

A black and white close-up photograph of George Jackson. He is smiling broadly, showing his teeth. He has dark, curly hair and is wearing a collared shirt and a jacket. The background is out of focus.

Blood in My Eye

Part One

George
Jackson

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BLOOD IN MY EYE

Part One

GEORGE JACKSON

TO THE BLACK COMMUNIST YOUTH –

TO THEIR FATHERS –

WE WILL NOW CRITICIZE THE UNJUST WITH THE WEAPON.

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My dear only surviving son,

I went to Mount Vernon August 7th, 1971, to visit the grave site of my heart your keepers murdered in cold disregard for life.

His grave was supposed to be behind your grandfather's and grandmother's. But I couldn't find it. There was no marker. Just mowed grass. The story of our past. I sent the keeper a blank check for a headstone – and two extra sites – blood in my eye!!!

PREFACE

In his introduction to George Jackson's *Soledad Brother*, Jean Genet wrote, "Nothing has been willed, written or composed for the sake of a book ... it is both a weapon of liberation and a poem of love." This book, too, is a weapon, but one entirely willed and purposeful. It was completed barely a week before the author's murder in San Quentin on August 21, 1971. It was sent out of the Adjustment Center with specific instructions for its publication, almost as if the author knew that he would never live to see its appearance in print. Describing it a few days before the end, George said, "I'm not a writer, but all of it's me, the way I want it, the way I see it." What he saw and what he wanted, the central passion of his life, was war, the revolutionary war of the people against their oppressors, a war which grew out of "perfect love and perfect hate."

"I've been in rebellion all my life," he wrote in one of his letters. For a young black growing up in the ghetto, the first rebellion is always crime. George's first experience with Amerikan law came at fourteen when he was arrested in Chicago for stealing a purse. From then on, his life was a constant succession of arrests, juvenile homes, paroles and more arrests. At age eighteen he was convicted of stealing \$70.00 from a gas station. His lawyer promised him that he would make a deal with the D.A. if George confessed to second degree robbery. He told George it was his only chance because he had a record. "Don't put the court to the expense of a trial, and they will give you county time." Instead he was given an indeterminate sentence – one year to life.

The first time I was put in prison, it was just like dying. Just to exist at all calls for some very heavy psychic adjustment. Being captured was the first of my fears. It may have been an acquired characteristic built up over centuries of black bondage.¹

The turning point in his life came when I met Marx, Lenin, Trotsky, Engels, and Mao ... and they redeemed me. For the first four years, I studied nothing but economics and military ideas. I met the black guerrillas, George "Big Jake" Lewis, and James Carr, W.C. Nolen, Bill Christmas, Tony Gibson and many others. We attempted to

1 *Soledad Brother: The Prison Letters of George Jackson.*

transform the black criminal mentality into a black revolutionary mentality.²

He wasn't alone in his discovery. At the same time, other prisoners were just beginning to discover Marx, Fanon and Mao, who provided them with a new way of regarding themselves and their struggle – a new standard of moral judgment. “I have been in rebellion all my life. I just didn't know it.” The social insights of Marx and others made it possible for them to have a sense of themselves as members of the human community, members of a revolutionary brotherhood.

In prison, commitment to revolution has a special meaning and a special price. To be identified as a revolutionary by the prison authorities means an almost permanent denial of parole, separation from the other prisoners, solitary confinement (usually in maximum security wings of the prison), transfers from one prison to another, beatings, bad food. It brings down on you the entire punitive and repressive force of a completely totalitarian system.

Inside prison George practiced a very special kind of devotion and love. When convicts talk about him, they often use the term “for real.” Many inmates “murder mouth” and “sell wolf tickets”; they do a lot of heavy talking, but when it comes down to the point of action, they disappear. George, however, was as good as his word. Whenever he made a statement of some kind, it would be followed by action. If you were the victim of a racial attack inside prison, there was a good chance that he would turn up fighting for you at your side.

Most of his “offenses” inside prison – the reasons why he was forced to spend over seven years in various forms of solitary confinement, including the infamous strip cells³ in Soledad's “O” wing, the reasons why he was never paroled – involve his defense of other inmates. What made him particularly dangerous to the prison authorities was this enormous talent as an organizer.

2 Ibid.

3 A 6 by 8 cell with no protection from wet weather, deprived of all items with which he might clean himself, forced to eat in the stench and filth caused by his own body wastes, allowed to wash his hands only once every five days and required to sleep on a stiff canvas mat placed directly on the cold canvas floor.

We have got to be together. We have got to be in a position to tell the pig that if he doesn't serve the food when it's warm and pass out the scouring powder on time, everybody on the tier is going to throw something at him, then things will change and life will be easier. You don't get that kind of unity when you're fighting with each other. I'm always telling the brothers that some of those whites are willing to work with us against the pigs. All they got to do is stop talking honky. When the races start fighting, all you have is one maniac group against another. That's just what the pigs want.⁴

It is not coincidental that the need for unity among revolutionary groups is one of the major themes of this book.

Try to remember how you felt at the most depressing moment of your life, the moment of your deepest dejection. That is how I feel all the time. No matter what level my consciousness may be, asleep, awake, in between. The thing is there and it keeps me moving, pins my eye to the ball, upright, twenty-four hours a day.⁵

“Locked down” inside his cell, George devoted himself to study. His painfully acquired scholarship in the fields of Marxian economics and history rivaled that of most college professors. But sometimes, for days on end, reality itself would vanish from his cell.

I would be sitting in a special locked isolation cell, sometimes even with the lock welded shut, and there would be no one to talk to – just the sound of screaming voices. And because there is no human contact, you depend on books. No contact with people. Special lock welded on the door. Nobody around. I'm strictly by myself. The only friend I had was a book. Sometimes I'd find myself talking out loud to the author. I'd sort of wake myself up and I'd hear myself talking to this other person. I guess it was like some kind of wish fulfillment. When I'm asleep at night, I still find myself talking to those guys.⁶

Typing laboriously on a plastic typewriter, George published position papers which dealt with prison life and revolutionary politics from a Marxian point of view.

4 Unpublished interview.

5 Unpublished interview

6 Unpublished interview

He paid a heavy price for his activities. When the prison couldn't break him through solitary confinement, they attempted to have him killed by other inmates: "They were forced to frame me and set me up for the final kill." The word was out among white convicts: "Get Jackson. It will do you some good." Once he remarked that there had been twenty setups on his life inside prison. It got so that when he left his cell he was always ready to parry an attack. But nothing could mitigate the pain of confinement. And the years stretched out and a whole decade passed. In the context of his life what happened next had a grim inevitability.

On January 13, 1970, a new exercise yard was opened in the maximum security wing of Soledad Prison. Eight whites and seven blacks were skin-searched and sent out into the yard. Predictably a fight broke out between the whites and the blacks. Without any warning, a tower guard who had a reputation as a crack shot began to fire. He fired four times and three black inmates were killed. One white prisoner was wounded in the groin by a shot that ricocheted.

Black survivors claim that one of the wounded men bled to death on the concrete floor. Three days later the Monterey County Grand Jury found that the killings were justifiable homicide. Less than half an hour after this verdict was announced on the prison radio, a white guard, (not the guard who had fired the shots) was found beaten to death. All the convicts in the wing where the killing took place were put into isolation. On February 28, Fleeta Drumgo, John Clutchette, and George Jackson were formally charged with the murder.

The prison authorities accused George because, in their words, "he was the only one who could have done it." With their total power over the inmate population – the power of parole, solitary confinement, the power of life and death – they were certain they could get the kind of testimony they needed when the trial came.

When George's parents came to visit him they used to bring his younger brother Jonathan. George and Jonathan would go off to one side of the visiting room and whisper together. What went on between them can be seen in this book in the excerpts from Jonathan's correspondence. At the age of sixteen Jonathan had an extraordinary insight into the nature of guerrilla warfare. In some of his letters, George was later to refer to Jonathan as his *alter ego*. After George was accused of the murder of the guard on the 16th of January, Jonathan began to get his first taste of Amerikan justice.

Jonathan himself wrote:

People have said that I am obsessed with my brother's case, and the movement in general. A person that was close to me once said that my life was too wrapped up in my brother's case, and that I wasn't cheerful enough for her. It's true I don't laugh very much any more. I have but one question to ask all you people and people that think like you, what would you do if it was your brother?

On August 7, 1971, Jonathan Jackson entered a court-room in San Rafael, California, and attempted to free three black convicts, one of whom was on trial for assaulting a guard. He armed the convicts and took five hostages, including the assistant district attorney and the judge, still dressed in his robes. He died a few minutes later in a hail of bullets inside a rented van that was being used for the getaway.

"We're taking over," he said. At seventeen, Jonathan had already come to the conclusion that the only way he could affirm his sense of justice was at the point of a gun. His experience of life in Amerika had convinced him that the only way he could be heard was by an act of suicidal daring. "You can take our pictures. We are the revolutionaries." With these words he announced to the world that he was not a criminal, because he no longer recognized the legitimacy of white law.

When his sister heard the news of his death, she cried out, "But he was only a boy." Her mother corrected her: "Don't say that. He was a man. They killed his father a long time ago. Jonathan wasn't going to let that happen to him. He was going to live like a man." After his death, George wrote in a letter:

I haven't shed one tear, I'm too proud for that, a beautiful, beautiful man-child with a sub-machine gun. He knew how to be with people. I loved Jonathan, but his death only sharpens my fighting spirit.

I'm proud just to have known that he was flesh of my flesh, blood of my blood.

In a news conference three days after, he said, "I loved that boy. I was the first to stand him up in his crib. Not a crib, really. All we had was a box. I taught him how to walk; I wanted to teach him how to fly. I'll think of him now as I think of Che Guevara."

George Jackson's last book, *Blood in My Eye*, speaks with the voice of the dead, not only the dead George Jackson and his brother, Jonathan, but the living dead in all of the jails and ghettos of this country. It speaks with the voices of the men who have already given themselves up for dead and who have nothing left to give – except a death for the people.

It is very much a book by a man who considered himself doomed. In his last letters, George wrote about the judicial process as “the endgame.” He had foreseen and foretold his assassination at San Quentin a thousand times (“ten years of blocking knife thrusts and the pick handles of sadistic pigs”). The fact that the author of this book lived with his death for so many years gives his book a kind of special importance. But it would be a mistake to consider it simply as the work of an individual – George always refused to consider himself an individual. Untold thousands both inside and outside prison join in its proclamation of total revolutionary war.

This book was written literally in bedlam, with the author locked in solitary for a minimum of twenty-three and a half hours a day, in the midst of raucous screaming that never stopped – the screams of prisoners being beaten, the screams of men retreating from intolerable pain into madness. It is a book about taking the revolution that George worked and died for inside prison out into society at large. His message to his revolutionary brothers is crystal-clear. *Settle your quarrels, come together, understand the reality of our situation, understand that fascism is already here, that people are already dying who could be saved, that generations more will die or live poor butchered half-lives if you fail to act. Do what must be done, discover your humanity and your love in revolution. Pass on the torch. Join us, give up your life for the people.*

George Jackson was shot and killed inside San Quentin on August 21, 1971. The convicts who were with him inside the cell block where he was being confined have asserted that he sacrificed his own life to save them from an official massacre.⁷ This would only have been in keeping with the character of his entire life.

–Gregory Armstrong
October 15, 1971

⁷ An affidavit filed by the inmates of the San Quentin Adjustment Center shortly after the author's death.

BLOOD IN MY EYE

We must accept the eventuality of bringing the U.S.A. to its knees; accept the closing off of critical sections of the city with barbed wire, armored pig carriers crisscrossing the streets, soldiers everywhere, tommy guns pointed at stomach level, smoke curling black against the daylight sky, the smell of cordite, house-to-house searches, doors being kicked in, the commonness of death.

March 28, 1971

Letter to a Comrade⁸

My sister has informed me of your release and the political education class you have formed: From her words and your messages, I sense that we are still together. We've gone through approximately the same changes since they separated us – the confused flight to national revolutionary Africa, through the riot stage of revolutionary Black Amerika. We have finally arrived at scientific revolutionary socialism with the rest of the colonial world. I was hoping that you wouldn't get trapped in the riot stage like a great many other very sincere brothers. I have to browbeat them every day down here. They think they don't need ideology, strategy or tactics. They think being a warrior is quite enough. And yet, without discipline or direction, they'll end up washing cars, or unclaimed bodies in the city-state's morgue. But I was almost certain that wouldn't be your destination, brother.

Though I no longer adhere to all of Nechayev's revolutionary catechism⁹ (too cold, very much like the fascist psychology; revolution should be love-inspired), his first line contains the incontrovertible truth, the black revolutionary is twice doomed.

At times I wonder about the present state of revolutionary black consciousness. It's really annoying to hear blacks express right-wing traditionalist political ideals. I mean the same spiel that you get from

8 A prison comrade of the author's who must remain anonymous.

9 Nechayev, an early Russian nihilist. His catechism can be found in *Zero: The Story of Terrorism*, by Robert Payne

Wallace, Maddox, Hearst, or Hunt coming from black people like Lomax, Young, Bunche – some recently dead now, thanks to the forces of good. I think Lady Lomax is still around, though, representing Africa with her Anglo-Saxon vernacular. Her husband, L. Lomax was C.I.A. Did you read *The Reluctant African*, which was sheer propaganda for the “owner,” disguised in blackface. These are the really dangerous people. When we leap to destroy the “owner” we’ll have these kinds of niggers to fight. They will use the tactic “white left-wing causes” to protect their bosses’ “white right-wing cause.”

You must teach that socialism-communalism is as old as man; that its principles formed the basis of mostly all the East African cultures (there was no word to denote possession in the original East African tongues). The only independent African societies today are socialistic. Those which allowed capitalism to remain are still neo-colonies. Any black who would defend an African military dictatorship is as much a fascist as Hoover. Are you aware of how the people are living under these so-called Africanized fascist cultures? The Congo and the entire West Coast of Africa excepting Guinea and Mauritania are still slave states, dominated by Westernized black right-wing puppets. I’m thoroughly sick of the old Jess B. Simples¹⁰ (young ones too). They’ll be your main source of opposition in communizing the black colonies here. The “good white people” who own things will always give them a few inches in their papers or other media. That’s how fascism works, influencing the masses and institutions through elites.

I talked to several black lawyers when I got this last case of pig killing hung on me. We started off agreeing, but they abandoned me the moment I attacked Anglo-Saxon law, capitalism and the Blues, and then went on to recognize Black Panthers, Kwame Nkrumah, Sekou Toure, Nyerere and Odinga instead of Kenyatta, Lumumba instead of that little punk in Ethiopia, and Peking instead of Atlanta or Freetown. That will be your main source of opposition – the black running dog. But it’s unfair to automatically condemn a black person for not understanding economic and political subtleties; some are simply confused in an honest way.

Some of the arguments they pose will center around the despondent cliché that “Africa will invent something unique, it won’t be socialism,

10 Fictional hero of the Langston

communism, or capitalism.” Often they’ll leave out the denunciation of capitalism altogether. You must explain the economic motive of human social history and bring out that there are only two ways by which societies can ever be governed and organized for production of their needs: the various types of totalitarian methods represented by assorted capitalist and fascist arrangements, and the egalitarian method. Egalitarianism is people’s government, and people’s government and economics is socialism, dialectical and materialist. How else can societies be governed? There must be hierarchies or the elimination of hierarchies. Then show that the greatest contributions to egalitarianism came from Africa, the greatest and the first examples.

Then, comrade, you will encounter the faint-hearted and illogical types like Ali/Clay, entertainer and tool of the capitalist cliques. Their line is: “Ain’t nobody but black folks gonna die in a revolution.” This argument completely over-looks the fact that we always have done most of the dying, and still do: dying at the stake, through social neglect or in U.S. foreign wars. The point is now to construct a situation where someone else will join in the dying. If it fails and we have to do most of the dying anyway, we’re certainly no worse off than before.

We find ourselves today forced into a reexamination of the whole nature of black revolutionary consciousness and its relative standing within a class society steeped in a form of racism so sensitized that it extends itself even to the slightest variation in skin tone.

The great majority of blacks reject racism. They have never found it expedient, wise or honorable to take on the characteristics of the enemy. I think it is vitally important to stress that for blacks a concern for the “survival” of the race is not, patently not, definable as racism.

Any explanation for social phenomenon, past, present or future, must present valid arguments and proof. As we travel back into history, honest descriptions and definitions will inevitably overlap. They will differ depending on their geopolitical standpoint. Ideally, they should be colored with as little subjective interpretation as possible from today’s world. The present, due to its staggering complexities, is almost as conjectural as the past. We must prove our predictions about the future with action.

So all my comments must be considered the merest supposition – they must be considered in just the same way we must consider all other

comments in this area. They merit attention only in that as soon as I make them it won't be much longer before I go about proving them. As a slave, the social phenomenon that engages my whole consciousness is, of course, revolution.

The slave – and revolution.

Born to a premature death, a menial, subsistence-wage worker, odd-job man, the cleaner, the caught, the man under hatches, without bail – that's me, the colonial victim. Anyone who can pass the civil service examination today can kill me tomorrow. Anyone who passed the civil service examination yesterday can kill me today with complete immunity. I've lived with repression every moment of my life, a repression so formidable that any movement on my part can only bring relief, the respite of a small victory- or the release of death. In every sense of the term, in every sense that's real, I'm a slave to, and of, property.

Revolution within a modern industrial capitalist society can only mean the overthrow of all existing property relations and the destruction of all institutions that directly or indirectly support existing property relations. It must include the total suppression of all classes and individuals who endorse the present state of property relations or who stand to gain from it. Anything less than this is reform. Government and the infrastructure of the enemy capitalist state must be destroyed to get at the heart of the problem: property relations. Otherwise there is no revolution. Reshuffle the governmental personnel and forms, without changing property relations and economic institutions, and you have produced simply another reform stage in the old bourgeois revolution. The power to alter the present imbalances, to remedy the critical defects of an advanced industrial state ordered on an antiquated set of greed-confused motives, rests with control over production and distribution of wealth. If the one percent who presently control the wealth of the society maintain their control after any reordering of the state, the changes cannot be said to be revolutionary.

The prerequisite for a successful popular revolution is that the victors totally junk the old machinery of state. Lenin stressed in *The State and Revolution*: "One thing especially was proven by the commune, viz. that the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes." And again: "the working class must break up, smash the ready-made state

machinery, and not confine itself merely to laying hold of it.” The reason is simple enough: A popular revolution means a revolution by and for the popular classes. Its ultimate aim is to bring all classes into one, that is, destroy the class state!¹¹

Revolutionary change means the seizure of all that is held by the 1 percent, and the transference of these holdings into the hands of the remaining 99 percent. If the 1 percent are simply displaced by another 1 percent, revolutionary change has not taken place. A social revolution after the fact of the modern corporate capitalist state can only mean the breakup of that state and a completely new form of economics and culture. As slaves, we understand that ownership and the mechanics of distribution must be reversed. The problems of the Black Colony and the Brown Colony, those of the entire 99 percent who are being manipulated, can never be redressed as long as the necessary resources for their solution are the personal property of an extraneous minority motivated solely by the need for its own survival. And that extraneous minority will never consider the proper solutions. We have this on record from a voice speaking from inside the Fourth Reich – a Lieutenant Governor of California orating in public on poverty: “One-third of the population will always be ill-housed, ill-clothed, and ill-fed. Many urban problems are really conditions that we cannot change or do not want to incur the disadvantages of changing.” His “one-third” statement was a calculated understatement.

To the slave, revolution is an imperative, a love-inspired, conscious act of desperation. It’s aggressive. It isn’t “cool” or cautious. It’s bold, audacious, violent, an expression of icy, disdainful hatred! It can hardly be any other way without raising a fundamental contradiction. If revolution, and especially revolution in Amerika, is anything less than an effective defense/attack weapon and a charger for the people to mount *now*, it is meaningless to the great majority of the slaves. If revolution is tied to dependence on the inscrutabilities of “long-range politics,” it cannot be made relevant to the person who expects to die tomorrow. There can be no rigid time controls attached to “the process” that offers itself as relief, not if those for whom it is principally intended are under attack *now*. If the proponents of revolution cannot learn to distinguish and translate the theoretical into the practical, if

11 John Gerassi, *The Coming of the New International* (New York: World Publishing, 1970), p. 40.

they continue to debate just how to call up and harness the conscious motive forces of revolution, the revolutionary ideal will be the loser – it will be rejected.

The principal reservoir of revolutionary potential in Amerika lies in wait inside the Black Colony. Its sheer numerical strength, its desperate historical relation to the violence of the productive system, and the fact of its present status in the creation of wealth force the black stratum at the base of the whole class structure into the forefront of any revolutionary scheme. Thirty percent of all industrial workers are black. Close to 40 percent of all industrial support roles are filled by blacks. Blacks are still doing the work of the greatest slave state in history. The terms of our servitude are all that have been altered.

The Black Colony can and will influence the fate of things to come in the U.S.A. The impact of black revolutionary rage actually could carry at least the opening stages of a socialist revolution under certain circumstances – not discounting some of the complexities created by the specter of racism. However, if we are ever going to be successful in tying black energy and rage to the international socialist revolution, we must understand that racial complexities do exist.

When the Minister of Defense and Servant of the People* attacks the strategy of the Amerikan Communist Party and the liberal-left revisionists for their failure to devise a policy which takes into account the special circumstances of Yankee-style racism, he is not attacking communism and the collective ideal. He is questioning the Communist Party and other less committed sections of the left revolutionary movement about their awareness of the unique problems presented by a particularly vicious and immediately threatening racism.

My brother Jonathan, a communist revolutionary to the core, writing me in June of 1969, theorized as follows:

We are quite obviously faced with a need to organize some small defenses to the more flagrant abuses of the system *now*. I mean this in a military sense. The period of disorganized activity, of riots and rallies, and purely political agitation/education has come to a close. The violence of the opposition has brought it to an end. We cannot raise consciousness another millimeter without a new set of tactics. Long-range political ploys alone are not practical for us. To me, the concept seems to assume that someday in the distant

future we'll produce a 700-pound flea to fight the Paper Tiger. That's not too likely to happen. While we await the precise moment when all of capitalism's victims will indignantly rise to destroy the system, we are being devoured in family lots at the whim of this thing. There will be no super-slave. Some of us are going to have to take our courage in hand and build a hard revolutionary cadre for selective retaliatory violence. We have numbers on our side if the whites who support revolutionary change can prevent this thing from degenerating into race war. The picture of the U.S. as a Paper Tiger is quite accurate, but there is a great deal of work to be done on its destruction and I'm of the opinion that if there is a big job of growing to do, the sooner begun the sooner done.

Both Huey and Jonathan are understandably calling for the programmed revolution to take into account the fact of racial genocide. Jonathan is calling from his grave, adding another voice to the many thunderous graveyard affirmations which, for us blacks, speeds the revolution to its ultimate issue. In order to develop revolutionary consciousness, we must learn how revolutionary consciousness can be raised to the highest point by stimuli from the vanguard elements. We recognize and appreciate the decades of hard, sometimes dangerous work done in the name of revolution by the older socialist parties. Perhaps we wouldn't exist at all were it not for their efforts. It is our sincere wish to operate in complete harmony with these older groups. But we must create new impetus and greater intellectual and physical energy if the forces of reaction are not to win another extended reprieve. A joint effort will make the task of overwhelming our common enemy all the simpler. But if our present differences cannot be reconciled by an honest and fearless search for the correct way, then we will be forced to take the foundation of correct ideals and theory into our own hands and build a positive and more practical superstructure applicable to the circumstances surrounding our lives. In his *Guerrilla Warfare* Lenin wrote: "New forms of struggle, unknown to the participants of the given period, inevitably arise as the given social situation changes, the coming crisis will introduce new forms of struggle that we are now unable to foresee."¹²

In other words, the old guard must not fail to understand that circumstances change in time and space, that there can be nothing

12 V. I. Lenin, *Guerrilla Warfare*.

dogmatic about revolutionary theory. It is to be born out of each popular struggle. Each popular struggle must be analyzed historically to discover new ideas. In the words of John Gerassi: “Building from one to the other, eventually the revolutionary cadre would become equipped with a theory rooted in experience, broadened by historical knowledge, tested by combat, and fortified by reflection.”¹³

After ten or fifteen generations of laboring on a subsistence level, after a hundred and forty years of political agitation and education, we grow impatient – not that we fail to understand the risks and complexities of anti-establishment warfare. We simply want to live.

We question a strategy that seems to have stopped short of providing a tactic for growth and for survival. Terror tactics like lynching will never be allowed to work on us. If terror is going to be the choice of weapons, there must be funerals on both sides. And let the whole enemy power complex be conscious of that!

The superstructure of any edifice that is as extensive and as lofty as revolution must be reexamined with each successive layer, for faults, for possible improvement of method.

We have the foundation of our strategy. We have studied Marx and Lenin for a description and history of the modern industrial state. We’ve organized our thoughts and trained our bodies for the ordeal of “grave-digging.” Our vanguard elements understand the simple importance of winning consciousness. Of course education and familiarization with the core issues on a broad basis precede hard revolutionary violence. If people are to understand and relate to revolutionary violence they must first be educated into an acceptance of the fact that there is no alternative, or *that the alternative is less inviting than a fight.*

Our whole question is: just what level of consciousness will support the violent revolutionary activity necessary to achieve our ends? And how will we know when this level is reached? Recall: our Mao teaches that when revolution fails it isn’t the fault of the people, it’s the fault of the vanguard party. The people will never come to us and say, “Let’s fight.” There have never been any spontaneous revolutions. They were all staged, manufactured, by people who went to the head of the masses and directed them.

13 Gerassi, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

The liberalist slogan “You can’t get ahead of the people” is meaningless. From what other position can one lead? From the rear? Rearguard leadership?! A typical Yankee innovation. I think most of these irresponsible excuse-slogans are based on dread – a secret wish to avoid the discomfiture of people’s war. In all the successful class struggles and colonial wars of liberation, the vanguard elements did get ahead of the people and pull. There is no other way in forward mass movement:

A vanguard which fears that consciousness will outstrip spontaneity, which fears to put forth a bold “plan” that would compel general recognition even among those who differ from us. Are they not confusing vanguard with rearguard?¹⁴

I am not implying that the vanguard party act out the people’s role. I am not implying a “society superior to society.” We must never forget that it is the people who change circumstances and that the educator himself needs educating. “Going among the people, learning from the people, and serving the people” is really stating that we must find out exactly what the people need and organize them around these needs. If the statement implies a “coming from” somewhere else, it substantiates no superiority but rather a biological-existential reality. This concept needs very little substantiating beyond the obvious fact of a nation of slaves who control no more wealth than some clothes, perhaps a worthless automobile, and a roof of sorts over their heads, but who have been successfully conditioned to feel rich or at least contented.

“The task of a revolutionary is to make revolution.” The word “manufacture” can be substituted for the word “make,” and the meaning comes through a little better for us.

The fascists have deliberately manufactured a false sense of security by various stratagems. They will never permit conditions to go out of their control as long as “bread and circuses” appease. We clearly cannot dodge our responsibilities by giving credence to slogans built around “conditions.” Conditions will never be altogether right for a broadly based revolutionary war unless the fascists are stricken by an uncharacteristic fit of total madness. Should we wait for something that is not likely to occur at least for decades? The conditions that are not present must be manufactured.

14 V.I. Lenin, *Selected Works*.

Recall: we had people who felt conditions weren't right in the 1930s also. The government's bread lines were backed up around every corner, and baseball was at its peak. Private ownership of public property should have been destroyed in that decade, but the "conditions weren't right." The vanguard elements betrayed the people of this nation and the world as a result of their failure to seize the time. The consequences were a catastrophic war and a new round of imperialist expansion, this time carried out by the greatest imperialist of all time – the Yankee brigand. There would now be no Indochina "situation" (to mention one of dozens of like situations) if we had taken ourselves seriously then, when all conditions were favorable. It was a slightly below-conscious desire to avoid doing the U.S. further violence, and perhaps a general distaste for organized violence, in particular, that robbed us of our chance to win on that occasion when, ironically, a win would have cost very little. There wasn't then even the illusion of well-being. In a report written by Comrade Jonathan Jackson in November of 1969 just before Fred Hampton's and Mark Clark's murders in Chicago and the shoot-out at the Central Avenue Panther headquarters in Los Angeles,¹⁵ he says,

It's come down on us hard now. There are twenty different breeds of pigs patrolling every street in the colony here. I mean every section of the city that can be said to be predominately Black is saturated with the establishment's demented gunslingers, of every sort. They're all nervous and dangerous as king cobras. Spies, double agents, entrapment, a war of electronics, house-to-house searches, doors being kicked in. I feel just as you do on these issues. I'm just not going for it, even if it means fighting them by myself. If they kick down the door of a house I've stopped at they'll fall in dead. The 9 mm Browning weighs something like 2 pounds. I'm not carrying this extra weight around my belt for nothing. It has a 13-round clip, I keep one in the barrel, 14 shots. Save me a cell on murderer's row there, I could have 14 murder charges any day now.

15 Two Black Panther Party leaders killed during a raid by the Chicago police. Hampton was the chairman of the Illinois branch of the party. A special report prepared by the commission of inquiry headed by Ramsey Clark concluded that the purpose of the police raid was to "search and destroy." It also concluded that Hampton had been deliberately killed by shots fired at close range while he was totally unconscious. The shoot-out on Central was the result of a police raid on the Los Angeles Panther headquarters. The Panthers battled the police for five hours, at times even throwing the police's own tear-gas canisters back at them.

Try to get the picture – down every through street they cruise just a few moments apart at most. Sometimes the stupid bastards are bumper to bumper. Each one of the cruisers has a different residential street here in the Black communities that seems to belong to them. It's patterned. Let's say two pig cars, "P1" and "P2," are both traveling south on Central. They'll patrol six to seven blocks on that main street. "P1" will then make a left on SOth Street, "P1" a right on 51st Street, etc. It works out so that each couple of square blocks is in effect always surrounded, cut off, divided, sub-divided. Repression is here! I've followed them, studied them, holed a few of their cars – you should see how they'll run when they can't tell from exactly what quarter they're drawing fire. We overestimate them, or perhaps have little sense of our own power. In the short-run, and here I mean in an isolated tactical operation sitting within a particular political design, with military weapons we could easily out-gun the establishment's first line of defense. What, for example, would the city pigs do if they are confronted by a .38 snubbed revolver in the hand of a brother who's fired that .38 perhaps 10 times in his life? Then take the same situation but give the brother a flamethrower (stolen from the military), give the brother an armored van from inside which he could use said flamethrower, give him also two comrades in arms, one equipped with an M60 machine gun, the other an anti-tank rocket launcher. Pigs are punks. Give me 10 cells armed as I've just mentioned and we could start to enforce some of the demands of the people. Their present show of strength is actually their weakness show – they're too visible. Comrades ask me sometimes what can we do against "all these pigs." I state it simply – we put them to death. They look at me as if to say, "You're nuts, man." When I go about my explanation their eyes go blank, or they are distracted by something five blocks down the street. They're not hearing then. So what's happening? The things I say (for us, smile) seem too fantastic for them to even listen. Yet it doesn't seem fantastic for them to go against the L.A.P.D. with a snubbed-nosed revolver. There's a great deal of work to be done – with ourselves – yet. But the day of the real dragon is coming. Long live the guerrilla!!

Jonathan was sixteen years old then and he had just that year been allowed to drive a car. He liked to drive, and observe. He had long since learned to like the fight. Guns and weapons in general were his forte. I carefully reminded him that even vanguard violence was organized

violence. He returned one of Fanon's lines: "It's time for the talking to end, and the acting to begin."

In another of his reports, after the Chicago murders of Hampton and Clark and the five-hour shoot at Black Panther headquarters in Los Angeles, he writes:

The fact of Amerikan terror, slave existence in general, seems to have almost destroyed the nervous system of the Black man here. They are frightened, and feel they are smart for being so. Those that were unaffected, those that escaped, those that refused to be intimidated, dismayed, prudent to the point of cowardice, have either joined or supported the Black Panther Party! They got down pretty cold. One point needs to be cleared up, however. I recall you remarking that in an urban guerrilla situation the military proper must be hidden, separate from the political front, since unlike a classical Mao-Giap countryside struggle where the enemy's principal forces are 30 miles down the road, with us the enemy is all around, within a few moments of strike. There should, I feel, be one branch that is purely political, operating the rent strikes, the breakfast programs, the People's Bazaars where all sorts of food and clothing, utensils and tools are sold, hospitals or clinics (free, of course), and what I will term cottage shops to employ those who will work for the new medium of exchange – love and loyalty – at such things as the making of the clothing and canning of the food for the People's Bazaar. Then there should be the super-secret branch to enforce. The military, the comrades with the nervous equipment to make the best use of the M60, the M16, the flamethrower, the hand grenade, the mortar, our armored vans and equipment in front and plenty of gun ports, bullet-proof tires, etc. You dig, one of the large trucks properly prepared (plastic may be the best armor, 1Y2 inches will stop a 220 grain slug fired from a .45 sub-machine gun; 2 inches to 3 inches will protect you from high-power rifle bullets) – and with a heavy armor-piercing, ammo-equipped M60 port in the front cab pointing in the direction that the truck is moving forward along the street – is more effective than a tank of the Yankee style. The machine gun in the front cab, and one pointing out to the rear from the trailer, has whatever street they are moving down in a guerrilla ambush tactic we'll call angulation. Each one of these guns pointing front and back, up the street and back down it, has the advantage of being able to rack that entire street with only a slight back and forth

lateral movement. One armor-piercing bullet may render several of the unrighteous dead.

And comrade, the pigs are so proud of their new little 'copters – they're suckers – it's almost comical to hear them boast and watch them look to the sky with the pride of power. The pig who will get up in one of those things is as stupidly suicidal as a duck trying to outfly a charge of 12-gauge shot. The fierce and beautiful Cong shoot down a couple dozen of the very biggest and best 'copters Yankee invention can produce every week. These things that the pigs use are toys, sitting ducks. One, I mean one, solid or armor-piercing .30 caliber bullet aimed at any one of several points – the tail rotor, the hub of the main rotor, or even the operator – will reduce \$200,000 worth of Yankee invention to scrap.

I was pursuing this joke of a secondary education when the whole thing occurred, but acting with my small thing would have hardly helped much, though it may have helped raise consciousness, some – the besiegers attacked from the rear, the idea of it – strong! Militarily it would have demonstrated to the pigs that the Panther Party is not out there on the limb alone, and of course it would have promoted among the people that confidence of ability we always speak on when together! How would they have felt (the pigs and the people) if the nameless, faceless, lightning-swift soldier of the people could have reached up, twisted the tail of their \$200,000 death bird, and hurled it into the streets, broken, ablaze!! I think that sort of thing has more to do with consciousness than anything else I can think of. Long live the Panther! Power to the People Who Don't Fear Freedom.

Jonathan was sixteen years old then, I repeat. Consciousness is the opposite of indifference, of blindness, blankness. Promoting consciousness involves the general dissemination of the concept that each of us is part of a universal action and interaction; that poles are somewhere connected; that there are material causes for trauma, vertigo, degenerative disease. Connections, connections, cause and effect, clarity on their relation and interrelations, the connection with the past, continuity, flow, movement, the awareness that nothing, *nothing* remains the same for long. And it follows that if a thing is not building, it is certainly decaying – that life is revolution – and that the world will die if we don't read and act out its imperatives. Not on its own will it die, but rather because the forces of reaction have

created imbalances that will kill it: “The seeds of its own destruction.” Our destruction too – in the epoch of the Bomb, the nerve gases, the massive precipitation of industrial wastes.

Consciousness is knowledge, recognition, foresight; common experience and perception; sensibility, alertness, mindfulness. It stirs the senses, the blood; it exposes and suggests; it will objectify, enrage, direct. There are no positive formulas for a thing so complex. We have guidelines only to help us with its growth. This means that after we are done with our books, they must be put aside; and the search for method will depend on observations, correct analyses, creativity and seizing the time. Sometime after the December 4, 1969, shoot-out around the Panther Party Los Angeles headquarters, Jonathan commented on the “connections,” the aftermath:

Have you grasped the significance of the backlash? It has stung the fascist. The people are in foment, all of them, of all persuasion. They don't dig midnight or dawn raiding parties, bullets with steel jackets, cowardly pigs perched upon their roofs, the same gases manufactured for use against the Vietnamese Liberators blowing back into their faces: Repression. Do you see the effect it has on the uncommitted? Comrade, Repression exposes. By drawing violence from the beast, the vanguard party is demonstrating for the world to examine just exactly what terms their rule is predicated on – their power to organize violence, our acquiescence.

But check – Blacks are conditioned to acquiesce. They have, in general, been led to believe that this system is the product and property of the “white man,” that the white man will protect it with his all, that the white man is a killer, a reflex killer, that all we can ever hope for is a reforming or expanding of the system to include the few of us who can make ourselves acceptable; “it's too big for us,” “you can't fight city hall,” “it can't happen in Amerikkka,” and all of that shit, pig-shit.

Double check – all of the objective conditions are present here in the Black Colony for revolution, the physical thing, I mean, “*want*” and “*want to*” (the real feeling, not the various pretenses). East Los Angeles hasn't changed a bit since you were out. Watts is still a depressed area. Many of the west-side districts are starting to resemble the older black districts. The issue of employment is still the same; we do 30 to 40 percent of the nation's work for 1 percent

of the returns, and a huge pool of us is always kept unemployed to reduce the value of the labor of those who are, just like 10 years ago, just like 1864-65 when we were thrown on the labor market-hungry, ragged, crowded into clap-boards, and unhappy. Nothing has changed since you left the street, comrade, not in this respect at least. Perhaps our condition stands out a little more glaringly, that's all.

But you know what's been building. The vanguard has viciously attacked the "system" – the omnipotent system attacked by the slave. Sort of like the worker bee growing so disgusted with the quality of his life that he turns and attacks the bear. The other bees will understand, they do understand, and all sorts of bees, even those who thought the bear their rightful ruler see him differently when he foams at the mouth, and bites at his own tail.

I think you were on the right track with the idea concerning repression. It is, it has to be, a part of the revolutionary process, a necessary stage in the development of revolutionary consciousness. The situation being as it was and is, the Black experience is what I'm referring to here. The milder lynch-example type repression is accepted by us as a necessary part of life, but the new harsher thing brought on by the political thrust of the vanguard party serves to show even the most tractable of the reformers among us that firstly, the system will not, or actually cannot, meet our demands; secondly, it clearly illustrates the real terms of our existence under capitalism, the nature of it, and how foul a piece of the pie would be even if we could have some.

One fundamental problem remains: the survival of the vanguard political party and I mean in good form. We must think to the righteous fielding of a clandestine army!!

Jon

Lenin, Guevara and Fanon, all in their particular fashion, postulate that before revolution can take place, all other forms of redress must be exhausted, clearly exhausted. Electoral processes must have broken down, the confidence of the electorate in any of the old forms completely shattered, confidence in the ability of the old system to honestly organize any aspect of public life must be shaken to the core. Years and years ago it may have been an acceptable tactic to organize a people's ticket of solid worker and revolutionary credentials and

arm it with an ideal platform – only to be defeated by a mud-slinging opportunist-warlord, demonstrably inferior, scum-swilling pig. Then pass out a pamphlet to explain to the people how the system has failed them, or speak it in Pershing Square – or, years ago, in the Campus Hall. Today it is not a tactic – it's counter-revolution. After forty years it's pretty clear that it will not suffice. Years ago, "working with" and attempting to influence union leadership may have been judicious, but the government has long since infiltrated and bought off this leadership and legislated away the strike. Union-hall speeches and pamphlet passing are playing at revolution.

It isn't revolutionary or materialist to disconnect things. To disconnect revolutionary consciousness from revolutionizing activity, to build consciousness with political agitation and educational issue-making alone is idealistic rather than materialist. The effect has been reformism rather than revolution. When any election is held it will fortify rather than destroy the credibility of the power brokers. When we participate in this election to win, instead of disrupt, we're lending to its credibility, and destroying our own. With all the factors of control over the electoral process in the hands of the minority ruling class, the people's party can always be made to seem isolated, unimportant, even extraneous. If these tactics still give the appearance of revolution to some after decades of miscarriage, we are justified in replacing them as vanguard.

When people begin to express their disgust at the demagogic and reformist maneuvers of the vanguard parties, they will discover in real action a new form of political activity which in no way resembles the old:

These politics are the politics of leaders and organizers living inside history who take the lead with their brains and their muscles in the fight for freedom. These politics are revolutionary and social, and these new facts which the native will now come to know exist only in action. They are the essence of the fight which explodes the old colonial truths and reveals unexpected facets, which brings out new meanings and pinpoints the contradictions camouflaged by these facts. The people engaged in the struggle who because of it command and know these facts, go forward, freed from colonialism and forewarned of all attempts at mystification, inoculated against all national anthems. Violence alone, violence committed by the people, violence organized and educated by its leaders, makes it

possible for the masses to understand social truths and gives the key to them. Without that struggle, without that knowledge of the practice of action, there's nothing but a fancy-dress parade and the blare of the trumpets. There's nothing save a minimum of readaptation, a few reforms at the top, a flag waving: and down there at the bottom an undivided mass still living in the middle ages, endlessly marking time.¹⁶

In the general retreat to avoid full commitment, to write the discomfort out of revolution, some have raised a debate among us that has degenerated into name-calling, quoting the same authorities to validate diametrically opposed ideas, and ultimately creating a process that is dividing us into two mutually exclusive or contradictory groups. The overall effect is to reduce us to caricature.

Where more than one individual is involved in any life situation, the fact of subjectivism will always make differences based on opinion and interpretation – a problem in exchanges, in reaching the necessary means for the initiation of collective activity. Some debate will always be carried on. However, on the basics we must somehow agree or nothing will get done. All opinions are not of equal value, and there is such a thing as counterproductive revisionism.

Stupidity is not unknown to our long-range political policy makers. Participation in electoral politics organized by the enemy state – after recognizing that the whole process must be discredited as a conditional step into revolution, and particularly participation that tends to authenticate this process – is the opposite of revolution. It's a tactic for the ultra-rightists. With history as a guide we could never make such monumental errors.

The history of the U.S. – the blood-soaked, urine-steeped essence of its being; the wreckage and demise of its human character under the wheels of a two-hundred-year-old headlong flight with heedless, frightened animals at the controls of a machine that has mastered them – allows for no appeal on a strictly ideological level. George Wallace or Adolf Hitler would fare better at the polls of an honest election than Huey Newton and Tom Hayden. But again, what is an honest election after the fact of monopoly capital?

16 Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*.

Repression is indeed a part of revolution, a natural aspect of antithesis, the always-to-be-expected defense-attack reflex of the beleaguered, toothless tiger. All arguments against this fundamental fact are false and labored to the point of being completely illogical. Can power be seriously challenged without a response? Will the robber baron, the tycoon, the *Führer* allow us to seize his privilege without resistance? Can we steal it away from the greatest bandit of all time with sleight of hand alone? Incredible! The fascists understand the value of mass psychology, are familiar with its use, and hold all the important implements of its effective control. But they are not aware of our existence and our general strategy regarding the reaching of people.

The whole situation can be reduced to a minority ruling clique engaging the people's vanguard elements for control of the masses. The ruling clique approaches its task with a "what to think" program; the vanguard elements have the much more difficult job of promoting "how to think."

No tactic can be ignored or discounted in such a battle. Power responds to all threats. The response is repression. If the threat is a small one, the fascist tactic is to laugh it off, ignore it, isolate it with its defense mechanism – media. The greater the threat the greater the corresponding violence from power.

The only effective challenge to power is one that is broad enough to make isolation impossible, and intensive enough to cause repression to affect the normal life style of as many members of the society as possible. By compromising and playing at class war, we lose. If some effective means of threatening to wield power is not used in the opening stages of revolutionary activity, repression will concentrate itself on the vanguard elements only, when the ideal situation is for the people to feel the raw essence of power. Nothing can bend consciousness more effectively than a false arrest, a no-knock invasion, careless, panic-stricken gunfire. These will frighten some, anger others. Common sense alone tells me whom the people will turn their anger against. Perhaps for a short time they will be angry at us, but since the pig is a pig, it won't be long before this anger is channeled in the right direction.

Revolution builds in stages; it isn't cool or romantic; it's bold and vicious; it's stalking and being stalked – the opposition rising above our level of violence to repress us, and our forces learning how to counter this repression and again pulling ourselves above their level

of violence. That process repeats itself again and again until finally the level is reached where the real power of the people is felt and the ruling class is suppressed. The power of the people lies in its greater potential violence. And this power of the people – their greater potential violence – can be brought to fruition only if the conditions in an urban society are created by the application of the *foco* theory.¹⁷ The *foco* theory can be effective only when it does not allow itself to be isolated from the people, thus exposing itself to the vastly superior fire power of the corporate state:

There is no doubt that Fidel's *foco* was the motor to the revolution in Cuba. But nor can there be any doubt that Fidel's organizational genius made sure that the *foco* remained in the center of the much bigger revolutionary movement, which it controlled or guided for its military and political advantage. The *foco* may well be the best tactic to mount the motor, but it needs a long period of preparation, intensive organizational work to set up an efficient, reliable machinery which will not only generate the atmosphere for armed struggle by *focos* but will also guarantee their logistic, communication, survival programs and propaganda network. The traditional communist parties of the world claim that they are doing just that – and have been, mostly peacefully, for forty years. That is not what Bejar had in mind when he said there have been “real stages of hard underground life.” Bejar, and New Left revolutionaries all over the world, know very well that a revolutionary life style is a warrior's life style. By stages he meant stages of combat, and that is precisely the way in which revolutionaries can be honed into the kind of organization capable of leading a people's war.¹⁸

We are at an impasse now, because the next level of revolutionary consciousness and activity cannot be reached without calling down on the nation a corresponding and perhaps over-reactionary repression. And it's not the people who dread this next level of commitment. They

17 The *Foco* theory grew out of the Cuban Revolution and refers to the “more or less slow building up through guerrilla warfare of a mobile strategic force which would be the nucleus of a people's army and of a future socialist state.” [Regis Debray, *Revolution in the Revolution? Armed Struggle and Political Struggle in Latin America* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1967), p. 24.]

18 Gerassi, *op. cit.*, p. 69

don't understand the significance of it as yet. The dread, the fear, rests with some of the old-guard elements. I refer you again to Mao: "When revolution fails...it's the fault of the vanguard party."

Some of the fear is an honest fear that revolution will be repressed entirely. These thinkers have historical references that roll them back to Europe to the time of Hitler's Germany and Italy in the twenties and thirties. But I say that can never happen here. That was too long ago, too far away, and none of those European countries had thirty million irate niggers on their hands. None of that ever had to happen, for the same reason that we don't have to allow it to happen. All reactionary movements depend principally on a handful of individuals – sometimes one individual.

There are many thousands of ways to correct individuals. The best way is to send one armed expert. I don't mean to outshout him with logic, I mean correct him. Slay him, assassinate him with thuggee, by silenced pistol, shotgun, with a high-powered rifle shooting from four hundred yards away and behind a rock. Suffocation, strangulation, crucifixion, burning with flamethrower, dispatch by bomb. Auto accidents happen all day. People drown, get poleaxed, breathe noxious gases, get stabbed, get poisoned with bad water, ratsbane, germicides, hemlock, arsenic, strychnine, L.S.D. 25 concentrate, cyanide, hydrocyanic acid, vitriol. A snake could bite him, nicotine oil is deadly, an overdose of dope; there's deadly nightshade, belladonna, datura, wolfs-bane, foxglove, aconite, ptomaine, botulism, and the death of a thousand cuts. But a curse won't work.

We're going to have to fight to win. The logic of procrastination has been destroyed. A people can never be so repressed that they can't strike back in some way. We will purge the poltroons and fight. Or just ignore them. The reality of power's automatic defense reflexes makes it possible for us to measure our own effectiveness. Their efforts to seriously repress us indicate that we have reached people – that we are finally in the fight. And we cannot ever be truly repressed. There is quite simply no way for an established government to defeat an internal, determined, aggressive enemy. Especially in an urban society. The mechanics, logic, and logistics of urban people's guerrilla warfare cannot be defeated.

In the opening stages of such a conflict, before a unified left can be established, before most people have accepted the inevitability of war,

before we are able militarily to organize massive violence, we must depend on limited, selective violence tied to an exact political purpose. In the early service of the people there must be totally committed, professional revolutionaries who understand that all human life is meaningless if it is not accompanied by the controls that determine its quality. I am one of these. My life has absolutely no value. I'm the man under hatches, the desperate one. We will make the revolution. Nothing can stop us, we are not intimidated by the specter of repression – we're already repressed. The Black Legion¹⁹ and their terror leaves us cold, unafraid. We will meet it with a counter-terror. We'll never, never allow ourselves to be immobilized by a tactic that actually works better for us. The lynch-murder of a friend – it makes me angry, not afraid. I'm the next man that must be lynched! My forefather trembled when his brother was lynched, but my brother's immolation means war to the death, war to the utmost, war to the knife!!

Violence is not supposed to work in Amerika. For no one, that is, except the "omnipotent administrator." But this has yet to be proved to my satisfaction since I know that a bomb is a bomb is a bomb; it twists steel, shatters concrete and dismembers men everywhere else in the world. Why not those made in Amerika? A bullet fired from an assault rifle in the hands of a Vietnamese liberation fighter will kill a pig in Vietnam. Why won't it kill a pig in the place where pigs are made?

Counter-terrorism is a facet of urban people's guerrilla warfare. It's our logical response to the repressive measures taken by the enemy state to contain us in the early stages of the rebellion. Our military cadre involved in this activity has the tactical advantage over the establishment's terrorists only if we remain clandestine. While working at the direction of a political front we must remain separate from it. The ranks of these early soldiers must be absolutely impervious to infiltration; precautions must be made to keep this cadre impenetrable to police spies and less committed comrades.

In *The Coming of the New International*, John Gerassi observed that

As a leading pragmatist, Lenin believed that the only way a revolution could come about in Europe in his time was by the creation of a revolutionary organization. That organization had

19 An armed anti-labor terrorist group active in the thirties, reputedly financed by sections of the automotive industry.

to be tight, well trained, loyal to its central committee, dedicated – and narrow, not only for ideological reasons (hence purges and sectarian splits were to be encouraged during its formative years), but also for security.²⁰

And Lenin states that

The more we confine the membership of such an organization to people who are professionally engaged in revolutionary activity and who have been professionally trained in the art of combating the police, the more difficult it will be to unearth the organization.”²¹

One of Jonathan’s reports contains the following:

I find it almost impossible to trust comrades, not after all of this. They say Gloves Davis – a black pig – killed Fred Hampton, while he was asleep. I certainly don’t have to mention all the so-called defectors who are now appearing before government committees testifying for the state. They were infiltrators to begin with. The house-niggers who ran to the high sheriff as soon as someone whispered revolt. I think I hate them worse than I hate the sheriff, or the “owner.”

I’m just a young slave (you say) trying to understand and cope with my environment. I know personalities have no place in revolution but every time I think of Davis, Jess B. Simple, Karenga²² and the rest of these murderous turncoat idiots, my trigger finger fairly itches! Non-persons like Karenga, LeRoi Jones and the other right-wing blacks are intelligent enough to know what they are doing. We cannot excuse them with the ease that we can excuse the average brother who has had no opportunity or inclination to search. The mantle of ignorance doesn’t cover their behavior. They have to know that when they attack socialism, the communist ideal, and revolution that they are not logically (or illogically depending) attacking all that is white, etc. They know that Ho Chi Minh isn’t white or Chairman Mao, or Nkrumah, Lumumba, and Toure. They know that there isn’t but one fight going on across this planet, the one between the imperialist forces of capitalism and its victims.

20 Gerassi, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

21 V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works*.

22 Ron Karenga, head of a black nationalist organization known as U.S.

They know that it was for work that we were kidnapped – what else do you feed a slave for? These Black, Black, Black, Black men (if you can swallow their shallow shit) have had time to study, some have traveled, they “know” that it was capitalist agricultural economics that first caused our pain, and that the only change since then is the decline of the agricultural elite and the rise of the modern bourgeoisie. A sweat-shop displaced the plantation. Could it have escaped their that that all the African states that really liberated themselves booted out the foreign businessmen and are now socialist states?

No, I think the strongest suggestion is that they are working for the government, the new house-niggers. And what better way is there for them to sell themselves to us than to scream Black, Black, Black, Black ... Like Tom Mboya, whose whole service for the C.I.A. was to redirect the revolutionary rage of the people into a thing more compatible with the interests on Western Businessmen. They are spies – death to spies.

I don't think it is a personality clash at all for us to teach these black pigs that we will not be altered from our course, that the reward for counterrevolution is death! We can't continue to expect or wish for loyalty to the people – we'll have to demand it. And that's both from these cowardly fat-mouths who come to us in their disguise, “cultural nationalism,” and from the class defectors who tommy-gun us in our sleep.

I'll make an example of Gloves Davis even if I have to hobo to Chicago. They'll find him strung-up to a street light by his heels with our sign burned in his forehead!!

Tests must be devised to guard ourselves against the possibility of those fools getting into our separate military groups. There is no way to stop the infiltration of an above-ground political group, but we can guard the clandestine army by: 1. letting no one choose us (even if they did know about us and could find us); we do the choosing. 2. Once we choose someone to do the people's military work they should be isolated and tested thoroughly, and their background checked. There are patterns to people's lives, especially Blacks, that if studied one can easily spot pig tendencies and connections. Checks could be run through some of our political people who have friends or sympathizers who own, say, used car

lots or any business that generally deals in credit. A great deal can be learned through the various credit check institutions these days. We'll be using one of their own instruments for the "real" purpose that they invented it, against them. (Generally that's the way it will be throughout the war.)

Testing can be developed into a science-written stuff to help reestablish for ourselves the patterns of this soldier's background. You know, full commitment generally comes as a result of awareness, and awareness is the product of study and observation. The things a person has gone to the effort of reading and analyzing say a great deal about his character. In other words, very few black intelligence agents will have studied Marx, Mao, Lenin, Fanon, cats like that "in depth." You can generally tell what processes a man's mind has gone through by what he's studied, observed. So examine, even the Post Office will do that. Written and oral tests – drugs are not to be discounted either, oral tests under truth drugs. Then you have the ultimate tests, the things that no agent of the establishment could do. Like assassinate the local head of the Gestapo. Bring him out of isolation blindfolded, arm him, tell him what to do, and where to go afterward, and wait, etc. I think you could be fairly sure of him after a series of tests like these.

We're only thinking in terms of a small, highly trained, super-secret, counter-Kluxist vanguard group. However, dealing with people you've known over the years and have seen tested in fire already is best, like me, you and your comrades, and mine. The Blacks who joined the armed expeditionary forces just for profit (the cats who steal them blind and hustle the other suckers). They are starting to stir, to become aware also.

This Vietnam adventure on the part of the fascist has vastly changed the whole relationship between the masses and the ruling class. Can you detect the subtle changes? The really ugly side of imperialism is being demonstrated for not just the people who suffer its effects abroad, but also to the little sleepy guy here inside the U.S. They're starting now to make the link between foreign wars and foreign businesses. And they're better able to make the comparisons and conclusions. Ho Chi Minh vs. Ky, for example. People are all starting to say such things as "Some form of socialism is the answer." Time to move, we must show them that resistance is possible, and that there is a hard left cadre willing to lead it. Conditions are right

now, for the beginnings, at least, of a revolutionary culture; these conditions have always been present here inside the Black Colony but ... no leadership until now.

If we can keep the Panther alive by protecting the party workers with a show of underground strength, watching the watcher, assassinating the assassins, I think the people will start to listen to them. Blacks have grown very cynical to all groups who make claims in the area of problem-solving – since there have been one million groups and no problems solved. The physical conditions are right for the start of a protracted war. We have yet to hit on the tactic for control of attitudes, however; how to make people organize and resist the ruin of their lives. And it's for certain we'll never figure out the right tactic if the pigs keep killing off and busting all the vanguard elements. The time has come – Bobby's *Seize the Time* makes sense. We can't build a mass movement without finding some way to stay alive long enough to let them know we're here. And that we're not just out to play on them. That we are finally prepared to totally commit ourselves to the fight, that we will never abandon them when the pig moves in with his pistols and paddy-wagons, that we're willing to take it to the grave-yard.

A show of organizational skill and valid anti-establishmentism will *always* bring on violence from the fascist. The people know this, so they must also know that this violence can be countered before they'll believe and respond. "Let the ruling class tremble at a communist revolution." That's my favorite line in all of Marx and Engels. From Fanon it's "The time for talking has ended, the time for acting has begun." – Long live the guerrilla.

Jon

The counter-terrorist, faceless, nameless specialist in all martial arts is the first soldier of the people! His violence will be swift, surprising, explosive, and tied into a clearly political matrix. In some cases of assassination, it may be wise to make them appear as accidents, but that still doesn't reduce the political content.

These workers, properly distributed and going about their tasks with secret, flawless precision and in perfect unison with the political front, will shake the fascists to their very foundations. Their limited, highly selective violence is the absolute minimum for enforcing the demands

of the people. Anything less will fail. We are not dealing with nice people who will throw down their guns and submit to our will because we outnumber them; from the vantage point of established power and history, they know that one armed man can control a thousand.

People's War is not polite or proper. It is not possible to limit the scope and range of violence to what the enemy will bear without reacting. Any ideal, any activity that may do violence to their control, will never be permitted. People's War is improvisation and more improvisation. It is organizing the masses around their realistic needs and moving them against whatever forces restrict their passage to power. I repeat: realistic, day-to-day needs should be the basis of organizing people and making them conscious of revolution – that the world, the universe, must revolve – that it will stop, stagnate, and die for no man's privilege.

If we accept revolution, we must accept all that it implies: repression, counter-terrorism, days filled with work, nervous strain, prison, funerals.

Our present problem as soldiers is to protect our political people at their work and enforce the increasing demands that the people, as a political result, will make upon power. The soldier is the counter-terrorist, the bodyguard, the first of a military vanguard. The distance between him and the class enemy is a free fire zone. He has to be the baddest and strongest of our kind: calm, sure, self-possessed, completely familiar with the fact that the only things that stand between black men and violent death are the fast break, quick draw, and snap shot. Terrible Jonathans teathed on the barrel of the political tool, hardened against the concrete of the most uncivilized jungles of the planet – Chicago, St. Louis, Los Angeles, San Francisco – tested in a dozen fires. “Tall, slim youth”. . . the new nigger, with a gun and the eyes of the hunter, the hunter of men.

These comrades must make the first contribution. They will be the first to fall. We gather up their bodies, clean them, kiss them and smile. Their funerals should be gala affairs, of home-brewed wine and revolutionary music to do the dance of death by. We should be sad only that it's taken us so many generations to produce them. Building consciousness and revolutionary culture against the repressive, natural defense reflexes of the system means taking realistic day-to-day issues like hunger, the need for clothing and housing, joblessness. It involves provoking repression – feeding on it. The fact of political and political-

economic prisoners in legions and the processes used by the oppressors to judge and condemn them must be used as the rallying cries of revolution. Economic crime and even crimes of passion against the oppressors must be understood as rebellion. Even funerals can be used as an issue, since there will be so many of them. Improvising on reality is the key principle underlying the building of a united left and raising the consciousness of the people. It will give us our tactics.

In the Black Colony and other depressed areas of the country there will be less difficulty in organizing, mobilizing and altering the attitudes of the people toward their class enemies. However, in the areas of the class structure that can be said to be “making it,” affecting attitudes toward a revolutionary change in the system of production and distribution will, of course, call for the destruction of their comfort, the “manufacturing” of a “condition” where they will be either neutral or complementary to the revolutionary effort. The psychological effect of our secret army, the real destructive effect it can have; an increasingly pervasive underground press with new emphasis on a “mass style”; the popularization of the revolutionary culture and then the elevating of it; both under the direction of an ultra-aggressive political party – these three, with no element missing, connected to the realistic issues form the basis of our only hope. There will be no educating, no consciousness, no revolutionary culture, no forward movement, without these three elements working with the harmony of a healthy organism.

To sum up, the existence of a political vanguard precedes the existence of any of the other elements of a truly revolutionary culture. If the thrust of this political vanguard is effective (demonstrating realistic, sincere designs aimed at the overthrow of established power), it will be attacked by the built-in automatic survival instincts of the established power complex, creating and supporting the need to counterpoise the violence of power. Without the ability to organize a counterforce to neutralize the violence of established power, antithesis dies. We are not contending with fools who will allow us to simply walk in and organize people to war against them. All serious challenges will be met with panic and repression. That is axiomatic. We must not allow ourselves to be hunted, imprisoned and murdered. We will never yield to terror tactics. We will organize a violence of our own, hidden and more aggressive. We fight from a position of weakness, but there are tactical devices that if employed without restraint will afford us a very real advantage.

The fascists believe that one guard with a machine gun can control a thousand men, but I know that this guard cannot watch all one thousand at once. While his attention and gun are trained on a gathering of ten who whisper freedom – closing on his blind side, my knife will claim his life. A political thrust is immediately followed by a hidden military thrust in the opening phases of revolutionary culture. Leadership must be protected. And it helps people bit by bit to understand and relate to the necessity of violence in any plan to overthrow anything – “overthrow” means violence. In our case it means putting to death. This is the last time I’ll repeat this for those of us who for one dread or another seem not too receptive: fighting originates from a well-developed kick in the ass.

The proletariat – the working class – is still the most revolutionary class, and still the real gravedigger of capitalist society. However, the notion that they alone can or must carry the revolution is too ridiculous and simplistic for any serious consideration at all. The industrial working force of today’s modern industrial state may be pivotal in carrying out a successful revolution against that state, but their power and numbers have been vastly reduced by such developments as automation, military-corporate elitism, (the connection through marriage of government, military and corporate heads), the new class of National Guard pigs (they broke the postal strike), government-controlled unions, right-to-work laws, etc. The argument that centers on the ideal that all workers must be politically educated before the revolution can support a violent thrust verges on the absurd. Today nearly six and a half million of them can’t find work. And those who are working seem to be convinced that foreign wars and armaments spending are more desirable than unemployment. Of course they should be made conscious of their exploitation and they must be moved to act in their behalf. Those who feel that they are doing well, and those who actually are doing well should be introduced to the fact of “surplus value.”²³ Waiting passively for the final verdict of history is not making revolution. It flies in the face of revolution. It ignores the existence of bread and circuses, terror from the right, and the racism and animalism of the ruling-class pigs. It doesn’t take into account the fact that they know we are coming.

23 Surplus labor in Marxian economics is the number of hours a worker can work in excess of what is required to provide him with minimum sustenance. The product of surplus labor is known as surplus value. It is the only source of profit for the capitalist and leads to exploitation of the worker.

They know how to hold on to their privilege, could they have held it this long otherwise? We are being repressed now. Courts that dispense no justice and concentration camps are already in existence. There are more secret police in this country than in all others combined – so many that they constitute a whole new class that has attached itself to the power complex. Repression is here. It's time to move with determination. After our victory, no one will escape our justice with the now historically classic line "Well, we didn't know." Repression is here *now*, and we won't reach the next level of revolutionary consciousness and activity until we meet it with a counter-terror and demonstrate to the people that we are here and resistance is possible.

From a letter mailed by Jonathan shortly before his death:

Why do we go for this old shit, most of the fascist functionaries live as unguarded as I do. I could slip a knife between Max Rafferty's ribs. The Agnews and Du Ponts, the Rockefellers and Morgans, all of the Getty, Hunt, and Hughes types who sneak around in armored cars and jets are just as reachable. Anyone who will come out of his bomb shelter can be had. Imagine what Nixon's armored car would look like if I stepped out of the alley and hit it with the anti-tank rocket launcher under my coat – a ball of fire. Hell will be their reward.

But the guerrilla needs our help. When Jonathan steps forward with his anti-Nixon rocket launcher, there should be nine more like himself, with assault rifles to close an exit path for him. And there should be a political infrastructure, a cadre, not far away to explain his actions, and glean from them the greatest possible overall political effect.

Prestige stands between the masses and a revolt against their class enemy. The aura of magic, glamour, luster and splendid permanence covers the fascists like a protective layer of fat. The slimy scales of majesty shield and conceal the dilapidation of the old bourgeois reign of terror. Although in reality nothing remains but the illusion. They can still organize violence, but the Indo-Chinese have proved that to be not too formidable.

Our present task is to illustrate this point forcefully to the people. The fascist industrial state can organize a ponderous, mechanized violence, but this systematic industrially based holding action is helpless before the fluid, mobile, self-impelled attrition of people's urban guerrilla

warfare. With his techniques fully developed and established, the urban guerrilla launches his attacks on the corporate-military-police complex with some of these military objectives in mind:

- to weaken the local guards or the security system of the dictatorship, given the fact that we are attacking and the “gorillas” defending, which means catching the government in a defensive position with its troops immobilized in defense of the entire complex of national maintenance, with its ever-present fears of an attack on its strategic nerve centers, and without ever knowing where, how, and when that attack will come;

- to attack on every side with many different armed groups, few in number, each self-contained and operating separately, to disperse the government forces in their pursuit of a thoroughly fragmented organization instead of offering the dictatorship the opportunity to concentrate its forces of repression on the destruction of one tightly organized system operating throughout the country;

- to give proof of its combativeness, decision, firmness, determination, and persistence in the attack on the military dictatorship in order to permit all malcontents to follow our example and fight with urban guerrilla tactics. Meanwhile, the government, with all its problems, incapable of halting guerrilla operations in the city, will lose time and suffer endless attrition and will finally be forced to pull back its repressive troops in order to mount guard over the banks, industries, armories, military barracks, prisons, public offices, radio and television stations, North American firms, gas storage tanks, oil refineries; ships, airplanes, ports, residences of outstanding members of the regime such as ministers and generals, police stations, and official organizations, etc.

- to increase urban guerrilla disturbances gradually in an endless ascendancy of unforeseen actions such that the government troops cannot leave the urban areas to pursue the guerrillas in the interior without running the risk of abandoning the cities and permitting rebellion to increase on the coast as well as in the interior of the country;

- to oblige the army and the police, with the commanders and their assistants, to change the relative comforts and tranquillity of their barracks and their usual rest for a state of alarm and growing tension in the expectation of attack or in search for tracks that vanish without a trace;

- to avoid open battle and decisive combat with the government,

limiting the struggle to brief and rapid attacks with lightning results;

– to assure for the urban guerrilla a maximum freedom of maneuver and of action without ever relinquishing the use of armed violence, remaining firmly oriented toward helping the beginning of rural guerrilla warfare and supporting the construction of the revolutionary army for national liberation.²⁴

Prestige is an abstract, an intangible. It has no material basis, no substantial objective reality to be perceived through the senses. One can't touch it or taste it, see it or smell it, it can't be heard. So how does it exist? Subjectively, in the mind's eye, after the fact of some connected circumstances that may also have been subjective.

We're looking for connections; the materialist approach is to examine things in their total sequence, see them in process, not to merely establish their being in fixed sequential images, but to take in the state of being in process: infancy, maturity, decline, things in motion, processed into other things in motion. We're constantly laboring to determine that which governs, regulates, motivates all the separate but related and interrelated processes – from the viewpoint that consciousness is determined by dialectical, objective developments. The prestige of power as the subjective effect of a past deed or reputation, real or fancied, then has a very definite life process. The prestige of the capitalist class inside the U.S. reached its maturity with the close of the 1860-64 civil war. Since that time there have been no serious threats to their power; their excesses have taken on a certain legitimacy through long usage.

Prestige bars any serious attack on power. Do people attack a thing they consider with awe, with a sense of its legitimacy? In the process of things, the prestige of power emerges roughly in that period when power does not have to exercise its underlying basis – violence. Having proved and established itself, it drifts, secure from any serious challenge. Its automatic defense-attack instincts remain alert; small threats are either ignored away, laughed away, or in the cases that may build into something dangerous, slapped away. To the masters of capital, the most dreadful omen of all is revolutionary scientific socialism. The gravedigger evokes fear response. Prestige wanes if the first attacks on

²⁴ Gerassi, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

its power base find it wanting. Prestige dies when it cannot prevent further attacks upon itself.

All intellectual arguments against the necessity of counter-violence, even in the opening stages of a People's War against an industrial establishment such as the one in the U.S.A., are false. We can stop the debate; prestige must be destroyed. People must see the venerated institutions and the "omnipotent administrator" actually under physical attack. They must be assured that the heavens will not hurl lightning bolts at the people's heads for challenging the rights of property. Then, although international capitalism has shot its last bolts, it is not exactly harmless. If the threat to power is truly revolutionary and the first step into revolutionary consciousness taken with a forceful attack upon prestige, we must anticipate reaction, accept repression's terror, and meet it with a counter-terror of our own. The gravedigger needs a bodyguard to protect him at this work, else the grave may be his own.

The debate between the vanguard elements should end. The argument that the prestige of power will let itself to be educated away is too idiotic to be allowed to stand. Waiting for power to move to its inevitable collapse is suicidal for all concerned. Blacks and other Third World peoples have the very imminent prospect of genocidal tactics to contend with, and we can now all see that the modern industrial state, motivated by the interests of exclusive groups of capitalist masters, cannot regulate itself to make possible an inclusive production and distribution of goods, or production without a massive waste of resources and destruction of all that stands about. The debate ends, the action begins. It is not a question of the necessity of violence, but how to organize it to fit our unique situation, to tie it with flawless exactitude to our political activity, and to organize it immediately.

Comrade George: I read recently from a textbook edited by my favorite writer W. Pomeroy²⁵ that a city street could actually be considered as a defile. A convoy of any kind trapped in a defile on the countryside is easy prey for the forces positioned above and about it....

-Jonathan

It is absolutely certain that every fascist military thinker and official in the world has devoted time and study to the works of the great guerrilla

25 W.J. Forest Pomeroy, author of *Guerrilla Warfare and Marxism*.

tacticians, Mao, Ho, Giap, Guevara, Pomeroy, Fanon and Nkrumah. The fundamentals of People's War are no secret. It would seem that Giap's *People's Army*, *People's War* or Guevara's *Guerrilla Warfare* and the other masterworks on poor people's war, once published for the world to study, would blunt their effectiveness at least a little – that is, until one has studied in depth and understood. Guerrilla warfare by its very nature is invulnerable. Advanced scientific guerrilla strategy, worked out over the first three-quarters of this century, is not, contrary to popular image, merely a “hit-and-run” haphazard affair. In spite of the need for improvisation and mobility and in spite of its poverty and daring, it is scientific. The man who labored over its construction had as a task the forging of an instrument which would enable an indigent and weaponless people to resist and overcome a ponderous mechanized army dependent upon an industrial base and operating on systematized thought. It is a perfect tool, perfect. No establishment army can countervail it. The best example of this new fighting style – the urban guerrilla – is the spectacular success of the Tupamaros, the military arm of Uruguay's National Liberation Movement. Brilliantly organized, they have carried out well-planned operations, such as

burning down plants (General Motors) without harming a single worker, robbing impregnable fortresses (such as the Casino of Punta del Este), kidnapping hated officials, ambassadors, and bankers, seizing whole towns long enough to explain their purpose and revolutionary commitment, assassinating key repressive agents, such as the chief of the police's special squad, sabotaging imperialism's industrial-military complexes and raiding police military outposts to capture arms and ammunition.*

Gerassi outlines their fighting strategy as follows:

The objective is manifold: (1) to threaten the Establishment, cause it to panic and make serious tactical mistakes, such as resorting to mass repression which radicalizes the population against them; (2) to establish the underground revolutionary apparatus, including both active participants and trusted but passive collaborators (who will later carry out the liaison communication, logistic, and propaganda needs of the revolutionary armies in the cities); (3) to test new recruits in relative security, for, though police infiltrators are bound to creep in and stay in the organization for future need even if they have to kill their own to do so, the fact that for a long time urban groups will operate independently of each other keeps

sweeping arrests of urban guerrillas down to a minimum; (4) to demoralize the rank and file and even the officers of the repressive forces, as they see themselves constantly but unexpectedly under attack (it is said that to kill policemen indiscriminately is to forget the working-class background of the cop on the beat; this is as absurd as trying to save the ordinary soldiers whom the Vietnamese must kill to survive); (5) to panic local capitalists to withdraw their funds from specific areas, thus hurting the local warlords and politicians who profit from these investments; (6) to frighten away foreign investors, which will affect the whole bureaucratic oligarchy; (7) to force the U.S. to constantly extend its intervention, which will tax its resources, hence discontent at home, and spread its imperialistic arms, rendering it more vulnerable abroad.²⁶

At this point, I must make clear that I am certainly not warning the military establishment or their capitalist masters, nor am I advocating the overthrow of the established Amerikan government; when I use the initials U.S.A. in these observations, it must be understood that I could quite as easily be referring to the Union of South Africa (U.S.A.!!)

The government of the U.S.A. and all that it stands for, all that it represents, must be destroyed. This is the starting point, and the end. We have the means to this end; the problem is to develop acceptance of their use.

The first struggle is one waged within our own minds. We must in all haste transcend the intellectual inhibitions that preclude support of at least the minimum level of violence that must develop concomitantly with each political thrust; our attitudes must change before we can expect any response from the people, workers, students, lumpenproletariat. We must accept the eventuality of bringing the U.S.A. to its knees; accept the closing off of critical sections of the city with barbed wire, armored pig carriers criss-crossing the city streets, soldiers everywhere, tommy guns pointed at stomach level, smoke curling black against the daylight sky, the smell of cordite, house-to-house searches, doors being kicked down, the commonness of death. Then we must learn the forms of resistance: the booby trap, the silenced pistol and rifle, the pitting of streets to slow them down, the wrecking of heavy equipment to block their efficient movement, false walls, hidden sub-basements,

²⁶ *Ibid*, p. 69.

tunnels (Vietnamese style), destruction of the critical elements of the facilities that support establishment order; we must learn the value of infiltration – it works better for us than it does for the opposition. We simply stop allowing ourselves to be hunted and do some stalking of our own; their secret police aren't really too secret at all. Right now we can go numbering, naming, compiling information on them all – they're too visible to be safe. Revolution is aggressive. Just where are we? Where is this country skidding to? In the morning the fight will have begun!

In considering all of the establishment's protective agencies, even those that are quasi-secret, none can hide themselves. Any establishment, institution or organization that enjoys prestige, that exists openly aboveground, is by this definition "weak," or at least vulnerable to a determined attack. When the purpose of your military tactics is to build and guard some object or point of supposed advantage, the defender can actually be thought of as being under siege, the guard himself a standing target. The fortress and all its resources, mechanized and human, for all its imposing strength, cannot exist for long under persistent attack deprived of the opportunity to replenish, repair, renew itself. If the opposing military forces that have laid the siege are nameless, faceless, numberless, indistinguishable from all the millions that exist all about the establishment, when the establishment's military forces sally forth from their beleaguered fortress to do battle, what must be the result? They must cause suffering to the innocent, since it is impossible for them to know us, thus making new enemies. They will restrict the freedom of our known or suspected political parties and projects that are welded to the people, thus restricting the freedom of others who may have been neutral or sympathetic to them. They will make themselves targets for our hidden machine gun, sniper's rifle, silenced pistol, mortar, anti-tank rocket, flamethrower.

Our counter-terrorism will bring on a stage-two fascist repression. There is no question in our minds – blacks, men under hatches – about the nature of the ruling class; the exceedingly violent disposition of the U.S.A. ruling class is well documented with just a glance into our lives and the order of our deaths. The point is to reveal this "senseless violence" to the entire revolutionary class or classes.

Counter-terrorism is a mighty tool, and the only one at our disposal in the opening stages of People's War. In some cases in other revolutionary societies this level of violence alone was sufficient to win all the

demands of the people. However, I'm sure that here it will not be sufficient because of the complexities of the U.S.A. class structure and its stockpile of potential further violence (many of the small demands of a sizable portion of the population are slowly being met at the expense of all the rest of us and the world's people). A new pig-oriented class has been created at the bottom of our society from which the ruling class will be always able to draw some support. Consequently our task will be to move from counter-terrorist tactics into the second stage of larger guerrilla unit operation.

Over 90 percent of the U.S.A. population live in cities and towns, and although some of the principles of classic Mao-Che-style guerrilla operations must be used to stop the orderly flow of intercity and interstate commerce, most of the real fighting must take place inside the nerve centers of the nation – the cities. This is an entirely new situation in the development of People's War. Whereas the classic types of the Third World movements generally relied upon the strangling of provincial capitals where the enemy colonial power tended to concentrate itself, in urban guerrilla warfare where the colonies can be said to be situated within the city, the process or tactics will be unique.

Though the basic strategy is the same, urban guerrilla warfare differs from all that has ever taken place in the arena of guerrilla against the god state. There are similarities between our situation and that of the growing movement of the Uruguayan people, and perhaps we can draw from their experience. But to be realistic, the disparity in size and population, the relative strength of the enemy state institutions and their global sweep, must seriously be taken into account. Uruguay is a colony of Anglo-Amerika; defeat of the Uruguayan government and a change in the present property relations would of necessity mean the defeat of a section of the Amerikan imperial infrastructure. The comparison between ourselves and the Algerian liberation experience is almost untenable, though there may be some small tactical lessons to be gleaned from their urban effort. It must be kept in mind that the principal battles that led to the people's victory were fought on the countryside between massive French mechanized divisions and a classical guerrilla army of the people. The battle for Algiers was only aided by the forces within. The people's fifth column within the city of Algiers was not a model of perfection simply because the principal effort, energy and motive forces were located in the classical guerrilla units that engaged the French expeditionary forces for control of

the countryside. At issue there in Algeria were such things as crude petroleum (62 percent of the nation's exports), agricultural products (18 percent), and some iron ore. All these basic raw materials were, of course, located in the countryside and had to be protected by the French.

The war for control of the U.S.A. is unique in that its heartbeat can be stopped only by placing our primary forces in the valleys and defiles of its city streets. U.S.A. is the colonial master, the center of the imperial process where the raw materials are worked into finished manufactured products to be recirculated back into the exterior and interior colonies. In a comparison of the classical forms of wars of liberation fought in the outlying colonies and the one we must yet formulate, a vital question is immediately brought to our attention: Does it work in such a totally different setting?

A theoretical examination indicates that it does. In fact, urban people's guerrilla warfare may prove to be an even more effective tool than the classical type. The same advantages are present, the same possibilities, plus some that exist simply because the fight is taking place within the cities, the nerve centers of the nation.

The enemy culture, the established government, exists first of all because of its ability to govern, to maintain enough order to ensure that a cycle of sorts exists between the various levels and elements of the society. "Law and Order" is their objective. Ours is "Perfect Disorder." Our aim is to stop the life cycle of the enemy culture and replace it with our own revolutionary culture. This can be done only by creating perfect disorder within the cycle of the enemy culture's life process and leaving a power vacuum to be filled by our building revolutionary culture.

When the fight takes place within the cities, the disorder will clearly be hastened – this will have an immediate effect on the consciousness of the bulk of the population and will strain the relationship between government and governed to the utmost.

If the life of the manufacturing city is to be stopped, it is clear that the normal processes, at least, will be slowed by a convoy of establishment trucks, tanks or troops simply moving in the city's arteries where commercial convoys should be moving. The necessary checkpoints will further slow it. Each one of the opposition's own tank shells that is fired inside the manufacturing city at the elusive guerrilla will destroy some

aspect of that factory-city and undercut the ability of the establishment to produce another tank shell. It will not help the fascist cause very much at all when the armored personnel carrier or jeep patrol equipped with 30-caliber machine guns fires into a downtown shopping crowd at the elusive guerrilla who has taken refuge among them. The people just will not understand.

The cities of fascist U.S.A.-built straight up and with very little real planning or pattern, the twisting side streets, gangways connecting roofs, manholes, storm drains, concrete and steel trees – will hide a guerrilla army just as effectively as any forest. There is the added advantage that just being in an area doesn't automatically make one suspect and fair game, as is the case when an establishment army unit spots a gathering, no matter how innocent, in an area where guerrilla movements have been reported in the countryside; just being out there defines them. The fact that the guerrilla can hide himself fairly easily inside large population centers does not mean that hard work needn't be done toward the winning of popular support. It simply means that failure to gain "full support" for violent confrontation doesn't preclude violent confrontation. If all the elements exist that have made guerrilla warfare in its classical style an invincible weapon against mechanized, industrially-based armies in un-developed areas, they will be even more successful in built-up urban Amerikan conditions.

The facts that make it impossible for the establishment army to overcome the attacking guerrilla army – in spite of the availability of the knowledge contained in the master-works on guerrilla strategy – become clear when we realize that after the strategy is understood by the guerrilla chief, the tactics applicable to his particular military problems "*are a product of his imagination alone*," a constant creative improvising. Also working against the establishment's general staff is its own mentality. They've convinced themselves or have been convinced by their experience at war with other mechanized armies that "having the most at the right time" wins war. In other words, they feel that winning wars depends mainly on gadgets and they presume that they can dictate the terms and grounds upon which each battle takes place. They're locked in on a fixed set of systematized ideas that conflict completely with the realities of People's War. Their egos simply will never allow them to admit that all the ingenuity that has gone into the development of the blitzkrieg has been wasted. A \$100,000 tank can be destroyed with two dollars' worth of materials; a jet is useless

against the rifleman, and it also can be destroyed with one well-placed burst from an assault rifle or destroyed on the ground by mortar from miles away. Then, too, the pilot, years in the making, can be killed with a knife. The 'copter as a fighting machine is the most stupid of all the costly gadgets; it can be heard from miles away; it can't be armored, a ten-cent bullet can render it useless. All of these contraptions require liquid fuels that will stop flowing when the production of all the other commodities stops. Fighting really depends upon the people and small easily machined portable weapons.

Another factor that works to the advantage of the guerrilla army is time. The establishment forces cannot survive the prolonged unrest that is steadily building. Profits fall, the point of diminishing returns is eventually reached; and from there, the establishment's force and energy goes into its last stages of life, while our new revolutionary culture is building musical chairs where each go-round excludes some element of their control factors. The objective, I repeat, of the destruction of a city-based industrial establishment and its protective forces is to create perfect disorder, to disrupt all of their interacting processes that allow them to produce and distribute goods, and this can be done from within the process much more easily than from without. Really, there is no possibility of an established government ever overcoming a determined internal enemy.

By their very nature, the "holder" or "owner" and his guard are exposed and vulnerable. A comparison between their mode of existence and that of the people's vanguard elements employing all the subtle scientific principles of urban guerrilla warfare will demonstrate clearly where the real power lies. Top-heavy establishment organizations that exist openly are always a reflection of the men who staff them. Of primary interest to the guerrilla are the bureaucratic institutions that serve to protect the right of the wrongdoers to do their wrong – the local and federal pig establishments. The complexities of the class structure have shifted somewhat since the time of Marx and Lenin. Presently within the working class, there exists an ultra-right section at the bottom of this structure which feels that all of its demands on life can be met by the existing order. In fact, the working class of U.S.A. 1971 can be realistically divided into two mutually exclusive and conflicting sections, one right-oriented and conservative, the other left to neutral. One explanation for this phenomenon is the loss over the years (to fascist nationalistic propaganda and state-controlled unions)

of a clear-cut class consciousness. In effect, it can be said that this right-oriented sector of the working class is a new class, a new pig class. In their ranks we find a factory or construction worker, the ubiquitous civil service employee, the retired military career man, the man who sells used autos or insurance, the stock clerk or longshoreman about to be replaced by a machine. All of these individuals are not clearly in the new pig class – some only have just one foot in the grave. As yet they only have pig tendencies and can still be redeemed. Outright pigs must be either neutralized or destroyed (killed). From the new pig class (a section of the working class whose demands are small and are being slowly met by the capitalist masters), the government draws its greatest support. The forces of counterrevolution make themselves felt on the street level through this new class, while above this class, in the loosely defined petit-bourgeois level and upper-middle-class professionals and students, we can find some very real revolutionary consciousness! There are explanations for this complex inverted stratification of revolutionary potential; the history of the U.S.A. and its immigrants, the emphasis placed on subversion of the workers' movement (the unions) by the ruling class, and the apparent (not real) stabilizing of the economy with fascist Keynesian controls and redoubled imperialist expansion, all can be carefully treated to explain the present confusion and contradictions in the class struggle – but most of this I leave to Comrade Newton who has handled it well so far. This is a comment on what to do with what we have and what we are realistically faced with.

The top-heavy bureaucratic agencies that exist with quasi-social sanction – and in particular the ones that are given over to the maintenance of law and order – draw their principal personnel from the pig class and consequently are an expression of that class's mentality: a stagnant, even atavistic mentality that is completely dependent upon regimen and rote to perform the simplest of functions.

First of all, the opposition is stupid. However, let me qualify this statement with the observation that they make up for what they lack in brains with sheer brutality. As a result of their original drawback (stupidity), they have expanded to massive proportions, and tied themselves irrevocably to a technology based on massive and equally faulty machines to the point now that it is impossible for them ever to hide any of their movements, to move with any real speed, or to change themselves in response to any change in our attack. The very nature of their apparatus, its supposed legality and its size, tends to

weaken it. Their growing demand for personnel leaves them helpless to stop us from infiltrating them. Their cybernetics cannot overcome the fact that men, especially of the pig class, are cyclic. They think, function and live in cycles. This is more to their detriment than ours. Their science of control turns upon them to weaken and wreck their own institutions. How can a massive department or bureau or regiment with hundreds of personnel ever coordinate any activity without the strictest regimentation, without a massive meeting place to familiarize themselves with procedures, without badges or uniforms to identify each other, without systematized patterns of thought and behavior, without dependence on clear-cut orders. Simple pig types can only learn to function by rote and in cycles. Procedure must be drilled into them and only seldom if ever changed. It is quite easy for a pig to perform a particular function the same way, time after time, once he has learned the function; it is not so easy to vary, especially when there are great numbers of the same types of individuals involved. What would be the result if each pig were given a different job each day in a different area or if he had to vary his code every week or think for himself just one eight-hour shift? Chaos. If it weren't for the sergeant or lieutenant and a routine, when the average pig ran out of gas, his car would have to be pushed out of the street by the citizenry; when his bullets ran out he would have only a club until he could check with the captain.

Cyclic men equipped with only a few learned responses can be watched, clocked, photographed and anticipated. Their code isn't really a code at all. They are finished! A pig is a fool! They have numbers over the small vanguard element and the social license to kill – but once we decide on the proper action, we will find that our enemies are vulnerable.

For the soldiers of the people, the guerrillas, though they also must operate with the tightest structure and in complete harmony with their political branch, cycles are not a factor in their operations. The subtleties and fundamentals of urban guerrilla warfare can be broken down to their simplest terms this way:

Mobility

Only the light, portable, easily machined or easily stolen weapons are employed by the guerrilla under normal circumstances. On rare occasions, he may hire or commandeer a piece of heavy equipment for an isolated or special purpose (which fits in with the improvised, extemporaneous nature of this form of combat). The bomb in all its various forms, banglor, mortar, satchel charge, hand grenade; the anti-

tank rocket launcher, the sniper's rifle, the light machine gun, the silenced pistol, the flamethrower, the poison dart, poison bullet, the crossbow, the knife, the fist – all form the guerrilla arsenal. Provision must be made to move men and equipment in spite of the condition of today's streets and roads in the cities. That means making use of the new four-wheel drive civilian-type jeeps, station wagons and motorcycles. The bicycle will regain popularity. Heavy vehicles, the jeeps, trucks, vans (all ordinary-looking family or commercial-looking vehicles but armored with either plastic or steel) can be either rented or commandeered. All dwellings should be rented and expendable. They should be equipped so that when forced to leave by tunnel or other hidden exits, the place can be burned to create further confusion for the attacker and destroy evidence. Food and clothing should be purposely simple. Clothing must always be available for disguises. Although part of the guerrilla's function is to hijack and commandeer food in nonperishable form from the enemy cultures and stockpiles, he should also learn to identify the food plants that grow wild all over the country – even in backyards and vacant lots. He should also learn to want less.

Infiltration

Right now we can be placing our soldiers inside the various police and military and prison staffs. Our more gifted and better-educated comrades could end up in the intelligence units of the army and police; our major source of weapons should come from our men placed in the military under seemingly ordinary circumstances. This is our enemy's greatest weakness; any establishment's greatest weakness is the need for personnel to resist the people. This lays them open to infiltration. The guerrilla army that operates within the city is necessarily small, so we stop infiltration by being very selective and conducting thorough and murderous tests and making full use of the principles underlying departmentalization.

The Ambush

The only form of attack employed by the guerrilla forces is the ambush, the surprise attack. There must never be any front lines, or defending of territory. The only engagements that are carried to completion are the ones that we are winning; after an initial attack if the enemy regains himself and counterattacks, we disengage and simply go home to await the next opportunity when we can catch him asleep, with his women, moving in convoys, on the toilet.

Camouflage

Nothing ever appears outwardly as it is. The armor (sheets of plastic or steel) is fixed inside the vans and trucks in such a way as to make them appear normal when viewed from without. The military safe-house – with tunnels leading in all directions and connecting with other houses, a storm drain, a manhole with bulletproof and airtight plexiglass window, encasements inside the house camouflaged with heavy curtains, rooms with doors that are really booby traps that work from the inside – must be made to look like any other house along the block. We must dress and equip ourselves with weaponry that will allow us to move even in units of a dozen or more without appearing to be anything other than private citizens pursuing their private interests. We will make use of all forms of disguise: mailman, policeman, telephone repairman, priest, nun, National Guardsman. This principle will soon have them shooting at each other or turning the innocents against them. The result – perfect disorder!

Autonomous Infrastructure

If it is our eventual goal to wear away the establishment's ability to produce and distribute goods, to feed its war machine, or organize any sort of social activity; then, of course, we must, at the same time, provide ourselves with the means of performing these functions on at least a subsistence level. Both the military and the political arms of the liberation movement must think of the provisioning of their vanguard elements and the people during the dark days when we stop the machine. Military supplies are stockpiled in advance with food staples. Depression-days' foraging and war-years' liberation gardens must be reintroduced and refined. The military must depend on the people for food. It must also prepare to feed the people from the enemy's supplies.

Then you have the very healthy, spontaneous mass looting. Perfect disorder! At some point in the development of the overall struggle revolutionary culture it will have to become totally independent of the old enemy culture in keeping with Che's theory of molding the new society around the struggle against the old. We will start from the beginning to build our own infrastructure in every possible area: people's stores, hospitals, banks, buses, army. This dual power, this building of political infrastructure and the military is succinctly stated by the Minister of Defense of the Black Panther Party, Huey P. Newton:

We recognized that in order to bring the people to the level of consciousness where they would seize the time, it would be necessary to serve their interests in survival by developing programs which would help them to meet their daily needs. For a long time we have had such programs not only for survival, but for organizational purposes. Now we not only have a breakfast program for schoolchildren, we have clothing programs, we have health clinics which provide free medical and dental services, we have programs for prisoners and their families, and we are opening clothing and shoe factories to provide for more of the needs of the community. Most recently we have begun a testing and research program on sickle-cell anemia, and we know that 98 percent of the victims of this disease are Black. To fail to combat this disease is to submit to genocide; to battle it is survival.

All these programs satisfy the deep needs of the community but they are not solutions to our problems. That is why we call them survival programs, meaning survival pending revolution. We say that the survival program of the Black Panther Party is like the survival kit of a sailor stranded on a raft. It helps him to sustain himself until he can get completely out of that situation. So the survival programs are not answers or solutions, but they will help us to organize the community around a true analysis and understanding of their situation. When consciousness and understanding is raised to a high level, then the community will seize the time and deliver themselves from the boot of their oppressors.²⁷

In following this strategy we at once “fill a very real vacuum” that already exists in the Black Colony (brown and poor white too), where the people are not being fed, clothed, provided with adequate medical treatment or transportation facilities. This will create the consciousness that comes from the introduction of people’s government. It will help the people to understand the force and energy of revolution. “We are organizing them around their needs.” We will not distract them with such empty questions as who will be elected from which political party. All political parties, as things stand, will support the power complex. Any individual elected will either be a supporter of the established

27 Huey P. Newton, *Black Capitalism Re-Analyzed*, p. C (supplement from) Black Panther Intercommunal News Service, Saturday, June 5, 1971.

politics – or an “individual.” What would help us, in fact, is to allow as many right-wing elements as possible to assume “political” power. The warnings that “our thrusts toward self-determination will bring on fascism” are irresponsible – or better, unrealistic. The fascists already have power. The point is that some way must be found to expose them and combat them. An electoral choice of ten different fascists is like choosing which way one wishes to die. The holder of so-called high public office is always merely an extension of the hated ruling corporate class. It is to our benefit that this person be openly hostile, despotic, unreasoning. We are not living in a nation where left-wing parties hold eighty out of two hundred seats in a congressional body, or even eight out of two hundred. This is a huge nation dominated by the most reactionary and violent ruling class in the history of the world, where the majority of the people just simply cannot understand that they are existing on the misery and discomfort of the world. They have been hypnotized into believing that criticism of the expansionist policies of imperialism is really isolationist or injurious to both the U.S.A. and the world!!

We are faced with two choices: to continue as we have done for forty years fanning our pamphlets against the hurricane, or starting to build a new revolutionary culture that we will be able to turn on the old culture. Collectively we have that choice; the Black Colony as it sits out here alone has no such choice. In a report from Jonathan Jackson in early 1970, he said,

We are not going to wait until the U.S.A. attacks the people of the U.S.A. or Angola, Mozambique or any of the other African nations in foment. We can't wait. We shouldn't even allow this thing to happen in Indo-China. Bank of America, Chase Manhattan, First National City Bank of N. Y., Irving Trust Co., the Morgan monopoly, Manufacturers Hanover Trust, Continental Ill. National Bank, First National Bank of Chicago, Bankers Trust Co., and a dozen lesser firms all have great financial interests in the U.S.A. now. In 1966 the U.S.A. investment in one small African nation was \$667 million. It's almost doubled since then. In 1968, 70 to 75% of all goods from the U.S.A. entered the U.S.A. duty free. Soon we'll be asked to fight the people of the U.S.A. because they're getting their people's army together ... No – I'm not waiting for them to attack a new part of Africa or Asia, I'm entering the war now – on the side of the Vietnamese!

The Black Colony, U.S.A., has little choice. We must enter the war on the side of the majority of the world's people, even if it means fighting the U.S.A. majority. We fight to live. And we're learning to fight; it'll be a war, to the knife if necessary.

We can't wait until the generation that thinks of blacks as niggers and the rest of the world as gooks, chinks, spies, etc., has been educated away. It may be the reverse that happens; we niggers and gooks may be blown away first. Or if we survive, what will we inherit? A desert?

We'll mass what people we can; perhaps that won't be the whole lower class. We'll mass ourselves and any ally we may be able to draw from the whole class structure, and we'll attempt to wage a war on property and property rights. Essentially that is the fight, but, even then, some men will die as in all forms of war. But if we cannot draw the support that is necessary for such a war, then we see a positive benefit for the majority of the world's people in the reduction of this whole country to a vast wasteland, and a graveyard for two hundred million of history's most damnable fools!

In People's War, urban style, each political move toward organizing people around their realistic needs will support a corresponding military move. This unity of politics and war will increase the overall revolutionary consciousness by degrees to a point where mass consciousness can be said to exist.

The Black Panther Party is the largest and most powerful political force existing outside establishment politics. It draws this power from the people. It is the people's natural, political vanguard. Now let us assume the existence of a small, tightly knit, totally committed and separate military vanguard such as Jonathan Jackson attempted to build.

Jonathan was my brother and closest comrade. I knew him. He was the real super-nigger. He worked at it, hard. He took complete control of himself, he learned every weapon in the human arsenal, from the flying side-thrust foot attack and the quick-draw snap shot to the manufacture and use of the mortar. He knew six thousand ways to kill a man, thirty with the simple stroke of an empty hand or foot. *He* was seventeen years old when he died in the service of the people, on the side of the black colonies and with the courage of the whole colonized world. Let's assume where Jonathan is concerned that "... ur battle cry reaches some receptive ear, and another hand reaches down to take up

our weapon..." We have two perfectly harmonious fists: the left "front ram" of the Black Panthers' political thrust, and the left "back ram" of the August 7th movement.

Let's further assume that this nation is one huge city that we can call by its rightful updated name Johannesburg. This clarifies the understanding of urban People's War, the concept of "the true internationalism," and the connections, interactions, processes and effects of a people at war under the leadership of a vanguard which wields a double-edged sword against an isolated enemy element. All the cities of this country can be treated as one interconnecting entity, due to the necessity of exchange and interactions caused by specialization. We can now deal with them as a single entity because of the national character of the vanguard party and revolutionary consciousness within the inner Black Colony. All Anglo-Western cities are generally the same when they are reduced to the critical features that support them. I could be talking about London, New York, Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, Paris, Berlin or Rome instead of Johannesburg.

Mao pictured the U.S.A. as the city of the world surrounded, besieged and slowly strangled to death by a third force under arms. Using Mao's theoretical springboard, I wish to make further comments on the hypothetical super-technological city-state and its vulnerability.

Any honest expert in the overall strategy and logistics of classic Western mechanized warfare – the war of the industrially-based, established state – will admit that the scientific guerrilla force must be outnumbered ten to one in manpower by the mechanized force if it is to be contained at all. The establishment army, the defenders of property, of the industrial complex armed with the tools and weapons of heavy industry, must field ten men for just one guerrilla: this point is a strong indication of the relative effectiveness of the two fighting styles. Recent reports (March of 1971) coming in from the Indo-Chinese theater describe such debacles as eighty U.S.A. 40-ton tanks racing in wild retreat before the guerrillas. Puppet soldiers and U.S.A. mercenaries in their haste to disengage from the people's forces are lashing themselves to the runners of rescue helicopters. Disaster for the man with the most and best equipment is threatening and imminent. Now is the time for us to fill the streets with our protest, clog the tunnels and back stairs of covert totalitarian government with every weapon at our disposal.

The effectiveness of rallies and mass demonstrations has not come to an end. Their purpose has diacritically altered, but the general tactic remains sound. Today the rally affords us the opportunity to effect intensive organization of the projects and programs that will form the infrastructure of our communes. If the mass rallies close, as they have in the past, with a few speeches and a pamphlet, we can expect no more results than in the past: two hours later the people will be Americans again (instead of people). But going among “the people” at each gathering with clipboards and pens, and painfully ascertaining what each can contribute to clear-cut, carefully defined political projects, is the distinction between intensive organization and the sterile, stilted attempts to build new unions (rank and file, etc.) or elect a socialist legislature.

However, as we start the projects that will eventually move the workers and the whole community into open conflict with the ruling clique, my own personal observations lead me to the independent conclusion that the political vanguard and even its early project need to be defended. Clearly the political cadre needs protection from the enemy culture’s military, its secret police and vigilante “death squads.”

Armed struggle is at the very heart of revolution. If the problems of the people cannot be redressed because the necessary resources are in the hands of a relatively few families and individuals, it means we are going to have to seize this property. Seizing property has always meant some form of war, some form of armed struggle. If history is our guide, it clearly records that nothing of any great value has ever changed hands without a struggle, or at least a show of, or threat of, violence. Men simply don’t surrender what they think of as their privilege and property except by force. History itself is economically motivated class struggle.

There is simply no way to compare this society or its historical experience with that of a tiny colonial country like Chile: Allende is not seizing property; his government is “buying property.” Until the Chilean ruling capitalist class is suppressed, the Chilean revolution is as meaningless as the Swedish experiment. Socialist governments which attempt to coexist with capitalist economics completely forget the economic motive of human social history. Revisionism has given birth to countless “socialistic” hermaphrodites, always to the detriment of people’s power. Strained, tortured definitions of social existence and organization have trapped the people in so many contradictions that

most have given up all hope of harnessing the modern industrial state or even understanding it. England before the Tories or between the Tories is “liberal socialist.” Military dictatorships, clearly totalitarian, are ruled by cliques traveling under the designation “revolutionary council,” etc. No argument has any substance if it conflicts with the objective conditions, the clear, incontrovertible facts. In our case, these facts can be read from the nation’s dailies – in the obituary section. Blacks who seriously advocate revolution are killed. Blacks who attack property relations are slated for the graveyard or the prison camp. It’s a national cultural tradition. Since these are the facts, it follows that

An oppressed class which does not strive to learn to use arms, to acquire arms, only deserves to be treated like slaves. We cannot forget, unless we become bourgeois pacifists or opportunists, that we are living in a class society, that there is no way out of this society, and there can be none, except by means of the class struggle. In every class society, whether it is based on slavery, serfdom, or as at present, on wage labour, the oppressing class is armed.²⁸

The vanguard cannot stay alive long enough to effect a broad consciousness unless it possesses the latent threat of force. They’re going to claim that our clothing projects, the people’s bazaars, the people’s stores and decentralized cottage industries are fronts for stolen property. The establishment will claim that the vanguard party is feeding and clothing people with goods stolen from the old enemy culture. They’ll claim that we’re buying it from the city-state’s lumpen who steal everything they can sell, or that we’re ripping it off ourselves. Of course, this will be used to justify an attack upon our political projects, our infrastructure. The assaults will be justified by them in a dozen different ways, whether we establish ourselves in storefronts or in our homes. They will attack us – behind the fire ordinance, the sanitation department, the anonymous tip. The establishment’s mercenaries will break in shooting, and all of us who are not killed will go to jail, for violating the fire ordinance, resisting arrest, attempting murder and receiving stolen property, etc. It’s as predictable as nightfall.

I’m convinced that any serious organizing of people must carry with it from the start a potential threat of revolutionary violence. Without it, the establishment forces will succeed in isolating the political organizer

28 V.I. Lenin, *Selected Works*.

and closing down his project before the people can feel its benefits. Self-determination requires a small, hidden, highly trained army equipped with the very best and most destructive of military weapons, and a bodyguard of counter-terrorists.

The vanguard party distinguishes itself in the service of the people and superimposes itself over the old culture throughout the city-state. Tactics designed to further the development of revolutionary consciousness must be based upon the prevailing state of class and race antagonisms created out of the new relationship. We can be certain that the nucleus of a clandestine army will already exist by then. The government's repressive agencies will also be well infiltrated by blacks and other revolutionary people. Infiltration is the work of the professional revolutionary. Infiltrating the establishment's protective agencies will also tend to neutralize the ruling class's attempt to isolate the black vanguard commune from the larger body of the class structure. All efforts to isolate the vanguard community must be resisted. The Black Colony must actively invite other revolutionary people to follow their example. We must give refuge to the refugees, and eventually work out some means to coordinate our operations with theirs at every level. However, we cannot delay our own preparations toward a united black revolutionary culture. No one will undertake to aid us unless they sense the power of our movement. It is blacks who must play not only the role of liberating the Black Colony but also the leading role in the liberation of the whole city-state. To expect that someone else will take the full responsibility for our own liberation is suicide. We'll be asked to be "patient" for another one hundred to one hundred and fifty years! We'll get stuck with long theoretical explanations on consciousness or objective conditions when it's clear that consciousness will not grow unless there is someone among us willing to feed it.

Consciousness grows in spirals. Growth implies feeding and being fed. We feed consciousness by feeding people, addressing ourselves to their needs, the basic and social needs, working, organizing toward a united national left. After the people have created something that they are willing to defend, a wealth of new ideals and an autonomous subsistence infrastructure, then they are ready to be brought into "open" conflict with the ruling class and its supporters. This conflict must extend to every level of capitalist production and distribution. Consciousness of our power will grow, as a result of this mass contact with the ruling forces. There is no question that people must be

organized and educated to the benefits of people's government before they can successfully move against their class enemy. However, there seems to be some question as to how seriously we should take ourselves and our work of organizing. When we meet resistance, should we acquiesce, withdraw, wait it out or intensify? Should we meet violent reaction with a more determined violence? The type that put eighty tanks to flight in Laos? In other words, if the fascists don't like what we're doing and attack us through a lynch mob (the police forces and judicial branch of their government), should we relent? Or should we accept their violent reaction as a natural response to our challenge and organize against it?

Every step, every stage toward a unified black commune will meet great resistance. This resistance will come in some form of violence. It is clear that if we don't learn to overcome all resistance, no forward movement will be made. Discovering ways of meeting and overcoming resistance, demonstrating to ourselves that "*we can*," is a fundamental antecedent to the growth of revolutionary consciousness because we'll be under attack every step of the way. One hundred years ago it would have been the same. One hundred years from today it will be the same. We'll take our mule and forty acres now, collectivize them, defend them, invite other revolutionary people to follow our example, make allies-then leap to destroy the fascists' pseudo-mass-culture from within.

As the people move into more significant areas of anti-establishment projects they will be hurled violently into contact with the defenders of the present state of property relations at the level of production, distribution and property rights in general. Then we will discover that their power and their new fighting style actually depend on their greater potential for violence. The size and complexity of a thing are not an index of its strength. This struck me forcefully one evening as I flipped through one of the nation's news weeklies and spotted a photograph of a huge self-propelled 155-mm cannon lying on its side, its barrel spiked forever. A man on foot, armed with a rocket that weighed less than four pounds, had destroyed it.

The larger and more complex the city-state, the more it is dependent upon all related parts. The cannon was hit at its base, in the moving parts of its treads, which were destroyed and the death machine fell of its own weight. How can the super-technological state operate without electricity or power, without water, transport, communications, sewage systems, utilities? None of these can be protected; their sheer

size alone makes it impossible. How can the establishment protect an electrical supply line and the thousands of transformers, etc? Effective positioning of the guards is militarily impossible. A man every twenty-five feet up and down the million miles of line can't protect it (it would also break the class that paid for the protection), since a break at any one point renders powerless huge sections of the area served. The cost of supporting the guards would bankrupt any nation. The guerrillas would simply overwhelm the guardians point by point. I think this is the essence of the poor man's war, the essence of the guerrilla strategy, the protracted war of the worker bees.

The only valid form of union activity is seizure of union leadership by any means necessary. We must call strikes to enforce our demands on capital. To enforce the strike we must stop the plant's power source. Standing in the gateway with a placard and a pamphlet alone will not dull a worker's short-term interest in wage slavery. The very first impulse is to eat! With right-wing union leadership *gone* and the black worker revolutionized through his contact with the black commune, even the fascists who exist without any sense of community or class consciousness can possibly be won over or at least rendered neutral. Either way, they won't be able to break strikes with the power lines down.

The power of our military strategy sitting beside our political infrastructure depends on constant attack, attack, attack. Improvisation, aggression. An attack on property, the utilities that feed the super-state, indirect and *direct* attacks at the productive point and distribution system. As I stated, the Western military experts admit that the mechanized establishment guard must outnumber the attacking worker by ten to one. What they cannot afford to admit is that even with this numerical superiority they cannot win. They're learning this in every theater of combat. In a class war, they could never even raise a ten-to-one numerical superiority! Even if they succeed in employing the degenerate elements of the lower class (created by a long history of counter-positive mobilization of reactionary mass society) as mercenaries or vigilantes in the early stages, the advantage is still ours. At ten to one, we still enjoy a strategic, military superiority if we are attacking, because they must defend so many different points vital to the order and continuity of their life-support system, all at the same time. The points to be protected will always outnumber the units who are available to protect them.

The super-technological city-state has grown so complex that it is completely dependent upon its thousands of related parts. It has grown so large that no force can be fielded to protect all its vital parts. The essence of the guerrilla technique is to cripple and finally stop the life-support system of the enemy class or state. The advantage of the anti-establishment force can be best understood by picturing the need for the establishment forces to *spread themselves thin* in the vain attempt to protect the mechanical base of their source of power, which, of course, works out to be the various forms of productive and nonproductive property. The mobile “have-not,” the attacker, can concentrate his forces (even though initially they are numerically inferior) to actually outnumber and overwhelm the thinned-out forces of the establishment by attacking at one or two points at a time. In Mao’s *Selected Works*, Vol. II, he speaks of ingenuity and mobility as necessary qualities of any guerrilla operation.

The ancients said: “Ingenuity in varying tactics depends on mother wit”; this “ingenuity,” which is what we mean by flexibility, is the contribution of the intelligent commander. Flexibility does not mean recklessness; recklessness must be rejected. Flexibility consists in the intelligent commander’s ability to take timely and appropriate measures on the basis of objective conditions after “judging the hour and sizing up the situation” (the “situation” includes the enemy’s situation, our situation and the terrain), and this flexibility is “ingenuity in varying tactics.” On the basis of this ingenuity, we can win more victories in quick-decision offensive warfare on exterior lines, change the balance of forces in our favor, gain the initiative over the enemy, and overwhelm and crush him so that the final victory will be ours.²⁹

If there are twenty points in the city-state to be protected, and ten units of protection, clearly an attacking force of one could destroy ten of the twenty points without opposition. The ten points that remain and are guarded by the ten units of protection must now meet the attacker on a one-to-one basis. The term “attack” explicitly means “first strike,” and “first strike” translates into “advantage.” Total repression and genocide are not possible if we organize ourselves for survival first – if we first construct the commune, a sense of community, a common interest of class. The objective conditions are present. To postpone our liberation

29 Mao Tse-tung, *Selected Works*.

with the excuse that the “people aren’t ready” is to underestimate them; in effect it’s like saying they don’t have the mentality to act in their defense. The repeating shotgun is the deadliest weapon in the world for close-range urban fighting. They are simple to make, maintain and use. Anyone can be effective with the scatter gun; one simply points and squeezes the trigger; if the thing to be shot is moving, follow through with your swing. Tanks are obsolete. They can be rendered harmless with a dollar’s worth of grenade, propelled from the muzzle of the shotgun by a blank cartridge. Then, as a tank moves down any city street it has placed itself in a defile. On a cost-effectiveness basis, the most destructive weapon is the gasoline bomb. Enough gasoline, soap shavings and potassium chlorate could flip a tank over on its side, or thrown from the windows of our defiles, the gasoline bomb could incinerate the largest army.

We can only be repressed if we stop thinking and stop fighting. People who refuse to stop fighting can never be repressed – they either win or they die – which is more attractive than losing and dying. The primacy of politics remains but we must now prepare for armed confrontation. By no stretch of the imagination can we hope to overthrow so determined an enemy without force.

We Will Win!

George



Blood in My Eye was completed only days before the author died from bullet wounds during an alleged escape attempt from San Quentin Prison, California. Arrested at the age of eighteen for allegedly taking part in the robbery of a gas station netting \$70, George L. Jackson was sentenced to one year to life in prison. At the time of his death he had served eleven years behind prison walls, seven of those years in solitary confinement. This book testifies to how those years were spent, and why.

Written with the memory of his slain brother, Jonathan, constantly before him, it is an apocalyptic vision of America. It speaks to the poor, the jailed, and the disenfranchised throughout the world. Jackson's message to his revolutionary brothers is clear: "People are already dying who could be saved, generations more will die or live poor butchered half-lives if you fail to act. Discover your humanity and your love in revolution. Pass on the torch. Join us, give up your life for the people."

Blood in My Eye takes up where Soledad Brother left off, and introduces the reader to the life force that was George L. Jackson.



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