

# A WORD OR 2

Mba Mbulu, Editor

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*“Black Nationalism is the only real solution for Black People in the United States.”*

## Knowledge Has Never Saved AnyOne

Knowledge has never saved anyone.

At least, that’s what Frantz Fanon said. And I believe him.

From the time I first read what Fanon said until now, I have not learned or been made aware of anything that has made me change my opinion. Knowledge has never saved anyone. In fact, an ignorant person who acts is more likely to acquire freedom and self government than a knowledgeable person who does nothing.

Knowledge is not going to save Black People in the United States. That’s bad news, because Black People in the United States of America seem to be stuck on knowledge.

In order to make Our struggle more effective, We need to put certain academic pursuits in perspective. History is one such academic pursuit. In Ten Lessons: An Introduction to Black History, I explained some of the purposes for studying history. I wrote: “People don’t just read history, they read it for a serious purpose. One of the major purposes is to get proof of their worth and their race’s worth... [T]he version of history We get is important because it will determine how We feel about Our present condition, and it will determine what steps We are likely to take to improve Our condition.”

I continued: “We must use history to discover Our strengths and weaknesses as attested to by Our past triumphs and failures. Since we are living in a very politicized environment (under very political conditions), and since politics primarily concerns itself with the nature of conflict, We must know Our strengths and make use of them in order to survive and progress...” Knowing how strengths and weaknesses aided and hindered Our development can enable Us to understand what areas We need to concentrate on NOW in order to progress or succeed in an endeavor, aim or goal.

I then added: “History provides people with numerous and alternative approaches to solving and eliminating problems. It enables people to anticipate what probably will happen, and prepare accordingly. This is possible because basic principles that governed people’s relations

thousands of years ago also do so today. Therefore, given a certain set of circumstances, people are apt to act in essentially a certain way during any time period. History provides Us with case studies of similar circumstances that preceded Our particular circumstances, and reveals and opens up avenues to more potential solutions that We can analyze and eventually choose from.”

I said more: “History also serves the purpose of psychologically and socially preparing people to accept change(s). If Black People are aware of the fact that Our general circumstances have been experienced previously by other groups of people and that these other groups have succeeded in changing their condition, then We will be more apt to adjust Ourselves psychologically (mind-wise) and socially (relationship-wise) and attempt to do whatever We feel is necessary to bring about the conditions We desire to live under.

Anything is possible as long as the people who want changes prepare themselves socially and psychologically for that change.”

Then I concluded by saying: “Additionally, history helps people understand the present. Everything (every event, person, nation, etc.) is a stage in a process. In order to understand where you are or where anyone else is, how you (or any other individual, nation or race) have developed, or how anything came to be, you must understand the past, the steps that led up to the thing or condition that exists today.

Too many Black instructors and students tend to “get off” on history. It’s as if they think We should be able to move forward today based on what Our forefathers did decades and millennia ago. But Our ancient track record means nothing to those whose lifestyle is enhanced by Our exploitation. Nor is Our track record going to inspire Black individuals to build a system that is more representative of Our concerns and objectives. Black History will only help Us if those who teach it encourage their students to think outside the status quo paradigm and act outside the status quo paradigm.

Getting caught up in the “such and such was Black” syndrome or the “Blacks were the first to do that” syndrome, just to cite a couple, isn’t going to help Us change



**BE**

**BLACK**

**SMART**

Our present condition in the least. Knowing those things is well and good, and necessary, but they are not going to help Us move forward in today's world if they are not represented in the proper context. The focus of those type lessons should revolve around the strengths that catapulted Us to the forefront and self determination in the past and how can We use them to catapult Us to the forefront and self determination today.

We have to be reasonable. Why should I teach with pride that there have been Black presidents of the United States if they did not try to outlaw slavery, Jim Crow and systematic exploitation? So what if Cleopatra was Black? The way she went about doing business, if white people want to claim her they can have her. John Brown, a white man, is more relevant to Black History than any alleged Black president, Cleopatra or most of the other people we are so prone to claim.

An exceptional accomplishment on the part of a Black individual can not be considered as a step forward for Black People. In order to make history relevant to Us, We need to teach it within a context that emboldens and empowers all of Us. We need to understand history's limitations as well as its potential for good, and account for each when We study and teach it.

Audacity has been one of history's pistons. Black History must be, to an appreciable degree, the story of audacious individuals and audacious collectives. Why? Because knowledge has never saved anyone.

### **It's Not Just History**

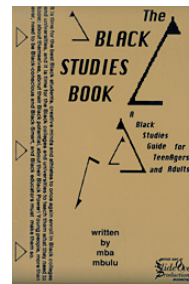
History isn't the only subject Black individuals tend to "get off" on. Some Black individuals take academics beyond its effective realm in a host of other fields. Black People have to understand that people with power assess your level of intelligence based on what you do, not what you say.

It seems that many of Us equate being a revolutionary to understanding revolutionary thought, voicing revolutionary opinions and "looking the part." Some people do respect a smart individual because of what s/he knows, but that type of respect doesn't mean squat among the power brokers of the world. In a hostile environment, where government has been overthrown, war without bloodshed (politics) is the basis of negotiation and human and physical destruction is the difference maker of choice, any level of respect that can not be equated to fear is so flakey that a small wind can blow it into irrelevance.

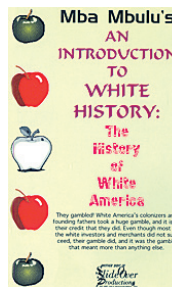
We need to establish an independent Black nation, a self governing Black Power system, right here in the belly of the beast that has tormented Us for so many years. We have long known more than We need to know to get this job done. As such, the academic stage of Our struggle has served its purpose. It's time to move to the next stage. If that means making the status quo feel threatened, then let the status quo feel threatened.



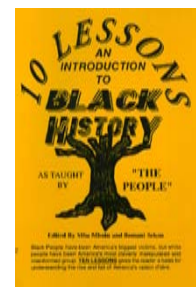
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### **Power Quotes**

"Success is a result of what you stand for. Whether you 'win' or 'lose' on an individual level has little to do with whether or not you succeed."

"When it comes to supporting Black Power, Black individuals in the United States take themselves very seriously; they have so much to lose that will be put at risk. But when it comes to supporting white power, Black individuals in the United States make themselves very small; there is hardly a sacrifice they are unwilling to make in support of it."

"You can't change the system from within, but you can fool yourself into thinking you can; particularly when you fall under the influence of fear or greed."