

A black and white photograph of a large crowd of people, likely at a protest or rally. The crowd is dense, with many individuals looking towards the camera or slightly to the side. Some people have their arms raised, and there are some signs visible in the background. The background shows tall buildings, suggesting an urban setting. The overall tone is serious and determined.

**BLACK RADICAL
TRADITION**

OUTLINE

PRE-COLONIAL AFRICA

SLAVE RESISTANCE IN THE AMERICAS

THE HAITIAN REVOLUTION

U.S. ABOLITIONISM AND SLAVE REBELLION

CIVIL WAR AND RECONSTRUCTION

PAN-AFRICANISM

DECOLONIZATION

CIVIL RIGHTS AND BLACK POWER

BLM AND PRISON ABOLITION

MAO'S STATEMENT ON BLACK STRUGGLE

PRE-COLONIAL AFRICA

Before 1500s

PRE-COLONIAL AFRICA

- Vast diversity of political systems with different forms of governance, some being highly democratic
 - **Centralized kingdoms:** Ghana, Mali, Songhai, Kongo, Zulu, etc.
 - **City-States:** Yoruba, Hausa, etc.
 - **Decentralized societies:** Igbo, many hunter-gatherer groups, etc.
- Pre-colonial African polities were incredibly complex, with **armies, tax systems, and recorded histories** (both oral and written)
- **Timbuktu** in particular was a **world center of learning** with universities and libraries
- Had their own forms of class stratification and hierarchies
- **Transatlantic slave trade** begun with the Portugese in the 1440s, turning into a **massive industry** with Columbus' voyage to the Americas



SLAVE RESISTANCE IN THE AMERICAS

1500s-1800s



SLAVE RESISTANCE

- Enslaved people **constantly resisted** in small ways:
 - Slowed work, broke tools, pretended not to understand, stole, poisoned food, and faked illnesses
- Many **committed suicide** as an act of refusal, especially during the Middle Passage
- Maintained African **languages, music, religions, and names**
 - Directly led to **Voudou** and **Candomblé**
- Enslaved people who escaped formed **independent settlements** in mountains, swamps, forests
 - Largest was **Palmares** in Brazil with ~30,000 people
- Learned to **read and write** despite it usually being illegal to teach enslaved people to read

THE HAITIAN REVOLUTION

1791-1804

HAITIAN REVOLUTION

- Haiti is the **only successful slave revolt in history** where enslaved people overthrew a colonial government, abolished slavery permanently, and established an independent state
- Radicalized by the French Revolution and took **“liberty, equality, and fraternity”** and applied it to everyone
- Led by **Toussaint Louverture**, who was a former slave, military genius, and a political leader
- **Defeated Napoleon**
- Terrified the slaveholding world and were isolated and forced to pay an **“independence debt”** to France which crippled their economy
- Declared all citizens “Black” regardless of ethnicity to **reject colonial hierarchies**



U.S. ABOLITIONISM AND SLAVE REBELLION

1820s-1860s

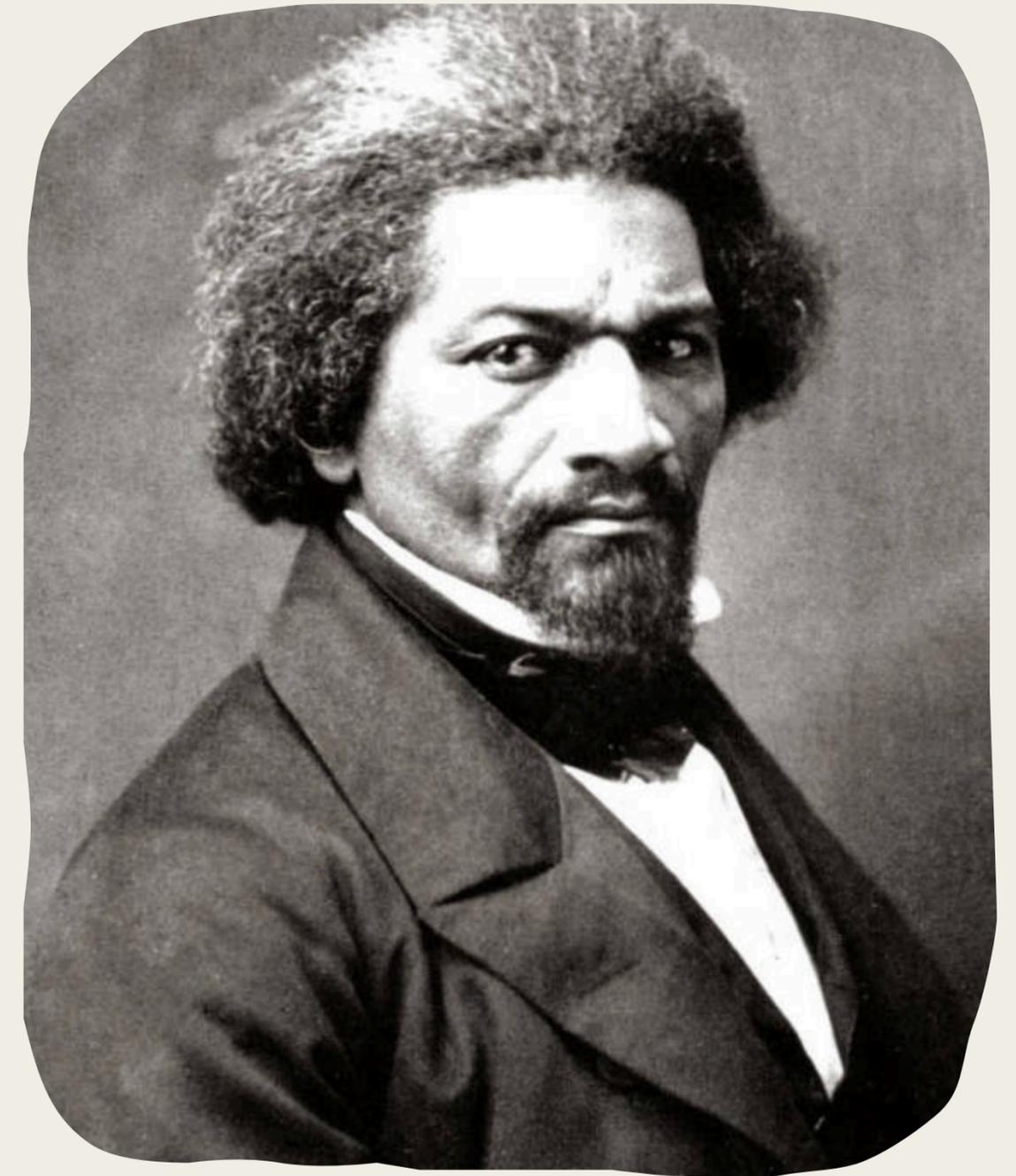
NAT TURNER'S REBELLION



- Slave rebellion led by **Nat Turner** in Southampton County, Virginia, in 1831
- Nat Turner was an **enslaved preacher** and **literate**, something that was rare for his time
- Rebellion killed approximately **60 white people**, making it the **most deadly slave rebellion** in the U.S.
- Local militias and federal troops **crushed the revolt**; Turner evaded capture for a while but was eventually caught and hanged
- White mobs **killed 120-200 Black people** as punishment, Virginia **banned literacy** and **restricted Black preachers**
- **Helped destroy the myth** of the contented slave

FREDERICK DOUGLASS

- Born into slavery around 1818 in Maryland, was **separated from his mother as an infant**
- **Learned to read**, although it was forbidden, and he traded bread for reading lessons from white children
- Hired out to **Edward Covey** in 1834, who was a **notorious “slave breaker”** who made slaves work endlessly and routinely whipped them
- Douglass **fought back** physically one day and **won**, later writing of the experience, "**I was nothing before; I was a man now.**"
- Escaped north in 1838 disguised as a sailor
- Became a **leading abolitionist orator**
- Engaged with **socialism and Marxism**, becoming increasingly left throughout his life, although never fully adopting socialism



CIVIL WAR AND RECONSTRUCTION

1861-1877

CIVIL WAR



- Thousands fled to Union lines, forcing the North to confront slavery
- Over **180,000 Black men enlisted**, fighting despite risk of enslavement or execution if captured
- **W.E.B. Du Bois** argued that enslaved workers **withdrew their labor** (essentially a general strike) on a scale which **crippled the Confederate economy**
- Leaders like **Frederick Douglass** and the National Equal Rights League **demanded citizenship, suffrage, and land**
- Formerly enslaved people **collectively farmed land** and **ran their own communities** in the Sea Islands (**The Port Royal Experiment**)

BLACK RECONSTRUCTION

- **W.E.B. Du Bois** was born in 1868 and was the **first Black American** to earn a PhD from Harvard
- ***Black Reconstruction in America*** was a **reclamation** of the post-Civil War era that rewrote the historical record against the racist **Dunning School**
- Argued that Reconstruction was **not a “tragic era”** but the **first real experiment** in interracial democracy in American history
- Its failure was not because Black people were “unfit for freedom” but because the North and South made a deal to abandon them in exchange for capitalist consolidation
- The South’s “redemption” was a **terrorist counter-revolution** carried out by the **KKK**, backed by Northern capital
- Introduced the concept of “**whiteness**” as a psychological wage that **compensated poor whites** for their exploitation while **dividing them** from Black workers



PAN-AFRICANISM

1890s-1945

PAN-AFRICANISM



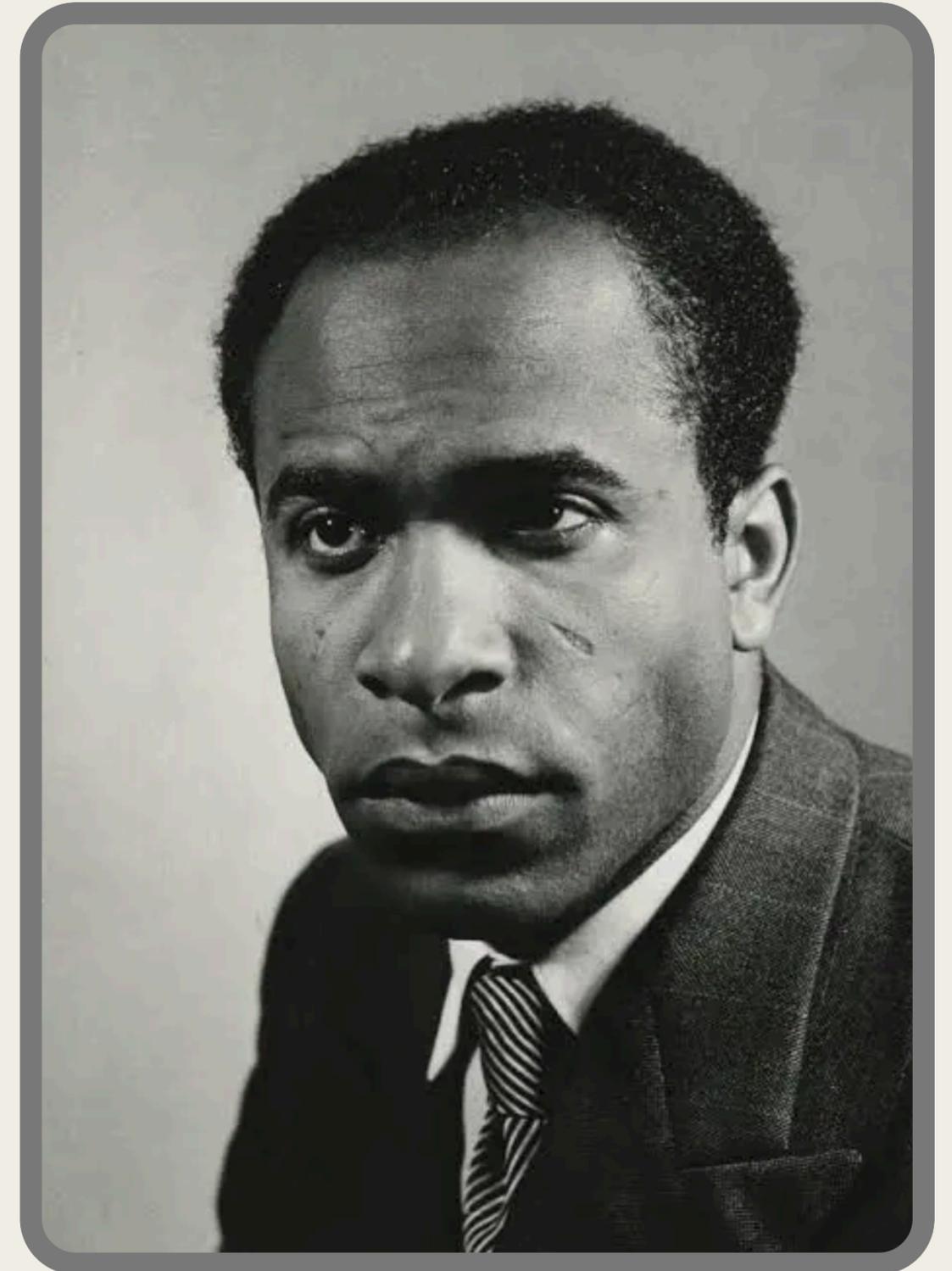
- The belief that African people across the continent and diaspora share a **common history** and a **common struggle** against racism and colonialism
- Originated with enslaved Africans in the West before it took root in Africa itself
- Originally organized primarily by **diaspora figures**
- 1945 Manchester Conference was a **turning point** where future African independence leaders took the lead
- Initially demanded **colonial reforms**, but soon became a demand for **full independence**
- Two main tendencies: **Casablanca Group** (Nkurumah, Guinea, Mali) which demanded immediate unity and socialist orientation, and **Monrovia Group** which favored gradual reforms and cooperation with colonial powers
- Provided the **ideological framework** for African independence

DECOLONIZATION

1945-1970s

FRANTZ FANON

- **Marxist psychiatrist** born in Martinique, 1925 and fought for France in WWII, **experiencing racism firsthand** from the very people he was supposed to be liberating
- Wrote ***Black Skin, White Masks*** on the **psychological damage** colonialism inflicts
- Joined the **Algerian revolution** in 1954; treated tortured fighters and torturers alike
- The ***Wretched of the Earth*** argued **decolonization requires violence** because **colonialism was violence**
- Warned against national bourgeoisie who just wanted to replace white rulers while keeping colonial economics
- Called for **Third World solidarity** beyond the US/USSR
- Influenced **Black Power movement, Palestine**, and many other liberation movements



CIVIL RIGHTS AND BLACK POWER

1950s-1970s

MALCOLM X



- Born in 1925 and was a street criminal turned Nation of Islam minister in prison
- Preached **separation, white devilry,** and **self-defense** by any means necessary
- **Broke with NOI** after realizing Elijah Muhammad's hypocrisy
- **Pilgrimage to Mecca** transformed his politics
- Rejected "**civil rights**" for "**human rights**" and argued American racism was a violation of international law, not just a domestic issue
- **Shifted left rapidly** in his final months, began to speak of **socialism** as a possible solution
- **Assassinated by the NOI** in 1965, and his influential ***Autobiography*** was published posthumously

BLACK PANTHER PARTY

- Founded in 1966 in Oakland by **Huey Newton** and **Bobby Seale**, originally as **armed patrols** against police brutality
- **Ten-Point Program** demanded land, housing, employment, education, exemption from military service, and more
- Started efforts like the **free breakfast program** for children, **health clinics**, **sickle cell testing**, which won community support
- Allied with other communities, including white radicals
- **FBI killed and destabilized leadership** through their **COINTELPRO** efforts
- Their breakfast programs became the **model for Federal school lunch programs**



BLACK LIBERATION ARMY



- Emerged in 1970-71 as an **underground offshoot of the Black Panther Party** after **COINTELPRO destroyed** above-ground leadership
- Not a centralized organization but a **network** of autonomous cells and collectives
- **Targeted police** specifically as defenders of the capitalist system
- **Assata Shakur** was their most famous member; framed in a 1973 shooting of an officer and was given **asylum in Cuba**, where she died
- Raised the question of whether **above-ground organizing** could ever be enough when the **state kills without consequences**

BLM AND PRISON ABOLITION

1980s-Present

FERGUSON UPRISING

- The **Ferguson protests** began in **August 2014** in Ferguson, Missouri, following the fatal shooting of **Michael Brown**, an unarmed Black teenager, by a police officer, Darren Wilson
- This murder ignited widespread outrage and **mobilized thousands** to protest against police brutality, systemic racism, and longstanding social inequality.
- Groups like **Black Lives Matter** emerged because of the protests, emphasizing the need for sustained activism and community organizing, reflecting the strategies of past civil rights organizations





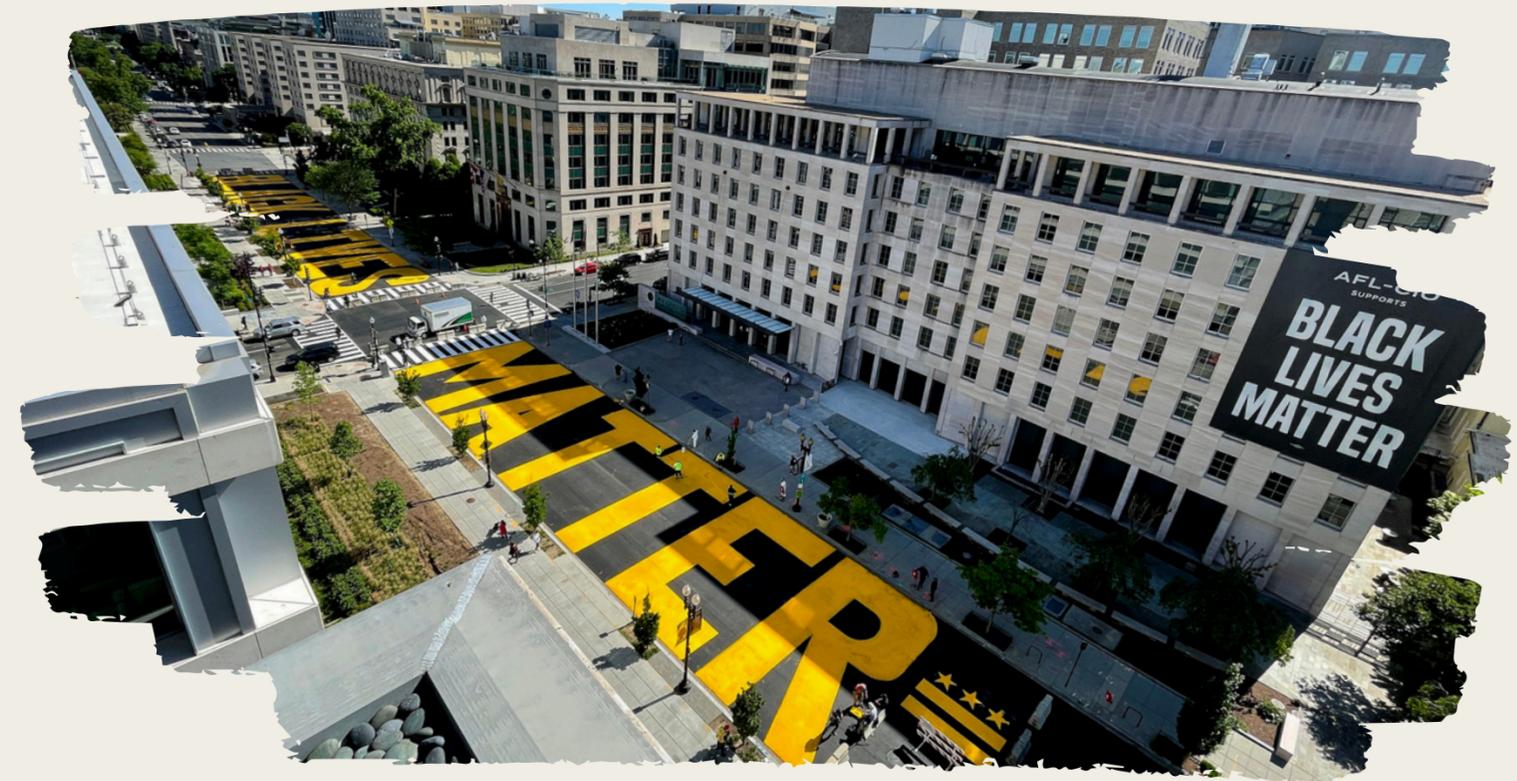
GEORGE FLOYD UPRISING

- The George Floyd protests erupted in **late May 2020** after the killing of **George Floyd**, an unarmed Black man, by a Minneapolis police officer, Derek Chauvin.
- This murder similarly **sparked a global movement** against police brutality and white supremacy, drawing millions to the street and **raising the profile of prison abolition** among grassroots organizers
- The **Black Lives Matter** movement became even more popular for its commitment to combat anti-Black violence, and **more radical movements gained traction** by seeing this violence as intrinsic to the US as a capitalist, racist state.



CO-OPTATION OF BLM

- Unfortunately, the **most visible elements** of the Black Lives Matter movement **have been co-opted** by various reformist groups and institutions, **focusing energy on surface-level changes** rather than deeper questions about challenging white supremacy
 - Ex: Demanding increased DEI initiatives at the DoJ, using BLM language in corporate advertising, shifting from abolishing the police to increasing their funding and training them better
- This has presented **several challenges** Black liberation organizations still confront, such as the **tension between gaining visibility** and resources **without liquidating radical messaging** and direct action





BLACK POLITICAL PRISONERS

- It's also important to reflect on the experiences of Black political prisoners past and present, and connecting their struggle to Black liberation work
 - **Early 20th Century** - Robert F. Williams, Marcus Garvey
 - **Civil Rights Movement** - Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks
 - **Black Power Movement** - Angela Davis, Fred Hampton
 - **Contemporary** - Mumia Abu-Jamal, previously Assata Shakur
- It's also important to see **Mass Incarceration** itself as a tool for oppressing all Black people, and disciplining Black revolutionaries specifically, in addition to its broader role in class society

CURRENT PROTEST CULTURE

- **UTD** has hosted many protest in the modern era with many **contradictions** and **successes**, these faults are consistent with the nature of protest around the world but specifically in America.
 - **Palestine Solidarity Movement**
 - *Think about how the calls to action mirror the 2020 uprisings also how the visibility grew and how states and cities responded to these gatherings*
 - **ICE Walkout / Resistance**
 - From *Prairie Land* to Minneapolis we see people everyday resist ICE and Imperialism turns inwards to its citizens



Iranian Opportunist attempt to imitate the Palestine movements success

中国共产党中央委员会主席毛泽东同志 支持美国黑人抗暴斗争的声明

(一九六八年四月十六日)

最近，美国黑人领袖马丁·路德·金突然被其帝国主义者暗杀。马丁·路德·金是一个非暴力主义者，但其帝国主义者并没有因此对他宽容，而是使用反革命的暴力，对他进行血腥的镇压。这一件事，深刻地说明了美国的广大黑人群众，掀起了他们抗暴斗争的新风暴，席卷了美国一百几十个城市，这是美国历史上前所未有的。它显示了在两千多万美国黑人中，蕴藏着极其强大的革命力量。

这场黑人的斗争以暴乱形式在美国国内，是帝国主义当前整个政治危机和经济危机的一个突出表现，它给国内外帝国主义的美国帝国主义以沉重的打击。

美国黑人的斗争，不仅是被剥削、被压迫的黑人争取自由解放的斗争，而且是整个被剥削、被压迫的美国人民反对垄断资产阶级的统治的新号角。它对于全世界人民反对帝国主义的斗争，对于越南人民反对帝国主义的斗争，是一个巨大的鼓舞和鼓舞。我代表中国人民，对美国黑人的正义斗争，表示坚决的支持。

美国的种族歧视，是殖民主义、帝国主义制度的产物。美国广大黑人同美国统治集团之间的矛盾，是阶级矛盾。只有推翻美国垄断资产阶级的反动统治，彻底搞民族主义、帝国主义制度，美国黑人才能得

取得彻底解放。美国广大黑人同美国白人中的广大劳动人民，有着共同的利益和共同的斗争目标。因此，美国黑人的斗争正在获得越来越多的美国白人种中的劳动人民和进步人士同情和支持。美国黑人斗争必将同美国白人劳动人民联合，最终结束美国垄断资产阶级的罪恶统治。

我在一九六三年《支持美国黑人反对帝国主义种族歧视的正义斗争的声明》中说：“万恶的殖民主义、帝国主义制度是随着殖民和贩卖黑人而兴起的。它必将随着黑人的彻底解放而告终。”我现在的仍然坚持这个观点。

当前，世界革命进入了一个伟大的新时代。美国黑人争取解放的斗争，是全世界人民反对帝国主义斗争的一个组成部分，是当代世界革命的一个组成部分。我们，世界各国的工人、农民、革命知识分子和一切愿意反对帝国主义的人们，行动起来，给予美国黑人的斗争以深大的声援！全世界人民更紧密地团结起来，向着我们的共同敌人帝国主义及其帮凶们发动持久的猛烈进攻！可以肯定，殖民主义、帝国主义和一切剥削制度的彻底崩溃，世界上的一切被压迫人民，被压迫民族的彻底翻身，已经为期不远了。

美国黑人抗暴斗争形势简图

一场美国历史上前所未有的黑人抗暴斗争的新风暴，以无比迅猛之势席卷美国一百几十个城市。它显示了在两千多万美国黑人中，蕴藏着极其强大的革命力量，它给国内外帝国主义的美国帝国主义以沉重的打击。



COMMUNIST SOLIDARITY MAO'S STATEMENT

- Written by Mao on behalf of the CPC Central Committee on April 16, 1968
- This document reports the revolutionary upsurge by Black folks and their allies in the wake of Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination on April 4th
- He describes it as an example of counter-revolutionary violence typical of the capitalist-imperialist(-settler) "United States"
- Mao emphasizes the massive potential revolutionary force of twenty million Black folks, seeing their liberation as crucial for all people challenging monopoly capitalism

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What do folks think about this reading? Does Mao's perspective have any strengths or weaknesses?
2. How does the upsurge in the U.S. at the time compare with contemporary struggles?
3. What's the power of connecting "domestic" struggles with imperial violence?
4. What's the role of inter/transnational solidarity in supporting Black liberation and Communist revolution?
5. How can this affect our organizing as RRC?





THANK YOU!

IG: @rrc_utd

Discord & Signal: ASK AN OFFICER!!!

MAKE A PLAN TO SHOW UP TO **BOOK CLUB**
THIS FRIDAY @ 5PM SLC 2.304