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1969 - 1970
BAC, Inc.
presented to
BUUC
Nat'l Mtg Sheraton Park
Washington, D.C.
Feb 20, 1970

THE DISAFFILIATION OF BAC

(See attached Statement of Disaffiliation)

As stated in the introductory remarks to this report, a firm position was taken by our constituency relative to our relationship with the UUA. It was clear that most black Unitarian Universalists want that to be a no-nonsense relationship. They felt we had entered into a partnership with Unitarian Universalists, who called for the establishment of BAC's program as a priority item on the UU agenda. We put tremendous energy into gaining approval of our program at two General Assemblies; much time and money has been expended in our attempts to relate to the UUA in meaningful ways. At no point has the UUA Board of Directors acted as a partner in this effort. From November, 1967 through to the present time, they have contrived to either not recognize us, to co-opt us, or have simply provided constant impediments to our efforts. This has culminated in the reduction of BAC's budget in the current year by $50,000. Through their attempt to extend the BAC budget to a five-year period rather than the four-year period agreed to by the delegates to two General Assemblies, the UUA Board of Directors is once again involved in a typical racist, institutional action, letting us know that "the man" still has the upper hand.

We were attempting to be recognized as an affiliate in 1967, we were told, with no qualifications, that we could not engage in fund-raising. This was before any consideration of our receiving funds from the Annual Fund had been made.

Please note the inconsistency contained in a recent policy state-

ment of the UUA Board in reference to Umbrella Fund-Raising. In reference to BAWA it reads:

> "The 1969 General Assembly recommended that BAWA not be funded through the Association's budget and the budget for the Association provides no allocation for BAWA, BAWA therefore is free to raise funds."

In reference to BAC it reads:

> "The Board has recorded its intent to fund BAC to the full $1,000,000 recommended for BAC by 1968 General Assembly. Whether this is accomplished in four fiscal years or five will depend upon the results of the Annual Fund. Under this policy BAC is not permitted to raise funds from UU organizations, societies or individuals, other than assisting in the Annual Fund Campaign."

The one thing that the BAC-BUUC Movement has always had working in its favor is its integrity and this is no time to give that up. We, therefore, feel that the disaffiliation of BAC from the UUA is a necessary action in the retention of that integrity.

By disaffiliating, we are able to accomplish several things. We can let the UUA Board of Directors get the message loud and clear that when we said not to tamper with the Black Affairs Council as a priority, that we meant just that, and that we are not the type of black people who will accept their action just to assure the receipt of the remaining funds. Also, we can place ourselves in the position to engage in independent fund-raising among UU and in so doing carry our struggle straight to the people.

To carry through with this move, it will be necessary that we engage ourselves immediately in the fund-raising effort. We have already begun to lay the groundwork for this in the workshops that deal with the BAC Investment Program.

THE CONCLUSION

There is no movement of black people in the United States today which has gone through the necessary stages of institution-building as meticulously as have black Unitarian Universalists. Everything that we are currently facing in the continued development of our relationship with Unitarian Universalism must be experienced by any black people seeking to retain their integrity as they maintain ties with predominantly white institutions. Our primary weakness continues to be that of not applying the programming and organizing knowledge we have gained as thoroughly as we could at the local level. We must find ways to better share the information that we have gained with our local black brothers and sisters. To this end we must make certain that we thoroughly understand our own movement; that we keep abreast of the wider black Movement, and that we relate as much as possible to those involved in the Movement in our respective home locations.

STATEMENT OF DISAFFILIATION OF THE BLACK AFFAIRS COUNCIL, INC.
FROM THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION.

On Saturday, January 24, 1970, the Board of Directors of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) voted not to reverse an earlier decision it had made to cut its current allocation to the Black Affairs Council (BAC) by $50,000. Furthermore, the UUA Board recorded its intent to extend the balance of the $1 million commitment to BAC over a five-year period rather than the four-year period we originally agreed on in 1968.

Most Uni-Uni's are well aware by now that the question of BAC funding has been subjected to more scrutiny and wide-based decision-making (it was the prime issue in two General Assemblies) than any program this denomination has considered. We feel that the People have made known their collective will on this issue: that the Black Affairs Council should receive $250,000 per year for a four-year period, and that this is but a pittance of what is owed. The two votes at the General Assemblies of 1968 and 1969 said very clearly that Unitarian Universalists, responding positively, wished the Black Agenda to be the top U-U priority and meant to commit themselves to that action with dependable financial support.

It must be understood, however, that the majority of this denomination's hierarcy--the UUA Board of Directors--have never favored the existence and funding of BAC. They put the question of BAC affiliation and funding before the General Assembly, it's true, but they also acted at the same time to affiliate another organization and even attempted to fund it. It is safe to conjecture that had it not been for THE PEOPLE of this denomination, BAC affiliation and funding would never have been realized. The Board's response to BAC has been comparable to the response that white institutions normally give to Blackamericans--racist and reactionary. In

the struggle being waged by Black Unitarian Universalists to find new ways for predominantly-white institutions to relate to the Blackamerican community, we find this conflict between the Board and the People most disturbing. Yet, an analysis of this conflict may lead to some new understandings about institutional responses when those responses are developed by small boards which are inherently conservative. Perhaps we should find more ways to develop these responses directly with the People, through referenda or through general assemblies. It seems that at least for America's religious institutions, there may be some validity in that approach.

Whether there is any validity in it or not, this consideration must now become an item for the white agenda. Blackamerican Uni-Uni's have put as much time and energy as we can afford into a process that has led simply to our being "the last hired and the first fired." We must now move beyond the recalcitrance of the UUA Board and take our case to the People.

We feel that the majority of white Uni-Uni's want to see the BAC program continue. In refusing to accept the conditions established by the UUA Board, we feel that most Uni-Uni's will be inspired by our integrity in that we did not allow the People's will to be violated after it had been expressed by two General Assemblies.

Many people have asked why we cannot be "good sports" and take our lumps along with the other programs that were cut. We feel that a program that has been as meticulously debated over two and one-half years, as has the BAC program, cannot be placed in the same category as other denominational programs. Further, we do not agree with those persons throughout the

land who would relegate this nation's racial problems to some obscure position on the list of national priorities. We still see racial inequities as the number one problem of the United States, ecological imbalances notwithstanding.

The fact that the UUA is spending 1.6 million dollars in the current fiscal year (in addition to BAC's allocation) shows clearly that money was available, but the decision-makers obviously lacked an unequivocal commitment to black empowerment through BAC. It is hard to understand why the Board could not have "frozen" the $250,000 due BAC and pared the remaining budgetary items accordingly.

BAC is the major social outreach program of the UUA affecting large numbers of non-Unitarian Universalists. It deals with the most crucial social issues in America today and is thus uniquely translating the Unitarian Universalist rhetoric of "brotherhood and humanity" into concrete form. The BAC-UUA relationship, before the Board's action, had become the model for other religious denominations in dealing with black self-determination; the Board's action has a negative effect on both the black and white approaches to new models.

BAC is the most viable program the denomination has, and its imaginative structure and style make it a model that other denominations have already begun to follow for relating to the Blackamerican community. Therefore, we now appeal to all who recognize the necessity for the program's continuance and growth to back our efforts by funneling financial support directly to the Black Affairs Council, instead of through the UUA Annual Fund.

SINCE WE WISH TO DO THIS AND SINCE AFFILIATE AGENCIES OF THE UUA ARE NOT PERMITTED TO RAISE FUNDS INDEPENDENTLY, WE MUST ANNOUNCE THE DISAFFILIATION OF THE BLACK AFFAIRS COUNCIL, INCORPORATED, FROM THE UUA.

There are a number of relevant points that our supporters must remember about this disaffiliation:

(1) Disaffiliation of BAC from the UUA should not affect the participation of Blackamerican Unitarian Universalists at the local church level;

(2) Disaffiliation does NOT mean that BAC is no longer a Unitarian Universalist program, but like the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, it is simply not a program of the UUA. In its new status, BAC will be more dependent than ever upon the denomination's individual members.

(3) Disaffiliation does not mean that Black Unitarian Universalists have given up on the institution of the Unitarian Universalism. Unitarian Universalists have gone further than most predominantly-white institutions in developing new institutional responses to Blackamericans, only to have that progress systematically negated by a monolithic Board of Directors that is not responsive to the will of the People. Black Unitarian Universalists feel that the main work of developing a positive response in this institution is yet before us.

(4) Disaffiliation means that BAC must raise $50,000 to make up the amount that was cut from its budget in the current fiscal year. In that the 1968 General Assembly had made its $1 million commitment to our four-year program, indigenous groups are looking to us for continued support based on that commitment, especially since it is viewed as a partial reparational settlement of the capital owed to Blackamericans.

It must be clearly understood that when we speak of fund-raising and of the current year's goal of $50,000, we are referring to BAC's operating budget. It is through this budget that we support hard-core organizing projects across the country as well as BAC's administrative operation.

In addition, we have our economic development program which will be conducted through the sale of BAC BONDS. This is an investment program for churches, fellowships and individuals and should not be confused with the appeal for donations to the operating budget.

Disaffiliation will NOT affect our investment program. We have already begun carrying that to the People and will continue to do so.

(5) In 1967 and again in 1968, BAC proponents were told that, as an affiliate of the UUA, the Black Affairs Council could not engage in independent fund-raising activity. In 1969, when we witnessed another affiliate was involved in its own independent fund-raising, we inquired about the propriety of such fund-raising activity, only to be given the ambiguous ruling: that funded affiliates (BAC) could not be involved in fund-raising, but non-funded affiliates (BAWA) could. We consider this ruling to be a good example of institutional game-playing with a racist motivation.

(6) There is a historical precedent for the action we are taking: Some years ago, the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) also disaffiliated from the UUA. It did so because the American Unitarian Association would not provide the funds that the UUSC required for its program priorities, the greatest of which were in international programs. By disaffiliating, the UUSC was able to raise funds independently and receive funds from sources that it could not have had if it remained affiliated. We could certainly ask whether some of the subsequent and current denominational expenditures in

international programs could not have been more efficiently made as a part of an affiliated UUSC's international outreach.

(7) It must also be clearly understood that we will not attend the business sessions of the 1970 General Assembly. We refuse to spend time and energy in a process which subverts the will of the People, and until it is decided whether this institution will operate through the will of the People rather than a select hierarchy, we abstain. The General Assembly now becomes the business of the white agenda.

Despite the considerable difficulty, the double-standard treatment, the unresponsiveness and the curious insensitivity we have experienced from the UUA Board, we feel that we have not allowed its actions to diminish the positive support the BAC program has received from U-U individuals and from individual churches and fellowships of this denomination. We need and intend to expand upon that support, and by this method raise the capital owed to our People.

POWER TO THE PEOPLE AT LAST!

Revised 3/30/70