not complete; no urban based Black political groups had armed components.[3] There were no

[3] National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1968), pp. 19–21.

Black fighting formations that could organize, control and direct these rebellions. The "Fruit of Islam" was clearly not up to the task because they had not been able to adequately respond to the killing and shootings of their members by local police. Nor could rural based groups lend any support; they were still in a life and death battle to keep the Klan and Southern police at bay. SNCC made a half-hearted attempt to transfer their operations to the urban areas; however, outside of H. "Rap" Brown and a few others, it seemed their Southern experiences rendered them ineffectual.

The Urban Rebellions brought forth scores of new political formations. These formations generally adhered to the idea of armed self-defense, at least in theory. This shift in tactics was accompanied by new nationalist sounding politics, usually with a separatist tone, although a rediscovery of the Pan African concept was also becoming apparent. Unfortunately, they adopted a "high profile" operation, characteristic of the civil rights struggle, that relied too heavily on television, radio, and print media. In reality this was no longer the civil rights struggle; it had become the Black Liberation Struggle. The civil rights leaders needed this type of exposure to get their message across and to help protect themselves from the most flagrant abuses. This strategy was maladaptive in its application to the Black Liberation Struggle, which necessarily demanded more clandestine ways of operating. Preparation for guerrilla warfare is most successfully carried out surreptitiously. This patently obvious fact was lost on the new (younger) organizations. They were impressed by Malcolm X and the fiery orators, but failed to recognize his specific role as stimulator/educator. Clearly, they were now embarking on a new phase that demanded quiet, patient organizing and training of those tens of thousands already sufficiently stimulated–as evidenced by the massive rebellions–and waiting for someone to show them how to get the job done. "Rattling a sword makes a lot of noise ... drawing one is silent ..."

There was still a great deal of agitation, propagandizing and educating that needed to be done. But not by those who, according to their mission, were concerned with forming Black fighting formations. Lack of focus and prioritization usually led to this mistake as groups tried to combine the activities of the military and political workers in each cadre. They failed to realize that each situation demanded specialization: political workers (stimulators, educators, marchers, etc.) and military workers (armed self-defense and assault units). The Deacons had it right!

An outstanding practitioner of this new form was the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM). RAM began an intensive organizing drive in the Northeast states around 1967. Much of their activity was centered in Philadelphia. RAM was militant, nationalist and high profile. They even had their cadre spray paint their slogan "Join the Black Guard" on walls throughout the community ["the Black Guard" was their (out front) military arm]. RAM's leaders were in front of cameras on all important issues. Their "Black Guard" cadre could be seen at their cultural centers in their fatigues and black berets. They even had a youth group called "the Liberators." This contributed to a feeling of hopefulness among Black people who began to believe the Revolution was right around the corner (no one in Philadelphia had yet heard of a similar group that had cropped up in California, the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense). The effects of their activities were not quite so positive among whites who felt threatened

and afraid (some people went out their way to frighten the white folks; it made them feel better about the injustices they had suffered). Around 1967 the white folks began to strike back. Over a period of several months all known RAM leaders and key cadre were arrested. Although RAM advocated armed self-defense and owned weapons, they did not carry them in public. Consequently, they were arrested for everything from "J-walking, to conspiring to put cyanide in the police department rations at the next major holiday celebration."[4] RAM had not (essentially) fired a shot (however, some alleged members and supporters were arrested bringing dynamite from Canada, allegedly to blow up the Statue of Liberty).

These arrests crippled RAM, and they never regained their former vitality. Their leaders and cadre were forced to fight these trumped-up charges for years afterward. This treatment was not reserved only for RAM; similar scenarios played out in Black communities throughout the country. In fact, the attacks on RAM and other militant groups were spearheaded by police forces throughout the country, including the FBI. The success of law enforcement officers in carrying out these plans was almost certainly related to the inexperience of RAM and other organizations. These groups were never able to get grounded after they showed their hand (super militancy, dress, etc.). Black fighting formations of this era never even had a chance to fight. Many of the activists became discouraged after these experiences and turned to drugs or crime.

When it came to the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense (BPP), circumstances were a little different. BPP was founded in 1966 in Oakland, California and followed the same pattern as RAM. However, because of a clause in the California State Law, any citizen was allowed to carry arms (in public) as long as they were not loaded. The BPP took advantage of this clause in order to brandish weapons wherever they went. At the time, this seemed the height of militancy, and they received more attention than any other group from the community, media and police. Despite this attention they could not be put down as easily as RAM because they always had their guns with them ... and they were loaded. After a few confrontations with the police it became apparent that these young Blacks could not be intimidated. Before long, BPP members were being provoked into gun battles with the police. Within a year, one of the co-founders, Huey Newton, had been shot and imprisoned for killing the police officer who shot him. Bobby Seale, another co-founder, had been jailed for marching into the state capital (with other armed Panthers) to protest the law passed to ban the carrying of guns in public. "Little" Bobby Hutton was the first BPP member to be killed during a Panther—police shootout in which several members of the Party were wounded and jailed when two carloads of Panthers were ambushed by the police. Eldridge Cleaver would later flee the country to avoid incarceration for charges associated with the shootout. Shortly after the inception of the BPP, its top three leaders (Newton, Seale, and Cleaver) were either in prison or exile. Moreover, this was a fate that confronted several key local leaders and cadre members.

On the positive side, membership skyrocketed! Chapters were formed

[4] Maxwell C. Stanford (Akbar Muhammad Ahmad), "Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM): A Case Study of an Urban Revolutionary Movement in Western Capitalist Society," Masters thesis, Atlanta University, Atlanta, GA, 1986.

throughout the West Coast, in the Midwest, Northeast and South. The BPP became a magnet for most of the smaller local organizations who were of a similar mind. And with the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968, even more people were eager to join the BPP. By this time no Panthers were carrying guns in public; however, this did nothing to stop the onslaught. BPP offices and homes were raided from coast to coast. Police agents who had infiltrated the ranks were provoking deadly confrontations with the police and other Black organizations. BPP members were even hunting and killing each other because of the "agents provocateurs." The Panthers were a potentially strong Black fighting formation that was forced to take to the field before they were ready. As a result "... the field of battle [was] a land of standing corpses." Panthers were dying in the streets, they were dying in raids, and in prison (Soledad, San Quentin, Attica ... Atmore—Holman) ... it was "war to the knife!"[5]

The Panthers were not the only Black fighting formation; there were other revolutionaries and "free shooters" that were just as committed, armed and involved. For example, Fred "Ahmad" Evans and a squad of Black guerrillas trapped the Cleveland, Ohio police in a deadly ambush. A number of officers were killed and wounded, some guerrillas were also killed or wounded and Ahmad Evans was imprisoned (where he died). Mark Essex (free shooter) held off an army of police officers atop a high hotel in New Orleans. Officials had to call in a helicopter gunship to kill him, but not before he had inflicted casualties on them. Jonathan Jackson walked into a courtroom in San Rafael, California and pulled a submachine gun from his duffel bag. After disarming all of the sheriffs, he gave pistols and a shotgun to James McClain, William Christmas and Ruchell "Cinque" Magee, three Black prisoner comrades of his brother, George Jackson. They rounded up the white judge, district attorney and a number of jurors as hostages; after forcing their way past the rest of the sheriff's and police officers, their getaway van was riddled with bullets, killing Jackson, McClain and Christmas. Ruchell "Cinque" Magee was wounded, but survived. Before they died, they blew the judge's head off with the shotgun they had taped under his chin. The district attorney and jurors were also shot, but survived. George Jackson was a field marshal in the BPP. He was killed the following year in San Quentin but not before three prison guards and two "inmate snitches" were knifed to death. It was later learned that all of those brothers were set up by an "agent provocateur" who had infiltrated their inner-circle. The agent, Louis Tackwood, had married one of their sisters![6]

The revolutionary Republic of New Afrika (RNA), once headed by Robert F. Williams, gunned a number of Detroit police down after they tried to storm a meeting their leaders were holding at a church. A few years later they killed a sheriff after their headquarters were raided in Jackson, Mississippi. That raid sent their entire leadership to prison.[7] Free shooters were killing police officers in sniper attacks in Philadelphia, Chicago, St. Louis and New Orleans housing

[5] George Jackson, *Blood in My Eye* (Baltimore, MD: Black Classic Press, 1990).

[6] Gregory Armstrong, *The Dragon Has Come* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), and Paul Liberatore, *The Road to Hell: The True Story of George Jackson, Stephen Bingham, and the San Quentin Massacre* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1996).

[7] Imari Abubakari Obadele (Milton Henry), *Free the Land!: The True Story of the Trials of the RNA-11 in Mississippi and the Continuing Struggle to Establish an Independent Black Nation in Five States in the Deep South* (Washington, DC: House of Songhay, 1984).

projects. H. "Rap" Brown became a fugitive after a bomb went off outside of a court building in his comrades' car. A year or so later he was wounded and captured after a running gun battle between his liberators (from east St. Louis) and the New York City police. A number of liberators were also captured. Police officers were killed while they sat in their cars, or directed traffic; this was war. There were brothers and sisters hijacking passenger jets to Cuba and Algeria where the BPP had a branch of fugitives headed by Cleaver (he had left the country to avoid going back to prison for his participation in the shootout which left "Little" Bobby dead).

This was very sobering for BPP members. All of the early flash and high profile began to dissipate even as the Panthers searched desperately for ways to regain the initiative and plug the security gaps. Finally, it was decided that an autonomous strike force that could handle all armed actions was needed. Other BPP members would continue with and expand community programs such as free breakfast, educational and sickle cell testing, clothing donations and so on. Unfortunately, it was again too little, too late. The seeds of mistrust had been sewn by the agents and their handlers (the police/FBI). They were cultivated in an environment of youthful and inexperienced leadership. This leadership demonstrated little understanding of intelligence and counterintelligence activities, or how to combat them. More importantly, they held but a fleeting grasp on "the art of war," which as a critical component of their growth and survival could not have been overemphasized. Still, they pressed on. Orders went out to the field marshals to begin organizing (separating) guerrilla groups (a Black Liberation Army).

A very important opportunity was missed at this point; the BPP had made some half-hearted attempts to recruit street gangs, however, they were unsuccessful. They overlooked the fact that street gangs were typically only responsive to programs that focus primarily on fighting. As we've seen, the old BPP wanted cadres who were political and military workers. Almost invariably gang members responded to recruitment efforts with a, "Get back when it's time to fight ..." When the time to fight did arrive, in their haste to go into the new phase, they pushed that knowledge out of their minds ... Of course it would not have been easy to slow down at this point, but a little foresight would have indicated the strategic benefits of doing so.

Growing unrest among the rank and file proved to be a major stumbling block to launching the new phase. Further, leadership was less than swift in developing a response to the problem. Nevertheless, the new phase was launched with the BPP cadre studying texts on guerrilla warfare, refusing to be arrested for any reason and launching planned attacks on various targets. In New York City a gun battle erupted between the police and BPP members when officers tried to arrest members for carrying concealed weapons. When the smoke cleared, a cop and BPP member Harold Russell were dead, and two other BPP members were wounded (Robert "Ra'uf" Vickers and Anthony "Kimu" White). "Kimu" was arrested but "Ra'uf" escaped to the underground where doctors eventually healed his wounds and allowed him to go back into the field. In California, geronimo ji Jaga Pratt, who was out on bail in connection with the 1969 gun battle that ensued after a police raid of the Los Angeles headquarters, went underground and formed a guerrilla group. In Philadelphia, a guerilla group raided a police station, killing one cop and wounding another. BPP

guerrilla groups were raiding banks for funds, hijacking food to give to the community, and acquiring sophisticated military weapons.

This intensified activity brought pressure on the BPP political workers. After the raid on the Philadelphia police station, every BPP office in the city was raided by the police. Fortunately, Party members anticipated these raids. After gun battles at two of the offices, however, the Panthers were forced to surrender. This activity also provoked gun battles between the police and other Blacks. In 48 hours the score was: six cops in the hospital with gunshot wounds, one cop at the morgue, Panthers and guerrillas in prison, while other guerrillas were on the run. All of the Panthers were released after massive protests by the Black community, and because the police could not fully justify the raids. These episodes clearly demonstrated that they should have been operating this way all the time! This new appreciation of how to attack the problem was not universally shared and division grew around the disagreement. There was a split between those who advocated this new phase and (surprisingly!) other leadership elements who favored removing guns from the strategy entirely. Such a reversal would cause an about face which seems ludicrous in view of the Philadelphia lesson where police officers were killed and wounded, Panthers sustained no casualties, and all detained Panthers were shortly released from prison. The community support and participation engendered by the Philadelphia episodes was also a positive result of the new phase. BPP members held a major convention in Philadelphia within weeks of these events without any police interference. It was enough for the Black community to see that the roles of those participating in planned assaults (the guerrillas) and the BPP political workers were strictly dichotomized. There was absolutely no reason, therefore, to suspend all armed actions. Besides, it was too late!

There were other complaints about the new opulent lifestyle that various leaders had adopted (on release from prison in 1970, Huey Newton began to hang out with Hollywood stars and rent expensive apartments). But, the real beef was the poor strategy that killed members and sent others to prison. Huey Newton (the top leader) advocated no guns in the program. For those who wanted to fight, or who were underground, he sent an open communiqué to the North Vietnamese government that he would make BPP members available to fight in Vietnam (against the US forces). This was strange to say the least! Not that the Panthers weren't sympathetic to the Viet Cong's fight, but very few could see any reason that we should not show our sympathy by stepping up our armed actions inside the United States. The Vietnamese government was of a similar mind, and they openly declined the offer, suggesting that the BPP could better help by supporting them from within the United States. Eldridge Cleaver (who had been feuding with Huey from Algeria) countered that it was time to stop the bullshit and lend full support to the armed struggle. He had made arrangements with the Algerian government whereby Panthers, and others, could go to Algeria to be trained. Another clear voice was Field Marshal George Jackson. He had been advocating and writing about the necessity for this type of change, and how it could be carried out. He would have unquestionably been the most effective leader to implement this new phase strategy because he was highly regarded by many, and was also a master theoretician. These traits were complemented by his desire to implement theory, and his desperation (at the

time he was preparing to go on trial for killing a prison guard). It would not have been difficult to liberate him from prison—provided the BPP put their full resources behind the effort. There was no lack of BPP members (male or female) who would have volunteered for such an honorable mission. Sadly, the West Coast leadership (Huey Newton and company) and the police/prison officials had him cut off from direct contact with those who were ready, willing and able to carry out such a plan. Consequently, the police/prison officials set Jackson up and assassinated him. However, George and his prison "Black Guerilla Family" killed five of the enemy. Ruchell Cinque Magee had recovered from his courthouse wounds and was in this battle, also.[8]

August 21, 1971 (the date of Jackson's death) was a sad day. Shortly afterwards, "Attica Prison" blew up after a memorial for him (43 guards and prisoners died). Black guerrillas walked into a California police station, killed a police sergeant and riddled the station with bullets–the "George L. Jackson Assault Team" of the Black Liberation Army (BLA) claimed responsibility.

The question of the split on strategy was solved after enforcers dispatched by Huey Newton shot and killed a Panther after he had given unfavorable details of the inner workings of the West Coast leadership clique. "Robert Webb" was a top Panther leader and bodyguard of Huey Newton; it was his words at a New York meeting, attended by disgruntled Panthers from all over, that were most damaging against the West Coast leadership. Webb reported opulence, pimping BPP female members, and cocaine addiction. The following day, Robert Webb was assassinated by Newton enforcers. Afterwards, the primary West Coast representative (Central Committee Member Samuel Napier) was found in an office destroyed by fire. Napier's bound body had been riddled with bullets. Shortly afterwards, the West Coast delegation placed themselves under police protection until they could make arrangements to return to California. The word went out that the police were looking for a number of people in connection with the shooting and preceding meeting. This forced many people to go underground. Again we see a fatal disregard for the dictums of the art of war. Preparations for this chain of events were made only haphazardly or belatedly.

These preparations swelled the ranks of the guerrillas considerably. Intensive training for these new guerrillas included bank raids for funds and gun stores for arms and ammunition. This could have been a new beginning; however, because it was forced on them, and unplanned, their hasty actions all but destroyed any above-ground political activity. They were making the same mistake in reverse that the civil rights organizations had made: the civil rights organizations were all political workers with no military component, while the guerrilla groups (such as the Black Liberation Army) were all military with no political workers.

Revolutions must be led by professionals if success is the goal. One may not start as a professional, but must certainly become one if destruction is to be avoided. The hallmark of the professional is being able to proceed from point "A" to point "B" without any wasted energy. This means learning from the mistakes of others–as well as your own–and not repeating them. It also means

[8] Eric Mann, *Comrade George: An Investigation into the Official Story of His Assassination, His Work for the People and their Response to His Death* (Cambridge, MA: Hovey Street Press, 1972).

learning the best practices from others and adapting and emulating their successes (wherever applicable).

This new phase was now solidly being launched, but on an unprofessional basis. The past, present and future were not adequately evaluated. After finally adopting the right style, they lost contact with the substance of what this was all about. They forgot (most had not yet learned) that "... war is an extension of politics; politics by different means." It follows, then, that they should have taken their cue from whatever was happening in the political arena, as the Deacons used to do. But that did not happen, at least not initially.

The BLA guerrilla groups were busy acquiring and consolidating their logistical base (raiding banks, gun stores, acquiring transportation, safe houses, etc.). This is understandable and proper. But, at the same time, they were launching deadly attacks on the police. Since these were planned assaults, they were considerably more successful than the past shootouts to which the BPP was subjected. Usually, these attacks were carried out so swiftly that when the smoke cleared the cops were dead or wounded, and the guerrillas had disappeared. They had learned how to reverse the ratio of killed and wounded in their favor. The success of these attacks clearly indicates the benefits of operating this way and more than suggests that this should have been the mode of operation from the beginning.

However, BLA members still suffered casualties from the rare operation that resulted in a running gun fight, or when they were sometimes subjected to car stops, or forced into confrontations because the local police were looking to hassle some Blacks. These casualties were by and large irreplaceable. This was so because the BLA did not have an adequate political apparatus from which to replenish their forces, nor did they see the necessity of developing a way to integrate the street gangs into their activities.

The BLA had also become the "top priority" of special FBI/local police "Joint Task Forces." The title is more impressive than what they were able to accomplish. The BLA guerrilla groups did not fall victim to police infiltration in any significant way. So, aside from being caught off balance (as indicated), their demise must be attributed to some other mistake that gave these task forces an opening (e.g. frequenting places under surveillance, or "attrition").

The BLA fielded the most effective Black assault units since the maroons! Their primary weakness, and the thing that caused the most harm, was their failure to properly integrate themselves with the Black masses, through their inability to interact with a revolutionary, above-ground political group.

The BLA did attempt to reintegrate with political workers who had left or been expelled from the BPP. Since most of these workers were located on the East Coast, they were known as the "East Coast Panthers." But they did not have any of the vitality, stature, resources or connections that they had previously enjoyed. However, the BLA did have the know how to put together a new political organization that could eclipse even the BPP (using above-ground cadres, recruited from former Panthers and other political Blacks). In order to do this they would have to channel their energies and resources away from their armed activities. But before they could come to this conclusion, they had all been imprisoned, killed or exiled.

The BLA continued their revolutionary commitment after being imprisoned. Some of them escaped or attempted to escape. In 1976, BLA member John

"Andaliwa" Clark was killed in a New Jersey state prison after BLA members, armed with homemade weapons, fought against armed guards. One BLA member was killed in a fall from a high rise prison in New York after another prisoner had descended on the same rope. BLA member Herman Bell was overpowered after holding a guard hostage in an escape attempt from Rikers Island Prison in New York. A rubber raft and other gear were discovered outside of his building. BLA members Anthony "Kimu" White and Woody "Olugbala" Green were ambushed and killed after escaping from a prison in New York City. In 1977, Russell "Maroon" Shoats and three other BLA members escaped from the state prison at Huntington, PA. Two of these brothers were recaptured and BLA member Wayne "Musa" Henderson was killed. Maroon was recaptured after a 27-day hunt. In 1979, a BLA task force walked into the Clinton Prison in New Jersey, and after commandeering the visiting area, liberated BLA member Assata Shakur (she later surfaced in Cuba). Kweisi Balagoon, BLA member, had escaped from a New Jersey state prison, he was part of the BLA task force that liberated Assata Shakur. In 1979, Arthur "Cetewayo" Johnson and Robert "Saeed" Joyner, two BLA members, took over a cell block at the state prison in Pittsburgh in an attempt to escape. They and a few other brothers (who had helped) were overpowered.

In 1980, BLA members Russell "Maroon" Shoats and Cliff "Lumumba" Futch escaped from a maximum security state mental hospital in PA. They and Phyllis "Oshun" Hill, who had smuggled them the escape weapons, were captured three days later after a gun battle with police and FBI. In 1980/81, BLA member Sundiata Acoli and a number of other prisoners were almost killed when guards at the federal prison at Marion, Illinois opened fire after they were discovered trying to cut through the security fence. In 1981, BLA member Joseph "Joe Joe" Bowen and three other brothers held guards at gunpoint for six days after a failed escape attempt at the state prison at Graterford, PA (Joe Joe and BLA member Fred "Muhammad Kafi" Burton had assassinated the warden and deputy warden at the Holmesburgh, Philadelphia Prison in 1973).

There was much more ...

The prison authorities came to grips with this by keeping BLA members in the "holes" for 5, 10, 15 years and even longer. BLA member Ruchell "Cinque" Magee (courthouse shootout, and at San Quentin when George Jackson was killed) has spent most of his 30 years in prison in the hole! The prison authorities have them cut off just like they did Field Marshal George. Most of them have sentences that make release back into society unlikely. A campaign for amnesty or deportation to a foreign (African) country holds real possibilities that can serve as an organizing tool. There is much more that can be said about what lessons the fighting formations learned on a tactical level. However, that's another paper.

As it stands, in 1994, we're (essentially) back to square one. There are no Black fighting formations active in the African communities in the United States. The Nation of Islam's "Fruit of Islam" has potential (they always did, for that matter), and the street gangs also still hold great potential. Outside of that, there are tens of thousand of young African men and women who are ready to become fighters for their survival, but as of now, those who are capable of recruiting, organizing and training them are either "cut off" or "scared straight ..."

Long live the spirit of Alprentice "Bunchy" Carter (BPP)
Long live the spirit of John Huggins (BPP)
Long live the spirit of Sandra Pratt (BPP)
Long live the spirit of Zayd Malik Shakur (BLA)
Long live the spirit of Twymon Ford Myers (BLA)
Long live the spirit of Frank "Heavy" Fields (BLA)
Long live the spirit of Wayne "Musa" Henderson (BLA)
Long live the spirit of Fred Hampton (BPP)
Long live the spirit of Lumumba Shakur (BPP)
Long live the spirit of Captain Richard S. (BLA)
Long live the spirit of Woody "Olugbala" Green (BLA)
Long live the spirit of Anthony "Kimu" White (BLA)
Long live the spirit of Spurgeon Jake Winters (BPP)
Heroes and Martyrs all!!!
The struggle continues!!!

# LIBERATION OR GANGSTERISM

By RUSSELL "MAROON" SHOATS

Each generation must, out of relative obscurity, discover its mission-fulfill it or betray it.
Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth

Indigenous and Asian youth to use their time, energy, creativity and imagination to discover their true self-worth and earn the respect of the entire world while struggling toward even broader goals that were not measured by one's material possessions. And over time each segment cheered on, supported, worked in solidarity with and/or discovered its own common interests and closely linked missons connected to broader people's goals.

## Introduction

Within two generations the youth of this country have come full circle. Starting in 1955, youth were driven by two major motivations: one, the acquiring of enough education or apprenticeships, the use of their unskilled labor or street smarts to land "good" jobs or establish hustles, and to make as much money and obtain as many material trappings as possible. The second was to use the education, apprenticeships, unskilled labor, street smart jobs, hustles and the material trappings provided by them to win a measure of respect and dignity from their peers and society in general. Simultaneously, they were learning to respect themselves as individuals, and not simply be eating, sleeping, laboring and sexual animals.

### The First Wave: circa 1955-1980

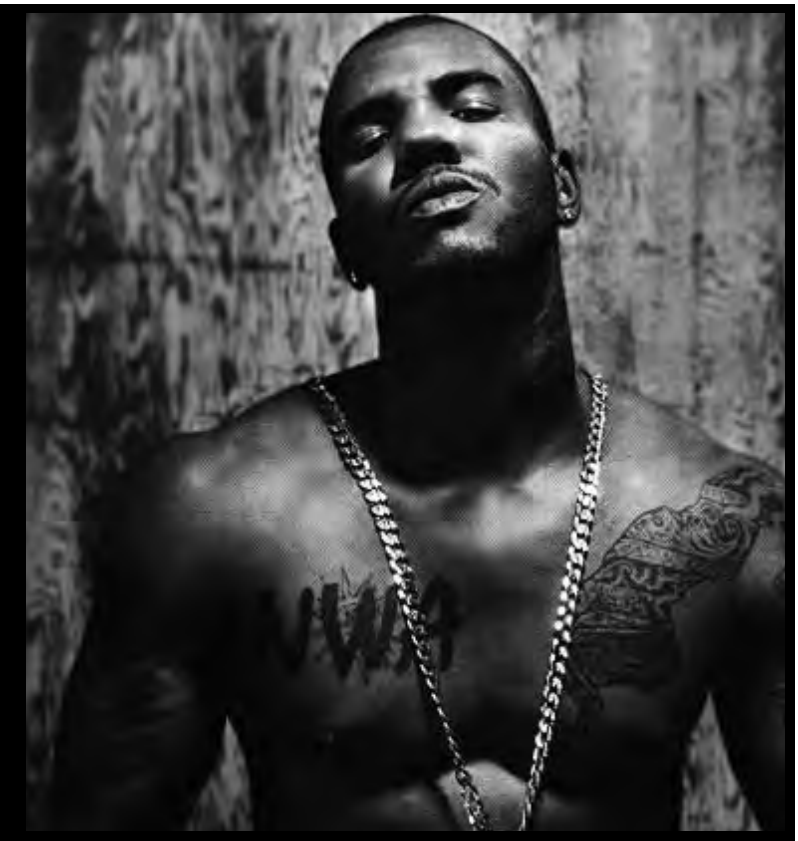
The Civil Rights Movement in the South successfully motivated Black, Puerto Rican, Euro-Amerikan, Chicano-Mexicano,

Thus, Black youth elevated the Civil Rights Movement to the Black Power and Black Liberation Movements. Puerto Rican yourth energized their elders' ongoing struggle to win independence for their home island. Euro-Amerikan youth attacked the lies, hypocrisy and oppression that their parents were training them to uphold in the schools, society and overseas. Native Amerikan youth were returning to their supressed ancestral ways and fighting to regain control over some of their land. Asian youth were struggling to overcome a system and culture that had always used and abused them.

Indeed all of them came to see clearly that neither education, jobs, money, hustles or material trappings could, by themselves, win them the victories they needed, or the new type of dignity and respect they deserved.

Moreover, from 1955 until circa 1975, these youth joined, formulated, led and supported struggles worldwide against racial oppression and bigotry, colonialism, oppression of women and

youth. In the process they were winning themselves the respect, admiration and gratitude of the world's oppressed as well as their peers. Further, in addition to becoming people that societies must take seriously, these youth were positive contributors who had much to give and were willing to sacrifice to achieve their goals. They were youth who were capable of imagining a better world and fighting to realize it while remaining youthful and having a good time doing it. All in all, they earned a much-deserved place in history.



## From the Mountain to the Sewer

Yet here we are 30 years later and the youth nowadays have been stripped of that hard-earned freedom, self-respect and dignity. They are being told-over and over-that the only way to regain them is again to acquire education, skills, good jobs, or the right hustle(s). This means, once again, to acquire as much money and material things as one can in order again to win respect and dignity frome one's peers and society-and thereby begin to start loving one's self, and seeing one's self as more than simply an eating, sleeping, working and sexual being.

## How the hell did we get back to 1955?

First off, let me make clear that even with all of the glorious strides the youth made within the First Wave, they were not the only ones fighting for radical or revolutionary changes. In fact, more than anything, they were usually only the tip of the spear. They were the shock troops of a global struggle, motivated by youthful energy and impatience, with no time or temperament for elaborate theories, rushing forward into the fray, ill prepared for the tricks that would eventually overwhelm them.

So to understand what happened, we must examine some of the main "tricks" used to slow down, misdirect, control and defeat them. And without a point, a spear loses all of its advantages.

## Strategic Tricks Used Against Them

Understanding these tricks, their various guises and refinements, is the key to everything. You will never really understand what happened to get us to this point, or be able really to move forward, until you recognize and devise ways to defeat them. They were and remain:

1. Co-option
2. Glamorization of Gangsterism
3. Separation from the most advanced elements
4. Indoctrination in reliance on passive approaches
5. Raw fear

Co-option was used extensively to trick just about all of the First Wave youth into believing that they had won the war. In particular, to every segment of youth, from university students to lower class communities, billions of dollars and resources were made available. This was supposedly for these youth to determine what should be done to carry out far-reaching changes, while in reality they were being expertly monitored and subtly coaxed further and further away from their most radical and advanced elements. This was done mainly through control of the largess, which ultimately was part of the ruling class' foundation, government and corporate strategy for defeating the youth with sugar-coated bullets.

In time, consequently, substantial segments of these previously rebellious youth found themselves fully absorbed and neutralized either by directly joining or accepting the foundations', sub-groups', corporations', universities' or "approved" community groups' assistance-or by becoming full-fledged junior partners in the system after winning control of thousands of previously out-of-reach political offices.

And, for all intents and purposes, that same trick is still being used today.

Glamorization of Gangsterism, however, was then and continues to be the most harmful trick played against the lower class segments. The males, in particular, were then and continue to be the most susceptible to this gambit, especially when used opposite to prolonged exposure to raw fear!

Let me illustrate by briefly describing the histories of two groups that presently enjoy nothing less than "icon" status amongst just about everyone aware of them. These two groups' "documented histories" clearly show how that trick is played, and continues to be played, throughout this country. The first of these two groups is the original Black Panther Party, which was bludgeoned and intimidated to the point where its key leader(s) "consciously" steered the group into accepting the Glamorization of Gangsterism. Because this glamorization was less of a threat to the ruling classes' interests, it won the Party a temporary respite from the raw fear the ruling circles were lev-

Glamorization of Gangsterism, however, was then and continues to be the most harmful trick played against the lower class segments.

elling against it. In the process the organization was totally destroyed. The second of the two groups was the Nation of Islam 'connected' Black Mafia, which had a different background, but against whom the same tricks were played. It also left in its wake a sordid tale of young Black men who were-again-turned from seeking to be Liberators into being ruthless oppressors of their own communities. These men never once engaged their real enemies and oppressors: the ruling class.

Hands down the original Black Panther Party (BPP) won more attention, acclaim, respect, support and sympathy than any other youth group of its time. At the same time the BPP provoked more fear and worry in ruling class circles than any other domestic group since Presidents Roosevelt, Truman and Eisenhower presided over the neutralization of the working class and the U.S. wing of the Communist Party. The BPP was even more feared than the much larger Civil Rights Movement. According to the head of the FBI, the Panthers were the "greatest threat to the internal security of the country". That threat came from the Panthers' ability to inspire other youth-in the U.S. and globally-to act in similar grassroots political revolutionary ways.

arm in Algeria that had the only official "Embassy" established amongst all of the other Afrikan, Asian and South Amerikan revolutionary groups seeking refuge in that then-revolutionary country. Astonishingly, the BPP even inspired separate Black Panther Parties in India, the Bahamas, Nova Scotia, Australia and Occupied Palestine/State of Israel!

On the other hand, the Nation of Islam (NOI) had been active since 1930. Yet it also experienced a huge upsurge in membership in the same period. This was mainly due to the charismatic personality of Malcolm X and his aggressive recruitment techniques. Malcolm's influence carried on after his assassination, fueled by the overall rebellious spirits of the youth looking for groups which would lead them to fight against the system.

Therefore, there's a mountain of documents which clearly show that the highest powers in this country classified both groups as Class A Threats to be neutralized or destroyed. These powers mused that if that goal could be achieved, they could then use similar methods to defeat the rest of the youth.

Thus, there were separate BPP-style formations amongst Native Amerikans (the American Indian Movement); Puerto Ricans (the Young Lords); Chicano Mexicano Indigenous people (the Brown Berets); Asians (I Wor Kuen); Euro-Amerikan (the Young Patriot and White Panther Parties); and even the elderly (the Gray Panthers). Also, there were literally hundreds of other similar, lesser known groups! Internationally the BPP had an

So how did they do it? Against the BPP the powers used a combination of co-option, glamorization of gangsterism, separation from the most advanced elements, indoctrination in reliance on passive approaches and raw fear; that is, every trick in the book.

Thus, fully alarmed at the growth and boldness of the BPP and related groups as well as their ability to win a level of global

support, the ruling classes' governmental, intelligence, legal and academic arms devised a strategy to split the BPP and co-opt its more compliant elements. At the same time they moved totally to annihilate its more radical and revolutionary remainders. They knew they had the upper hand due to the youth and inexperience of the BPP; and they had their own deep well of resources and experiences in using counter-insurgency techniques much earlier against:

-Marcus Garvey's UNIA (Universal Negro Improvement Association);
-the Palmer Raids against Euro-Amerikans of an Anarchist and/or left Socialist bent;
-the crushing of the IWW (Industrial Workers of the World) and neutralizing of the other Socialists;
-their subsequent destruction of any real Communist power in Western Europe;
-their total domination and subjugation of the Caribbean (except Cuba), Central and South Amerika-except for the fledgling guerilla movements;
-and everything they had learned in their wars to replace the European colonial powers in Africa and Asia.

Still, the BPP had highly motivated cadre, imbued with a fearlessness little known among domestic groups. The ruling class and its henchmen were stretched thin, especially since the Vietnamese, Laotians and Kampucheans were kicking their ass in Southeast Asia. Moreover, the freedom fighters in Guinea-Bissau and Angola had the U.S.' European allies-whom the U.S. supplied with the latest military hardware-on the run.

So although the BPP was inexperienced, the prospect of neutralizing it was a mixed bag. The members of the BPP still had a fighting chance. The co-option depended on them neutralizing the BPP co-founder and by-then icon, Huey P. Newton. Afterward, they used him-along with other methods-to split the BPP and lead his wing along reformist lines. It was hoped that this process would force the still-revolutionary wing into an all-out armed fight before it was ready, either killing, jailing, exiling or breaking its members will to resist or sending them into ineffective hiding-out. At this time, even with the BPP's extraordinary global stature, no country seemed to want to risk the U.S. wrath by "openly " allowing the BPP to train guerilla units, something which, given more time, could nevertheless have come to pass.

So, surprisingly, Huey was allowed to leave jail with a still-to-be-tried-murder-of-a-policeman charge pending. Thus, the government and courts had him on a short leash, and with it they hoped to control his actions, although probably not through any direct agreements. Sadly, the still politically naive BPP cadre and the other youth who looked up to Newton could imagine "nothing" but that "they"-the people-had forced his release. Veterans from those times still insist on clinging to such tripe!

Yet it seems Newton thought otherwise, and since he was not prepared to go underground and join his fledgling Black Liberation Army (BLA), he almost immediately began following a reformist script. This was completely at odds with his own earlier theories and writings, as well as at odds with basic principles that were being practiced to

good effect by oppressed people throughout the world. Even further, he used his almost complete control of the BPP Central Committee to expel many, many veteran and combat-tested BPP cadre in an imitation of the Stalinist and Euro-gangster posture he would later become famous

for. This included an all-out shooting war to repress any BPP members who would not accept his independently-derived-at reformist policies.

At the same time, on a parallel track, U.S. and local police and intelligence agencies were using their now infamous COINTELPRO operations to provoke the split between the wing Huey dominated and other, less compliant BPP members. This finally reached a head in 1971, after Huey's shooting war and purge forced scores of the most loyal, fearless and dedicated above-ground BPP to go underground and join those other BPP members who were already functioning there as the offensive armed wing. Panther Wolves, Afro-American Liberation Army and Black Liberation Army were all names by which these members were known, but the latter is the only one that would stick. At this time the BLA was a confederation of clandestine guerilla units composed of mostly Black Revolutionary Nationalists from a number of different formations.  Nevertheless, they still accepted the BPP's leadership and Huey Newton as their Minister of Defense. But obviously Newton didn't see it that way.

Even more telling, it was later learned that Newton's expensive penthouse apartment-where he and other Central Committee members handled any number of sensitive BPP issues, was under continuous surveillance by intelligence agents who had another apartment down the hall. Thus, Newton and his faction were encapsulated, leaving them unable to follow anything but government sanctioned scripts; unless he/they went underground. This only occurred when Newton fled to Cuba after his gangster antics threatened the revocation of his release on the pending legal matters which the government held over his head.

Add to that, the glamorization of gangsterism was something that various ruling class elements had begun to champion and direct toward the Black lower classes, in particular. This occurred especially after they saw how much attention the Black Arts Movement was able to generate. Indeed, these ruling class elements recognized it could be used to misdirect youthful militancy while still being hugely profitable. They had, in fact, already misdirected Euro-Amerikan and other youth with the James Bond-I Spy-Secret Agent Man and other replacements

for the "Old West/Cowboys and Indians" racist crap, so why not a "Black" counterpart? Thus was born the enormously successful counter-insurgency genre collectively known as the Blacksploitation movies: Shaft, Superfly, Foxxy Brown, Black Caesar and the like, accompanied by wannabe crossovers like Starsky and Hutch, and the notorious Black snitch Huggie Bear. Psychological warfare!

Follow the psychology: You can be "Black", cool, rebellious, dangerous, rich, have respect, women, cars, fine clothes, jewelry, an expensive home and even stay high; as long as you don't fight the system-or the cops! But, if you don't go along with that script, then get ready to go back to the early days-with its shoot-outs with the cops, graveyard, prison, on the run and exile! Or you can be cool even as a Huggie Bear-style snitch, and interestingly, like his buddy, the post-modern/futuristic rat Cipher of The Matrix, who tried to betray ZION in return for a fake life as a rich, steak-eating, movie star. And most important: no more fighting with the Agents! Get it?

In addition, the ruling classes bolstered the government's assault by flooding our neighborhoods with heroin, cocaine, marijuana and "meth". In the process they saddled the oppressed with a Trojan Horse which would strategically handicap them for decades to come. All of those drugs had earlier been introduced to these areas by organized criminals-under local police and political protection. But now the intelligence agencies were using them with the same intentions that alcohol had long ago been introduced to the Native Amerikans and opium had been trafficked by the ruling classes of Europe and this country: to counter the propensities of oppressed people to rebel against outside control while profiting off their misery.

Against this background Newton began to indulge in drugs to try to relieve the stress of all that he was facing. He became a drug addict, plain and simple. That, however, didn't upset the newly-constructed gangster/cool that Hollywood, the ruling class and the government were pushing. Although many BPP cadre and other outsiders were very nervous about it, Newton's control was by then too firmly fixed for anyone to challenge-except for the BLA, whose members were by then in full blown urban guerilla war with the government.

At the same time, the reformist wing of the BPP did manage to make some noteworthy strides under its only female head, Elaine Brown. Newton's drug addiction/gangster-lifestyle-provoked exile caused him to "appoint"-on his own and without any consultation with the body-Elaine to head the Party in his absence. An exceptionally gifted woman, she relied on an inner circle of female BPP cadre, backed up by male enforcers, to introduce some clear and consistent projects that helped the BPP to become a real power locally. It was a reformist paradigm, though, that could not hope to achieve any of the radical/revolutionary changes called for earlier. On the contrary, Newton in his earlier writings had put the cadre on notice of a point when, in order to keep moving forward, the aboveground would have to be supported by an underground. Yet it was Newton who completely rejected that paradigm upon being released from jail, although he still organized and controlled a heavily armed extortion group called "The Squad", which consisted of BPP cadre who terrorized Oakland's underworld with a belt-operated machine gun mounted on a truck bed and accompanied by cadre who were ready for war! In classic Euro-gangster fashion, Newton had turned to preying on segments of the community that he had earlier vowed to liberate. But, of course, the police and government were safe from his forces. With no connection to a true undergound-the BLA-there was no rational way to ratchet up the pressure on the police, government and the still fully operational system of ruling class control and oppression. Newton and his followers had been reduced to completely sanctioned methods.

Consequently we can see all of the government's tricks bearing fruit. In a seemingly curious combination of Co-option, Indoctrination in Reliance on Passive Approaches (that is, passive toward the status quo), and Glamorization of Gangsterism, Newton's faction of the BPP had limited itself both to legal and underworld-sanctioned methods. They also fell for the trick of Separation from the Most Advanced Elements by severing all relations with their armed underground,the BLA, whose members would lead the BPP if the Party got to the next level of struggle-open armed resistance to the oppressors. Finally, Newton, his faction and activists from all of the other Amerikan radical and revolutionary groups succumbed to the terror and Raw Fear that was being levelled on them. The exception was those who waged armed struggle, who themselves were killed, jailed, exiled,

forced into deep hiding or into continuing their activism under the radar.

## Epilogue on Huey P. Newton and his BPP faction

Elaine Brown both guided Newton's and her faction to support Newton and his family in exile while orchestrating the building up of enough political muscle in Oakland to assure his return on favorable terms. Thus, Newton did return and eventually the charges were dropped. Nevertheless, Newton continued to use his iconic stature and renewed direct control of his faction again to play the cool-political-gangster role; and like any drug addict who refuses to reform, he kept sliding downhill, even turning on old comrades and his main champion, Elaine Brown, who had to flee in fear.

Sadly, for all practical purposes, that was the end of the original Black Panther Party.

Check-mate!

Later, as is well-known, Newton's continued drug addiction cost him his life, a sorry ending for a once great man.

* * *

"When you grow up in situations like me and Cliff...there is a lot of respect for brothers like [drug lord] Alpo and Nicky Barnes, those major hustler-player cats. Cause they made it. They made it against society's laws. They were the Kings of their own domain". (Cliff Evans, "The Ivy League Counterfeiter", Rolling Stone, 2000; in Toure, Never Drank the Kool-Aid, Picador, New York, 2006)

## The "Original" Black Mafia (BM)

Albeit a touchy matter to many, it's an irrefutable fact that the original Black Mafia (BM) was first established in Philadelphia, Pa., in the late 1960's, and has seen its cancerous ideas duplicated, imitated and lionized by Black youth ever since.

Moreover, although it's unclear how much the national Nation of Islam (NOI) leadership knew or learned about the BM, there's no question of the local NOI's eventual absorption of the BM-under Minister Jeremiah X. Pugh. In fact, although the BM was originally just local "stick-up kids" culled from neighborhood gangs, their being swallowed by the NOI would eventually turn them into a truly powerful and terrifyuing criminal enterprise-completely divorced from everything that the NOI had stood for since its founding in 1930.

Sadly, most of the high level tricks which the government employed against the BPP were also used against the BM/NOI; namely, Co-option, Glamorization of Gangsterism, Separation from the Most Advenced Elements and Raw Fear.

that they were hustlers, stick-up kids, or both. So the same way that the Italian Mafia would contribute huge sums to the Catholic Church, the BM would do with Philly's Temple No. 12.

The national NOI, however, had been under close scrutiny and surveillance by intelligence agencies for decades. In fact, by the time of this death, the NOI's founder, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, had in excess of one million pages of files in the archives of the FBI alone! (Anyone who still believes that the assassination of Malcolm X did not have a hidden U.S. government hand behind it, has no clear idea of the threat that the NOI was perceived to be at that time). As a result of their surveillance, the intelligence agencies knew who were the BM's financial contributors to the NOI.

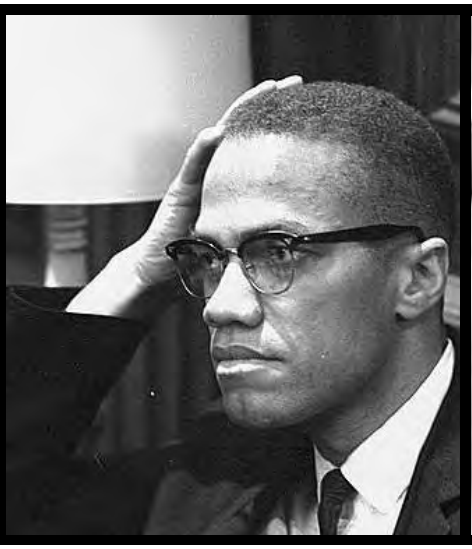
Thus, it must be understood that although the NOI and BPP had different ideologies and styles, to most Black youth, both held out the promise of helping them to obtain what they most desired: self-respect, dignity and freedom.

Interestingly, the puritanical NOI's dealings with the founders of the BM were similar to that of the Catholic Church's historical relationship with the Italian Mafia. That is, the BM members who attended NOI religious services did so strictly on that basis-while still coming to the attention of the local NOI leadership as unusually good financial contributors. And within the lower class Black community being served, everybody knew that meant

Overshadowing this, of course, were the bloody assaults that the FBI and local police were levelling against other Black radical and revolutionary groups, like the local and national BPP branches, the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM) and scores of smaller formations.

The FBI first tried to recruit Minister Pugh as a snitch against the local BPP by telling him that the BPP was out to get him and supplant the local NOI for Black youth's loyalties. Pugh, to his credit, didn't take the bait and also avoided getting his Temple No. 12 involved in a war with the BPP, although he had to suspect that his taking of blood money

from the BM had also come to the attention of the FBI, thus making him vulnerable. Yet miraculously about the same time Pugh's name was removed from the FBI's Security Index, which contained all of what that agency considered to be the country's top-level threats. After Pugh's having been on the list for years, and right after its agents filed a report of his refusal to be a snitch, why would the Bureau nevertheless relax the pressure? How did J. Edgar Hoover & Co. think things would unfold? By giving Pugh and his Temple, and their BM followers, enough rope to hang themselves, or to become addicted to a game that was ultimately controlled by their professed enemies-the U.S. government and its underlings. Thus, this would turn the tables on Pugh and force him to become less radical, more compliant, and



no longer a threat on the level of the BPP, RAM and other revolutionaries.

For the BM members, the glamorization of gangsterism fit right in. After all, why would a group of Black stick-up kids and gang members call the mselves The Black Mafia? This was in the era of Black is beautiful, when millions of Blacks began wearing Afros/Bushes and African clothing and adopting African names-completely at odds with aping Italians! Why not name themselves the zulus, Watusis or the Mau Mau-like even younger street gangs were doing? No, Hollywood's projection of gangsterism was getting through.
Consequently, within a couple of years the BM would uniformly be recognized as expensively dressed, big hat-wearing, Cadillac-driving imitations of the Italian Mafia. And sadly, they turned countless numbers of street gang members, former RAM cadre and militants from dozens of other Philly groups, who were fighting oppression, into pawns who were used to further destroy their own communities.

The third trick, that is, of separating the youth from the more advanced elements, operated under cover of Pugh and other insiders continuing to preach Black Nationalist doctrines amongst the youth in the street gangs and within the prisons, never missing an opportunity to hold out the illusion that they could gain pride and respect. As a result, many youth believed they were joining a rebel group that was only awaiting the right time to throw their lot in with the masses of Blacks who were waging battles from coast to coast and on the African continent.

In reality Pugh & Co. were tricking the youth into diverting their energies into gangsterism, thereby separating them from the more advanced elements. Many, if not most, bought into the rationale that their extortion and drug dealing were a tax that would be used to build The Nation. A few years later that would be dubbed drinking the Kool-Aid, after Jim Jones and his CIA handlers tricked and forced hundreds of other Blacks to "drink" their death. And undoubtedly, Huey had also tricked his people with a similar game, which decades later was shown

to be completely false! Yes, that ill-gotten money did build and/or buy some expensive homes, cars, clothing, women and drugs as well as a few schools and businesses. But to fight oppression? Please!

Finally, the raw fear being levelled on the entire society had a devastating effect on the BM, also. Otherwise how can one account for the hundreds, if not thousands, of BM street soldiers, who were fearless enough to cow Philly's long-established Italian Mafia and most of its warring street gangs; or the BM headhunters, who terrorized the city with decapitations, nevertheless producing a distinctly lackluster showing when confronting anyone in uniform?

I'll tell you how: their leadership had completely disarmed their members' fighting spirits by alsways telling them not to resist the police until the leadership gave the order-which never came. Comically, after the police and FBI had succeeded in suppressing, jailing, exiling and co-opting most of the BPP, BLA, RAM and others, they then discovered the BM and attacked it with a vengeance. As might be expected, none of the BM put up anything resembling real resistance except to go on the lam. Minister Jeremiah himself made a 180-degree turn by becoming a snitch after getting caught in a drug sting.

Thus, the legacy of the BM is one of a ruthless group of Black thugs who have spawned similarly ruthless crews-notably Philly's Junior Black Mafia (JBM) and the latest clone, Atlanta's Black Mafia Family. But their most harmful effect comes from their deeds and mystiques that has returned a huge segment of Black youth to believing that the only way to gain any respect and dignity is through being the best and most heartless hustler around: that is, full circle back to 1955.

Finally, I used the BPP/BLA and NOI/BM as examples because they are the most well documented. Although both are surrounded by so much mythology, a true rawanalysis is almost never attempted except by the government and intelligence agencies. The latter use their findings to refine and revise older tricks in order to continue checking and controlling this country's rebellious youth while simultaneously persisting in oppressing the communities they occupy-in line with the ruling classes' agenda.

As to the middle and upper class idealistic youth from all segments of the First Wave, with few exceptions they allowed themselves willy-nilly to be co-opted fully as the new managers of the system they had vowed radically to change. Moreover, they became the champions of and made a doctrine out of the necessity of always using and relying on passive and legal methods, epitomized by their new saint, Martin Luther King, Junior.

## The Second Wave: circa 1980-2005

Thus, by 1980, for all practical purposes, the youth from the First Wave had been defeated. Following this they collectively descended into a debilitating, agonizing, escapist long period characterized by partying. I am not discounting the fringe elements who had been so adversely affected that they had their hands full trying to rebuild their sanity or families, or to go

back to school or simply survive in prison or exile while everybody else seemed to be dancing on the ceiling. This was similar to the shell shocked vets of WWI and WWII and the post-tramatic stress syndrome sufferers of the Vietnam war.

The most misunderstood victims, however, were the First Wave's children, who themselves became the Second Wave from 1980 to 2005. Those are the years when the latter either

reached puberty or became young adults who, paradoxically, were left in the dark about most of what had occurred before. Instead they were left to the tender mercies of the reformed but still rotten-to-the-core and ruling class-dominated schools, social institutions and propaganda machinery.

Thus, amongst all the lower and working class segments of the youth, Coolio's Gangster's Paradise fits the bill. These youth were raised by the state, either in uncaring schools, juvenile detention centers or homes; in front of TV sets, movies, video arcades, or in the streets. Within the greatly expanded middle classes-most notably amongst the people of color-the youth were back to the gospel of getting a good education and job as their highest calling. This was mixed with an originally more conscous element which tackled plitics and academia as a continuation of the First Wave's struggle. The upper class youth, however, were doomed to follow in the footsteps of their ruling class parents, since the radical and revolutionary changes they sought failed to alter the country much.

Like a recurring nightmare, the Second Wave also fell victim to co-option, glamorization of gangsterism, separation from the most advanced elements, reliance on passive methods and raw fear of an upgraded police state. Left to their own devices, the lower class youth began a search for respect and dignity by devising their own institutions and culture, which came to be dominated by gangs and Hip Hop. These, on their own, could be either used for good or bad. But lacking any knowledge of the First Wave's experiences, they were tricked like their parents.

## The Gang and Hip Hop Culture

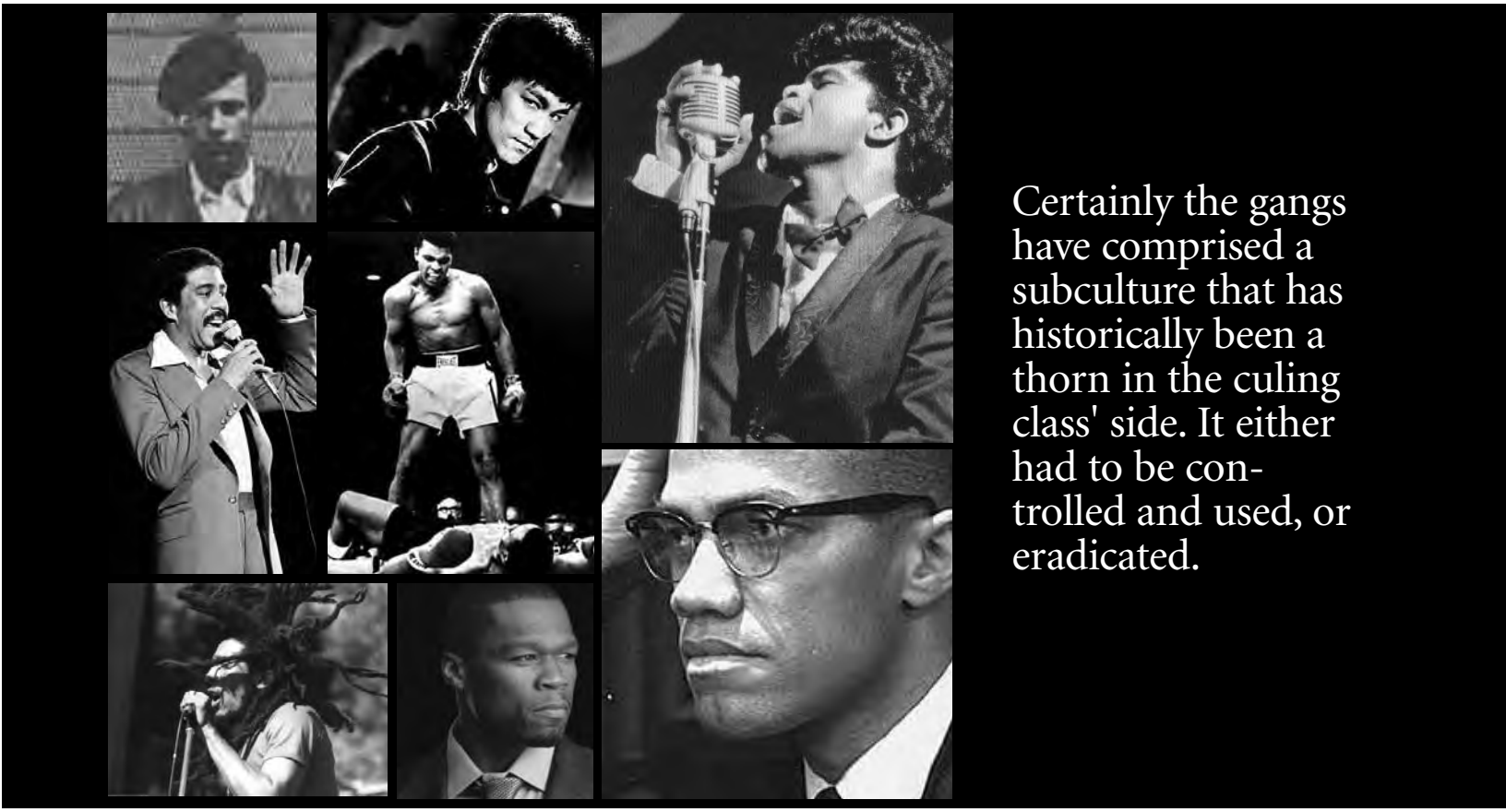
Gangs are working and lower class phenomena which date from the early beginnings of this country, having also been in evidence overseas. In fact, many of those who joined the First Wave were themselves gang members, most notably Alprentice "Bunchy" Carter, head of the notorious Slausons (the forerunners of today's Crips), and the martyred founder of the Los Angeles Panthers. As little as it's understood, the gangs are in fact the lower class counterparts of the middle and upper classes' youth clubs, associations, Boy/Girl Scouts, and fraternities and sororities. The key difference is the level of positive adult input in the middle and upper class groups.

Hip Hop is just the latest manifestation of artistic genius bursting forth from these lower class youth-seeking respect and dignity.

Orthodox hip hoppers speak of a holy trinity of hip hop fathers: Herc, Afrika Bambaata, and Grandmaster Flash. But like moisture in the air before it rains, the conditions were ripe for hip hop before the holy trinity began spinning. Hip

Hop's prefathers or grandfathers are James Brown, Huey Newton, Muhammad Ali, Richard Pryor, Malcolm X, Bob Marley, Bruce Lee, certain celebrity drug dealers and pimps whose names won't be mentioned here... (Toure, Never Drank the Kool-Aid, op. cit.)

Alas, Hip Hop culture is daily being co-opted in ways so obvious that it needs no explanation. But woe be to us if we don't come to grips with how the Second Wave's gangs have been co-opted. It is a continuing tragedy, moreover, which if not turned around will ultimately make the shortcomings of the First Wave pale in comparison!



Certainly the gangs have comprised a subculture that has historically been a thorn in the culing class' side. It either had to be controlled and used, or eradicated.

Ronald Reagan and crack were hip hop's '80's anti-fathers: both helped foster the intense poverty and the teenage drug-dealing millionaires as well as the urge to rebel against the system that appeared to be moving in for the kill, to finally crush Black America. (Toure, Never Drank the Kool-Aid, op. cit.)

Certainly the gangs have comprised a subculture that has historically been a thorn in the culing class' side. It either had to be controlled and used, or eradicated. Usually that was accomplished by co-option and attrition, with older elements moving on, or being jailed long enough to destroy the group. Our First Wave, as noted, was able-somewhat-to outflank the ruling class by absorbing some key gang members of that time. This added to the First Wave's prestige in the community and its acceptance of radical and revolutionary ideas. (Also, as noted, these ideas were pimped by BM-style groups).

It's fascinatingly simple to follow how the Second Wave has been tricked to destroy itself. Just about all the pillars upholding this giant con game are familiar to everyone in the form of

movies, TV, street culture, cops, courts, jails, prisons, death, and our own families' and friends' experiences with them.

## Gangstas, Wankstas and Wannabes

All of the above, more than anything, crave respect and dignity! Forget all of the unformed ideas about the homies wanting the families, fathers and love that they never had. That plays a part, but if you think that the homies only need some more hugs, then you've drunk the kool-aid! Actually, even if you did have a good father and a loving family/extended family, if everything in society is geared toward lessening your self-worth because of your youth, race, tastes in dress, music, speech, lack of material trappings, etc., they you will still hunger for some respect, which if it came, would lead you to knowing dignity within yourself. Even suburban, middle and upper-class youth confront this-to a lesser degree.

All of the beefin', flossin', frontin', set-trippin', violence and bodies piling up comes from the pursuit of respect and dignity. This is how 50 Cent put it:

Niggas out there sellin' drugs is after what I got from rappin'...When you walk into a club and the bouncers stop doin' whatever the fuck they doing to let you in and say everybody else wait. He special. That's the same shit they do when you start killin' niggas in you hood. This is what we been after the whole time. Just the wrong route. ("Life of a Hunted Man", posted on Rolling Stone website, April 3, 2003; in Never Drank the Kool-Aid, op. cit.)

Admittedly, at times that simple, but raw truth is so intertwined with so many other things that it's hard to grasp. Namely, nowadays, the drug game, other git-money games, and most sets do provide a sort of alternative family. They also provide a strong cohesion that is mistakenly called love. Hence, to cut through the distractions, I'll illustrate my point as follows:

When the Second Wave was left hanging by the defeated and demoralized First Wave, its members unknowingly reverted to methods of seeking dignity and respect that the First Wave had elevated themselves above during their struggle for radical and revolutionary change. This was a period during which gang wars and gang banging were anathema! The revolutionary psychiatrist Frantz Fanon in The Wretched of the Earth notes that the colonized and oppressed are quick to grab their knife against a neighbor or stranger, thereby in a subconscious way ducking their fear of directing their pent up rage at those responsible for their suffering: their colonial oppressors.

The notable early sets-like the Bloods, Crips and Gangster Disciples-primary activity was banging, or gang warring over "turf": neighborhoods, schools, etc., as well as over real or imagined slights. But the real underlying motivation was of all of the parties' desires to build their reputations and earn stripes, meaning to gain prestige in the eyes of fellow bangers. This translated into respect amongst their peers. It also caused these youth to bond with each other like soldiers do in combat; a bonding like a family-even more so. Not surprisingly, many outsiders decreed that this bonding was love. Some youth also thought that. However, to exchange love, you first have to love yourself, and the gang banger by definition has no love for his or her self. They in fact are desperately seeking respect, without which love is impossible.

Example: If you respect your body, you can also love your body, and you would not dare destroy it with drugs or alcohol. But if you don't respect your body and you go on to destroy it in that fashion, then it follows that you have no love for it either.

The bangin' raged on for years, piling up as many deaths and injuries as the U.S. suffered during the Vietnam War. Each incident elevated either the attacker's or victim's stature in the eyes of his or her peers. As might be expected during those years, the overseers of the oppressive system bemoaned the carnage while locking up untold numbers of bangers for a few years; but overall, they did absolutely nothing to try to arrest the problem.

Now here's where it really gets interesting. Drugs, as noted, had been flooding into these same communities since the 1960's. Back then, however, it was mainly heroin, with marijuana and meth playing relatively minor roles. Remember the movies Serpico and The French Connection exposing that? But the early gangs, to their credit, never got deeply involved in that. They saw dope fiends as weak and, although those early gangs would blow some sherm or chronic, it was just a pass-time activity for them. They were serious about bangin'!

The bangers were in fact all co-opted, wedded as they were to their form of fratricidal gangsterism and totally separated from the remnants of the First Wave, about whom they knew next to nothing. Meanwhile, the "good kids" were being indoctrinated in passive, legal, get-a-good-education approaches. And both groups were scared to death of the police! For despite the bangers' hate and contempt, any two cops could lay out a dozen of them on all fours-at will. Hence, Tupac's later iconic stature amongst them, since he could walk his talk:

...the fact that while everyone else talks about it, Tupac is the only known rapper who has actually shot a police officer; the walking away from being shot five times with no permanent damage and walking away from the hospital the next day and the rolling into court for a brief but dramatic wheelchair-bound courtroom appearance-it's been dangerously compelling and ecstatically brilliant. ("Tupac", The Village Voice, 1995, in never Drank the Kool-Aid; op. cit.)

At that time this madness was contained in lower class communities since the ruling class believed that technology had made what it dubbed the underclass obsolete anyway. To do this the ruling classes' henchmen made sure that their Gestapo-like police were heavily armed and fully supported. I urge people to see Sean Penn and Robert Duval's movie, Colors.

But something was on the horizon that was about to cause a seismic shift in this already sorry state of affairs. It was to alter things in ways that most still cannot or will not believe.

## Peep the Game

South Amerikan cocaine replaced French Connection and CIA-controlled Southeast Asian/Golden Triangle-grown heroin as the drug of choice in the early 1980's. Remember Miami Vice? Well, as might be expected, this country's government, intelligence agencies and large banks immediately began a struggle to control this new trade. Remember: control-not get rid of-in complete contrast to their lying propaganda projects like the War on Drugs! Thus, they were in fact dealing with-not fighting-the South Amerikan governments, militaries and large landowners who controlled the raising, processing and shipping of the cocaine. (For a few years, however, the latter themselves had to battle a few independent drug lords, most notably Pablo Escobar Ochoa and his Medellin Cartel).

In this country at that time the youth gangs had next to nothing to do with the cocaine trade, which was then primarily servicing a middle and upper class-and white-clientele. The traffic employed a few old-school big time hustlers along with some Spanish-speaking wholesalers, who also had their own crews to handle matters. Although after the fact, the Hip hop cult movie favorites Scarface and New Jack City are good descriptions of that period, albeit they both-purposely-left out the dominant role that the U.S. government and intelligence agencies played in controlling things.

All right, I know you're down with all of that-and love it! So let's move on.

In the middle 1980's the U.S. began backing a secret war designed to overthrow the revolutionary Sandinista government that had fought a long and bloody civil war to rid Nicaragua of its U.S.-sponsored dictator (Somoza) in 1979. But after being exposed to the world, the U.S. Congress forbade then-president Reagan from continuing this secret war. Like a lot of U.S. presidents, however, he just ignored Congress and had the CIA raise the money, recruit the mercenaries and buy or steal the military equipment to continue the war.

Consequently, that's how and why crack and the mayhem it's caused came upon us. Here, however, you won't see Hollywood and TV giving up the raw. With few exceptions like Black director Bill Dukes' Deep Cover, starring Laurence Fishburn, and Above the Law with Steven Segal, you have to search hard to see it portrayed so clearly. Later I'll explain why.

Anyway, most people have heard that crack was dumped into South Central Los Angeles in the mid-'80's-along with an arsenal of military-style assault rifles that would make a First Wave BPP member ashamed of how poorly equipped s/he was. Needless to say, the huge profits from the crack sales, coupled with everyone being financially strapped, magnified the body count! And, since crack was also so easy to manufacture locally and so dirt cheap, just about anybody in the hood could get into the business. Gone were the old days of a few big-time hustlers, except on the wholesale level.

But, make no mistake about it, the wholesale cocaine sold for the production of crack was fully controlled and distributed by selected CIA-controlled operatives.

So, to all of you dawgs who have been bragging about how big you are/were, a top-to-bottom organization chart would in fact look something like this:

At the top would be the president: Ronald Reagan;
then former CIA director George Bush, Sr.;
the National Security Advisor;
Secretary of State;
major banking executives;
Colonel Oliver North;
General Secord;
arms dealers;
mercenary pilots;
South and Central Amerikan government and military leaders, including Escobar and the Medellin Cartel originally;
U.S. Navy, Coast Guard, Customs and Border Patrol officers;
state and local police, and county sheriffs and their deputies, and their successors in office;
and at the bottom of the barrel: YOU DAWG!

Now I know that you already knew in your hearts that there were some big dawgs over you, but I bet you never imagined the game came straight out of the White House, or that you were straight up pawns on the board. If that sounds too wild, then tell me why it's harder to find any government, CIA, military or bankers, like George Bush, Sr., and his crew, in prison, than it is to win the lottery? Yeah, they double-crossed Noriega, Escobar and the Medellin Cartel, and made Oliver North do some community service, but that's all. The real crime lords-the government, military, CIA and banking dons-all got away. Finally, and only after Congresswoman Maxine Waters made a stink about it, was the CIA forced to do two investigations and post on its official website their findings together with an admission of being a drug dealer.

## Naw dawg, y'all were played! Face it.

That's what happened to you O.G.'s from the '80's. But as Morpheus said in The Matrix, let me "show you how deep the rabbit hole goes".

Gradually the U.S. government was forced to crack down on the cocaine coming through Florida, but by then the South Amerikan cartels and their government and military allies had found new routes through Mexico. At first the the members of the Mexican underworld were just middlemen; but quickly recognizing a golden opportunity, they essentially seized control of most of the trade between South Amerika and the U.S.They forced the South Amerikans into becoming junior partners who were responsible only for growing and processing, the cheaper the better. The Mexicans now purchased mountains of cocaine for transshipment and smuggling into the U.S. wholesale market, resulting in oil and automotive industry-type profits.

One might wonder why the South Amerikans-powerful players-would go for a deal like that. As ever the answers can found in the Machiavellian and serpentine maneuverings of the United States government and its poor Mexican counterpart. You see, in the 1980's the Mexican government was overseeing an economy that was so bad, that for all practical purposes, it was bankrupt. Indeed, the U.S. and and its underlings in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) were forced periodically to give the Mexican government millions upon millions in loans, in return for unfair trading concessions, in order to prop it up with the economy. The U.S. was then and is now extremely vulnerable to conditions in Mexico because common sense and past experience has told its rulers that the worse things became in Mexico, the more conditions would force its already dirt poor majority to find a way to enter the U.S. to find a means to feed themselves and their families. And the U.S. could not keep prevailing upon the IMF and WB to lend Mexico more money-especially since the U.S. ruling classes saw another way temporarily to plug up the hole in their control of matters in the international financial world.

Thus, another unholy alliance was formed. This one was between the U.S. government, CIA, State Department, banks, and the other usual suspects on one side; and their Mexican counterparts-including their first fledgling cartels-on the other, with the South Amerikans now in a junior partnership role. However, I don't want to give the impression that it was arranged diplomatically, all neat and tidy. Far from that!

No, it evolved through visionaries amongst the usual suspects, putting their ideas before other select insiders and working to

craft an unwritten consensus. It was the same way that they-along with Cuban exiles in Florida-had used the earlier cocaine trade to fuel the growth around Miami. Only this time it would be Mexico, a much more pressing and unstable situation.

It was recognized by all parties that Mexico's underworld would eventually land in the driver's seat due to its ability to take the kind of risks called for, its geographical proximity to the U.S. border and, most important, its strong desire to avoid confronting the U.S. and Mexican governments as Pablo Escobar had done. Thus, the members of the Mexican underworld were more than willing to guarantee that most of their drug profits would be pumped back into the moribund Mexican economy through large building projects, upgrading the tourist industry, big-time farming and other clearly national ventures. And, on the messy side, their gunmen were becoming experts at making reluctant parties fall into line by offering them a stark choice between gold or lead.

Nevertheless, avoid thinking that the Mexican and South Amerikan underworld ever became anything but hired hands of the big dawgs in the United States government and their partners in the banking industry, who always remained in a position to destroy their underlings' smuggling and money laundering operations through tighter control of U.S. borders and/or by making it extremely difficult to launder the mountains of small-denomination bills which the traffickers had to deal with. In fact, that's what happened when then-president George Bush, Sr., ordered the invasion of Panama, which was/is a major offshore money laundering hub, after hired hand Gen. Manuel Noriega had become unruly in 1989.

Plus, these hired hands would insure that their chosen corrupt politicians would always win in Mexico's elections by distributing the planeloads of money that the South Amerikan gangsters and government/military partners would make available as overhead. But more important for the United States, a major part of the proceeds would be pumped into the Mexican economy in order to forestall the looming bankruptcy.

Consequently by the middle 1990's the Mexican underworld had established the superpowerful Gulf, Juarez, Guadalajara, Sinaloa and Tijuana cartels. Moreover, the underworld had consolidated its power by not only controlling who all were elected to key political posts in Mexico, but had also perfected the art of bribing key local, state and regional police heads as well as strategic generals in Mexico's armed forces. Check out the movies Traffic, Once Upon a Time in Mexico, and Antonio Banderas/Selma Hayek's Desperado. Once again, after the fact, you'll see Hollywood making money by spilling the beans. But you should not let the stunt work lull you into thinking there's no substance to the plots!

Remember: Mexico's cartels wouldn't be able to function without the collaboration and protection from the highest levels within the U.S. establishment. Just as the CIA has openly admitted it was a drug merchant during an earlier period, you can believe nothing has changed-except partners!

The hilarious part is that none of the wannabe real gangstas in the U.S. know that in reality they're low-paid, low level CIA flunkies without pensions or benefits; or they can't wait until they get out of prison to become undercover government agents-slingin' crack.

Alas, most people think it's crazy to believe that the government of the U.S. would allow its cities and small towns to be flooded with cocaine from South Amerika. Even the wannabe gangstas don't really believe that. They prefer to think that such ideas are good for conspiracy junkies and cling to the illusion that they are more than just pawns on the chessboard.

Further, if one does not get beyond the idea that this whole thing was just a plot to destroy the Black and Brown peoples-a favorite, though shortsighted theory-there's no way to see just how deep the drug game really is. I repeat: the main objective was to pump billions of dollars into the Mexican economy in oder to avoid a complete meltdown and the subsequent fleeing to the U.S. of sixty or more million Mexicans out of its ninety-plus million inhabitants. This would have been a crisis that would have dwarfed the numbers who are just beginning to make their presence known!

Actually, the big dawgs in the U.S. probably didn't know just how they were gonna control the fallout that would inevitably accompany their cocaine/crack tax. They routinely tax alcohol, gambling (from the lotteries to the casinos), and even prostitution in certain areas, don't they? So yeah, it was a clandestine

operation to use cocaine to rescue Mexico and stave off an economically induced invasion of the U.S. by its destitute populace. The Mexican people, especially its Indigenous population, were made poverty-stricken by 500 years of colonialism, slavery, peonage, neo-colonialism and the theft of one-third of their country by the United States in the 19th century.

Sadly, though, our First Wave's degeneration into the glamorization of gangsterism, the Second Wave's hunger for respect and recognition that was fueling the senseless gang carnage, the Hip Hop generation's ability to provide the youth with vicarious fantasies to indulge their senses with the hypnotic allure of the temporary power that the drug game could bring them-led the youth in the United States back to emulating the First Wave's Superfly and Scarface days. Others also see that:

My theory is that nine times out of ten, if there's a depression, more a social depression than anything, it brings out the best art in Black people. The best example is Reagan and Bush gave us the best years of hip hop...Hip hop is created thanks to the conditions that crack set: easy money but a lot of work, the violence involved, the stories it produced-crack helped birth hip hop. Now, I'm part conspiracy theorist because you can't develop something that dangerous and it not be planned. I don't think crack happened by accident...Crack offered a lot of money to the inner city youth who didn't have to go to college. Which enabled them to become businessmen. It also turned us into marksmen. It also turned us comatose. (Ahmir Thompson, aka Quest Love, "The Believer", in Never Drank the Kool-Aid, op. cit.; also, "The Believer-Interview with Ahmir Thompson" at www.believermag.com/isues/200308/?read+interview_thompson)

With the deft moves of a conjurer, the big dawgs in the U.S. seized upon all of this and began to nudge these elements around on the international chess board-within their giant con game. Moreover, these big dawgs in the United States had very little choice where to start their triage in order to gain some relief from their manufactured domestic crisis. I'll tell you why.

Cocaine in its powder and crack forms is so addictive that the cultures that use them regularly-the rich and famous, the

Hollywood Set, corporate executives, lawyers, doctors, weekenders, entertainers, athletes, college kids, suburbanites, hoodrats, hustlers, pipers, etc.-bring a guaranteed demand!

In most ways, it could be argued, the effect has been the same as with alcohol and tobacco, which have never been successfully suppressed in the U.S.

It follows then that despite all of their propaganda about Just Say No and the bogus War on Drugs, the big dawgs never had any intention of even trying to eradicate the use of cocaine. In fact, crack had turned their lower class neighborhoods into lucrative mainstays of the big dawgs' alternative taxing scheme At the same time, however, the Black and Brown communities were becoming major headaches that if left unchecked could eventually evolve into a real strategic threat! In contrast to the realtively tranquil non-Black/Brown communities, which used more, mostly powder, cocaine, the trade in the Black and Brown hoods and barrios was accompainied by an expontial increase of drug-related violence especially after the gangs got seriously involved.

Now, as I've pointed out, the gangs were mainly just pursuing respect prior to getting involved with hustling drugs. And the carnage connected to that was not a real concern to the big dawgs. But the crack/cocaine trade was different from the earlier dumping of heroin in those communities which was accompanied by the comparatively isolated violence of the Black Mafia-style groups. That violence, though terrifying, was also more selective. The more widespread availability of crack and assault weapons led the big dawgs to understand that if they didn't aggressively deal with the ultra-violent inner city drug gangs, the latter would eventually move to consolidate their gains by forming South Amerikan and Mexican-style cartels. Afterward, they, like their Mexican forerunners, could gradually take over inner city politics for themselves once they realized that the money and power would not of themselves provide them with the kind of respect and dignity they sought. To understand why not, just observe the rich and famous hip hop artists who continue to wild-out because they sitll lack the respect and dignity that comes with struggling for something other than money or power: in short, some type of (political or higher) cause.

Anyway, the hip hop generational favorite TV drama The Wire lays out the entire phenomenon pretty much as it had earlier played itself out in Baltimore and other urban areas. In fact, the fictional TV series derives its realness from an earlier long-running expose featured in a Baltimore newspaper (another after the fact but still useful piece of work to study). Indeed, the parts of that show which depict earlier years of the Black gangs getting deep into the crack trade clearly illustrate my points about the gangs evolving into proto-cartels-and then being triaged before maturing into real strategic threats, thereby leaving the crack trade intact.

That's why "The Prison Industrial Complex" was formed! It was set up as a tool to neutralize the Second Wave before its members woke up to the fact that, despite their money and power they were being used: played like suckers, a rub that the more astute big dawgs feared that money would not soothe. Thus, all of your draconian gun-related and mandatory sentencing laws were first formulated on the federal level, where most of the big dawgs have their power, and then forced upon most of the states. This was to insure that the Second Wave would never be able to consolidate any real power. Precisely because the latter were proving themselves to be such ruthless gangstas, in imitation of their Hollywood idols, coupled with the power they derived from their share of the undercover tax being extracted from their communities, the ruling classes took the position that they should be triaged before they got too big, a period which averaged from one to three years in a run, and that everything they acquired should be taken. The martyred hip hop icon The Notorious B.I.G. put it all together in his classic song, rightly titled Respect:

Put the drugs on the shelf/Nah, I couldn't see it/Scarface, King of New York/I wanna be it...Until I got incarcerated/kinda scary...Not able to move hehind thesteel gate/Time to contemplate/Damn, where did I fail?/All the money I stacked was all the money for bail. ("Biggie Smalls", The New York Times, 1994, in Never Drank the Kool-Aid, op. cit.)

Let's get another thing straight!-like the angle that continues to have shortsighted individuals chasing ghosts about why powder cocaine and crack are treated so differently. In the big dawgs' calculations, there is no reason to punish harshly the powder cocaine dealers and users in the same manner as the crack

crowd.. Racism has not been the driving motive; rather it was the armed threat posed by these proto-cartels! The big dawgs witnessed a clear example of what might come by way of the Jamaican Posses that cropped up in the Black communities. These young men from the Jamaican and Caribbean diaspora were also a consequensce of the degeneration of those regions' lower classes' attempts to throw off the economic and social effects of their former slavery and colonial oppression. Led by the socialist Michael Manley and inspired by the revolutionary music of Bob Nesta Marley (which can be glimpsed in the later movies, Marked for Death with Steven Segal, and Belly with DMX and Nas), the Jamaican Posses were the Black Mafia on steroids! Moreover, despite their quasi-religious nationalism and their ability to operate with heavily armed soldiers in the U.S. and the Caribbean, their ten thousand or so members were nothing compared to the hundreds of thousands in the wings of the Black and Brown communities!

The cry from the big dawgs' mouthpieces in Congress was about the gunplay, not so much the drugs. What was not said, however, was the big dawgs' anxieties about stopping these gunslingers before they got over their mental blocks about using their weapons against the police-or the system. Stop them while they're hung up on imitating their Hollywood and Euro-Mafia icons who made a mantra out of not using their weapons against the police. Indeed, with a few exceptions, the Second Wave allowed itself to be disarmed and carted off to prison like pussycats!

In addition, to appease some of the conservative segments in the U.S. which were upset about capitalism's globalization drive, the big dawgs dangled the prospect of thousands of new jobs for the rural communitires which were being destroyed by it (hence, the Prison Industrial Complex and its neo-slavery).

Therefore, we must struggle against the shortsighted idea that racism alone is the driving motive which has fueled the construction of the Prison Industrial Complex.

Instead, if you do a follow-up and add your own research, you'll be able to document the who, when, where and how the big dawgs set everything in motion; as well as how they continue to use us as pawns in their giant international con game.

Conclusion

Ask yourself the following questions:
1. How can we salvage anything from how the people of the First and Second Waves allowed their search for respect and dignity to degenerate into gangsterism?
2. In what ways can we help the Next Wave avoid our mistakes?
3. What can we do to contribute to documenting who the real big dawgs are behind the drug trade?
4. Why have they never been held accountable?
5. How come our families and communities have been the only ones to suffer?
6. How can we overcome our brainwashing?
7. How can we truly gain respect and dignity?
8. In what ways can we atone for our wrongs and redeem ourselves, families, and communities?
9. What are some ways to fight for restitution and reparations for all of those harmed by the government-imposed undercover drug tax?
10. How can we overturn the 13th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and finally abolish legal slavery in the U.S.?

Once you answer those questions and begin to move to materialize your conclusions, then you will have made the choice between Liberation or Gangsterism: Freedom or Slavery.

Things to Read

1. The Wretched of the Earth, Frantz Fanon (an in-depth explanation of what the oppressed must do in order to gain true respect and dignity)
2. We Want Freedom, Mumia Abu-Jamal
3. Assata, Assata Shakur
4. A Taste of Power, Elaine Brown
5. Blood in My Eye, George Jackson
6. Liberation, Imagination and the Black Panther Party, Kathleen Cleaver and G. Katsificas, eds.
7. Black Brothers, Inc.: The Violent Rise and Fall of Philadelphia's Black Mafia
8. Monster: The Autobiography of a L.A. Gang Member, Sanyika Shakur (From gangster into liberator)
9. Dark Alliance, Gary Webb (documents how the CIA introduced crack into the U.S.)
10. Lost History, Robert Parry (an even more in-depth expose of

the CIA and cocaine)
11. Down by the River: Drugs, Money, Murder and Family, Charles Bowden (the U.S. and Mexican governments' partnership with the drug cartels)
12. Inspector General's First and Final Reports on Iran-Contra and the Illegal Drug Trade, posted on the CIA's official website (the U.S. government's admissions about its dealing drugs)
13. We Are Our Own Liberators, Jalil Muntaquim
14. Beyond Smoke and Mirrors: Mexican Immigration, D.S. Hassey, Jorge Durand and Nolan J. Malone (how the Mexican economy collapsed while the Drug Enforcement Administration admitted that 85% of the drugs shipped from Mexico got across the U.S. border-with no action taken)