

INNER-CITY ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

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1967 - YEAR OF TRANSITION FROM ACTION TO ORGANIZATION

A New Year's Message from the Rev. Albert B. Cleage Jr.

1967 will be a year of racial violence and conflict during which the impotent civil rights organizations will be unable to maintain the status quo. Black people will be steadily driven back into a new slavery very similar to the Era of Reconstruction terrorism following the Civil War. On the one hand, white supremacy and white power are realities. On the other hand, black subordination and black powerlessness are not generally recognized. The black community does not yet realize that it is engaged in a power struggle for survival and that the white man will do everything possible to maintain white supremacy. Conflict is inevitable because the black man is no longer psychologically able to accept either his subordination or his powerlessness, and the white man is not prepared to give up either his power or his favored position.

The white man understands the nature of this power struggle better than the black man, and therefore he has launched a more massive counter-attack than the present scope of the black man's revolt would seem to warrant. Thus:

1. Selective Service racial discrimination, which results in forcing the black community to furnish 50% of the troops for the war in Vietnam and the coming war in Asia, skims off the cream of dissatisfied black youth and potential ghetto leaders.
2. Combined with this a skeleton poverty program, which does little to help the black masses, will continue to be used to skim off other potential black ghetto leaders.
3. Urban Renewal and the Demonstration Cities Act will be used to destroy black political power and to remove black people from the center city black ghettos.
4. Automation and unemployment will increase the dependence of black people upon public welfare assistance.

5. Government-sponsored birth control for black women on relief will be used to decrease the Negro birth rate.

6. As if all this were not enough to destroy any possible incipient black power, every effort will be used to transfer all urban political power to county and multi-county governments in which black voting strength is destroyed.

The black community will be immobilized by schizophrenia. The NAACP and other "responsible" black leaders will continue to talk and think in terms of an impossible integration and self-defeating liberal-labor coalition, even as the black masses turn more and more to a black mystique symbolized by African dress, distinctive African haircuts, Swahili, and talk about the glories of Ancient Africa. Out of the frustration of this kind of immobilization will come constant "Burn, Baby, Burn" riots and bands of confused black terrorists determined to blow up the white man's world.

In the midst of this chaos in which the conditions of the black man grow increasingly worse, the Inner City Organizing Committee on a local level, and Stokely Carmichael and the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee and Floyd McKissick and the Congress of Racial Equality on a national level, offer the only intelligent and serious approach to the complex problems confronting black people in America. These organizations, and gradually others like them in every urban center, North and South, will continue the slow, hard, step-by-step process of building grass-roots organizations capable of making an effective stand against white power. They will build the political and economic power necessary to control black communities. Even though these organizations will be the only force in black communities throughout America in 1967, they will not seek an all-out confrontation unless it becomes necessary for the survival of black people.