


BLACK AUTONOMY

A NEWSPAPER OF ANARCHISM AND BLACK REVOLUTION

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"It's no accident that people like Malcolm X and Martin Luther King were destroyed at those moments of their political careers when they had begun to critique nationalism as a platform of organization; and where, in fact, they replace nationalism with a critique of imperialism, which then unites us with the liberation struggles of so many people on the planet. If we don't have that kind of global perspective about our social realities, we will never be able to re-envision a revolutionary movement for Black self-determination that is non-exclusive, and doesn't assume some kind of patriarchal nationhood. Many of our African nations have failed precisely because they lacked a revolutionary vision for social change that worked, and not because they didn't have a nation."
—bell hooks



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

The Racist Roots of Gun Control. / US Prisons: The Cold War of the '90's.
/ Black activist Deacon Alexander charged under Terrorism Bill.
/ Reflections on the Million Man March on Washington, DC.
/ Update on Mumia Abu Jamal. / The Secret FISA Court. / and more...!

"NO SLAVES, NO MASTERS, NO BORDERS!"

Black Autonomy, A Newspaper of Anarchism and Black Revolution.

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"Our insistence on military action, defensive and retaliatory, has nothing to do with romanticism or precipitous idealist fervor. We want to be effective. We want to live.

Our history teaches us that the successful liberation struggles require an armed people, a whole people, actively participating in the struggle for their liberty!"

-George Jackson; from "Blood in My Eye."

Inside This Issue...

Features:

"Anarchist vs. Marxist-Leninist thought on Organization.", pg 4. *"The Racist Roots of Gun Control."*, pg 4. *"The Secret FISA Court."*, pg 6. *"The Cold War of the 90's."*, pg 7. *"The Million Man March: Power to the People?"*, pg 10. *"Get Deacon Alexander Back on the Streets"*, pg 12.

Departments:

News of Repression and Resistance...pg 2. Fighting Back, Black Autonomist activism notes...pg 3. These Prisoners Need Your Support!...pg 8. Random Notes...pg 9. Letters...pg 14. Anarchism + Black Revolution = New Black Autonomous Politics...pg 15.

NEWS OF REPRESSION AND RESISTANCE National and International Coverage.

Bomb damages American Express branch, no injuries. ATHENS, GREECE:

A makeshift time bomb slightly damaged the entrance of an American Express Bank branch near Athens during the night but no one was hurt, police said. The bomb placed at the entrance of the bank in the northern Athens suburb of Maroussi went off in the early morning hours when the branch was closed.

A small anarchist group, the Anti-Establishment Nucleus, claimed responsibility in a call to a Greek radio station shortly before the explosion.

The anarchist group said it planted this bomb and another that damaged a Citibank branch in Athens on Saturday to protest the jailing of former U.S. Black Panther member Mumia Abu-Jamal.

The offices of Greek and foreign companies are common bomb targets for Greek leftist urban guerrilla groups.

INS & Police terrorize the Mission district. SAN FRANCISCO, CA.:

Beginning the last week of May, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and San Francisco police have carried out a series of attacks on immigrants in the Mission including a cowardly raid on the casual labor scene along Cesar Chavez [Army] Street where INS agents posed as construction contractors to lure immigrants into their van and deport them to Mexico!

INS agents also boarded buses on the 14 Muni line through the Mission and arrested passengers! Immigrants selling cassette tapes on Mission St. have been arrested by the local SF police and may have been handed over to the INS for deportation.

The raids are part of a nationwide escalation of attacks on immigrants: 700 more INS agents have been hired by the Clinton administration this year to step up raids on immigrant communities and workplaces in the interior of the US.

INS agents are making regular sweeps in the jails with city police cooperating closely, using LA county jail as the pilot program, with the deportation of 4500 prisoners in California planned for this year including those found innocent and even some legal immigrants; deportation proceedings are being streamlined and more INS concentration camps are being built where immigrants are crammed to-

gether in horrible conditions that have sparked repeated rebellions including most recently in New Jersey.

The US/Mexico border is being converted into a high tech battle zone where hundreds of INS agents swarm a no-man's-land between border towns while others hunt innocent people like animals as they attempt dangerous crossings through the desert.

Black labor activist charged with terrorism. LOS ANGELES, CA.:

Deacon Alexander, a noted African American activist in Los Angeles, has been arrested and charged with terrorism and extortion in relation to labor organizing. Deacon is part of the L.A. Unemployed Council.

They have been going around to construction firms and trying to get them to hire African Americans. The charges are apparently in relation to this activity. Bail has been set at \$185,000. A preliminary hearing has been scheduled. [For more on this case, see pg. 12.]

Supremacist group launches surveillance campaign. HAYDEN LAKE, IDAHO.:

Aryan Nations, America's fastest growing neo-Nazi group, has launched an orchestrated intelligence campaign against government officials, prominent civil rights organizations, and the media, according to the Southern Poverty Law Center's Klanwatch Project.

The Aryan nation's intelligence operation calls for its state offices to develop "counter intelligence" teams to photograph and compile information about individuals with targeted public and private organizations, according to Klanwatch's Chief Investigator Joe Roy.

Klanwatch has obtained written confirmation of the surveillance operation from internal Aryan Nations' memoranda. The material refers to targeted groups as "enemy" organizations.

Aryan Nations is currently active in at least 22 states. The July 1995 Aryan World Congress attracted 200 white supremacists from across the United States and Canada to the group's Idaho headquarters. For the last two years, Aryan Nations has been courting militia group followers. "This intelligence campaign directly coincides with a stepped up effort to recruit militia activists," warned Klanwatch's Roy.

H.Rap Brown released; charges dropped. ATLANTA, GA.:

In Atlanta the "case" against Iman Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin, formerly known as H. Rap Brown, dissolved within 10 days.

Police arrested Al-Amin Aug. 7 for allegedly shooting William Miles. They claimed Miles identified Al-Amin as the attacker.

But the case blew up 10 days later when Miles told the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, "I said I didn't see who did it." Miles said police and federal agents pressured him into saying Al-Amin was the shooter. Later, he said, they threatened to file charges against him if he changed his story.

Al-Amin and his lawyer had explained earlier that the arrest came on the heels of five or six years of federal harassment of him and of Muslims in general. Al-Amin is an orthodox Muslim leader and teacher. He charged that the FBI and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms were behind the arrest, although city police carried it out.

In the late 1960s Al-Amin was a leader in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and later became a member of the Black Panther Party. [Cont. on pg. 4]



FIGHTING BACK! Black Autonomist Activism Notes.

Organizing for the Million Man March by G. Jackson.

My involvement in the local organizing committee for the Million Man March in Seattle began when a brother invited me to go to a meeting at the Nation of Islam's Seattle mosque. I admit I had some reservations about working with them, due to their authoritarian "leadership" style and reactionary rhetoric and program [see *Black Autonomy* vol. #1, issue #3 for a critique of the NOI entitled "The Nation of Dogma"-ed.]. After working closely with them, my position hasn't changed; although I still maintain good relations with individual members. They lack a practical, liberating revolutionary program; instead they seek to empower the Black business and religious sectors exclusively, while the rest of us simply "go along for the ride".

Our organizing efforts were hampered from the beginning by the lack of information being provided by the NOI. Things got even more confused when one coalition member had information that the local NOI themselves didn't have.

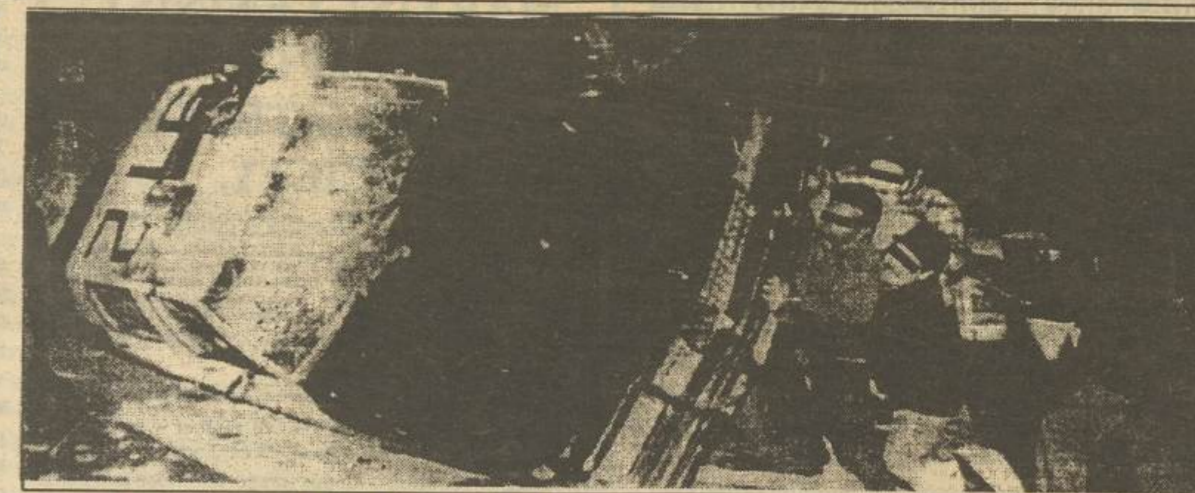
For example, we were initially told that women would not be allowed to march, that they were to stay home with the children. According to one source, the All African People's Revolutionary Party (AARP) had been approached by the Nation to assist in organizing and fundraising for the event. The AARP demanded that in exchange for their help women had to be allowed to march; a condition that Farrakhan agreed to, while still emphasizing that the march was primarily for Black men.

This potentially presents a problem when we're expected to effectively explain to people in the "hood what the march is all about and why they should support it. Then there was the issue of the purpose of the march. According to Minister Farrakhan, October 16th was to be "A Day of Atonement and A Day of Reconciliation" within the community. Not so widely advertised was the "Day of Absence-No work, no school, and no buying...except for Black-owned businesses"; the idea, of course, to shut down the economy.

This is the portion of the Million Man March that got my mydivided attention!

The NOI insisted that we rigidly follow Farrakhan's plan to the letter, that we scrape and sacrifice in order to get the \$299.00 to make the bus trip to Washington, DC. When questioned by another committee member about what those who cannot afford it should do, the reply was that the person simply needs to stop buying alcohol and cigarettes. What!? Excuse me!? You are actually going to tell someone who is barely making ends meet, someone with a family to feed, to selfishly use \$300.00 to get his (or her) own self to DC? What are the spouse and kids going to eat while he or she is gone; the latest issue of "The Final Call"!? Suddenly, all poor people are drunks or chain smokers if they're broke?

My suggestion of going door to door asking people what they wanted out of the march were met with "the minister [meaning Farrakhan] already knows what they need". My other suggestion of holding an event of some kind for those in the community who didn't or couldn't make it were met with "the minister [Farrakhan] has told us that he wants us in church that day". "Fine", I said, "what if we had people at the church round table on what improvements they'd like to see in the community and have them put a proposal together for those returning from DC to review and comment on?"



Another brother turned to me and said, "I think what the minister [Farrakhan] is saying is that we need to stop questioning and start obeying". I was stunned. It doesn't get any more iron-fisted than that.

It is my position (and I'm sure that many of my Black Autonomist associates would agree) that if the local organizing committees are to become the centers of community-based political power, the community themselves - the poor majority of the community - must seize back the reins of control from all right-wing and liberal/conservative (reactionary) elements in order to institute a fully democratic, anti-authoritarian program of self-sufficiency and defend it, by force of arms, if necessary.

It isn't about just fighting organized fascist militia groups, right-wing whites, opportunists within the white left, the local police department, or the various branches of the U.S. Justice Department and military; it is about enforcing the collective class power of the majority of Black people (the working poor, the unemployed, and the incarcerated) against the aspirations of wanna-be elitists, self-proclaimed "leaders", and others who exhibit a wish for "whiteness" that works.

Anti-Racism vs. Anti-Fascism: An analysis of the Anti-Racist Action Conference. by Lorenzo Komboa Ervin.

In October 11-13, 1995 I was a participant at the annual ARA conference in Columbus, Ohio. It was during a Midwest speaking tour and I was doing a workshop on "organizing against racism and police brutality."

When I first got there to the event site [at a closed high school], I knew something was wrong. Although there were all sorts of white radical groups at the conference, there were very few Blacks and people of color, and no black organizations. I thought to myself "was this deliberate and why?" How is it that these white radicals can call themselves 'anti-racists', but leave the primary victims of racism out of their movements? There is something very wrong with that.

After I was there for awhile, I even came to the conclusion that they didn't even want people of color to attend the event, except in a token fashion.

Through out the event they would only talk about a vague "fascism", which they take to mean the coming of the KKK and other crude racists. This is because to them it is a question of white people being at the center of the struggle. That is, the issue of the "bad whites" [fascists] versus the "good whites" [Leftists] must be resolved as the central issue. They don't see it in terms of the state's oppression and terrorism against peoples of color, and they make no attempt to

ally themselves with communities of color.

No, their anti-racist movement is a Left-wing "white rights" movement. The funny thing was that my workshop was the best attended work shop at the entire event, and even though they had not planned to give me a prominent role in the conference, it was hard to ignore the mass participation in the workshop by a majority of the people who attended the conference.

So I was placed on a conference panel with the other main speakers. We were each given the time to summarize our views on the anti-racist struggle. When my turn came, (and wouldn't you know I was last), I pointed out the ironical situation with these white radicals leading this so-called anti-racist struggle, which minimized the role of the victims of racism, and I called on the people of color at the event to form an independent caucus to protect their rights and strengthen their voice in the group. This went over well with them, but not with the white radicals who sat in stunned silence.

It was at this time that the Spartacist League, those champions of "the white working class as revolutionary vanguard" decided to make their attack, take over the meeting, and try to intimidate myself and the other panelists. One of their silly drones ran to the front of the auditorium, screaming and hollering some garbage about "white rights", and even told one Black woman to "shut up.... we know what racism and Black Liberation is...and you should just follow us." The Sparts are the most hated group on the Left, bar none. They never put on public meetings themselves, but like parasites on a dog's behind, they come and leech off others' events and try their best to disrupt them. What they are are the most infantile "revolutionary" Leftist cult around. I don't think they have one Black member, and have less than 100 members worldwide, but they are an "authority" on Black Liberation.

But their attempt at disruption and intimidation did not work, especially on me, in fact I challenged them from the podium to make their move or sit their asses down. They are all talk of course, but are scum of the worst sort. What I and other people of color at this event did not like however is that no one rushed to assist us when we were attacked. So we held an independent meeting and declared the existence of the POC caucus, and demanded that we be put on every policy-making board on the organization. We also stated that there will not be any further attacks on people of color in the organization and pointed out that we will take whatever action is necessary to defend ourselves in the future.

But it pissed us off that this kind of thing could even happen at a so-called "progressive" event, and it showed the racism and bankruptcy of the white Left itself. For quite a few years, I have been disturbed at the methods of the so-called "anti-fascist" movement

[cont. on pg. 12]

Seattle police file suits against citizens.
SEATTLE, WA.

The Seattle Police Officers' Guild along with several individual officers filed lawsuits in October, 1994 against six individuals who had lodged complaints about police misconduct with the Internal Investigations Section of the Seattle Police Department.

The suits claim that the citizens' complaints defamed the officers, invaded their privacy, and abused government process.

The American Civil Liberties Union of Washington (ACLU-W) contends that under both the United States and the Washington Constitution, citizens have a right to use established channels to pursue claims of misconduct by government officials. In addition, Washington law provides immunity from civil liability to any person who in good faith communicates a complaint of information to any agency of the government regarding a matter reasonably of concern to that agency.

ACLU-W review found that the complaints reflected differing opinions about the incidents from those held by police. Volunteer attorney Traci Sammeth is handling the case for the ACLU-W.

The ACLU-W monitored the Police Guild suits and was prepared to represent the citizen defendants. The suits, however, were dismissed by the court since there had been absolutely no activity in the cases by the attorney for the Guild and the officers. (Only two of the six defendants had ever been served with notice that a lawsuit had been filed against them.) The only purpose the suits appeared to serve was to get publicity to deter others from filing complaints against police officers.



ANARCHIST VERSUS
MARXIST-LENINIST
THOUGHT ON THE
ORGANIZATION OF
SOCIETY.

By Lorenzo Komboa Ervin.

Historically, there have been three major forms of socialism: Libertarian Socialism (Anarchism), Authoritarian Socialism (Marxist Communism), and Democratic Socialism (electoral social democracy).

The non-Anarchist Left has echoed the bourgeoisie's portrayal of Anarchism as an ideology of chaos and lunacy. But Anarchism, and especially Anarchist-Communism, has nothing in common with this image. It is false and made up by its ideological opponents, the Marxist-Leninists.

It is very difficult for the Marxist-Leninists to make an objective criticism of Anarchism as such, because by its nature it undermined all the suppositions basic to Marxism.

If Marxism; and Leninism, its variant which emerged during the Russian revolution, is held out to be the working class philosophy and the proletariat cannot owe its emancipation to anyone but the Communist Party, it is hard to go back on it and say that the working class is not yet ready to dispense with authority over it. Lenin came up with the idea of a transitional State, which would "with away" over time, to go along with Marx's "dictatorship of the proletariat." The Anarchists expose this line as counter-revolutionary and sheer power-grabbing, and over 75 years of Marxist-Leninist practice have proven us right. These so-called Socialist States produced by Marxist-Leninist doctrine have only produced Stalinist police states, where workers have no rights, and a new ruling class of technocrats and party politicians have emerged, and the class differential between those the State favored over those it didn't created widespread deprivation among the masses and another class struggle. But instead of meeting such criticisms head on, they have concentrated their attacks not on the doctrine of Anarchism, but on particular Anarchist historical figures, especially Bakunin, an ideological opponent of Marx in the First International of Socialist movements in the last century.

Anarchists are social revolutionaries who seek a stateless, classless, voluntary, cooperative federation of decentralized communes based upon social ownership, individual liberty and autonomous self-management of social and economic life.

The Anarchists differ with the Marxists-Leninists in many areas, but especially in organization building. They

differ from the authoritarian socialists in primarily three ways: they reject the Marxist-Leninist notions of the vanguard party, democratic centralism, and the dictatorship of the proletariat; and Anarchists have alternatives to each of them. The problem is that almost the entire Left, including some Anarchists, is completely unaware of Anarchism's tangible structural alternatives of the catalyst group, Anarchist consensus, and the mass commune.

The Anarchist alternative to the vanguard party is the *catalyst group*. The catalyst group is merely an Anarchist-Communist federation of affinity groups in action.

This catalyst group or *revolutionary anarchist federation* would meet on a regular basis or only when necessary, depending on the wishes of the membership and the urgency of social conditions. It would be made up of representatives from or the affinity group itself, with full voting rights, privileges, and responsibilities. It would both set policies and future actions to be performed. It would produce both Anarchist-Communist theory and social practice. It believes in the class struggle and the necessity to overthrow Capitalist rule. It organizes in the communities and workplaces. It is democratic and has no authority figures like a party boss or central committee.

In order to make a revolution, large-scale, coordinated movements are necessary, and their formation is in no way counter to Anarchism. What Anarchists are opposed to is hierarchical, power-tripping leadership which suppresses the creative urge of the bulk of those involved, and forces its agenda down their throats. Members of such groups are mere servants and worshippers of the party leadership. But although Anarchists reject this type of domineering leadership, they do recognize that some people are more experienced, articulate, or skilled than others, and these people will play leadership action roles. These persons are not authority figures, and can be removed at the will of the body. There is also a conscious attempt to routinely rotate this responsibility and to pass on these skills to each other, especially to women and people of color, who would ordinarily not get the chance. The experiences of these persons, who are usually veteran activists or better qualified than most at the moment, can help form and drive forward movements, and even help crystallize the potential for revolutionary change in the popular movement.

What they cannot do is take over the initiative of the movement itself. The members of these groups reject hierarchical positions (anybody having more official authority than others), and unlike the M-L vanguard parties, the Anarchist groups won't be allowed to perpetuate their leadership through a dictatorship after the revolution. Instead the catalyst group itself will be dissolved and its members, when they are ready, will be absorbed into the new society's collective decision-making process. Therefore, these Anarchists are not leaders, but merely *advisors* and *organizers*.

[cont. on page 9]

The Racist Roots of Gun Control

by Clayton E. Cramer

"Sampled" from the Internet.

The historical record provides compelling evidence that racism underlies gun control laws — and not in any subtle way. Throughout much of American history, gun control was openly stated as a method for keeping blacks and Hispanics "in their place," and to quiet the racial fears of whites.

This paper is intended to provide a brief summary of this unholy alliance of gun control and racism, and to suggest that gun control laws should be regarded as "suspect ideas," analogous to the "suspect classifications" theory of discrimination already part of the American legal system.

Racist arms laws predate the establishment of the United States. Starting in 1751, the French Black Code required Louisiana colonists to stop any blacks, and if necessary, beat "any black carrying any potential weapon, such as a cane." If a black refused to stop on demand, and was on horseback, the colonist was authorized to "shoot to kill." Slave possession of firearms was a necessity at times in a frontier society, yet laws continued to be passed in an attempt to prohibit slaves or free blacks from possessing firearms, except under very restrictively controlled conditions. Similarly, in the sixteenth century the colony of New Spain, terrified of black slave revolts, prohibited all

blacks, free and slave, from carrying arms.

In the Haitian Revolution of the 1790s, the slave population successfully threw off their French masters, but the Revolution degenerated into a race war, aggravating existing fears in the French Louisiana colony, and among whites in the slave states of the United States. When the first U. S. official arrived in New Orleans in 1803 to take charge of this new American possession, the planters sought to have the existing free black militia disarmed, and otherwise exclude "free blacks from positions in which they were required to bear arms," including such non-military functions as slave-catching crews. The New Orleans city government also stopped whites from teaching fencing to free blacks, and then, when free blacks sought to teach fencing, similarly prohibited their efforts as well.

It is not surprising that the first North American English colonies, then the states of the new republic, remained in dread fear of armed blacks, for slave revolts against slave owners often degenerated into less selective forms of racial warfare. The perception that free blacks were sympathetic to the plight of their enslaved brothers, and the dangerous example that "a Negro could be free" also caused the slave states to pass laws designed to disarm all blacks, both slave



[cont. on next page]

and free. Unlike the gun control laws passed after the Civil War, these antebellum statutes were for blacks alone. In Maryland, these prohibitions went so far as to prohibit free blacks from owning dogs without a license, and authorizing any white to kill an unlicensed dog owned by a free black, for fear that blacks would use dogs as weapons. Mississippi went further, and prohibited any ownership of a dog by a black person.

Understandably, restrictions on slave possession of arms go back a very long way. While arms restrictions on free blacks predate it, these restrictions increased dramatically after Nat Turner's Rebellion in 1831, a revolt that caused the South to become increasingly irrational in its fears. Virginia's response to Turner's Rebellion prohibited free blacks "to keep or carry any firelock of any kind, any military weapon, or any powder or lead..."

The existing laws under which free blacks were occasionally licensed to possess or carry arms was also repealed, making arms possession completely illegal for free blacks. But even before this action the Virginia Legislature, in the aftermath of Turner's Rebellion, the discovery that a free black family possessed lead shot for use as scale weights, without powder or weapon in which to fire it, was considered sufficient reason for a frenzied mob to discuss summary execution of the owner. The analogy to the current hysteria where mere possession of ammunition in some states without a firearms license may lead to jail time, should be obvious.

One example of the increasing fear of armed blacks is the 1834 change to the Tennessee Constitution, where Article XI, 26 of the 1796 Tennessee Constitution was revised from:

"That the freemen of this State have a right to keep and to bear arms for their common defence," to: "That the free white men of this State have a right to keep and to bear arms for their common defence." [emphasis added].

It is not clear what motivated this change, other than Turner's bloody insurrection. The year before, the Tennessee Supreme Court had recognized the right to bear arms as an individual guarantee, but here is nothing in that decision that touches on the subject of race.

Other decisions during the antebellum period were unambiguous about the importance of race. In State v. Huntly (1843), the North Carolina Supreme Court had recognized that there was a right to carry arms guaranteed under the North Carolina Constitution, as long as such arms were carried in a manner not likely to frighten people. The following year, the North Carolina Supreme Court made one of those decisions whose full significance would not appear until after the Civil War and passage of the Fourteenth Amendment. An 1840 statute provided:

"That if any free negro, mulatto, or free person of color, shall wear or carry about his or her person, or keep in his or her house, any shot gun, musket, rifle, pistol, sword, dagger or bowie-knife, unless he or she shall have obtained a licence therefor from the Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions of his or her county, within one year preceding the wearing, keeping or carrying thereof, he or she shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and may be indicted therefore." Elijah Newsom, "a free person of

color," was indicted in Cumberland County in June of 1843 for carrying a shotgun without a license — at the very time the North Carolina Supreme Court was deciding Huntly. Newsom was convicted by a jury; but the trial judge directed a not guilty the state appealed to the North Carolina Supreme Court.

Newsom's attorney argued that the statute requiring free blacks to obtain a license to "keep and bear arms" was in violation of both the Second Amendment to the U. S. Constitution, and the North Carolina Constitution's similar guarantee of a right to keep and bear arms. The North Carolina Supreme Court refused to accept that the Second Amendment was a limitation on state laws, but had to deal with the problem of the state constitutional guarantees, which had been used in the Huntly de-



cision, the year before. The 17th article of the 1776 North Carolina Constitution declared:

"That the people have a right to bear arms, for the defence of the State; and, as standing armies, in time of peace, are dangerous to liberty, they ought not to be kept up; and that the military should be kept under strict subordination to, and governed by, the civil power."

The Court asserted that: "We cannot see that the act of 1840 is in conflict with it... The defendant is not indicted for carrying arms in defence of the State, nor does the act of 1840 prohibit him from so doing." But in Huntly, the Court had acknowledged that the restrictive language "for the defence of the State" did not preclude an individual right. The Court then attempted to justify the necessity of this law:

"Its only object is to preserve the peace and safety of the community from being disturbed by an indiscriminate use, on ordinary occasions, by free men of color, of fire arms or other arms of an offensive character. Self

preservation is the first law of nations, as it is of individuals."

The North Carolina Supreme Court also sought to repudiate the idea that free blacks were protected by the North Carolina Constitution's Bill of Rights by pointing out that the Constitution excluded free blacks from voting, and therefore free blacks were not citizens. Unlike a number of other state constitutions with right to keep and bear arms provisions that limited this right only to citizens, Article 17 guaranteed this right to the people — and try as hard as they might, it was difficult to argue that a "free person of color," in the words of the Court, was not one of "the people."

It is one of the great ironies that, in much the same way that the North Carolina Supreme Court recognized a right to bear arms in 1843 — then a year later de-

Sandusky, and the laurel-crowned field of New Orleans, plead eloquently for this interpretation!"

Finally, after this paeon to liberty — in a state where much of the population remained enslaved, forbidden by law to possess arms of any sort — the Court defined the valid limits of laws restricting the bearing of arms:

"We are of the opinion, then, that so far as the act of 1837 seeks to suppress the practice of carrying certain weapons secretly, that it is valid, inasmuch as it does not deprive the citizen of his natural right of self-defence, or of his constitutional right to keep and bear arms. But that so much of it, as contains a prohibition against bearing arms openly, is in conflict with the Constitution, and void..."

"Citizen"? Within a single page, the Court had gone from "right of the whole people, old and young, men, women and boys" to the much more narrowly restrictive right of a "citizen." The motivation for this sudden narrowing of the right appeared two years later.

The decision Cooper and Worsham v. Savannah (1848) was not, principally, a right to keep and bear arms case. In 1839, the city of Savannah, Georgia, in an admitted effort "to prevent the increase of free persons of color in our city," had established a \$100 per year tax on free blacks moving into Savannah from other parts of Georgia. Samuel Cooper and Hamilton Worsham, two "free persons of color," were convicted of failing to pay the tax, and were jailed.

On appeal, counsel for Cooper and Worsham argued that the ordinance establishing the tax was deficient in a number of technical areas; the assertion of most interest to us is, "In Georgia, free persons of color have constitutional rights..." Cooper and Worsham's counsel argued that these rights included writ of habeas corpus, right to own real estate, to be "subject to taxation," "[t]hey may sue and be sued," and cited a number of precedents under Georgia law in defense of their position.

Justice Warner delivered the Court's opinion, most of which is irrelevant to the right to keep and bear arms, but one portion shows the fundamental relationship between citizenship, arms, and elections, and why gun control laws were an essential part of defining blacks as "non-citizens":

"Free persons of color have never been recognized here as citizens; they are not entitled to bear arms, vote for members of the legislature, or to hold any civil office."

The Georgia Supreme Court did agree that the ordinance jailing Cooper and Worsham for non-payment was illegal, and ordered their release, but the comments of the Court made it clear that their brave words in Nunn v. State (1846) about "the right of the people," really only meant white people.

While settled parts of the South were in great fear of armed blacks, on the frontier, the concerns about Indian attack often forced relaxation of these rules. The 1798 Kentucky Comprehensive Act allowed slaves and free blacks on frontier plantations "to keep and use guns, powder, shot, and weapons, offensive and defensive." Unlike whites, however, a license was required for free blacks or slaves to carry weapons. The need for blacks to carry arms for self-defense included not only the problem

[cont. on pg.13]

THE SECRET FISA COURT: RUBBER STAMPING ON RIGHTS.

by Philip Colangelo

(Sampled from the internet. Originally sampled from "CovertAction Quarterly", Number 53, Summer, 1995)

SEVEN JUDGES ON A SECRET COURT HAVE AUTHORIZED ALL BUT ONE OF OVER 7,500 REQUESTS TO SPY IN THE NAME OF NATIONAL SECURITY. THEY MEET IN SECRET, WITH NO PUBLISHED ORDERS, OPINIONS, OR PUBLIC RECORD. THOSE SPIED ON MAY NEVER KNOW OF THE INTRUSION. NOW, CLINTON HAS EXPANDED THE POWERS TO INCLUDE NOT ONLY ELECTRONIC, BUT PHYSICAL SEARCHES.

The aftershock of the Oklahoma City bombing sent Congress scurrying to trade off civil liberties for an illusion of public safety. A good ten weeks before that terrible attack, however, with a barely noticed pen stroke President Bill Clinton virtually killed off the Fourth Amendment when he approved a law to expand the already extraordinary powers of the strangest creation in the history of the federal judiciary.

Since its founding in 1978, a secret court created by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA rhymes with ice -a) has received 7,539 applications to authorize electronic surveillance within the U.S. In the name of national security, the court has approved all but one of these requests from the Justice Department on behalf of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the National Security Agency. Each of these decisions was reached in secret, with no published orders, opinions, or public record. The people, organizations, or embassies spied on were not notified of either the hearing or the surveillance itself.

The American Civil Liberties Union was not able to unearth a single instance in which the target of a FISA wiretap was allowed to review the initial application. Nor would the targets be offered any opportunity to see transcripts of the conversations taped by the government and explain their side of the story. "Without access to such materials," said Kate Martin of the ACLU, "targets of FISA searches are denied any meaningful opportunity to contest the basis for the execution of the FISA search."

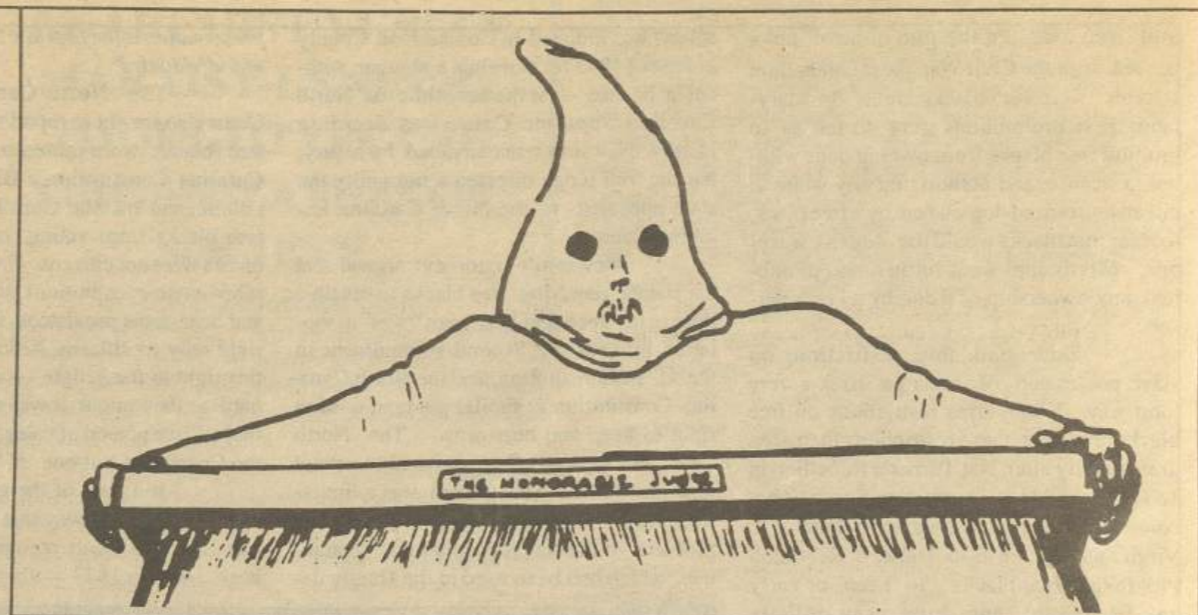
OPEN-ENDED SURVEILLANCE

When Clinton signed Executive Order 12949 on February 9, the frightening mandate of the FISA, court was greatly expanded: It now has legal authority to approve black-bag operations to authorize Department of Justice (DoJ) requests to conduct physical as well as electronic searches, without obtaining a warrant in open court, without notifying the subject, without providing an inventory of items seized. The targets need not be under suspicion of committing a crime, but may be investigated when probable cause results solely from their associations or status: for example, belonging to, or aiding and abetting organizations deemed to pose a threat to U.S. national security. Furthermore, despite a lowered standard for applying the Fourth Amendment against unreasonable search and seizure than is necessary in other U.S. courts, under the 1995 expansion, evidence gathered by the FISA court may now be used in criminal trials. Previously, evidence was collected and stockpiled solely for intelligence purposes.

LEGALIZING THE AMES SEARCH

Granting new powers to the FISA court was accomplished quietly and treated as a non-event in the national media. The lack of reporting was somehow fitting, though, following as it did the silent debate last year when Congress rubberstamped the annual Intelligence Authorization Act.

Some legal minds found the whole exercise positively refreshing. The fact that this was done with a minimum of fuss and posturing on both sides, and without having



to have a debate that tries to roll up the corners of classified information is very impressive, cheered former NSA General Counsel Stewart Baker.

Reportedly, the Clinton administration had not always been enthusiastic about expanding the court's powers. Like its predecessors, it operated under the assumption that the executive already had inherent authority to exempt itself from Fourth Amendment constraints and could order warrantless searches to protect national security. Nonetheless, the government avoided allowing this inherent authority to be tested in the courts.

Then along came Aldrich Ames. The spy case proved a convenient vehicle on which to hitch expansion of state power. It also offered a glimpse at the state-of-the-art domestic counterintelligence techniques that might well be turned on an activist group near you.

Following months of electronic and physical surveillance which included a break-in of Ames' car and searches through his office and family trash, FBI agents were finally turned loose in the early morning hours of October 9, 1993. They didn't 'pick' locks like in the movies; they made their own keys. Among other agents in the FBI, the consensus was unanimous: The tech agents were geniuses.

Thanks to a warrant authorized by Attorney General Janet Reno, a team of agents from the sprawling National Security Division had permission to enter the Ames home in Arlington, Va.

There was only one minor problem. The attorney general of the United States does not have the authority to order a warrantless physical search of a citizen's home, argued Professor Jonathan Turley of George Washington University National Law Center. "The Aldrich Ames search in my view was obviously and egregiously unconstitutional."

Other civil liberties lawyers agree with this evaluation, and the Justice Department itself was concerned enough about the question to refer to this problem when it negotiated a deal with Ames in order to avoid trial. While Ames was sentenced to life in prison, his wife Rosario received five years.

"We didn't get to the point of litigation, I regret to say," said Ames' lawyer Plato Cacheris. "The problem was that Ames very much wanted to see that his wife was treated a little more softly than he was being treated."

Now eager to put a stamp of judicial impartiality on the hazy executive branch doctrine of inherent authority, the Justice department immediately got behind the bill to expand the FISA court's power. Soon after Ames pleaded guilty last year to spying, administration officials began arguing that adherence to traditional Fourth Amendment protections for American citizens would unduly frustrate counterintelligence efforts against spies operating in the U.S. Physical searches to gather foreign intelligence depend on secrecy," argued Deputy Attorney General Jamie Gorelick. "If the existence of these searches were known to the foreign power targets, they would alter their activities to render the information useless. Gorelick went on to explain that A

[traditional] search can only be made when there's probable cause to believe a crime is involved, whereas a national-security search can be made at a substantially earlier stage. We often don't know what we're looking for when we go in," she observed.

THE PRICE OF SECRECY

The possibility of FISA-sanctioned fishing expeditions was only one of the potential abuses that alarmed legal scholars and people concerned with civil liberties. "It's absolutely ripe for abuse," said New York City defense lawyer Ron Kuby. "There are hundreds of solidarity groups that American citizens work with, and all of those groups could be targets under FISA. These groups and individuals, engaged in legitimate dissent and solidarity work with the victims of U.S. foreign policy around the world, fear that their First and Fourth Amendment rights will be eroded."

Others worry that under cover of secrecy, the court would exceed even its own broad legal mandate. "Clearly the FISA court was strengthened to allow the government to conduct searches they would not be allowed to conduct under the traditional constitutional provisions," said Turley. That means the government could attempt and fail to secure a search warrant under traditional constitutional arguments, then go to the FISA court and convert the case artificially into a national security investigation and secure approval for the very same search.

In the post-Oklahoma bombing atmosphere, the temptation to broadly interpret national security to include homegrown terrorism is likely to increase. Defenders of the FISA court point out that there are lengthy provisions written into the original legislation to minimize the impact of FISA-authorized surveillance on innocent Americans. Of course, since no information about the actions of the court is permitted to escape the sealed FISA chambers, the public is expected to accept on blind faith that the minimization procedures

are functioning properly and the various law enforcement and intelligence agencies are not overstepping their bounds. But given an extensive and well-documented pattern of past government abuses, Turley's warning of future abuses seems safe. Even when warrantless searches were unambiguously illegal, the government conducted thousands of them and violated the civil rights not only of possible spies, but of people engaged in constitutionally protected dissent. Secret searches of Americans' homes and papers in the name of national security were one of the worst

civil liberties abuses of the Cold War, noted the ACLU's Martin. Instead of approving them, the Congress should outlaw them.

Even if the court and law enforcement agencies did not overstep their powers, legal scholars assert that warrantless searches are unconstitutional, no matter what the context or motivation. The court's defenders, on the other hand, argue that the end justifies the means. Gorelick recently conceded that the government could not gather as much evidence under the traditional standard of the Fourth Amendment. By this logic, notes Kate Martin, It is

[cont. next page.]

Fourth Amendment. By this logic, notes Kate Martin, It is also true that torture allows the government to get information it would not otherwise get.

While refusing to be specific, FBI Director Louis Freeh argues that national security is so important that it constitutes a special category. He testified before Congress that, "Because any discussion of the importance of FISA-based electronic surveillance would involve highly sensitive matters and highly classified information, suffice it to say that information derived from FISA electronic surveillance is critical to the president of the United States, the National Security Council, the intelligence community, the Department of Defense, and the State Department."

The Supreme Court, however, has never endorsed the concept of a national security exception for physical searches. In 1972, it ruled that the Fourth Amendment prohibits warrantless surveillance of domestic targets. The Court specifically warned that the danger to political dissent is acute where the Government attempts under so vague a concept as the power to protect 'domestic security.' But given the secrecy surrounding the FISA court, even finding a test case to challenge incursion on Fourth Amendment rights may be difficult. Most people surveilled under the authority of the court remain blissfully ignorant that a search has taken place.

CASE IN POINT

Among the handful of FISA-tainted investigations that have become public is the prosecution of Khader Hamide and Michel Shehadeh of the so-called Los Angeles Eight for their membership in the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

In that case, Martin said, permanent residents whom the government sought to deport based on their First Amendment activities were informed that they had been subject to FISA surveillance. The government then secured a completely ex parte ruling that the surveillance was legal in a proceeding in which the [U.S.] residents were not even allowed to participate. That ruling then foreclosed forever any adversary hearing on the legality of the surveillance.

In another case, people not themselves targets of a FISA-authorized telephone tap were hauled into court for having the misfortune of calling somebody who was under electronic surveillance. In 1988, after activists Vernon Bellecourt, Bill Means, and Bob Brown phoned a member of the Peoples' Committee for Libyan Students, they were ordered to testify before a grand jury investigating the group. When the three men refused to cooperate and testify even with immunity, they were slapped with a citation for contempt. James Cacheris was one of the federal judges who issued that citation in support of the FISA warrant. Five years later, he was appointed to the secret court.

SEVEN MEN AND A RUBBER STAMP

Although its powers have been enhanced to include physical searches, the FISA court retains the same low profile structure that it had in 1978. On the first tier are seven federal judges, appointed to staggered seven-year terms by the chief justice of the Supreme Court. Each judge takes a turn reviewing applications submitted by the attorney general. He or she sits in a sealed, vault-like chamber on the top floor of the Justice Department headquarters, where the door is always locked and guarded and the room is regularly inspected for bugs.

In the unlikely event that the first tier rejects an application, the Department of Justice can appeal to the FISA Court of Review. Should this three-member panel of judges also deny the request, it could then be heard by the Supreme Court. Those last two progressions up the judicial hierarchy have proved strictly unnecessary, however. Federal Judge Robert W. Warren from Wisconsin, senior panelist on the second tier FISA Court of Review, joked that he has not exactly been overwhelmed by the workload since his appointment in 1989.

We've never met since I've been on it, said Warren. I was sent a designation by the Chief Justice, and I asked a couple of people what in the world the

court did because I had not even heard of it before I got that designation. I also had some correspondence with my brethren on the court and we've talked to each other and said, "What are we supposed to do?" and, "When is something going to happen?" Nothing ever has happened. It's an empty title as far as I am concerned at this point.

Based on the remarkable record of servility the first-string spy court has achieved on surveillance requests 15 years with only one rejection, and that one on technical grounds new requests for physical searches are unlikely to cut into the Review Court's happy schedule.

THE NOOSE TIGHTENS

This recent strengthening of the FISA court fits comfortably in the pattern established in the late 1970s after the massive FBI crime spree against political activists. When the illegalities were documented by the Senate's Church Committee instead of stepping in and stopping political policing activities by DoJ and intelligence agencies Congress took exactly the opposite approach. It waved a flag over a pattern government activities that had been criminal, draped it in authoritative language, and magically made it all legal. Since that time, through a series of laws and executive orders, policy-makers have further chipped away at freedoms previously presumed to be sacred.

The Cold War of the 90's.

By A. Jalil Bottom.

On May 12th, 1994, the *Wall Street Journal* featured an article entitled: "Making Crime Pay-Triangle of Interests Created Infrastructure To Fight Lawlessness-Cities see Jobs;politicians see a Popular Issue and Business Cash In- The Cold War of the 90's."

In knowing how government employs the media to persuade the public to support political objectives in the behalf of military and business interest the subtitle, "The Cold War of the 90's", set off an alarm bell in my head. What in the past had been called the war against crime, has evolved into an official social and political policy of government; it has now become a viable military and business interest. The [US] government is now renovating military bases into prisons, so that former military communities will continue to have an industry. Today's rural community want a prison in their backyard.

The article stated: "Americans' fear of crime is creating a new version of the old military-industrial complex, and infrastructure born amid political rhetoric and a shower of federal, state, and local dollars. As they did in the Eisenhower era, politicians are trying to put do each other in standing up to the common enemy; communities pin their hopes on jobs related to the build-up; and large and small businesses scramble for a slice of the bounty. These mutually reinforcing interests are forging a formidable new "iron triangle" similar to the triangle that arms makers, military services, and lawmakers formed three decades ago."

What is truly ominous about this development is the fact they are talking about increasing the number of people being sent to prison. They are talking about how big business like Goldman Sachs & Co., Prudential Insurance Co. of America, Smith Barney Shearson, Inc., and Merrill Lynch & Co. are among those competing to underwrite prison construction with private, tax-exempt bonds-where no voter approval is re-

quired. In essence, big business is investing in the prison system. This begs the question, where have big business, big investors ever put the welfare of people before their own profits? How do big investors plan to gain a return of their investment, and make a profit? What does mean to the average worker, and what does this mean to those communities in which most prisoners (that being Africans and Hispanics) come from? This country imprisons more of its citizens about 1.4 million people, than any other industrialized nation. Although Euro-Americans comprise 69% of all those arrested, while Blacks comprise 29% of those arrested, institutional racism in the criminal justice system incarcerates Blacks in disproportionate numbers. It imprisons African men 4 times more than did apartheid South Africa, 9 times more than European Americans. While Blacks comprise 48% of the US prison population, they are only 12.5% of the entire population. Presently, the fastest growing ethnic group being imprisoned in this country are Hispanic.

Although these statistics were gathered several years ago by the Federal government, imagine how these numbers will increase in the years to come with this developing infrastructure reminiscent of the industrial-military complex.

[The original article contains numerous footnotes and references. For a subscription to CovertAction Quarterly, write to: CovertAction Quarterly 1500 Massachusetts Ave. NW Washington, DC 20005]

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[Cont. on pg. 10]



These Prisoners Need Your Support!

MUMIA UPDATE...

Mumia Abu-Jamal appears before Judge Albert Sabo.

Report from Aug. 11, 1995 hearing in Philadelphia by Jamila Levi, Pittsburgh committee.

[This selection has been edited for length]

Sabo demanded that Mumia come forward and either take the witness stand, or personally refuse to testify. When Len Weinglass protested, Sabo threatened, "I'll remove you from the case. You're interfering! You can give, (your client) advice but he himself has to give his decision. Sabo's patronizing manner brought muffled groans from supporters.

Responding to repeated questions as to whether it was his decision not to take the witness stand, Mumia answered, "It is my position today to follow the advice of counsel."

Later, Weinglass called Sabo's performance "an attempt at intimidation and coercion... no competent lawyer would allow it (giving Sabo a preview of Mumia's testimony) in a totally hostile and biased court... (Mumia) will speak, if he wants to, when he gets a new trial... a defendant can never be forced to say anything." Sabo, who yesterday said he didn't want "a second PCRA (claiming ineffective counsel) against you New York lawyers", was trying to protect the record by getting Mumia to say it was his own decision to not testify.

Weinglass then announced his intention to call William Singletary, as a Brady witness (suppressed evidence, since his statement to police was destroyed and he was run out of the city). He requested a protective order; the prosecution protested vigorously and the request was denied.

Weinglass announced that the 80-page transcript from March 18, 1982 had only been received the day before, and contained major issues. When he requested more time to read it, Sabo responded, "Well, read it! I'll give you time! Read it now! You're a lawyer, it'll take you no time to read it... the court's not operating in the dark, maybe you are! I won't give you any more slack!" and he threatened a \$1000 fine (which was imposed later in the day).

The defense tried once again to have the FBI files admitted into the record as evidence of surveillance both by the federal agency and the Philadelphia Police Dept. from 1968 through the '80's. Sabo refused to budge. When the defense tried to address other issues of bias, an increasingly hostile Sabo demanded, "All I want to know is do you have more witnesses? Who do you want to call!" Weinglass stated that Singletary was on his way, but was ill, suffering from lack of sleep, diabetes and hypertension. Sabo: "If he doesn't arrive, that's it!"

The prosecution presented three witnesses: a police officer who worked in the Police Administration Bldg. ("roundhouse") and testified about the procedure for logging in people brought through one of the doors (cross-examination proved the log books did not provide a comprehensive, accurate report of who was brought in); a detective who allegedly picked up and interviewed Arnold Howard on 12/6/81 (his

memory seemed to fail on many issues other than the statement he was showed earlier this week by the prosecution); and a forensic pathologist called to give his opinion on Faulkner's neck wounds. When Weinglass failed to return some photographs showing the wounds, as quickly as Sabo demanded them, he was cited for contempt and fined \$1000. Weinglass: "Let the record reflect that the court is raising his voice and pointing his finger in a threatening manner." It is true that no written description can substitute for actually seeing the blatant hostility and bias emanating from Judge Sabo.

William Singletary was called by the defense for a limited purpose: to show the prosecution's suppression of evidence in 1982. He was at the scene on 12/9/81 and voluntarily went down to the roundhouse to give a statement. Once there, his handwritten statement was torn up repeatedly, police threatened violence against him and his family, until he was coerced into signing a false statement after approximately five hours. Subsequently, his gas station business was destroyed through police intimidation, breaking of windows and repeated harassment of his tow truck drivers. He had to go out of business in February and moved out of the state the following summer. Prior to 12/9/81 he had no problems with the police, his business was never vandalized, and he was even friends with one of the police who appeared on the scene that night.

Sabo ruled that the prosecution could ask anything, threatened the defense with another contempt, and sat back while Asst. DA Arlene Fisk grilled Singletary about matters that should have been saved for a new trial.

Singletary testified that he was at the scene, saw a passenger emerge from the VW and pull a gun on Faulkner, heard the shot that hit Faulkner in the back, and saw a second man shoot Faulkner in the face. He testified that Mumia did not come upon the scene until after Faulkner was shot, that Mumia offered help, and that Singletary saw the gun on Faulkner's lap discharge with the bullet that tore through Mumia. He testified that when other police arrived on the scene, that beat and kicked Mumia brutally, sticking their nightsticks into his wound and repeatedly using his head as a battering ram.

Although questions abound regarding the actual events of 12/9/81, the issues are clear: the prosecution suppressed a wealth of evidence that would have shown Mumia was not the shooter, the trial was marked by a biased investigation, coercion of witnesses and deals made in exchange for testimony, the defense did not have expert witnesses such as a forensic pathologist and ballistic expert.

[For more information contact: Concerned Family & Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, (215) 476-8812.]



BLACK AUTONOMY, VOL.#2 ISSUE#1



Brothers, Sisters, and Comrades...

As many of you know, *Black Autonomy* is a pro-Black, pro-revolution publication for poor people of African descent and poor people of other nationalities.

As a publication published by poor people, we are of course broke 90% of the time. At times we must take measures which will insure our continued publication, despite unfavorable financial conditions.

It is with this in mind that as of 12/2/95, we are forced to enact a temporary stoppage on free prisoner subscriptions. Not to worry, those of you who already receive a free sub or those who wrote us prior to 12/2/95 will continue to receive your copy of *Black Autonomy* with a slight delay.

I strongly urge all of you who receive a sub to share your copy with others or even better donate it to the prison library (if the gulag you reside in has one; if not, start one if possible.).

I sincerely apologize for any inconvenience that this may have caused any of you and I thank all of you in advance for your patience and understanding in these lean times.

Your brother and comrade in struggle,
G. Jackson



BLACK AUTONOMY, VOL.#2 ISSUE#1

[Anarchist vs. Marxist-Leninist Organization, cont. from page 4.]

for a mass movement.

What we don't want or need is a group of authoritarians leading the working class, then establishing themselves as a centralized decision-making command. Instead of "withering away" Marxist-Leninist states have perpetuated authoritarian institutions (the secret police, labor bosses, and the communist party) to maintain their power. The apparent effectiveness of such organizations [we're just as efficient as the Capitalists!] masks the way that revolutionaries who pattern themselves after Capitalist institutions become absorbed by bourgeois values, and completely isolated from the real needs and desires of ordinary people.

The reluctance of Marxist-Leninists to accept revolutionary social change is, however, above all seen in Lenin's conception of the party. It is a prescription to nakedly seize power and put it in the hands of the Communist Party. The party that Leninists create today, they believe, should become the [only] Party of the Proletariat in which that class could organize and seize power. In practice, however, this meant personal and party dictatorship, which they felt gave them the right and duty to wipe out all other parties and political ideologies.

Both Lenin and Stalin killed millions of workers and peasants, their Left-wing ideological opponents, and even members of the Bolshevik [later called "Communist"] party. This bloody and treacherous history is why there is so much rivalry and hostility between Marxist-Leninist and Trotskyist parties today, and it is why the workers' states, whether in Cuba, China, Vietnam, or Korea are such oppressive bureaucracies over their people.

It is also why most of the East European Stalinist countries had their governments overthrown by the petty bourgeoisie and ordinary citizens in the 1980s. Maybe we are witnessing the eclipse of State communism entirely, since they have nothing new to say and will never get those governments back again.

While Anarchist groups reach decisions through Anarchist consensus, the Marxist-Leninists organize through so-called democratic centralism. Democratic centralism poses as a form of inner party democracy, but is really just a hierarchy by which each member of a party-ultimately of a society-is subordinate to a higher member until one reaches the all-powerful party central committee and its Chairman.

This is a totally undemocratic procedure which puts the leadership above criticism, even if it is not above reproach. It is a bankrupt, corrupt method of internal operations for a political organization. You have no voice in such a party, and must be afraid to say any unflattering comments to or about the leaders. In Anarchist groups, proposals are talked out by members (none of whom has authority over another), dissenting minorities are respected, and each individual's participation is voluntary. Everyone has the right to agree or disagree over policy and actions, and everyone's ideas are given equal weight and consideration. No decision may be made until each individual member or affiliated group that will be affected by that decision has had a chance to express their opinion on the is-

[cont. next page.]

Random Notes.

News we learned of shortly before going to press...

Muslims riot after police kill Algerian. LYON, FRANCE:

Khaled Kelkal, a 24 year-old Algerian muslim suspected of involvement in a wave of bombings throughout France, was killed in a shoot out with French papatroopers.

The killing, which was televised throughout the country, ignited rioting throughout the various working class immigrant areas in the country by angry residents who see this as the latest outrage in a long string of harassment and random arrests by French authorities, in addition to the usual racism and rampant unemployment

[cont. from page 8.]

Individual members and affiliated groups retain the option to refuse support to specific federation activities, but may not actively obstruct such activities. In true democratic fashion, decisions for the federation as a whole must be made by a majority of its members.

In most cases, there is no real need for formal meetings for the making of decisions, what is needed is coordination of the actions of the group. Of course, there are times when a decision has to be made, and sometimes very quickly. This will be rare, but sometimes it is unavoidable. The consensus, in that case, would then have to be among a much smaller circle than the general membership of hundreds or thousands. But ordinarily all that is needed is an exchange of information and trust among parties, and a decision reaffirming the original decision will be reached, if an emergency decision had to be made. Of course, during the discussion, there will be an endeavor to clarify any major differences and explore alternative courses of action. And there will be an attempt to arrive at a mutually agreed upon consensus between conflicting views. As always, if there should be an impasse or dissatisfaction with the consensus, a vote would be taken, and with a two thirds majority, the matter would be accepted, rejected, or rescinded.

This is all totally contrary to the practice of Marxist-Leninist parties where the Central Committee unilaterally sets policy for the entire organization, and arbitrary authority reigns. Anarchists reject centralization of authority and the concept of a Central Committee.

All groups are free associations formed out of common need, not revolutionaries disciplined by fear of authority. When the size of the work-groups (which could be formed around labor, fundraising, anti-racism, women's rights, food and housing, etc.)

[cont. on next page.]

that is common in predominantly North African neighborhoods. Prior to the bombings and the assassination of Muslim cleric Abdelkader Sahrroui, French police had conducted regular sweeps through muslim areas for identification checks and weapons searches. Muslims are also angry that France supports the military government that now controls Algeria. The Islamic Salvation Front and other factions have waged a campaign of bombings and assassinations in Algeria in an attempt to overthrow the government.

Fascists derail passenger train; one killed. PHOENIX, ARIZ:

One person was killed and dozens seriously injured when an Amtrak passenger train left the tracks and tumbled down 30 feet into a dry river bed. A three foot section of track was missing; the spikes had been pulled out and the warning system built into the tracks had been disabled. A typewritten note from a group calling itself "The Sons of the Gestapo" was found near the wreckage. Police released few details of the letter except that it angrily denounced the FBI assaults on the Branch

Davidians in Waco and white supremacist Randy Weaver in Idaho.

Good news from the National Association of Chiefs of Police WASHINGTON, DC:

According to the National Association of Chiefs of Police, more than twice as many officers committed suicide this year than those who were killed in the line of duty. Of the 700,000 law enforcement personnel nationwide, 300 committed suicide this year; Twelve officers in New York City alone, which the group said was a record.

Attention Readers and Retailers.

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please help us to free Mark Cook.



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BLACK AUTONOMY, VOL.#2 ISSUE#1

Communist Party membership only represented five percent of the population. This is elitism of the worst sort, and even makes the Capitalist [Republican or Democrat] parties look democratic by comparison.

What the Communist Party was intended to represent in terms of workers' power is never made clear, but in true "1984" doublethink fashion, the results are 75 years of political repression and State slavery, instead of an era of glorious Communist rule. They must be held accountable politically for these crimes against the people, and we must reject their "revolutionary" political theory and practice. They have slandered the names of Socialism and Communism.

We reject the dictatorship of the proletariat, it is unbridled oppression, and the Marxists-Leninists and Stalinists must be made to answer for it. Millions have been murdered by Stalin in the name of fighting an internal class war, and millions more were murdered in China, Poland, Afghanistan, Cambodia, and other countries by Communist movements which followed Stalin's prescription for revolutionary terror. We reject State communism as the worst aberration and tyranny.

We can do better than this with the mass commune.

The Anarchist mass commune (sometimes called a *Workers Council*, although there are some differences) is a national, continental, or transnational federation of economic and political cooperatives and regional communal formations. Anarchists look to a world and a society in which real decision-making involves everyone who lives in it—a mass commune—not a few discipline freaks pulling the strings on a so-called proletarian dictatorship. Any and all dictatorship is bad, it has no redeeming social features, yet that is what the Leninists tell us will protect us from counter-revolution. While Marxist-Leninists claim that this dictatorship is necessary in order to crush any bourgeois counter-revolutions led by the Capitalist class or right-wing reactionaries, Anarchists feel that this is itself part of the Stalinist school of falsification. A centralized apparatus, such as a state, is a much easier target for opponents of the revolution than is an array of decentralized communes. And these communes would remain armed and prepared to defend the revolution against anyone who militarily moves against it. The key is to mobilize the people into defense guards, militias, and other military preparedness units.

This position by the Leninists of the necessity for a dictatorship to protect the revolution was not proven in the Civil War which followed the Russian revolution; in fact, without support of the Anarchists and other Left-wing forces, along with the Russian people, the Bolshevik government would have been defeated. And then true to any dictatorship, it turned around and wiped out the Russian and Ukrainian Anarchist movements, along with their Left-wing opponents like the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries, and even ideological opponents in the Bolshevik party were imprisoned and put to death. Millions of Russian citizens were killed by Lenin and Trotsky right after the Civil War, when they were consolidating State power, which preceded Stalin's bloody rule. The lesson is that we should not be tricked into surrendering the grassroots people's power to dictators who pose as our friends or leaders [whether they are white politicians or Black nationalist "leaders"; left-wing, center, or conservative].

We don't need the Marxist-Leninists' "solutions", they are dangerous and deluding. There is another way, but to much of the Left and to many ordinary people, the choice has appeared to be Anarchic chaos or the Marxist-Communist parties, however dogmatic and dictatorial. This is primarily the result of misunderstanding and propaganda. Anarchism as an ideology provides feasible organizational structures, as well as valid alternative revolutionary theory, which, if utilized, could be the basis for organization just as solid as the Marxist-Leninist (or even more so) only these organizations will be egalitarian and really for the benefit of people, rather than for the Communist leaders.

Anarchism is not confined to the ideas of a single theoretician, and it allows individual creativity to develop in collective groupings, instead of the characteristic dogmatism of the Marxist-Leninists.

[Cont. on pg 13]

The Million Man March: Power to the People..?

Interviews By G. Jackson.



The following are excerpts of interviews I did with several brothers and sisters on their reactions, expectations, comments, and criticisms of the Million Man March on Washington, D.C. this past October 16th. My questions to the respondents appear in *bold italics*. This selection has been edited for length.

How did you hear about the Million Man March?:

"I heard about the Million Man March in February. I got a call from the NOI [Nation of Islam] branch at the Lakewood Community center for me to come down on a Sunday."

After learning more about it, what was your impression?:

"I didn't have an impression at first. When I first got there, they had a few words on the march, and then they began to preach like it was church. So I didn't really get what it was supposed to be."

Did you go to D.C.?:

"I didn't go to D.C., I watched a majority of it on CNN and ESPN. When I saw that 1.8 million Black men and women there...it filled my heart."

What do you think of it in retrospect?:

"Well, when I look back and I think about the stuff that has happened since, I notice things that are happening; more brothers, and sisters too, who are becoming more aware, so I think it's doing some good. People are slowly, but surely waking up."

What do you think the immediate needs of the community in Seattle are and how do you think we should approach solving these needs?:

"Where do I begin...? The needs...there's so many of them. I think most importantly we need to build a foundation; I'm talking about a mental stability, a financial stability; we need to keep the money in the community."

"Also, the level of education within the community is shot. We need to rebuild our schools, if not abandon the ones already in existence and create our own. This may be a bit radical, but hey it's about revolution. It's nation-building time!"

-Kym Williams, 21; student.

How did you hear about MMM?:

"The first time I heard about the Million Man March I was sittin' here watchin' television. They announced it on the news that Farrakhan was talking about doing something like this. I heard about this months and months ago before the actual event occurred."

Did you go to D.C.?:

"No, I wanted to go."

What did you expect to come out of the Million Man March?:

"Actually, I really didn't know what to expect, but I was hoping that it would send a very clear message to this country that there is a serious problem and we need to start recognizing that instead of continuing this dialogue about "Oh, we have no problem; there is no problem between Black and white".

How do you intend to serve your community?:

"Well, I think I've always done that, but after the mmm I think I pushed myself more, to do more for my community. And that includes bringing issues to the fore front like police brutality; issues that we need to address. I've always been someone like that. Just continue to do what I have been doing. Hopefully, I will be somebody who has done my community proud."

What do you think the immediate needs of the community in Seattle are? How do you think we should approach solving those needs?:

"[Short pause]. First of all, I think we need to...We need to start working together rather than against each other. We need to recognize that we're in this together; that it's not just one group of individuals. Recognize that not everybody can be a "chief", some of us have to be "soldiers".

And in fact, instead of saying some of us have to be "soldiers", all of us have to be "soldiers"; we have to get out there and work. Start really being accountable for a lot of stuff that's goin' down in our community.

I feel we have to be "role models" for our young people; too many of our young people have turned to gangs, turned to drugs, and turned to guns. And we're pushing that responsibility off on to the police. And so, this has allowed the police to come in and do whatever they want. They say they're here to "save" us, but really it's victimizing our community."

-K.L. Shannon, 26; political activist

[cont. next page]

The article purported that:

"Parts of the defense establishment are cashing in, too, scenting a logical new line of business to help them offset military cut backs. Westinghouse Electric Corp., Minnesota Mining & Manufacturing Co., GDE Systems Inc. (a division of the old General Dynamics) and Alliant Techsystems Inc., have created special divisions to retool their defense technology for America's streets...Many lesser-known companies already are doing well fighting crime. Esmore Correctional Services Inc., was taken public by Janny Montgomery Scott."

If contemporary history is any indication, it is evident that government and business "Cold War of the 90's" is directed at the African and Hispanic community. In their search for people to pillage and conquer for profits, the collusion of government, military, and business interest has turned inward, and now the enemy is us, it is the poor, it is the new immigrants of color, and it is the disenfranchised.

To gain support for this new conquest of manifest destiny, this opening of the new domestic frontier, the general public (i.e.: European-Americans), must be made to support what ultimately is the resurrection of involuntary servitude and slavery in America. To ensure that this happens, the government's nefarious alliance with the mass media has created an air of hysteria about crime. It has done so, although the Federal Bureau of Investigation recently reported that crime in America is decreasing, not increasing.

The power of the media and government is extremely awesome, it is the power to define what we think about and how we think about it. It is the power that shapes our collective consciousness and attitudes, and in so doing, motivate people to respond to specific stimuli; and respond in a specific way.

As stated in the article "...according to a new *Wall Street Journal/NBC News Poll*, more than 70% of those surveyed support longer prison terms for violent offenders...Meanwhile, a recent Justice Department study shows that 21% of all Federal prisoners are guilty of low-level, non-violent offenses, such as possession of small quantities of illegal drugs, but are serving lengthy sentences under mandatory minimums set by [US] Congress."

By shaping the collective consciousness and attitudes, the politicians are then able to pass into law draconian sanctions. Sanctions that appease the the will of the people demanding a safe society, and ultimately serving the interest of restructuring the industrial-military complex, by forging an infrastructure for the proliferation of prison building.

Although it soothes and anesthetizes the collective consciousness towards the desired end of permitting hundreds of thousands, if not millions more people to be incarcerated at no moral or psychic detriment to those who constitute the majority of Americans. This buildup fails to inhibit or prevent criminal social behavior by the poor and disenfranchised. This is particularly significant when "[T]here's a food fight among communities that want these prisons", for politicians like New York Assemblyman Dan Feldman, chairman of the legislature's criminal-justice committee, prisons have become, he says "the juiciest pork in the barrel."

Dr. Thomas, the academic, observed: "With the population in private prisons growing at four times the rate of the general prison population, growth for the private-prison industry is virtually guaranteed. If you were in the hotel industry, you'd think you'd died and gone to heaven."

The "Triangle of Interests" has set the stage for the resurrection of slavery in America, since this peculiar institution was never abolished. It is heralded that the 13th Amendment of the US Constitution abolished involuntary servitude and chattel slavery of Africans, although there exists an exception clause for those who have been duly convicted of a crime. The exception clause has been consistently upheld by the US Supreme Court, holding that prisoners are no more than slaves of the state. Presumably, the US will then be able to compete with China's prison made products on the international market, since Clinton recently maintained favored nation trading status with China despite human rights violations.

Given this reality of the proliferation of prison building, the logical consequence of this developing infrastructure of big business investment, military security tech-

nology, and government sanctions, along with the mass media support suggest an increase in human toll. Hence, the reason for Pell grants being abolished, the removal of Boxing and Weightlifting equipment from Federal prisons, lowering the age to 13 for a person to be sentenced as an adult, the increase of the number of death penalty laws, and "three strikes...you're out" legislation.

As we enter a new millennium, the criminalization of poverty in capitalist America points to the desensitization of a moral determination. It points to the entrenchment of the idea of putting profits before people, leading to an understanding that if you are a poor Euro-American, Black, Hispanic, Asian, Native American or any combination of the same, prison could very well be part of your future.

About the author:

A. Jabil Bottom is a political prisoner of war and former member of the Black Panther Party and Black Liberation Army. He has been in prison for nearly 24 years. He has earned a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology.

[Million Man March cont from pg.10]

How did you hear about the MMM?:

"I heard about it through S.T.A.N.D., System To Advance Nubian Development. That's one of the groups I'm in now. They were talking about the march. For a long time I didn't know what the march was about. I didn't know what the issue was they were marching for; what it was about."

After learning more about it, what was your impression of it?:

"I had alot of opinions about it. For one thing, I heard about the women not being involved and I was like "okay, that's not right." Initially, I thought it would be a waste of alot of Black peoples' money. They'd be paying the airlines money, the hotels money in D.C.; alot of money would be going from the Black community into the white community and that would defeat the purpose."

Did you go to D.C.?:

"I did go to D.C. I didn't make it to the march, but I did make it to the MMM headquarters, talk to the brothers. It was cool."

What did you expect to come out of the march?:

"I thought that it would show solidarity on a very large scale. I thought that would be the main point because you had brothers coming from all the way to the left to all the way to the right, you know what I'm sayin'? You had brothers and sisters coming from all sections of the movement. They were all coming there for different reasons for the most part, I think that was the over all point; to show solidarity."

What do you think of it in retrospect?:

"I don't know that I can see a really strong difference right now. I'm not saying by any means that it didn't need to be done. I wouldn't by any means say it was not necessary, but in the immediate community I can't necessarily see a change."

What do you think the immediate needs of the community in Seattle are and how do you think we should approach solving those needs?:

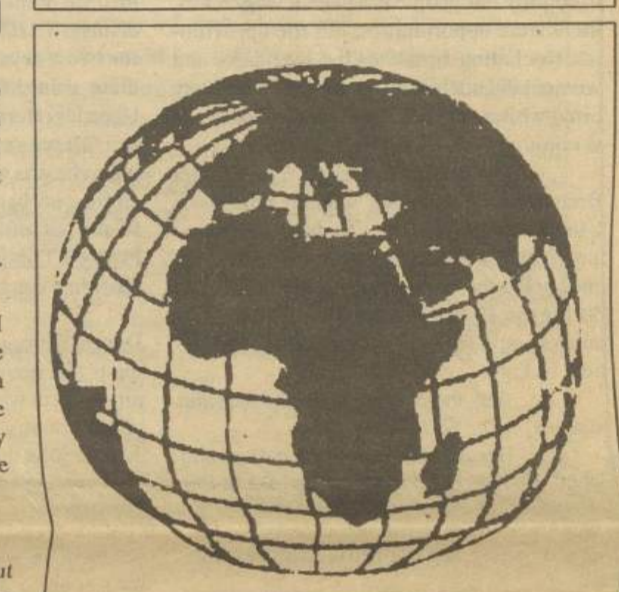
"Education for the most part. Brothers and sisters need to understand why they do the ignorant things they do, and then they might think "Wow, why do I do the things I do? Why do I sell blunts? Why do I get high? Why do I not care about what's going on with African people all over the world?"

Why is my ultimate goal in life to own a 20 bedroom house and 7 cars, know what I'm sayin'? Why? What's the point? Especially when there's brothers and sisters who have no food. Why can't I look at another brother or sister and see them as myself?"

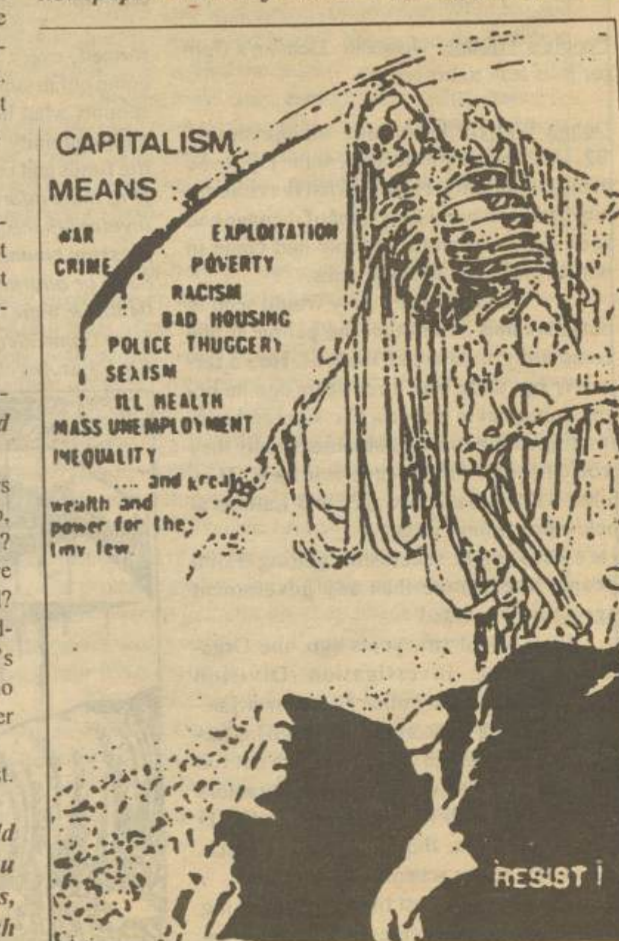
-Adrianna Majors, 16; student/artist/activist.

Okay, readers, now it's *your* turn! How would you answer these questions in relation to where you live and work? Depending on the number of responses, we will be expanding the letters section to publish

BLACK AUTONOMY, VOL.#2 ISSUE#1



[Million Man March: cont.]
your comments. The more concise the letter is, the more likely it will be published. Write to the address listed in the top left-hand corner of page 2 of this newspaper. We look forward to hearing from you...!



A Call for Submissions.

Marginal Editions is planning a book of writings by prisoners, ex-prisoners, and their families. Submissions of any length, topic, and style will be considered for inclusion.

The book is intended to reflect the ideas, concerns, feelings, and experiences of people involved with the "criminal justice system". As with our first publication, CANADAs (which included one essay from a prisoner and two articles by Jim Campbell of Prison News Service), we will not flinch from printing controversial material.

The aim of this book is two-fold: to act as a resource for prisoners and prison-issues activists (an extensive bibliography and resource list is planned), and to act as a "wake up call" to the general public.

If you would like to make a submission, or would like more information about the project, please contact:

Chris Magwood, Marginal Editions,
277 George St. N., Unit 102
Peterborough, ON Canada K9J 3G9
(705) 745-2326. email: marginal@ptbo.igs.net

A note to subscribers and supporters.

Recently, some of our subscribers in the prison systems have written to me complaining that their copy of *Black Autonomy* never arrived or arrived in poor to unreadable condition.

We are asking all of our prisoner subscribers to send the names and addresses of wardens and other prison officials at the prisons they are incarcerated at, so we can have this information on file in the event we have to take one or more of them to court.

As some readers may be aware, we and the American Civil Liberties Union of Washington (ACLU-WA) are in the process of litigation against the Washington State Department of Corrections. We'd like to expand our ability to act quickly in the event of more repression against our people, despite our admitted limitations. Please send the info to the address listed in the front of this newspaper.

In an attempt to avoid alot of unnecessary duplication, I would like to suggest that if a prisoner or a group of prisoners is aware of a number of subscribers in their particular gulag that someone among you be designated with the responsibility of making sure that the "...jackals and vultures who wallow in the blood of the people" (Fanon), i.e.- the authoritarian elements who run the prison, have been listed with us.

I'd also like to take the time to apologize for the sizeable gap between issue #5 and this issue.

Those of us associated with the FBCP were in dispute as to the structure of the group and the direction it should take. For all practical purposes, the FBCP doesn't exist. However, we as activists and comrades are still in constant communication and dialogue.

At the initiation of Bilal Nine of the Black Fist collective, we will be holding the first Black Autonomist (anarchist) conference in the U.S. Date, time, and place will be announced.

This is not only a historic moment within the history of international revolutionary struggle, but also within the context of our peoples' long struggle against white supremacy and capitalism in the U.S.

This also represents the creation of a whole new revolutionary movement within the poor Black community. Watch these pages for articles on our progress.

-In Struggle,
Greg Jackson,
Black Autonomy newspaper.

O.J. trial verdict linked to hanging.

Over three hundred people—mostly Hampton University students—packed the Hampton, VA, city council chambers this past Wednesday evening, Oct. 25, to demand that the police release information about the death of Antwan Sedgwick, a 20-year-old black man found hanged from a jungle gym near the Hampton Coliseum on Oct. 4, the

day after the announcement of the O.J. Simpson verdict.

For three weeks there was a complete silence in the local news media about Sedgwick's death. The local newspaper, television, and radio stations said nothing about the incident. Meanwhile, information and rumors circulated around the city and the University.

Finally, on Mon., Oct. 23 a local black community newspaper, the *Hampton Roads Voice*, published a fairly detailed article. Antwan was found hanging by his own belt, tied in a bowling knot, a sophisticated military knot. The family and friends of the victim do not believe that Antwan's death was a suicide. Antwan had no reason to kill himself.

There are also persons who claim that two cops had an altercation with Sedgwick 10 hours before his death. The two cops allegedly expressed racist opinions about the O.J. verdict and used the word "nigger". The two cops regularly patrolled the housing project, Pine Chapel, where Sedgwick lived.

At a rally just before the city council meeting, SCLC leader Rev. Harris and others spoke about the need to make the police and city council end their "conspiracy of silence" and provide the Sedgwick family and the community with the full results of their investigation. Then the large predominantly black but multiracial crowd of students, faculty, and people from the community marched into city hall and up to the city council chambers to confront the politicians and chief of police. As the council recited the "pledge of allegiance," many students raised clenched fists and chanted "No justice! No peace!" The atmosphere was electric.

After a few minutes, Rev. Harris addressed the council. He began by attacking the students and apologizing for their militancy, stating that the students were "inexperienced and did not know how to behave at city council meetings". Then this same reverend who had a given a militant speech outside a few minutes earlier groveled at the feet of the city council and asked the council to show the students that "the system works." At this point the chief of police announced that he and Rev. Harris had already agreed to a meeting in a week—the following Wednesday—at which time he would share the results of the police investigation. Rev. Harris thanked the chief of police and told everyone that we had what we had come for and to leave. Many people called out in anger, and about 20 students surrounded the police chief and peppered him with questions. These militant efforts were met with organized attempts by Hampton University administrators and Rev. Harris's allies to make people be quiet and to "calm down." Among those working with Rev. Harris to keep people quiet was a delegation of several members of the local Nation of Islam!

Every one of the dozens of people I spoke to as we were leaving the meeting was furious and bewildered. We had not expected militant leadership, but we were not prepared for such a blatant sellout. The mis-leaders had already made a deal before the rally outside and were just using us to show the city council they could mobilize an angry demonstration.

The next day students at Hampton University wrote and began to distribute a leaflet around the campus describing what had happened and urging everyone to develop their own leaders and confront Rev. Harris next Thursday, Nov. 2, when he comes to the campus to report on his meeting with the chief of police. Sorry for the length of this report, but it is not every day that a possible lynching is being covered up by local cops and politicians.

-Steven Rosenthal (via the internet).

African-canadian brother speaks on Quebec independence vote.

50.6% NO and 49.4% YES with a 92% voter turnout! Can you believe that shit? Folks up here are still pretty shocked.

So for the time being, Quebec stays in Canada, but it's obvious enough that they want to leave. There are a lot of English speaking people, Native people, and immigrants in Quebec who almost all voted "no", so if you actually just counted the Quebecois vote, most of the actual French speaking people there want their own nation. The Cree in North-east Quebec had their own referendum and decided they want

to stay in Canada because they already have a working relationship with Canadian law (i.e.- constitutional recognition), whereby Quebec as an independant nation would clearly be hard as fuck on Natives and people of colour (remember, it was the Quebec provincial police that crushed the Mohawks at Oka, and the Parti Quebecois has always preached an anti-immigration stance, even against French speaking people of colour like Haitians, Vietnamese, etc.).

All the radicals I know on the west coast really didn't give much of a fuck which way the vote went. It really is something of a west coast apathy. Quebec nationalism is just another form of colonization when it comes down to it, and the only people around here who support it are old-time white commies who can still remember the FLQ. The only thing that made us sort of lean in the direction of hoping for a "yes" vote was the fact that it would really fuck Canada up and decentralize things. Also, the dollar would plummet and Canadians might actually wake up out of their sleep walking consumer comas and do something to keep us from being swallowed up by US corporations.

The only problem is that white Canadians are more likely to turn to Canadian nationalism in the face of a 50 cent Canadian dollar, and the right would benefit. Who knows, really?

As it looks, it really is just a matter of time now. There will be another referendum and Quebec will separate—if Canada doesn't start making some serious concessions immediately (like granting them Distinct Society status in the constitution, which they've been asking for for years now). I wonder what all this looks like to people in other countries? It seems to me that the US would never let something like this actually go to a referendum. If we got our shit together and demanded a black nation, do think they ever just let us vote ourselves into sovereignty? Canada is a weird country, with some strange social democratic and contradictory ideas. What do you think? Could Quebec separation inspire our people down there to get a piece of what's ours on this continent?

There's also more stuff heating up with the Pentiction Nation who are attempting to blockade a ski resort this winter, and were on TV the other night in camo battle dress building bunkers on the road side. The road to the resort runs through their Nation and they've vowed to block it all winter. Our resident sell out Asian attorney general, same pig who called in the RCMP on the Shuswap, has suggested he will use the RCMP again at Pentiction. It's all part of their refusal to treat land claims in the court, but rather at the end of a gun barrel.

-Wayde Christopher Compton;
Vancouver, B.C. Canada (via the internet).

**THE HISTORIC ROLE OF GOVERNMENT
... IS MURDER.**



**ANARCHISM +
BLACK
REVOLUTION
=
NEW BLACK
AUTONOMOUS
POLITICS**

Unified position statement of *Black Autonomy* newspaper and affiliated Black Autonomist (anarchist) activists in the United States.

The new autonomous politics is made up of the anti-authoritarian core of Anarchism and many of the tenets of revolutionary Black nationalism. This combination of all elements makes up something so new it has not been fully defined before now. We will attempt now to more sharply define what it is that I have been talking about for the last fifteen years, and also to place it within an historical context so that it can no longer be dismissed as an "eclectic mish-mash", or "corruption" of (both) ideals as the purists would claim.

And yet, it should not alarm Anarchist ideological "purists" when I speak of a Black anarchist politics. First, the early Anarchist movement in America always reflected the cultural, social and political ideals of the community that produced it. Thus we had a Germanic-dominated Anarcho-syndicalist tendency during the 1880's called the International Working People's Association which was strong in Chicago, Pittsburgh and other industrial cities; a Jewish Anarchist movement in New York and other cities during the 1900's, wherein some whole newspapers were printed in Yiddish; an Italian movement in New York, New Jersey and other areas in the 1920-30's and so on. One ethnic group after another produced a unique, though no less valid, American Anarchist social movement. So the question then becomes, why should anyone even be surprised to learn that there will be Anarchist movements which culturally and politically reflect those communities of Africans or Hispanics. In talking about Anarchist ideals, we are not talking about "orthodoxies" which cannot be revised, we are talking about ideas which will be picked up, used by millions of oppressed peoples, and adapted to their purpose and circumstances.

Anarchist purists and other Eurocentric ideologues will just have to shudder, because it is happening now and there is nothing that anybody can do to stop it. Even as we are talking, the first slow steps toward building a core tendency of Black anarchists is a reality. Several men and women have been influenced by the ideas I dared to raise in my pamphlets in the 1970's, but they have taken those ideas, made them into a class weapon reflecting the African experience on this continent, and are taking the first step to free our people and our class. It is important that we define ourselves, since we realize we are our own liberators. We demand that Africans be subjects of history, and not mere objects that Europeans decide what to do with.

This great Black sector of humanity has said enough, and has now started to find its own voice. There will be no condescending saviors out of the mother country, we must begin to do this ourselves, although we know the revolutionary project to defeat the system of capitalism and enslavement requires millions of other allies who will help us. We will decide the agenda, the timetable, and the tactics of obtaining our freedom.

The new Black autonomous politics differs from European Anarchism in that we know that we are oppressed both as a distinct people and as workers for our labor power. But Anarchism places its greatest contradiction with the state and its ability to hold back a free lifestyle, and this is exactly what we cannot limit our critique to. This is a white world-view based on their privileged place in this society. We realize that historically constructed "races" have been created under this system, which determine both the manner of life and death under this system, and that the State upholds this racial/class system. It is no accident, and it's true that racism has not been commissioned by individual white workers, but they have been the beneficiaries of our oppression, and whites are part of the social control mechanism of the state. It is nonsense to say something otherwise, like "we are all in the same boat" or all just workers like the American socialist and communist have done. We say this is a lie and part of a myth about the white working class as a vanguard and "working class heroes".

In addition, we say that people are super-oppressed because of their race under this system, not just their class. Anarchism's limitations to critique this type of oppression are quite obvious, and is what has resulted in an all-white movement, which is confused about how to intervene in struggles that involve people of other than European nationalities and how to analyse the nationalism of the oppressed. It has always been my project to extend the Anarchist ideals to cover new contingencies and other areas of struggle not foreseen by the initiators of the doctrine.

The Black autonomists also disagree with many Anarchists and other white radicals because we know that the battle is not just against "racism", or fascist vanguard elements like the Nazis or Klan, rather it is the system which produces fascism which must be destroyed. The capitalist system literally came into existence based on the enslavement and forced labor of African, Asian, and other oppressed peoples; the genocide of the Native Americans, and the brutal theft of the lands of the Hispanic peoples are other examples of this oppression. But Europeans of all classes benefitted from this super-exploitation, and capital has created the hierarchical structure of race and class oppression we live under. It is extremely important to understand that this kind of racial stratification is not some deliberate ideological nonsense that people of color have created themselves, so-called "identity movements" as some vulgar socialists call them, but has been a function of the state from inception, with one's place in society and class privileges riding on the outcome. If you are non-white, you will be treated one way, if you are white, another. So "racism" is a class doctrine, used by the state for super-exploitation of certain workers and peoples; in fact, I contend that it is the actual class relations in North American society.

So-called "white" people are a super-contrived nationality designed to help the capitalists keep workers of color in their place and safeguard the status quo. So rather than

see the "white" industrial working class as a potentially revolutionary class, instead we see it as an opportunistic, collaborationist body which must be redefined and reorganized if it is to constitute a reliable ally and have any ability of fighting in its own interest as a new class.

As Black autonomists, we of course disagree with Marxists and other "radicals" who claim that an authoritarian party and strong leadership cultism is necessary to produce a social revolution. But we go further and say that neither they or the Anarchists can lead us as a people of color (or even themselves) to freedom, even though they have been conditioned as Europeans to command and rule over people of color. We can work with them on certain projects or in action on a campaign, but they will not determine the agenda or outcome of our struggles.

However, we differ with the Black Nationalists, although we share many basic ideas with them. We also believe in and treasure many of the traditions and history of our people, but believe it must be demystified and made into a culture of resistance, rather than personality cults or escapism from the reality of racism. Further, we do not believe in a "race nationalism", we are not xenophobic, do not entertain any racial mythology about Europeans, and are not seeking to build a Black state as the answer to our problems. In many respects, we know that Black nation-state-ism will defeat our ability to obtain full freedom and has a limited program for social revolution. We are not immune from the laws of social nature. We believe the class politics which will show itself within any Black state, whether an Islamic, secular "new African" or otherwise will result in an extreme class differential and economic injustice. We believe that a bourgeois class and political dictatorship is inevitable, and that revolution will ensue even under such a Black state, which calls itself "African Socialist".

We also believe that historically Black nationalism has asserted itself most forcefully as a defensive doctrine to white racism, not as an anti-racist movement, but as a counter-power movement, that is, to organize an interest group which can battle for political power inside this system. This is what happened to the seemingly revolutionary "Black Power" current produced by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee during the 1960's; it was usurped by the Black petit bourgeoisie.

In addition, those who argue for a state never tell how it will be obtained, and many of those arguments made are vague and fanciful. Who really believes that America will just grant an Islamic state or give up five southern states to Africans just because a small faction calling itself a "government-in-exile" or even the the majority of us want it. Why, it would require years of a bloody struggle, and a major organizing campaign. In addition, the only group which even talked about conducting a plebiscite to find out what form African people believe our independence should take was the Panthers. Even though I personally have good relations with many of these organizations, I have a hard time taking these people on this issue seriously and have always considered this wishful thinking or a flight of fancy. But then it is not up to me, but to the Black masses themselves.

So far, we have made little more than the arguments that many socialists and Anarchists have made for years against certain kinds of nationalism. However, it would

be extremely unfair to not point out that groups like the Black Panther Party, League of Revolutionary Workers, (and even the SNCC in the late 1960's), though calling themselves "revolutionary black nationalists", in fact did not call for or actually struggle to obtain a nation state in Africa or the existing land-territory of the United States. It appears that they had adopted some variant of socialist doctrine, and had as their primary motivation the toppling of the existing capitalist state/empire. Their position radically differed from the Cultural (Afrocentric), Religious, and other variant of nationalist tendencies. The BPP especially was an advanced political formation which did much pioneering theoretical and organizing work on race and class issues, and although we have many disagreements with their vanguardist and authoritarian political structures, we have much in common philosophically.

We too believe in armed self-defense, but we believe it is the people at-large not a political party which must be organized in self-defense units. We too believe in armed struggle, but believe the masses extending an insurrection to a social revolution will be the likely unfolding scenario, not a vanguard party seizing power "in the name of the people" or a small secret army. But, in common with the Black Panthers, the Black autonomists believe that even before capitalism is defeated, we can begin to turn our communities into dual power communes, from which we can wage a protracted struggle with capitalism and its agents. We believe in common with the Panthers and the League of Revolutionary Black Workers that the Black working class will be the decisive factor in any such struggle, not the middle class. And in common with SNCC, we think the role of the organizer is not to lead people, but to empower them and let them take over their own local struggles. We also believe that our communities are colonies or semi-colonies which are totally under the control of the state. But we do not believe in politics of electoralism in any form, and reject coalitions with Liberals or social democrats.

Finally, like the Panthers, and contrary to today's Nation of Islam and its spokesmen we believe that there were historical, socio-economic factors which accounted for both slavery and racism, not because whites are "ice-people", "devils", or other such nonsense. This system produces racism/white supremacy, and it is this capitalist system which must be destroyed to get rid of it! So this is who we are fighters for human rights, self-determination, and freedom for our people and our class.

**The Panthers
proved how
dangerous Black
revolutionaries
can be to this
system, now we
will finish the
job!**

[For more info write to the address listed in the front of this newspaper.]

Mexican arrested in his own bed. Justice Wanamaker's scathing dissent criticized the precedents cited by the majority in defense of this absurdity:

"I desire to give some special attention to some of the authorities cited, supreme court decisions from Alabama, Georgia, Arkansas, Kentucky, and one or two inferior court decisions from New York, which are given in support of the doctrines upheld by this court. The southern states have very largely furnished the precedents.

It is only necessary to observe that the race issue there has extremely intensified a decisive purpose to entirely disarm the negro, and this policy is evident upon reading the opinions."

While not relevant to the issue of racism, Justice Wanamaker's closing paragraphs capture well the biting wit and intelligence of this jurist, who was unfortunately, outnumbered on the bench:

"I hold that the laws of the state of Ohio should be so applied and so interpreted as to favor the law-abiding rather than the law-violating people. If this decision shall stand as the law of Ohio, a very large percentage of the good people of Ohio to-day are criminals, because they are daily committing criminal acts by having these weapons in their own homes for their own defense. The only safe course for them to pursue, instead of having the weapon concealed on or about their person, or under their pillow at night, is to hang the revolver on the wall and put below it a large placard with these words inscribed:

"The Ohio supreme court having decided that it is a crime to carry a concealed weapon on one's person in one's home, even in one's bed or bunk, this weapon is hung upon the wall that you may see it, and before you commit any burglary or assault, please, Mr. Burglar, hand me my gun."

There are other examples of remarkable honesty from the state supreme courts on this subject, of which the finest is probably Florida Supreme Court Justice Buford's concurring opinion in *Watson v. Stone* (1941), in which a conviction for carrying a handgun without a permit was overturned, because the handgun was in the glove compartment of a car:

I know something of the history of this legislation. The original Act of 1893 was passed when there was a great influx of negro laborers in this State drawn here for the purpose of working in turpentine and lumber camps. The same condition existed when the Act was amended in 1901 and the Act was passed for the purpose of disarming the negro laborers and to thereby reduce the unlawful homicides that were prevalent in turpentine and saw-mill camps and to give the white citizens in sparsely settled areas a better feeling of security. The statute was never intended to be applied to the white population and in practice has never been so applied.

Today is not 1893, and when proponents of restrictive gun control insist that their motivations are colorblind, there is a possibility that they are telling the truth. Nonetheless, there are some rather interesting questions that should be asked today. The most obvious question is, "Why should a police chief or sheriff have any discretion in issuing a concealed handgun permit?" Here in California, even the state legislature's research arm—hardly a nest of pro-gunners—has admitted that the vast majority of permits to carry concealed handguns in California are issued to white males. Even if overt racism is not an issue, an official may simply have more empathy with an applicant of a similar cultural background, and consequently be more able to relate to the applicant's concerns. As my wife pointedly reminded a police official when we applied for concealed weapon permits, "If more police chiefs were women,

a lot more women would get permits, and be able to defend themselves from rapists."

Gun control advocates today are not so foolish as to openly promote racist laws, and so the question might be asked what relevance the racist past of gun control laws has. One concern is that the motivations for disarming blacks in the past are really not so different from the motivations for disarming law-abiding citizens today. In the last century, the official rhetoric in support of such laws was that "they" were too violent, too untrustworthy, to be allowed weapons. Today, the same elitist rhetoric regards law-abiding Americans in the same way, as child-like creatures in need of guidance from the government. In the last century, while never openly admitted, one of the goals of disarming blacks was to make them more willing to accept various forms of economic oppression, including the sharecropping system, in which free blacks were reduced to an economic state not dramatically superior to the conditions of slavery.

In the seventeenth century, the aristocratic power structure of colonial Virginia found itself confronting a similar challenge from lower class whites. These poor whites resented how the men who controlled the government used that power to concentrate wealth into into a small number of hands. These wealthy feeders at the government trough would have disarmed poor whites if they could, but the threat of both Indian and pirate attack made this impractical; for all white men "were armed and had to be armed..." Instead, blacks, who had occupied a poorly defined status between indentured servant and slave, were reduced to hereditary chattel slavery, so that poor whites could be economically advantaged, without the upper class having to give up its privileges.

Today, the forces that push for gun control seem to be heavily (though not exclusively) allied with political factions that are committed to dramatic increases in taxation on the middle class. While it would be hyperbole to compare higher taxes on the middle class to the suffering and deprivation of sharecropping or slavery, the analogy of disarming those whom you wish to economically disadvantage, has a certain worrisome validity to it.

Another point to consider is that in the American legal system, certain classifications of governmental discrimination are considered constitutionally suspect, and these "suspect classifications" (usually considered to be race and religion) come to a court hearing under a strong presumption of invalidity. The reason for these "suspect classifications" is because of the long history of governmental discrimination based on these classifications, and because these classifications often impinge on fundamental rights.

In much the same way, gun control has historically been a tool of racism, and associated with racist attitudes about black violence. Similarly, many gun control laws impinge on that most fundamental of rights: self-defense. Racism is so intimately tied to the history of gun control in America that we should regard gun control aimed at law-abiding people as a "suspect idea," and require that the courts use the same demanding standards when reviewing the constitutionality of a gun control law, that they would use with respect to a law that discriminated based on race.

[Clayton E. Cramer is a software engineer with a telecommunications manufacturer in Northern California.]



...IT'S SPACIOUS AND BRIGHT WITH LEVEL FLOORS AND AN EXCELLENT VIEW. THE CURRENT RESIDENTS ARE SLOW AND WEAK AND I THINK YOU COULD EASILY CHASE THEM OFF WITH A FEW ROCKS AND SOME BIG CLUBS.

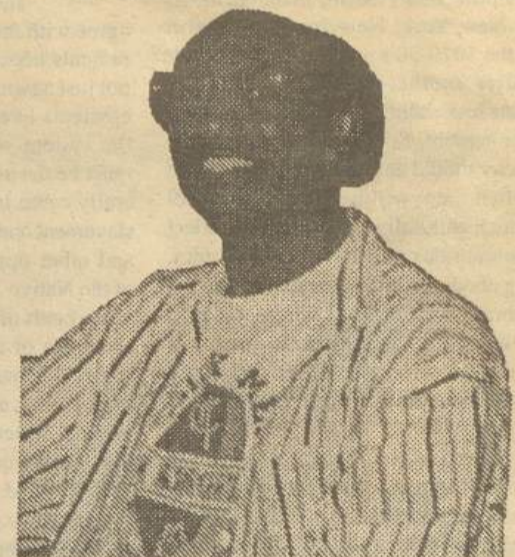


OUR LIVES WILL BE BETTER WHEN ALL THE RICH ARE DEAD.



In Memorium...

Joseph Antoine Zimbabwe



Nov. 29, 1932-Jan. 3, 1996.

Black Autonomy.

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