As people who are dedicated to changing the system in order to advance black people and all Humanity, we believe that it is our duty - and that of all people who claim to be struggling to free black people - to assume the leadership to break out of the vicious circle by which the oppressed are taking out their despair and frustration on each other.

WHAT MUST BE DONE?

FIRST, all those who claim that they are giving revolutionary leadership must accept the responsibility for projecting new standards for human behavior. These standards must make unmistakably clear that crimes like robbing, raping and vandalizing are unforgivable in any society and against any people, regardless of race or class. We must make clear that standards like TRUST, DISCIPLINE, RESPECT, COURAGE, DEPENDABILITY and ACCOUNTABILITY TO COMMUNITY, are absolutely essential to any people, and especially to oppressed people who are fighting to get rid of their oppression. Such standards will give us a political idea of who is a friend of the revolution and who is an enemy. They will provide us with a basis for distinguishing between criminal acts and political acts. They will enable each of us to fight the capitalist corruption which is within us all. They are the first step in the long hard struggle before us to recreate our communities.

SECOND, we must project a vision of a new society, a new system, in which there will be no need for jails and prisons because the society will provide opportunities for everyone of us - men, women and children - to carry on meaningful productive activities and to make meaningful political decisions, and thus to develop into new, socially responsible and better human beings.

THIRD, we have to engage in programs of action to rid ourselves of the corrupt values and practices which are the result of the present system and which make us accomplices in our own self-destruction.

We can begin by practicing the principle of "Value People More Than Things." This means we have to make choices and we have to stick by them.

1. Everyone of us, in every community, should refuse to buy the stolen or "hot" goods which seem so tempting but which really mean that we are subsidizing crime and accepting stealing as a way of life. Each of us should pledge this for our own selves, and then make joint pledges with our families, relatives, friends, neighbors, classmates, co-workers, club and church members, etc. - holding each other responsible for these pledges. Thus, in our practice, we can educate our communities, including the criminal elements, to understand that we are not going to tolerate inhuman anti-social behavior any longer.

2. TEACH-INS SHOULD BE HELD in our schools and churches, on the causes and effects of crime in our communities, culminating in joint pledges not to associate with anyone who continues to practice looting, stealing, pimping or other inhuman, anti-social behavior.

3. We should criticize any section of the black movement which takes advantage of blackness to blackmail anyone or to commercialize on blackness. We should be equally critical of anyone who takes a liberal or sympathetic attitude to anyone of any race who rips off, steals, mugs, vandalizes, pimps or rapes a woman of any race, or who pushes drugs or sells "hot goods" in any community.

4. Finally, wherever we are, among friends, at work, in school, at church, we must make clear our conviction that it is the duty of the oppressed to carry on united, purposeful struggles against all forms of oppression, and that we are ready to explore with anyone those programs that will enable all of us, young and old together, to struggle against oppression and for the power and the sense of community that we as black people must have to give human dignity and value to our lives, now and in the future.

We call upon all people, in every city and town, and particularly in black areas, to support, encourage and work with all groups, individuals and organizations who are ready to put these principles into action.

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