

# WHO RESPECTS THE BLACK MAN'S RIGHTS?

Judge Taney, in his famous decision on the Dred Scott case, ruled that a Black man was a slave because he was Black regardless of whether the laws of the state in which he lived allowed or prohibited slavery. He stated in his decision that, "A Black man has no rights a White man is bound to respect." Coming from the mouth of an official representative of the government appointed to dispense "justice" in a court of "law", those words expressed the basic ideological tenet of racism.

In terms of our struggle to free Black people being waged in the streets, schools, armed services, and courts of present day America, nothing seems to have changed in this basic premise. Black people still have no rights. White people still know this, and still perpetuate the system that allows this condition to exist in all kinds of blatant and subtle ways, in all aspects of American society, within all classes of people.

The question raised today by this reality is who, then, is our real enemy? Is it only the courts and police and other apparatuses of control that govern this country for the benefit of capitalism, or is it even more broadly dispersed among all the elements of the population who actively practice racism or passively allow it to contaminate our existence? Does the White man have any rights the Black man is bound to respect?

If all White people are at liberty to disregard the rights of all Black



KATHLEEN AND MACEO

people, and are encouraged to do so by all the institutions of society, what apparatus is there which binds those Whites who seem to recognize that this is unjust and seem to acknowledge the rights of Black people to firmly maintain this position? What concretely exists in present day America to prevent these same White people from reneging on this recognition and refusing to respect the rights of Black people? What assurance do we have that they are not merely pretending to be humane, moral and "revolutionary" in order to deceive and confuse and divide us? What GUARANTEE do we have that they too will not revert to the majority position articulated by Judge Taney and echoed by Judge Hoffman when the pressure becomes too great, that they too will not acquiesce in the violent enforcement of this position by the fascist American government?

We are not so foolish as to judge

people by the color of their skin, nor are we so foolish as to trust people on the basis of their promises and appearances. The past performance of White people in their help to Blacks in slavery has been plagued with opportunists, egotists, hypocrites, liars, cowards, mavericks, napes and nuts who represent no real power and command no real support among their brothers. There has always been a point beyond which they could not or would not go.

Now that Black people in general and the Black Panther Party in particular are on trial for our right to exist, and the symbol of our humanity and our struggle, Chairman Bobby Seale, has already been sentenced in advance to death in the electric chair by the fascist government of the United States, where are those revolutionary soldiers who will stand with us shoulder to shoulder, gun in hand, brave in heart, and brothers in commitment to the real liberation of Black people that can only be won in blood? What proof do we have today that a White man is bound to respect a Black man's rights? How long can we wait to find out?

BLACK PANTHER PARTY  
International Section, Algiers, Algeria  
Kathleen Cleaver,  
Communications Secretary

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