

INSTITUTE OF THE BLACK WORLD

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The main issue, in my view, is whether IBW should accept "white" money.

I have heard no serious suggestion that IBW accept money from the CIA and/or right-wing racist sources. At any rate, I am opposed on practical grounds to the acceptance of money from the CIA and/or right-wing racist sources. For the purpose of this paper then, "white" money refers to money from white liberal sources and the government.

I believe IBW should accept money from white liberal and government sources for the following reasons:

- I. Money from these sources is necessary for the survival of the IBW and the completion of its mission.
 - A. Money from other sources cannot be tapped immediately.
 1. We tried to raise money from Howard, Shaw, etc., and failed.
 2. We need money from "white" sources to hire people to create a program for raising money from black sources.
- II. "White" money sources owe black people a debt they can never repay. Whether such money is called reparations or a just debt or a grant is irrelevant. The point is that white people owe the money, and we are entitled to it.
- III. The term "white" money is a misnomer. All "white" money was stolen recently or at an early date from black, brown, and red people.
 - A. Serious discussion on this point leads one to an infinite regress: Should one accept money from black people who accept money from white people?

IV. IBW cannot perform its mission without subjecting white funding sources to the criticism of grants as well as the criticism of words.

A. We should not only seek "white" money but we should demand as much money (more, in fact) as white institutions and intellectuals receive. It would be strategically unwise (if we want to "take control") to permit white liberals and the government to fund our opposition freely and in good conscience. I believe our goal should be black hegemony, and black hegemony should start with a demand for parity (and more) in funding.

V. "White" money is our money. Black people pay taxes. They pay a proportionately larger share of their income than whites. In state universities, black students constitute about 2 per cent of the enrollment. But black people in Illinois, New York and other states pay more than 2 per cent of the taxes. In fact, black taxpayers are subsidizing the education of the children of the white middle-class and the work of white professors.

I would not be misunderstood. I am not saying that accepting money from white sources is an ideal solution. I am simply arguing that accepting such money is the only option available to us immediately. Beyond that, I am saying that a large proportion of the money labelled "white" money is in fact black.

It should also be said that there is no such thing as pure autonomy or pure black money. Until black people (in Africa, the West Indies, and America) accumulate a stockpile of H-bombs and a fleet of Jets, we will be forced to speak in terms of relative autonomy and effective control. I believe IBW can accept "white" money and maintain effective control. The history of revolutionaries, from Lenin to Malcolm X (remember Malcolm at Harvard) to Cleaver to Castro, proves that it is possible (to quote Lenin) to steal from the bourgeoisie what the bourgeoisie has stolen.

It is said in opposition to this view that a revolutionary black organization should not accept "white" money for the following reasons:

- I. Money, especially "white" money, corrupts.
- II. White control comes with "white" money.

III. Accepting "white" money confuses black constituencies.

IV. "White" money will not fund serious black revolutionaries.

While admitting the weight of these objections, I would say that:

I. Money does not necessarily corrupt.

People are not corrupted by receiving pieces of paper called money. What corrupts is conditioning to a certain style which requires a certain amount of money from sources who will only give you money if you do or fail to do certain things. In this situation, the recipient is always in control (above the level of subsistence, i.e., food, water, etc.). He decides freely on the threshold of his compromises and he is responsible for the compromises he makes in the name of the institution.

What happens really is self-domestication--a process of internal control by the recipient who draws in his wings and restricts himself to certain things for fear of alienating his source.

I am arguing here that people are not corrupted by receiving money but by their idea of what is required to get money and by their acquiescence in that idea and their compliance with secret or open signals from the donor.

I do not believe that you have to stop eating to prove that you are honest. But I believe with the opponents of the view expressed here that if you are eating too well you ought to check yourself. Fattening hogs, as our forefathers used to say, ain't healthy--for hogs.

Ultimately, however, the only defense is constant vigilance--that and a collective decision to abandon the institution when it cannot be sustained without compromises which contradicts its reason for being. It is impossible here, however, to discuss the theory of revolutionary compromises. See Lenin's Left-Wing Communism and Two Tactics.

II. White control does not necessarily come with white money. (N.B. the history of the Malcolm X Community College in Chicago)

The opposite view seems to be based on a fatalistic view of white power and white skill. It also underestimates the contradiction in the white community.

Black people with a high level of consciousness can exploit the contradictions, ambivalences, and incoherencies in the white community. There is no reason why co-optation should be a one-way street. There is no reason why blacks should not co-opt and use white people.

You don't control people by giving them money. You control them by refusing to give them money or by withholding money or threatening to withhold money. The key point is the threat to withhold money if action rises above a certain threshold. And here again the decision as to whether to sell soul or skin or cut bait is in the hands of the recipient.

IBW should not avoid white funding sources, but it should avoid dependence on a single funding source, whether white or black. I believe the record will show that the only serious threats to the autonomy of IBW have come from black institutions. (See AU Center.) The history of neo-colonialism has been a history of a wide and largely unsuccessful attempt to avoid dependence on either East or West. Some of these attempts failed, but the principle is sound.

In order to avoid certain pitfalls, we should develop a variety of funding sources. We should avoid grants with strings and/or institutional controls. Beyond all that, we must maintain constant vigilance. The pressure of an informed constituency will help. And we should have a clear idea of the boundary between permissible and impermissible compromises.

III. White funding does not necessarily confuse the public.

The proof of the pudding is in the eating. Revolutionaries and rebels justify themselves not by the money they receive but by what they do with the money. It is our duty to educate the black public on these issues by providing a political framework which will lift public debate

above the issues of personalities and false issues.

- IV. It is not true that white sources will not finance serious black revolutionaries or serious black rebels. The problem here, in my opinion, is the imprecision of the term "white sources." Some white sources, as we all know, have funded black revolutionaries and rebels (Stokely, Cleaver, Foreman).

Secondly, white sources are not free. Like other men, they respond to situations they cannot control. Some whites are giving now not because they dig our validated hypotheses but because they are afraid their buildings will be burned down. Other sources need to give to blacks for their own self image and for their public image in the black community.

Thirdly, white people can miscalculate, too. Some whites are stupid, some have personal contradictions, some have incompetent (from the standpoint of their interests) advisers, some have advisers who are consciously or unconsciously undermining the system from within.

Fourthly, whites are not always aware of their real interests or there may be a conflict between their immediate and long-range interests.

Fifthly, personal motivations are irrelevant. The real motives are seldom stated. Men announce that they are giving out of a sense of charity or public responsibility. Actually, most men give out of a sense of guilt or fear or ego. They give to immortalize themselves or to extend the boundaries of their ego or to get public approval.

It has been suggested on another level that IBW should reduce its style of life to the point where individuals could sustain themselves by individual work. I am opposed to this idea, which has a great deal of merit, because of the drain on the energy of staff members. I also doubt that staff members can raise enough money in this manner to support themselves and the institution. Nor am I convinced that staff members can sustain themselves by money from black sources (colleges, churches, book publishers, magazine publishers.)

I don't think IBW can complete its mission without a budget in the neighborhood of \$400,000. I don't think IBW can compete with the Stevenson Institute of the Jordan-Litwack, Lasch-Genovese combines without adequate resources. I believe a budget of about \$400,000 is reasonable in relation to the budget of the Stevenson Institute or the \$700,000 budget for a black Think Tank in one city (Chicago).

Having said that, I will readily grant that we must do everything we can to create alternative funding sources in the black community. I would recommend a SNCC-type Northern strategy (Friends of the IBW, cocktail parties in homes) focused initially on young black professionals in major Northern cities. We should also sell annual (\$25), sustaining (five years, \$100) and life membership (\$400). We should also seek long-range rather than annual grants and should work with the Center in developing a capital fund.