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Op Ed

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**Black Power And The Black Lives Matter Movement**

**By E. D. Mondainé Jr.**

The struggle for racial justice has been at the center of black existence from the moment the first slave stepped onto the soil of this continent. The savage abduction and brutal exploitation of Africans by this nation is not just a matter of our history; it also has a profound effect on our future. Whether we want to admit it or not, the moral, social, and political implications of centuries of brutality against African Americans are still with us today and hang like a Sword of Damocles over the viability of our nation. In this context, it is convenient for many to forget that we live in a moral universe and that we cannot break its moral laws, just as we cannot break its natural laws, without suffering the consequences.

What I'm sharing is not necessarily bad news, and I could even make a case that it is the Good News. The sin of slavery conceived at our nation's birth has the potential to bind us together against the common enemy of a vicious legacy – but only if we have the courage and the character to confront it together. And here is where we face our greatest challenge.

Although many Americans admit that racism is problematic and built into the fabric of our society, only four in ten Americans say they support Black Lives Matter. I suspect the remaining six who do not support BLM do so for reasons other than those they parrot from the racist media machines that call themselves news. The real reason for withholding their support, of course, is fear - fear of losing their hidden advantage, fear that the loss of this advantage will expose inherent inadequacies, and fear of retribution. In this way, BLM is merely a reincarnation of an idea that terrified America in the late 1960s and early 1970's – Black Power.

However, for African Americans, both the Black Power Movement and the Black Lives Matter Movement are a response to having our backs against the wall. That's why they are both easily cast as "radical." Both movements are a desperate and vocal reaction to the state's unfettered violence committed against our community. We are now as we were then, sick and tired of asking politely for the right to survive.

Unfortunately, the inalienable rights promised to all Americans have never been equitably shared with America's Black population. White America doesn't want to understand that Black Power, in any decade, is not a bid to steal their rights from them; it is an attempt to secure those same Constitutionally guaranteed rights for ourselves. This fact may seem incredibly obvious to some. Still, I am often shocked by those who willingly choose not to recognize how Black Americans, four hundred years later, face terrifyingly similar challenges to our fundamental rights. One only needs to look at the laws passed in 2021 that attempt to strip Black Americans of their voting rights to see how the resurrected spirit of Jim Crow still haunts black freedom and, yes, Black Power. The houses of African Americans are still on fire, and it's going to take all of us - black, white, yellow, red, and brown - to put it out.

If the American story has any lesson, it is this: without an unrelenting commitment from every citizen to afford the same rights to all Americans equally, our democracy is not just a sham; it is unsustainable. In the absence of a genuinely equal America that operates according to its stated and most cherished values, this country will most assuredly become unwoven by the shadows of its brutality and hypocrisy. Here we see the imperative underlying the demand for Black Power that we all must heed. It is not a call to radicalize; it is a Call to a national, moral, and political Reckoning that is a matter of our survival. We ignore this Call at our peril.

I am a black man, a descendant of slave ancestry, and I'm proud to be a part of the Resilience and Resistance of Black people. So go ahead, say it out loud with me, because there ain't no shame, "I'm Black, and I'm proud

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