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Subject: !*BLACK COMMUNITY UNDER ATTACK IN SEATTLE USA
To: AGE-L@UGA.CC.UGA.EDU

Black community under attack in liberal Seattle

By John Persak, 5 December 1997

Although Seattle has been championed and self congratulatory on its "tolerance" of ethnic minorities, it looks as if the left is asleep at the wheel, while the City of Seattle wages attacks in the Black Community. In recent months, activism in the Black Community has grown tremendously. This activity has been met with intimidation by sellouts, with the help of the Seattle Police Department, and has also been ignored by our so-called socially responsible city officials.

The battle lines have been drawn at the African American Heritage Museum--the museum started as a community run occupation (the longest in US history) 12 years ago at the old Coleman school. The policies and programs of the museum is supposed to be run democratically by a board. However, there are two opposing interests represented on the board--on one side, community activists including the Youth Action Committee, CopWatch members and others; on the other, "salaried professionals", politicians, and others referred to by members of the Community as "uncle toms". The sellouts on the board have been working hand in glove with City officials and the police department to purge out the progressive elements of the museum. In other words, anyone who wants the Museum to be a living institution controlled by the Black Community will have to go.

In addition, open letters have been sent to the Museum committee twice by the Youth Action Committee(YAC), charging abuses of procedure, refusal to allow progressive members of the board to contribute to the project, refusal to produce receipts for money spent on "consulting", unfair hiring practices, and a myriad of other offenses.

Rather than responding, the chair and program director of the Museums Board have stepped aside, to allow the city to take hand--twice the Seattle Police Department has threatened Community activists with forced eviction, which later have turned out to be bluffs-*this time*.

In addition, the Sellout elements on the Board are also trying to take over the Umoja Festival, a community organized Black festival which last August attracted over 10,000 through grassroots organizing. It outshined the so-called "Central District Festival", where only a few hundred turned out, and was organized by SPD officers Rodney Stokes and Vic Minor among others with Weed and Seed funds. Naturally, the police presence was high, along with military vehicles for show, should anything "go wrong". With the Black Community outshining the powers that be, the real festival has to be co-opted or destroyed, from the point of view of the Sellouts.

YAC activists and participants are also being harassed by the SPD, in the neo-COINTELPRO style gestapo tactics used on the Panthers in the 1970's. At a YAC workshop at the Garfield Community Center on November 26, SPD officer McFadden barged in the adjoining gym, interrogating youth, threatening jail to those protesting, and called for backup. When Dr. Fish, one of the workshop facilitators asked what the problem was, the police swarming the joined offered obscenities, threats of arrest, and proceeded to handcuff two boys-ages 12 and 14--and take them away without explanation.

A meeting then took place last Tuesday between Black Community activists, and several Police officers, including Norm Stamper. In regards to the Umoja festival, the police insisted that they should want control of the festival, with Stamper reportedly saying that having two "divided the black community". The SPD also want 3 removed from the board--the progressives, of course. Reverend Jefferies insisted that the old guard have "financial oversight" over the festival.

Greg Jackson of CopWatch and Black Autonomy approached Stamper with an account of the raid at the YAC workshop, demanding that action would be taken on the matter, and promising that the Black Community would follow up. After the meeting, two activists were followed home by marked cars. One is tempted to ask, when will activists start getting shot at?

In response the Community is fighting back. A demonstration took place last Monday in front of the Washington Mutual Tower, where the office of Bob Flowers, chair of the Museum's board is located. Another demonstration is planned for Thursday, December 11th, at 6:00pm, at the Community Policing Forum, 400 23rd Ave S. The Community continues to mobilize support, and groups in the Seattle area have been working to inform the rest of the city.

For more info, contact Black Autonomy, 680-8916, or the Puget Sound IWW, 516-8562.

PLEASE CALL WRITE FAX IN PROTEST;

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