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There Is No New Black Panther Party: An Open Letter From the Dr. Huey P. Newton Foundation

In response from numerous requests from individual's seeking information on the "New Black Panthers," the Dr. Huey P. Newton Foundation issues this public statement to correct the distorted record being made in the media by a small band of African Americans calling themselves the New Black Panthers. As guardian of the true history of the Black Panther Party, the Foundation, which includes former leading members of the Party, denounces this group's exploitation of the Party's name and history. Failing to find its own legitimacy in the black community, this band would graft the Party's name upon itself, which we condemn.

Firstly, the people in the New Black Panthers were never members of the Black Panther Party and have no legitimate claim on the Party's name. On the contrary, they would steal the names and pretend to walk in the footsteps of the Party's true heroes, such as Black Panther founder Huey P. Newton, George Jackson and Jonathan Jackson, Bunchy Carter, John Huggins, Fred Hampton, Mark Cark, and so many others who gave their very lives to the black liberation struggle under the Party's banner.

Secondly, they denigrate the Party's name by promoting concepts absolutely counter to the revolutionary principles on which the Party was founded. Their alleged media assault on the Ku Klux Klan serves to incite hatred rather than resolve it. The Party's fundamental principle, as best articulated by the great revolutionary Ernesto "Che" Guevara, was: "A true revolutionary is guided by great feelings of love." The Black Panthers were never a group of angry young militants full of fury toward the "white establishment." The Party operated on love for black people, not hatred of white people.

Furthermore, this group claims it would "teach" the black community about armed self-defense. The arrogance of this claim is overwhelmed by its reactionary nature. Blacks, especially in the South, have been armed in self-defense for a very long time; indeed, the spiritual parent of the Party itself was the Louisiana-based Deacons for Defense. However, the Party understood that the gun was not necessarily revolutionary, for the police and all other oppressive forces had guns. It was the ideology behind the gun that determined its nature.

Because the Party believed that only the masses of people would make the revolution, the Party never presumed itself to be above the people. The Party considered itself a servant of the people and taught by example. Given massive black hunger, the Party provided free breakfast for children and other free food programs. In the absence of decent medical facilities in the black community, the Party operated free medical clinics. In the face of police brutality, the Party stood up and resisted. Considering the overwhelming number of blacks facing trials and long [prison](#) terms, the Party developed free legal aids and bussing-to-prison programs.

The question the Foundation raises, then, is who are these people laying claim to the Party's history and name? Are they reactionary provocateurs, who would instigate activities counterproductive to the people's interests, causing mayhem and death? Are they entertainers, who would posture themselves before the media, and, according to numerous sources, with empty guns, to spin gold for themselves? Are they, given the history of their late-leader Khalid Muhammad, a group of anti-Semites like the very Ku Klux Klan they allegedly oppose? What is their agenda?

Conditions for blacks in America today are worse than when the Black Panther Party was formed in 1966. Blacks in the main continue to live in poverty; disproportionate percentages of blacks die from AIDS and cancer, as the black infant mortality rate continues to be double that of whites. There is a desperate need for liberation agenda. The Black Panther Party unarguably set the example, espousing principles and a history that certainly should be embraced by all those still struggling for freedom. Rather than appropriating the Party's name, however, groups that purport to represent African Americans ought to follow the Party's true historical example. In the absence of such commitment, the Foundation denounces the usurpation of the Black Panther Party name by this questionable band of self-appointed leaders.

For further reading on the Black Panther Party, please visit our website at www.blackpanther.org. Books by and about the Black Panthers can also be purchased online through this site. Suggested reading includes Revolutionary Suicide, To Die for the People, War Against the Panthers, This Side of Glory, and A Taste of Power.