

Reading 2 – Side A

John Hulett on the Lowndes County Freedom Party

1 ...Some time ago, we organized a political group of our own known as the Lowndes
2 County Freedom Organization, whose emblem is the Black Panther. We were criticized, we
3 were called communists, we were called everything else, black nationalists and what not,
4 because we did this. Any group which starts at a time like this to speak out for what is right
5 – they are going to be ridiculed. The people of Lowndes County realized this. Today we are
6 moving further. Too long Negroes have been begging, especially in the South, for things
7 they should be working for. So the people in Lowndes County decided to organize
8 themselves – to go out and work for things we wanted in life – not only for the people in
9 Lowndes County, but for every county in the state of Alabama, in the Southern states, and
10 even in California... No person can be free while other people are still slaves, nobody.

11 In Lowndes County, there is a committee in the Democratic Party. This committee
12 not only controls the courthouse, it controls the entire county. When they found out that
13 the Negroes were going to run candidates in the primary of the Democratic Party...they
14 assembled themselves together and began to talk about what they were going to do.
15 Knowing this is one of the poorest counties in the nation, what they decided to do was
16 change the registration fees in the county.

17 Two years ago, if a person wanted to run for sheriff, tax collector, or tax assessor, all
18 he had to do was pay \$50 and then he qualified to be the candidate. This year, the entrance
19 fee is about \$900. If a person wants to run, he has to pay \$500 to run for office. In the
20 primary, when they get through cheating and stealing, then the candidate is eliminated. So
21 we decided that we wouldn't get into such a primary because we were tired of being
22 tricked by the Southern whites. After forming our own political group today, we feel real
23 strong. We feel that we are doing the right thing in Lowndes County.

24 We have listened to everybody who wanted to talk, we listened to them speak, but
25 one thing we had to learn for ourselves. As a group of people, we must think for ourselves
26 and act on our own accord. And this we have done. Through the years, Negroes in the
27 South have been going for the bones while whites have been going for the meat. The
28 Negroes of Lowndes County today are tired of the bones – we are going to have some of the
29 meat too...

30 In Lowndes County, the sheriff is the custodian of the courthouse... After talking to
31 the sheriff about having the use of the courthouse lawn for our mass nominating
32 meeting...he refused to give the Negroes permission. We reminded him that last year...that
33 one of the biggest Klan rallies that has ever been held in the state of Alabama was held on
34 this lawn... And he gave them permission...

35 But he would not permit Negroes to have the use of the courthouse. For one thing
36 he realized that we would build a party – and if he could keep us from forming our own
37 political group then we would always stand at the feet of the Southern whites... So we told
38 him that we were going to have this meeting... And we wouldn't let anybody scare us off.
39 We told him, we won't expect you to protect us, and if you don't, Negroes will protect
40 themselves... [W]e reminded him that according to the law of the state of Alabama, that

41 this mass meeting which was set up to nominate our candidates must be held in or around
42 a voters' polling place. And if we decide to hold it a half a mile away from the courthouse,
43 some individual would...protest our mass meeting. And our election would be thrown out.

44 So we wrote the Justice Department and told them what was going to happen... All
45 of a sudden the Justice Department started coming in fast into the county... [The Justice
46 Department man] wanted to know, if shooting takes place, what are we going to do. And I
47 said, that we are going to stay out here and everybody die together... I said to him, through
48 the years in the South, Negroes have never had any protection, and today we aren't looking
49 to anybody to protect us. We are going to protect ourselves... [Some time later], he said to
50 me, John, I've done all I can do, and I don't know what else I can do, and now it looks like
51 you'll have to call this meeting off at the courthouse. And I said, We're going to have it...
52 [That night], the Justice Department came walking up the aisle of the church and said to me,
53 Listen. I've talked to the Attorney General of the state of Alabama, and he said you can go
54 ahead and have a mass meeting at the church and it will be legal...

55 To me, this showed strength. When people are together, they can do a lot of things,
56 but when you are alone you cannot do anything. There are 600 Negroes in the county who
57 did not trust themselves and who joined the Democratic Party. We warned the entire state
58 of Alabama that running on the Democratic ticket could not do them any good, because this
59 party is controlled by people like [George] Wallace; and whoever won would have to do
60 what these people said to do.

61 I would like to let people here tonight know why we chose this black panther as our
62 emblem... [T]his black panther is a vicious animal, as you know. He never bothers
63 anything, but when you start pushing him, he moves backwards, backwards, and
64 backwards into his corner, and then he comes out to destroy everything that's before him.
65 Negroes in Lowndes County have been pushed back through the years. We have been
66 deprived of our rights to speak, to move, and to do whatever we want to do at all times.
67 And now we are going to start moving... We decided to stop begging. We've decided to
68 stop asking for integration. Once we control the courthouse, once we control the board of
69 education, we can build our school system where our boys and girls can get an education in
70 Lowndes County... We aren't asking any longer for protection – we won't need it – or for
71 anyone to come from outside to speak to us, because we're going to speak for ourselves
72 now and from now on. And I think not only in Lowndes County, not only in the state of
73 Alabama, not only in the South, but in the North – I hope they too will start thinking for
74 themselves. And that they will move and join us in this fight for freedom.

75 - John Hulett, "How the Black Panther Party was Organized," May 22, 1966

Malcolm X on Power

76 **Interviewer:** What is the ambition of the Black Muslims?
77

78 The white man has taught the black people in this country to hate themselves as inferior, to
79 hate each other, to be divided against each other. Messenger Muhammad⁴ restores our love

⁴ Elijah Muhammad – prophet to Black Muslims; Malcolm served as one of Muhammad's chief ministers within the Nation of Islam

80 for our own kind, which enables us to work together in unity and harmony. He shows us
81 how to pool our financial resources and our talents, then to work together toward a
82 common objective. Among other things, we have small businesses in most major cities in
83 this country, and we want to create many more... [I]t is very important to improve the
84 black man's economy, and his thrift. But to do this, we must have land of our own. The
85 brainwashed black man can never learn to stand on his own two feet until he is on his own.
86 We must learn to become our own producers, manufacturers and traders; we must have
87 industry of our own, to employ our own. The white man resists this because he wants to
88 keep the black man under his thumb and jurisdiction in white society. He wants to keep the
89 black man always dependent and begging--for jobs, food, clothes, shelter, education...

90
91 **Interviewer:** Many white religious leaders have also gone on record against the Black
92 Muslims. B'nai B'rith⁵ has accused you of being not only anti-Christian but anti-Semitic. Do
93 you consider this true?

94
95 **Malcolm X:** ...Let me say just a word about the Jew and the black man. The Jew is always
96 anxious to advise the black man. But they never advise him how to solve his problem the
97 way the Jews solved their problem. The Jew never went sitting-in and crawling-in and
98 sliding-in and freedom-riding, like he teaches and helps Negroes to do. The Jews stood up,
99 and stood together, and they used their ultimate power, the economic weapon... The Jews
100 pooled their money and bought the hotels that barred them. They bought Atlantic City and
101 Miami Beach and anything else they wanted. But the Jew that's advising the Negro joins the
102 NAACP, CORE, the Urban League, and others. With money donations, the Jew gains control,
103 then he sends the black man doing all this wading-in, boring-in, even burying-in--
104 everything but buying-in. Never shows him how to set up factories and hotels. Never
105 advises him how to own what he wants. No, when there's something worth owning, the
106 Jew's got it. Walk up and down in any Negro ghetto in America. Ninety percent of the
107 worthwhile businesses you see are Jew-owned. Every night they take the money out. This
108 helps the black man's community stay a ghetto.

109
110 **Interviewer:** Isn't it true that many Gentiles have also labored with dedication to advance
111 integration and economic improvement for the Negro, as volunteer workers for the NAACP,
112 CORE and many other interracial agencies?

113
114 **MALCOLM X:** A man who tosses worms in the river isn't necessarily a friend of the fish. All
115 the fish who take him for a friend, who think the worm's got no hook in it, usually end up in
116 the frying pan. All these things dangled before us by the white liberal posing as a friend and
117 benefactor have turned out to be nothing but bait to make us think we're making progress.

118 - Malcolm X, Playboy Interview, May 1963

⁵ **B'nai B'rith** is the oldest continually operating Jewish service organization in the world. It was founded in New York City by Henry Jones and 11 others on October 13, 1843.

Reading 2 – Side B

The New Racism – Time Magazine

1 The Supreme Court in 1954 changed many of the underlying conditions of life in the U.S. by
2 decreeing that the old “separate but equal” doctrine was antithetical to American
3 democracy. Today, a dozen years later, many militant ideologues are impatient with what
4 they consider the glacial pace of progress in civil rights. They espouse instead a racist
5 philosophy that could ultimately perpetuate the very separatism against which Negroes
6 have fought so successfully. Oddly, they are not white men but black, and their slogan is
7 “Black Power!”

8
9 ...On the face of it, “black power” ...seems nothing more than an appeal to the long-
10 submerged racial pride of Negroes... Indeed, as applied by the young demagogues of SNCC
11 and CORE, the notion of black power is inching dangerously toward a philosophy of black
12 separatism and perhaps ultimately of black Jacobinism... Along Mississippi’s highways, the
13 cries of “black power!” soon turned to cries of “we gonna get white blood!”⁶ Already, Negro
14 hotheads have set up a political party in Alabama (the “Black Panthers”) that spurns whites.
15 In Los Angeles’ Watts ghetto, some embittered Negroes want to disincorporate the entire
16 area and re-establish it as “Freedom City,” with its own officials and police.

17
18 In this context, the Gandhian doctrine of nonviolence espoused by Martin Luther King is in
19 danger of crumbling... More levelheaded Negro leaders – and white civil rights advocates –
20 are appalled by the implications of the black-power mentality. Accusing SNCC of adopting a
21 “black racist” course, NAACP Executive Director Roy Wilkins adds that it is ominously
22 similar to South Africa’s apartheid policy, only turned topsy-turvy... Mississippi’s NAACP
23 Field Director Charles Evers, whose brother Medgar was assassinated three years ago as a
24 result of his civil rights activities [has said]: “If we are marching these roads for black
25 supremacy, we’re doomed. I never will be anti-white. I would be just as guilty of the
26 racism and bigotry we’ve been fighting all these years.”

27
28 ...Precisely what impact the whole argument will have on the mass of America’s 20 million
29 Negroes is something else... In the long run, to most Negroes freedom and power are
30 abstractions, easily mouthed slogans for their deepest desires. For what they realistically
31 and rightly crave is a more generous slice of what they are beginning to taste: more and
32 better jobs, better housing, better education for their children, the means and access to the
33 forms as well as the places of leisure that the white man affords... Black power is a ringing
34 slogan in the summer of 1966 – one that may well see all the counsel of well-meant
35 moderation choked in Mississippi dust.

36 - “The New Racism, *Time*, 1 July 1966

⁶ Following the attempted assassination and wounding of James Meredith who was making a solitary march across Mississippi for voting rights, other activists took up his march and continued it.

Roy Wilkins (NAACP) on Black Power

37 ...There has now emerged...a strident and threatening challenge to a strategy widely
38 employed by civil rights groups, namely, nonviolence... We [the NAACP] never signed a
39 pact either on paper or in our hearts to turn the other cheek forever and ever when we
40 were assaulted. But neither have we couched a policy of manly resistance in such a way
41 that our members and supporters felt compelled to maintain themselves in an armed state,
42 ready to retaliate instantly and in kind whenever attacked. We venture the observation
43 that such a publicized posture could serve to stir counterplanning, counter-action, and
44 possible conflict... Moreover, in attempting to substitute for derelict law enforcement
45 machinery, the policy [of violence] entails the risk of a broader, more indiscriminate
46 crackdown by law officers, under the ready made excuse of restoring law and order.⁷

47 ...[T]he more serious division in the civil rights movement is the one posed by a
48 word formulation that implies clearly a difference in goals. No matter how endlessly they
49 try to explain it, the term “black power” means anti-white power. In a racially pluralistic
50 society, the concept, the formation and the exercise of an ethnically-tagged power, means
51 opposition to other ethnic powers, just as the term “white supremacy” means subjection of
52 all non-white people. In the black-white relationship, it has to mean that every other ethnic
53 power is the rival and the antagonist of “black power.” It has to mean “going-it-alone.” It
54 has to mean separatism.

55 Now, separatism, whether on the rarefied debate level of “black power” or on the
56 wishful level of a secessionist Freedom City in Watts⁸, offers a disadvantaged minority little
57 except the chance to shrivel and die.

58 The only possible dividend of “black power” is embodied in its offer to millions of
59 frustrated and deprived and persecuted black people of a solace, a tremendous
60 psychological lift, quite apart from its political and economic implications.

61 Ideologically, it dictates “up with black and down with white” in precisely the same
62 fashion that South Africa⁹ reverses that slogan.

63 It is a reverse Mississippi, a reverse Hitler, a reverse Ku Klux Klan.

64 If these were even in our judgment, what virtue can be claimed for black over white?
65 If, as some proponents claim, this concept instills pride of race, cannot this pride be taught
66 without preaching hatred or supremacy based on race?

67 Though it be clarified and clarified again, “black power” in the quick, uncritical and
68 highly emotional adoption it has received from some segments of a beleaguered people can
69 mean in the end only black death. Even if, through some miracle, it should be enthroned
70 briefly in an isolated area, the human spirit, which knows no color or geography or time,
71 would die a little, leaving for wiser and stronger and more compassionate men the painful
72 beating back to the upward trail.

⁷ Wilkins is likely referencing violence in Mississippi and Louisiana, which resulted in the creation of the Deacons for Defense who accompanied the Meredith March in June 1966. In addition, the Watts riot in Los Angeles received significant media attention in August, 1965.

⁸ Although the Black Panther Party for Self Defense had not yet been established in Oakland, California, some blacks in Watts who were disgruntled with city government wanted to disincorporate the Watts ghetto from Los Angeles and to hire their own police force.

⁹ Apartheid was the policy of separatism or segregation imposed by the white minority in South Africa on the nation’s majority black population.

73 We of the NAACP will have none of this. We have fought it too long. It is the raging
74 of race against race on the irrelevant basis of skin color. It is the father of hatred and
75 mother of violence.

76 It is the wicked fanaticism which has swelled our tears, broken our bodies, squeezed
77 our hearts and taken the blood of our black and white loved ones. It shall not now poison
78 our forward march.

79 We seek, therefore, as we have sought these many years, the inclusion of Negro
80 Americans in the nation's life, not their exclusion. This is our land, as much so as it is any
81 American's – every square foot of every city and town and village. The task of winning our
82 share is not the easy one of disengagement and flight, but the hard one of work, of short as
83 well as long jumps, of disappointments, and of sweet successes...

84 - Keynote Address to the NAACP Annual Convention, Los Angeles, July 5, 1966