

**In the Spirit Of Fred Hampton And Mark Clark:
Carry On The Tradition Of Resistance**

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So when you select heroes about which [Afrikan] people ought to be taught, let them be [Afrikan] heroes who have died fighting for the benefit of [Afrikan] people.

Malcolm X

December 4, 1992 will mark twenty-three years since local agents of the U.S. imperialist state (Chicago police, under the direction of the FBI), launched a pre-dawn search-and-destroy attack upon an apartment at 2337 West Monroe Street, Chicago, assassinated Fred Hampton and Mark Clark, and wounded four other members of the Black Panther Party (BPP).

Immediately after the attack, the U.S. and its assassins stood behind a fabricated story, trying to conceal their real motives and methods. They claimed that illegally purchased weapons were in the apartment. There were weapons in the apartment, but all of them had been legally purchased -- a fact known to the assassins, their having been so informed by their paid agent provocateur, William O'Neal.

If the assassins knew that there was no legal justification for their mission, then why did they launch it? They did so because Fred Hampton and the Black Panther Party were leading forces -- and thus major targets -- in the revolutionary war between the U.S. and Afrikans inside its borders who struggle for national self-determination.

Fred Hampton and Mark Clark were murdered as they slept because they carried on a tradition of resistance to their people's oppression; they worked each day to awaken and to organize Afrikan people, and to build bonds of solidarity with other oppressed peoples, in a common struggle against U.S. settler-colonialism and international capitalist-imperialism, and to build a socialist society.

The [Afrikan] youth and moderates must be made to understand that if they succumb to revolutionary teaching, they will be dead revolutionaries.

FBI Internal Memo, 1968

At the time of his assassination, Fred Hampton was twenty-one years of age, and sat as Chairman of the Illinois Chapter of the Black Panther Party. Chairman Fred, as he was affectionately and respectfully called, began his political activism as a fourteen-year-old high school student in Maywood, Illinois, where he organized a youth chapter of the NAACP.

Like most Afrikan youth of the time, Fred was influenced by the growing revolutionary movement of Afrikan and other oppressed peoples throughout the U.S. in the late 1960's. Fred's consciousness and practice reflected his political shift to the left, so much so that he drew the attention of the repressive forces even before he joined the BPP, and the FBI itself began to monitor his activity in 1967. Shortly thereafter, Fred, Bobby Rush and several others organized the Chicago chapter of the BPP, which soon grew into an organization that influenced oppressed communities not only in the city, but throughout the state and the entire U.S.:

They began to negotiate with Chicago street gangs, such as the Blackstone Rangers, Disciples, and Vice Lords, attempting to convince them to give up their violent "gangbanging," and to focus instead on the true enemy -- the government and the police. They built the original Rainbow Coalition which united the Panthers, the Puerto Rican Young Lords Organization, the Young Patriots, the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), and, for a time, certain [Afrikan] street gangs.

They opened a Breakfast for Children Program, first at the Better Boys Foundation, then later at several other locations in the city, and fed hundreds of hungry young children before they went to school. Fred was spreading the message throughout the city, constantly speaking at colleges and high schools and meeting with a wide range of leaders and organizations. He led by example, starting his day at six in the morning at the Breakfast Program, and would never ask someone to do something he would not do, from selling the Panther newspaper to defending the Panther office from police attack.

At the same time, the FBI, both nationally and locally, was increasing its efforts to, in its words, "neutralize the Panther Party and destroy what it stands for."

(December 4th Committee, Fred Hampton 20th Commemoration, pp.2-3)

The moment imperialism arrived and colonialism arrived, it made us leave our history and enter another history.

Amilcar Cabral

The activities of the BPP took place within the context of the national democratic stage of the revolutionary struggle of Afrikans in the U.S. to regain the independence that We lost more than three hundred years ago.