

# THE SPIRIT OF THE PEOPLE IS GREATER

AN INCOMPLETE  
HISTORY OF COMMUNITY  
SELF-DEFENSE



the spirit of the people is greater:  
an incomplete history of community self-defense

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### **“THE SPIRIT OF THE PEOPLE IS GREATER THAN THE MAN’S TECHNOLOGY”: THE ROLE OF MEMORY WORK IN COMMUNITY SELF-DEFENSE**

By danielle luz belanger

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*“One cannot memorialize that which is present and that which is yet to come, a reality that reinforces the requirement that memory work in these contexts becomes bullets for liberation.”*

- Doria D. Johnson, Jarrett M. Drake,  
& Michelle Caswell

“From Cape Town to Chicago to Colombo  
and Back Again: Towards a Liberation  
Theology for Memory Work”

Instances of community self-defense--or strategic practices aimed at resisting forms of aggression, repression, and oppression by any means necessary--are prolific throughout modern history, yet remain largely understated in the dominant record. This project seeks to rectify the lack of visibility surrounding the plurality and legacy of community self-defense by highlighting historic examples from groups such as the NAACP Monroe, North Carolina Chapter and the John Brown Anti-Klan Committee, among others. These groups embraced the fundamental understanding that safety is a precondition of community empowerment.

The examples that follow speak to the relatively commonplace practice of self-defense among subjugated and vulnerable communities, exploring the various strategies exercised by and for those communities in the struggle for self-preservation and self-determination. Such framing aims to subvert negative stigmatizations of left militancy by situating self-defense as one of several components comprising the larger social fabric of collective life in progressive spheres. This context is necessary for understanding how self-defense in many cases emerges as a critical condition upon which the liberation of oppressed people depends; it is in contrast to prevailing assumptions that such practices are extremist, unwarranted, or fueled more by a general antagonism than a concrete need for protection.

An equally important context informing the question of why we know so little about this expansive history stems from recognition of the ways in which community self-defense, by demonstrating the effectiveness of organized resistance, threatens to undermine the status quo. Examining how the production and circulation of knowledge relates to existing power structures helps elucidate the challenges engendered in efforts to uplift histories such as this one, which face the dual forces of exclusion and subjugation.

In 1970, Howard Zinn delivered a seminal speech at the Society of American Archivists in which he unsettled the concept of neutrality. Up until that point, neutrality was largely accepted as a standard tenet of work in libraries and archives, alleged to underpin the moral dimension of the information professions.<sup>1</sup> Zinn pointed out that neutrality is in fact much more contentious than previously believed, serving to reproduce the unequal power relations of society and dictate the legitimation of certain ideas over others.<sup>2</sup> Far from being the ethical stronghold of the field, Zinn explained that neutrality is an insidious manifestation of ideals that both derive from and reinforce a specific set of values, thus establishing those ideals and values as normative.

The myth of neutrality is evidenced everywhere by its patent synonymy with the white, patriarchal, heteronormative perspective, and the dearth of preserved perspectives that fall beyond those bounds. For archivists, historians, librarians, and others who actively participate in memory work, asserting a neutral stance should be tacitly understood as the masking of underlying political motivations and experiences that inevitably inform one's decision-making process.<sup>3</sup> Acknowledging this reality reveals how complicity and passivity work in tandem to implicate supposedly "neutral" views in a system that is predicated upon an uneven (and in many cases, harmful) distribution of power.<sup>4</sup>

Just as neutrality acts as an instrument of racial capitalism by obscuring reality and truth, intellectual freedom similarly operates to obfuscate systemic injustice under the false premise of universality. Governed by the conditions of racial capitalism, the construction of libraries and archives as a "marketplace of ideas" leaves these institutions encoded by an "economic order of things."<sup>5</sup> This can be observed in the ways in which the field of Library & Information Sciences acknowledges a need for antiracist reform, but responds superficially to that need by adopting a neoliberal multicultural praxis, as opposed to one that is based upon reparations that recognize the humanity and dignity of all

people.<sup>6</sup> Illuminating histories of community self-defense--which are primarily histories of indigenous, black, and brown resistance--requires active recognition of the dignity that belongs to all people who molded past struggles for self-determination and self-preservation.

We have established that instances of community self-defense remain obfuscated in the historical record and explored the power dynamics responsible for the scarcity of available resources on the subject. But what are the implications of this observation? How can certain ideas and lived experiences be legitimized without relying on the authority of the traditional arbiters of knowledge? How did we arrive at a situation where the right to self-defense still needs defending?

The examples raised in this project illuminate the possibilities of autonomous and community-directed world building. They are largely sourced from the Freedom Archives, a community archive which specializes in 20<sup>th</sup> Century progressive history. The Freedom Archives receives most of its funding from the communities it serves. In addition to an effective internship program, the archive engages the collection by repurposing historical materials for pedagogic application. In this way, the archive participates in the memory work of creating a place for indigenous, black, brown, queer perspectives and experiences to be remembered, preserved, and activated.<sup>7</sup> Such narratives have long eluded traditional archives, which were initially built upon their exclusion and erasure. The Freedom Archives stands as a potent example of a project that bellies the hegemonic regulation of information and hones the liberatory potential of forging a new paradigm for archival engagement.<sup>8</sup>

As a staff member, it follows that my own experiences with preserving the past are heavily influenced by the Freedom Archives and the meanings generated from the relevance of its collections to the communities with which I actively participate. My

explorations in memory work are also shaped by the understanding that ideas of “belonging and believing” provide a valuable conceptual framework from which the project of “humanizing the dehumanized,” can be authentically pursued.<sup>9</sup> Acknowledging our obligation to preserve and remember the histories most resonant with our own experiences is believing that we have always belonged someplace, and fought for that belonging. And we continue to belong and fight to belong here, now, as we will in the future that has yet to come.

It is worth stating that this project does not attempt to offer a complete account of the entire history of community self-defense; it reflects the understanding that such an endeavor is not only an impossibility, but a Borgesian caricature of what knowledge under capitalism stands for: the desire to create a digestible, controlled taxonomy, to possess through knowing. To dispossess through unknowing.

The goal instead is to provide some examples that can help expand what currently exists as an abbreviated history. Significant contributions to a people’s history of self-defense have already been made by historians, activists, archivists, and scholars such as Howard Zinn, Michelle Caswell, Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, Akinyele Umoja, Nathaniel Moore, Claude Marks, and countless others. Many of their ideas are drawn upon in the following pages.

With the objective of encouraging engagement with past examples and providing resources that might assist in the process of building programs of communalized support today, I raise the topics of community self-defense and collective memory to underscore their parallel relevance to the present moment. An unprecedented level of precarity ushered by the coronavirus pandemic has been met by a growing culture of care and reciprocity, giving rise to the (re)emergent conviction that communities can, in fact, keep each other safe in the face of a failing system.

In the spirit of fighting for our safety and belonging through the creative means available to us, I close with a scene that aspires to recognize and participate in the liberatory capacity of memory work:

*in an industrial city across the san francisco bay /  
there were oil refineries and polluted soil and people  
who lived there / one day they got together and held  
guns to the sky while a black man spoke about spirit  
/ it's greater he insisted greater than the man's  
technology <sup>10</sup> / and he pointed to a helicopter that  
flew overhead close to the ground where the people  
stood / its rotary wings lapped up dust and dirt and  
you could see every particular flit thru the wind-  
churned air, turning light to gauze / the people  
roared / they said / no more!!! / and the helicopter  
shrunk back into the sky / so the people took back  
what was theirs / not a single bullet fired / not a  
single person fell / the ground beneath their feet /  
the sky above their heads / the stillness of the  
afternoon air / they took back what was theirs, said /  
it could be ours, too*

## Footnotes

1 Although Zinn's ideas have been largely accepted among information professionals, the subject of neutrality is still debated today. For a recent argument in defense of neutrality, see: Frank J. Boles, "To Everything There Is a Season." *The American Archivist* 82, no. 2 (2019): 598–617. <https://doi.org/10.17723/aarc-82-02-21>.

2 Zinn, Howard. "Secrecy, Archives, and the Public Interest," *Boston University Journal*, v.19-21 (1971-1973).

3 Caswell, Michelle. "Dusting for Fingerprints." *Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies* 3, no. preprint (2020).

4 Jensen, Robert. "The Myth of the Neutral Professional," *Progressive Librarian* No. 24, (2006).

5 Seale, M., & Mirza, R. "Speech and Silence: Race, Neoliberalism, and Intellectual Freedom." *Journal of Radical Librarianship*, 5, (2019): 41–60.

6 This is a generalization. While not all aspects of the field fall into the trappings articulated here, it remains the dominant trend. In a world dominated by a specific set of views, believing that all perspectives can be provided an equal platform vis-a-vis intellectual freedom is (under many circumstances, at least) the equivalent of denying pre-existing formations of privilege and disenfranchisement; it is an ambitious aspiration that in recent cases, has tended to deny, rather than advocate for, Black people's humanity. See: Seale, M., & Mirza, R. (2019). *Speech and Silence: Race, Neoliberalism, and Intellectual Freedom*. *Journal of Radical Librarianship*, 5, 41–60.

7 Such narratives have long eluded traditional archives, which were initially built upon their exclusion and erasure.

8 Johnson, D., Drake, J., Caswell, M. (2016). "From Cape Town to Chicago to Colombo and Back Again: Towards a Liberation Theology for Memory Work". *Reflections from the 2016 Mandela Dialogues*. Accessed November 6, 2020. <https://www.nelsonmandela.org/news/entry/reflections-from-the-2016-mandela-dialogues>. Also see: Caswell, Michelle, Ricardo Punzalan, and T-Kay Sangwand. "Critical Archival Studies: An Introduction." *Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies* 1, no. 2 (June 27, 2017). <https://doi.org/10.24242/jclis.v1i2.50>.

7 Johnson, D., Drake, J., Caswell, M. "From Cape Town to Chicago to Colombo and Back Again: Towards a Liberation Theology for Memory Work". *Reflections from the 2016 Mandela Dialogues*. (2016). Accessed November 6, 2020. <https://www.nelsonmandela.org/news/entry/reflections-from-the-2016-mandela-dialogues>. Also see: Caswell, Michelle, Ricardo Punzalan, and T-Kay Sangwand, "Critical Archival Studies: An Introduction." *Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies* 1, no. 2 (2017). <https://doi.org/10.24242/jclis.v1i2.50>.

8 Hughes-Watkins, Lae'l. "Moving Toward a Reparative Archive: A Roadmap for a Holistic Approach to Disrupting Homogenous Histories in Academic Repositories and Creating Inclusive Spaces for Marginalized Voices." *Journal of Contemporary Archival Studies* 5, no. 1 (2018). <https://elischolar.library.yale.edu/jcas/vol5/iss1/6>.

9 Derived from Terry Cannon, *The Story of the Black Panther Party: All Power to the People* (San Francisco: People's Press, 1970).

## II.

### **ARMING IMAGINATION: THE CULTURAL FABRIC OF COMMUNITY SELF-DEFENSE**

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*“When history sleeps, it speaks in dreams: on the brow of the sleeping people, the poem is a constellation of blood. When history wakes, image becomes act, the poem happens: poetry moves into action.”*

- Octavio Paz “Toward The Poem”

This section examines the cultural foundations of revolutionary self-defense by exploring the examples of Robert and Mabel Williams, who led the local NAACP Chapter in Monroe, North Carolina, the Black Panther Party, the Inez Garcia Defense Committee, and the John Brown Anti-Klan Committee. These groups made unique contributions to the popularization of community self-defense by creating publications and art, among other cultural offerings. Understanding that the struggle for safety, self-determination, and self-preservation was two-pronged, involving ideological as well as physical resistance to forms of oppression, these groups promoted and lived their political program by building a culture that embraced ideals of collective life and disciplined struggle.

## DEFENSE STARTS AT HOME: ROBERT & MABEL WILLIAMS



(Above) Photograph of Robert & Mabel Williams. From Alegria, A., Bergman, L., Herzing, R., Marks, C., and Nadel-Hayes, S. *Robert and Mabel Williams Resource Guide*. San Francisco, CA: The Freedom Archives, 2005. (Right) Excerpt from *The Los Angeles War Cry*, Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM), p. 3. Black Liberation Collection. Freedom Archives. Full pdf available online.

Robert and Mabel Williams held prominent leadership positions in the NAACP Monroe, North Carolina branch, where Robert served as head. Among the demands listed in their 10-point program were asking for the abolition of racial discrimination and police brutality, fair treatment of blacks when applying for welfare and aid to dependents, and the integration of schools. Both Robert and Mabel Williams spoke openly about the need for armed defense in their county as a response to white supremacist and Klan violence. According to Robert, "so many threats were made by the Klan, that it was necessary for us to form an armed guard... We kept armed men to protect our community from Klan invasion." (*Robert and Mabel Williams Resource Guide*, p. 8).

In 1959, recognizing that no other news outlets were telling the stories that needed to be told of the escalating crisis of racial violence in the region, Robert and Mabel launched a newsletter



## URBAN GUERRILLA WARFARE

by Robert F. Williams

### The Coming of Massive Violence

We must defend ourselves. We must fight back. We must reject the unwritten commitment that so-called Negro leaders have made guaranteeing our brutal oppressors immunity from retribution for their heinous acts of violence against our defenseless people. Not only must we defend ourselves violently, but we must do it collectively. We must condition ourselves for defense, both physically and psychologically. We must become adept in the methods of massive defense.

There are those mercenary Uncle Toms and masochists among us, whose missions are to demoralize our people and encourage them to reject the first law of nature. They are quick to inform us that we cannot win any conflict that may degenerate into a state of massive violence. Why do they not tell the racist oppressors that they cannot win? Why do they not tell them that they constitute a minority in the world? The fact is that the racists are the ones who will lose such a conflict. America is too sensitive to withstand such a shock. The oppressors have more to lose than the dehumanized and oppressed in such a conflict. Our people have nothing to lose but their chains.

We prefer peaceful negotiations, but our oppressors have proved to us that they are not susceptible to such mild pressures for reform and that they will utilize massive violence to attempt to contain our struggle. When massive violence comes, the U.S.A. will become a bedlam of confusion and chaos. The factory workers will be afraid to venture out on the streets to report to their jobs. The telephone workers and radio workers will be afraid to report. All transportation will grind to a complete standstill. Stores will be destroyed and looted. Property will be damaged and expensive buildings will be reduced to ashes. Essential pipelines will be severed and blown up and all manner of sabotage will occur. Violence and terror will spread like a firestorm. A clash will occur inside the armed forces. At U.S. military bases around the world local revolutionaries will side with Afro G.I.'s. Because of the vast area covered by the holocaust, U.S. forces will be spread too thin for effective action. U.S. workers, who are caught on their jobs, will try to return home to protect their families. Trucks and trains will not move the necessary supplies to the big urban centers. The economy will fall into a state of chaos.

This racist imperialist oppressor will not be brought to his knees, simply because of the fighting ability and military power of Black Freedom Fighters and their allies inside the U.S., but because of the creation of economic, chaotic conditions, total disorganization, frustration of his essential and ultra-vital organs of production, and adverse conditions created by the world-wide liberation struggle. Such a formidable enemy will fall prey to the new concept of revolution because of his ultra-modern and automated society and the lack of psychological conditioning of his forces. Our people have already been conditioned by almost 400 years of violence, terror and hunger.

The new concept of revolution defies military science and tactics. The new concept is lightning campaigns conducted in highly sensitive urban communities with the paralysis reaching the small communities and spreading to the farm areas. The old method of guerrilla warfare, as carried out from the hills and countryside, would be ineffective in a powerful country like the U.S.A. Any such force would be wiped out in an hour. The new concept is to huddle as close to the enemy as possible so as to neutralize his modern and fierce weapons. The new concept creates conditions that involve the total community, whether they want to be involved or not. It sustains a state of confusion and destruction of property. It dislocates the organs of harmony and order and reduces central power to the level of a helpless, sprawling, octopus. During the hours of day sporadic rioting takes place and massive sniping. Night brings all-out warfare, organized fighting and unlimited terror against the oppressor and his forces. Such a campaign will bring about an end to oppression and social injustice in the U.S.A. in less than 90 days and create the basis for the implementation of the U.S. Constitution with justice and equality for all people.

Of course, there would be great losses on the part of our people. How can we expect liberation without losses? Our people are already being admonished by the nonviolent forces to die for Freedom. We are being told to sacrifice our lives in situations of diminishing returns. If we must die, let us die in the only way that the oppressor will feel the weight of our death. Let us die in the tried and proven way of liberation. If we are going to talk about revolution, let us know what revolution means.



entitled, *The Crusader*. Its mission was to spread news of what was happening in Monroe and promote the imperative of armed defense in the fight against white supremacy. The newsletter provided ideas of armed self-defense with impetus and reach, ultimately contributing to the creation of a national and international network of support for resistance against the Klan.

Fig 1



Fig 2

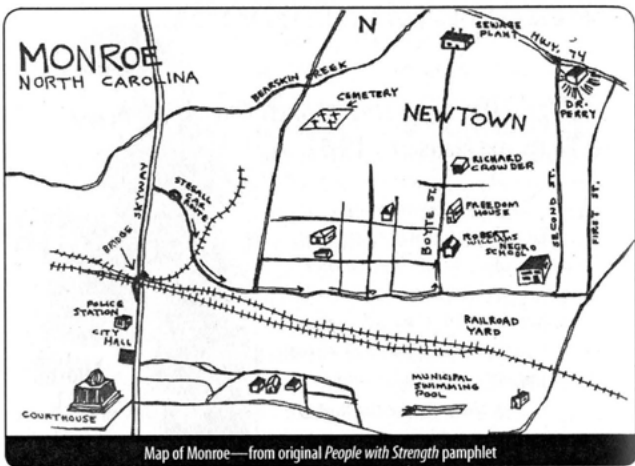


Fig 3

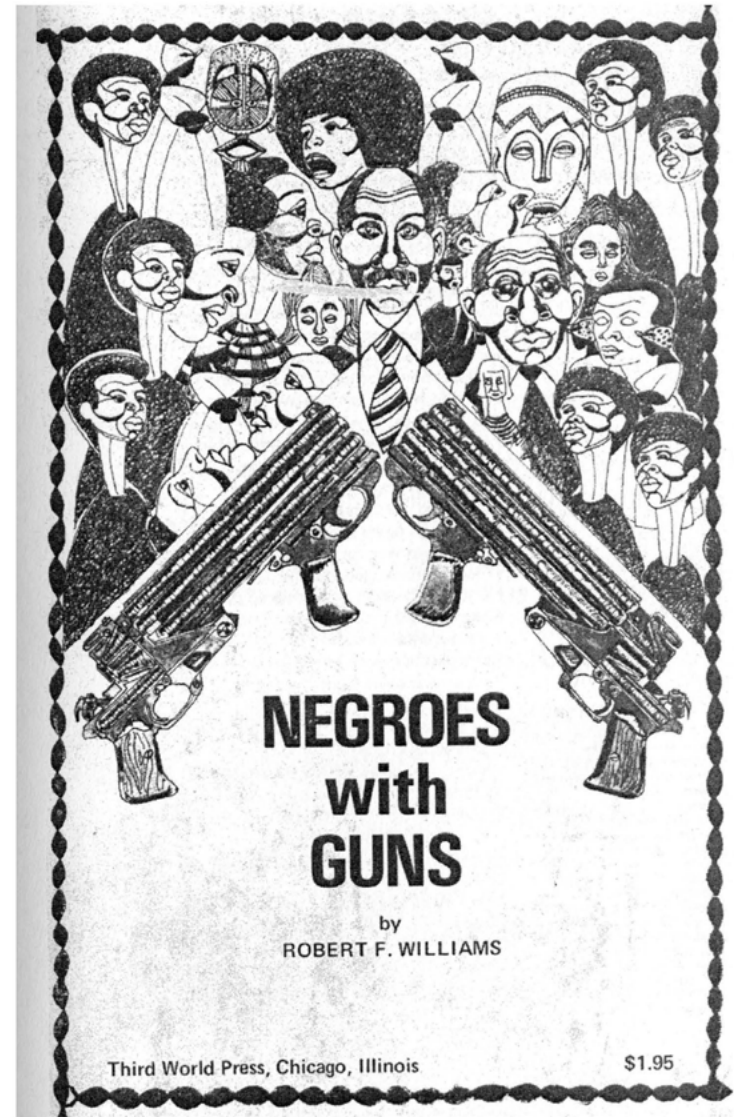


Fig 1: Robert Williams Wanted Flyer  
 Fig 2: Map of Monroe, North Carolina.  
 Fig 3: Cover of book, Robert F. Williams, *Negroes with Guns*. (Chicago, IL: Third World Press, 1962). 1, 2, & 3 sourced from Alegria, A., Bergman, L., Herzing, R., Marks, C., and Nadel-Hayes, S. *Robert and Mabel Williams Resource Guide*. San Francisco, CA: The Freedom Archives, 2005.

# A PROGRAM FOR SURVIVAL: SELF-PRESERVATION & THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY



Fig 1

defined; forms of self-defense ranged from directing the flow of traffic at intersections with broken stop lights (which the city neglected to fix), to creating a robust and highly successful cop-patrol program.

Part of what made the BPP so effective in establishing one of the most comprehensive community programs was their adance around educating members about the ideological substance of their work. By building a strong sense of community through embracing collective life in study, shared work, and political purpose, the BPP

The iconic Black Panther Party (BPP) remains one of the most well known examples of community self-defense today. For the BPP, the practice of self-defense was folded into the larger project of creating a “Program for Survival” which included providing an extensive range of social services for specifically Black communities. The initiative stemmed from a general understanding that Black individuals could not rely on the state for basic essentials or services. It follows that practices of self-defense in the BPP were somewhat broadly

effectively connected the need for self-defense, self-determination, and self-preservation to a larger and international political program. They created a culture of resistance through innovative art, the creation and dissemination of a prolific newspaper, providing breakfast programs, discussion groups, and more.

Fig 2



Fig 1: “To Serve and Protect Our Senior Citizens,” article in *Black Panther Intercommunal News Service*, June 6, 1973.

Fig 2: “A Program for Survival,” in *Black Panther Intercommunal News Service*, June 6, 1973.

## DEFENDING HER RIGHT TO SELF-DEFENSE: THE CASE OF INEZ GARCIA



Image: Luis 'Bato' Talamantez, David Johnson, Inez Garcia and Willie 'Sundiata' Tate at a rally in San Francisco. San Quentin Six Collection. Bato, David, and Sundiata were part of the San Quentin Six. Inez Garcia was a prominent figure in the 1970s women's movement.

In 1974, Inez Garcia was tried for first degree murder after shooting and killing one of her two rapists in self-defense. During her trial, the judge blatantly discredited Inez's experience by instructing the jury to exclude the factor of rape in their assessment. Of Inez's case, *Seize the Time* wrote:

*"When Inez tried to report her rape to a police matron, she told Inez that she was not there to listen to her problem, [and instructed her] to tell the DA. The DA, a white man, asked her, 'How did you like it? How long did it take? Did he enter you?' The judge instructed the jury to ignore the evidence of rape except as a psychological factor that perhaps may have 'imbalanced' Inez' state of mind."* (*Seize The Time*, Vol. 1-4. Periodical. Santa Barbara, CA: Seize The Time. October 1974. Seize The Time Collection.)

Inez was unapologetic about her choice to defend herself; she stated that she did not want sympathy, but simply "a defense of her right to self-defense." Inez's case spurred increased dialogue around defense against aggressive and unprovoked assault, especially as related to sexual and gender-based violence. Women's rights groups advocated for Inez's justice, forming the Inez Garcia Defense Committee and circulating materials that would help build a case for self-defense through a specifically women's lens. A pamphlet created by the Defense Committee wrote:

*"Thousands upon thousands of women have been attacked and raped, and countless more live in fear of rape. Inez is one of the few to defend herself so bravely. Her case is an example to everyone, for until men stop attacking women, women must be free to defend themselves by whatever means necessary."*

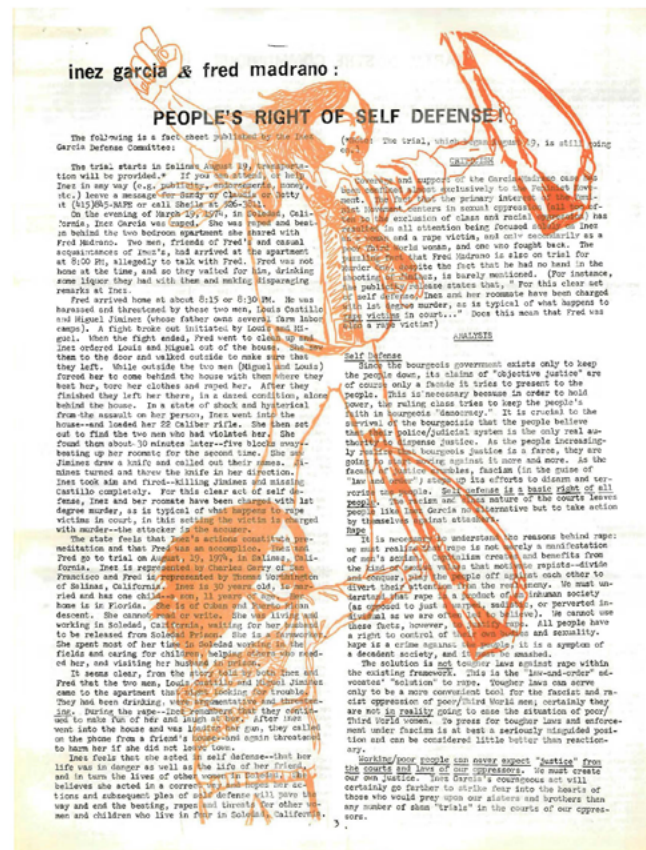
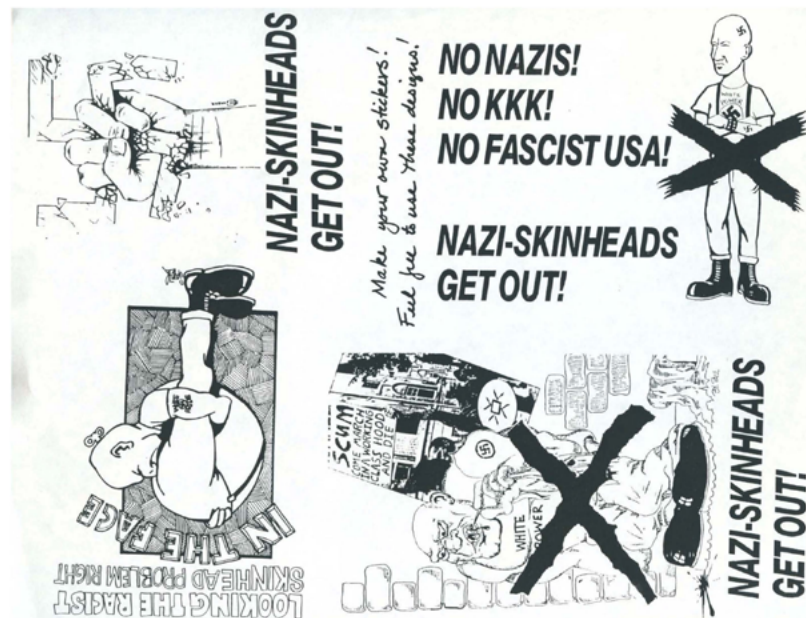


Image: People's Witness. Periodical. (Sacramento, CA: Sacramento Solidarity Committee). September 6, 1974. People's Witness Collection. The Freedom Archives.

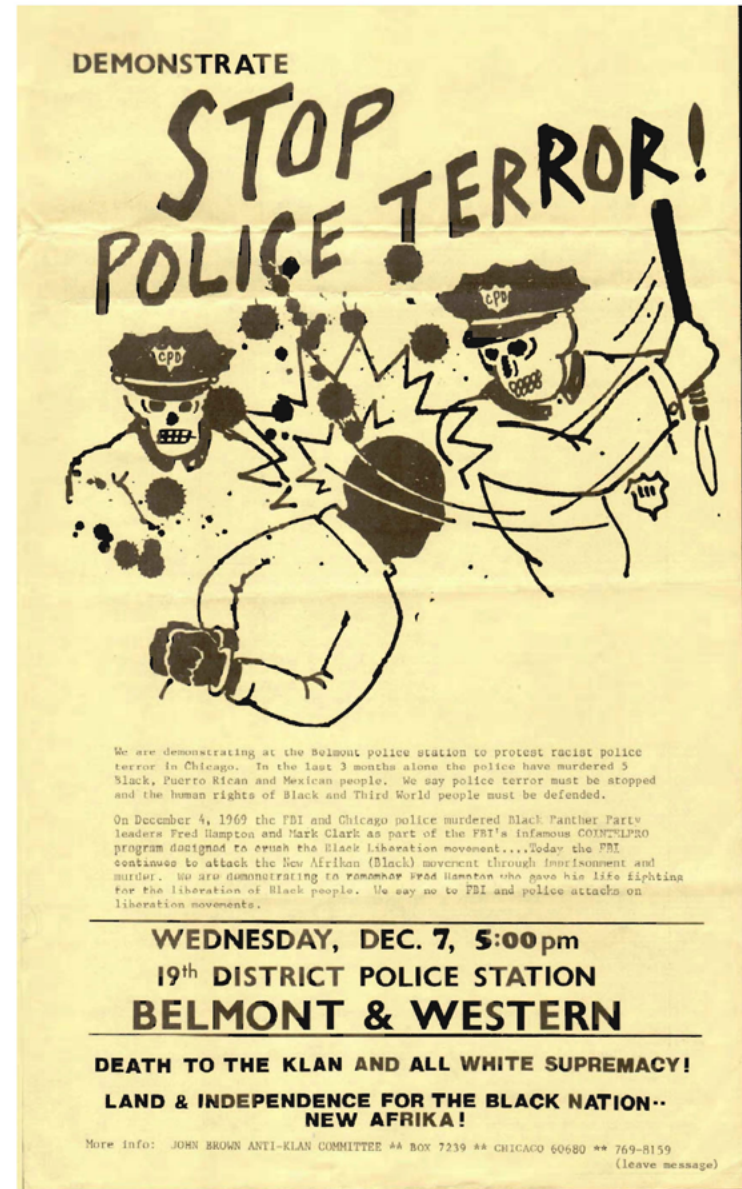
After spending two years in prison, Inez's conviction was reversed on appeal in 1977. She was represented by attorney Susan Jordan during her retrial, who discarded the diminished capacity defense of her original trial in 1974, arguing instead that the homicide was committed wholly out of self-defense.

Inez's widely covered trial not only marked a milestone in the movement against gender-based violence, but sparked a movement that bridged women's issues with struggles against incarceration. The pamphlets, flyers, and fundraisers that circulated on Inez's behalf broke new ground by asserting the inclusion of women's issues in larger conversations around self-defense and self-determination.

## THE JOHN BROWN ANTI-KLAN COMMITTEE



Sticker Templates. John Brown Anti-Klan Committee, Chicago Chapter. C. 1980s. John Brown Anti-Klan Committee Collection. The Freedom Archives.



Flyer, "Stop Police Terror!" John Brown Anti-Klan Committee, Chicago Chapter. C. 1980s. John Brown Anti-Klan Committee Collection. The Freedom Archives.

The Chicago Chapter of the John Brown Anti-Klan Committee (JBAKC) was at the center of escalated Neo-Nazi activity in the Northside and Southwest Side Chicago neighborhoods. As these neighborhoods became more integrated in the 1980s, Klansmen and Neo-Nazis began to terrorize Black communities through firebombings, cross burnings, racist graffiti, racist attacks, and murders. In response, the JBAKC held a number of counter rallies and forums confronting white supremacy. These initiatives, which recognized the importance of dialogue by creating much needed spaces for discussing racial divides, were part of a larger effort to wage an ideological battle against the KKK. To the JBAKC, self-defense started with discourse and making public spaces less hostile; they countered racist graffiti by painting over it with anti-klan messaging and disseminating other anti-klan propaganda, such as stickers. The flyers and graphics highlighted here provide some examples of JBAKC's attack on white supremacy through propaganda.



Fig 1

Fig. 1: (Above) Flyer, “No Imperialist War, No KKK, No Fascist USA!” John Brown Anti-Clan Committee Collection. The Freedom Archives.

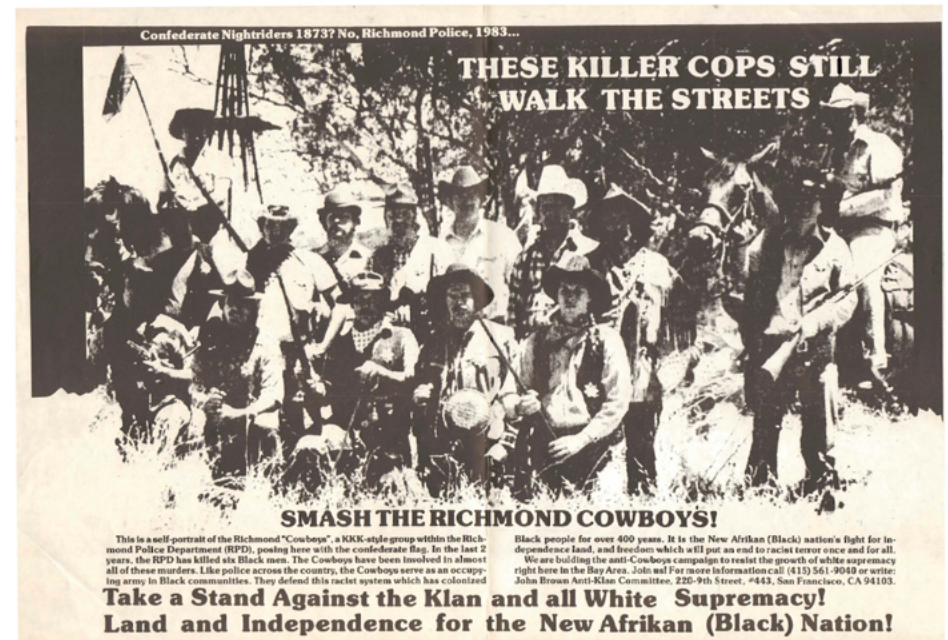


Fig 2

Fig. 2: Flyer, “These Killer Cops Still Walk The Streets: Smash the Richmond Cowboys!” John Brown Anti-Clan Committee Collection. The Freedom Archives.

### III.

#### **DIVERSITY OF TACTICS: DEFENSE ON MULTIPLE FRONTS**

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*“...a rice seedling,  
grows, not only to fill his hunger,  
but to give birth  
to other rice seedlings  
who will give birth  
to many more  
who will fill the hunger  
of generations of peasants  
for food, and land,  
and right”*

- “A Comrade Is As Precious As a Rice Seedling,” Mila D. Aguilar (1984)

This section builds from the ideas explored in section II to consider the practical applications of self-defense, self-determination, and self-preservation in the examples of Wounded Knee, Watts, and Attica, among others. These groups recognized the central importance of self-defense to revolutionary life, exercising creativity, sophisticated strategy, and resilience in the endeavor to keep one another safe. While the actions highlighted in the following examples stand out for their symbolic impact, they also led to direct material changes and expanded the horizon of dignified struggle by defying what was previously believed possible. Drawn out in this section is the revolutionary thrust of holding simultaneously the immediate needs of communities and a larger vision that connects the local with the global, the individual with the collective, and the historical with the contemporary.

## DEFENDING LAND, DEFENDING LIFE: THE OCCUPATION AT WOUNDED KNEE

The 71-day occupation of Wounded Knee on the Pine Ridge Reservation (South Dakota) in 1973 stands as an impressive example of community self-defense that centers indigenous lived experiences and land struggles. The occupation took place at the site of the 1890 massacre of nearly 300 Indian people by U.S. Government forces--a historical event whose atrocities remain glossed over in the dominant record.

Oglala Sioux traditional leaders called for the occupation, galvanizing several hundred Oglala Sioux, supporters from other tribes, and members of the American Indian Movement (AIM) to advance on Wounded Knee, where they would take a "stand on Indian land for Indian rights" (Voices From Wounded Knee, p.2). They arrived at the small town in the middle of the night, taking nearly a dozen of the town's residents as hostages. The town was surrounded by police forces within hours of the Oglala Sioux's arrival; not long after that, armed conflict ensued.

The armed takeover of Wounded Knee emerged from a grassroots movement that sought to bring awareness to the continued mistreatment of indigenous communities in the U.S.; through occupying reservation territory which had fallen under the control of a corrupt tribal leader and had become "a patchwork of white- and Indian-owned property," by the 1970s, occupiers asked that the site be genuinely restored to the Oglala Sioux people and demanded that the U.S. government follow through on the Treaty of 1869 (Voices from Wounded Knee, p.9, 55). The government responded by enacting tactics of siege warfare, which included cutting off electricity and water to the town, attempting to thwart the transport of food and supplies to occupiers, and opening fire into the village from the surrounding hills. But the indigenous resistance proved to be more cunning in their defense tactics, preventing U.S. troops from forcing them out of land they were entitled to. The occupying community created a medical clinic, set up housing, trained a highly competent security force, and arranged for a steady flow of supplies into the camp.

Succeeding in occupying the town of Wounded Knee for 71 days, Wounded Knee stands as a testament to indigenous resistance and is remembered as a profound victory for indigenous communities and land struggles.



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### SECURITY

"So it's an army, but it's an army born purely out of love for the Indian race, and not hate for the white race . . ."



Images: ed. Robert Anderson, Joanna Brown, Jonny Lerner, and Barbara Lou Shafer, *Voices From Wounded Knee* (Rosevelt Town: NY: Akwesasne Notes 1974): 76, 78, and 126.

# REBELLION FROM THE INSIDE OUT: RESISTANCE AT ATTICA PRISON

PSC - 2

September 17, 1971

## THE PRISONERS OF ATTICA

# Unity and courage vs. Rockefeller's machine guns



Rockefeller's assault troops entering Attica prison for the massacre.

ATTICA, N.Y., Sept. 14—Billionaire Governor Rockefeller yesterday ended with a massacre the greatest prisoners' rebellion in modern times, reflecting the blatant racism that has created the concentration camp system in this country and has led to prisoners' revolts nationwide, a guard held hostage by rebelling inmates at Attica State Prison emerged from the prison's main gate free and unharmed but with a violent shout of "White power!" behind him, within the prison walls, opened a carnage of blood and bodies, including 26 dead prisoners and hundreds wounded, some fatally. All dead were 9 guards held as hostages, all, according to later autopsy, killed by bullets as 1000 state troopers, sheriffs' deputies and prison guards armed with shotguns, automatic weapons and nausea gas stormed the prison with gun blazing.

"It reminded the aftermath of a war," some observers said, and they were right. Attica, with its prisoner population 85 per cent black and Puerto Rican and the high political consciousness and clenched fist salutes displayed during the rebellion, was one more battle in the continuing war for national liberation of the black and brown populations in the United States. Few believe that it will be the last.

On Thursday, September 9, over 1000 prisoners, long abused by the all-white racist guard force, a vicious prison system, and an economic and political dictatorship held over the poor and working class of this country by the rich, rose up to overpower their tormentors. Within minutes, the inmates seized Cell Block D and 22 guards. Then, from a makeshift megaphone, the inmates issued their demands, many of which reflected the high political content of the rebellion.

### POLITICAL DEMANDS RAISED

"An immediate end to the agitation of race relations by the prison administration of this State," the prisoners demanded, an end to the racial discrimination against brown and black prisoners by the parole board; a replacement of the present parole board appointed by Rockefeller with a board elected by the people; the right to labor union membership while working in the prison and state and federal minimum wage instead of the present slave labor; constitutional right to legal repre-

sentation at parole board hearings; "an end to the segregation of prisoners from the mainline population because of their political beliefs"; an end to guard brutality against prisoners; and, later the prisoners added their demands for amnesty from criminal prosecution and "speedy and safe transportation out of confinement to any non-imperialist country."

"Many prisoners believe their labor power is being exploited," said the declaration of demands, "in order for the state to increase its economic power and to continue to expand its correctional industries (which are million-dollar complexes), yet do not develop working skills acceptable for employment in the outside society, and which do not pay the prisoner more than an average of forty cents a day. Most prisoners never make more than fifty cents a day. Prisoners who refuse to work for the outrageous scale, or who strike, are punished and segregated without the access to privileges shared by those who work; this is class legislation, class division, creates hostilities within the prison."

The prisoners set up a People's Central Committee which included black, Puerto Rican and white members, organized their own typing pool and sound system. As for the hostages, according to Tom Soto of the Prisoners Solidarity Committee who saw them, the guards were being well treated, undoubtedly much better than the guards had ever treated the prisoners.

### ROCKEFELLER REJECTS AMNESTY

Nelson Rockefeller, billionaire governor of New York, disagreed. "To do so (grant amnesty) would undermine the very essence" of American society, he said. From the barbed-wired seclusion of his 3000 acre private estate at Pocantico Hills, Rockefeller rejected the plea of the mediating committee for him to join the negotiations. Instead, this brother of the head of Chase Manhattan Bank ordered the full mobilization of the National Guard units in western New York to prepare a massacre of Attica's inmates.

The demands of the prisoners were never seriously considered, and the most fundamental of the demands, amnesty, was never considered by the State. To the prisoners, this was crucial as many were in danger of being framed up on murder charges for the death of a sympathetic guard killed by other guards when the rebellion broke out.

Meanwhile, the troop buildup outside the prison continued. Sheriffs' deputies poured in from 13 surrounding counties in their own automobiles, armed with shotguns and 30-30 hunting rifles for "the turkey shoot," as one racist called it. It was clear that Rockefeller's government was not negotiating in good faith.

Under cover of "negotiating," they were preparing the massacre, as hundreds of National Guard troops were moved into the area on Monday. Police outside the prison grew increasingly hostile to arriving crowds of prisoners' supporters and relatives. One state trooper leveled his shotgun at members of a delegation of the Prisoners Solidarity Committee and growled, "Get out of the roadway or we'll wipe you out!"

Meanwhile, relatives of prisoners were denied access to the prison grounds by police, although relatives of hostages were allowed in. A roadblock

one mile from the prison sealed off the prisoners from their relatives and outside supporters. As far as the State was concerned, the prisoners' families had no rights. A curfew was also imposed in the town of Attica to prevent angry black, brown and white supporters from exercising their right to be at the scene.

Rockefeller's government had also decided the prisoners had no rights. Not even the right to live. Yesterday, Monday morning, the State's mobilization was completed, and by 8 a.m. 1700 troops armed with machine guns, automatic rifles, tear and nausea gas, shotguns, and high pressure hoses were poised for the attack. At 9:45, Oswald gave the signal for the attack to begin. Two Army helicopters circled over the northeast corner of the 35-acre compound where the prisoners were gathered. One dropped containers of nausea gas onto Cell Block D, while the other swooped down on the men below, firing automatic weapons in the crowd of prisoners, shooting them down in "Vietnam" fashion. The prisoners had no weapons to return the fire but defended themselves as valiantly as they could. Their only means of defense were hand-made weapons. It was a massacre.

### CAPITALIST PRESS LIED

Yesterday the capitalist press was full of horror stories of hostages with their throats cut, mutilations and executions. The racist hysteria against the prisoners' uprising was being carefully fanned. Today the truth came out—the guards were all killed in the same murderous assault by police and national guards on the prisoners.

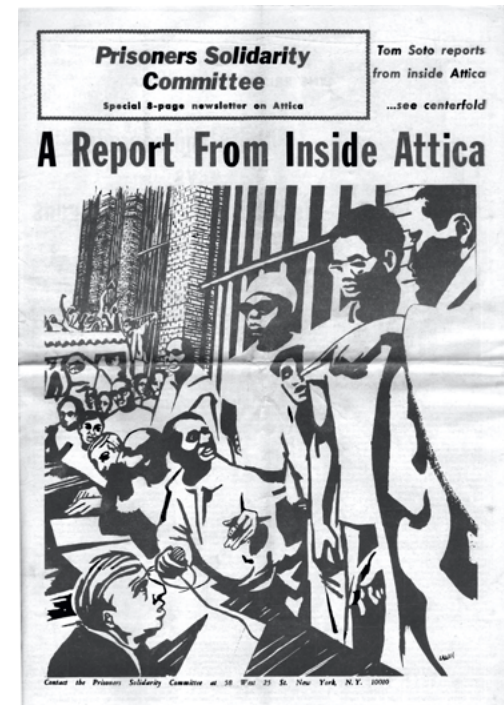
So far, twenty-eight prisoners and nine hostages were reported killed, hundreds of prisoners wounded. The 28 surviving hostages were taken for treatment to a nearby hospital, while the hundreds of wounded prisoners waited for treatment in a small room in the prison, 8 by 10 feet, the floor covered with blood. "It's the worst thing I've ever seen," said one doctor emerging from the prison gate in a blood-stained gown.

Asked if he had any second thoughts after seeing the resulting massacre, Commissioner Oswald patted his bare stomach and calmly replied, "No, I don't." Nelson Rockefeller had no second thoughts, either. He agreed that the security of the many were in danger of being framed up on murder charges for the death of a sympathetic guard killed by other guards when the rebellion broke out.

The people were not. Prisons around the country stirred with anger. In Baltimore City Jail, the second revolt within a year broke out, and prisoners of Cleveland County Prison also rebelled. Throughout New York, Rockefeller ordered all inmates in the state's maximum security prisons confined to their cells, in fear of spreading rebellion. Rockefeller, slipping his mint julep at his Pocantico Hills estate, may have been delighted with Nixon's support, but he was frantically worried about the rising tide of people's vengeance that is increasingly threatening to sweep him and his wealthy class into the dustbin of history.

From September 9 to September 13, 1971, over 1200 incarcerated people rebelled, took hostages, and occupied parts of Attica Prison in what is contemporarily known as one of the largest and most successful prison rebellions in the U.S. United around demands for better healthcare, education, and against unrestrained violence by the state, prisoners worked collectively to negotiate an end to inhumane conditions at the prison. On the fourth day, New York State Police troopers, sent by then Governor Rockefeller, descended upon the prison murdering 33 prisoners and 10 correctional officers. 49 years later, Attica serves as a rallying cry for those working for self-determination inside of prison walls. Today, incarcerated people's right to self-defense continues to be largely suppressed by prison guards, who commit atrocious acts of violence against prisoners with impunity.

The incarcerated people of the 1971 Attica rebellion opened the gate to the possibilities of rebellion and resistance for those behind bars, demonstrating the power of collective self-defense even among one of the most subjugated groups in today's society.



Article, "Unity and Courage vs Rockefeller's machine guns," in *A Report From Inside Attica*. Prisoners Solidarity Committee. September 17, 1971. Attica Prison Rebellion Collection. The Freedom Archives.

Cover, *A Report From Inside Attica* (Periodical). Prisoners Solidarity Committee. September 17, 1971. Attica Prison Rebellion Collection. The Freedom Archives.



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The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee of California

## WILL WATTS SECEDE?

Watts, South Central Los Angeles, a colony of the poor trapped in a right-wing city that recently denied it even a hospital, may pull out of Los Angeles altogether.

If it does, it will join more than 70 other cities, such as Sierra Vista, that have disincorporated themselves. The name suggested for the independent Watts is FREEDOM CITY.

This plan came last month from a Negro organization called the Temporary Alliance of Local Organizations, or TALO. The spokesman for this move is TALO's public relations chairman, SNCC field secretary Clifford Vaughn.

The Alliance is a broad coalition of Negro organizations, ranging from the black nationalists to the NAACP. It was created after the freeing of the policeman who killed Leonard Davis. It was felt that a riot would erupt if the community did nothing to stop police brutality. "Another riot would have caused meaningless deaths," says Vaughn. "I don't mind dying for a political purpose, but I don't want to die for nothing. It was clear that the courts and the investigating commissions were only going to whitewash the cops and infuriate the people. We had to take action."

**Policing the Cops**

The first, and major project of TALO was the Citizens Area Patrol (CAP). This is a fleet of cars and drivers who follow the Los Angeles Police in the Watts area. Their cars carry two-way radios supplied by SNCC. Within minutes after a call is made into the CAP central, a car with a photographer and often a tape recorder can be on the scene of an arrest or police action.

"The purpose of CAP is to observe the police and protect the community," says Vaughn. "It has given the residents of Watts a new security. Unfortunately the police don't understand that the purpose of the Patrol is to prevent situations that will lead to riots. They harass the drivers with tickets, stopping them, running them off the road."

The CAP has been a rallying point for the community. Ghetto residents have felt the oppression of the police most acutely. One of the most forceful ideas behind the creation of Freedom City is that it would have its own police force, and the "occupying army" of the LAPD would no longer have the power of terror over the community.

**Freedom City**

There are many obstacles, practical and legal, in the way of the initiative. 271, 543 signatures, about one out of every four voters in Los Angeles city must be placed on a petition to disincorporate. 25% of the property owners in the area must agree. Various city commissions must approve.

The move has received wide support. Assemblyman Mervyn Dymally, John Fretz, executive director of the Southern California Council on Church and Race; Mrs. Yvonne Bradshaw, Democratic nominee in the 61st Assembly District and Norman Houston, president of the LA central NAACP branch, are among the supporters of the idea, along with the TALO coalition.

"For a generation we have vainly protested against a system and a society which have held us in de facto slavery," says the public statement that announced the drive for Freedom City. "We have been exploited by the majority of society. We fear the police and the criminal equally. Our votes are overwhelmed by the majority of the electorate, a sub-

CONTINUED PAGE 4, COLUMN 2

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**FIELD WORKERS BOYCOTT**  
**DI GIORGIO RIGGED ELECTION**  
FOR TERMS OF SCHENLEY CONTRACT SEE PAGE 6

On Friday, June 24, the NFWA again proved that it has the support of the majority of farm workers in its battle with DiGiorgio. This was demonstrated by the boycott by field workers and the boycott by field workers and other DiGiorgio employees of the "election" at DiGiorgio's Sierra Vista and Borrego Springs ranches.

At Borrego Springs, near San Diego, out of 219 eligible voters (eligibility determined by DiGiorgio) only 14 voted. There were 732 "eligible" voters at both ranches. Of these, 547 refused to vote and 41 cast blank ballots. Of the 385 votes cast, the Teamsters received 281 (73% were for the union, versus the 26% that voters the road from the polling place it was not difficult to see which workers supported the boycott.

**Field Workers Boycott**

The first truck load of field workers saw a pattern which was to be repeated all morning. As the truck entered the turn into the station a hastily made red NFWA banner appeared on a stick held by one of the workers. The truck, instead of turning, continued down the road and left the ranch accompanied by loud shouts of approval from the pickets. Those on the truck answered with "Viva la huelga."

Throughout the morning the bus and truck loads of field workers brought in to vote remained seated or walked to the rope which separated the pickets from DiGiorgio property. During the 11 hours of polling the strikers stood in the hot sun and sang and cheered as their companions refused to participate in the "free and open" election.

Approximately 30 field workers voted. The rest of the voters were office workers, carpenters, plumbers, shed men, and some of the high-school students hired



**THIS BUSLOAD OF FIELD WORKERS, one of many, refused to get out when driven to the DiGiorgio polling place by DiGiorgio several weeks earlier. Many of the students refused to participate and some actively aided the boycott.**

The refusal of the NFWA to participate in the company election was based on 8 months of experience in dealing with DiGiorgio under similar conditions. The union charged that the election was fraudulent since the procedure, set by the company, did not permit strikers to vote. Eligibility was controlled by the company.

The union pointed out that its organizers were barred from the camp or ranch property, while ranch supervisors openly solicited for the Teamsters. The morning after the election was announced, leaflets appeared urging the workers to vote for the Teamsters and presenting a vague set of proposals. Workers reported that the leaflet was being distributed by the ranch supervisory personnel.

The NFWA replied with a leaflet listing the major points of the Schenley contract signed the same day that DiGiorgio announced his private election.

**NFWA Injunction**

On Wednesday and Thursday the ruling

The boycott was successful. The pickets lined up around the Sierra Vista ranch and the slogan "No votes viewed" to the workers in the field. On the picket lines were some 65 student volunteers in Delano for a week of orientation before going to work at boycott centers around the country. Many of them felt that participating in the picket lines was the most valuable experience of the entire program; their enthusiasm was certainly shared by the strikers.

In addition to leafleting and picketing, the NFWA and AFWD filed suit in S.F. Superior Court seeking an injunction forbidding DiGiorgio to put their names on the ballot. The injunction was granted. The company had asked two questions: (1) Did the worker want a union? If so, which union? The farm workers clearly answered these two questions without ever touching the ballots.

There is no doubt that the election has served to sharpen and polarize the conflict in Delano. Father Desmond, asked by DiGiorgio to observe at Borrego Springs, refused to sign a statement that the election was fair.

The election was supported by Bishop Wilton Gregory of the Fresno-Merced diocese who, in a statement on June 17, launched a thinly veiled attack on the recognition of the NFWA as the legitimate bargaining agent for farm workers by Schenley and Christian Brothers.

There was increased outside support for the Delano strikers, demonstrated by the student volunteers and by the vigil outside the home of Rev. Moore, an "impartial" observer at Sierra Vista. This vigil was joined by Negroes from Bakersfield, led by their pastor, Rev. Stacy. Their support was mobilized by two SNCC organizers in Bakersfield, Marshall Ganz and Richard Flowers. Rev. Moore, a Negro who claimed at the Delano Senate hearings that Delano had the best race relations in America (a phrase used by Sen. Eastland in the descriptive Southern County Manifesto), did not refuse to sign the "fair election" statement.

**DELANO NEEDS FOOD**

The strikers in Delano are in desperate need of food for the strike-kitchen. Send staples: flour, coffee, rice, meat. In San Francisco, contact the NFWA office - 255-2215.

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**DI GIORGIO BOYCOTT MARCH**

On Saturday, July 9, at 11 A.M., there will be a march up Market Street in San Francisco in support of the DiGiorgio boycott. The Delano March will start at Drum and Market and end in the Civic Center plaza.

Cesar Chavez and a group of striking farmworkers from Delano will lead the march. It is expected that the speeches will be brief; marchers will go to neighboring markets to picket.

**JOIN CESAR CHAVEZ ON JULY 9 IN THE MARCH UP MARKET STREET!**



**NFWA DICE NO VOTER EN ELECCIONES FALSAS**

DOLARES HURTIA, NFWA vice-president on picket line. Sign reads "NFWA Says DON'T VOTE IN FALSAS ELECCIONES." Photo: Gerhard Gschwend

The youth-led Citizens Area Patrol (CAP) of Watts, California is one of the earliest examples of a community cop-watch program. Developed in 1966, CAP responded to escalating levels of police brutality at a moment when housing segregation in Los Angeles was legally reinstated under Proposition 14. By demarcating the city's neighborhoods along racial lines, this new legislation made it easier for cops to target specifically non-white and often Black communities. The redlining of neighborhoods with Prop 14 emboldened tactics of aggression among police forces, leading to increased cases of racial terror in Los Angeles's predominantly Black areas.

A project of the Temporary Alliance of Local Organizations (TALO), the CAP program involved a fleet of cars that were equipped with two way radios (provided by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, or SNCC) to monitor police activity. Disbanding in small teams, drivers and photographers with cameras and tape recorders in tow would arrive at the scene of police action, such as an arrest, to document and record the interaction. CAP Executive Director Tommy Jacquette said of the grassroots patrol group:

CAP is more of a function than an organization. The patrol is to reduce police brutality, and protect our people. We don't do this with arms; we don't even carry a pair of fingernail clippers when we go out. But when the Man comes on, the reaction of many people is to panic. We're there to stop that panic, to fight fear. (*The Movement Newspaper*, July 1966.)

Though the actions carried out by CAP were completely legal, it is evident that cops saw the CAP as a threat. With patent antagonism, cops issued tickets "for anything, everything, and nothing," including "frayed license plates and tail lights that were too blue." ("There is a movement starting in Watts," *The Movement Newspaper*, July 1966)

News of what was happening in Watts spread through outlets such as *The Movement*, a periodical that was published by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) of California. At its peak, the paper had 2,500 paid subscribers across the country.



Founded in Oakland, California in 1967, the Black Panther Party always held community control of the police central to their mission. Their stance on the matter was explicitly stated in their ten-point program, which all members were required to memorize prior to joining the organization. Point seven, "We Want An Immediate End To Police Brutality And Murder Of Black People," reads:

We believe we can end police brutality in our Black community by organizing Black self-defense groups that are dedicated to defending our Black community from racist police oppression and brutality. The Second Amendment to the Constitution of the United States gives a right to bear arms. We therefore believe that all Black people should arm themselves for self-defense.

The Black Panther, June 16, 1973 Page 15

**BOBBY'S MESSAGE**

Continued from page 5

tion that were used and called attention to Chicago's voter registration regulations.

"Here in Chicago, when it comes down to registering people to vote... if I'm not mistaken, you have to go down to the courthouse to register to vote or some other local institution of government, and you have to line up and wait. That's the state laws here, in California, we have a different situation. We can legalize registrars in a matter of 1 hour. If we can put together 30 people, 50 or 100 people inside of a church, the Alameda County Board of Registrar's office will come down and teach a class for 1 hour and have everybody raise their hand, swear the people in, and make them deputy registrars.

"They can then go out into the community and knock on the doors and actually solicit people to register to vote. You do not have that here and that's the problem.

"On the one hand you're talking about, here in Chicago, placing a proposition, measure or initiative on the ballot for community control of police. But you need a state referendum, measure or proposition to allow for people to be able to become deputy registrars so that they can go out into the community and in fact register people to vote, so that people in the community can participate in the political process, in the electoral process.

"Now this method of making the people go to the courthouse to register to vote is an old, fascist, racist method from the South to the North to the East to the West. It's been used on Black people consistently in the South, where you have to first go to your courthouse, police station, or fire station and register to vote. If people don't go down there they can't participate in the electoral process. If we hear any politician talk about government and about people participating in government, and that we have a democracy and that the word democracy means government by the people. If they talk that, then it's necessary for you, the community, move on them to support the fact that you the people should have the right to organize non-partisan and partisan groups and have people become deputy registrars in the thousands to be able to go in the community and register millions of people.

"They cannot talk about government of the people, by the people, for the people, they cannot talk about the word democracy, or democrat or a people's republic or whatever, without recognizing the fact that millions of people in this country do not even

**BOBBY SEALE** spoke to over 1,000 Chicagoans who gathered to end police brutality and corruption through community control of police.

participate because of the repressing framework."

Bobby then turned his speech toward the police:

"...Their real power is manifested in the organized guns and force. But we're saying that the people in this country, the people in this country, don't have any control over that organized guns, force and power. We're

**COMMUNITY CONTROL**

Continued from page 5

for all of us, because until it's made better, it's not a safe place for any of us. All of our children suffer because of the things that are going on now.

"It's good to organize, it's good to try to get some control. But it certainly means that you're going to have to gain some political power. One of the places not to ignore... (is the church). The Church is a moving force. That minister can move a lot of people in your direction. This will be a powerful force in keeping people from being shot, it will keep police from walking into buildings and just shooting people down..."

The audience also heard Brother Dick Gregory, who brought some hard truths to them. He spoke of police turning their backs on certain crimes committed in poor ghettos:

"At five years old in the Black ghetto of St. Louis, Missouri, I knew what a hustler looked like and knew what a dope pusher looked like. And at five years old I just could not believe I was that much more smarter than the police.

saying that the capitalist, the racist, and others have the control over it. And we're saying that we want to change it, that we want to revolutionize it, turn it over into the hands of the people, for a new process to occur. We're saying we want community control.

"So what you're doing when you put the initiative on the ballot is uniting so many people in opposition to the corruption of this system, in opposition to the brutality, in opposition to all the exploitation. If that isn't our goal, I don't know what is.

"I say this is humanity, we are part of humanity, we're going to be significant to it, we're going to have to involve the masses of the people. You do not gain power to the people, you do not gain government of the people, by the people and for the people, until the people start to learn how to control those institutions of government, be it the police department or whatever, until we make it function for ourselves. We are not going to survive, we are not going to live long enough unless we begin to change things and we better participate for the next 4 years, for the next 6 years, for the next 10 years, because the movement has a job... We have a job of implementing people's power in Chicago and this country. All Power to the People and thank you very much."

"At six years old, I saw the cop... standing on the corner, laughing and joking with the pimps. At six years old, I saw the cop stick his hand through a car window where the dope pushers were sitting, and they held a jolly conversation. I'm six six years old, I'm 41 years old, and I keep hearing white folks in American saying to Black folks, 'Why don't you have respect for your local police?'. That's the first time I realized white folks was crazy.

Brother Gregory perhaps summed up everything as best anyone could when he said:

"When you look at the police structure in America, I hope you see more than the police—I hope you see America. Today you're talking about community control of the police; tomorrow we're going to talk about community control of America..."

Organizations that support the City-wide Campaign for Community Control of Police include the NAACP, the Illinois Black Political Caucus, the American Indian Movement (AIM), Operation PUSH (People United to Help Humankind), the League of Black Women Voters and the National Defense Organization (which includes more than 700 political and social organizations from across the United States).

Images: (Left and right) Excerpts from article, "Chicago Community Control of Police Conference: A Resounding Success," *The Black Panther Intercommunal News Service*, Vol. X No. 4. June 9, 1973. The Black Panther Party Newspaper Collection. The Freedom Archives.

Similarly to the Citizens Area Patrol of Watts, the Black Panther Party's cop patrol would arrive at scenes of police activity to serve as witnesses who could report on actions committed by officers in violation of the law. Unlike the Citizens Area Patrol, however, the BPP cop patrol would bear arms as a tactic of intimidation. The goal was to hold officers accountable to their actions, and hopefully dissuade them carrying out unprovoked assault (which was and continues to be exceedingly common). The program of the Oakland chapter was so successful that it became adopted in many major cities across the U.S. The BPP recognized a vital opportunity to build off of the momentum garnered in Oakland. They hosted a conference on Community Control of the Police in Chicago and created a nationally, broad-reaching militant movement as a means to end police brutality.

The Black Panther, Saturday, June 9, 1973 Page 14

**POLICE SABOTAGE FAILS**

Continued from page 3

who office workers remember was unusually polite, had been given literature about the issue of community control of police and left the office smiling strangely and thanking everyone. Shortly after the police appeared, Having no search warrant, the police were not allowed into the building. Though this has not stopped Chicago police before, the quick emergence of many members of the community from their homes, as well as the quick arrival of Brothers Rush and Todd made a critical difference. Attorney Todd first asked the ranking official, Straszette, from the State Attorney's office, if the police were in "hot pursuit". The first reply was "No". Then, minutes later, when the chances of obtaining a hastily signed search warrant became even more remote the answer became "Yes". (If police are in "hot pursuit" they don't need a search warrant to legally enter a private building.) After conferring with Brother Rush, the coordinator of the city-wide campaign, Attorney Todd, a leading member of P.U.S.H. (People United To Save Humankind), a Chicagoan headlined his views.

**BOB RUSH**, moderator of the two-day conference, introduced **FANNIE LOU HAMER**, a long time southern community activist.

**CHICAGO**

Continued from page 3

favorable legislation, involvement in electoral politics at the precinct level and working along with other progressive organizations for the realization of the conference's goals.

Community Control of Police - A Definition, concerned the control of the police draft ordinance and its essential points, with an eye toward defining, with even greater insight, exactly what problems are involved and how to work them out. Coordinating this workshop was im-

The last three workshops, Voter Registration, Ward Redistricting and Community Control of Police - A Tool for Unity in Grassroots politics, were combined into one, hosting this triple-edged workshop was Sam Patch, Chairman of the Illinois Black Political Caucus. The suggestions were:

--Ward Redistricting - To obtain the representation necessary in proportion to Chicago's population for community control of police, based on Chicago's population, there should be a minimum of 19 Black wards, 3 La-

pendent wards, more? wards

wards are chosen by the City led by the people City Council shelve, by un-adopted Com-

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**BOBBY SEALE'S MESSAGE TO THE CHICAGO CONFERENCE**

Last week Bobby Seale flew to Chicago from Oakland, California, to attend the June 1st and 2nd Community Control of Police Conference sponsored by the City-Wide Campaign for Community Control of Police, held at the University of Illinois, Circle Campus.

Bobby took the place of scheduled speaker, Brother Huey P. Newton, who was unable to attend. Hundreds of Chicago residents took part in the conference workshops, and overwhelmingly resolved to begin organizing to end police brutality and murder of Black and poor people through establishing community control of the Chicago Police Department.

**"COMMUNITY CONTROL OF AMERICA"**

**BOB RUSH, DICK GREGORY, FANNIE LOU HAMER, OTHERS, SPEAK AT CHICAGO CONFERENCE**

(Chicago, Ill.) - Chicago's Community Control of Police Conference, held on June 1st and 2nd, attracted more than a thousand Chicago citizens of varied ethnic background who participated in workshops in order to set up a structure by which control of Chicago's police could be achieved.

Also, the conference was highlighted by an impressive array of speakers who had come to Chicago from near and far. They included: Bobby Seale, leading member of the Black Panther Party; Fannie Lou Hamer, southern activist; Dick Gregory, comedian-activist; mayor of Gary, Indiana, Richard Hatcher and many others.

The conference was moderated by Bobby Rush, Coordinator of the Illinois Chapter of the Black Panther Party and a campaign organizer for Chicago's City-wide Campaign for Community Control of Police. Bobby Rush set the tone for the successful two-day conference when he addressed conference participants as-

**DICK GREGORY** spoke of the need for community control of Chicago's police.

American Patrolmen's League (AAPL) also spoke, Robinson is a member of the Chicago Police Department, who, after seeing from the inside police corruption and policies toward Black and poor people, formed the AAPL. He has been harassed, threatened and even arrested on occasions by the Chicago Police Depart-

# COMMUNITY CONTROLLED POLICE: THE CITY OF BERKELEY

Highlighted are excerpts from a 20 page pamphlet (c. 1970s) which argues for direct control of police by neighborhood residents in Berkeley. This early example approaches self-defense by targeting the police department and attempting to establish community control over law enforcement. The call for community control of police has recently re-emerged as the movement for abolition gains increasing support. While the statistics outlined in the pamphlet do not reflect current conditions, they help illuminate the pieces of

information useful for soliciting from city governments in order to create a convincing case for community controlled police.

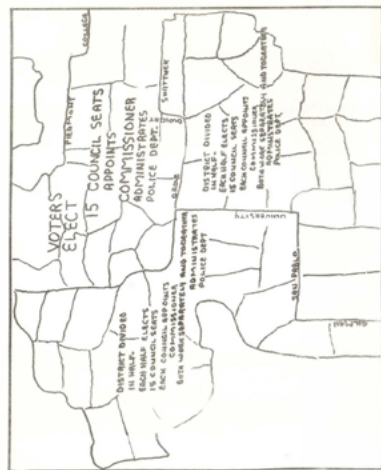


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stituting a city-wide review board would be neglectin the magnitude of problems in the black community.

**DISCRIMINACY:** 6. THE COMMON PEOPLE OF A COMMUNITY AS DIS-  
TINGUISHED FROM A PRIVILEGED CLASS: THE  
COMMON PEOPLE WITH RESPECT TO THEIR PO-  
LITICAL POWER.

the random house dictionary of the english language  
unabridged edition



| BUDGET   | manpower                                      | %solved crime   |
|--|---|---|
| <p><b>\$1.6 million</b></p>  | <p><b>161 men</b></p>                         | <p><b>29%</b></p>   |
| <b>1964</b>  |   |   |
| <p><b>3.6 million</b><br/><b>125% increase</b></p>   | <p><b>272 men</b><br/><b>60% increase</b></p> | <p><b>23%</b></p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><b>6% DECREASE!!</b></p> |
| <p>* Not included in the 'official' police budget are the pension funds for police and firemen. These funds totalled \$2.3 million this year compared to only \$1 million in 1964. An annual \$13,000 pension now goes to former BPD chiefs, Addison Fording, who retired in 1966, and John Holstrom who retired in 1960 (although both men were fit enough to devise the comprehensive plan for the University police force in 1969). Added together the police, fire and pension budgets total \$8.3 million this year, or 10.1 percent of the entire city budget.</p> |   |   |
| <p>* Chief Baker also has 150 reservists, 82 of whom are listed as "active in the BPD 1969 Annual Report. No such figures are available for 1964-65, but the budget for "emergency and reserve services has tripled since that time.</p>   |   |   |
| <p>* There are, of course, no figures available on the number of unsolved, and thus unsolved, crimes, particularly rape, but these might be the most significant figures of all because they would reveal the serious degree of alienation that exists between the Berkeley Police and an ever-growing number of Berkeley citizens.</p>  |   |   |

Images: (Left and right) Excerpts from pamphlet, "Community Control of Police." C. 1970s. The Freedom Archives General Collection. The Freedom Archives.

## IV.

### CONCLUSION, RESOURCES, & CONTINUED LEARNING

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*“ The rebellion of the archivist against his normal role is not, as so many scholars fear, the politicizing of a neutral craft, but the humanizing of an inevitably political craft.”*

- Howard Zinn, “Secrecy, Archives, and the Public Interest,” (1970)

### CONCLUSION

Memory work aspires to remold traditional modes of interacting with the past, insisting that we “transform ways of knowing and doing” in order to humanize the “inevitably political craft” of archiving. The histories highlighted here attest to the radical potential of privileging possibility over precedent—whether through direct action, as illustrated in some of the featured examples, or through the act of stewarding and sharing a history that has been previously deemed unfit for preservation. Memory workers in this context can participate in defending community histories, narratives, and experiences against threats of erasure.

## RESOURCES

1.  
Our Communities, Our Solutions: An Organizers' Toolkit to Abolish Policing by Critical Resistance  
[http://criticalresistance.org/cr\\_abolish-policing-toolkit\\_2020/](http://criticalresistance.org/cr_abolish-policing-toolkit_2020/)
2.  
M4BL Info Sheets: Community Control of Law Enforcement & Participatory Budgeting  
<https://m4bl.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/CommControlofLawEnforcement-OnePager.pdf>  
<https://m4bl.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/ParticipatoryBudgeting-OnePager.pdf>
3.  
Defund Police Toolkit by Interrupting Criminalization  
<https://www.interruptingcriminalization.com/s/Defund-Toolkit.pdf>
4.  
What's Next? Safer and More Just Communities Without Policing by Interrupting Criminalization  
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5ee39ec764dbd7179cf1243c/t/5f85c390635cac03f35913d5/1602601934251/What%27s+Next+Report+.pdf>
5.  
*Police: A Field Guide* by Tyler Wall and David Correia (Verso, 2018)  
<https://www.versobooks.com/books/2530-police>

### Political-Para-Military Book List

1. GARVEY AND GARVEYISM....A. GARVEY
2. PHILOSOPHIES AND OPINIONS OF MARCUS GARVEY....vol 1&2
3. BLACK NATIONALISM....UDOM
4. NEGRO LIBERATION....HAYWOOD
5. AMERICAN NEGRO SLAVE REVOLTS....APTHEKER
6. BLACK RECONSTRUCTION....DuBOIS
7. RECONSTRUCTION....ALLEN
8. PAN AFRICANISM OR COMMUNISM ....PADMORE
9. THE NEGRO IN THE UNITED STATES....FRAZIER
10. BLUES PEOPLE....Le Roi Jones
11. BLACK JACOBINS....C.L.R. JAMES
12. NEGROES WITH GUNS....WILLIAMS
13. BLACK BOURGEOISIE....FRAZIER
14. POLITICAL CHANGE IN UNDERDEVELOPED COUNTRIES....
15. PARTISAN WARFARE...HEILBRUNN....Praeger
16. GUERRILLA WARFARE....CHE GUEVARA
17. GUERRILLA WARFARE...MAO-TSE-TUNG
18. WAR,POLITICS AND POWER....CLAUSEWITZ
19. THE TRUE BELIEVER....ERIC HOPFER
20. GUERRILLA AND COUNTER GUERRILLA WARFARE....POMEROY
21. POLITICAL THOUGHTS OF MAO TSE TUNG
22. ANTHOLOGY ON MAO:ON PRACTICE  
ON CONTRADICTION  
ON PROTRACTED WAR  
PROBLEMS OF WAR AND STRATEGY
23. WHAT IS TO BE DONE ?....LENIN
24. STATE AND REVOLUTION....LENIN
25. COMMUNIST REVOLUTIONARY WARFARE
26. RIGHT OF SELF DETERMINATION....LENIN
27. CONFLICT IN THE SHADOWS....JAMES ELIOT CROSS
28. 150 QUESTIONS FOR A GUERRILLA....
29. PEOPLES WAR, PEOPLES ARMY....
30. PRIMER FOR REVOLT....
31. WE SHALL FIGHT IN THE STREETS....
32. GUERRILLA WARFARE....YANK BERT LEVY
33. MODERN GUERRILLA WARFARE....
34. PRINCIPLES OF WAR....CLAUSEWITZ
35. THE WAR OF THE FLEA....TABOR

Book list from *The Los Angeles War Cry*, Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM), p. 3. Black Liberation Collection. The Freedom Archives.

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