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The Drug Epidemic: A New Form of Black Genocide?

An excerpt from “Anarchism and the Black
Revolution”

By Lorenzo Kom’boa Ervin

***Dope is death! We must fight dope
addiction by any means necessary!
Do all you can to help your people in the
anti-dope war!***

- 1. Set up drug education classes in the community, for the youth especially, to expose the nature of the drug trade, who it hurts, and how the government, banks, and pharmaceutical companies are behind it all.**
- 2. Exposure of the death merchants and their police protectors. (Photos, posters, fliers, newsletters, etc.)**
- 3. Harassment of the dealers; i.e., threatening phone calls, knocking the drug “product,” have citizens marching inside their “place of business,” and other tactics.**
- 4. Set up drug rehabilitation clinics so that junkies can be treated, can study the nature of their oppression, and can be won over to revolutionary politics. We must win people away from drug use and to the revolution.**
- 5. Physical elimination of the dealer; intimidation driving him out a neighborhood or out of town, beatings, and assassination, where necessary.**

so violence prone, especially the “big shots” (who are also protected by the cops) they must be opposed by both military and political means.

We are not advocating the summary murder of people, but we are saying if it takes death to bring about a change in the community, so be it! The issue of death is essentially an issue of who is doing the dying. It can be direct and exercised against the death merchant, or it can be indirect and exercised against our youth — if we let it. To be aware of a dangerous situation and not move to change it is to be as responsible for that dangerous situation as those who created it in the first place.

Listen, I don't want to simplify this problem by saying that just kill a few street-level dealers and that will end it. No it won't, and we don't want to do that anyway! They are just poor people trying to survive this system, just pawns in the drug game whose lives don't matter to the big Capitalists or government. When they say so these street level dealers will be killed or imprisoned, but the drug peddling system will go on. This is a sociopolitical problem, which can best be addressed by grassroots organizations. But it's the corporate and industrial backers of the drug trade (not just the corner dealer) that not only must not only be exposed, but must be moved on. In addition to educational, agitation and other action, there must be military action by revolutionary cells.

The underground actions which we are asking people to move an can be carried out by a relatively small group of dedicated people, a revolutionary cell of armed fighters, who have been trained in guerilla tactics But even these small groups of people must have the support of the neighborhoods in order to function, otherwise people will not know it from another violent gang. Once this social cohesiveness exists among the community, then we can begin to put this proposal into action against the most violent, high-level drug dealers. We are addressing ourselves to what can be more or less be considered to be guidelines for dealing with the problem on a neighborhood or community-wide level then at a national level:

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One of the worst forms of criminality is drug dealing, and it deserves same separate comments all its own. There is a negative drug subculture in the Black community that glorifies, or at least makes acceptable, drug use, even though it is killing us and destroying our community. In fact, every day we read of some junkie in our communities dying over an overdose of drugs, or of some street corner drug dealer dying from a shootout over a dispute or tip-off during a drug deal “gone sour.” The tragedy of the latter is that, these days, innocent victims — children or elderly people — have also been gunned down in the crossfire. The drug addict (the new term seems to be “crack-head”) is another tragic figure; he was a human being just like anyone else, but because of his oppressed social environment, sought drugs to ease the pain or to escape temporarily from the “concrete jungles” we are forced live in the urban ghettos of America.

With the introduction of crack, a more powerful derivative of cocaine, which made its appearance in the 1980s, even more problems and tragedies of this sort had developed — more addicts, more street gang killings, and more deterioration of our community. In the major urban areas there have almost always been drug uses, what is new is the depth of geographical penetration of crack to Black communities in all areas of the country. But the spread of crack is just a follow-up to massive government drug peddling that began at the end of the decade of the 1960s. The white House is the “rock house,” meaning the U.S. Political administration is behind the whole drug trade. The U.S. government has actually been smuggling drugs into this country for many years aboard CIA and military planes to use as a chemical warfare weapon against Black America. These drugs were mostly heroin imported from the so-called “Golden Triangle” of Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War. But with the

introduction of crack cocaine, there was no need to import drugs into the country at the same extent as before, because it could be chemically prepared in a mainland lab, and then distributed immediately. Crack created a whole new generation of drug clients and customers for the drug dealers; it was cheap and highly addictive.



Crack and other drugs are a huge source of profits for the government, and it keeps the Black community passive and politically indifferent. That is the main reason why we cannot depend upon the police force and or the government to stop the drug traffic or help the victims hooked on drugs. They are pushing the drugs to beat us down, on the one hand, but the State is also made more powerful because of the phony “war on drugs” which allows police state measures in Black and oppressed communities, and because of millions of dollars in government monetary appropriations made of “law enforcement” agencies, who supposedly are putting down the traffic in drugs. But they never go after the bankers or the big business pharmaceutical companies who fund the drug trade, just the street level dealers, who are usually poor Blacks.

Unemployment is another reason that drug trafficking is so prevalent in our communities. Poor people will desperately look for anything to make money with, even the very drugs that are destroying out communities. But if people have no jobs or income,

drugs look very lucrative and the best way out of the situation. In fact, the drug economy has become the only income in many poor Black communities, and the only thing that some people perceive will lift them out of lives of desperate poverty. Clearly, decent jobs at a union wage are part of the answer to ending drug trafficking in our community, rather than a dependence on police, courts and the State. The cops are not our friends or ally, and must be exposed for their part in protecting the trade, rather than suppressing it.

Only the community can stop drug trafficking, and it is our responsibility however you look at it. After all, those junkies are our brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers, neighbors and friends; they are no strangers. We must organize to save their lives and the life of our community. We must establish anti-dope programs in Black communities all over the country. We must expose and counter the government’s role as pusher of dope, along with that of the police as protector of the drug trade. But also we must be prepared to help the drug victims with street counseling, street clinics (where they can clean-up and learn a trade and the sociopolitical reasons for drug use), propaganda against drug use, and other activities.

Junkies are the victims of the drug society, which thinks its cool to use drugs. Children are some of the biggest victims of drug dealing, when they are tricked or forced (by economic necessity) into using or selling it. The users and dealers both are victims, but the dealers are something else than entirely innocent. Even though that Black on the corner selling dope bags is a victim himself of the economic and political system which makes him do it, dope dealers are a corrupt, dangerous breed who must be stopped. Many people have been killed or seriously injured for naively trying to oppose dope dealers, and make them leave their neighborhoods. Therefore, whereas the policy with junkies would be more benevolent and understanding, with dope dealers we must be cautious, and even ruthless when it is called for. We need to try to win them over first with an economic and political program to draw them away from the drug trade, but many of the dealers are