

BLACK POWER
and the
THIRD WORLD

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(Address to the Organization
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B L A C K P O W E R

and the

T H I R D W O R L D

We greet you as comrades because it becomes increasingly clear to us each day that we share with you a common struggle; we have a common enemy. Our enemy is white Western imperialist society. (Note that we use the term white Western society as opposed to white Western civilization. The West has never been civilized. It has no right to speak of itself as a civilization.) Our struggle is to overthrow this system which feeds itself and expands itself through the economic and cultural exploitation of nonwhite, non-Western peoples - the THIRD WORLD.

We share with you also a common vision of the establishment of humanistic societies in the place of those now existing. We seek with you to change the power bases of the world, where mankind will share the resources of their nations, instead of having to give them up to foreign plunderers where civilizations can retain their cultural sovereignty instead of being forced to submit to foreign rulers who impose their own corrupt cultures on those civilizations they would dominate.

Anglo society has been nearly successful in keeping all of us -- the oppressed of the Third World -- separated and fragmented. They do this for their survival, because if we felt our unity we would know our strength. Especially here on this continent, where the Anglo is in the minority, he has for hundreds of years succeeded in keeping all of us who are oppressed from realizing our common plight. But the call of Che Guevara for a continental struggle against a common enemy would seem to ameliorate this fragmentation among those who would resist Western imperialism.

We speak with you, comrades, because we wish to make clear that we understand that our destinies are intertwined. Our world can only be the Third World; our only struggle, for the Third World; our only vision, of the Third World.

Until recently, most African-Americans thought that the best way to alleviate their oppression was through attempts at integration into the society. If we could enjoy public accommodations in the United States (motels, hotels, restaurants, etc.) our condition would be alleviated, many of us believed. This attitude was characteristic of the "civil rights movement" and clearly points up the bourgeois character of that "movement". Only the bourgeoisie are in a position to be concerned about public accommodations.

The African-American masses, on the other hand, do not have any jobs, any housing worthy of the name decent, nor the money to enjoy restaurants, hotels, motels, etc. The "civil rights movement" did not actively involve the masses, because it did not speak to the needs of the masses.

Nonetheless, the "civil rights movement" was a beginning and because its aims met resistance throughout the U.S.A., depths of racism heretofore unrecognized were laid bare. It had been thought that the aims of the "civil rights movement" would be easily realizable, because the United States constitution supported them. But thousands of African-Americans were jailed, intimidated, beaten, and some murdered for agitating for those rights guaranteed by the Constitution, but only available to whites.

Eventually, the United States Congress passed a Civil Rights Bill and a Voting Rights Bill, assuring us of those rights for which we had been agitating. By this time, however, more and more of us were realizing that our problems would not be solved by the enacting of these laws.

In fact, these laws did not begin to speak to our problems. Our problems were an inherent part of the capitalist system and therefore could not be alleviated within that system.

The African-American masses had been outside the "civil rights movement". For four years they watched to see if any significant changes would come from the nonviolent demonstrations. It became clear to us that nothing would change and in the summer of 1964, only a couple of weeks after the Civil Rights Bill was passed, the first of what is now over one hundred rebellions occurred. The following year, the same year that the Voting Rights Bill was enacted, one of the largest rebellions occurred in Watts.

These rebellions are increasing with intensity and frequency each year until now practically every major city has seen us rise to say, "We will seize the day or be killed in the attempt."

The "civil rights movement" could never attract and hold the young bloods who clearly understood the savagery of white United States and who are ready to meet this savagery with armed resistance. It is the young bloods who contain especially the hatred Che Guevara speaks of when he says, "Hatred as an element of the struggle -- relentless hatred of the enemy that impels us over and beyond the natural limitations of man and transforms us into an effective, violent, selected and cold killing machine."

The black power movement has been the catalyst for the bringing together of these young bloods: the real revolutionary proletariat ready to fight by any means necessary for the liberation of our people. In exposing the extent of racism and exploitation which permeates all institutions in the United States, the black power movement has unique appeal to young black students on campuses across the country. These students have been deluded by the fiction that exists in white North America that if the black man would educate himself and behave himself he would be acceptable enough to leave the ranks of the oppressed and join white society.

This year, when provoked by savage white policemen, students on many campuses fought back, whereas before they had accepted these incidents without rebellion. As students are a part of these rebellions they begin to acquire a resistance consciousness. They begin to realize that white North America might let a very few of them escape one by one into the mainstream of her society, but as soon as blacks move in concert around their blackness, she will reply with a fury which reveals her true racist nature.

We are moving to control our African-American communities as you are moving to wrest control of your countries -- of the entire Latin continent -- from the hands of foreign imperialist powers. Therefore there is only one course open to us. We must change North America so that the economy and politics of the country will be in the hands of the people. Our particular concern is our people -- African-Americans. But it is clear that a community based on the community ownership of all property would not exist within the present capitalist framework. For the total transformation to take place, whites must see the struggle that we're engaged in as being their own struggle. At the present time, they do

not. Even though the white worker is exploited, he sees his own best interest lying with the power structure. Because of the racist nature of this country, we cannot work in white communities, but have asked those whites who work with us to go into their own communities to begin propagandizing and organizing. When the white workers realize their true condition, then there will exist the possibilities for alliances between ourselves and them.

However, we cannot wait for this to happen, or despair if it does not happen.

The struggle we are engaged in is international. We well know what happens in Viet Nam affects our struggle here and what we do affects the struggle of the Vietnamese people. This is even more apparent when we look at ourselves not as African-Americans of the United States, but as African-Americans of the Americas.

At the present moment, the power structure has sown the seeds of hate and discord between African-Americans and Spanish-speaking people in the large cities where they live. In the state of California, Mexican-Americans and Spanish-speaking people comprise almost 50 per cent of the population, yet the two view each other with suspicion and sometimes outright hostility. We recognize this as the old trick of "divide and conquer" and we are working to see that it does not succeed this time.

Last week Puerto Ricans and blacks took to the streets together in New York City to fight against the police, which demonstrates success in this area. Our destiny cannot be separated from the destiny of the Spanish-speaking people in the United States and of the Americas. Our victory will not be achieved unless they celebrate their liberation side by side with us. For it is not their struggle, but our struggle.

We have already pledged ourselves to do what we are asked to aid the struggle for the independence of Puerto Rico, to free it from domination by United States business and military interests. And we look upon Cuba as a shining example of hope in our hemisphere. We do not view our struggle as being contained within the boundaries of the United States as they are defined by present-day maps. Instead, we look to the day when a true United States of America will extend from Tierra del Fuego to Alaska, when those formerly oppressed will stand together, a liberated people.

Our people are a colony within the United States; you are colonies outside the United States. It is more than a figure of speech to say that the black communities in America are the victims of white imperialism and colonial exploitation. This is in practical economic and political terms true.

There are over thirty million of us in the United States. For the most part we live in sharply defined areas in the rural black belt areas and shantytowns of the South, and more and more in the slums of the northern and western industrial cities. It is estimated that in another five to ten years, two-thirds of our thirty million will be in the ghettos -- in the heart of the cities. Joining us are the hundreds and thousands of Puerto Rican, Mexican-American and American Indian populations. The American city is, in essence, populated by people of the Third World, while the white middle class flee the cities to the suburbs.

In these cities we do not control our resources. We do not control the land, the houses or the stores. These are owned by whites who live outside the community. These are very real colonies, as their capital and cheap labor are exploited by those who live outside the cities. White power makes the laws and enforces those laws with guns and nightsticks in the hands of white racist policemen and black mercenaries.

The capitalist system gave birth to these black enclaves and formally articulated the terms of their colonial and dependent status as was done, for example, by the apartheid government of Azania (South Africa), which the U.S. keeps alive by its support.

The struggle for black power in this country is the struggle to free these colonies from external domination. But we do not seek to create communities where, in place of white rulers, black rulers control the lives of black masses and where black money goes into the pockets of a few blacks: we want to see it go into the communal pocket. The society we seek to build among black people is not an oppressive capitalist society -- for capitalism by its very nature cannot create structures free from exploitation. We are fighting for the redistribution of wealth and for the end of private property inside the United States.

The question that may be asked is how does the struggle to free these internal colonies relate to your struggle to destroy imperialism. We realistically survey our numbers and know that it is not possible for black people to take over the entire country militarily and hold large areas of land.

In a highly industrialized nation the struggle is different. The heart of production and the heart of commercial trade is in the cities. We are in the cities. With our rebellions we have become a disruptive force in the flow of services, goods and capital.

Since 1966, the cry of the rebellions has been "Black Power". In this cry, there was an ideology implied which the masses understood instinctively. It is because we are powerless that we are oppressed and it is only with power that we can make the decisions governing our lives and our communities. Those who have power have everything; those who are without power have nothing. Without power we have to beg for what is rightfully ours. With power we will take our birthright, because it was with power that our birthright was taken from us.

Black power is more than a slogan; it is a way of looking at our problems and the beginning of a solution to them. It attacks racism and exploitation, the horns of the bull that seek to gore us.

The United States is a racist country. From its very beginning it has built itself upon the subjugation of colored people. The Europeans who settled the United States systematically stole the land and destroyed the native population, the Indians, forcing them eventually onto reservations where they live today, a mere 0.3% of the total population. At the same time the United States was waging genocide against the Indians, it was raping the African continent of its natives and bringing them to the Americas to work as slaves.

To enslave another human being, one needs a justification and the United States has always found this justification in proclaiming the superiority of whites and the inferiority of nonwhites. We are called "niggers"; Spanish-speaking people are called "spicks"; the Chinese "chinks"; the Vietnamese "gooks". By dehumanizing us and all others of color, it therefore becomes just, in the mind of the white man that we should be enslaved, exploited and oppressed.

However, it becomes even easier to keep a man a slave when he himself can be convinced that he is inferior. How much easier it is to keep a man in chains by making him believe his own inferiority! As long as he does, he will keep himself in chains. As long as a slave allows himself to be defined as a slave by the master, he will be a slave, even if the master dies.

This technique has been successfully practiced not only against us, but wherever people have been enslaved, oppressed and exploited. We can see it happening today in the schools of large U.S. cities where Puerto Rican and Mexican children are not allowed to speak Spanish and are taught nothing of their country and their history. It is apparent in many African countries, where one is not considered educated unless he has studied in France and speaks French.

Black power attacks this brainwashing by saying, WE WILL DEFINE OURSELVES. We will no longer accept the white man's definition of ourselves as ugly, ignorant and uncultured. We will recognize our own beauty and our own culture and will no longer be ashamed of ourselves, for a people ashamed of itself cannot be free.

Because our color has been used as a weapon to oppress us, we must use our color as a weapon of liberation. This is the same as other people using their nationality as a weapon for their liberation.

This coming together around our race was an inevitable part of our struggle. We recognize, however, that this is not the totality, only the necessary beginning.

Black power recognizes that while we are made to feel inferior, this is only so that we may be more easily exploited. Even if we destroy racism, we would not necessarily destroy exploitation. Thus, we must constantly launch a two-pronged attack; we must constantly keep our eyes on both of the bull's horns.

Color and culture were and are key in our oppression. Therefore our analysis of history and our economic analysis are rooted in these concepts. Our historical analysis, for example, views the United States as being conceived in racism. Although the first settlers themselves were escaping from oppression, and although their armed uprising against their mother country was around the aggravations of colonialism -- "taxation without representation," etc. -- the white European settlers could not extend their lofty theories of democracy to the Indian, whom they systematically exterminated as they expanded into the interior of the country. Indeed, in that same town where the settlers set up their model of government based on the theory of representative democracy -- in that same town the first slaves were brought from Africa.

In our economic analysis our interpretation of Marx comes not only from his writings, but from how we see capitalism's relationships to people of color.

The labor movement in the United States, while in the beginning containing some great leaders in the struggle against the absolute control of the economy by the industrial lords, essentially fought only for more money. Those few who had the vision of extending the fight for workers control of production, never succeeded in transmitting their entire vision to the rank and file. This labor found itself asking the industrial lords not to give up their control but merely to pass out a few more of the fruits of this control. Unlike us, they do not raise questions of redistributing the wealth inside the U.S.

Thereby did the United States anticipate the prophecy of Marx and avoid the inevitable class struggle within the country, by expanding into the Third World and exploiting the resources and slave labor of people of color.

U.S. capitalists never cut down on their domestic profits to share with the workers. Instead they expanded internationally and threw the bones of their profits to the American working class.

The American working class enjoys the fruits of the labors of the Third World workers. The proletariat has become the Third World; the bourgeoisie is white Western society.

The true potential revolutionaries in this country are the black youths of the ghettos; those who have developed insurgence in the cities are African-American and Latin communities where past rebellions have taught important lessons in dealing with the government's armed reaction to our uprisings.

These rebellions should not be taken lightly. In the past three years, there have been over one hundred uprisings in the internal colonies of the United States. These are no doubt reported to you as "minor disturbances initiated by a few malcontents". These are major rebellions with numbers of participants who are developing a consciousness of resistance.

It is with increasing concern that we see the United States will by any means necessary attempt to prevent the liberation struggles sweeping across the Third World. But in particular we know that the United States fears most the liberation struggle on this continent. In order to secure itself geographically, the United States must have Latin America, both economically, politically and culturally. It will not do for the Anglos to be isolated on a continent of hostiles.

Black power not only addresses itself to exploitation, but to the problems of cultural integrity.

Wherever imperialism has gone, she has imposed her culture by force on other peoples, forcing them to adopt her language and way of life. When African slaves were brought to this country, the Anglo saw that if he took away the language of the African, he broke one of the bonds which kept them united and struggling. Africans were forbidden to speak to each other in their own language. If they were found doing so, they were savagely beaten into silence.

Western imperialism has always understood the importance of language to a people's cultural consciousness and integrity. When it moved into the Third World, it has moved to impose its own language. In Puerto Rico, where Yankee cultural imposition is at its height, English is taught in all high schools for three years, while Spanish is taught for two years.

Anglo society learned other valuable lessons from the enslavement of Africans in this country. When you separate a man's family, as was done to the slaves, you again weaken his resistance. But carry the separation further. Take a few of the weaker slaves and then treat them as house pets -- the lighter skinned slaves (offspring of the master's rape of the African woman) was preferred. Give him the crumbs off the master's table and cast-off clothing and soon he will fear to lose these small comforts. Then use his fears by getting him to report on the activities of the bad slaves, report the impending revolts and uprisings. Distrust and dissent is created among the Africans, and thus they will fight among themselves instead of uniting to fight their oppressors.

Today's descendants of African slaves brought to America have been separated from their cultural and national roots.

Black children are not taught of the glory of African civilization in the history of mankind; they are instead taught about Africa: the dark continent inhabited by man-eating savages. They are not taught of the thousands of black martyrs who died resisting the white slave masters. They are not taught of the numerous uprisings

and revolts where hundreds of brave Africans refused to submit to slavery. Instead, the history books read of "happy slaves singing in their fields . . . content with their new lives." The "few" slaves who did resist are called "troublemakers", "malcontents", "crazy".

Black children in North America grow up aspiring only to enter white society -- not only because white society eats better, is housed better and clothed better and can make a better living -- but because they have been bombarded by the white-controlled communications media and educated by black teachers with white minds -- (our petty Yankees) that white IS better, white is beautiful. Anglo features, manner of speech and aspirations are to be acquired if one is to be successful, even WITHIN the black community.

The white man hardly needs to police his colonies within this country for he has plundered the cultures and enslaved the minds of the people of color until their resistance is paralyzed by self-hate.

An important fight in the Third World therefore is the fight for cultural integrity. Wherever Western society has gone, as Frantz Fanon tells us, she has imposed through force her culture.

Through force and bribery (the giving of a few crubs to a few petty Yankees) the people of a conquered country begin to believe that Western culture is better than their own. The young people begin to put aside the richness of their native culture to take on the tinsel of Western culture. They become ashamed of their roots and inevitably can only be trapped in a life of self-hate and private pursuit for self-gain.

Thus does the West entrap whole peoples with little resistance.

One of our major battles is to root our corrupt Western values and our resistance cannot prevail unless our cultural integrity is restored and maintained.

It is from our people's history, therefore, that we know our struggles and your struggles are the same. We have difficulty getting the information we need on what is happening in your countries. In so many ways we are illiterate of your heroes, your battles and your victories.

We are working now to increase the consciousness of the African-American so it will extend internationally. The United States fears this more than anything else, not only because such a consciousness would destroy within black communities the minority complex so carefully cultivated by the Anglos, but because it knows that if the black man realizes that the counter-insurgency efforts of this country are directed against his brother, he will not go, he cannot go. Then it will become crystal clear to the world that the imperialist wars are racist wars.

During the past year instituted a black resistance to the draft movement, not only because we are against black men fighting their brothers in Viet Nam, but also because we are certain that the next Viet Nam will be on this continent. Perhaps Bolivia where there are now "special forces advisors", perhaps Guatemala, Brazil, Peru or the Dominican Republic.

The African-American has tried for the past four hundred years to peacefully exist inside the country. It has been to no avail.

Our history demonstrates that the reward for trying to peacefully coexist has been

physical and psychological murder of our peoples. We have been lynched, our houses have been bombed and our churches burned. We are now being shot down in the streets like dogs by white racist policemen and we can no longer accept this oppression without retribution. We must join those who are for armed struggle around the world.

We understand that as we expand our resistance and internationalize the consciousness of our people as our martyred brother Malcolm X taught us, retaliation from the government will come to us as it did to him.

As the resistance struggle escalates, we are well aware of the reality of Che Guevara's words that the "struggle will not be a mere street fight . . . but will be long and harsh". In the end our common brotherhood sustains us all, as we struggle for our liberation by any means necessary.

But black power means that we see ourselves as part of the Third World; that we see our struggle as closely related to liberation struggles around the world. We must hook up with these struggles. We must, for example, ask ourselves: When black people in Africa begin to storm Johannesburg, when Latin Americans revolt, what will be the role of the United States and that of African-Americans?

It seems inevitable that this nation will move to protect its financial interests in South Africa and Latin America, which means protecting white rule in these countries. Black people in the United States then have the responsibility to oppose, at least, to neutralize, that effort by the United States.

This is but one example of many such situations which have already arisen around the world -- with more to come.

There is only one place for black Americans in these struggles, and that is on the side of the Third World. Frantz Fanon, in *The Wretched of the Earth*, puts forward clearly the reasons for this and relationship of the concept of a new force in the world:

"Let us decide not to imitate Europe; let us try to create the whole man, whom Europe has been incapable of bringing to triumphant birth.

"Two centuries ago, a former European colony decided to catch up with Europe. It succeeded so well that the United States of America became a monster, in which the taints, the sickness and the inhumanity of Europe have grown to appalling dimensions . . .

"The Third World today faces Europe like a colossal mass whose aim should be to try to resolve the problems to which Europe has not been able to find the answers . . ."

It is a question of the Third World starting a new history of man, a history which will have regard to the sometimes prodigious theses which Europe has put forward, but which will also not forget Europe's crimes of which the most horrible was committed in the heart of man, and consisted of the pathological tearing apart of his functions and the crumbling away of his unity.

No, there is no question of a return to nature. It is simply a very concrete question of not dragging men toward mutilation, of not imposing upon the brain rhythms which very quickly obliterate it and wreck it.

The pretext of catching up must not be used to push man around, to tear him away from himself or from his privacy, to break and kill him.

No, we do not want to catch up with anyone. What we want to do is go forward all the time, night and day, in the company of man, in the company of all men . . .