



WORKS

In the event of another financial meltdown and possible government bankruptcy, communities would be left to fend for themselves. If anyone is in doubt about this just consider the absence of government in New Orleans following hurricane Katrina. The Black community was left to fend for itself as police officers and emergency services pulled out of the city and prevented people fleeing the flood water from escaping, in some instances using deadly force. The objective of the police was to prevent Black people from entering and overrunning the white, rich suburbs that surround the city. If the nation faces financial bankruptcy, we would be derelict in our duty if we believe that the government wouldn't leave our communities to fend for themselves. If it ever comes to this we should be prepared, and this is what autonomy prepares and develops us for (i.e. self-government).

We certainly, however, don't need a national emergency to justify self-government. We face a state of emergency within our own neighborhoods every day when it comes to the state of police brutality, mass imprisonment, unemployment, poverty, poor educational resources and lack of affordable health care. These are the range of issues autonomous activists confront everyday within our neighborhoods. To quote an activist from the book *We Are Everywhere*:

Understanding autonomy includes community owned and run health care, education and social support, direct democracy in zones liberated by the people who live in them, not as enclaves to withdraw to, but as outward looking communities of affinity, engaged in mutual cooperation, collective learning, and unmediated interaction.

This is autonomy and every day that we confront injustice and initiate solutions to our problems, collectively and individually, we are creating liberated spaces within our neighborhoods and most importantly within our minds because we rid ourselves of the mentality that some leader has to swoop into our communities and save us from injustice. Autonomy therefore first starts in the mind, it is the governing of self based on the revolutionary ideas and principles that the community and I can address and solve our own problems. This should not be interpreted as neighborhood separatism or a reason to carve our neighborhoods into enclaves, that is not autonomy. Autonomy unshackles the mind from reliance on government or outsiders to solve our own affairs. It breeds a confidence of self-determination and creates innovative solutions to problems we are confronted with by placing the people on the frontline in charge of uniting to liberate our own spaces.

Anyone involved in present day community advocacy will recognize this image of people power in motion. Anyone who has ever been in a community center

