



Excerpt of Bobby Seale Speech

Kaleidoscope Theater Los Angeles

April 16, 1968



Bobby Seale (born 1936) was co-founder and chairman of the Black Panther Party for Self Defense and a leader of the Black Power movement. Seale and Huey P. Newton founded the party in Oakland, California, in 1966, and drafted a 10-point program ("What we want! What we believe") outlining the goals of the party.

In this 1968 speech, Seale spoke in defense of Newton, who had been jailed for the murder of Oakland police officer John Frey. In 1971, after two years in prison, the charges against Newton were dismissed.

"...Do I have to lay out to you again the platform of the program of the Black Panther Party? Do I have to get you to understand what we mean by black liberation in this country? Do we have to get you to understand the necessity of black people taking up arms to defend themselves against racist attack in this country? Well damn it if I have to do it, we're going to do it. Here we are, alright, come on now!

Listen, in our program it states, if you haven't read it you begin to read it you begin to understand it. This program is not outlined for the white community, it's outlined for the black community. Now, number one: we want power to determine our own destiny in our own black communities. Number two: we want full employment for our people. Number three: we want decent housing fit for shelter of human beings. Number four: we want an end to the robbery by the white men to the black people in the black communities. Number five: we want decent education that teaches us about the true nature of this racist decadent system and education that

teaches us about our true history and our role in society in the world. Number six: we want all black men to be exempt from military service. Number seven: we want immediate end of police brutality and murder of black people. Number eight: we want all black men and women to be released from county jails, prisons, federal, state, what-have-you because they have not had fair trial, they have been tried by all white juries. Number nine: we want all people when brought to trial to be tried in a court by their peer groups or people from their black community as defined by your jive Constitution of the United States. Number ten: and in summarization, we want some land, we want some bread, we want some clothing, we want some education, we want some justice, and we want some damn peace.

If I say I want peace, then you say, 'You should put down your gun.' But hasn't it occurred to you by now after 400 years of being brutalized and murdered and lynched and maimed by guns and force on the part of racists and the racist power structure in this



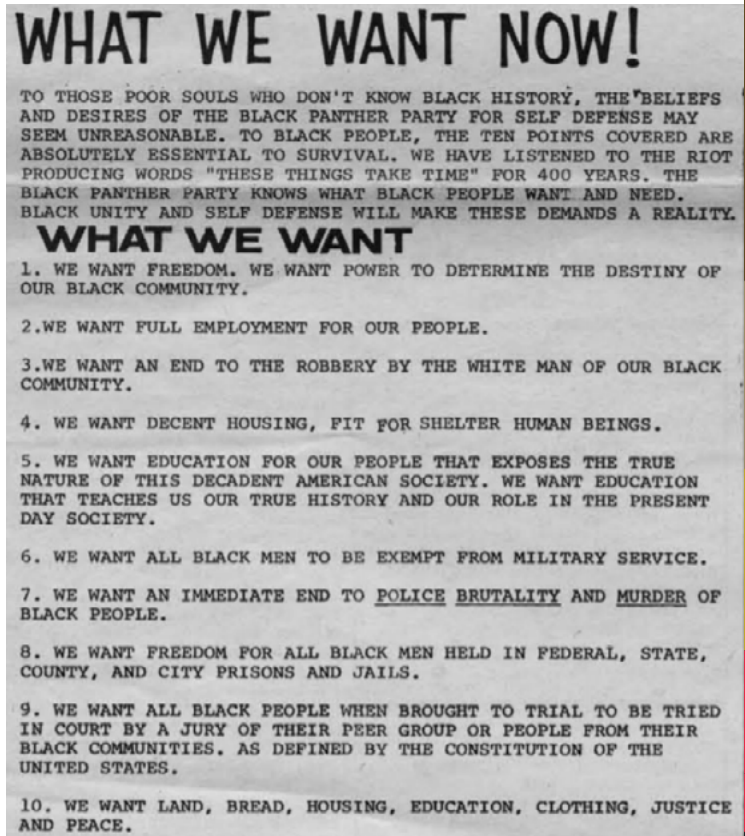
EXCERPT OF BOBBY SEALE SPEECH (CONTINUED)

country; it's damn near time we picked up the gun to try to begin to get some peace, to defend ourselves and our community from racist attacks by the pigs,²³ to defend ourselves against racist attacks by bird giant saw, Minuteman or Ku Klux Klansman or what have you?

Hasn't it occurred to you that it's damn near time we organize ourselves in some fashion to have some ability to begin to make racists and the racist power structure act in a desired manner as we define the functional definition of what power is? The ability to define the situation and we have been defining it, now we must organize our black communities to also make the power structure of racism act in a desired manner.

And what is that desired manner? Politics, what is politics? What is politics? You think politics start with a seat in the assembly, no it doesn't. It's related to it but it doesn't start there. Politics starts with a hungry stomach. Politics starts with a pig crushing us across our skull and murdering our people. Politics starts with the fact that we get a rotten education and we get brainwashed and fooled in a trick notion and trick knowledge and everything else that goes on in terms of the exploitation that goes down.

Politics starts with the fact that you want decent housing, fit for shelter of human beings, now this is where politics starts. And black people now understand with the Black Panther Party that we are going to relate to politics in a real fashion. We are not going for no more jive verbal sincerity—at all. Don't give me Robert F. Kennedy your jive shuck, 'I think it is necessary here, that we come forth.' I don't want to hear it..."



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TEXT SOURCE: American Public Media. *Bobby Seale: Speech delivered at the Kaleidoscope Theater, Los Angeles, California—April 16, 1968.* <https://bit.ly/2VDPYez>.

IMAGE SOURCE: Michiganensian. *Bobby Seale at John Sinclair Freedom Rally at Crisler Arena in Ann Arbor, Michigan, December 10, 1971.* University of Michigan yearbook, 1972. <https://bit.ly/3yQi1pk>.

²³ The Black Panthers deliberately and provocatively used the term "pig" to describe police officers of any race who were part of the oppression of Black people. They defined pig as "a low natured beast, that has no regard for law or justice, or the rights of the people, bites the hand that feeds it, usually masquerades as the victim of an unprovoked attack."