

The Challenge of Autonomy: Prospects for Freedom Going into 2021



1. Intro: Do For Self Politics vs. Hypothetical Radicalism

“And i prayed to God to make me strong and able to fight...”

- Harriet Tubman

*“Freedom is something that you have to do for
yourself.”*

- Malcolm X

We find ourselves situated in a time when the u.s. Empire is deteriorating faster and faster. We cannot, therefore, discuss the struggles against injustice here in any way without first looking at ourselves politically, economically, and strategically within that deteriorating situation. Either benefiting from it or sinking with it. Either integrating into this burning house, building our own, or running unprepared into the cold to die.¹ The matter is that simple.

If we had to rank these options in order, we would say what Emiliano Zapata said: that it is *“better to die on our feet than live on our knees”*: better for white supremacy to burn down and leave us out in the cold, to take our chances wandering in the wilderness of uncertainty like the Israelites, than to allow the violation of modern-day slavery to continue. But even better than that, is that we might build our own resilient communities, which will shelter us in the long struggle against the plantation society, and sustain us after it’s finally gone. We call this third

¹ Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. stated near the end of his life, “I fear i am integrating my people into a burning house.” <http://amsterdamnews.com/news/2017/jan/12/dr-martin-luther-king-jr-i-fear-i-am-integrating-m/>

option “self-determination,” and it has many stages and phases and forms it can take depending on the situation - from just owning our own collective businesses and protecting our own without the police, all the way to Maroon towns and *quilombo* fortresses like those built by our ancestors who escaped bondage, and beyond.²

A lot of people talk a good game about this. Whenever challenged about “but what would we do without police or prisons?” the hypothetical radical will talk about communities self-organizing and so on. They rarely take any real, practical steps to put it into action. But even at the risk of sounding like all of them, we put this together in 3 parts: 1. an introduction 2. an analysis of the events of 2020 and how they show us the limits and “prospects for freedom”³ available in the foreseeable future, and then 3. a list of concrete, tried and tested baby steps that serious comrades can start from scratch with. We speak from generations of experience and successful communal structure - not from our own personal opinions, left-wing jargon, dreams, theories or books alone.

It’s easy to say “F the Police” and “Abolish This” and “Defund That.” Most of the people who are advocating most publicly and visibly for abolition of slavery today would be completely helpless (or outright liabilities) if their demands were granted tomorrow. However, because in reality these demands will never be granted anytime soon, it has created an environment of contradiction, where it’s very easy to adopt abolitionist politics without facing any of the real consequences and repercussions of it. Because no matter how loud you scream at the police, at the end of the night, you still have their protection to rely on. This has given rise to a very lower-middle-class-compatible, *hypothetical* form of “radicalism.” *Actual* preparations are endlessly delayed or dismissed with condescension in favor of pure rhetoric and ideological identities and labels. “Anarchist” “Marxist” “Revolutionary” “Anti-Racist” “Anti-State” “Feminist” “Abolitionist” and so on - all can become substitutes for building actual, material power.⁴

But when your community is either a warzone or holds the potential to become one at any moment - and when you are intergenerationally invested in that community to such an extent that your and your children’s and your children’s children’s fates are tied to it - then this

² Russel Maroon Shoatz, *Maroon Implacable*, pages 101-156. For more detail, see Margarita Rosa, *Du’as of the Enslaved: The Male Slave Rebellion in Bahia, Brazil* and her source list.

³ Al Hajj Malik Shabazz / Malcolm X, “The Prospects for Freedom in 1965” Lecture at the Militant Labor Forum <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aDlpERfBbxo>

⁴ Meanwhile, Right Wing militias suffer from no such failure of priorities. They are preparing actively, and the risks of allowing them to out-prepare us have become abundantly clear to anyone with eyes in the last few years. This is probably because, ironically, their culture is still more determined by that of the working class than the contemporary left’s. More attachment to actual material realities. Notwithstanding that sometimes their perceptions of that reality are wildly deluded.

isn't so easy. Realistically, abolishing the slavery of our time (police and prisons) means facing the possibility of chaos. Not romantic, liberating chaos, like you feel in the middle of a rebellion or like you see on an anarchist pamphlet cover - but actual chaos, like Chicago in a hot summer, South Central in the 1990s, or cartel wars. Nothing liberating about it, just grimy. And we have already lived through this, and it is always just around the corner, or right up on our doorstep. Nothing hypothetical about it.

If the police were actually defunded or gradually abolished, who would fill the vacuum they left? Are the people calling for their defunding and abolition armed and organized and ready to respond to domestic violence calls? What about when the perpetrator is armed, a member of a street organization ("gang") connected to dozens of others, etc? Will they come running to our aid when the poor begin to cannibalize each other? Are they doing that kind of work now? If not, why would we expect them to be ready to do so in the absence of police?

There are only three possible outcomes of defunding and/or abolishing the police state:

- A) that the exact same State that created the problem will reallocate funds and bureaucracy into replacing it with something radically different (once more leaving us completely dependent on handouts from the u.s. government for our basic survival), or
- B) that communities ourselves pick up the slack, as much as possible (and eventually altogether) without the help of the State.
- C) That there will simply be a massive rise in crime and poor-on-poor violence - especially with the post-Covid economic depression - until the same black and brown poor people who made abolition possible will ultimately beg for the police back, and the whole episode will be used to re-consolidate Police State power. Anyone who is really entrenched in and familiar with the experiences and mood of the most oppressed peoples in this system already understands this, and we aren't writing this for the rest.

We don't trust the State to exist, never mind to handle our futures and our children's futures for us. So that rules out A. We didn't enjoy growing up with no one but neighborhood heroes - too many of whom are now dead or in other ways taken from us - to shelter us from the always-imminent threats of addiction, constant victimization and senseless killing - so that rules out C, and pretty much narrows it down:

No one is going to get us ready for what's coming except ourselves. No one is going to get us free except each other. No one is coming to save us or do this for us except for us.

These are the freedoms we need to seize for ourselves, and never wait for the State, the Left, social media personalities, or any other variety of jive-talker to handle for us.

By the time the police and prison systems are defunded or abolished, it will be way too late. We can't wait for tomorrow when our peoples are dying now. We need to do for self now. Tonight. Today. Last year.

Let's each and every one of us, wherever we are right now, whatever we're working with no matter how few or how poor, analyze our situation, form a plan, and start right now. And let's see it through!

2. The George Floyd Rebellions and our Prospects for Freedom

“So in discussing this topic tonight, ‘Prospects for Freedom in 1965,’ I think we have to go back... to the time when the struggle of the Black man in America began to be projected into the limelight. Not only in this country, but throughout the world...”

- Malcolm X⁵

“And we were running and fighting, fighting and running, just like our ancestors had done.”

- Zapatista Army of National Liberation

Rather than claiming to know *exactly* how self-determination can be realized, or putting forward any grand scheme by which we assure anyone it *will* be realized, we suggest a narrow, *tactically flexible* political program for how to start. Not necessarily “What is to be Done” like Lenin said, but more like what “might should be done,” as one obscure contemporary mentioned last year.⁶

Perhaps our proposals could only bring us halfway to our goals, with limited control over the social, educational, and financial aspects of our community lives. Perhaps we would be bogged down there as so many other movements (quite questionably) claiming the rhetoric of self-determination have been.⁷ Even so, we contend that this would be a “good problem” compared to our current conditions of absolute dispossession, and absent, broken, or downright self-destructive community structures.

Or perhaps the initial baby steps could mark only the beginning of something new for us. Something almost unprecedented in the U.S. since WWII, but which nonetheless represents **the only territorially successful⁸ model of resistance⁹ to white supremacy inside the Western**

⁵ Lecture at the Militant Labor Forum, “The Prospects for Freedom in 1965”

⁶ Idris Robinson, “How It Might Should be Done.”

<http://libcom.org/library/how-it-might-should-be-done-idris-robinson>

⁷ “Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex”

<https://incite-national.org/beyond-the-non-profit-industrial-complex/>

And INCITE!, *The Revolution Will Not be Funded*

<https://www.dukeupress.edu/the-revolution-will-not-be-funded>

⁸ Mexico News Daily, “Zapatistas to Extend their Control with 11 More Autonomous Zones”

<https://mexiconewsdaily.com/news/zapatistas-to-extend-their-control/> Hackbarth and Mooers, *The Zapatista Revolution is Not Over* <https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/zapatista-chiapas-caracoles/>

⁹ The word “resistance” here is meant in the same way as German revolutionary Ulrike Meinhof, when, after hearing Chicago Black Panther Party Chairman Fred Hampton speak at a conference and

hemisphere during that time. That is: **to carve out a territory or network of cities or towns, neighborhoods, communities, villages, families and households, with a high level of spiritual, social, economic, political, and judicial autonomy from that order, while in an ongoing tension or struggle against it.**¹⁰ **Territories and networks in which the State may continue to exist, but real day-to-day power is in the hands of the organized community.** **In a word: “autonomy.”** Social Revolution would be better than mere autonomy, of course - but we challenge those who would bring that up as a criticism, to kindly put their money and activities where their mouths are, and let us focus on our survival in the meantime. This essay is for doers not talkers.

How can a community get some level of real political autonomy on its road to the “promised land” of total self-determination? **Where do we even start? To answer those questions we’re going to first need to look at where we are and how we got here:**

Everywhere poor black and brown people, and very young people generally, particularly those just now coming of age, are taking any action possible to directly resist the system. They want a world in which public safety is not handled by military force, and in which disobeying the law is not a justification for continuing slavery. This is a generation who have seen firsthand the vulnerability of the u.s. Empire and will only distantly remember a time when Americans enjoyed the sense of absolute, first world invincibility (and resulting *hubris*) that characterized previous generations. This is a generation whose character was well summarized by memes circulated during the rebellions, stating in effect that they are simultaneously too shy to ask a waiter for extra ketchup, and not even slightly hesitant to body-slam a cop.

This humble, self-mocking fearlessness is a breath of fresh air after the pathologically self-conscious, politically correct moralism of the generation immediately before them - those now-twenty-and-thirty-somethings who brought us pop culture intersectionality, infinite inclusive acronyms for every conceivable variety of light-skin, and “wokeness.”

It has already forced the world’s most powerful nation to the negotiating table in one single summer concerning issues that hundreds of grassroots, nonprofit, reformist, old-guard Left, Black Nationalist, secular and religious movements could not get taken seriously on for

attempting to paraphrase, she said: *“Protest is when I say this does not please me. Resistance is when I ensure what does not please me does not occur.”*

¹⁰ Sixth Declaration of the Selva. <https://enlacezapatista.ezln.org.mx/sdsl-en/>

decades prior.¹¹ The most militant and visionary of these youth are not only ready but energized and eager to hear what an alternative to policing and prisons could look like.¹² Their demands and dreams are not limited to mere reforms and improvements on an existing system of slavery. Many of them are ready, as Mumia Abu Jamal encourages us, *“to move for what we want, not for what we think the system can produce, because the system is the problem.”*¹³

Older militants of every generation stand to gain and learn just as much if not more from these upcoming youth than the other way around.

The uncertain part here is not whether it is possible to take the place of State power when and where it declines - the only question is, who will do so? Corporations? Regional and local governments? Illegal capitalist (“criminal”) elements? Organized community forces?

If the Police State regroups, adapts and consolidates absolute power over the cities using new and improved means, as they did in the aftermath of Black Power, or the Rodney King Uprising for instance, then our opportunities will be limited accordingly. If it is unable to do so, then how will we take advantage?

The most recent and acute set-back to our enemies (outside of Covid 19 and its economic fallout) has been the recent George Floyd Rebellions. The rebellions themselves were not the acute issue. Rather, the clear demonstration of ungovernability, the impotence of the State in being unable to put it down, the inability of civil society actors (nonprofits, religious leaders, liberals, etc) to do anything to slow, pacify or moderate it, and the potential for further repetitions of such disorders without any clear end in sight, is. The State is nothing if not a monopoly on the use of force and a psycho-emotional guarantee against chaos for those it

¹¹ *“By the ’80s and ’90s, prison abolition had become a movement, most closely associated with two black women, Angela Davis and Ruth Wilson Gilmore, as well as Canadian Quaker Ruth Morris... but it didn’t really take off until this year.”* 6/12/2020 Arrieta-Kenna, “The Deep Roots and New Offshoots of ‘Abolish the Police’.” <https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2020/06/12/abolish-defund-police-explainer-316185> Also see Rachel Swan, “How the Debate About Police Reform Could Remake Oakland’s City Council” <https://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/How-the-debate-about-police-reform-could-remake-15447760.php>

Yet more evidence of the causal relationship between the Rebellion and mainstreaming of these issues, is that out of 20 news media and academic citations (we checked each of them for basic credibility) in the Wikipedia entry for “Police abolition movement,” 16 are from the year 2020, and 3 out of the other 4 others are from the last 3 years, although the phrase and concept have been in circulation among activists since at least the 1940s! https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Police_abolition_movement

¹² <https://truthout.org/series/the-road-to-abolition/> https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Police_abolition_movement

¹³ Mumia Abu Jamal, 2020 Interview with Marzi Starzmann, “You Cannot Decarcerate Using the Tools of Incarceration” <https://truthout.org/articles/you-cannot-decarcerate-by-using-the-tools-of-incarceration-says-mumia-abu-jamal/>

protects. Those it protects being corporations, the rich, their institutions, and the prison-industrial complex, with the middle class, white people of every class, and then the general populace tailing at the end of these. George Jackson said it well: “*All classes are subject to the authoritarian syndrome. It is an atavistic throwback to the herd instincts*” BUT if State power is seen to be unable to control its subjects or ensure that capitalist commerce can function, then a timer has started on its lifespan.¹⁴ And anywhere State power is reduced, that is an opening for community powers to step in. *If properly prepared, creatively organized, and if we act decisively!*

This is not to exaggerate and claim that this means the “timer” will be allowed to run out and the machine will simply die. Only that it is a “State” of affairs (so to speak) that cannot be tolerated. It forces the State to address it. If it cannot use force then it will use concessions, reforms, co-optation, integration and so on.

The sheer scale of minor concessions granted¹⁵ and major (in a few cases, unprecedented) reforms promised or up for negotiation in places such as Minneapolis, Portland, and Oakland,¹⁶ are signs of the extent to which the State is willing to go to preserve itself in the face of this particular situation. We have already seen community organizers step in spontaneously, without specific preparation, to fill the vacuum left by police in the temporary, de facto autonomous zones created by social rebellions. Such as when the Minneapolis American Indian Movement (AIM) Patrols took over aspects of public safety during the unrest there. It is no exaggeration to say tens of millions of people across the continent and beyond are now calling for the massive reduction or outright abolition of police and carceral slavery (prisons). These demands, if realized *even partially* over the course of the next 50-100 years, would represent **a historically unprecedented reduction in the power of the State to control the People through immediate direct violence, or prevent autonomous zones from emerging within its borders.** This means our prospects for true self-determination within the territory of

¹⁴ *Blood in My Eye*, page 124

¹⁵ Crowd-sourced, day-by-day breakdown of all the concessions and small victories, as they were occurring, during only the first month or so of active rebellions here:

<https://www.facebook.com/babamalang/posts/10158418299074281>

¹⁶ “Minneapolis City Council Advances Plan to Abolish Police Department”

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/minneapolis-city-council-advances-plan-to-abolish-police-department-11593188831>

Eder Campuzano, “Portland Superintendent Says He’s Discontinuing Presence of Armed Police Officers in Schools.” There are examples of this in several other school districts, Portland is just one among many. [https://www.oregonlive.com/education/2020/06/portland-superintendent-says-hes-discontinuing-school-re source-officer-program.html](https://www.oregonlive.com/education/2020/06/portland-superintendent-says-hes-discontinuing-school-re-source-officer-program.html)

Rachel Swan, “How the Debate About Police Reform Could Remake Oakland’s City Council”

<https://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/How-the-debate-about-police-reform-could-remake-15447760.php>

that State hinge heavily, as Malcolm and others have already shown, on the development of an independent social movement conducive to our goals.¹⁷

Therefore, our struggle by necessity has multiple fronts: on the one hand, the social movement for Black liberation, defunding of the carceral slavery apparatus (police, prisons) and so on, and on the other, the community movement(s) that will be absolutely vital to replace them. Without which the vacuum will necessarily be refilled by more of the same, or by something even worse.¹⁸ There are many others but these are the two main fronts our study revolves around, and both of them are necessary to complement the other while remaining distinct and independent of each other.

It may be useful to think of them in terms of “offense” and “defense.” While popular rebellion and social movements clear the space we need to work in by pushing “offensively” back against State power, it’s up to those of us with the will to move into that space, to build something positive that we can leave to our babies when their turns come to continue this struggle after us.

The most successful and comparable examples of autonomous communities inside of a capitalist State they are still unable to overthrow, are scattered across Latin America, from rural and metropolitan Mexico to rural Brazil. There are also post-Soviet Cuba¹⁹ and Athens, Greece to look at.²⁰ But we lack space to list or explain the major similarities and key differences between their situations and ours. The book *Territories in Resistance* by Raul Zibechi is one good introduction that could be used as a starting point, just to scratch the surface. All of these should be studied diligently if we are to innovate something new and unique to suit our situation.

Chess not checkers, bruh!

¹⁷ Malcolm, “Prospects for Freedom”

¹⁸ For example: enforced chaos, such as in the 80s and 90s when police strategically allowed the poorest and most rebellious neighborhoods in the country to become drug playgrounds so long as they remained apolitical. Or, alternatively, criminal and right-wing elements like the Philly Black Mafia, cartels, conservative militias, neo-Klan groups like 3 Percenters and Oathkeepers, and so on.

¹⁹ Cuba provides an excellent model of grassroots food autonomy and do-for-self agriculture from which much can be learned, the obvious differences notwithstanding.

²⁰ Wikipedia provides good overall, understandable background on Athens:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exarcheia> Also: “*Exarchia*, The Anarchist Athens Neighborhood Where No Government is Good Government” by Cara Hoffman <https://www.thedailybeast.com/exarchia-the-anarchist-athens-neighborhood-where-no-government-is-good-government> Obvious differences aside, the significance of the Greek anarchist example, is that it is in an urban, first world context, so there are key similarities showing us what’s really possible even in the belly of the beast.

3. Conclusion: A List of Starting Points

“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... I was hoping you wouldn’t get trapped in the riot stage like a great many other very sincere brothers.”

- George Jackson

*“I set up a plan and then i seen it through
I gave you a chance cuz i believed in you
No matter how hard it gets, see it through
My only reward was just to see you grow.
So see it through, see it through...
No matter how hard it gets, see it through...
No matter how hard it gets.”*

- The Jacka

All that said, the young people getting active in the streets today are entering a desert of political options and conversations. A degenerate political left represents the only well-known alternative to openly fascist Democrats²¹ and neo-nazi-courting Republicans, a left that has grown so petty bourgeois (middle class) in its class character that it has very little relationship to the physically existing world, as outlined in section 1. For those of us who actually want to make this thing materially viable, we need to focus on building the actual material infrastructure for self-determination, independent of police and State assistance.

This infrastructure building should be our top priority over and above all else, except for the most vital acts of direct, effective resistance, as outlined in section 2. While theory, organization-building, discussion groups, verbal protest and civil disobedience are all important - even vital²² - none of them are sustainable without community power-building to prepare us for the long term.

²¹ Defined as by George Jackson, in the empirical, political-economic, structural sense of the word - as a nationalist, capitalist totalitarian State built on the unity of bourgeois, labor, and State power, with ideological details playing an ultimately “non-essential,” mainly psycho-social role. *Blood In My Eye*, pages 117-177.

²² Anonymous, *The Siege of the Third Precinct in Minneapolis*
<https://crimethinc.com/2020/06/10/the-siege-of-the-third-precinct-in-minneapolis-an-account-and-analysis>

You can strategize however fits you and yours best but these are some labels we like to organize priorities and projects under, in a very rough chronological order of how we feel they need to be handled:

- A. "Breathing Room"
- B. Alliances
- C. Sustainability

Each stage will require multiple avenues to be pursued at once, there will be a *LOT* of trial and error, and all of it is easier said than done. You have to be ready to stick with it and not be praised or recognized or rewarded. Once you get some very bare bones, basic housing, resources, and relationships in place, the whole process has to start over again, many times over. You build it piece by piece - block by block, street by street.

We'll break each of these 3 stages / areas down into suggested baby steps:

A. Breathing Room

Living under capitalism as a Black person is like being suffocated financially, mentally, emotionally, socially, and spiritually, until you physically die. It's just a question of how long before the physical part sets in. We have no intergenerational wealth, no assets, and no security even if we do attain them. Studies show that Black people who get wealth are stripped of it by institutions of racism (banks, courts, hospitals, schools, laws, basically everyone and everything) faster than anyone else.²³ It's pointless to talk about political autonomy if we still can't even feed our children.

So the first step is to get some kind of breathing room. This has to happen in a few different areas to give us the space to then make power moves as functional collectives - not divided or independent individuals. We have 11 suggestions based on our own experiences, and expect this stage should require an investment of anywhere from 6 to 24+ months depending on the level of community and political cohesion you're starting out with:

²³ McIntosh, Moss, Nunn and Shambaugh, "Examining the Black-White Wealth Gap." <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/02/27/examining-the-black-white-wealth-gap/>

1. **You need money. A communal surplus of money.** You don't have to be rich, but you will need money. Establish a pool of capital that you hold together *collectively* - not private individuals sponsoring others! We want power not handouts. The simplest way we've found is to form a collective with clearly spelled out common goals, and start paying monthly dues into the communal fund. This should be a collective of persons deeply rooted in their communities, with community ties to each other. The funds should be controlled by someone that is chosen and trusted by consensus of the group. She should be someone who is extremely accountable - for example, to a political organization that could be appealed to if she betrayed our trust and who could effectively reign her in, parents, religious congregation, a life-long or multi-generational circle of loyal friends, or other tight-knit community. If you start with 5 people paying \$20 a month this will be enough to get started. Although it should be mentioned that *ENSLAVED* Africans plotting insurrection in the 1830s managed it by each member donating a full day's wages every month into their communal fund!²⁴ So it all depends what the level of seriousness is on your part as an individual, as well as the level of trust within the collective over all. Until we get the resources to sustain ourselves independently of capitalism, anything that doesn't make dollars, for now doesn't make any sense. It will remain so in general until we are able to start developing the means to produce our own wealth and address our own needs independently. Anyone who wants to misuse a theoretical critique of capital to obscure this reality, please see footnote 25.²⁵

When deciding whether someone meets the criteria to be invited to this table in the first place, ask yourselves not about the individual or their qualities isolated within themselves, but rather, "What do they contribute to community-building?" And "What *community* does this person represent that makes them important to link to? Who are their peoples? How loyal are they to them? Do they switch up allegiances or comrades more than once or twice in a lifetime? What are they really about in terms of actions, not ideas or words?"

It's about communities, not individuals. "Activists" tend to revolve around charismatic individuals, ideologies, and social media clout holders. The first are dangerous when not

²⁴ Many slaves were allowed to find employment while giving most of the wages to the master. Julio Pino, *Jihad in Brazil*
https://www.academia.edu/11741727/Jihad_in_Brazil_Muslims_Making_a_New_World_Across_the_Black_Atlantic?email_work_card=interaction_paper

²⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FBhw0iWZcho>

controlled by or accountable to a tight-knit, functional communal structure. The second are mostly hot air that you should avoid getting entangled in or taking too seriously - they usually don't correspond to anything concrete or political ("political" meaning, actual power, not words) or tell you anything about how the people claiming them will act when it really gets real. The third - social media clout holders - should be avoided like the plague.

2. **Once we have a bare bones supply of capital held in common, it's time to start buying and training with weapons - NOT TO USE THEM ANYTIME SOON** - but once we actually have to use them, by then it will be way too late. The best thing about this country aside from the right to remain silent is the right to stay strapped. Take advantage before Joe and Harris cancel it. Make your own calculations to make sure revenues always exceed expenses, and you always have a little communal pocket money available at any given time. All applicable gun laws should be strictly studied and obeyed. Educate! As for illegal and unregistered weaponry, even suggesting or discussing such things should never be tolerated. These kinds of weapons are only useful for offensive and retaliatory operations. Those who know, don't say. Those who say, don't know and need to shut up.
3. **If you have that level of trust established, work together to help each person in the community gradually raise their credit score.** Research with knowledgeable people and the internet how this is done. It takes time and it will be very important down the road.
4. **Consciously choose your own leaders rather than allowing them to emerge "organically" without anyone agreeing to it - or if not, then use the group's consensus as your leader, and be disciplined about it.** If someone is going to be chosen to decide what communal monies will be spent on, exactly when and how etc, to call shots in security situations, or other important roles, that person should be chosen by consensus. This isn't out of principle for us but practicality: if you can't reach consensus on this, your group might not be ready for all of the steps just yet. Once the consensus is reached, then their decisions should be respected whether you always agree with every minor detail or not. If a more horizontal structure is what makes you feel warm and fuzzy, then the consensus of the group on any given issue should be treated like a leader. Everyone has to stand by that consensus decision loyally, without preventing it by standing on individual opinions stubbornly, or rendering it ineffective by changing their positions all the time. Beware of informal leadership who function the

same as chosen leaders but can never be held accountable because you simply refuse to acknowledge that's what they are or formalize their positions. Most of our traditions as Africans are leadership-oriented (occasionally even to a fault), based on shared religion, honor, loyalty, and kinship groups *choosing* who we follow. Rather than someone who holds all the power forcing everyone else to obey. So we should take advantage of that rich tradition and build on it, not abandon it completely for Eurocentric ideas of what equality means or looks like. Entertainers, anyone who is always in the limelight, easily offended or prideful might not be the best choice.²⁶ Anyone who always takes revenge for slights against them (justified or not), asks for leadership or says they are best suited for it, should be completely disqualified from the start.

5. **Put together a phone tree** of people to call in potentially dangerous situations. Develop protocols on how to respond to specific thresholds - domestic violence vs. threats, interpersonal conflicts, etc. Talk to honorable community members who have experience in de-escalation, hood politics, and professional security work. Get well-rounded advice from a variety of people with different perspectives and experiences. Move cautiously and move humbly! You can't prepare or train too much.
6. **Carefully select possible control zones - neighborhoods or other areas where our specific communities (however you want to define yours, that's on you) can exercise some level of power** and start laying the groundwork for future autonomy, in close cooperation and confederation with any other communities that live there. That means somewhere we have real, deep roots, ideally going back generations. If not, then decades - or at bare minimum, some years of deep relationships and 1,000% solid alliances with those who do.²⁷
7. **Join a trade (union or other) apprenticeship.** Plumbers get the best pay, electrical and carpentry are probably the most vital skills to add to the movement. You need money and you need skills even more.

²⁶ Malcolm on Black self-defense vs. spectator culture as well as taking entertainers as leaders vs. choosing them collectively: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hH0fh7xVOU8> We would say that most modern day social media activists/talkers and influencers are also entertainers, just with political overtones.

²⁷ "Kibbutz communism" - the practice of foreigners, such as European Jews in Palestine or white leftists in California, simply setting up shop inside of preexisting communities - is not communism, nor is it autonomy in any sense related to what we're talking about. Describing kibbutz type, settler-communalism as non-racist so long as it remains open to the locals integrating into their cultural hegemony and accepting their political and moral values, is an irrelevant distinction.

8. **Begin developing your food production skills: Start a garden. Yes, it is a cliché. And yes, it is also necessary.** At the risk of sounding corny and played out, this is actually important for obvious reasons. It saves money, gives a boost to health and longevity in urban food deserts, and gives us a lifeline / baby-step in the direction of self-sufficiency from capitalism. It's also something that you can all get your hands dirty doing together. Seek out help from experienced gardeners so you don't waste years learning by trial and error. Study hard, be creative.
9. **Assign specific individuals to focus on intelligence and counter-surveillance.** Keep detailed lists of names, addresses, ranks and roles of fascist and neighborhood watch organizations. Again, not to do anything to them - but for now just to have the data. In your potential geographical control zones, you need to start early mapping out where all of the means of surveillance are - get on apps like Nextdoor, memorize all of the cameras, and make a game-plan for how to swiftly blind all of them in a few minutes if necessary. Know all your local snitches, do not antagonize them or draw needless attention to yourselves. You'll need stashes of spray-paint and to educate yourselves on security culture - this is one thing left-wing activists and Google are both very good for. Study Michael Collins and the Mau Mau.²⁸ Counter-surveillance is a subtle thing - think outside the box!
10. **Housing.** Establish collective house(s) with members who have stable income, strategically so as to cut costs. Shopping collectively can help save as well. Calculate the surplus income, and agree on a fixed amount that goes into the community fund. This will act as savings toward purchasing property, investing in collective business that can multiply, etc. We would recommend shooting for \$1,000 per month, ideally.
11. **Something Else Entirely.** Don't like these ideas? Got a million objections? Very well. Do it differently, then... But *do* something though!

B. Alliances

1. **Once you have something, then bring it to the table.** The concept of "allies" without any power to align around is nothing more than an exercise in pointlessness and vanity. Uniting and confederating with others should be based on bringing something to the

²⁸ Edgerton, *African Crucible*. Kanogo, *Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau*.
Hart, *The I.R.A. and Its Enemies*.
Wilderson, *Incognegro*.

table to share, no matter how meager, and asking the same from others for mutual benefit. And community cohesion and loyalty are the greatest of all resources. This is the basis of this section.

2. **Stay local but think regional now.** Think about the geographical space you inhabit, and how it is linked strategically to other cities, towns, counties, states, borders and countries. What are the most important points to connect? What would be the easiest ones to connect? Balance the answers out and start investing time and work into building relationships with comrades in those areas. Always keeping in mind that what we are building is communal - we are not interested in mere individuals unless they can fit into that and be accountable to it somehow. Each community has its own way of conceiving of and working that out - what's important is just that it exists and that it's strong, in whatever form or tradition that community has already established for itself. Arrange physical gatherings to discuss these ideas, break bread, spend time with each other's families and communities, become familiar with each other's neighborhoods and cultures and histories. Are these individuals loyal? Are they communalists or individualists, in terms of how they've lived their lives and how they're moving now? That's how you find out who you can really build with.
3. **When your community is in consensus that the timing is right, cement your relationships with these other communities in specific resource exchanges, formal agreements and pacts.**
4. **Stay solid rooted in the neighborhood but always think like a nomad - always expanding options, always keeping them open.** The stronger the bonds between different areas, the more possibilities for migration and geographic flexibility. The full extent and details of how climate change will damage or even render uninhabitable some areas of the Earth, are not known to us yet. Not to mention whatever changes in the aggression level and volatility of the State as well as right-wing non-State elements - white terrorist groups, etc. Therefore it makes sense to keep in the forefront of our minds the ability to move from place to place. There may come a day when it is useful for one community to pick up and find shelter with an allied one elsewhere until things in their home-area die down. For children and civilians to be able to do so while those equipped for it stay behind and shoot it out with the neo-Klansmen, until it is safe for everyone to return. Or any number of other unknown scenarios. Transnational connections should be cultivated with this in mind as well. We need to be not only practical but adaptable and creative at all times!

5. **Get a foothold in the countryside.** We need both rural and urban footholds at all times, either one is not enough by itself. Having someone who rents or owns in a remote rural area, or in a small town within easy distance from remote areas and enough space to grow food for a couple families, is very useful. Always expanding and diversifying your options, always keeping them open...
6. **Something Else Entirely.** Do these ideas not apply well to your local politics and situations? All good. Do it differently. But do something though!

C. **Sustainability**

Some of the following points can't be considered as strictly "tried and tested" like most of our others, because we're still working on them or haven't managed them all yet. Stay creative. But we strongly believe all of what we say will be essential in the years to come. And consistency is key:

1. **From Renting to Owning.** The goal of renting properties collectively is to pool money to eventually own something collectively - otherwise it's a pointless waste of money and a trap.
2. **From Hustling for Capital to Building Anti-Capital: Real Resources.** Once we have cut costs, acquired communal property ownership, and maintained a stable surplus of capital (even a very small one), we should then reinvest the profit of all this into weaning ourselves off of dependency on capital altogether. With a long view toward total self-sufficiency: producing our own energy, healthcare, education, security, food, (eventually) clothes and shelter, to such an extent that were the entire capitalist system to collapse and the dollar lose all value, our basic infrastructure would still be standing. Individuals will need to commit their lives to learning environmentally sustainable carpentry methods, plumbing, electrical work, marksmanship, gunfighting tactics and more. ***This means our end goal in acquiring capital is not succeeding within capitalism-imperialism, but rather weaning ourselves off of our addiction to it. Capital resources are a necessary short-term means. Non-capital resources that can sustain us in and of themselves - food, clothes, shelter, etc - are the actual goals!*** Otherwise we're just on the merry-go-round of the market system with everyone else... and that's a vicious cycle.

3. **Prioritize the Next Generation:** Start an educational cooperative - ideally in a building you own, even if that means a living room - for the community's children and any others who want to attend. Raise the next generation of soldiers and keep this thing going. Don't give your kids up to "*They Schools.*" Organize cookouts, play-days, after-school activities for ample socialization. Pass this on.
4. **Study John Robb's Ideas on Resilient Communities in *Brave New War, Small Wars Journal* and similar enemy publications.** Why should the right wing be the only well-prepared ones? Why should we not think so far ahead when our enemies do?
5. **Intel is the future.** The future of struggle will depend on our ability to use counterintelligence even better than the pigs. John Robb and others like him have written extensively about how decentralized resilient communities and "open source" war theory can become invincible to conventional armies and governments. There is no reason why such insights cannot be useful in low-intensity conflicts (potentially bordering on low-intensity civil war within the foreseeable future) in North America as well. Study hard! Our security efforts should be localized, community-wide affairs, and our intelligence apparatuses should develop the same way, but they should also ideally work with all communities and regions. Especially in terms of sharing information around threat levels from far right and neo-Klan groups (3 percenters, Oathkeepers, "proudboys" aka Loud boys, etc, etc...).

We find ourselves situated in a time when the u.s. Empire is deteriorating unevenly, unpredictably, but faster and faster. We cannot, therefore, discuss or contribute to the struggle here without first looking at ourselves politically, economically, and strategically within that deteriorating situation. Either benefiting from it or sinking with it. Either integrating into this burning house, building our own, or running unprepared into the cold to die. The matter is that simple. And when this house is gone, and when you and i are gone - our babies will have to live with whatever we left behind for them. And we can't leave anything behind that we don't get off our asses and do ourselves.

What will you do?