

Anarchist People of Color to Gather in Detroit

Fifth Estate Collective

This fall, people will gather in Detroit to lay the foundations for an anti-authoritarian, grassroots movement of people of color that will organize in their communities against racism and repression. Described as “an organizers’ conference of people sympathetic to the Anarchist movement in various communities of color”, the APOC conference will consist of a weekend of workshops, networking and strategy sessions. Already, groups around the US are organizing benefit concerts to show solidarity and physically support the conference. This conference is for community activists, oppressed and Indigenous peoples, Anarchists and anti-authoritarians of color. THIS IS A PEOPLE OF COLOR ONLY EVENT, sponsored by the Students Movement for Justice at Wayne State U., the Black Autonomy Network of Community Organizers-S.W. Michigan chapter, and our friends in the Anarchist movement.

From the organizers: “To all Anarchists: This is a chance for us to diversify the Anarchist movement. We ask that you support this effort. Although this is a people of color only event, white Anarchists and supporters should encourage individuals and groups of color they know to attend, and organize to help them attend this conference by raising money for them, and publicizing this event widely.

Several hundred persons now call themselves Anarchist People Of Color (APOC). It is time we met, and more importantly, organized an autonomous political tendency. This will be the first opportunity for APOC to meet and express their concerns and ideas at a mass meeting of other APOC, as well as the first chance to begin to build a united movement. We want to speak with our own voice and develop our own understanding about things such as racism, internal colonialism, poverty, police murder and brutality, mass imprisonment of “minority”/non-white youth, and other issues, which most effect us. We also want to develop our own political theory about what Anarchism means to us as people of color, who have been dominated by a white political and cultural power historically.

We realize that there are whites in the Anarchist and progressive scene who are sympathetic to our cause, but feel that we have the absolute right to meet and plan an agenda of our own choosing and around our own interests. Just as women, gays or other autonomous groups, we decide whether or how to allow others outside our tendency to participate. We’ve asked that this conference be a people of color-only space. Historically, there have always been ethnic Anarchist tendencies in the United States, whether Jewish, German, Italian, Russian, Polish, or others in the Third world. It should be no surprise that Africans in America, Xicano/a, Puerto Rican and other forces would try to build their own united tendency. We do ask that those sympathetic to the conference offer material aid, mutual political support, solidarity and deep and honest understanding while we hold this conference and try to create our movement.

We welcome all people of color to this conference, regardless of whether or not they understand Anarchist theory, or self identify as an Anarchist. As Anarchist people of color, part of our task has to be educating the people in our own communities as to what Anarchism stands for. Therefore, throughout the conference, we will have an orientation program, called- “Anarchism 101”, to teach the fundamentals of Anarchism and autonomist ideals to anyone who is interested.

No one organization, individual or tendency can honestly claim to be speaking for all APOC. We do not make such a claim. We are asking those among the body of APOC interested in community-based organizing, building a

mass tendency, and meeting other APOC activists, to come to this event where we can get to work. We are inviting all APOC to come, in a spirit of unity and reconciliation: let us put aside any past personal or political differences, and seriously discuss how we can build a new movement.

The APOC conference will occur on the weekend of October 3–5, 2003 at Wayne State University in Detroit, MI. (For directions: please check the WSU online directory at: www.ucomm.wayne.edu/fsd/all.shtml, or email Shemon Salam at smj_shemon@yahoo.com)

There will be a \$10 admission fee for individuals, and a \$20 admission fee for organizational representatives. This money will cover food, materials, and other expenses to put on the conference. No one will be turned away for lack of funds. We are trying to get housing in one or more Detroit neighborhoods for those people coming in from out of town. As for Transportation, we are attempting to raise funds so that we can rent some vans which can be used to take people directly to the conference site each day. We need money for this and other details of the conference, so if you would like to help please send donations.

Please send donations, registration or requests for more info to: APOC Conference c/o BANCO P.O. Box 19962 Kalamazoo, MI. 49006 or email apoc@illegalvoices.org

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