Black Power: The Politics of Liberation

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PDF (No page #s):
Summary, Key Words/Phrases, and Important Quote(s)

Preface

- **Summary:** This book is about why, where, and in what manner Black people MUST get themselves together. The moves are simple if we fail to do this, we face continued subjection to a white society. If & when we succeed, because we will, we will exercise control over our lives, politically, economically, & physically. This book isn't a formula, Blueprint or timeline because freedom doesn't have a set time. Programs don’t come out of one or two lines but out of day-to-day interaction between organizers in the community. In chapter 1 they explain that to get to the right answers we need to ask the right questions and the premise needs to be routed in the truth. In chapter 2 they teach pride rather than shame and the responsibility of all black people. In chapter 3 they explain what white people can do to help, some might be interested in this.

- **Keys:** Frederick Douglas

- **Quote:** Those who profess to favor freedom yet deprecate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground; they want rain without thunder and lighting. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters… Power concedes nothing without demand. It never did and it never will.
  - Frederick Douglas

Chapter 1: White Power: The Colonial Situation

- **Summary:** In the first chapter of “White Power” one of the main topics we as a people get confused and allow other people to confuse us on is racism. Racism is subordinating a racial group(s) and maintaining control over that racial group(s). Control coincides ONLY with power, so power and the urge to demean a racial group further explains racism. As for individual and collective groups of white people, individuals can so call “Absolve themselves” but those same individuals support the vehicle and/or institution that supports racist policies against the same people, Black people, they want to be forgiven by.
We need to clarify these certain issues because black people’s political esteem is very low, in direct result from the “Public FOOL System” giving us and our youth meaningless curriculum. The first thing they teach us is that we were slaves and will be a dead slave now if you get out of line, which some examples could be; being black walking down the street, getting shot in the back running away from the pigs, and absolutely nothing... just to name a few, and these people believe we can’t do anything for ourselves productively without the help of white people.

“White America’s School of Slavery and Segregation, like the School of Colonialism, has taught the subject to hate himself and deny his own humanity. The white society maintains an attitude of superiority in the black community has two often succumb to it, thereby permitting the light still believe in the correctness of their position. Races assumptions of white superiority have been so deeply ingrained into the fiber of the society that they infuse entire functioning and the national subconscious (Kwame & Hamilton, 1967, p. 31).”

Even with black “leaders” that run for City Council, Mayor, Governor and even the President of the U.S.A and win they are then only as powerful as their white kingmakers will permit them to be (Kwame & Hamilton, 1967, p. 11).” As black people that aspired to be leaders we cannot in theory “fight the system” and expect the system to treat you nicely, fairly or justly. In other words, “When one forcefully challenges the races system, one cannot, at the same time, expect a system to reward him or even treat him comfortably when one forcefully challenges the races system (Kwame & Hamilton, 1967, p. 15).”

The comment that gets thrown around constantly is, “Not all white people are bad” and this comment might hold water, nevertheless; “[it] is not to say that every single white american consciously oppresses black people. He does not need to. Institutional racism has been maintained deliberately by the power structure and through indifference, inertia [A tendency to do nothing or remain unchanged] and lack of courage on the part of white masses as well as petty officials (Kwame & Hamilton, 1967, p.22).” The facts of institutional racism at all angles creates an inferiority complex within the individual or particular group being oppressed, for example; “Since every human being depends upon his cumulative experience with others for clues of how he should view and value himself, children who are constantly rejected understandably begin to question and doubt whether they, their family, and their group really deserve no more respect from the larger society than they receive (Kwame & Hamilton, 1967, p.29).” The effects of this creates the white man psychic properly known as the black bourgeoisie or Coon/House Negro.
Black power explains that coons adopt and accept the customs, dress, language and ways of their oppressor while rejecting their heritage, their people, and in result themselves (Kwame & Hamilton, 1967, p.30).” Understanding the power that is against us is key. Organizing and tightening up against people that don’t see us as humans, have a zero morality complex and have shown it through 463 years (310 years of slavery starting with 20 enslaved Africans in 1685 and 153 years of Post-Slavery, Black Codes, Jim Crow, Crack epidemic, Mass incarceration, Police state, etc.) and counting.

- **Keys:** Loyalty to whites- This is basically highlighting The notion that black people in educated spaces are loyal to, for example, a political party more than their own people.
- Captive leaders- These are “could-be” leaders in our community such as black school teachers but they are not respected in their communities like they should be.
- Oppressive forces and special interests- A great amount of stuff in this country aims to be detrimental to the black community. For example, CSU’s doing away with remedial courses.
- Colonial mentality- The notion of a slave state still being present in the mentality of blacks as, enslaved, and whites as the master.
- Cumulative experiences- we are conditioned by continuous oppression that our people began with during the slave trade and is continuing with things like unemployment, under resourced neighborhoods, unequal pay and mass incarceration.
- Assimilation, Institutional Racism, Colonialism, Dred Scott decision, Inferiority, Superiority.

- **Quote:** “The missionaries came for goods, not for our good (Kwame & Hamilton, 1967, p. 17).”

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**Chapter II: Black Power: Its Need And Substance**

- **Summary:** As a people we need to reclaim our talents, time and most importantly our human dignity. We must have and obtain black power if we want to prosper in the future. We must redefine ourselves, we are not niggas, savages, thugs, murderers, menaces to society, these are all creations of the main culprit, white people. Black people must redefined themselves, and only they can do that (Kwame
These characteristics given to us by society are given to us by white America to define us. And if we accept this we’re just working as “good slaves” for white America... again!

The next step for black power for black people is “political modernization” and this has three major concepts;

1. Questioning all values and institutions of the society.
2. Searching for new and different forms of political structure to solve political and economic problems.
3. Running the base of political participation to include more people in the decision making process.

“The goal of black people must **NOT** be to assimilate into middle-class America” because that class, as a social force, perpetuates racism (Kwame & Hamilton, 1967, p.40).

One of the movements affecting black people is the terms; diversity, intersectionality and “People of Color” - (like Black people have the same problems as everyone else and like we’re back in the 50s, which wasn’t that long ago). While these factions grow and prosper off of our backs, dripping sweat and blood we remain stagnant and retrogressive. We need to call the entire system into question.

The fundamentals of black power is having our own by this we mean proper representation control over ourselves. This doesn’t mean black power for some and not for all because “Black people have not suffered as individuals but as members of a group, therefore; liberation lies in [group] action (Kwame & Hamilton, 1967, p. 54).” To be able to obtain liberation we can’t be chasing integration with white people which only scrapes the cream off the top of our pot onto the white dinner plate.

Imagine a community pouring all of their resources they had available into their youth for 18 to 24 years and after that time passed those same youth turned their back on their own community and do for and sustain the other community. We will call those people selfish, wasteful, and traders to their own race but this is what black people do when they get into the middle class and around white people. They believe they are better than who and what they came from, even though those were the same people that made a foundation for them and made it possible for them to get where they are at today. And with this cycle we continue to be on the bottom of every rung of every ladder. Integration means that black people must give up their identity, deny their heritage, therefore deny themselves and their people “No person can be healthy, complete and mature if he must deny a part of himself; this is what “Integration” has required thus far (Kwame & Hamilton, 1967, p. 55).”


Chapter III: The Myth of Coalition

- **Summary:** When forming coalitions there must be a clear vision of grouping with whom? What for? And what objectives? In chapter 3, Kwame and Hamilton explain three myths; The interest of black people are identical with the interest of certain level, labor and other reform groups, the fallacious assumption that a viable coalition can be affected between the politically and economically secure and a politically and economically insecure, and finally assumptions that the political coalitions are and can be sustained on a more friendly sentimental basis by appeals to conscience (Kwame & Hamilton, 1967, p.60).” For those who want to start a coalition with white liberals need to understand that “white leaders who attempt to communicate and cooperate with the [black] counterparts, do not see racial inequality in the same way that [black people do] and white american lives almost his entire life in a white world[,] The Negro American lives a large part of his life in a white world also, but in a world in which he is stigmatized (Kwame & Hamilton, 1967, p.61).” **Coalitions are meaningful when both, all parties are not only willing but believe it is absolutely necessary to challenge Anglo-conformity and other prevailing norms and institutions (Kwame & Hamilton, 1967, p.62).”**

We must be a secure group before starting any formation with other groups. We cannot join groups that have interest diametrically opposed to the interest of black people.

So what are the grounds for a viable coalitions? They are as listed

1. Recognition by the parties involved of the respective self interest
2. The mutual belief that each party stands to benefit in terms of that self interest from a line with the other or others
3. Acceptance of the fact that each party has its own independent basis of power and does not depend for ultimate decision-making on a cause outside of itself
4. The realization that coalition deals with specific and identifiable- as opposed to general and vague- goals.

- **Keys:** Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), Political coalitions, Liberals, Democratic machine, American Federation of labor(AFL), Middle-class Coalitions, Anti-White

- **Quote:** “Whenever black people have moved towards genuinely independent action, this is Syed he has distorted their intentions are damned their performance (Kwame & Hamilton, 1967, p.84).”

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**Chapter IV: Mississippi Freedom Democrats: Bankruptcy Of The Establishment**

- **Summary:** This chapter summaries that black people knew they would have to search for and build new forms of politics outside the democratic party or any other form that will begin to bring about changes needed for them in this country. Democrat and Republican are two different fangs on the same snake that continues to poison us.

- **Keys:** Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP)

- **Quotes:** “We are told that America is a “society of laws, not of men,” the implications being, of course, that laws operate impartially and objectively, irrespective of race or other particular differences. This is completely inconsistent with reality. What is the agent of those and political power; it is the product of those powerful enough to define right and wrong and to have the definition legitimize by law (Kwame & Hamilton, 1967, p.95).”

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**Chapter V: Black-Belt Election: New Day A’Coming**

- **Summary:** Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) understood one of the major obstacles affecting black people organize structures to fight institutional racism was *fear*. History shows us only coming together to do three things sing, pray, and dance. If we met to do anything else we were intimidated and threatened by the power structure. So political power is the first step independence and
freedom. So registering black people to vote does several things; it marks the beginnng of political modernization by broadening the base of participation, white people have contained black people from not voting and for us to go out and vote in a block is saying NO to their containment, also the black person begins to live and to create their own existence (Kwame & Hamilton, 1967, p. 105).” In this chapter they also talk about not giving or spending that much time to convince people that are too far gone. We can’t force anybody to do something that they don’t want to do the only thing you can do is question what they’re doing and to allow them to answer that question for themselves.

- **Keys:** FEAR, Institutional racism, Ministers/Preachers and the black community, 1965 Voting rights Act(Passed in August), Board of Education, T.C.B (Take care of business- black folks business)

- **Quote:** “Only so many black people rush to the banner of freedom and blackness without seeing someway to make ends meet, to care for their children (Kwame & Hamilton, 1967, p. 120).”

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**Chapter VI: Tuskegee Alabama: The Politics Of Deference**

- **Summary:** This chapter summarizes Booker T Washington’s school the Tuskegee Institute. A lot of this information is in the book “Up from Slavery” which is a book about Booker T. Washington and his life. They summarize the hardships that our forefathers had to go through to vote and explain the importance of voting. Nowadays the most important thing is voting locally and voting for some Propositions that affect black people because that is what affects us immediately, not the presidential election. So using parts of the Tuskegee model of not being apologetic or defensive about controlling our communities will be a step in the right direction.

- **Keys:** Tuskegee, Dr. George Washington Carver, Dr. W.E.B DuBois, Booker T. Washington, political power

- **Quote:** These decisions were made on the premises that (1) it was wiser to seek only a few offices in order to show the local whites that they had nothing to fear from the growing black vote; (2) it was best to gain “experience” in public office before even thinking about assuming full control; (3) if the blacks elected all candidates, the weights-in addition to pulling up stakes and leaving the county-might, during the lame-duck, so disrupt the financial status of the county asked to
render the incoming blacks in capable of governing effectively (Kwame & Hamilton, 1967, p.136).”

Chapter VII: Dynamite In The Ghetto

- **Summary:** Kwame and Hamilton pitch the idea that there have been virtually no legitimate programs to deal with alienation and oppressive conditions in the ghettos. These ghettos are here and sustain to suppress our intellectual thought and Godly virtue. This dynamite placed in the ghetto was placed by white racism and is it ignited by white racism so when the dynamite goes off all 463 years of hell will break loose on white supremacy.

- **Keys:** Corporate Power, Black migration (WWII Deep South), Moving to the North Black were placed in slums/projects, Board of Education,

- **Quote:** “Correspondingly, The lower class has been transformed from production to permanent unemployment. It’s value was no longer labor but dependency... both groups and allied interests are in daily battle, which is manifested in the recurring disorders that surround housing, education, and welfare administration... (Kwame & Hamilton, 1967, p.148).”

Chapter VIII: The Search For New Forms

- **Summary:** This whole chapter is about understanding that we cannot use old instructions to solve new and more intricate problems. Change has to come some day and change can only come when black America begins to move, and continues to move. Some of us get caught in the respectability aspect and wanting all white people to respect us. So we tread the water, ever so slightly, so we can be liked and respected by every group. This idea is so preposterous because respectability can only go so far. Kwame and Hamilton suggest for black students to actually control the public schools in their community by creating a committee of teachers (Kwame & Hamilton, 1967, p.167). We need to shift the conversation from integration into control. This goes for education in the schools, for renting, and any other activities that affect the black community. We cannot be satisfied by only being visible to white people “black visibility is not black power (Kwame & Hamilton, 1967, p.174).”. And the idea of a leader being bad news is crazy because
having a leader is important in the way they give structure to the organization. Finally, “If political institutions do not meet the needs of the people, if people finally believe that those institutions to not express their own values, and those institutions must be discarded. It is a wasteful and inefficient, not to mention unjust, to continue imposing old forms and ways of doing things only people who know longer view those forms and ways as functional (Kwame & Hamilton, 1967, p.176).”

- **Keys**: Committee of teachers, Control over curriculum, career guidance, financial matters, Quality Education, Human rights, Discipline, Black Visibility is not Black Power.

- **Quote**: “We see this as a potential power of the ghettos. In a real sense, it is similar to what is taking place in the south: The move in the direction of independent politics—and from there, the move towards the development of wholly new political institutions. If these proposals also sound impractical, utopian, then we ask: what other real alternatives exist? There are none; The choice lies between a genuinely new approach in maintaining the brutalizing, destructive, violence breeding life of the ghettos as they exist today. From the viewpoint of black people, there is no choice (Kwame & Hamilton, 1967, p.177).”

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**Afterword**: “T. C. B.”

- **Overview:**

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**Afterword, 1992 By Kwame Ture**

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**Afterword, 1992 By Charles V. Hamilton**

- **Overview:**