

**WE WANT
BLACK
POWER**



AUGUST 1966

BLACK POWER

ISSUE

notes

and

comment

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Student Nonviolent
Coordinating Committee

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Stokely Carmichael's speech - Chicago, Illinois - July 28, 1966:

This is 1966 and it seems to me that it's 'time out' for nice words. It's time black people got together. We have to say things nobody else in this country is willing to say and find the strength internally and from each other to say the things that need to be said. We have to understand the lies this country has spoken about black people and we have to set the record straight. No one else can do that but black people.

I remember when I was in school they used to say, "If you work real hard, if you sweat, if you are ambitious, then you will be successful." I'm here to tell you that if that was true, black people would own this country, because we sweat more than anybody else in this country. We have to say to this country that you have lied to us. We picked your cotton for \$2.00 a day, we washed your dishes, we're the porters in your bank and in your building, we are the janitors and the elevator men. We worked hard and all we get is a little pay and a hard way to go from you. We have to talk not only about what's going on here but what this country is doing across the world. When we start getting the internal strength to tell them what should be told and to speak the truth as it should be spoken, let them pick the sides and let the chips fall where they may.

Now, about what black people have to do and what has been done to us by white people. If you are born in Lowndes County, Alabama, Swillingchit, Mississippi or Harlem, New York and the color of your skin happens to be black you are going to catch it. The only reason we have to get together is the color of our skins. They oppress us because we are black and we are going to use that blackness to get out of the trick bag they put us in. Don't be ashamed of your color.

A few years ago, white people used to say, "Well, the reason they live in the ghetto is they are stupid, dumb, lazy, unambitious, apathetic, don't care, happy, contented," and the trouble was a whole lot of us believed that junk about ourselves. We were so busy trying to prove to white folks that we were everything they said we weren't that we got so busy being white we forgot what it was to be black. We are going to call our black brothers hand.

Now, after 1960, when we got moving, they couldn't say we were lazy and dumb and apathetic and all that anymore so they got sophisticated and started to play the dozens with us. They called conferences about our mamas and told us that's why we were where we were at. Some people were sitting up there talking with Johnson while he was talking about their mamas. I don't play the dozens with white folks. To set the record straight, the reason we are in the bag we are in isn't because of my mama, it's because of what they did to my mama. That's why I'm where I'm at. We have to put the blame where it belongs. The blame does not belong on the oppressed but on the oppressor, and that's where it is going to stay.

Don't let them scare you when you start opening your mouth - speak the truth. Tell them, "Don't blame us because we haven't ever had the chance to do wrong." They made sure that we have been so blocked-in we couldn't move until they said, "Move." Now there are a number of things we have to do. The only thing we own in this country is the color of our skins and we are ashamed of that because they made us ashamed. We have to stop being ashamed of being black. A broad nose, a thick lip and nappy hair is us and we are going to call that beautiful whether they like it or not. We are not going to fry our hair anymore but they can start wearing their hair natural to look like us.

We have to define how we are going to move, not how they say we can move. We have never been able to do that before. Everybody in this country jumps up and says, "I'm a friend of the civil rights movement. I'm a friend of the Negro." We haven't had the chance to say whether or not that man is stabbing us in the back or not. All those people who are calling us friends are nothing but treaterous enemies and we can take care of our enemies but God deliver us from our 'friends.' The only protection we are going to have is from each other. We have to build a strong base to let them know if they touch one black man driving his wife to the hospital in Los Angeles, or one black man walking down a highway in Mississippi or if they take one black man who has a rebellion and put him in jail and start talking treason, we are going to disrupt this whole country.

We have to say, "Don't play jive and start writing poems after Malcolm is shot." We have to move from the point where the man left off and stop writing poems. We have to start supporting our own movement. If we can spend all that money to send a preacher to a Baptist convention in a Cadillac then we can spend money to support our own movement.

Now, lets get to what the white press has been calling riots. In the first place don't get confused with the words they use like 'anti-white,' 'hate,' 'militant' and all that nonsense like 'radical' and 'riots.' Whats happening is rebellions not riots and the extremist element is not RAM. As a matter of fact RAM is a very reactionary group, reacting against the pressures white people are putting on them. The extremists in this country are the white people who force us to live the way we live. We have to define our own ethic. We don't have to (and don't make any apologies about it) obey any law that we didn't have a part to make, especially if that law was made to keep us where we are. We have the right to break it.

We have to stop apologizing for each other. We must tell our black brothers and sisters who go to college, "Don't take any job for IBM or Wall Street because you aren't doing anything for us. You are helping this country perpetuate it's lies about how democracy rises in this country." They have to come back to the community, where they belong and use their skills to help develop us. We have to tell the Doctors, "You can't go to college and come back and charge us \$5.00 and \$10.00 a visit. You have to charge us 50¢ and be thankful you get that." We have to tell our lawyers not to

charge us what they charge but to be happy to take a case and plead it free of charge. We have to define success and tell them the food Ralph Bunche eats doesn't feed our hungry stomachs. We have to tell Ralph Bunche the only reason he is up there is so when we yell they can pull him out. We have to do that, nobody else can do that for us.

We have to talk about wars and soldiers and just what that means. A mercenary is a hired killer and any black man serving in this man's army is a black mercenary, nothing else. A mercenary fights for a country for a price but does not enjoy the rights of the country for which he is fighting. A mercenary will go to Viet Nam to fight for free elections for the Vietnamese but doesn't have free elections in Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, Texas, Louisiana, South Carolina and Washington, D.C. A mercenary goes to Viet Nam and gets shot fighting for his country and they won't even bury him in his own home town. He's a mercenary, that's all. We must find the strength so that when they start grabbing us to fight their war we say, "Hell no."

We have to talk about nonviolence among us, so that we don't cut each other on Friday nights and don't destroy each other but move to a point where we appreciate and love each other. That's the nonviolence that has to be talked about. The psychology the man has used on us has turned us against each other. He says nothing about the cutting that goes on Friday night but talk about raising one finger-tip towards him and that's when he jumps up. We have to talk about nonviolence among us first.

We have to study black history but don't get fooled. You should know who John Hullett is, and Fanny Lou Hamer is, who Lerone Bennett is, who Max Stanford is, who Lawrence Landry is, who May Mallory is and who Robert Williams is. You have to know these people yourselves because you can't read about them in a book or in the press. You have to know what Mr. X said from his own lips not the Chicago Sun-Times. That responsibility is ours. The Muslims call themselves Muslims but the press calls them black Muslims. We have to call them Muslims and go to their mosque to find out what they are talking about firsthand and then we can talk about getting together. Don't let that man get up there and tell you, "Oh, you know those Muslims preach nothing but hate. You shouldn't be messing with them." "Yah, I don't mess with them, yah, I know they bad." The man's name is the Honorable Elijah Muhammad and he represents a great section of the black community. Honor him.

We have to go out and find our young blacks who are cutting and shooting each other and tell them they are doing the cutting and shooting to the wrong people. We have to bring them together and spend the time if we are not just shucking and jiving. This is 1966 and my grandmother used to tell me, "The time is far spent." We have to move this year.

There is a psychological war going on in this country and its whether or not black people are going to be able to use the terms they want about their movement without white peoples blessing. We have to tell them we are going to use the term 'Black Power' and we are going to define it because Black Power speaks to us. We can't let them project Black Power because they can only project it from white power and we know what white power has done to us. We have to organize ourselves to speak from a position of strength and stop begging people to look kindly upon us. We are going to build a movement in this country based on the color of our skins that is going to free us from our oppressors and we have to do that ourselves.

We have got to understand what is going on in Lowndes County, Alabama, what it means, who is in it and what they are doing so if white people steal that election like they do all over this country then the eyes of black people all over this country will be focused there to let them know we are going to take care of business if they mess with us in Lowndes County. That responsibility lies on all of us, not just the civil rights workers and do-gooders.

If we talk about education we have to educate ourselves, not with Hegel or Plato or the missionaries who came to Africa with the bible and we had the land and when they left we had the bible and they had the land. We have to tell them the only way anybody eliminates poverty in this country is to give poor people money. You don't have to headstart, uplift and upward-bound them into your culture. Just give us the money you stole from us, thats all. We have to say to people in this country, "We don't really care about you. For us to get better, we don't have to go to white things. We can do it in our own community, ourselves if you didn't steal the resources that belong there." We have to understand the Horatio Alger lie and that the individualist, profit-concept nonsense will never work for us. We have to form cooperatives and use the profits to benefit our community. We can't tolerate their system.

When we form coalitions we must say on what grounds we are going to form them, not white people telling us how to form them. We must build strength and pride amongst ourselves. We must think politically and get power because we are the only people in this country that are powerless. We are the only people who have to protect ourselves from our protectors. We are the only people who want a man called Willis removed who is a racist, that have to lie down in the street and beg a racist named Daley to remove the racist named Willis. We have to build a movement so we can see Daley and say, "Tell Willis to get hat," and by the time we turn around he is gone. Thats Black Power

Everybody in this country is for 'Freedom Now' but not everybody is for Black Power because we have got to get rid of some of the people who have white power. We have got to get us some Black Power. We don't control anything but what white people say we can control. We have to be able to

smash any political machine in the country thats oppressing us and bring it to its knees. We have to be aware that if we keep growing and multiplying the way we do in ten years all the major cities are going to ours. We have to know that in Newark, New Jersey, were we are 60% of the population, we went along with their stories about integrating and we got absorbed. All we have to show for it is three councilmen who are speaking for them and not for us. We have to organize ourselves to speak for each other. Thats Black Power. We have to move to control the economics and politics of our community so the southside cannot be controlled by a Daley. We have to tell Daley, "Don't you dare arrest anybody for treason. If you should arrest anybody it should be yourself and your whole corrupt political machinery thats been exploiting and oppressing us, Daley." We have to let them know when they arrest some of our black brothers we are going to make them heros in our community.

I want to show you what the man does to our minds. Do you remember watching Tarzan and how we used to yell for him to beat up the black, uncivilized, cannibal natives? Well, they are putting Tarzan back on TV this September and we ought to yell for the black people to beat the hell out of Tarzan and send him back to Europe.

Now I want to explain about this 'Western Civilization' we are being upgraded into. The man got on radio and said, "Well, when they start rioting they are nothing else but savages," and we got mad but you know the man was right, because a savage throws a Molotov Cocktail, civilized man just drops a bomb, thats all. Civilized Lyndon is just dropping bombs and daring the people to touch the men who dropped the bombs on them. Thats civilization.

Well anyway, a Lt. Colonel was shot down in Africa and landed among some of the brothers. They say this big bird coming down and they got afraid but when my man landed they took care of him. After a couple of months they got so they could talk, so the tribe got everybody together because they wanted to hear what my man had to say. And they said, "Well, look here. Who are you? I mean whats all this?" And well, my man stood off and said, "I'm a Lt. Colonel in the United States airforce." And the cat said, "Wow. What does that mean?" He said, "Well, it means that I'm a high-ranking officer. I have under my command several thousand men and I'm a well educated man. I graduated from Harvard University with a P.H.D. in Military Science." And so the chief said, "Well, whats happening with this bird?" He said, "Well thats a war plane and we're engaged in a war." And the tribesmen understood war and they started jumping up and down, "Wow. You in a war. Are you winning?" He said, "Yes, my good man, all these metals here represnt at least thirty men I have killed single-handedly. Three - zero men, by myself and these are the metals." And the tribe went wild, "Wow, is he a hero." And the tribesman said, "Wow, baby, you must have had some feast!" And the white Lt. Colonel from the civilized United States jumped back, snorted and said, "My good man, where I come from we don't eat people when we kill them, We're civilized." And the chief said, "Well, baby, why you kill them?"

SNCC BLACK PCWER PROJECT - CHICAGO

Statement by Monroe Sharp, Director

Chicago SNCC has now moved into the action stage of organizing for Black Power. We have spent almost three years building a base of community awareness in the northern end of the 4th Ward. Community people are working daily but we now need additional help from our black brothers and sisters who are willing to put in that time in the street organizing block by block to make this project a success.

We feel that the first and most essential stage of building for complete community control by the people is the stage of removing the Uncle Tom politicians who do not speak to the needs of the community but help preserve the status quo of exploitation. We must seize political control of the community starting with the replacement of each precinct captain and leading up to the replacement of the Alderman himself. We must do that now and we must do that ourselves.

In four months there will be an Aldermanic election and we have to move now to undermine the machine's power in this community. We need more black organizers out in the streets. If you believe in Black Power, now is the time to make that personal committment to get out and work, in the evenings after work if necessary, but the time to move is now. An application blank is on the last page of this issue. We are serious - are you? T.C.B.

In addition to more organizers, we need help from our white friends and from our brothers and sisters who cannot get out in the street. A support group is needed to sell those buttons, to do the explaining that is necessary to those who live in the integrated, southern end of the ward and to free our street workers to devote full time to the project. Please fill out the form below.

If you really understand the need for Black Power and understand that we have to build block by block, precinct by precinct and finally ward by ward in this city, stand up and be counted today. Black Power can be a reality in Chicago as well as Lowndes County, Alabama.

Yes, I am interested in joining a Friends of Black Power group.

NAME _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ ZIP _____

TELEPHONE _____

Mail to: S.N.C.C. 4165 S. Ellis Ave. Chicago, Ill. 60653

Your help is needed to make the Chicago SNCC BLACK POWER PROJECT a success. We do not hear from many of our readers from year to year. Surely anyone can afford a \$1.00 monthly pledge or a Black Power Button. Please let us hear from you this month.

THE MOVEMENT - A pictorial documentary of the Movement. 125 pages of award-winning photographs. Text by Lorraine Hansbury.

Donation.....\$2.00

☐

Send _____ copies - - - \$ _____ enclosed

BLACK POWER CAR STICKER - 6" by 10" white background with the words BLACK POWER and Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee with Black Panther emblem in black. (Not illustrated.)

Donation.....50¢

☐

Send _____ stickers - - - \$ _____ enclosed

BLACK POWER BUTTON - Illustration actual size. Black and white with clasp pin.

Donation.....50¢

☐

Send _____ buttons - - - \$ _____ enclosed

For quantity orders on above items - please contact the Chicago SNCC office.

ALL ITEMS WILL BE SENT BY RETURN MAIL.

☐

Please place my name on the SNCC Pledge List for the amount of \$ _____ per month. I understand that a monthly reminder card and return envelope will be sent to me on the first of each month and that I will receive a receipt for each donation.

☐

I enclose a \$ _____ contribution to further the work of the Chicago SNCC BLACK POWER PROJECT.

NAME _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ ZIP _____



Mail to: SNCC, 4165 S. Ellis Ave., Chicago, Illinois 60653

WHY BLACK POWER ?

SNCC's philosophy evolved through the Freedom rides, sitting-in at lunch counters, voter registration drives, head-beatings, jail, murder and the Mississippi Freedom Democratic party. We have advanced to the maturity of Black Realism (which is a healthy black nationalism or black consciousness) that recognizes black people must become strong politically, economically and culturally outside of the guidelines that white society sets up for us. It is necessary for us to set up our own guidelines to restore a pride in our black manhood that the civil rights movement cannot return to us. We must regain our birthright and not sell it for a mess of white society pottage. We base this belief on an ethic of basic human rights that is an integral part of the struggle of captive peoples around the world to throw off the yoke of oppression. SNCC considers itself to be a human rights organization.

The civil rights movement has unfortunately degenerated into a tool of white society for the preservation of the status quo. This was accomplished by two things. 1. The manipulations of the United States government through its force of laws (which is called 'justice') by the various Democrats who happen to occupy positions of power. 2. The shortsightedness of the civil rights movement itself in using the symbol of integration as a panacea for the special form of class discrimination in this country known as race discrimination. The civil rights movement is utterly useless in the struggle for self-determination of black people in America today.

SNCC believes black people must decide what they want in their own communities and must implement their decisions through political control. Our first attempt in this direction was the organization of the Black Panther party in Alabama. Black Realism must next be carried into the seething native quarters of the North where the natural revolt of the black man against white colonial society can be directed into a force for the acquisition of meaningful BLACK POWER. This is a job that must be accomplished by black men who understand the parody of American justice, who identify with their African heritage, who can operate outside of the structure of white society and who are not interested in winning white popularity contests. Are you ready, Brother? T.C.B.

THE STUDENT NONVIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE

4165 South Ellis Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60653

Telephone 924-6781

Monroe Sharp, Director

THE

BLACK

PANTHER

IS

COMING!

BLACK POWER

The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (known as SNCC, pronounced 'snick') developed the term BLACK POWER. We believe that black people must become strong politically, economically and culturally outside of the guidelines that white society sets up for us. It is necessary for us to set up our own guidelines to restore a pride in our black manhood and to gain the basic rights that belong to us as human beings. The white oppressors have denied us these rights from the days of slavery. We, the black people of America are a captive people and the United States government uses the political structure, the social structure and the economic structure of this country to keep us 'second-class citizens.'

It is time for us to stand up like MEN and tell the white power structure that we are going to develop our own power structure and that we are going to call it BLACK POWER. Quite naturally, the white power structure does not like BLACK POWER and has tried to discredit our young black leaders. We black people have the right as human beings to decide what we want in our own neighborhoods, to tell the schools what we want them to teach our children and to decide who we want to represent us. BLACK POWER will be won by black men who understand the parody of American justice, who identify with their African heritage, who can operate outside of the structure of white society and who are not interested in winning white popularity contests.

Are you ready, Brother? BLACK POWER needs YOU!

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4165 South Ellis Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60653

Telephone: 924-6781 Monroe Sharp, Director