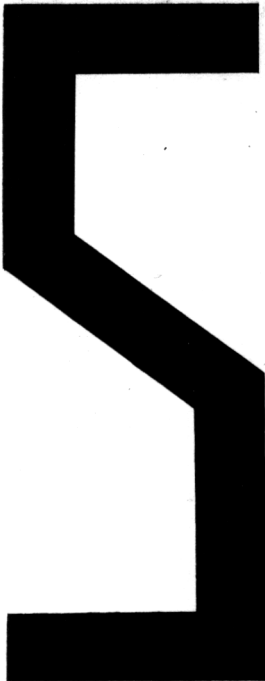


BLACK PANTHERS



Eldridge



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THIS POSTER WAS DONE BY YOUNG 13 YEAR OLD REVOLUTIONARY SISTER LYNN CELESTE.

THE POWER OF THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY

Cec Levinson

It is an indisputable fact that the Black Colony confined within the boundaries of these less-than-united-states, in fighting for its own liberation from imperialist oppression is leading the movement for basic economic and political change which will ultimately free the entire working class. Today, in this historical period, the Black Panther Party has proven, by its phenomenal growth, by the acceptance of its program by a growing segment of the Black population, that it is the emerging political leader of the Black Colony, which signifies that it is providing the leadership of the revolutionary forces in this country.

I, a white revolutionary, if I am to be true to my ideals and stated goals, must accept the leadership of the accepted leader of the revolutionary forces, the Black Panther Party.

Why am I so sure that the Panther Party has the correct program for today's struggle against U.S. imperialism? The effectiveness of a political program lies in its value as proven in day-to-day testing in the community, in its acceptance by an ever-increasing number of the people it is designed to lead; both of which assure its ultimate victory. We cannot, of course, prove an "ultimate victory", but we can attempt to determine whether we're heading in that direction.

In building a revolution, there are 2 essentials: to organize for the attainment of the immediate needs of the working people and the constant developing of a revolutionary consciousness toward that inevitable day when we'll destroy this monstrous capitalistic power structure and begin building a socialistic-people's world. What

tactics (the daily struggle for immediate gains) and theory (knowledge that no basic change in the class structure will be achieved under capitalism, that a revolution must be fought.) It is evident from studying the history of organizations and political parties born during the last century, that continuing struggles on both levels is difficult. Every group, to my knowledge, conceived in this country with revolutionary objectives has either fallen into the capitalistic abyss of reformism and been drowned in the infected mire of attempting to "make it" in this decaying system - (factually, the "leaders" "make it" while the late membership is left to float about looking for another base, or just to forget it) - or the entire group has been left out in the vacuum of revolutionary rhetoric; isolation from the people.

The Communist Party of the U.S. is a classic example of revolutionary beginnings. It was the first to recognize the colonial status of Black people, calling for self-determination for what it termed The Negro Nation in the Black Belt of the south. It was only half a theory, failing to encompass the entire Black Colony spread throughout the many states in the swelling urban ghettos of the north, but it did recognize the innate colonial super-exploitation by the white power structure. It knew the need and carried forth a program to organize southern share-croppers and tenant-farmers in their desperate need for land. Many communists were killed in attempting to organize the miners (Joe Hill, the poet who sang, "Don't mourn for me. Organize!") and workers in other basic industries in the south. Above all, the CPUSA recognized the in-

imperialistic struggle and many of them fought and died in the Spanish Civil War, anticipating, correctly the rise of fascism in Europe should Franco succeed in overthrowing the then democratic Spanish government. The CP was the foremost fighter for Black studies and, most basic of all, understood the need for a black-white labor coalition. However, and sadly because this is the barest outline of a proud, heroic history, somewhere along the road of fighting for these necessary and immediate demands, many U.S. communists got trapped in the capitalistic bag of profit-making and became themselves, the exploiters, now engaging in reformist activity, if any at all. Unlike other organizations, it wasn't the leaders, most of whom had been born of the working class and strengthened through union organizing in steel mills and coal mines and southern agriculture, who turned tail on their revolutionary objectives. The CP itself recognized the futility of all this in 1948 with its support of the Progressive Party.

There are exceptions, and the Panthers have among today's CPers, many active and/or verbal - mostly Black - supporters. Perhaps the most notable is the great lawyer William Patterson, defender of the Scottsboro Boys and writer of the original WE CHARGE GENOCIDE petition presented to the United Nations in 1951. And the communists had on an international as well as a local level something else we must all learn, an essential factor lacking among U.S. "revolutionists" of today without which there will be no revolution. There was always, a deep, real, penetrating feeling of brotherhood between them, and an ever-present

they worked. It was this feeling of being needed, of belonging, generated particularly from the leadership in working class areas that propelled the Party through the horror of the McCarthy period. We all need to feel useful, if not vital to the movement; fighting alone is insanity and leads towards emotional, sometimes, physical death.

But perhaps the other end of the rope (used by the enemy to hang dissenters) is more meaningful, closer to us active in the movement today. Here we find dangling several ghostly illusions: organizations replete with those who scream REVOLUTION with every breath but who have so alienated themselves from the people as to have become virtually ineffective. The Yippies are a prime example. They are dedicated, I am sure, to their cause; they appear ready, at a moment's notice to sacrifice years in prison, perhaps their lives. But we don't need any more headline-making martyrs. Self-sacrifice is often necessary to provide the initial impetus for a movement. It is sometimes true that people will act only in the aftermath of horror, if they are not completely immobilized. But today, we need organizers: doorbell-ringing, sidewalk pounding, people-loving organizers.

It is essential that we know our enemy and understand fully the strategy it employs to sabotage our revolutionary efforts. The ruling class pursues a razor-sharp, double-edged policy of counter-insurgency: on one jagged side, there are concessions - to encourage reformism; on the other, repression - to discourage rebellion.

The first weapon is used pri-

to the Black bourgeoisie, financial crumbs to the upper strata of the working class, the skilled workers, and a constant attempt to buy off militant leaders. In the last several years - in the aftermath of the southern student demonstrations and the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party's state-wide organizing and challenge at the National Democratic Convention in 1964 - a 4th, most insidiously clever method has appeared and thrived to such an extent as to have stifled much revolutionary activity. This is the infamous Poverty Program in all its varied forms and hundreds of initialled extremities. But whatever the initials, wherever it shows its sneering grin, it has but one purpose: to buy the people's souls in a compromise with capitalism; to keep them so busy attending endless, meaningless meetings, "skill center" classes which end where they began - no jobs, and the people fighting among themselves for these sometimes lucrative, most often, peanuts - positions; so busy, there is no time for appraisal of the busyness, let alone revolutionary study or activity. This is the only country in the world with the financial resources to fight for its life by throwing bones to thousands of its citizens. (Think of the schools we could build, the land we could buy, the jobs we could guarantee dividing up the \$70 million plus flushed down the Oakland drain every year!) This is the fattest, deadliest saboteur we have to combat. It is imperative that the message get to the people: Take the money - Hell, Yes! Let it pay the rent and buy food and clothes and movies and scotch, but not your souls! Take the money. Fight the source!