

**Huey P. Newton**

# **In Defense of Self Defense**

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Historically, the power structure has demanded that Black leaders cater to their desires and to the ends of the imperialistic racism of the oppressor. The power structure has endorsed those black leaders who have reduced themselves to nothing more than apologizing parrots. They have divided the so-called black leaders within the political arena. The oppressors' sponsor radio programs, give space in their racist newspapers, and have shown them the luxury only enjoyed by the oppressor. The black leaders serve the oppressor by purposely keeping the people submissive and passive — non-violent. At any moment that these so-called black leaders respond to the cries of the suffering and downtrodden, unemployed and welfare recipients who hunger for liberation by any means necessary.

Historically there have been a few black men who have rejected the handouts of the oppressor and have refused to spread the oppressor's treacherous principles of deceit, gradual indoctrination and brainwashing, and who have refused to indulge in the criminal activity of teaching submission, fear, and love for an enemy who hates the very color black and is determined to commit genocide on an international scale.

There has always existed in the black colony of Afro-America a fundamental difference over which tactics from the broad spectrum of alternatives black people should employ in their struggle for national liberation.

One side of this difference contends that black people are in the peculiar position where in order to gain acceptance into the "mainstream" of American life they must employ no tactic that will make

the oppressor whites angry. This view holds that black people constitute a hopeless minority and that salvation for black people lies in developing brotherly relations. There are certain tactics that are taboo. Violence against the oppressor must be avoided at all costs, because the oppressor will retaliate with superior violence. So black people may protest but not protect. They can complain but not cut and shoot. In short, black people must at all costs remain non-violent.

On the other side of the difference, we find that the point of departure is the principle that the oppressor has no rights that the oppressed is bound to respect. Kill the slavemaster, destroy him utterly, move against him with implacable fortitude. Break his oppressive power by any means necessary. Men who have stood before the black masses and recommended this response to the oppression have been held in fear by the oppressor. The blacks in the colony who were wed to the non-violent alternative could not relate to the advocates of implacable opposition to the oppressor. Because the oppressor always prefers to deal with the less radical — i.e., less dangerous — spokesmen for his subjects. He would prefer that his subjects had no spokesmen at all, or better yet, he wishes to speak for them himself. Unable to do this practically, he does the next best thing and endorses spokesmen who will allow him to speak through them to the masses. Paramount against his imperatives is to see to it that implacable spokesmen are never allowed to communicate their message to the masses. Their oppressor will resort to any means necessary to silence the implacable.

The oppressor, the endorsed spokesmen, and the implacables form the three points of a triangle of death. The oppressor looks upon the endorsed spokesmen as a tool to use against the implacable and to keep the masses passive within the acceptable limits of the tactics he is capable of containing. The endorsed spokesmen look upon the oppressor as a guardian angel who can always be depended upon to protect them from the wrath of the implacables, while he looks upon the implacable as a dangerous and irresponsible madmen who, by angering the oppressor, will certainly provoke a bloodbath in which they themselves might get washed away. The implacable view both the oppressors and the endorsed leaders as his deadly enemies. If anything, he has a more profound hatred for the endorsed leaders than he has for the oppressor himself, because the implacables know that they can deal

with the oppressor only after they have driven the endorsed spokesmen off the scene.

Historically, the endorsed spokesmen have always held the upper hand on the implacables. In Afro-American history, there are shining brief moments when the implacable have outmaneuvered the oppressor and the endorsed spokesmen and gained the attention of the black masses. The black masses, recognizing the implacables in the depths of their despair, respond magnetically to the implacables and bestow a devotion and loyalty to them that frightens the oppressor and endorsed spokesmen into a panic-stricken frenzy and they leap into a rash act — murder, imprisonment, or exile — to silence the implacables and to get their show back onto the road.

The masses of black people have always been deeply entrenched and involved in the basic necessities of life. They have not had time to abstract their situation. Abstractions come only with leisure. The people have not had the luxury of leisure. Therefore the people have been very aware of the true definition of politics: Politics are merely the desire of individuals and groups to satisfy first their basic needs: food, shelter and clothing, and security for themselves and their loved ones. The black leaders endorsed by the power structure have attempted to sell the people the simple-minded theory that politics is holding political office; being able to move into a \$40,000 home; being able to sit near white people in a restaurant (while in fact the black masses have not been able to pay the rent on a \$40.00 rat-infested hovel).

The black leaders have led the community to believe that brutality and force could be ended by subjecting the people to this very force of self-sacrificing demonstrations. The black people realize brutality and force can only be inflicted if there is submission. The community has not responded in the past or in the present to the absurd and erroneous, deceitful tactics of so-called legitimate black leaders. The community realizes that force and brutality can only be eliminated by counter force through self defense. Leaders who have recommended these tactics have never had the support and followership of the downtrodden black masses who comprise the bulk of the community. Grassroots — the downtrodden of the black community, even though they rejected the handpicked hankerchief heads endorsed by the power structure, the

people have not had the academic or administrative knowledge to form themselves in a long resistance to the brutality.

Marcus Garvey and Malcolm X were the two black men of the twentieth century who posed an implacable challenge to both the oppressor and the endorsed spokesmen that could be dealt with in no other way than precisely in the foul manner recorded by history. Malcolm, in our time, stood on the threshold with the oppressor and the endorsed spokesmen in a bag that they couldn't get out of. Malcolm, implacable to the ultimate degree, held out to the black masses the historical, stupendous victory of black collective salvation and liberation from the chains of the oppressor and the treacherous embrace of the endorsed spokesmen. Only with the gun were the black masses denied this victory. But they learned from Malcolm that with the gun, they can recapture their dreams and bring them into reality.

The heirs of Malcolm now stand millions strong on their corner of the triangle, facing the racist dog oppressor and the soulless endorsed spokesmen. The heirs of Malcolm have picked up the gun. And taking first things first, are moving to expose the endorsed spokesmen for the black masses to see them for what they are and always have been. The choice offered by the heirs of Malcolm to the endorsed spokesmen is to repudiate the oppressor and crawl back to their people and earn a speedy reprieve or face a merciless, speedy and most timely execution for treason and being too wrong for too long.