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Black Power has been defined, discussed, and defined repeatedly, but with little understanding of what it means. Perhaps whites understand most. The phrase itself is terrifying to them, and in their terror they begin to strike back in a variety of ways. Some respond as did white liberal Jack Newfield, in New York's *Village Voice*: "Negroes are just 10 per cent of an affluent, pluralistic society whose temper is hardly revolutionary. Negroes are a majority in no state, in no Southern congressional district. They are victims of national diseases that cannot be cured even if black power is won in a dozen local counties in the black belt. Liberals who have been liberated from paranoid anti-communism will not tolerate black nationalism, perhaps because of its anti-semitic overtones.... Negroes do not have a separate destiny within America, and any movement geared to change America must have a hope of winning a majority. The statistical non-white majority of the third world is merely a synthetic, psychic crutch. No matter how much Black Power is assembled, there is always more White Power." Newfield, a liberal who thinks Bobby Kennedy is a great savior, sounds no different from *The Saturday Evening Post*, which was at least more honest by calling its editorial on Black Power, "We Are All Mississippians." "We are all, let us face it, Mississippians. We all fervently wish that the Negro problem did not exist, or that, if it must exist, it could be ignored. Confronted with the howling need for decent schools, jobs, housing, and all the other minimum rights of the American system, we will do our best, in a half-hearted way, to correct old wrongs. The hand may be extended grudgingly--112--and patronizingly, but anyone who rejects that hand rejects his own best interests. For minimum rights are the only rights that we are willing to guarantee, and above those minimum rights there is and will continue to be a vast area of discrimination and inequity and unfairness, the areas in which we claim the most basic right of all -- the right to be stupid and prejudiced, the right to make mistakes, the right to be less and worse than we pretend, the right to be ourselves. When this majority right is threatened, the majority will react accordingly -- with results that could be disastrous to all of us." Both are simply saying we'll wipe you niggers the hell out like we're doing the Vietnamese. They understand Black Power; they know that only complete annihilation of the American black man will stop Black Power.

These are examples of White Power's more crude ways of trying to stop what it doesn't like. More sophisticated White Power moves in more devious and more dangerous ways. The cruder forms of White Power, as exemplified by *The Saturday Evening Post*, Newfield, the American Nazi party, the John Birch Society, etc., seek to destroy what they consider inimical. More sophisticated White Power moves to control and co-opt what it does not like.

Once the reaction to Black Power had begun to abate, the more sophisticated white liberals began very quietly to stress what they considered to be the more positive aspects of Black Power. They begin to acknowledge that, well, yes, Negroes did have a few problems like bad living conditions, no jobs, hunger, etc., and if you looked at it one way, there was a reason for blacks to be in the streets raising hell. Not that being hungry, homeless, and broke were any justification for violence, although Hubert Humphrey seemingly had too much to drink one night--113--and said that if he were Negro, he would have been in the street rioting himself. The next day he said he'd been misunderstood or something, i' e', he'd slipped and said what he felt for once. However, it was beginning to be understood that blacks did have some serious problems.

The impetus for this realization, it must be remembered, was not an apple falling on the head, but bricks falling on the heads of policemen. So while decrying the violence as worse than Satan himself, the violence did what all the books, speeches, petitions, and nonviolent demonstrations had been unable to do. It made the ghetto visible. Following the rebellions of 1966, there was much talk of what

to do to prevent a recurrence of the same in 1967, and knowing only two ways of dealing with problems, White Power paraded into the ghetto with plans, programs, and money, while slipping confidential memos to each other on how to put down insurrections. The Ford Foundation, headed by McGeorge Bundy, has been one of the most important W' P' organizations, funding all sorts of "war-on-poverty" type projects in the ghetto. Bobby Kennedy trekked over to Brooklyn's ghetto, Bedford-Stuyvesant, with money in front of him and bright young men behind. W' P' was frank enough to acknowledge that the intent of all this attention to the ghetto was to keep niggers on the corner, at least, and not in the street during the summer of 1967. W' P' realized quite clearly that Black Power was out to get them, their mamas, and everything they've got. One way to see that that didn't happen was to take over B' P', by trotting out some eminent sociologist to proclaim that, well, yes, if Black Power meant race pride, race identification, then it was a good and positive thing. One began having nightmares of Lyndon Johnson--114--standing before a joint session of Congress and closing an address with the words "Black Power!"

But April of 1967 rolled around and, lo and behold, long before the long, hot summer, blacks were taking care of business. This time it was not in the ghetto but on the tree-lined campuses of black colleges, such as Texas Southern University in Houston and Fisk University, one of the most prestigious black colleges, in Nashville, Tennessee. And these students were firing out of dormitory windows, pinning down small groups of hardened cops with intense gunfire. Then came Newark in July and Detroit in August. Great God on Mount Zion! Governor Hughes of New Jersey called it an "insurrection," and he was not wrong. In Newark, blacks fought the National Guard to a standstill. In Detroit, blacks controlled the metropolis for forty-eight hours and the U' S' Army had to be called in. And everywhere, in more than one hundred cities, blacks calmly went about getting those commodities and luxury items most white Americans take for granted. Television sets, radios, clothes, irons, washing machines, and food, food, food were suddenly made available for nothing. ("We'd already paid for 'em with all them carrying charges and other things," said one black in Newark.) While white America scurried about wondering why, why, why, blacks had no such question. They well understood what they were about. "The white man speaks of a heaven way up there in the sky that you can't enjoy until you die," said one black in Newark, "but we're tired of that garbage. We're taking a little piece of that heaven right now and the white men can do what they want about it. We're doing what we want." Another Newark resident commented, "They tell us about pie in the sky, but that pie in the sky is too damn high." And yet another explained,--115--"The brother's got to take everything he gets. Whitey ain't about to get up off anything unless you make him."

If nothing had ever made white America get up before, the summer of 1967 did. "Whitey" got up, but it didn't seem to do him much good. He simply went into his whole screaming act about "looting and violence," which said to blacks that he cared more about his property than he did about blacks, that he cried when a white cop got shot and shrugged when forty-five blacks were murdered in Detroit. Whites screamed hysterically for "law and order," unable to understand the justice of the "law and order" that brightened the ghettos across the country during the summer.

President Johnson reacted like what he is, a white man, and appointed a commission to study the rebellions, spending a lot of money to find out something he could've found out by asking any black sleeping on a bench in Lafayette Square in front of the White House. Big business suddenly decided to invest some of their blood money in the ghetto, building housing projects and playgrounds. White Power called out its black con men, but Whitney Young and King vacillated between damning the violence and half-enjoying scaring white folks more by telling them, well, if you'd listened to us, maybe this wouldn't have happened. In August of 1967, White Power got together for a one-day meeting to discuss what they could do to save themselves. And it was quite a gathering of crooks and reprobates. (Why dignify those who get wealthy by keeping others poor by calling them business leaders, labor leaders, religious leaders, civil rights leaders, or government officials. Their existence depends on their ability to keep my face in the mud. Detroit threatened--116--their existence. That is why they now care about how deeply my face is kept in the mud.) A' Philip Randolph, Wilkins, and Young were there, of course, along with a whole bunch of mayors, and the likes of David Rockefeller, Andrew Heiskell,

chairman of the board for Time Inc', Henry Ford II, George Meany, and a whole bunch of others who cared more about that evening's stock-market report than they did blacks. But they were there and they listened intently as Whitney Young said: "The Negro has as much right to have his extremists as anyone else. Rap Brown did not cause unemployment in the country. Rap Brown did not put Negroes in ghettos. Rap Brown did not perpetuate upon Negroes inferior education. This was done by other people in the society and it is to the other people that we must look...." In other words, he was asking the slaveowner to let the slave go; he was asking the oppressor to stop oppressing; he was asking the fox to get out of the henhouse. He was wasting his breath. This auspicious gathering called itself the Urban Coalition and pledged jobs, new investments in the ghetto (its the old investments that are causing the problem now), more low-income housing, and all sorts of nice things. It is too little too late. While the violence of 1967 did upset the country, Black Power began to take on overtones of respectability. Suddenly everyone was praising blacks for their natural hair styles, black pride, black consciousness, and black everything else if it meant that we'd go off in a corner and be black and leave them alone. *Time* magazine in its "Time Essay" of December 1, 1967, discussed "Black Power & Black Pride." The essay opens up by quoting Frederick Douglass: "It is evident that we can be improved and elevated only just so fast and far as we shall improve and elevate ourselves." Douglass said that in--117--1848, before he broke with Garrison. Anyway, *Time* goes on to point out that "As the months have gone by since Black Power burst... violently onto the scene, there has been a slow, subtle but steady shift in the attitude of Negroes -- even the moderate Negro leaders -- who were desperately opposed to the violent and separatist nature of the new crusade. What has clearly developed from this change is a Black Power movement set on a more respectable base, which at its best is in the spirit of what Frederick Douglass was advocating more than a century ago. The most intelligent spokesmen for the new attitude think of it in terms of Black Consciousness -- or, more completely, Black Pride.... There is indeed evidence that black pride is nourishing the new Negro's determination to take over his own destiny and accept no definition of blackness but his own." (They got two whole pages telling me what black, Black Power, black pride, and black consciousness is all about and then turn around and say that. They still think niggers are dumb.) "This kind of Negro is not anti-white; he is pro-black." They continue with much verbiage about the "good nigger's Black Power" and, as sure as the cavalry always comes to rescue the settlers, here come Roy Wilkins and Whitney Young riding across the plains, yelling, Here we is, white folks. Let's get them niggers. Even Tonto didn't *join* the damned cavalry. Dig 'em.

Wilkins: Pride of race and history and the riddance of self-denunciation are good and needed. The thing to guard against is black arrogance.

Young: Where the builders differ from the burners is that we want to win victories within the framework of the system.

--118--**King:** Black Power is a call to black people to amass the political and economic strength to achieve their legitimate goals. No one can deny that the Negro is in dire need of this kind of legitimate power.

Time:... the Black Power movement... is far more moderate than its reputation.... It desires neither to shoot its way out of white America nor to enter a supremacy contest with the white Establishment. Its goals lie within democracy's permissive framework, which has stretched many times before to assimilate minority groups and which, as far as the U' S' Negro is concerned, must stretch again for him.

So there we have it for the umpteenth time, white folks trying to tell black folks all about themselves and their goals. Except this time we realize that in actuality ol' massa is just trying to save his own scrawny neck. And realizing this, we're beginning to understand the nature of White Power and why it can never offer any real solution to our problems (or anybody's problems).

White Power creates one basic condition under which all who are powerless must live: It makes us sharecroppers. We work at jobs we care nothing about so that we can buy food, pay the rent, and buy

clothes. We're paid enough so we can stay alive and work and make money for somebody else. That's life in America. We work to help somebody else get rich and in return this employer gives us enough to keep us reasonably happy. We are told that this is the American way of life and we're very fortunate, because unlike others in the world we have free speech, free elections, free religion, and a free press. And we believe that we are free, just as we believe that emancipation was a gratuitous act on the part of Mr. Lincoln.--119--

America is a country that is built upon principles of inhumanity. Is it not inhuman to put a price tag on food, thereby prohibiting one from eating if he does not have money? Is it not inhuman to put a price tag on the roof over one's head, thereby making it possible to put any individual outdoors and without shelter if he is without money? Is it not inhuman to put a price tag on the facilities and medicines that could make a man well, thereby making it possible for that man to die, if he does not have money? Yet, these are the conditions that masquerade under the names of democracy and free enterprise. Where is the humanity in a system where the greatest power, glory, and honor goes to those who have amassed huge sums of money? Where is the humanity in a system which confers status upon those who have wealth rather than those who have character, which confers status upon those who have power rather than those who have integrity? Where is the humanity in a system that allows a child to be bitten by rats, while the dogs of other children wear clothes costing more than many families earn each week? Yet, it is this kind of a country that we are expected to love, honor, cherish and obey, and die for, when necessary (and it always seems necessary). Why? Life is more than working at a job you hate, to buy food, pay rent, and buy clothes, and one day die, having enjoyed nothing and loved no one. Yet, this is Life as America defines it -- two weeks' vacation a year you have to love, to live, before relinquishing your life again for another year.

But the American rhetoric hides the American reality. America says "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" and does everything to see that you don't have it. America says "freedom and justice for all" and herds the slaves off the ships.--120--

But America has been successful at not doing what it preaches. This technique is one of the foundations of power. H. H. Wilson writing in the June, 1953, issue of *Monthly Review* defined it this way: "Power is the ability to control the actions of men, to influence their behavior so that one may make and enforce decisions; it may be exerted through the threat of physical violence, by the ability to grant or withhold economic opportunities, or by control over the sources of information.... the political process is essentially a contest for power, for the means of determining 'who gets what, when, and how.'"

America has the rhetoric of freedom and the reality of slavery. It talks of peace, while dropping bombs. It speaks of self-determination for all people, while moving to control the means of production on which self-determination depends. It passes civil rights bills for black people, ostensibly, and does nothing to enforce such bills. America's rhetoric creates a world of beautiful, LSD illusions in which we're expected to live and be happy, and if we seek to break out of this world, we're ostracized, clubbed, or murdered. Power maintains itself through rhetoric and force.

Blacks have always been aware of what America really is, but unable, until now, to forcefully attack it. Whites are just becoming aware and their awareness is leading them to attack the system or withdraw from it. These young whites are not the poor and dispossessed, but the children of the affluent. They are the ones who have had the advantages of all that America considers best -- money, luxuries, security, and education. And they are rejecting it by running away from their homes by the hundreds of thousands to live in the Haight-Ashbury section of San Francisco and New York's Lower East Side, because, as--121--one psychoanalyst put it: "Society must have a complete revision of its values or we'll all wind up in nothingness." The hippies have dropped out, because they have seen the lives of their parents, and unlike the progeny of previous generations, do not want to imitate what they see around them. So they wear flowers in their hair, carry balloons in their hands, and tie bells to their feet in the search for the beauty and love that has not been evident in the models for living put forth by

America. They want nothing more than to love and be loved, and it is nowhere around them. It would seem that love, the ability to communicate totally with another, would be of the first priority for any society. America is the country where Love was killed, and replacing it has been an increasing self-hatred that flings itself against the helpless and the dispossessed with money and napalm. When the youth of a society refuse to follow the pattern that others before followed, that society is beyond healing and beyond redemption. The hippies are the walking and breathing manifestations of existential despair.

But the hippies offer no alternative; just despair. The young whites, however, who demonstrated against the war in Vietnam at the Pentagon on October 21, 1967, are searching for viable alternatives. They are refusing to be active participants in a government that says the best way to show love for your country is to go to a foreign land and die. Unlike blacks, whites have grown up believing America's rhetoric. They have grown up believing that their country was good and kind and that they, because they could "vote for the candidate of their choice" were participants in governing their lives. It has come as a shock to them to learn that their country is not good, not kind, and that they have absolutely no power to change anything.--122--They thought they did, with their picket signs and protest demonstrations, but the war in Vietnam seemed to escalate with each new protest. Now they are angry and frustrated and determined. They are willing to storm the Pentagon; they are willing to be violent; they are almost willing to die, not in Vietnam, but here to humanize America.

Their critics are alarmed at the new tactics of young whites in their opposition to the war in Vietnam. And the words "responsible" are being used now to refer to certain whites, who are "moderate" in their tactics of dissent. The young are not "moderate"; they feel deeply and intensely and the war in Vietnam is not military logistics to them. It is women and children being murdered; it is bombs being dropped on a people who have never dropped a bomb on them. They do not believe the government when it claims that freedom is being defended in Southeast Asia. If napalm, thousand-pound bombs, steelpellet bombs, gases, and a half-million armed soldiers are needed to defend freedom, then that freedom is questionable. They are obsessed by what their country is doing and it is out of love for that country that they block off draft-induction centers, throw blood at policemen, and storm the Pentagon. They know, too, that it is the old who are always sending the young to fight. To fight and to die. This time the young are resisting. They will not be sent to the marketplace (and there to die in expensive clothes and respectability), nor will they be sent to the battlefield (to die in fatigues and despair). They are not sure that it is the good who die young. All that is evil in America seems to be old. They are sure, however, that it is the young who die young.