



WORKS

There are good reasons for stripping leadership of corporate-style decision-making processes. How many times has the community's interest been compromised or betrayed by national Black leaders like Jesse Jackson or Al Sharpton swooping in to take the lead of a protest that local activists initiated only to have them hold a photo-op press conference with local politicians, push aside the local activists and cut a deal that leaves the core grievances in place while highlighting themselves as responsible negotiators then they hop in a plane and fly off back to their headquarters. These great compromisers take the steam and the initiative out of local activists campaigns and protests. They are more interested in symbolism than substance. Autonomous movements and activists on the other hand focus on substance as opposed to symbolism. Also this critique should not be interpreted so broadly as to imply that no national movement or national movements should exist but rather that movements that possess national structures should allow for autonomy at the local and regional level.

In leading ourselves and developing our own generational ideas and solutions, we should not hesitate to look to other regions of the world that have a history of autonomous struggle. At this moment Latin America is the region with the most dynamic examples of autonomous movements carving out spaces for themselves within urban and rural societies traditionally neglected by their governments. A recommended book to read on these movements is *Dancing With Dynamite: Social Movements and States in Latin America* by Benjamin Dangel. Another idea from Latin America that activists operating within autonomous radical organizations/collectives in the United States should adopt is networking through an umbrella organization similar to the People's Global Action network, a global network of autonomous movements that shares ideas, tactics and strategies related to grassroots resistance and activism. There needs to be an autonomous congress or collective within each city that would allow activists and grassroots organizations to network and share ideas, coordinate protests and, if possible, share resources. These grassroots organizations need to break out of their own spheres of activism, focusing on their issues exclusively, and develop multi-issue campaigns in concert with other grassroots organizations that would connect antipoverty activists with anti-police brutality activists, social justice activists with housing and health care activists, prisoner rights activists with human rights activists, etc, etc. Alliances of solidarity are important in autonomous movements—it prevents the movements from becoming isolated.

III. AUTONOMOUS CULTURE

Autonomous activism and movements also create an autonomous culture, a revolutionary culture that is directly in opposition to the capitalist “Me First” culture of consumerism that dominates the social, civic and political landscape

