Things are not as hopeless. It's possible growth and transformation over the past 20 years. So, from my perspective the situation is not as bad as people think. The United States for white females was 10.5 per thousand; for whites, 10.5 per thousand; for Blacks, 10.5 per thousand. The rate for Blacks in the United States was 21 per thousand; for whites, 10.5 per thousand; for Blacks, 10.5 per thousand. Thus, it appears to be a struggle to see how yesterday led to today, and to try to understand things that we did or might have done.

Q.: In the spirit of such an amnesty and the reintegration of these individuals of ideals and lessons into the society, what kind of an effect would this have?

D.C.: The main reason these people are still in prison is to prevent them from educating the people of the country. Historically, the successful uses of violence turned out to be personal wars. The national prison population is 50-percent Black, and the New York state prison population is 75-percent Black. So, from my perspective the situation looks terrible. It cries for the need of a liberation movement on a national scale.

Q.: Can you describe your personal growth and transformation over the last 20 years, specifically in relation to some of the values you have that were also embraced by the Black Power and some white radicals during the 60's?

D.C.: For the past 20 years, I haven't stopped trying to inform and educate myself. I've studied history, from today all the way back to the Big Bang-in order to better understand this mess that we now find ourselves in. Because, in looking around on a day-to-day basis, it looks like a desperate situation with no way out. Managing to acquire a long view of history-I'm not just talking about last week-gives a clearer perspective. Things are not as hopeless. It's possible to see how yesterday led to today, and it arms us to better develop methods of struggle that will successfully lead to a better tomorrow.

I'm much more angry today than I was 20 years ago. Then, I simply recognized the necessity that something had to be done and was not as violent as now. Now when I hear of injustices, particularly in the United States, I have mad and violent reactions. When I'm a personal witness to injustices, particularly racist incidents, I react before I think, which I don't like at all. That's very dangerous. I'm trying to work on controlling that.

In terms of revolutionary violence, we made the mistake of placing tactics before strategy. Since we wanted to distinguish ourselves from those people that didn't want to do anything, therefore, maintaining the status quo, we went to the other extreme in our zeal to demonstrate our revolutionary fervor and got hung up dealing with tactics. Period. With no overall strategy at all!

When we look at other movements—Baader-Meinhoff in Germany, Direct Action in France, Tupamaros in Uruguay-with their politics being disconnected from mass movements, violence turned out to be personal wars. Historically, the successful uses of violence have been those connected with mass struggles to gain a better life. Violence was used to give the final push to obtain the freedom that peoples struggled for. In Nicaragua against Somoza, for example. The same thing is happening in South Africa today. The masses started moving, much as Blacks in the United States in the 60's, before the violent actions of the African National Congress began. That's a mass movement that's not going to stop until final victory.

I'm now in the process of trying to make a synthesis of our experiences and trying to understand things that we did wrong, in order to use the lessons learned to develop methods of struggle that will be more efficient in the future.

Q.: It would seem that the United States is collaborating with the government of South Africa to suppress the visibility of this movement. Do you think that our government is afraid that there will be a really open discussion about the process in South Africa would reignite the visibility of this movement. Can you explain?

D.C.: I'm convinced of one thing. It was not government repression that destroyed the BPP. Obviously, many members were victims of that repression. Nevertheless, at the time I was there, they had the more support we received, not only from Blacks, but also from other segments of the society. I'm convinced that, on the whole, the BPP was destroyed by the megalomania of men.

There is a tendency expressed by the males of the human species, which is, they always engage in the struggle to see who's the baddest. When we look at the history of the world, conflicts are based on some male's desire to dominate others. Struggle between males is always at the root of conflicts in mankind.

I consider this to be a biological, evolutionary phenomenon from the early existence of the human species. It was when it was still on the savanna in Africa, hunting and being hunted. For the survival of the group, it was necessary to choose the best male as the strongest as leaders. Establishing the hierarchy was done by competition and aggressiveness. Much as in other species of animals. For example, the pecking order among hens is a troop of baboons or chimpanzees.

Leaving the savanna, developing civilization, and the technology capable of destroying all that lives, these tendencies with the clearest parallel to Black liberation in the United States is the struggle in South Africa. It is a highly urbanized society with a large working class. Furthermore, South Africa is an American product. And, since many problems still exist on that level in the USA, if the government gave free reign to open discussion it would really be condemning itself and exposing itself to problems they don't want to deal with.

Q.: Some of the chief problems within the various organizations of the 60's had to do with individuals and the issue of individualism. Although history shows that many of these organizations were neutralized by police infiltration, you have a different view concerning the breakup of the movement. Can you explain?

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