

## ONE — The Myth of the Panthers

ONCE UPON A TIME, THERE WAS A GROUP KNOWN AS THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY FOR SELF-DEFENSE. FORMED IN OAKLAND, CA, BY HUEY P. NEWTON AND BOBBY SEALE IN 1966, THE PANTHERS DEFIANTLY STOOD IN STARK CONTRAST TO THE NONVIOLENT PHILOSOPHY OF THE MAINSTREAM CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT.

THE BLACK PANTHERS TOOK UP ARMS, MARCHED IN THE STREETS, AND TOOK A CONFRONTATIONAL STAND AGAINST POLICE BRUTALITY. THEY CAPTURED THE ATTENTION OF THE NEIGHBORHOODS THEY PATROLLED, AND EVENTUALLY OF THE WORLD.



SOME PEOPLE ADMIRED THEM. SOME HATED THEM. IN TIME, THE BLACK PANTHERS BECAME MYTHICAL—AND IT CAN BE DIFFICULT TO SEPARATE MYTH FROM REALITY.

THE HISTORY OF THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY IS ONE LACED WITH VIOLENCE--IT IS ONE OF THE MOST ENDURING PARTS OF THE MYTH OF THE PANTHERS.



BUT VIOLENCE IS ONLY PART OF THE PANTHERS' STORY.

THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY WAS AN ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO SERVING THE COMMUNITY.



THE PANTHERS CREATED MORE THAN 60 "SURVIVAL PROGRAMS" TO HELP COMMUNITIES ALL OVER THE COUNTRY, INCLUDING THE FREE BREAKFAST FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN PROGRAM, WHICH FED THOUSANDS OF CHILDREN EVERY WEEK.

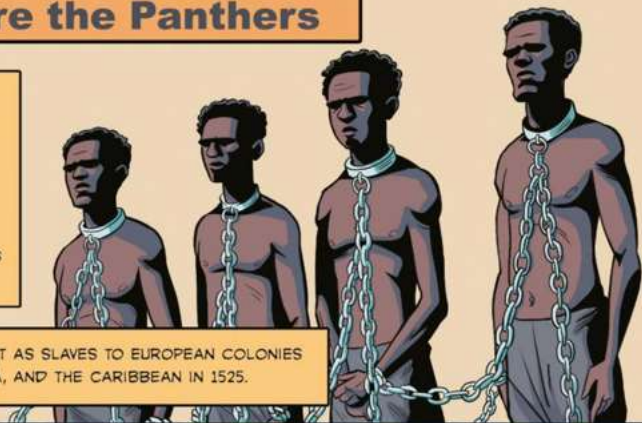


THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY WAS A COMPLEX ORGANIZATION THAT HAD AN EQUALLY COMPLEX RELATIONSHIP WITH THE COMMUNITIES IT WAS DEDICATED TO SERVING.



## TWO — Before the Panthers

IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND HOW AN ORGANIZATION LIKE THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY COULD COME INTO EXISTENCE, IT IS IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND THE HISTORY OF OPPRESSION AND THE STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM ENDURED BY AFRICANS AND THEIR DESCENDANTS IN AMERICA.



THE FIRST AFRICANS WERE BROUGHT AS SLAVES TO EUROPEAN COLONIES IN NORTH AMERICA, SOUTH AMERICA, AND THE CARIBBEAN IN 1525.

IN THE U.S., THE FORCED ENSLAVEMENT OF AFRICANS AND THEIR DESCENDANTS WOULD NOT END UNTIL 1863--AND IT WOULD TAKE A BLOODY WAR BETWEEN THE STATES TO END IT.

DURING THE CIVIL WAR, MORE THAN 100,000 BLACK MEN FOUGHT FOR THE UNION TO ENSURE THE FREEDOM OF MILLIONS MORE HELD IN CAPTIVITY. AND WHILE THEIR FIGHT HELPED BRING FREEDOM, IT DID NOT BRING EQUALITY.



THE LEGACY OF RACIAL OPPRESSION THAT ALLOWED SLAVERY TO FLOURISH IN AMERICA FOR CENTURIES CONTINUED, AS BLACK AMERICANS STRUGGLED AGAINST DISCRIMINATION AND SEGREGATION, LOOKING TO FIND THEIR PLACE IN THE LAND OF THE FREE.

HAVING BEEN SUBJECTED TO CENTURIES OF DEHUMANIZING ATROCITIES LARGELY IN THE SOUTHERN STATES, MANY BLACK AMERICANS BEGAN TO MIGRATE TO THE NORTH AND WEST STARTING IN 1916.

KNOWN AS THE GREAT MIGRATION, BLACK AMERICANS FLED THE SOUTH BY THE MILLIONS LOOKING FOR A BETTER WAY OF LIFE, AWAY FROM LEGALIZED SEGREGATION, SHARECROPPING, AND LYNCHING.



LIFE OUTSIDE OF THE SOUTH WAS DIFFERENT IN MANY WAYS, BUT OPPRESSION, INTOLERANCE, AND LIMITED OPPORTUNITY WERE PERSASIVE. DISCRIMINATION IN THE WORKPLACE AND HOUSING PERSISTED. THE THREAT OF VIOLENCE WAS EVERYWHERE.

IN WHAT IS KNOWN AS THE RED SUMMER OF 1919, ANGRY WHITE MOBS INSTIGATED MORE THAN 40 RACIALLY MOTIVATED ATTACKS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY, KILLING HUNDREDS OF BLACK AMERICANS.

THE SENSELESS VIOLENCE AND KILLING OF THE RED SUMMER WAS NOT THE END OF RACIST TERROR IN AMERICA.



IN 1921, ONE YEAR LATER, THE ALL-BLACK COMMUNITY OF GREENWOOD IN TULSA, OK, WAS ATTACKED BY AN ANGRY WHITE MOB AFTER A WHITE WOMAN ACCUSED A BLACK MAN OF ASSAULTING HER. GREENWOOD, WHICH WAS KNOWN AS "BLACK WALL STREET," WAS DESTROYED.



TWO YEARS LATER, THE PREDOMINANTLY BLACK TOWN OF ROSEWOOD, FL, WAS COMPLETELY BURNED TO THE GROUND IN 1923 WHEN A BLACK MAN WAS FALSELY ACCUSED OF ATTACKING A WHITE WOMAN.



BETWEEN 1882 AND 1968, THERE WERE 3,446 RECORDED LYNCHINGS OF BLACK FOLKS IN THE U.S. IN THE EARLY 1900s, LYNCHINGS HAD BECOME A FORM OF PUBLIC ENTERTAINMENT, WITH POSTCARDS CREATED TO COMMEMORATE THE MURDERS.

FOR DECADES, ACTIVISTS AND POLITICIANS FOUGHT FOR ANTI-LYNCHING LEGISLATION, ONLY TO BE STOPPED AT EVERY TURN BY SOUTHERN POLITICIANS.

THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS WOULD NOT PASS ANY FORM OF ANTI-LYNCHING REGULATION UNTIL 2020--MORE THAN A CENTURY AFTER THE RED SUMMER OF 1919.





MARCUS GARVEY

W. E. B. DU BOIS

WALLACE D. FARD

DISCRIMINATION, OPPRESSION, AND RACIAL VIOLENCE IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY GAVE RISE TO A CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT THAT SOUGHT SOCIAL AND POLITICAL EQUALITY FOR BLACK AMERICANS.

THIS TIME WOULD SEE THE BIRTH OF ORGANIZATIONS LIKE THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE (NAACP) AND LEADERS LIKE W. E. B. DU BOIS. IT WOULD ALSO SEE THE BEGINNING OF BLACK NATIONALISM, A MOVEMENT THAT SOUGHT MORE THAN SOCIOPOLITICAL EQUALITY--IT DEMANDED ECONOMIC POWER.

JAMAICAN-BORN MARCUS GARVEY, FOUNDER OF THE UNIVERSAL NEGRO IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION, AND WALLACE D. FARD, FOUNDER OF THE NATION OF ISLAM, WERE EARLY EXAMPLES OF BLACK NATIONALISTS WHO ESPOUSED RACIAL PRIDE AND EMPHASIZED THE NEED FOR BLACK FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE.

BLACK NATIONALISTS LIKE GARVEY CHALLENGED THE ESTABLISHED RACIAL STATUS QUO, AND AS A RESULT WERE SEEN AS A THREAT TO AMERICA, ESPECIALLY BY GOVERNMENT AGENCIES LIKE THE BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION (THE PRECURSOR TO THE FBI), WHICH DEPORTED GARVEY IN 1927.

FOR THOSE SEEKING TO KEEP BLACK AMERICANS IN A PLACE OF OPPRESSION AND INFERIORITY, THERE WOULD BE NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CIVIL RIGHTS AND BLACK NATIONALISM--BOTH WERE THREATS TO WHITE SUPREMACY.

AT THE OUTBREAK OF WORLD WAR II, THE EXODUS OF BLACK PEOPLE FROM THE SOUTH INCREASED AS THE NUMBER OF FACTORY JOBS IN THE NORTH AND WEST INCREASED.



DURING THIS SECOND GREAT MIGRATION, BLACK AMERICANS CONTINUED TO ESCAPE THE HORRORS OF THE JIM CROW SOUTH, SEEKING OPPORTUNITY IN THE SO-CALLED PROGRESSIVE STATES IN THE NORTH AND WEST.

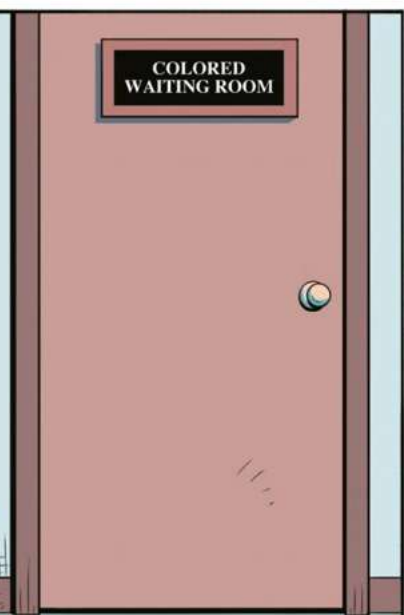
MEANWHILE, MORE THAN 100,000 BLACK SERVICEMEN WERE DEPLOYED OVERSEAS DURING WWII. BUT AS THEY FOUGHT FOR FREEDOM IN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD, THEY WERE SERVING IN A SEGREGATED MILITARY.



AND WHEN BLACK SOLDIERS RETURNED HOME AFTER THE WAR, THEY RETURNED TO A COUNTRY WHERE THEY WERE STILL NOT EQUAL.



COLORED  
WAITING ROOM





BLACK PEOPLE HAD BEEN FIGHTING FOR EQUALITY AND JUSTICE LONG BEFORE THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT BEGAN IN THE 1950s.

A MAJOR VICTORY CAME IN 1954, WHEN THE U.S. SUPREME COURT RULED IN *BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION* THAT RACIAL SEGREGATION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS WAS UNCONSTITUTIONAL. THIS LANDMARK RULING HELPED TO LAUNCH WHAT IS GENERALLY THOUGHT OF AS THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT.



SAVE  
SEGREGATION  
VOTE

SAVE  
SEGREGATION  
VOTE  
STATES  
RIGHTS



THE DESEGREGATION OF AMERICAN SCHOOLS DID NOT COME EASILY. RESISTANCE TO DESEGREGATION WAS OFTEN VIOLENT.

IN ARKANSAS, GOVERNOR ORVAL FAUBUS REFUSED TO ALLOW NINE STUDENTS--THE LITTLE ROCK NINE--TO ATTEND LITTLE ROCK CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL IN 1957.



IN RESPONSE TO THREATS MADE AGAINST THE LITTLE ROCK NINE, PRESIDENT DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER DEPLOYED THE 101st AIRBORNE DIVISION OF THE U.S. ARMY TO PROTECT THEM.



IN 1960, 6-YEAR-OLD RUBY BRIDGES, THE FIRST BLACK STUDENT TO ATTEND WILLIAM FRANTZ ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN NEW ORLEANS, HAD TO BE ESCORTED INTO SCHOOL BY U.S. MARSHALS. THE SAME WAS TRUE FOR LEONA TATE, TESSIE PREVOST, AND GAIL ETIENNE (THE McDONOUGH THREE), A TRIO OF 6-YEAR-OLDS THREATENED AS THEY USHERED IN DESEGREGATION AT THEIR SCHOOL.

IN A SCENE THAT WAS BECOMING INCREASINGLY FAMILIAR IN SOUTHERN STATES, U.S. MARSHALS WERE ALSO SENT TO PROTECT JAMES MEREDITH AS HE ENROLLED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI IN 1961.



THE STRUGGLE TO INTEGRATE SCHOOLS IN THE SOUTH WAS ONE OF THE MOST CRUCIAL PARTS OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT, BECAUSE SEGREGATION IN SCHOOLS WAS A CLEAR AND VISIBLE REPRESENTATION OF RACIAL INEQUALITY PLAGUING AMERICA.




AUGUST 28, 1955. EMMETT TILL, A 14-YEAR-OLD FROM CHICAGO, WAS VISITING RELATIVES IN MONEY, MS, WHEN HE WAS ACCUSED OF WHISTLING AT A WHITE WOMAN.

THAT NIGHT, HE WAS DRAGGED FROM THE HOME OF HIS UNCLE AND BRUTALLY MURDERED. THREE DAYS LATER, HIS MUTILATED BODY WAS FOUND IN THE TALLAHATCHIE RIVER.


TILL'S BODY WAS RETURNED TO CHICAGO FOR BURIAL. HIS MOTHER, MAMIE TILL-MOBLEY, INSISTED ON AN OPEN CASKET BECAUSE SHE WANTED THE WORLD TO SEE WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO HER SON. PHOTOS OF TILL'S HORRIFICALLY DISFIGURED CORPSE APPEARED IN NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES ALL OVER THE COUNTRY.

THE MURDER OF EMMETT TILL NOT ONLY SHED LIGHT ON THE HORRORS OF RACISM IN AMERICA, IT SERVED AS A RALLYING CRY FOR THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT.




LESS THAN SIX MONTHS AFTER THE MURDER OF EMMETT TILL, ROSA PARKS REFUSED TO GIVE UP HER SEAT ON A SEGREGATED BUS IN MONTGOMERY, AL.

THOUGH PARKS'S ACTIONS BECAME THE CATALYST FOR ONE OF THE MOST CRUCIAL MOMENTS OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT--THE MONTGOMERY BUS BOYCOTT--SHE WAS NOT THE FIRST PERSON TO PERFORM THE ACT OF PROTEST ON A BUS.




AND NINE YEARS BEFORE THAT, ON JULY 16, 1944, IRENE MORGAN WAS ARRESTED FOR REFUSING TO GIVE UP HER SEAT ON A BUS TRAVELING FROM MARYLAND, WHERE THERE WAS NO SEGREGATION ON BUSES, TO VIRGINIA, WHERE THERE WAS.

MORGAN'S CASE LED TO THE SUPREME COURT DECISION IN *MORGAN V. VIRGINIA*, WHICH RULED THAT SEGREGATION ON INTERSTATE BUSES WAS UNCONSTITUTIONAL.



NINE MONTHS BEFORE ROSA PARKS, 15-YEAR-OLD CLAUDETTE COLVIN WAS ARRESTED FOR REFUSING TO GIVE UP HER SEAT IN THE FRONT OF A BUS IN MONTGOMERY.



ALONG WITH SEGREGATION IN SCHOOLS, SEGREGATION ON BUSES WAS A HUGE PART OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT BECAUSE BOTH ISSUES LED TO COURT RULINGS THAT PROVIDED LEGAL PRECEDENTS FOR DESEGREGATION.



THE SUPREME COURT DECISIONS TO DESEGREGATE SCHOOLS AND INTERSTATE BUS TRAVEL BECAME KEY RALLYING POINTS IN THE GROWING CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT. AMID THE GROWING FIGHT FOR EQUALITY, CIVIL RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS BEGAN TO FORM. ONE SUCH ORGANIZATION WAS THE SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE (SCLC), AND ITS MOST RECOGNIZABLE MEMBER WAS DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

AS THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT GREW, DR. KING BECAME ITS LEADING SPOKESPERSON. HE WAS A POWERFUL SPEAKER AND A CHARISMATIC LEADER WHO BELIEVED ANY SORT OF VIOLENCE WOULD BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE TO THE STRUGGLE FOR EQUALITY.



CORETTA SCOTT KING



DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.



FRED SHUTTLESWORTH

ELLA BAKER



RALPH ABERNATHY



BAYARD RUSTIN



A. PHILIP RANDOLPH



DESPITE THE COMMITMENT TO NONVIOLENCE MADE BY DR. KING AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT, THE RACIST OPPOSITION TO DESEGREGATION DID NOT PRACTICE NONVIOLENCE.

ON SEPTEMBER 15, 1963, MEMBERS OF THE WHITE SUPREMACIST HATE GROUP THE KU KLUX KLAN (KKK) BOMBED THE 16TH STREET BAPTIST CHURCH IN BIRMINGHAM, AL, KILLING 11-YEAR-OLD CAROL DENISE MCNAIR, AND THREE 14-YEAR-OLDS, ADDIE MAE COLLINS, CYNTHIA WESLEY, AND CAROLE ROBERTSON.

NO ONE WAS HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR THE KILLINGS FOR MORE THAN TEN YEARS.

THREE MONTHS BEFORE THE BOMBING OF THE 16TH STREET BAPTIST CHURCH, CIVIL RIGHTS LEADER MEDGAR EVERS WAS ASSASSINATED IN FRONT OF HIS HOUSE BY WHITE SUPREMACIST BYRON DE LA BECKWITH.

IT WOULD TAKE MORE THAN 30 YEARS FOR DE LA BECKWITH TO BE CONVICTED OF THE MURDER.



ANDREW GOODMAN, JAMES CHANEY, AND MICHAEL SCHWERNER WERE CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVISTS WORKING TO REGISTER VOTERS IN MISSISSIPPI. ALL THREE WERE KILLED BY A GROUP OF WHITE SUPREMACISTS ON JUNE 21, 1964.

THEY WERE NOT THE ONLY VICTIMS OF FATAL RACIST ATTACKS. BETWEEN 1955 AND 1968, THERE WERE 41 CIVIL RIGHTS MARTYRS KILLED IN VIOLENT ATTACKS.





REV. GEORGE LEE (51).  
MAY 7, 1955.



LAMAR SMITH (63).  
AUGUST 13, 1955.



JOHN EARL REESE (16).  
OCTOBER 22, 1955.



WILLIE EDWARDS, JR. (24).  
JANUARY 23, 1957.



MACK CHARLES PARKER  
(23). APRIL 25, 1959.



HERBERT LEE (49).  
SEPTEMBER 25, 1961.



ROMAN DUCKSWORTH, JR.  
(28). APRIL 9, 1962.



PAUL GUIHARD (31).  
SEPTEMBER 30, 1962.



WILLIAM LEWIS MOORE (35).  
APRIL 23, 1963.



VIRGIL LAMAR WARE (13).  
SEPTEMBER 15, 1963.



LOUIS ALLEN (44).  
JANUARY 31, 1964.



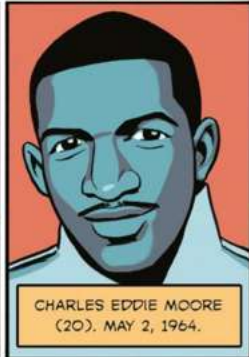
JOHNNIE MAE CHAPPELL  
(35). MARCH 23, 1964.



REV. BRUCE KLUNDER (26).  
APRIL 7, 1964.



HENRY HEZEKIAH DEE (19).  
MAY 2, 1964.



CHARLES EDDIE MOORE  
(20). MAY 2, 1964.



LEMUEL PENN (48).  
JULY 11, 1964.



JIMMIE LEE JACKSON (26). FEBRUARY 26, 1965.



REV. JAMES REEB (38). MARCH 11, 1965.



VIOLA GREGG LIUZZO (39). MARCH 25, 1965.



ONEAL MOORE (34). JUNE 2, 1965.



WILLIE WALLACE BREWSTER (38). JULY 18, 1965.



JONATHAN MYRICK DANIELS (26). AUGUST 20, 1965.



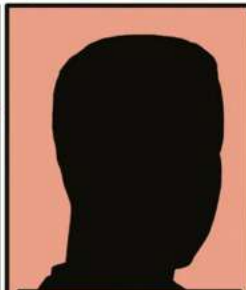
SAMUEL YOUNGE, JR. (21). JANUARY 3, 1966.



VERNON DAHMER (57). JANUARY 10, 1966.



BEN CHESTER WHITE (67). JUNE 10, 1966.



CLARENCE TRIGGS (76). JULY 30, 1966.



WHARLEST JACKSON (37). FEBRUARY 27, 1967.



BENJAMIN BROWN (22). MAY 12, 1967.



SAMUEL HAMMOND, JR. (18). FEBRUARY 8, 1968.



DELANO MIDDLETON (17). FEBRUARY 8, 1968.



HENRY SMITH (19). FEBRUARY 8, 1968.

IN ADDITION TO THE 41 MARTYRS RECOGNIZED BY THE CIVIL RIGHTS MEMORIAL IN MONTGOMERY, AL, THERE ARE ANOTHER 74 NAMES LISTED OF PEOPLE KILLED IN CONNECTION WITH THE MOVEMENT.



THE VIOLENT OPPOSITION TO CIVIL RIGHTS LED MANY TO QUESTION THE VALIDITY OF NONVIOLENCE. IN THE LATE 1950s, ROBERT F. WILLIAMS FORMED THE BLACK ARMED GUARD IN NORTH CAROLINA, AN ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO PROTECTING CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVISTS AGAINST RACIST ATTACKS.

WILLIAMS AND HIS ORGANIZATION TRADED SHOTS WITH THE KKK, AND IN 1961 HE RELOCATED TO CUBA, WHERE HE BROADCAST THE RADIO PROGRAM "RADIO FREE DIXIE" TO THE SOUTHERN UNITED STATES. IN 1962, HE PUBLISHED HIS BOOK, *NEGROES WITH GUNS*.



IN NOVEMBER 1964, EARNEST "CHILLY WILLY" THOMAS AND FREDERICK DOUGLASS KIRKPATRICK FORMED THE DEACONS FOR DEFENSE AND JUSTICE IN JONESBORO, LA.

WITHIN A YEAR, THERE WOULD BE MORE CHAPTERS OF THE DEACONS IN LOUISIANA, ALABAMA, AND MISSISSIPPI. THE ARMED ORGANIZATION WORKED WITH NONVIOLENT CIVIL RIGHTS GROUPS, PROVIDING SECURITY AT MARCHES AND RALLIES. THE PROTECTION OF THE DEACONS ALLOWED ORGANIZATIONS LIKE THE NAACP TO MAINTAIN THEIR PRACTICE OF NONVIOLENCE.

IN REJECTING NONVIOLENCE, MALCOLM X BECAME ONE OF THE MOST CONTROVERSIAL LEADERS OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT, FIRST AS A MEMBER OF THE NATION OF ISLAM FROM 1952 TO 1964, AND THEN AS THE FOUNDER OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AFRO-AMERICAN UNITY.

I DON'T FAVOR VIOLENCE. IF WE COULD BRING ABOUT RECOGNITION AND RESPECT OF OUR PEOPLE BY PEACEFUL MEANS, WELL AND GOOD. EVERYBODY WOULD LIKE TO REACH HIS OBJECTIVES PEACEFULLY.

BUT I'M ALSO A REALIST. THE ONLY PEOPLE IN THIS COUNTRY WHO ARE ASKED TO BE NONVIOLENT ARE BLACK PEOPLE.



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ON AUGUST 11, 1965, LOS ANGELES POLICE OFFICERS PULLED OVER BLACK MOTORIST MARQUETTE FRYE, LEADING TO AN ALTERCATION THAT WOULD SET OFF THE MASSIVE WATTS UPRISING.

OVER THE COURSE OF SIX DAYS, LOOTING, RIOTING, AND VIOLENCE DEVASTATED THE LARGELY BLACK LOS ANGELES NEIGHBORHOOD OF WATTS. THE NATIONAL GUARD WAS DEPLOYED TO TRY TO CURB THE VIOLENCE, MORE THAN 3,000 PEOPLE WERE ARRESTED, AND MORE THAN 30 PEOPLE WERE KILLED.

THE WATTS UPRISING SERVED AS NOTICE THAT THE RACIAL PROBLEMS PLAGUING AMERICA WERE NOT LIMITED TO SOUTHERN STATES. LOS ANGELES, LIKE MANY CITIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY, HAD A LONG HISTORY OF RACIAL INJUSTICE.

IN THE WAKE OF THE WATTS UPRISING, CALIFORNIA GOVERNOR PAT BROWN ORDERED AN INVESTIGATION LED BY THE McCONE COMMISSION TO DETERMINE THE CAUSE OF THE RIOT.

IN A REPORT CALLED "VIOLENCE IN THE CITY—AN END OR A BEGINNING?": A REPORT BY THE GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION ON THE LOS ANGELES RIOTS, 1965," THE McCONE COMMISSION DETERMINED THAT THE ROOT CAUSES WERE HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT, INFERIOR SCHOOLS, BAD POLICE RELATIONS, AND POOR LIVING CONDITIONS IN THE BLACK COMMUNITIES OF LOS ANGELES. RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADDRESS THE CAUSES OF THE RIOT WENT UNHEEDED.





BY 1965, AMERICA WAS EMBROILED IN THE VIETNAM WAR. THE U.S. MILITARY WAS NO LONGER SEGREGATED, AND MORE BLACK SOLDIERS SERVED IN VIETNAM THAN ANY OTHER WAR IN AMERICAN HISTORY. NEARLY 25% OF AMERICAN SOLDIERS KILLED IN VIETNAM IN 1965 WERE BLACK.

THE UNPOPULARITY OF THE WAR CONTRIBUTED TO THE POLITICAL TURMOIL IN AMERICA. FOR MANY BLACK AMERICANS, THE WAR IN VIETNAM--A WAR FOR "FREEDOM"-- WAS ESPECIALLY PROBLEMATIC, GIVEN THE ONGOING STRUGGLE FOR EQUALITY AND JUSTICE IN THE U.S.



IN 1966, WORLD HEAVYWEIGHT BOXING CHAMPION MUHAMMAD ALI REFUSED TO BE DRAFTED INTO THE MILITARY, CITING HIS OPPOSITION TO THE WAR.

ALI WAS JUST ONE OF MANY BLACK AMERICANS TAKING A STAND AGAINST THE WAR, CALLING INTO QUESTION AMERICA'S HYPOCRISY WHEN IT CAME TO THEIR FREEDOM.



WHY SHOULD THEY ASK ME TO PUT ON A UNIFORM AND GO 10,000 MILES FROM HOME AND DROP BOMBS AND BULLETS ON BROWN PEOPLE IN VIETNAM WHILE SO-CALLED NEGRO PEOPLE IN LOUISVILLE ARE TREATED LIKE DOGS AND DENIED SIMPLE HUMAN RIGHTS?

NO, I AM NOT GOING 10,000 MILES FROM HOME TO HELP MURDER AND BURN ANOTHER POOR NATION SIMPLY TO CONTINUE THE DOMINATION OF WHITE SLAVE MASTERS OF THE DARKER PEOPLE THE WORLD OVER.



THE WATTS UPRISING OF 1965 PROVED TO BE THE PRECURSOR FOR WHAT WAS TO COME IN 1966. MORE THAN TEN CITIES ERUPTED IN VIOLENCE--ALL IN RESPONSE TO POLICE ACTIONS.



ON JUNE 5, 1966, CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST JAMES MEREDITH SET OUT ON WHAT HE CALLED THE MARCH AGAINST FEAR--A 220-MILE MARCH FROM MEMPHIS, TN, TO JACKSON, MS.

MEREDITH PLANNED TO MARCH ALONE AS AN ACT OF PROTEST AGAINST RACISM, AND TO ENCOURAGE VOTER REGISTRATION.

DURING HIS SECOND DAY ON THE ROAD, MEREDITH WAS SHOT BY A SNIPER.



WITH MEREDITH IN THE HOSPITAL, OTHER CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVISTS AND ORGANIZATIONS CARRIED ON WITH HIS CAUSE, INCLUDING SNCC AND STOKELY CARMICHAEL.

ON JUNE 16, 1966, CARMICHAEL GAVE A POWERFUL SPEECH TO A LARGE CROWD IN GREENWOOD, MS.

WE BEEN SAYING "FREEDOM" FOR SIX YEARS NOW, AND WE AIN'T GOT NOTHING!

WHAT WE GOT TO START SAYING NOW IS "BLACK POWER"!

WE WANT **BLACK POWER!**

IT WAS AT THIS POINT THAT CARMICHAEL FORMALLY DISTANCED HIMSELF AND SNCC FROM THE NONVIOLENT MOVEMENT, AND THE BLACK POWER MOVEMENT WAS BORN.

