

THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES: The Origins, Platform and Program of the New Panther Vanguard Movement

The 1992 Los Angeles Rebellion

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In 1992 the long-suffering patience of the "grass-roots" with the entire so-called "criminal justice system" reached its boiling point. This "social rebellion" in the streets of Los Angeles clearly revealed the particular absence of any serious grass-roots "community organizing" in general and the particular lack of principled and uncompromising political leadership among the well-established African-American organizations. There was no shortage, however, of "Black politicians" and other "so-called leaders" willing to publicly condemn the "social rebellion," but were unwilling or unable to address the widespread indignation at rampant police "abuse of power." Just like the 1965 Watts Rebellion it only took a "spark" to ignite this "social explosion."

Not only was there total anarchy within the Black [and Mexican and Central American] communities of Los Angeles, there was no Black group [or for that matter any other group] that could capture the imagination of, or demand the respect of, all segments of the community, including the "street gangs." There was no organization with the potential of appealing to the legions of under-employed and unemployed Black and Mexican youth, or to the thousands of Black "homeless" men and women. There was no group that appeal to both Muslim and Christian, or even to those who professed no established religious belief. It was crystal clear to the NAAVM organizers that a "new type of Panther-like" organization had to be created.

NAAVM organizers also believed that it was critically important that the "internal contradictions" of the original BPP not be brought back to life by attempting to "revive" the original, but defunct, BPP. NAAVM organizers also knew that although many groups had expressed their desire for "unity in the community," there really was no actual African-American group with the capacity, or the mission, to effect "real" not "superficial" unity within the African-American community. A significant focus of the discussions preceding the actual formation of the NAAVM was developing a "shared understanding" of the "theory and practice" of the BPP, critically analyzing its Ten Point Platform and Program, and most importantly seriously studying and learning as much as possible from the BPP's "mistakes" and "successes."

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Official Launching of the NAAVM

Motivated in part by "unforgotten experiences" as members of the BPP, and also in part by a our recognition of the critical importance of inspiring, educating, and organizing just *ordinary* brothers and sisters from the streets, the NAAVM was officially launched during its First Annual Community Forum-Festival. Over five hundred people attended the Vision Theater in the Leimert Park area in Los Angeles. The theme of this founding event was "*Remembering the Black Panther Party: Serving the People Body and Soul.*" The event featured a series of educational speakers, cultural and entertainment activities, net-working with other community-based organizations and agencies, and was high-lighted by the distribution of nearly a thousand bags of "free groceries." This first "Forum-Festival" had a two-fold objective: to promote the remembrance of the many "positive" political and social contributions of the Black Panther Party and to provide the appropriate context for the formal launching of this New African American Vanguard Movement. The distribution of over a thousand free bags of groceries, although occurring at the conclusion of the program, was central to the success of the event, primarily because the original Panthers were especially remembered in the Los Angeles Black community for their "free food give-away" and other "survival" programs. The symbol of this NAAVM was a black panther bursting out of the new world order, symbolized by the image of a globe.

From its inception, NAAVM organizers consciously targeted gang members and potential members of the Crips and the Bloods for membership in its Defense Ministry. In its formative period, a key tactical objective of the NAAVM was also supporting and promoting community efforts to secure "gang truces." The NAAVM was quite successful during its formative period in attracting former gang members, but also later struggled internally with the challenge of providing a proper context for the proper "political orientation" of these youth. But first the NAAVM had to establish its "presence" in the Crip and Blood infested neighborhoods of South central LA. In mid-June 1994, hundreds of blue and black posters were printed and then posted throughout South central Los Angeles; these posters depicted an "enraged black panther" bursting out of the new world order, which was also symbolized by a globe, announcing "*The New African American Vanguard Movement - Coming To Your Neighborhood Soon!*"

Changes in Organizational Form

Since its inception in 1994, the NAAVM has gone through a number of changes in organizational form, including a major change in its "official name," and programmatic focus. The NAAVM continued to transform itself as opportunities for organizing around a revolutionary program presented itself. Since 1995 it has produced, more or less quarterly, its own organ, The Black Panther Newspaper, published by its Intercommunal News Service. The newspaper was widely distributed across the country, and was also circulated and avidly read in prisons throughout the country.

In 1996, the NAAVM launched its National Reparations Campaign, and in 2000 redesigned its "reparations campaign" as an "*Intercommunal Reparations Campaign.*" Our booklet, "A Case for An Intercommunal Reparations Campaign" is in its third revised printing; in this small booklet we outline our historical perspective on what we consider to be the "revolutionary demand" for "reparations," and under the banner of "intercommunalism" begin linking the struggle of African Americans for reparations to the struggles of reparations for Africans throughout the African

Diaspora and to the struggle for reparations of the indigenous populations particularly here in the Americas.

Although the programmatic goals of the New Panther Vanguard Movement, reflected in its revised Ten Point Platform and Program, remain basically unchanged since its formation, the organizational structure had been dramatically revamped. Membership into the NPVM is now by "invitation only," and is only extended to those who demonstrate their commitment and dedication to rebuilding a "revolutionary movement" through practical work over a long period of time. The revised Ten Point Platform and Program continues the basic demands of the original Black Panther Party but also includes new demands relating to the demand for "Reparations," release of all political prisoners, "sentencing review" of all prisoners convicted of non-violent drug offenses, a fundamental reform of the criminal justice system, a reform of the education system as it related to the education of African American youth and other youth of color, and the New Panther Vanguard Movement's desire to seek viable solutions to the "drug abuse problem."

Transition From the New African American Vanguard Movement to the New Panther Vanguard Movement

On **April 19, 1997**, leading members of the New African-American Vanguard Movement and the New Black Panther Party participated in a "Black Panther Unity Summit" at the Vanguard's Los Angeles-based International Panther Headquarters, so to continue discussions relating to the formation of a "national Panther Movement structure" that had been agreed to nearly a year earlier in Houston, Texas. The theme of this "unity summit" was "resolving contradictions." During the course of this first of three such "unity summits," both former and "new" Panthers discussed common program objectives, political perspectives, and revisited the "numerous contradictions" that had plagued the original Oakland-based Black Panther Party. Of particular importance was the discussion and dialogue that focused on the mistakes made by the Black Panther Party leadership in resolving contradictions, dealing with differences in tactics, philosophy, and "revolutionary ideology" among its leadership and membership.

During the "first unity summit" consensus was reached on a revised Ten Point Platform and a national Code of Conduct which would assist in giving form and direction to a new "loosely confederated" national entity that would be called the New Panther Vanguard Movement (NPVM). The major and immediate objective of the NPVM was to obtain the support and participation of each of the newly emerging "panther-like groups" and individual "panther activists" around the country, who had patterned themselves after, and were presumably carrying on in the "revolutionary tradition" of, the original Black Panther Party. This first "unity summit," composed of representatives of the NAAVM and the New Black Panther Party agreed to convene a follow-up meeting in Milwaukee in order to meet with the founder and members of the Black Panther Militia. This meeting never materialized, due to an apparent lack of interest by the Black Panther Militia.

Ongoing outreach efforts continued to be made to contact any "panthers" [former or present] functioning throughout the United States, and particularly in the Chicago, Philadelphia, and New York areas. The third "unity summit" took place in New York in 1998, sponsored by the Black Panther Collective. The former National Chairman of the New Black Panther Party, Khalid Muhammad, now deceased, stopped by and participated in a lively, sometimes heated, dialogue about the political philosophy of the original BPP, and the prospects of continuing to build a national network of "panther-like" groups. Unfortunately, Khalid did not want to pursue a serious

discussion about the concerns of then renamed New Panther Vanguard Movement regarding the differences between the NBPP and the NPVM.

The “unity summit” in New York resulted in joint commitments by the Black Panther Collective and the NPVM to continue seeking ways to work together, including assisting in the production and distribution of the Black Panther Newspaper. Informal discussions continued regarding attempts to build a “national operational network” of “panther-like groups,” with a “common” “code of conduct” and “platform and program,” which though similar to the original platform was in fact a significant “revision” of the revised Platform and Program and Code of Conduct of the original Black Panther Party. However, nearly six months after the “New York summit,” the Black Panther Collective developed internal contradictions, members left the group, and as a result the continued organizing of the “unity summits” came to an end, with the various “panther-like” organizations working and organizing independently.

The Philosophy and Program of the New Panther Vanguard Movement

Although African-American people have a common history and a common destiny, we are not a “community” of “one mind.” There continue to be serious “class” and “ethnic divisions” among Black people in America; and we still remain divided by religion, age, and social status. Even though our immediate ancestors from the African Continent were either kidnaped or sold into Slavery, we, as a people, ending up either in North, Central, and South America, or in many other places in the world. Millions of people of African ancestry populate the Caribbean islands and the South and Central American areas. Africans in the Americas, because of our history and locations, have a special role to play in both domestic and world affairs. The NPVM does not limit its membership to persons of “African ancestry,” and has in fact developed a “strategic alliance” over the past two years with the “Mexica Movement,” an organization of Mexicans, Central and South Americans, and other indigenous people. We have developed a “Joint Education In Our Interest Project.”

The historic struggles of African people in America has been, and continues to be, a critically important factor; although a “minority in North America,” relatively speaking, we are a large minority with awesome political potential. In fact, the improvement in the quality and standard of living for all Americans can be traced directly to the African-American struggle to achieve fundamental social, economic, and political changes in how we are governed as a people. For African-Americans, it is not the “strength in our numbers” which makes our political struggle significant; instead, it is our strategic location within the “belly” of American “Reactionary Intercommunalism” [the highest stage of “Capitalist Imperialism”], and the moral righteousness of our unyielding historical struggles for freedom, justice and equality.

In 1776 [one hundred and fifty years after the institution of slavery on the North American Continent], the Constitution of the United States of America considered “black people” less than fully human; the U.S. Supreme Court later declared that “black men had no rights” which “White men had to respect.” It took two generations of struggle, and a Civil War, to abolish the Slavery of African Peoples in America; it took another one hundred years to “get some respect” for these “freed slaves,” and today social and economic conditions still dictate that African-Americans must continue demanding that respect. It has taken, literally, over two-hundred years of struggle to get us to this point where many of us can genuinely claim that we are truly African and American, and to understand the “contradictoriness” of that “identity” or what that means for us as a dispossessed

people. Much of our blood, sweat and tears have been expended in, and for, America. In this regard, the demand of the NPVM for "intercommunal reparations" for Africans living in the Americas and for the Indigenous peoples, on whose land base we now reside.

As we look around our communities in this new century, the conditions which led to the formation of the Black Panther Party (BPP) in 1966 still continue to exist. In fact, it is fair to say that the economic, political, and social conditions have worsened for the majority of African-Americans. True, there has also been a corresponding increase in the so-called "Black middle classes," who have become increasingly hostile to, and alienated from, the masses of Black people. The Vanguard is firmly committed to the principle that no one but we ourselves can save us from the contradictions and adverse conditions we find ourselves in. In this New Millennium, the social and economic conditions (and corresponding "contradictions") are clearly greater than they were in the 60's. Today, the American people, both Black and non-black, are fed up with a political establishment that is monopolized by either the "Democratic" or "Republican" parties [both equally guilty of gross hypocrisy and support for the "status quo"]. For the past thirty years, a "bi-partisan" Administration in Washington D.C. has consistently allocated billions of dollars to build more prisons and hire more police, and to promote and fund "military/police actions" at home and around the world. It seems that Prison-building, ever expanding "police and military forces," and "Law and Order Politicians" are the bankrupt solutions of those who have endorsed the genocide of an entire generation of African-Americans and other poor people of color.

Today a "cloud of hopelessness" pervades the already polluted environment in poor African-American neighborhoods; but there is also a resurgence of many and varied forms of organized resistance and self-help organization among those on the very bottom of this society's "class structure." The struggle of African-Americans has always sought the improvement of those - who actually constitute the majority - on the very bottom of this society. And today, as yesterday, the majority of African-American youth leave high school either with less than a "seventh" grade education or with no graduation certificate. Despite the best efforts of individual teachers or administrators, most of the "public schools" have become reluctant "work places" and "warehouses" with very little "real education" taking place. There is an absence of political efforts to make education relevant, culturally or historically speaking. Begun, arguably, as a "noble" endeavor, "public education" has become a liability, and not an asset, to poor people of color.

Unemployment levels among young Black men, particularly among the ages of 18-35, has been devastating and should be seen and acted upon as "criminal" neglect" by the Government. In this Age of Technology, the unskilled labor of Black men (the source of much profits for the Capitalist system in the past) is no longer needed by the White Power Structure [which, despite a "few almost Black faces," has basically gone unchanged since the Sixties]. As a result, the criminal "injustice system" continues to imprison a population that is overwhelmingly composed of young African-Americans and other persons of color, principally Mexicans, South and Central Americans, and other people of color.

Infant mortality rates among young African-American women exceed that of some underdeveloped Third World countries. "Man-made" diseases, like AIDS, are decimating the ranks of gay men [many of whom are Black] and other heterosexual people of color at alarming rates [not only here in the USA but also in Africa]. Quality health care is all but none existent for poor people of color throughout the world. The ranks of the homeless are overwhelmingly, though not exclusively, African-American men and women. In our communities, which lack the "capital" for economic development, we know that crime runs rampant, as those who are unemployed and

unemployable succumb to involvement in petty [and oftentimes very serious] crimes against persons and property. Today the police institution has grown to gigantic proportions, as the criminal "Capitalistic culture" has infected the entire society. Despite the hiring of Black Chiefs of Police, and literally thousands of black and Mexican, and other rank and file police officers of color, within local police departments over the past ten (10) years, the "police institution" itself continues to be a bastion of white supremacy and anti-black animus, which is routinely experienced even by these "Black" police officers. Thus, it is clear that the police institution itself must be fundamentally changed into an institution based in and run by the communities they serve. A clear recognition of the perilous times that we live in demands an appropriate organizational response. On whose agenda will we depend to bring these injustices finally to an end?

The NEW PANTHER VANGUARD MOVEMENT dedicates its existence to continuing in the revolutionary spirit of the Black Panther Party. We recognized that Malcolm X certainly embodied that spirit and put forth a plan for total liberation of African-Americans led by the Organization of African-American Unity. The BPP, however, was the first successfully organized attempt to build a "mass base" for a "liberation movement" of Black people. This process must, and will, continue. Since there is no "organization of African-American unity," and because the BPP was destroyed before it could become institutionalized, the NEW PANTHER VANGUARD MOVEMENT stepped forward to fill that void. Although it appears to be an impossible task, unification of our Movement is the first condition for achieving the peace, the freedom, and the justice that our communities have longed for and deserve. We will accept nothing less than "total liberation" of our people from the "global yoke of capitalist economic development" Our basic view is that it is not a "piece of the pie" that we want; we want all the power and resources available returned to poor African and Indigenous people, globally. Our demand for "intercommunal reparations" is a serious demand for a real "distribution of the wealth" of Global Capitalism. We know, as in the words of Frederick Douglass, that *"Power concedes nothing without a demand, it never did and it never will."*

This new VANGUARD is prepared to make all necessary demands, and as we enter the Twenty-first Century, the membership of the VANGUARD share a commitment to re-establishing a Liberation Movement that will be able first to demand, and then achieve, a basic political program which can address the complex, global, socio-economic realities of this New Millennium, and the corresponding political needs and aspirations of the majority of Africans and other poor people of color. The "spirit of the Panther Party" and the "vision of Malcolm X" truly lives on in the hearts and minds of the members of the NEW PANTHER VANGUARD MOVEMENT. Panther-like slogans and Malcolm's teachings are heard today in student protest rallies, community demonstrations for justice, and labor pickets all across the country - from Alabama to Wisconsin, from California to New York, from the U.S.A. to Great Britain. If you too believe that a resurgence of "revolutionary activism" and "revolutionary unity" is critically needed in our communities, we urge you to review our revised Ten Point Platform and Program, and request your active, and material, support and participation in organizing this newly emerging "revolutionary Panther movement."

For further information regarding the New Panther Vanguard Movement call (323) 296-2038

November 29, 2002

**Political Statement Concerning the Dispute Between Members
of the Original Black Panther Party and the New Black Panther Party**

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[Former Member/Coordinator of the Southern California Chapter of the Black Panther Party]*

The New Panther Vanguard Movement (initially called the New African American Vanguard Movement) was founded in 1994 by former members of the “re-established” Southern California Chapter of the Black Panther Party, and newer, younger, “panthers” from the neighborhoods of South-Central Los Angeles. From the outset, the founders of the NPVM knew that the long-defunct “Black Panther Party” could not be “recreated.” But we recognized the need, and had the desire, to insure the continuity of the “revolutionary ideas” and grass roots organizing practices of the BPP. We intended to continue the BPP’s legacy of non-compromising political struggle on the behalf of Africans living in America, in solidarity with other oppressed communities and peoples, into the 21st Century. We also consciously focused on both the successes and failures of the BPP, recognizing that the BPP had both negative and positive qualities; we believed these qualities needed to be remembered, and the lessons applied to the existing changed conditions.

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For these reasons we felt it important for us to comment on the current dispute between former members of the now defunct Black Panther Party (BPP) and the New Black Panther Party (NBPP) that has been widely reported in the press. This dispute centers around two main issues. The first is the contention by some former members of the original BPP that the NBPP is using images and a name that it has no right to and that are the “property” of these former members. The second is that by espousing ideas (such as anti-Semitism) that were in fact alien to the original BPP, the NBPP is bringing its legacy into disrepute.

As far as the first issue is concerned it is instructive to begin by looking at the history of the “panther” as a political image. The use of this image dates back, not to the founding of the Black Panther Party, but to the voter registration campaign of the Student Non-Violent

Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in the early sixties to register Black voters in Lowndes County, Mississippi.

Clearly then, the “panther” as a symbol of the struggle for justice by Africans in America predates its use by the BPP. The original BPP officially closed its national headquarters in Oakland, California in 1982 but the panther “image” continues to inspire many to this day. In 1989 the NBPP was formed in Dallas, Texas. In Milwaukee in the early 1990’s, Michael McGee formed The Black Panther Militia. In 1994 the New African American Vanguard Movement, later to become the New Panther Vanguard Movement, was founded in Los Angeles and the Black Panther Collective was formed in New York. The attempt to revive the spirit of the old BPP was not restricted to the United States; in 1989 the group Panther was founded in London, England; and one of the most oppressed layers of humanity, the “untouchables” of India, chose to call themselves the “Dalit Panthers”. These are just the instances that we are aware of where the name “panther” has in some way been invoked in grass roots political organizing efforts.

Of course the BPP itself was in large part responsible for popularizing the use of the name and the image; but does that mean that ex-party members can now claim “ownership” of that image, an image that the BPP itself adopted from elsewhere? Marcus Garvey was largely responsible for popularizing red, black and green as the colors of Black struggle in America, would it have been reasonable for ex-members of his once huge organization to claim a copyright over the use of these colors?

This current dispute also brings into question the use by the NBPP of images of the now deceased co-founder of the BPP, Huey P. Newton. Particularly at issue is the now world famous image of Huey on a wicker chair holding a rifle. The person who took this picture, Eldridge Cleaver, is also now deceased; surely only he or Huey himself could have had any legitimate claim to copyright this picture. On what basis can individuals who were once members of the party claim this right? It is indeed a dubious claim and very definitely smells of self-interest given that these individuals are busy running a business that makes money from these disputed images. We say very clearly that such images belong to the people and no one has the right to claim ownership of them. The New Panther Vanguard Movement uses them in our on going political organizing and will continue to do so.

The second issue at the center of this dispute is the claim that the NBPP is bringing the legacy of the BPP into disrepute by using its name, but espousing ideas that were alien to it. This is a serious allegation and requires serious attention. Although various Panther-like groups have emerged since the demise of the BPP not all of them have been grounded in the Party’s history. Some of these groups have been formed by individuals who had no direct experience in the BPP, and who obviously have not studied its history. They have therefore not been guided by its successes and failures. It is therefore no surprise that such a group would put forward ideas that are not in keeping with the ideology or vision of the BPP. However, the way to deal with this problem is not by suing the NBPP, but by providing a vision for the ongoing struggle for justice for African Americans, that is in keeping with the spirit of the BPP’s ideology. It is our belief that we can best “preserve and protect” the “legacy of the original BPP” by being actively involved in building a “new movement” that is attempting to put into practice those dynamic ideas, revolutionary ideals, and beliefs which made the BPP so unique. The filing of a “lawsuit” against

the NBPP is the not the solution. The “legacy of the BPP” will be preserved, if at all, by the dedication and commitment of those who share its vision and ideology. We must organize, not in the courts, but in the communities of the poor and oppressed. “*Power*” in the words of Huey P. Newton, “*is the ability to define phenomena and to make it act in the desired manner.*” All Power to the People Who Dare to Struggle and Dare to Win!

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**BLACK PANTHER UNITY SUMMIT IN LOS ANGELES
LAUNCHES A NEW PANTHER VANGUARD MOVEMENT**

On December 20, 1996, several leading members of the New African-American Vanguard Movement [based in Los Angeles] and the New Black Panther Party [based in Dallas] met in Dallas, Texas, to discuss and explore the possibility of creating a "national panther organizational structure," involving the New African-American Vanguard Movement and each of the "New Black Panther" groups which have emerged across the United States during the past five or six years. The Dallas meeting reached a tentative agreement on several points, including the formation of a "National Black Panther Outreach Committee," composed of representatives from each of the groups. This National Panther Outreach Committee was charged with the task of continuing to discuss and reach agreement on such issues as "local autonomy," a "common agenda" (or common platform and program), a "Black Panther Code of Conduct," and organizing a followup meeting or conference involving all concerned panther groups from across the United States.

The Dallas meeting was somewhat hampered by the absence of representatives from the Minneapolis-based Black Panther Militia, Khalid Muhammad [the former National Spokesperson for Minister Farrakhan], who has been associated with the New Black Panther Party in Dallas, and representatives from other "Black Panther" groups in Chicago, Philadelphia, New York, Connecticut [these groups have all emerged in various areas of the country during the past five or six years].

From its inception in October 1994, the leadership of the New African-American Vanguard Movement [which also includes older members of the original Black Panther Party and younger generation "panthers"] has been committed to developing "operational unity" with, and cooperation between, all community-based organizations that are dedicated to the political and economic empowerment of Africans in America; the New African-American Vanguard Movement has also been particularly committed to stirring the revolutionary "Black Panther" sentiments existing among all oppressed peoples and communities, domestically and internationally.

Further developments of this National Outreach Committee occurred on Saturday, April 19, 1997 at a **BLACK PANTHER UNITY SUMMIT**, which was sponsored by the New African-American Vanguard Movement at its International Panther Headquarters in Los Angeles. The Los Angeles Black Panther Unity Summit was called for the purpose of continuing the on-going discussions of the National Outreach Committee, and exploring the possibility of creating a "national Black Panther organizational structure," in which the New African-American Vanguard Movement and each of the other "New Black Panther" groups would merge.

As a result of the Los Angeles "Black Panther Unity Summit" consensus was reached on a revised Ten Point Platform and a

national Code of Conduct, forming the foundation of a new national entity called the **New Panther Vanguard Movement (NPVM)**, which would continue publishing the Black Panther International News Service. The major and immediate objective of the **New Panther Vanguard Movement** is to organize the support and participation of each of the recently emerged "panther groups", and to recruit any and all of those individual "panther activists" (old and new) who continue to carry on in the revolutionary spirit and organizing tradition of the original Black Panther Party.

Participants in the Los Angeles Summit agreed to convene a followup meeting in Milwaukee in order to meet and confer with the brothers and sisters who are functioning with the Black Panther Militia. Ongoing outreach efforts will also be made to invite any and all "Panthers" [former or present] functioning throughout the United States.

Following the Los Angeles Summit, the leadership of the New African-American Vanguard Movement decided to immediately adopt the new name and to place all of its resources in this "national unity effort." The immediate goal of the **New Panther Vanguard Movement** is to establish a physical presence throughout the country by systema-tically organizing local chapters and branches, and by unifying whatever remains of the Black Panther Party Movement of the 60's. The revised Ten Point Platform of the **New Panther Vanguard Movement** continues the basic demands of the original Black Panther Party, but also includes new demands relating to the renewed demands for "reparations" for African-Americans, release of all political prisoners, sentence review of all prisoners convicted of non-violent drug offenses, the fundamental reform of the criminal justice system, and the desire to seek viable and lasting solutions to the "drug abuse problem" in African-American communities.

For more information regarding the New Panther Vanguard Movement or the Black Panther International News Service contact the Los Angeles-based International Panther Headquarters at (213) 296-4383.

Official Launching of the NAAVM

Motivated in part by “unforgotten experiences” as members of the BPP, and also in part by a our recognition of the critical importance of inspiring, educating, and organizing just *ordinary* brothers and sisters from the streets, the NAAVM was officially launched during its First Annual Community Forum-Festival. Over five hundred people attended the Vision Theater in the Leimert Park area in Los Angeles. The theme of this founding event was *“Remembering the Black Panther Party: Serving the People Body and Soul.”* The event featured a series of educational speakers, cultural and entertainment activities, net-working with other community-based organizations and agencies, and was high-lighted by the distribution of nearly a thousand bags of “free groceries.” This first “Forum-Festival” had a two-fold objective: to promote the remembrance of the many “positive” political and social contributions of the Black Panther Party and to provide the appropriate context for the formal launching of this New African American Vanguard Movement. The distribution of over a thousand free bags of groceries, although occurring at the conclusion of the program, was central to the success of the event, primarily because the original Panthers were especially remembered in the Los Angeles Black community for their “free food give-away” and other “survival” programs. The symbol of this NAAVM was a black panther bursting out of the new world order, symbolized by the image of a globe.

From its inception, NAAVM organizers consciously targeted gang members and potential members of the Crips and the Bloods for membership in its Defense Ministry. In its formative period, a key tactical objective of the NAAVM was also supporting and promoting community efforts to secure “gang truces.” The NAAVM was quite successful during its formative period in attracting former gang members, but also later struggled internally with the challenge of providing a proper context for the proper “political orientation” of these youth. But first the NAAVM had to establish its “presence” in the Crip and Blood infested neighborhoods of South central LA. In mid-June 1994, hundreds of blue and black posters were printed and then posted throughout South central Los Angeles; these posters depicted an “enraged black panther” bursting out of the new world order, which was also symbolized by a globe, announcing *“The New African American Vanguard Movement - Coming To Your Neighborhood Soon!”*

Changes in Organizational Form

Since its inception in 1994, the NAAVM has gone through a number of changes in organizational form, including a major change in its “official name,” and programmatic focus. The NAAVM continued to transform itself as opportunities for organizing around a revolutionary program presented itself. Since 1995 it has produced, more or less quarterly, its own organ, The Black Panther Newspaper, published by its Intercommunal News Service. The newspaper was widely distributed across the country, and was also circulated and avidly read in prisons throughout the country.

In 1996, the NAAVM launched its National Reparations Campaign, and in 2000 redesigned its “reparations campaign” as an *“Intercommunal Reparations Campaign.”* Our booklet, “A Case for An Intercommunal Reparations Campaign” is in its third revised printing; in this small booklet we outline our historical perspective on what we consider to be the “revolutionary demand” for “reparations,” and under the banner of “intercommunalism” begin linking the struggle of African Americans for reparations to the struggles of reparations for Africans throughout the African Diaspora and to the struggle for reparations of the indigenous populations particularly here in the Americas.

Although the programmatic goals of the New Panther Vanguard Movement, reflected in its revised Ten Point Platform and Program, remain basically unchanged since its formation, the organizational structure had been dramatically revamped. Membership into the NPVM is now by "invitation only," and is only extended to those who demonstrate their commitment and dedication to rebuilding a "revolutionary movement" through practical work over a long period of time. The revised Ten Point Platform and Program continues the basic demands of the original Black Panther Party but also includes new demands relating to the demand for "Reparations," release of all political prisoners, "sentencing review" of all prisoners convicted of non-violent drug offenses, a fundamental reform of the criminal justice system, a reform of the education system as it related to the education of African American youth and other youth of color, and the New Panther Vanguard Movement's desire to seek viable solutions to the "drug abuse problem."

Transition From the New African American Vanguard
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Movement to the New Panther Vanguard Movement
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On **April 19, 1997**, leading members of the New African-American Vanguard Movement and the New Black Panther Party participated in a "Black Panther Unity Summit" at the Vanguard's Los Angeles-based International Panther Headquarters, so to continue discussions relating to the formation of a "national Panther Movement structure" that had been agreed to nearly a year earlier in Houston, Texas. The theme of this "unity summit" was "resolving contradictions." During the course of this first of three such "unity summits," both former and "new" Panthers discussed common program objectives, political perspectives, and revisited the "numerous contradictions" that had plagued the original Oakland-based Black Panther Party. Of particular importance was the discussion and dialogue that focused on the mistakes made by the Black Panther Party leadership in resolving contradictions, dealing with differences in tactics, philosophy, and "revolutionary ideology" among its leadership and membership.

During the "first unity summit" consensus was reached on a revised Ten Point Platform and a national Code of Conduct which would assist in giving form and direction to a new "loosely confederated" national entity that would be called the New Panther Vanguard Movement (NPVM). The major and immediate objective of the NPVM was to obtain the support and participation of each of the newly emerging "panther-like groups" and individual "panther activists" around the country, who had patterned themselves after, and were presumably carrying on in the "revolutionary tradition" of, the original Black Panther Party. This first "unity summit," composed of representatives of the NAAVM and the New Black Panther Party agreed to convene a follow-up meeting in Milwaukee in order to meet with the founder and members of the Black Panther Militia. This meeting never materialized, due to an apparent lack of interest by the Black Panther Militia.

Ongoing outreach efforts continued to be made to contact any "panthers" [former or present] functioning throughout the United States, and particularly in the Chicago, Philadelphia, and New York areas. The third "unity summit" took place in New York in 1998, sponsored by the Black Panther Collective. The former National Chairman of the New Black Panther Party, Khalid Muhammad, now deceased, stopped by and participated in a lively, sometimes heated, dialogue about the political philosophy of the original BPP, and the prospects of continuing to build a national network of "panther-like" groups. Unfortunately, Khalid did not want to pursue a serious

discussion about the concerns of then renamed New Panther Vanguard Movement regarding the differences between the NBPP and the NPVM.

The “unity summit” in New York resulted in joint commitments by the Black Panther Collective and the NPVM to continue seeking ways to work together, including assisting in the production and distribution of the Black Panther Newspaper. Informal discussions continued regarding attempts to build a “national operational network” of “panther-like groups,” with a “common” “code of conduct” and “platform and program,” which though similar to the original platform was in fact a significant “revision” of the revised Platform and Program and Code of Conduct of the original Black Panther Party. However, nearly six months after the “New York summit,” the Black Panther Collective developed internal contradictions, members left the group, and as a result the continued organizing of the “unity summits” came to an end, with the various “panther-like” organizations working and organizing independently.

The Philosophy and Program of the **{tc \l3 "The Philosophy and Program of the}** **New Panther Vanguard Movement**

Although African-American people have a common history and a common destiny, we are not a “community” of “one mind.” There continue to be serious “class” and “ethnic divisions” among Black people in America; and we still remain divided by religion, age, and social status. Even though our immediate ancestors from the African Continent were either kidnapped or sold into Slavery, we, as a people, ending up either in North, Central, and South America, or in many other places in the world. Millions of people of African ancestry populate the Caribbean islands and the South and Central American areas. Africans in the Americas, because of our history and locations, have a special role to play in both domestic and world affairs. The NPVM does not limit its membership to persons of “African ancestry,” and has in fact developed a “strategic alliance” over the past two years with the “Mexica Movement,” an organization of Mexicans, Central and South Americans, and other indigenous people. We have developed a “Joint Education In Our Interest Project.”

The historic struggles of African people in America has been, and continues to be, a critically important factor; although a “minority in North America,” relatively speaking, we are a large minority with awesome political potential. In fact, the improvement in the quality and standard of living for all Americans can be traced directly to the African-American struggle to achieve fundamental social, economic, and political changes in how we are governed as a people. For African-Americans, it is not the “strength in our numbers” which makes our political struggle significant; instead, it is our strategic location within the “belly” of American “Reactionary Intercommunalism” [the highest stage of “Capitalist Imperialism”], and the moral righteousness of our unyielding historical struggles for freedom, justice and equality.

In 1776 [one hundred and fifty years after the institution of slavery on the North American Continent], the Constitution of the United States of America considered “black people” less than fully human; the U.S. Supreme Court later declared that “black men had no rights” which “White men had to respect.” It took two generations of struggle, and a Civil War, to abolish the Slavery of African Peoples in America; it took another one hundred years to “get some respect” for these “freed slaves,” and today social and economic conditions still dictate that African-Americans must continue demanding that respect. It has taken, literally, over two-hundred years of struggle to get us to this point where many of us can genuinely claim that we are truly African and American, and

to understand the "contradictoriness" of that "identity" or what that means for us as a dispossessed people. Much of our blood, sweat and tears have been expended in, and for, America. In this regard, the demand of the NPVM for "intercommunal reparations" for Africans living in the Americas and for the Indigenous peoples, on whose land base we now reside.

As we look around our communities in this new century, the conditions which led to the formation of the Black Panther Party (BPP) in 1966 still continue to exist. In fact, it is fair to say that the economic, political, and social conditions have worsened for the majority of African-Americans. True, there has also been a corresponding increase in the so-called "Black middle classes," who have become increasingly hostile to, and alienated from, the masses of Black people. The Vanguard is firmly committed to the principle that no one but we ourselves can save us from the contradictions and adverse conditions we find ourselves in. In this New Millennium, the social and economic conditions (and corresponding "contradictions") are clearly greater than they were in the 60's. Today, the American people, both Black and non-black, are fed up with a political establishment that is monopolized by either the "Democratic" or "Republican" parties [both equally guilty of gross hypocrisy and support for the "status quo"]. For the past thirty years, a "bi-partisan" Administration in Washington D.C. has consistently allocated billions of dollars to build more prisons and hire more police, and to promote and fund "military/police actions" at home and around the world. It seems that Prison-building, ever expanding "police and military forces," and "Law and Order Politicians" are the bankrupt solutions of those who have endorsed the genocide of an entire generation of African-Americans and other poor people of color.

Today a "cloud of hopelessness" pervades the already polluted environment in poor African-American neighborhoods; but there is also a resurgence of many and varied forms of organized resistance and self-help organization among those on the very bottom of this society's "class structure." The struggle of African-Americans has always sought the improvement of those - who actually constitute the majority - on the very bottom of this society. And today, as yesterday, the majority of African-American youth leave high school either with less than a "seventh" grade education or with no graduation certificate. Despite the best efforts of individual teachers or administrators, most of the "public schools" have become reluctant "work places" and "warehouses" with very little "real education" taking place. There is an absence of political efforts to make education relevant, culturally or historically speaking. Begun, arguably, as a "noble" endeavor, "public education" has become a liability, and not an asset, to poor people of color.

Unemployment levels among young Black men, particularly among the ages of 18-35, has been devastating and should be seen and acted upon as "criminal" neglect" by the Government. In this Age of Technology, the unskilled labor of Black men (the source of much profits for the Capitalist system in the past) is no longer needed by the White Power Structure [which, despite a "few almost Black faces," has basically gone unchanged since the Sixties]. As a result, the criminal "injustice system" continues to imprison a population that is overwhelmingly composed of young African-Americans and other persons of color, principally Mexicans, South and Central Americans, and other people of color.

Infant mortality rates among young African-American women exceed that of some underdeveloped Third World countries. "Man-made" diseases, like AIDS, are decimating the ranks of gay men [many of whom are Black] and other heterosexual people of color at alarming rates [not only here in the USA but also in Africa]. Quality health care is all but none existent for poor people of color throughout the world. The ranks of the homeless are overwhelmingly,

though not exclusively, African-American men and women. In our communities, which lack the "capital" for economic development, we know that crime runs rampant, as those who are unemployed and unemployable succumb to involvement in petty [and oftentimes very serious] crimes against persons and property. Today the police institution has grown to gigantic proportions, as the criminal "Capitalistic culture" has infected the entire society. Despite the hiring of Black Chiefs of Police, and literally thousands of black and Mexican, and other rank and file police officers of color, within local police departments over the past ten (10) years, the "police institution" itself continues to be a bastion of white supremacy and anti-black animus, which is routinely experienced even by these "Black" police officers. Thus, it is clear that the police institution itself must be fundamentally changed into an institution based in and run by the communities they serve. A clear recognition of the perilous times that we live in demands an appropriate organizational response. On whose agenda will we depend to bring these injustices finally to an end?

The NEW PANTHER VANGUARD MOVEMENT dedicates its existence to continuing in the revolutionary spirit of the Black Panther Party. We recognized that Malcolm X certainly embodied that spirit and put forth a plan for total liberation of African-Americans led by the Organization of African-American Unity. The BPP, however, was the first successfully organized attempt to build a "mass base" for a "liberation movement" of Black people. This process must, and will, continue. Since there is no "organization of African-American unity," and because the BPP was destroyed before it could become institutionalized, the NEW PANTHER VANGUARD MOVEMENT stepped forward to fill that void. Although it appears to be an impossible task, unification of our Movement is the first condition for achieving the peace, the freedom, and the justice that our communities have longed for and deserve. We will accept nothing less than "total liberation" of our people from the "global yoke of capitalist economic development" Our basic view is that it is not a "piece of the pie" that we want; we want all the power and resources available returned to poor African and Indigenous people, globally. Our demand for "intercommunal reparations" is a serious demand for a real "distribution of the wealth" of Global Capitalism. We know, as in the words of Frederick Douglas, that *"Power concedes nothing without a demand, it never did and it never will."*

This new VANGUARD is prepared to make all necessary demands, and as we enter the Twenty-first Century, the membership of the VANGUARD share a commitment to re-establishing a Liberation Movement that will be able first to demand, and then achieve, a basic political program which can address the complex, global, socio-economic realities of this New Millenium, and the corresponding political needs and aspirations of the majority of Africans and other poor people of color. The "spirit of the Panther Party" and the "vision of Malcolm X" truly lives on in the hearts and minds of the members of the NEW PANTHER VANGUARD MOVEMENT. Panther-like slogans and Malcolm's teachings are heard today in student protest rallies, community demonstrations for justice, and labor pickets all across the country - from Alabama to Wisconsin, from California to New York, from the U.S.A. to Great Britain. If you too believe that a resurgence of "revolutionary activism" and "revolutionary unity" is critically needed in our communities, we urge you to review our revised Ten Point Platform and Program, and request your active, and material, support and participation in organizing this newly emerging "revolutionary Panther movement."

For further information regarding the New Panther Vanguard Movement call (323) 296-4383

