

**Transcending Survival:
The Second Iteration of 400+1's Manifesto**

*Inspired by:
Every member of 400+1 from M to T.*

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Foreword:

This publication does not represent all that 400+1 will ever be. 400+1's culture is one of growth, innovation, and perpetual change. This has and will continue to necessitate many renditions of the federation's manifesto.

Acknowledgement:

We owe so much to the Maroons, the Republic of New Afrika, MOVE, the Combahee River Collective, Organisation of African Unity, and umKhonto we Sizwe. 400+1 isn't explicitly patterned after any organization, but we are so grateful for the brilliance, the courage, and the innovation demonstrated by those who've come before us.

Introduction:

This introduction was initially published as the manifesto on which 400+1 was founded in 2018. The analysis conveyed here still, in many ways, informs the federation's commitment to its framework.

The movement for Black liberation began in the early 1500s when Africans were lined up and prepared for Brazil by the Portuguese at slave ports in what, today, is known as Angola. At the time, Blackness was conceptualized differently. Much like now, Africans were divided on the basis of identity. Then, it was tribal or national identity based on geographic location and cultural variance throughout the continent. Now, it is identity based on gender, ability, socioeconomic status, proximity or lack thereof to whiteness, education, and access. Geographic separation and diversity in culture have persevered as factors of division, but where Africans were and, sometimes, still are unwilling to see themselves as one people, Europeans very quickly did the opposite. They saw pan-Africans as one people, as one resource ripe for exploitation and their subsequent and systematic enslavement of Africans and theft of our home continent was indicative of just that. But when resistance to that enslavement and exploitation erupted, it was not organized across the continent in a way that counterbalanced the widespread European pillaging of Africa. In fact, it was not a pan-African movement because pan-Africa did not exist in the minds of those who inhabited the continent. So, when Africans resisted, they resisted as Kongolese led by their King, Nzinga Mbemba. They resisted as Angolese led by their Queen, Nzinga, who waged a hundred year war against Portuguese slave traders. They resisted as Beninese led by their King, Agaja. They resisted on slave ships, commandeering vessels and killing the crews tasked with trafficking them to Europe and to the Americas. Our ancestors resisted, but none of those instances of rebellion involved support from a united or connected home continent. Europeans, on the other hand, benefitted from unity in both intention and impetus. Collectively, irrespective of their cultural or geographical differences, European countries were interested in expanding their respective empires through African resource theft and threw themselves, as one, into accomplishing their goal.

The movement for African liberation continued once African captives reached The Americas and began their tenure as slaves. There were ancestors like King June, a former Akwamu (Ghanaian)

chief turned field slave who led captives in St. John to knife down slave owners in acts of resistance. There was Jemmy, an Angolan man who organized twenty fellow Africans in the Stono Rebellion in South Carolina in 1739. Five hundred slaves burned down sugar plantations in New Orleans and armed themselves with hand tools in an attempt to take their freedom in the German Coast Uprising of 1811. In 1831, our Brother Nat led one of the most famous slave rebellions of his time. Nago slaves, who were Yoruba/Nigerians taken from the continent, were led by a man named Ahuna who, inspired by the Haitian Revolution, attempted to overthrow Portuguese slave owners. But just like their continental predecessors, the Afro-American and Afro-Latinx revolutionaries who resisted the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade lacked the broader support they needed to end it. At the time, there were over 10 million African slaves in the Americas and an estimated 100 million on the continent. Historians estimate that the European and colonial population did not match either. And yet, due to many factors, some within their control and some outside, slave revolts almost never involved more than a few hundred Black folks. The white response to these acts of rebellion; however, were always swift, systemic, and enacted with European solidarity. The British, Spanish, French, and Portuguese crowns were almost always ready to send military support to their colonies to ensure that African labor remained free and European pockets fat. Slave-owners in the United States, after the American Revolution, always had their government to tangibly support their tyranny with military backing and nationwide collaborative suppression of Black abolitionist uprisings.

Post-slavery efforts to overcome white despotism not only lacked collective impetus, but cohesive ideology as well. After four hundred years of trauma and persecution, Africans, now dispersed across the globe, were no closer to a chosen pan-African political identity than they were on the continent. The difference was that, now, an identity, shaped and informed by white hegemony, characterized by subjugation to economic deficit, violence, and dehumanization had developed for them. Both Africans in the Americas and Africans on the continent were now faced with the task of resource reclamation, cultural rebuilding, and general resistance to white violence without the resources they'd had access to and possibly taken for granted on the continent. With the Ku Klux Klan, European imperialism, theft and depletion of natural resources in Africa, Haitian debt and, later, Jim Crow and Apartheid to contend with, Black people did not have the space or capacity to develop political or economic strategy en masse. Not unlike their physically enslaved ancestors, Africans navigating this era were forced into positions of political and economic stagnancy. With racial and economic oppression developing rapidly as a global system, pan-Africa couldn't possibly put its mind on collective Black prosperity while the issue of Black survival, alone, remained uncertain. This problem persists today.

Today, what we once called slavery, we now call homelessness.

What we once called slavery, we now call food insecurity.

What we once called slavery, we now call hunger.

What we once called slavery, we now call wealth disparity.

What we once called slavery, we now call maternal mortality.

What we once called slavery, we now call mass incarceration.

What we once called slavery, we now call health disparity.

What we once called slavery, we now call the exploitation of Black militant potential by United States imperialists.

What we once called slavery, we now call wage theft.

What we once called slavery, we now call capitalism.

What we once called slavery, we now call police brutality and excessive force.

What we once called slavery, we now call state imposed violence.

Each of these elements of the Black material condition in the 21st century, were once components of an institution that was purportedly abolished nationally in 1865 and internationally in 1888. Aspiring revolutionaries tasked with galvanizing and mobilizing their communities are, essentially, facing the same obstacle that the organizers of slave revolts encountered: fear of and dependency on the oppressor without the resources to support promises of protection and autonomy. That fear manifests as internalized racism demonstrated through the collectively fulfilled prophetic stereotype of Sambo, a character eager to assimilate to, navigate, and gain proximity to whiteness. It takes the form of post traumatic slave syndrome, which is the cause of many maladaptive behaviors in our communities such as abusive parenting, toxic relationship development, aesthetic dissatisfaction, cultural incorporation of oppressor modeled sexism and misogyny and movement sabotage, itself. To be clear, this means that not only must organizers meet the tangible and material needs of their communities to build their capacity for political and economic strategy, but also provide the emotional and psychological support that true healing, without which capacity for revolution does not exist, entails.

In addition to its material and psychological condition, aspiring revolutionaries must also contend with the spiritual condition of pan-Africa. Black people, as a whole, burdened with the mission of survival and weighted by the trauma of systemic oppression, don't have the space for spiritual acknowledgement, exploration, care, or healing. Initially, Africans carried from the continent to the Americas were explicitly forbidden from engaging in any spiritual practice, Christianity included. They were beaten, humiliated, and shamed out of their spiritual traditions and as the years went on, a spiritual and ancestral disconnection formed. It is both a human right and a need to explore one's self and one's environment holistically and come to one's own conclusions. Perceived spiritual stagnancy impedes human growth and growth is a key to Black liberation.

Activists and organizers who aspire to revolution have, historically, in an effort to eliminate elitism, hierarchy and replications of oppressive dynamics and to directly empower marginalized communities, taken the difficult endeavor of defining the Black political position directly to those most impacted. This bottom-up strategy used in grassroots organizing, while in line with revolutionary principles and effective in guarding against tyranny and corruption, is unrealistic when the Black experience and its resulting impact on Black capacity is taken into consideration. And, yet, revolution is not possible without the leadership of those who are most oppressed. Revolution is not possible without cohesion in impetus and ideology. Revolution is not possible without the engagement of the Diaspora as a whole.

Because we continue to engage in organizing without addressing this issue, our "revolution" is reduced to principle rich, resource poor movement work or; even worse, resource rich, principle poor reformism. Those who are principled continue, in vain, to engage communities at max capacity and those who aren't seek support from the only well resourced institutions they have access to-institutions of white supremacy. This opens the door for unsustainable activism, infiltration, corruption, cyclical movement, division, organizational impoverishment, and ideological chasms.

What is unsustainable activism? It's when the same five local organizers take on every police shooting, every instance of excessive force, every local policy nightmare, every natural disaster, and every community program. What is infiltration? It's when white supremacist interests creep into Black movements, collectives and spaces; often because white supremacist funding has created space for them. What is corruption? It's when Black leadership ceases to represent collective Black interest and moves to protect its privilege. What is cyclical movement? It's when activists and organizers pour their hearts and souls into defeating municipal policy or state legislation only to encounter it, disguised as something else, a few short years later; when victories are pyrrhic and organizers are forced to position themselves as reactionaries. What is division? It's when hundreds of Black organizations are founded to do the same thing because they can't trust one another to protect collective interest. What is organizational impoverishment? It's when the most radical of movement formations are isolated and starved of resources until survival is impossible. What are ideological chasms? They are the space that

exists between organizations willing to bend to the will of law enforcement agencies and organizations who aren't.

It's natural for these obstacles to feel insurmountable, but they aren't.

There have been moments in the history of our struggle when pan-Africans have demonstrated cohesion in either impetus or ideology. The demands of revolting slaves were clear and agreed upon: release from bondage. While ideology varied during the civil rights and Black power movements, Black people engaged and took action at unprecedented rates. We've proven that we can unite in each of these areas. The key is to do so simultaneously. Finding our way to common ground is necessary to overcome division within our movement, but completely contingent upon the development of principles that are chosen based on their potential to fulfill Black material, psychological, and spiritual need.

These principles are necessary elements of the foundation for a system of Diasporic accountability, without which the obstacles that pan-Africa faces can not be overcome. Creating systems of accountability for the Black community, its advocates, its leaders and its allies will better protect pan-Africa from infiltration and corruption, specifically, but not exclusively. Accountability also has the potential to increase the sustainability of organizing strategies and models.

A united and principled pan-Africa with duty responsive constituents is a pan-Africa prepared for the reclamation of resources the movement for Black liberation demands; the first of which must be of ourselves. As Black people, we are our own most valuable resource. Just a fraction of our global population has the potential to organize in a way that results in the accumulation of tangible and actual wealth. This reclamation will empower Black radical formations to provide moral, financial, and human support to Black individuals, communities, organizations, and movements globally.

Quiddity:

Flesh meeting spirit.

We broken no more.

We in equilibrium.

400+1 was founded in June 2018 by Kristina Brown and Njera Keith, two young Black women living and organizing in Austin. In August, 400+1's founders embarked on The Beyond Tour, a five-city tour of Black, radical organizations in America. 400+1 visited The #LetUsBreathe Collective, North Philly Peace Park, and ALENA Museum. The federation never made it to

Atlanta, its final stop, making the decision to stage a hunger strike in response to the violence, deprivation, and isolation the Black movement workers it encountered throughout TBT were experiencing as neo-liberalism consumed and appropriated the last drops of momentum from #BLM. The hunger strike lasted for only ten days and was minimally successful.

Giants, all of us.

Sleeping through a long winter.

Recycling our dreams.

After the conclusion of The Beyond Tour, 400+1 focused on demonstrating and popularizing its own principles through praxis. These efforts included cultivating a community farm in the city in which it was founded, founding and operating a full-time community school for Black children, spearheading the boycott of a state-funded institution that openly discriminated against Black children, organizing Black survivors of sexual harm against the carceral system, partnering with Pawa254 and Artrika to host Sudan's Freedom Declaration, deep canvassing in response to anti-abortion ordinances, and establishing a bail fund for Black people held hostage by the state.

Heartache and trauma.

Til the tide meets the shore like

Bullet piercing skin.

400+1's early experiences led the federation's leadership to commit, more deeply, to hierarchical vanguardism and destabilization. This shift was informed by the study of uprisings led by enslaved Africans during the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, the Haitian Revolution, the Cuban Revolution, the Russian Revolution, the Basque Movement, the Sudanese Uprisings of 2019, and the Black Lives Matter Movement. To ascertain the relevance of the federation's movement theory to the current political climate, 400+1 engaged in a formal interrogation of its own experiences from its inception until January 2020, facilitated disruption containers (destabilization experiments), and conducted a destabilization study during the 2020 uprisings. Finally, the federation staged a small-scale destabilization at a local grocery store in August 2020 and another in February 2021 when, during a deadly winter storm that limited access to life-sustaining infrastructure, it seized a local park and made available resources for which nearby Black residents usually relied on the state.

We were the strong ones.

Why didn't we ever know?

That the universe was ours.

400+1 is a framework for Black liberation. The ideas that comprise the framework are that cohesion in impetus and ideology are foundational tenets of successful revolutions, that

vanguardism, destabilization, and marronage are viable solutions to the incapacity of the Black masses, and that formal reparative and solidary relationships encompass the range of multi-racial collaboration that should be involved in Black liberatory struggle.

Officially, 400+1 is a cooperative federation led by an exclusively Black vanguard. The vanguard, itself, is an ecology of collectives that identify as administrative leadership, charismatic & tactical leadership, procedural leadership, spiritual leadership, and grassroots leadership, respectively. The rest of the federation consists of exclusively Black intentional living communities, Black social clubs, IPOC worker owned cooperatives, and reparations paying white allies. Each of these semi-autonomous formations are unionized under 400+1's banner.

The federation envisions Black liberation as multiversal acknowledgement of the expansiveness of African existence, as ecological collaboration for Black wellness, and as an equitable distribution of resources-including love and protection-among Black people themselves.

We believe that when cohesion in impetus and ideology are achieved, it will be recognizable in an autonomous and regenerative culture that centers Black liberation as a recurring theme and an ethic, in diverse political expression that ultimately returns to common principles, and in the capacity of Black folx to mobilize quickly and en masse.

Vanguardism, in our estimation, is the utilization of voluntary martyrs for the development of institutions and ecologies that render revolutionary struggle accessible to the masses. Destabilization, within the context of the federation's movement theory, is the impelled severance of specific relationships between the Black masses, the state, and capitalism. The federation's intentional living communities epitomize marronage. They are a safe haven for Black people who are extracted from systemic oppression during destabilization and who voluntarily divest from the American project but, ultimately, they represent respite-not freedom-from the threat of white supremacist harm and colonization.

400+1 doesn't engage non-Black people who haven't explicitly committed to following Black, revolutionary leadership, reclaiming their relationship to Blackness from colonization, and contributing economically to the development of Black capacity. That commitment is reflected in literal restitution to 400+1. We believe, firmly, in building alliances pragmatically, not sentimentally and that revolutionaries should work from the outset to establish relationships most likely to serve them when the nations, institutions and communities they've built are under attack by white, colonial, imperialist, capitalist power.

400+1's Ministry of Cohesion contributes internal management of the federation's day-to-day operations.

The federation's L1 Collective contributes charismatic & tactical leadership through external culture work, pro-Black & anti-capitalist propaganda, identity-based galvanization, offensive assaults on oppressive institutions, and tactical interventions in systemic assaults on Black wellness.

The L2 Collective contributes procedural leadership through the internal systemization of the federation's external activity.

The L3 Collective contributes developmental leadership through tangible cultivation, peer to peer support, spiritual facilitation, artistic expression, political education, and institutional invention for the federation's maroons.

400+1's L4 collective contributes grassroots leadership through the distribution of federation resources to Black communities, the cultivation of intimate relationships with the Black masses, and the reclamation of those relationships from colonization.

400+1 was founded to protect and preserve the viability, longevity and vitality of revolutionary efforts. For this reason, each and every one of the federation's intended contributions is internally incubated before it is externally debuted.

The vanguard is incubated through Praxis: A Phrontistery for Black Revolutionaries. Praxis is a traveling, movement school for Black revolutionaries who volunteer for vanguardism. Matriculation to Praxis is a year-long process and vanguard candidates are enrolled for six years before graduating to active duty. 400+1 believes that the practice of launching revolutionaries into practice, without considerable study and rehearsal, has proven unsustainable for its predecessors and peers. Similarly, 400+1's destabilization tactics are incubated through study and experimentation and its intentional living communities are incubated by the vanguard's L3 Collective.

Beyond incubation and development, 400+1 hopes to catalyze mass mobilization through the slow and systematic organization of the African diaspora. Though not publicized, the strategy for this organization is reflected in both the federation's structure and movement theory. We believe that 400+1 is a manifestation of the systemic and ecological resistance that will ultimately catalyze revolution and liberate the world.

400+1 is committed to acting in the best interest of pan-Africa. It is committed to combating the imperialist agenda of the west. It is committed to developing an economic system that completely rejects capitalist and individualist values. It is committed to redefining nationhood in a way that protects the cultural shift it hopes to embody, but recognizes the divinity and preserves the dignity of every living being on earth. It is dedicated to doing the work to

contribute to prison abolition and the abolition of the system of policing while, simultaneously, developing justice systems that are holistically restorative as opposed to punitive and dehumanizing. 400+1 is devoted to creating a world where Black femmes and gender non conforming people are recognized as the brilliant, capable, influential beings that they are; in which they are protected from the ills of misogynoir and sexism. 400+1 is grounded in the understanding that true Black liberation is LGBTQIA affirming and that reproductive revolution and pro-migration orientations are in the best interest of the African Diaspora. The vision for 400+1 is one of sustainability: environmental sustainability, emotional and psychological sustainability, cultural sustainability, and movement sustainability.

Canonical Context:

This manifesto is an attempted translation of 400+1's existence. We believe it potentially helpful to allow the scholarship and expression with which our peers might be more familiar to contextualize our praxis and ideology. We hope this enhances the resonance of this communique.

Black Unity and Collaboration

I. In Response to Black Power: The Politics of Liberation

In Chapter 3 of Kwame Ture's and Charles Hamilton's *Black Power*, the false promise of coalition power is challenged and discredited. Ture's and Hamilton's assertions are consistent with 400+1's experiences in coalition spaces and, ultimately, undergird the federation's orientation toward coalition. 400+1 does not join multi-racial, bipartisan, and/or class diverse coalition spaces to collaborate or "meet people where they are." Our intention is always agitation, radicalization, and destabilization.

What Ture and Hamilton describe as an inclusion of Black people only at the leadership level of coalitions has troubled the federation's presence in these formations and informed our tendency toward agitation. The Black folx selected for leadership in multi-racial, bipartisan, and class diverse coalition spaces are almost always members of or aspirants to the professional class; meaning that they are poised to betray the interests of the Black poor and thus disqualified to serve as representative leadership. Further, these Black folx often neither possess nor strive to develop any actual connection with the communities they are tasked with representing and so cannot build a materialist assessment of the conditions to which those communities are subjected. They don't truly understand the problem and, thus, are often either unable or unwilling to advocate for comprehensive and transformative solutions. 400+1 takes it upon itself to expose these contradictions to push for class treachery among those who have yet to align themselves with the revolutionary principles that will ultimately serve the greatest good.

Ture's and Hamilton's argument that the interests of Black people are not identical with those of other liberal, labor, or reform groups because those groups often accept the legitimacy of the systems that oppress the Black masses further validates the federation's perception of multi-racial, bipartisan, and/or class diverse coalition spaces as degenerative. Almost always partners in said coalitions are expected to accommodate the politics of those furthest to the right under the guise of democracy and "moving at the speed of trust." 400+1 believes in moving at the speed of need demonstrated by those most impacted by systemic oppression, not at the speed of "trust" demonstrated by those who benefit from the harm and exploitation of the aforementioned.

Finally, Ture's and Hamilton's contention that solidarity cannot be established between the economically and politically secure and the economically and politically insecure affirms 400+1's observation of the marginalization of those who are politically and economically insecure in coalition spaces. It is never possible for Black folk to fully advocate for their interests when the podium from which they speak is crumbling beneath them. 400+1 advocates for the redistribution of wealth, power, and access in both the internal and external practices of coalition spaces from those most privileged to those least to make political partnership authentic and mutually beneficial as opposed to exploitative and tokenizing.

II. In Response to The Defeat of Black Power

In Leonard Moore's *The Defeat of Black Power*, the danger of bolstering Black assimilationist politics in pursuit of Black unity is made clear. Black nationalists and Black power activists were iced out of political relevance by civil rights organizers and elected officials at the 1972 National Black Political Convention. Assimilationists exploited the nationalist connection to Black communities to augment a political base that it wouldn't have grown otherwise. Black nationalists were ultimately betrayed by their own commitment to a false promise of Black unity.

This phenomenon is one 400+1 witnessed and experienced throughout the tail-end of the #BlackLivesMatter movement of 2012-2018. Black radicals alchemized collective energy in the streets for a popular front that would ultimately be co-opted by neoliberals and nonprofit professionals who sold Black interest to the Democratic party for grant money.

400+1 will not coalesce with Black organizations to its right for the sake of performative or false unity. The federation, itself, is a coalition of Black people who engage different

tactics and leadership orientations in order to take a more comprehensive and inclusive approach to movement work. 400+1 believes that cohesion in impetus and ideology (unity) must be developed from scratch and within a well-defined container.

Spiritual Practice and Radical Theology

I. In Response to “Evidence”

Alexis Pauline Gumbs’ “Evidence” is an illustration of the deep commitment 400+1 feels to the descendants of African people living now, today. The federation is experimenting with archival and how it can be a container for the spiritual relationship between its members and those that live long after we’ve transitioned. Gumbs’ directive to herself to “live [her] life as a tribute to our victory and not as a stifling reaction to the past” is a federation mandate that compels those who populate 400+1 to treat our work as the life or death engagement that it is and to allow that praxis to be an acknowledgement of our continual presence in this universe; a ritual that preserves the portal between this world and the next.

II. In Response to Vodou Cosmology:

Vodou Cosmology and the Haitian Revolution in the Enlightenment Ideals of Kant and Hegel validates 400+1’s belief in a spiritual lifestyle politic as a cohesive agent in revolutionary formations. The roles that comprise the vanguard’s ecology are ritualistic, in themselves. They are each a collection of orientations, behaviors, attitudes, habits, beliefs, investments, and connections that characterize and reinforce the devotion of revolutionaries to revolution.

Vodou Cosmology establishes that “social bonding in the rituals [of enslaved Africans in Ayiti] provided the arena for the worshipers to acknowledge each other as a constituent of one’s individual identity.” and that “the social neighbor is included in one’s structural reference of meaning via collective participation in the rituals.” *Vodou Cosmology* further establishes that “[a]fter all, taking part in the activities of a cult or set provides emotional support for members who are forced to live in a world that they often perceive as hostile, thereby allowing for the possibility of collective action.”

“Revolution is a spiritual practice.”- Kristina Brown, Minister of Cohesion, 400+1

400+1 isn’t interested in defining or directing the spiritual experience of its members. Rather, our hope is that-through revolutionary struggle-our members will find, develop, and reclaim a spiritual experience that they feel inspired to collectivize, organically. This exchange is foundational to the propagation of the revolutionary politic that the

federation espouses.

Transcending White Supremacy

I. In Response to Dawn

In *Dawn*, the first installment in Octavia Butler's Xenogenesis series, Lilith Iyapo is tasked with building a tribe of humans poised for evolution through genetic partnership with another species. This scenario serves as a sufficient metaphor for 400+1's relationship to vanguardism. Vanguardism requires intense transformation of those who subscribe to and volunteer for it. Members abandon remnants of the assimilationist politics they practiced before their radicalization and embark on an extremely personal journey of self-actualization and integration that is initially overwhelming and alienating. Vanguard members, all of us, are committed to active recovery from colonization. This commitment requires us to reclaim ourselves, our relationships, our behaviors, and our orientations from white supremacy. These are aspects of our human experience—usually completely tainted by systemic oppression—that people often conflate with their own identity; making this process of reclamation one that causes us to question, as does *Dawn*, what it means to be human and what the implications of human essentialism are on liberatory struggle.

II. In Response to The Trouble with Paradise

Toni Morrison's "The Trouble With Paradise", an essay we encountered in her recently published anthology, *The Source of Self-Regard*, articulates 400+1's efforts to free Blackness from the imposition of whiteness while simultaneously developing a resonant cultural norm. In this essay, Morrison shares that "one of the most malevolent characteristics of racist thought is that it seems never to produce new knowledge." Introducing new ideas, new mythologies, and new techniques to audiences that are deeply indoctrinated with limiting language and conceptualizations means that characterizing Blackness has proven challenging for the federation in ways that Morrison sums up masterfully. She also posits that "...whiteness matures and ascends the throne of universalism by maintaining its powers to describe and enforce its descriptions." This is a power that 400+1 is claiming, slowly. Instead of surrendering to the demand for language that is familiar, 400+1 is attempting to create new language with the understanding that familiarity does not justify violence and that much of what has been said by movement workers to attract the Black masses has been violently spoken in the language of white supremacy.

Our choice to engage with what is inevitably unfamiliar is in alignment with Morrison's call to treat paradise or heaven as an earthly and contemporary project. Creating environments that are comprehensively free requires the expungement of traditional racialization and commitment to the exercise of redefinition and self determination.

400+1 is building the road it walks upon and taking nothing for granted. This is a lifestyle politic that we ask members of the vanguard, C.R.E.A.M., The Ally Ship, and residents of L3s to take on. We mustn't seek or recreate the signaling or conditioning of a failed society in a space intended to give birth to a new one. Those who populate the federation are expected to practice courage by questioning and re-imagining, perpetually. 400+1's communication, both internal and external, is always an invitation to do that.

III. In Response to Becoming Human

400+1 subscribes to a brand of afro-pessimism that rejects humanness as it has been defined, believing that the dominant definition is one rooted in white supremacy. The federation embraces the idea that the abolition of the human construct is a necessary factor in Black liberation.

Unlike Frank Wilderson, who recently popularized afro-pessimism, the federation does not believe human conclusion to be accessible through a literal death, but rather a conceptual one that is followed by societal rebirth. Zakiyyah Iman Jackson's *Becoming Human* provides a foundational explanation for this principle and ideological orientation. In her work, she asserts that taxonomy and speciesism inform racial hierarchy.

400+1 is committed to interrogating the distinction between humans and the rest of earth's ecology and teasing out the spaces in which anti-Black racism comprises that dichotomy. This interrogation represents the extent of the federation's commitment to afro-pessimism as a principle.

Political Refinement

I. In Response to Black Marxism

400+1's opposition to class reductionism is reflected in Cedric Robinson's *Black Marxism*. *Black Marxism* seeks to establish the origin and, subsequently, the nature of some schools of Marxist thought as recklessly eurocentric. 400+1 subscribes to what it refers to as Orishan Communism, a method of analysis and lens with which to develop movement theory that explicitly accounts for and acknowledges both the ontology and

impact of African liberation struggles while maintaining compatibility with Marxism's materialist and anti-capitalist orientations. Materialism shows up most in 400+1's commitment to vanguardism and destabilization, both efforts to shift the conditions to which the Black masses are subjected so as to, ultimately, achieve a universally militant orientation toward the abolition of systemic oppression.

II. In Response to *We Will Shoot Back: Armed Resistance in the Mississippi Freedom Movement*

400+1's disinterest in reform is supported by what is chronicled in *We Will Shoot Back: Armed Resistance in the Mississippi Freedom Movement*. Black people were used, by the federal government, to maintain control over former confederate states and prevent the resurgence of the confederacy after the civil war ended. This unprecedented Black power in the state legislature allowed Black People to develop reforms that better protected their interests and even made it possible for them to solicit funds from the state for armed organizing in response to white terrorism. But when those same white southerners, initially locked out of the political process by the federal government, assimilated to a post-civil war politic, the state ceased to bolster or undergird Black political leadership in the south. Once Black people were no longer needed to maintain federal control, the government became uninterested in protecting them from the physical violence they faced. The reforms Black folx saw adopted were quickly repealed and white southerners began to use both physical violence to suppress Black political participation and systemic dominance to erode the protections Black folx had just recently come to know. Without power that existed autonomously of the state, Black folx slipped, easily, back into subjugation.

This phenomenon is deathly familiar. It's time that we cease to surrender our power to city councils, state legislatures, houses of representatives, senates, and administrations that may sometimes dangle the carrot, but will always ultimately return to the stick.

Descriptive Survey:

The vanguard is 400+1's representation. The formation is currently populated by a hierarchy of Black revolutionaries who identify as nonbinary, queer, and lesbian. A multitude of stories are woven into the fabric of the vanguard's reality; few of them still in progress, but all of them significant. Some stories convey the vanguard's inability to accommodate the true depths of marginalization. There are stories of prolific pain, too deep to be healed in the belly of martyrdom. Many stories are of inspiration, radicalization, and development. Still others are of

triumph, commitment, imagination, and spiritual fortitude in the face of great tribulation. And that's the beauty of living things. Their ontologies shift to accommodate expressions of the multiverses that inform them. While the vanguard employs spirits from near and far to do battle with a common enemy, each from where they stand in his line of destruction, it remains impossible for 400+1 to be only one thing.

The vanguard are but the voice of the federation. Those who live in its intentional living communities are to be the heart. These communities will ultimately illustrate both the failures and triumphs of the Orishan movement. They represent the scope of possibility within our federation.

The vanguard's relationships with The Ally Ship and C.R.E.A.M. represent the international politic it hopes to manifest; a dispersion of African people connected to those whose colonization complemented their own in the vile project of white supremacy and reunited with wealth that was stolen from and squeezed out of their ancestors. C.R.E.A.M. is populated by young (under 30) queer and nonbinary people who are subjected to colonization (400+1 is moving away from referring to people as colonized, as there is power in language and what we call ourselves. We are who we say we are and its important for us to claim freedom with our tongues as we work to manifest that freedom in our material condition.). The Ally Ship is populated by all white people in pursuit of a new collective identity through a material rejection of white supremacy.

Our hope in telling the stories of the folx who have come to call this project home, even for a short time, is to illustrate what is.

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She was a bit of a vagabond, aspiring to an assimilation that she could color with pseudo-radicalism. But her spirit wouldn't allow this betrayal and she would come to look back on the time she spent wandering and pretending as a great waste. At rock bottom, a place in which she discovered a profound disillusionment with the life available to her, she found what she believed to be her purpose. She was radicalized and her path was set toward 400+1.

She leaped into a Black nationalist politic and practiced it through grassroots organizing that was largely unsustainable. This time was marked deeply by rejection, poverty, and political refinement. Eventually, romantic love and downloads from her guides led her to something more comprehensive and a new framework was born.

She experienced an ego death; Spirit, her ancestors, and her guides forcing her to acknowledge that, although she'd felt alone for a long time, she was not the sole steward of revolution. She fell silent. She had many realizations. One was that she would never again be who she was. Another was that she would always be who she was meant to. The third was that the steps she took, either toward or away from the actualization of her praxis, were what actually defined her, her relationships, and her experience.

Simultaneously, she was broken and made whole.

She gifted the federation with vision, direction, and form.

2:

She was baby-woke, but determined to expand her consciousness. Eager to find her place and ready to prove herself, she took revolution on to demonstrate that divestment from capitalism and white supremacy were possible.

She gifted the federation with aspiration.

3:

She believed in perfection and she fought for it. One day she realized that, within the academy, her Blackness, her complexion, her sexual orientation automatically disqualified her from that experience. She decided to pursue perfection in liberatory spaces, instead. She wanted to win and that was what radicalized her. Her path was set toward 400+1.

She committed herself to gathering and to a culture of respectability politics that she believed would attract Black women among the masses to organizing spaces. She was right. Black women were attracted to the containers she curated, but they were disinterested in going anywhere from there. She was someone who invested in people, without hesitation, when instructed to do so by her own soul. She fell in love with a new woman and a new framework for Black liberation. She committed to manifesting a vision and her life was changed.

She couldn't have prepared for the way she was challenged. Confronted with the parts of herself that were incompatible with revolution, she wrestled in anger and confusion. Ultimately, she settled on essentialism, humility, courage, and transformation. She decided that she was, and would forever be, a revolutionary. There was much to consider, but also nothing left to think about.

This represented both her abdication and her coronation.

She gifted the federation with credibility, culture, and intention.

4:

They were fresh out of college and a serendipitous intervention of mutuality landed them in the company of three self-proclaimed revolutionaries. The four of them built community and understanding slowly and intentionally because, frankly, the federation was rich in time and poor in resources and this is what it could most afford to invest in. Their light and contribution during that time were undeniable. It felt like something special was happening to them; like they were being shaped or transformed in some way.

But there were incompatibilities. The demands of the collective for which they'd been recruited intimidated them. They were reaching for stability and the federation was in a precarious stage of its development. As the federation grew, so too did its demands on members. They'd never been promised a stationary experience but, still, they were surprised when they were asked to relocate with the collective. Moving wasn't an option for them. They were deeply committed to their partner and they wanted, desperately, to establish lifestyle norms. When it came time to make a choice, they chose their home. They chose their pre-existing relationships. They chose their comfort.

Six months after they left the federation, coronavirus began wreaking havoc on life as they knew it. They lost the three jobs they'd taken on to stay afloat. As it turned out, irrespective of their choices, stability would never be guaranteed. This realization gave them the push they needed to reimagine what was possible in their world. They worked with a friend to establish jail support and mutual aid initiatives, but became frustrated with the lack of political cohesion that troubled these experiences. What once felt impossible now seemed the only choice. Quarantined after testing positive for COVID, they applied for re-entry to a federation that had seemingly grown

lightyears in their absence. MOCs had implemented a brand new infrastructure to grow the capacities of folx for vanguardism, agency, and self-actualization. They were both relieved that things were less precarious and prepared to face precarity. It was time.

Their painstaking intellect quickly propelled them to high ranking during the preliminary matriculation required of inactive vanguard members and, before they knew it, it was time to meet their comrades and move on to probationary status. They noticed that people showed up differently in probationary engagements, which happen in person, than they did during preliminary matriculation—a remote experience. Though they struggled to establish an intimate connection with the two others assigned to their collective, the three of them developed a strong working chemistry. When all the collectives were brought together, people shared a great deal of themselves. But, not long afterward there was a sharp reduction in their sense of connection. The federation offered a lot more down time than they'd expected. They thought they'd be moving and working all of the time, but what they experienced, instead, were alternate moments of hyperdrive and spells of time they didn't know what to do with. They couldn't help but think back to their experience practicing mutual aid. They'd built their collective in deep community with a close friend. They missed the feeling of intimate collaboration. They missed the feeling of meeting the urgency of crises.

They couldn't meet the demands of their ranking and their indiscretion contributed to more than one interpersonal crisis in the federation. They were soon suspended. Suspension was an invitation to move slower than they'd ever allowed themselves; to watch and to notice themselves. They immersed themselves in self development. They asked questions of themselves that were deeply painful to answer. They were determined to return from suspension confidently and to break out of the comfort zone they'd built for themselves in intellectualism. How could they manifest a consistent self? How could they abandon self betrayal?

Before 400+1, they'd experienced an insatiable desire to be seen and to be centered. Now, they are centered more than they've ever been. Though they knew before joining the federation that they owe more to their descendants than to themselves, their understanding of this reality has deepened through their vanguard experience. The responsibility of elderhood weighs heavily upon them and makes them feel thrust into a spotlight. Though vulnerability is a foundational experience in 400+1, they feel very alone. Maybe, it wasn't centering, but intimacy and reciprocity they'd been in pursuit of all along. And, maybe, that's something the federation—though striving, admirably, to achieve it—still has yet to offer.

They gifted the federation with potential.

5:

She was a struggling single mother of three. She cried when she understood what 400+1 was. It was what she'd prayed for, too good to be true. Too good to be true. She had so many needs and the federation couldn't meet them all. She'd joined for additional support, additional community-not for additional responsibility. She cried when she said goodbye to the people she'd believed were her village manifested.

She gifted the federation with hope.

6:

She was radicalized by 400+1. Before joining the federation, she was prepared to vote for the Democratic Party in the upcoming presidential election and held tightly to the bootstraps myth of capitalism. But she heard truth in what revolutionaries had to say about her material condition and she saw opportunity in vanguardism; opportunity to channel her anger, opportunity to live a different life, opportunity to teach her children something important. Because her loved one was already a member of the federation, her choice felt safer than it might have otherwise. But it was this connection that caused her to leave the federation in anger. She was not prepared to confront the family trauma that was sure to surface in an experience as spiritually intense as revolution. She returned to the life she knew, determined to make capitalism work in ways that struggle didn't.

She gifted the federation with authenticity.

7:

They were radicalized by their own agency. It was during a hot summer that that they discovered there was something in revolution for them; not just for their sister who'd been radicalized before them, not just for their daughter who'd have to grow up in a world uninhabitable for Black women and Black people who decide that assigned womanhood doesn't suit them, not just for their father who'd seemed to expect this of them all along. Revolution had something to offer them. And that gave them a confidence, a purpose, a satisfaction that they'd never experienced.

They were courageous in a way they always knew they could be. They fell in love on the battlefield. The federation's ranking system gave them something to compete for; something at which they could prove they were good. And though they'd never expected to find people who accepted them, there was a newfound community that could, potentially, be the family they'd been struggling to find.

There were many moments filled with light, but not enough to balance the darkness of their experience. Their newfound purpose couldn't curb their destructive behaviors, as they waged a war they weren't equipped to win against depression and suicide ideation. They drank more than they wanted to. And, ultimately, they entered a toxic relationship that would prove detrimental to the federation.

It became too much. They chose themselves; turning their back on the mess they'd left behind and dreaming of a different version of themselves that they might manifest in a brand new place.

They gifted the federation with precedent.

8:

She was an adrenaline junkie, but there was no fulfillment left in cheap thrills. She'd lost the person who'd loved her the most deeply, the most unconditionally. And so adventure had lost its profundity. Life had lost its meaning. She was at rock bottom. She searched for some way to revive herself and stumbled upon 400+1. What better purpose than revolution? What greater adventure than that?

She was quickly rewarded for her choice; thrust into the birthplace of an uprising and left to make sense of it herself. Not everyone was chosen to participate, but the federation saw something in her and it helped her to better see something in herself. She performed well, as she knew she would. She always did. She was always chosen. She was always the best.

Her initial success was short-lived and she found herself more challenged than she'd ever been. She began a slow descent. Her membership felt like failure after failure, disappointment after disappointment. She began to question her choice and doubt her conviction. How could this space be for her if she felt like an alien within it; if she couldn't locate herself, if nothing clicked?

But another adventure presented itself; and it would be the height of her time as a vanguard member. Fifteen days of chilly resistance. Constant contact with the masses. Constant fear of arrest. She was a hero, once more. This escapade ended unceremoniously and she was left to the aimlessness she'd learned to associate with the federation.

A nasty thing was growing inside the vanguard house; inside her. A lie she'd thought harmless had come to bear fruit. She was held accountable for its impact; suspended. Bruised, but resilient as ever, she cherished her newfound freedom as an individual; her ability to experience

adventure on her own terms. She now had the space to experience her own life fully, without the lens of martyrdom coloring her view.

She gifted the federation with sentimentality.

9:

He believed that 400+1 would reinvigorate his life. Radicalized by his own proximity to whiteness and fascinated with armed formations, he wanted to experience the thrill of being on a winning team. But not long into his tenure as a vanguard member, he began to doubt the federation's capacity for victory. Ultimately, the true nature of battle struck fear in his heart and he acted out in ways that made it difficult to forgive himself. His departure was a spectacular demonstration of cowardice and spite.

He gifted the federation with aplomb.

10:

She sympathized with revolutionaries, but was not convinced that they could be successful. She did what she felt she could, but would not overextend herself. Pragmatism, survival, and social capital were values that anti-capitalism and anti-racism wouldn't supersede in her world. She bowed out gracefully, with no hard feelings.

She gifted the federation with decisiveness.

11:

He was never who she said he would be. And her intentions may never be clarified.

He gifted the federation with propitiation.

12:

He was an enigma; forever evading recognition. He was deeply committed and he couldn't care less. He was dedicated to his principles and he didn't have any. He was about his people and he never found his tribe. But, oh, how we all loved him.

He gifted the federation with esprit de corps.

13:

She was a doctoral student, wanting to believe that something existed outside of academia's stifling oppression. At the time, it felt like 400+1 was her best hope. She loved the people. She loved the connection. She even loved the vision. But she hated the structure and resented being held to standards that felt too much like what she wanted to escape.

She didn't graduate from preliminary matriculation and was asked to repeat. She said she would, but knew she wouldn't. She left and never looked back.

She gifted the federation with imagination.

14:

He was of the Black internationalist tradition. It was the manifesto that impressed him, though he admired what he perceived to be the federation's naive and prepubescent attempts at revolutionary action.

His was a light spirit and he'd already experienced too much pain and trauma to *choose* weight.

In the end, he felt that he had much to live for and many people left to love. He wouldn't risk his citizenship or, potentially, his freedom on the minimally impactful disruptions that required his participation as an L1.

He gifted the federation with credence.

Points of Contradiction and Self-Critique:

1. While 400+1 strives to be a home for Black revolutionaries, so far, the federation has struggled to cultivate joy, both internally and externally. Sadness and heaviness often plague 400+1 spaces. This is not sustainable, energetically, and the federation is working to interrogate and transform this culture through a deeper commitment to spiritual practice, friendship, and adventure.
2. 400+1 is in the process of extricating itself from an unprincipled relationship with an abortion access coalition that it initially joined with the intention of advocating for reproductive revolution. From 2018 to 2021, despite 400+1's insistence that the coalition embark on a transformation of values and commit to a subversion of inequitable power dynamics, internally, there was little progress. In December 2021, 400+1 called for a pause of all the coalition's external engagement following an anti-Black incident perpetuated by a member of its management team. The purpose of the pause was to establish a Black caucus that would oversee a process of restitution, accountability, and redirection. The caucus announced its demands and agenda on February 28th. 400+1 has given notice that it will resign from coalition membership if necessary changes haven't been implemented by June 1st, 2022.
3. When 400+1 launched Praxis: A Phrontistery for Black revolutionaries, it failed to immediately share its code of conduct with inactive and probationary vanguard members. This oversight resulted in collective harm that unfolded over the course of the federation's most recent cohort's first year experience. 400+1's Ministers of Cohesion held themselves accountable for this mistake, held other federation members accountable for their perpetuation and exacerbation of this harm, and offered healing services and mediation to all those who were impacted.
4. While 400+1 believes in the abolition of borders, it will remain a project of literal Black nationalism so long as imperialism, capitalism, and white supremacy threaten the well being of Black lives. The federation currently has no strategy for the reconciliation of this principle with its current position.
5. While 400+1 has invested, as deeply as it can with limited training, in the security of its members; the federation has a long way to go before it is insulated from the surveillance and infiltration of the state. 400+1's Ministers of Cohesion take full responsibility for further advancing the federation's security technology and protocol as a deepening of its commitment to movement sustainability.

6. 400+1 has not, and will likely never, eradicate some of the toxic aspects of hierarchy from the experience of its members. The federation is a hierarchical entity and looks forward to the obsolescence of both vanguardism and centralized governance, a point in the progression of revolutionary struggle in which we believe this eradication will be possible.