For Immediate Release

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**THIS IS POWER**

**E. D. Mondainé Jr.**

America has witnessed the slaying of Trayvon Benjamin Martin in Florida, subsequent murders of Eric Garner in New York, Michael Brown in Missouri, Tamir Rice in Ohio, and George Floyd in Minnesota. In addition, and not to be forgotten, the suspicious death of Sandra Bland in a jail cell in Texas, and Breonna Taylor, the 26-year old black woman, fatally shot in her Kentucky apartment. These violent incidents paint a grim and racist portrait of America, inconsistent with America's creed and values.

These murders have ignited unrest in the streets, communities, and cities of the United States. They have provoked the burning and looting of businesses, causing millions of dollars in loss for merchants and leaving neighborhoods decimated. Thousands turned out in Australia, Britain, France, Germany, and other nations in solidarity and protest against racism in the United States.

Waves of unrest have swept America in the past and birthed cycles of conflict, ranging from the North's attempt to separate the mixed race cultures of the South after the Civil War in the 1860s to the worldwide Black Lives Matter movement in 2020. Such unrest is served from pots of injustice stewed in white supremacy and bigotry; unfortunately, these vicenary performances are quickly forgotten as the hideousness of oppression.

Eerily, these scenarios are painfully familiar. Local media highlights barbaric and inhumane video documentation of American citizens standing in opposition to racism. Yet, at the same time, liberal politicians and elected officials offer hollow gestures as cosmetic aids, the inevitable resurgence of cancerous systemic injustices lauded upon marginalized and impoverished communities. In addition, local and national corporations seize marketing opportunities by offering temporary sustainability to frontline organizations that bring attention to social ills.

Unfortunately, such funding quickly evaporates when the wind blows away the smoke of tear gas canisters, torched buildings, and burning cinder in trash cans in inner-cities of the United States lit by angry protestors and social justice advocates. Making matters worse are town hall forums formatted to allow incensed and concerned citizens to express deep vitriol and blow off steam. Again, the results are empty promises and no policy and systemic change.

The Black Lives Matter movement that began in 2013 was the poster child for the latest short-lived call to action for America to become diversified, equitable, and inclusive. However, and according to many, such words have open-ended meanings offering no real and sustainable power.

The sheer madness of it all must end. But how, who, and what methods should be the catalyst for such insanity to stop?

There have been countless articles written about these subjects, and many allude to the point that the recapitulation of America's racist ill will is not only systemic but firmly rooted in anti-Blackness.

In the 1960s and 1970s, Black Power became a viable agent for change. As a result, several political, social, and cultural institutions were created, as well as racial pride and economic empowerment.

The legacy of Black Power and self-determination may answer questions regarding what could replace the imprisoning systems that suppress and thrive in Black communities. This brings me to where we are today.

First, we must look at optimism in its eyes and embrace the historical readiness and accessibility to Black Power. But, more importantly, it means we must look to the solidarity displayed by the world's citizens that have stood and still stand with black Americans against the racist ideologies of institutional racism in the United States.

Organizations such as the Black Panther Party, the U.S. Organization, the Republic of New Africa, and other programs fostered black self sufficiency and determination through mutual aid to secure success in African American communities without state or federal intervention.

In that spirit, Black social organizations must pool our power and use the muscle we've gained from being forced to build this country

Doing so establishes a more inclusive and dynamic power of self actualization. That power comes from influence, and watching said influence mushrooms empowerment to engage with others. The key to being influential is to foster support rather than just receiving it. Power is never bequeathed but earned.

Power isn't just about power but service to each other. It’s about being willing to engage in such a construct so foundational and fundamental to civility. In doing so, power is essential to building social capital.

Real power. Dr. King spoke of real power when he told America and the world that "the dispossessed of this nation the poor, both white and Negro live in a cruelly unjust society. They must organize a revolution against that injustice, not against the lives of the persons who are their fellow citizens, but against the structures through which society is refusing to take means which have been called for, and which are at hand, to lift the load of poverty. The only real revolutionary, people say, is a man who has nothing to lose. Millions of poor people in this country have very little or nothing to lose. If they can be helped to take action together, they will do so with freedom and a power that will be a new and unsettling force in our complacent national life".

This power will demand systemic ideologies and laws guaranteeing the destruction of overt and supremacist principles and societies. This power insists America's classrooms, corporate board rooms, and halls of justice listen to the cries of the marginalized and cash the checks written from the bankrupt accounts of diversity, equality, and inclusion. This power demonstrates the ability to move mountains of injustice and make way for paved avenues that give every citizen access to paths leading to the American dream. When every American can say in a unified, confident, and proud voice that this is most assuredly 'our America,' the home of the free and the land of the brave, this is power.

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E. D. Mondainé Jr. is an activist, entrepreneur, recording artist, and former President of the Portland Chapter of the NAACP. Founder of the Black American Chamber Of Commerce, he is also Sr. pastor of Celebration Tabernacle Church in Portland, OR and Grace Center, St. Louis, MO

The NAACP is excited to welcome Attorney Benjamin Crump, who represented the families of Breonna Taylor, Trayvon Martin and Michael Brown to address the annual convention of the NAACP Alaska Oregon Washington State Area Conference, Saturday September 3rd. As a tireless social justice advocate and the attorney for so many families who have lost loved ones to police’s excessive use of force, Mr. Crump embodies this year’s Convention theme,“This Is Power.”

His continued fight for justice for those who lost their lives at the hands of those sworn to protect, helped to represent thousands of Flint, Michigan citizens.

WHEN: Saturday, September 3rd Convention will feature a keynoted luncheon at 12, noon followed by workshops.Mr. Crump will keynote the dinner starting at 6pm and will attend a social hour prior to dinner with limited spaces available.

WHERE: Holiday Inn Portland – Columbia Riverfront, Portland, OR