



BIOGRAPHIES

to raise money to pay for the hotel and we had that first reunion in October 1986, the 20th anniversary. And we had people who came from around the country who had been in different chapters of the party.

We had one of our biggest support groups from Norway, Denmark, and Sweden. They sent representatives all the way from over there to participate because they had been really strong supporters.

So, to make a long story short, since the first reunion was held in 1986, there have been reunions on a national level every five years since then.

The most recent one was held just this past October. And different cities around the country, they have their own local reunions so I would have to say that since 1986, the first one, I'm sure there have been at least 25. I need to sit down and actually count them up. So I'm glad we pressed ahead and did it, because it's become a very important thing for people who used to be in the Black Panther Party.

L: Why was there any negative feedback at first?

J: Well, you know, people had different opinions about their experience in the party. They had different ideas about Huey Newton, one of the co-founders of the party. Everyone was not necessarily positive. They felt like we didn't need to bring up all this stuff. Some of what they felt was negative stuff that had happened, actually, at the intensity that some people had about this. But like I said, Madeline and Ralph and I, we pressed ahead and we did it anyway. And it was successful. It was very successful.

L: Now, you co-founded the Black Autonomy Federation in Memphis, Tennessee. Now tell us about that group and it's work.

J: Well, the Black Autonomy Federation was actually part of a progression of groups that had come out of the first Black Autonomy, Black Anarchist Collective that you yourself, Lorenzo, you were one of the co-founders of that collective in Atlanta back in 1994. And from that period on, there have been different iterations of that collective. The Black Autonomy Federation, which you, brother Rasman Yiga Nokashir and myself started in June of 2012 in Memphis, Tennessee.

That's where you and I were living at the time. It was sort of the latest iteration of the original black autonomy collective back from 1994. And we had started with the intention of actually dealing with issues around poverty in the black community. We had a black power conference in Memphis, Tennessee, in June

