

# The Evolution of (Black) Communal Socialism<sup>103</sup>

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*You have to go back and reach out to your neighbors who don't speak to you! And you have to reach out to your friends . . . get them to understand that they, as well as you and I, cannot be free in America, or anywhere else, where there is capitalism. . . .”—Ella Baker, Ella Baker Speaks! (1974)<sup>104</sup>*

*We live in strange times. We have a black president using race-neutral framing for social justice, alongside a Black Lives Matter movement using structural racism framing for participatory democracy. Killer Mike, a Southern rapper best known for his work with the Grammy Award-winning superduo Outkast, has endorsed a sitting U.S. senator and self-described socialist, Bernie Sanders. Some black preachers, apparently, are tripping over themselves to cozy up to Donald Trump or reposition themselves within the arc of Hillary Clinton's historic candidacy. Strange times indeed.—Rev. Andrew J. Wilkes, January 14, 2016<sup>105</sup>*

## I. INTRODUCTION

There are varied approaches to understanding democratic socialism (DS). A concept for politics used by progressives, workers, academics, anti-racists, feminists, queer activists and elected officials. Using the language

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103 This chapter is developed from chapter 4 of Kit Kim Holder, “History of the Black Panther Party, 1966-1972: A Curriculum Tool for African-American Studies” (UMass-Amherst, dissertation, May 1990).

104 <http://writingcities.com/2017/12/15/ella-baker-puerto-rico-solidarity-rally-1974/>.

105 [https://www.religioussocialism.org/socialism\\_in\\_black\\_america](https://www.religioussocialism.org/socialism_in_black_america).

of FDR's New Deal, DS presidential candidate Senator Bernie Sanders asserts that democratic socialism "is not tied to any Marxist belief or the abolition of capitalism" or the belief that "government should own the means of production." Rather, Sanders argues, DS is based in the belief that "the middle class and the working families who produce the wealth of America deserve a fair deal."<sup>106</sup> In this argument, Marxism is disavowed; and the benefits of capitalism are directed to the working and middle classes. Sanders campaigns on the dignity and well-being of the worker not the abolition of capitalism.

For Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, an advocate for the Green New Deal (which builds on FDR's New Deal), "ideology of capital" and the "concentration of capital" require "that we seek and prioritize profit and the accumulation of money above all else, and we seek it at any human and environmental cost. . . . democratic socialism . . . means putting democracy and society first. . . ."<sup>107</sup> Here, capitalism exists as subordinate to democracy and society.

A key campaigner for Sanders's 2015–16 presidential bid, activist scholar Cornel West views DS pursuing a transformative goal:

the fundamental commitment is to the dignity of ordinary people and to make sure they can live lives of decency. . . . It's about the accountability of the powerful vis-a-vis those who have less power at the workplace, women dealing with a household, gays, lesbians, trans, black people, indigenous peoples, immigrants. How do we ensure that they are treated decently and that the powerful don't in any way manipulate, subjugate and exploit them.<sup>108</sup>

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106 <https://www.teenvogue.com/story/bernie-sanders-explained-democratic-socialism-cnn-town-hall>.

107 <https://qz.com/1569538/sxsw-watch-the-alexandria-ocasio-cortez-interview/>.

108 [https://www.realclearpolitics.com/video/2018/07/07/tucker\\_carlson\\_vs\\_cornel\\_west\\_on\\_democratic\\_socialism\\_how\\_do\\_slave\\_descendants\\_benefit\\_from\\_illegal\\_immigration.html](https://www.realclearpolitics.com/video/2018/07/07/tucker_carlson_vs_cornel_west_on_democratic_socialism_how_do_slave_descendants_benefit_from_illegal_immigration.html).

There are subtle differences between Sanders, Ocasio-Cortez, and West—who notes that there are multiple forms of DS. We expand this discussion of DS and its progressive potential with analysis of a radical, anti-racist international party, the Black Panther Party (BPP), whose contributions to socialism remain relevant to democratic socialism. The party is essential in understanding the conflictual responses to communal socialism in black communities. Those conflicts or antagonisms are shaped by class or social economic status. Before discussing BPP programs that were socialist, it is helpful to engage a key theorist of the party, Kathleen Cleaver.

## II. PRAGMATIC ANALYSES

Only one party in the Revolutionary Era (1967–1972)<sup>109</sup> became the primary target for unsanctioned lethal police violence due to its socialist, anti-racist politics and international appeal. Given the amount of state violence arrayed to destroy the BPP, its logical to scrutinize its ideological threat to racial capital. This very small, young, bold organization inspired national and international communities to rebel against imperialism, racism, and classism. Organized in 1966 as the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, the BPP monitored and deterred urban police aggression, and sought to meet communal material needs—food, clothing, shelter, medicine and education. Criminalizing radical politics and militant blackness, local, state, and federal police decimated an organization whose membership, several hundred max, was mostly under twenty-five years of age. (Members of the organization believed in self-defense/armed struggle, contesting state militarism and COINTELPRO; party internal failings concerning self-defense and violence are well documented.)

The BPP wielded both pragmatic and visionary politics. The first woman to sit on the BPP Central Committee, Kathleen Cleaver, became co-founder of an Algerian internationalist wing (which separated from Oakland's elite hierarchy pursuing, with criminal intent, black power-as-black capitalism/electoral politics), and an analyst of international

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109 Joy James, "The Eclipse of the Revolutionary Era (1967-1972)."

socialism and underground militarism.<sup>110</sup> Cleaver's critiques of anti-revolutionary animus among black Americans remain essential today. In a 1997 PBS interview with Harvard scholar Henry Louis Gates, Cleaver describes nuanced ways in which a revolutionary movement rose, faltered, and fell. Class and ideological divisions among black Americans shaped black middle class or black bourgeoisie disparagements of radical or revolutionary struggle, according to Cleaver, as a caste of affluent blacks held "complicated" paternalistic relationships with black poor and working class communities and ideological animus toward black radicals and revolutionaries. For Cleaver, the romantic search for "black unity" required ignoring class divisions and led to superficial agreements that publicly presented a black united front despite the fact that confrontations with state and capital would disproportionately benefit those best positioned for personal gains: "many of the goals of the Civil Rights Movement were essentially goals for easier assimilation for middle class people . . . working class people and poor people weren't going to get too much out of [the civil rights movement]." The BPP were different from other civil rights organizations that "succumbed to red-baiting": they studied revolutionaries Malcolm X, [Ghanaian Kwame] Nkrumah, and [Martinique psychiatrist Frantz] Fanon to forge a (neo-) Marxist party.<sup>111</sup>

Revolutionaries believed that if "Third World" international movements challenged global capital and empire they could prevail, observed Cleaver, as an "international revolutionary vanguard that would have restructured the economy, restructured the educational system, taken the United States out of the role of world policeman, and made it the American people's revolutionary United States." For the majority of the world's "liberation" movements to be successful would require more than that they "seize power," asserts Cleaver, given that conventional "independence"

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110 Kathleen Cleaver and George Katsiaficas, eds., *Liberation, Imagination and the Black Panther Party* (New York: Routledge, 2001).

111 Interview, Kathleen Cleaver, PBS Frontline, Spring 1997, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/race/interviews/kcleaver.html>.

left the IMF, World Bank, and global colonizing corporate capital with control of national resources in Africa and in South America.<sup>112</sup>

In the 1960s, pragmatic revolutionaries presciently organized against extreme concentrations of wealth and poverty. In the 1990s, Cleaver reminded public television audiences “government-by-corporation would be dominated by those who controlled resources” and “15- and 20-year plans.”<sup>113</sup> Waging a rebellion against the emergence of a governing corporate-state partnership with “billions and billions of dollars to get rid of us,” Cleaver’s Panthers were imperfect visionaries in struggle who did not anticipate material wins in their life time but wished to leave a model: “[W]e had ideals, and we had commitment, and we had this glorious belief that the spirit of the people was greater than man’s technology.”<sup>114</sup>

Today, politicians and reformers work for white nationalist *and* anti-racist struggles to be denuded of class analysis. In the absence of a critique of capitalism, the workings of national economies within international predatory capital remain obscured. Cleaver notes:

... the colonial power creates a middle class, usually to control the colony for itself. ... the creation in black American communities of a class of physicians and managers and lawyers and judges [means that] their education takes them away from the communities that created these people. These are not like my parents’ generation, people who are trained in the black schools and whose talents are confined to the black community through a regime of segregation. These are people who are trained in the major institutions and are able to use their talents in the corporate and business structures of the larger society. Therefore, they’re not available to the poorer black communities.<sup>115</sup>

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112 Interview Cleaver.

113 Interview Cleaver.

114 Interview Cleaver.

115 Interview Cleaver.

### III. BPP SURVIVAL PROGRAMS

During the Revolutionary Era, the BPP created survival programs to build socialist institutions within local communities. The BPP grew out of the radical and militant atmosphere of the mid-1960s. Many, particularly young adults, studied Third World liberation struggles in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, as well as alternative economic systems. Blacks questioned the economic realities and promises of capitalism under which they were the last hired and first fired often with the lowest wages (their solidarity with Puerto Ricans, Native Americans, and Chicanos and Asians were based on racism, poverty and economic exploitation). The political climate of the 1960s was conducive to an embrace of socialism that often was seen as closely aligned to liberalism. Unlike the Communist Party USA (CPUSA)'s Du Bois Clubs, and other socialist-oriented organizations of the '40s and '50s, which were integrated, the BPP was rooted in black communities.

The BPP's socialist stance was more practical than intellectual. Rather than theorize, it focused on the practical aspects of distributing wealth. The BPP motto "All Power to the People" was concretized in socialist economics. Through socialist politics the Party advocated their goal for community control—over policing, housing, education, health care, and food distribution. The Party introduced socialism to the community in practical terms. Lt. of Health of Corona, NY, Dianne Jenkins, echoes civil rights leader Ella Baker:

Sisters, you practice socialism. If you needed a cup of sugar, all you had to do was go next door . . . . socialism, or the idea of socialism, is no big phenomenon . . . . the BPP will continue to develop these programs to serve the people and constantly raise the political level of the masses (*The Black Panther*, 11/1/69:19).

Seattle Breakfast coordinator Elmer Dixon discusses the party's socialist goals: "Serving the basic needs of the people is the primary task of the BPP. Implementing socialism within the community is one way of serving the people" (*The Black Panther*, 11/15/69). The survival programs were designed to serve and educate the black community. To serve the people

was a central theme of the Ten-Point Program and Platform (based on the Nation of Islam's Muslim program). Attempting to be responsive to the needs of the people, staffed by nonelite rank-and-file members, survival programs developed institutions that met the material and emotional needs of disenfranchised people who were also dispossessed by capitalism: "The conditions of living in a nation that can send a man to the moon. . . . and burn excess' wheat at harvest time while small children suffer year round from malnutrition. . . . is too depressing to be allowed to continue without taking some positive action. . . ." (*The Black Panther*, 2/28/70:18).

Developing programs that would lay the foundation for a new alternative, Richard Dhoruba bin Wahad (Panther NY 21) notes:

it is definitely in the laboring masses best interest to institute through survival programs . . . an alternative to inferior high priced foods . . . where people of the community collectively own, support and run cooperative stores. . . . In order to reach this level we must . . . [work] in a manner that necessarily involves the community because it relates to their survival (*The Black Panther*, 11/28/70:9).

The BPP understood that survival programs were not revolutionary, nor would they solve the material conditions of black impoverishment; the concept was to educate about the relevancy of socialism to daily life. They realized that abstract theory is not always relevant to communities; hence survival programs became a form of theory-in-practice. One form of material needs was also safety from police aggression and mass incarceration.

### COMMUNITY CONTROL

Since 2014, Black Lives Matter and other forms of activism have shaped concepts of community, racial-profiling, militarized policing within democracy. That advocacy shapes debates about the relevancy of democratic socialism. The BPP's first police-watch program, in 1967 (originally

named in 1966, the “Black Panther Party for Self-Defense”) sought to monitor and diminish police misconduct (in ways distinct from but similar to cell phone footage today). As Panthers became the focus of police harassment and conflict, effective monitoring of police misconduct diminished. By 1968, programs became more broadly political. For example, the Party assisted tenants with landlord and tenant disputes. BPP were asked by residents to provide protection from gangs given their distrust of or alienation from police departments that targeted low-income communities of color. In New York’s Lower Eastside, in 1969, Hells Angels, who were also tenants, terrorized black tenants to attempt to evict them from the apartment building until a black tenant called the BPP for assistance; Panthers accompanied National Field Marshal Don Cox to investigate, speaking with tenants and members of the gang, and then guarded the building until harassment ceased.

Everyday party members participated in community programs, and often lived in a collective manner, as members took turns cooking, cleaning, and providing for household needs. The basic need of all households was for food and health. Hence the most popular program of the BPP was the Free Breakfast Program (FBP), which developed because of the numerous hungry children who attended school without proper meals. Each BPP chapter had at least one FBP that highlighted the importance of nutritional assistance within communities. Feeding children before they went to school also exposed the economic inequities within racial-capital. Exposing that government and corporations had the resources but not the will to provide the basic human right of a nutritional meal, especially for children, highlighted the need for an alternative to the capitalist economy: “[It] is not enough to publish 2,000 page reports containing facts and statistics on hunger in Babylon because we cannot feed a report to a hungry child: ‘Instead, the Party has put its theory of serving the people into practice and has instituted free breakfast for children all across this country’” (*The Black Panther*, 2/28/70). The theory was that showing by example that communities had the power to control hunger among their children by organizing and building alternative models, increased the possibilities for creating a more just social order.



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New York FBP's Malika Adams expresses the feeling of working with the program; "I was doing something concrete and I could understand it . . . I could clearly see that if I get up at 4:00 in the morning and feed children . . . I know these children were hungry because I'd have to go get them and I could see they were hungry."<sup>116</sup> The educational part of the breakfast programs was taken from the SNCC Freedom School models. All children were welcomed. According to Philadelphia FBP coordinator Sam Coley: "We feed any and all children who come to us hungry." Programs included white, Latinx, and black children. In New York, Berkeley, Seattle, Washington, and Chicago multicultural children and staff populated the building.

Many centers lacked formal interaction between staff and children due to the shortage of staff and the volume of meals served. At other centers, staff members conducted informal discussions or classes on black and Latinx history and political education discussions about the need for the FBP. Des Moines Clive DePatten saw that the FBP wove socialist thinking into care and food: "We would say like there are five kids here, and one of these individuals has five pieces of candy. If you give each one of the others a piece of candy that would be socialism. Socialism was simply sharing, an equal distribution of whatever somebody had. This is The way we broke it down" (House Committee on IS., 1970:4812).

The FBP was a tremendous source of support for communities served by and contributing cash or food donations to the FBP. Organizations such as the Puerto Rican Young Lords, Chicano Brown Berets, and Asian I Wor Kuen, white Young Patriots began their own independent FBPs and also jointly ran breakfast programs with other groups. The food was obtained either by cash donations from individuals and/or food and material donations from businesses and organizations. This model of communal socialism was autonomous: until 1971, the BPP did not accept government funding. Governmental agencies attempted to demonize and vilify an organization for attending to human needs neglected by corporate-capitalist government. The BPP's position was oppositional to

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116 Kit Kim Holder, Interview with Malika Adams (3/25/88), *The History of the Black Panther Party, 1966-1972* (dissertation, 1990).

capitalism but party rules prohibited intimidation or theft to provide for the FBP. The BPP initiated boycotts of specific stores that would not support FBP.

By 1970, the program had become a model for other survival programs such as free health clinics, food distribution, and clothing programs. The focus on socialism was a constant. At Corona, New York, Carlton Yearwood noted about a free clothing rally:

Solidarity among the masses is becoming an objective reality through bringing the masses together so that they can see the contradiction of this capitalist society and weigh these findings with the ideology of Socialism "Serving the People." The reality of socialism overthrowing capitalism is because through their practice this will be the will of the people (*The Black Panther*, 11/1/69:19).

The FBP and all programs were to be models that would eventually be run by the community:

People in the communities where our programs are in operation have come forth to cook and donate their money and time as they see that the program is for their benefit. Also they see it as a bright example of them using their resources and energies, without the burden of a bureaucratic program . . . We honor the people who care about our youth (*The Black Panther*, 3/28/70:8).

On a given day at many FBP sites, there were more non-Panthers working than Panthers. This was consistent with the Panthers' view of serving the people. The BPP was not interested in controlling the programs but rather initiating them. The Party did not limit nonparty involvement in their programs to individuals.

During 1970, the federal government provided 51,380 "free or reduced" breakfasts daily to school children. The average cost per meal was \$.25. A 1972 Department of Agriculture report stated that this amount covered the cost of one piece of white bread and a half a glass of milk

(Nutrition and Human Needs, 1972, Part I). In contrast, the BPP initiated programs fed well over 3,200 children daily (thirty-two branches serving one hundred children each). The Black Panther Party's free breakfast program and similar endeavors were perhaps the most comprehensive free food program within a communal socialist context of its time. There was constant opposition to communal socialism. In San Diego, local FBI agents lobbied the Catholic hierarchy to transfer a priest who hosted a FBP in his church to New Mexico.<sup>117</sup>

The BPP liberation schools, modeled after SNCC Freedom Schools, were attached to FBP and accused as ideological sites. Yet community and communal care continued. Children and families require not only food or material sustenance, but also critical educational to evaluate the politics and ethics and economics shaping their lives. All workers with families with small children and elders desperately needed quality of child and elder care. In 1970, the BPP began to establish day care centers, originally organized to care for infants of Panther members (in Philadelphia, Los Angeles, and Algiers). Centers began to expand to include community people. One mother of five, whose children made satisfactory grades in school, was impressed by the instruction at the liberation school coupled with the FBP. When she noted her children choosing and writing reports on articles and giving oral reports on global news, she observed that: "their work shows that they can relate to what is happening to them and other poor people in the world." Students were encouraged to work in community and so tried to learn to read and write so that they could be of assistance. (Foner, 1970:172).

### MEDICAL PROGRAMS

There is much discussion and organizing today about single payer health care. It is interesting to note for perspective that the BPP sought free and universal health care for all communities. One successful grassroots program that also expanded and developed was the free medical clinics. The BPP initiated a medical and health-care

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117 For FBI tactics against the Free Breakfast Program, see Kenneth O'Reilly, *Racial Matters*, 1989.

program, in the early part of 1969. Various chapters of the party began working with health professionals and medical students conducting medical checkups in the local communities.

Conditions and problems such as high blood pressure, sickle cell anemia, lead poisoning, and drug abuse were some of the major concerns of the initial medical programs. Blood and blood-pressure testing, nutritional counseling, general checkups, and drug counseling were some of the services provided by the first Black Panther medical teams. Most of the Panthers who worked in these medical teams were trained by medical volunteers who were either medical students or professional nurses and physicians. At first BPP members concentrated on acquiring first aid skills. Branches conducted first aid classes as medical cadres met the medical needs of members and medical cadres were responsible for Panther medical and dental appointments, teaching basic first aid so that they could help the people in emergencies. Street corner tables provided free TB tests and information on sickle cell anemia. Black medical students and doctors assisted in Harlem's free clinic. Weekly meetings between the medical cadres of the Bronx, Brooklyn, Harlem, Jamaica, and Corona branches met. Harlem branch never did establish a free health clinic; the Panthers worked with progressive white and Puerto Rican medical corps in a Lower Eastside clinic in Manhattan. In Brooklyn, the New York 21 Community Health Clinic emerged. Aside from physical examinations, various tests and basic medical treatment, the clinic focused on health education and preventive medicine (*The Black Panther*, 2/28/69:17).

In March the Rockford, Illinois Branch opened a clinic. In Chicago, the Surgeon Jake Winter's Peoples Medical Care Center served over two thousand people within the first two months of its existence. The center was staffed by gynecologist, obstetricians, dentists, pediatricians, optometrists, general practitioners, and registered nurses, lab technicians, and public advocates. The BPP held weekly informational meetings for the public and organized community volunteers, and medical students to canvass the community, testing for lead poisoning, sickle cell anemia, and diabetes. (*The Black Panther*, 1/29/70 & 4/3/71:3) Although staffed by qualified medical staff and had adequate equipment, the city health

authorities repeatedly attempted to close the clinic. Working with progressive students and medical professionals the Party was able to utilize their advanced skills on a grassroots community level. The Party facilitated the process of medical skills and services coming into the black and other poor communities. The health clinic also involved community people as participants in the maintenance of the program.

By encouraging the community to participate in the medical cadres, the Party was not only providing medical care to the community but was also training community people in public health. Opened in May 1970, the clinic was housed in a trailer on land seized by the Boston Black United Front in an attempt to stop the city from building a highway through the African American community. In addition to holding public health classes, the Boston center also trained lab technicians, nursing assistants, and medical secretaries. Boston Peoples Health Centers was the shooting death of an African American patient by police at Boston General Hospital. The BPP used this incident to mobilize support for community control of medical care. At the opening ceremony, the mother of the slain man, Ms. Julia Mack, donated a portrait of her son to the clinic. At the clinic's first anniversary, over one hundred community people attended a dinner celebration to honor Ms. Mack for her support (*The Black Panther*, 6/12/71:15).<sup>118</sup>

The Boston Peoples Health Center successfully provided experienced medical care to communities while continuing to involve the community in decision-making. During 1971 the BPP launched a national campaign to raise the public consciousness on the issue of sickle cell anemia. In addition to their 1970 national testing campaign, the BPP was a leading participant in the establishment of a research foundation dedicated to address sickle cell Anemia.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The state targeted the panthers because we were socialists, not because we were armed.”—Marshall Eddie Conway

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<sup>118</sup> See Alondra Nelson, *Body and Soul: The Black Panther Party and the Fight Against Medical Discrimination*.

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Journalist, and former BPP political prisoner, Marshall Eddie Conway asserts that it was the party's rejection of capitalism that made it a target of police repression. However, a combination of factors—including its own missteps and violence—led to its demonization and rejection: the right to self-defense, anti-racist analyses, internationalist frameworks, and demands for community and police control.

The BPP were anti-capitalist based on the belief that the liberation of blacks and all communities required freedom from capitalism. While racism and (hetero)patriarchy are major forms of oppression, they cannot be eradicated until the capitalist system begins to disintegrate. Historically, the belief was that socialism was something that most sectors of the black community could relate to based on their depressed economic status in the United States. However, the petit bourgeoisie and blacks who found careers in government and military and corporate institutions did not share the same class status or deprivation of the unemployed and working poor.

Panthers also believed that by demonstrating socialism as an ideology through their material support via breakfast, housing, and medical programs that they could harness a perceived historical tendency and mandate among black communities: address individual financial oppression through collective means. That was fifty years ago. Individualism, consumerism, digitized addictive entertainment are key factors in social alienation and rising mental and emotional distress. All of these ailments have built considerable roadblocks to mobilizing for a transformative vision of a new society; one not shaped by predatory capitalism or capitalism at all. Add to that the rise of academics and mainstream journalists as the authorities on (radical) politics (which are rarely fought for from the site of the academy, nonprofit think tank, or publishing houses) and one sees the dissemination and distribution of dominant ideological frameworks that resist substantive change.

In the current context of electoral politics, with the endless campaign cycles that promise redress that is not sufficiently delivered, it is unlikely that society will achieve robust analyses of socialism. This is not just because of big money flooding the electoral process due to the 2010

*Citizens United* decision, or voter suppression, gerrymandering, or felon disenfranchisement. All of these are critical issues that have to be dealt with—along with the electoral college and “insider trading” within the democratic and republican parties that skew power toward billionaires and away from grassroots activists.

Those based in community organizing know it is possible to discuss socialism on a grassroots level where working class people can view their lives in theory because they are the architects of not only political movements but also the political theories that attend those mobilizations. These communities and the more affluent radicals who work with them have little to no investment in corporate structures.

If the strictures of electoral politics will not allow robust debate on socialism, then they will not permit either incisive debates on white supremacy, heteropatriarchy and trans/homophobia, and the destruction of other animals and species on the planet. If the need to win a campaign dictates a drag toward centrist politics then we have less space to develop analyses that counter the ideological mythmaking of capitalism as ordained by deity, and socialism as heathenism and essentially “un-American.” (We have inadequate space here to address communism, which also requires debate and discussion throughout our communities.)

From the attempts at transformative struggle decades past to the present moment, there is much to learn. Grassroots and international environmental activist, and anti-racist intellectual, Kali Akuno, a member of Black Socialists of America (BSA) offers an assessment of black socialism’s role in overcoming repression and class division. His critical view builds upon the legacy of community-based radical workers and points to the possibilities of the future:

What is holding us back from building this new civilization is the lack of sufficient organization and class consciousness within the working class. Despite the valiant efforts of various sections and sectors of the proletariat in every region of the globe over the past five hundred years, the working class remains a divided subject, fractured by language, nationality,

culture, religion, race, sex, and gender. The proletariat is also under constant assault by the bourgeoisie, as well as the reactionary state institutions and social forces that it controls and marshals to execute its will. Despite its present fragmentation and the never-ending assaults that it is forced to endure, the proletariat is objectively growing in size and strength throughout the world as a result of being subjected to ever-intensifying processes of dispossession, communication, and enculturation by the capitalist-imperialist system.<sup>119</sup>

All power to the communities that seek life and healing and risk comfort and security to imagine and materialize a better world.



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119 <https://blacksocialists.us/news/joining-bsa-kali-akuno>.

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