

Black Spartacus: Huey P. Newton's Revolutionary Suicide Revisited (A Psychohistorical Analysis of Successful Revolutionary Violence throughout Black History)

Joseph R. Gibson

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whites to give them their freedom."

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John Henrik Clarke asked "why do we pull so little on the greatness that we have been in order to understand the greatness we still have to be?" I believe the answer lies in popular promotion, which means that we pull so little on that greatness primarily because we have been allowed or even encouraged to know so little about it, especially in the area of Black-on-White revolutionary violence. We are exposed to so little about amazing people like Hannibal Barca, Queen Nzingha, Toussaint L'Ouverture, Denmark Vesey, Queen Nanny, Yaa Asantewa, Dedan Kimathi, Amilcar Cabral, and Robert F. Williams. The logic, according to Paulo Freire, is simple, intelligent, and self-protective on the part of institutionalized White supremacy: "The oppressed must see examples of the vulnerability of the oppressor so that a contrary conviction [to the oppressor's invincibility] can begin grow within them. Until this occurs, they will continue to be disheartened, fearful, and beaten."

Although Whites are bombarded with heroic images of themselves in textbooks, television, and the big screen violently defeating their enemies, both real and imagined, and Black self-destruction is made infamous via various media, there is a remarkable void of comprehensive literature addressing how oppressed Blacks have historically committed the ultimate act of self-defense—killing their definitive enemy.

The ability of institutionalized White supremacy to deny the historical existence of armed Black rebellion against White supremacy is what makes it truly powerful according to Newton's definition of power, which is "not in terms of how many people you can control. To us power is, first of all, the ability to define phenomena, and secondly, the ability to make these phenomena act in a desired manner."

According to Gayraud Wilmore, "it now seems clear that, notwithstanding the suppression of information, the whole issue of black insurrections was underplayed—partly because of that peculiar racist predisposition of many to remember the Negroes as docile, accommodating collaborators in their own misery, waiting for

Malcolm X proposed that "when you select heroes about which Black people ought to be taught, let them be Black heroes who have died fighting for the benefit of Black people...We need to be taught about [Black] people who fought, who bled for [their] freedom and made others bleed." Black Spartacus fulfills that need.



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