

**The Liberation of Our People: Transcript of a Speech Delivered by  
Angela Y. Davis at a Black Panther rally in Bobby Hutton Park  
(AKA DeFremery Park), Oakland, CA on Nov. 12, 1969**

Yeah, I'd just like to say that I like being called sister much more than professor and I've continually said that if my job -- if keeping my job means that I have to make any compromises in the liberation struggle in this country, then I'll gladly leave my job. This is my position.

Now there has been a lot of debate in the left sector of the anti-war movement as to what the orientation of that movement should be. And I think there are two main issues at hand. One group of people feels that the movement, the anti-war movement ought to be a single issue movement, the cessation of the war in Vietnam. They do not want to relate it to the other kinds and forms of repression that are taking place here in this country. There's another group of people who say that we have to make those connections. We have to talk about what's happening in Vietnam as being a symptom of something that's happening all over the world, of something that's happening in this country. And in order for the anti-war movement to be effective, it has to link up with the struggle for black and brown liberation in this country with the struggle of exploited white workers. Now I think we should ask ourselves why the that first group of people want the anti-war movement to be a single issue movement. Somehow they feel that it's necessary to tone down the political content of that movement in order to attract as many people as possible. They think that mere numbers will be enough in order to affect this government's policy. But I think we have to talk about the political content. We have to talk about the necessity to raise the level of consciousness of the people who are involved in that movement. And if you analyze the war in Vietnam, first of all it ought to become obvious that if the United States Government pulled its troops out of Vietnam that that repression would have to crop up somewhere else. And in fact, we're seeing that as this country is being defeated in Vietnam, more and more acts of repression are occurring here on the domestic scene. And I'd just like to point to the most dramatic one in the last couple of weeks, which is the chaining and gagging of Chairman Bobby Seale and his sentence to four years for Contempt of Court. I think that demonstrates that if the link-up is not made between what's happening in Vietnam and what's happening here we may very well face a period of full-blown fascism very soon.

Now I think there's something perhaps more profound that we ought to point to. This whole economy in this country is a war economy. It's based on the fact that more and more and more weapons are being produced. What happens if the war in Vietnam ceases? How is the economy going to stand unless another Vietnam is created, and who is to determine where that Vietnam is gonna be? It can be abroad, or it can be right here at home, and I think it's becoming evident that that Vietnam is entering the streets of this country. It's becoming evident in all the brutal forms of repression, which we can see everyday of our lives here. And this reminds me, because I think this is very relevant to what's happening in Vietnam that is the military situation in this country. I saw in television last week that the head of the National Guard in California decided that from now on their military activities are gonna be concentrated in three main areas. Now what are these areas? First of all, he says, disruption in minority communities, then he says disruption on

the campus, then he says disruption in industrial areas. I think it points to the fact that they are going to begin to use that whole military apparatus in order to put down the resistance in the black and brown community, on the campuses, in the working class communities. I think that they are really preparing for this now. It's evident that the terror is becoming not just isolated instances of police brutality here and there, but that terror is becoming an everyday instrument of the institutions of this country. The Chief of the National Guard said that outright. it's happening in the courts. There is terror in the courts, that judge, whose name is Hoffman proved that he is going to take on the terror in the society and bring it into the courts, that he is going to use what is supposed to be a court of law, justice, equality, whatever you wanna call it in order to meet out all of these, you know fascist acts of repression.

Now something else has been happening in the courts, and I think this is an incident that we all ought to be aware of because it's another instance of terror entering into the courts. Down in San Jose, not too long ago, a young Chicano was on trial and I'd like to read a quote from the transcript, a quote by Judge -- I think his name is Chargin, the fascist. He said, "Mexican people, after 13 years of age, it's perfectly all right to go out and act like an animal. Maybe Hitler was right. The animals in our society probably ought to be destroyed because they have no right to live among human beings. You are lower than animals and haven't the right to exist in organized society, just miserable lousy rotten people." Now this is the direct quote from the transcript that's happened within the walls of the courtroom. How can we fail to see that there's an intricate connection between that type of thing between what happened to Bobby Seale, between the unwarranted imprisonment of Huey Newton and what's happening in Vietnam. We are facing a common enemy and that enemy is Yankee Imperialism, which is killing us both here and abroad. Now I think anyone who would try to separate those struggles, anyone who would say that in order to consolidate an anti-war movement, we have to leave all of these other outlying issues out of the picture, is playing right into the hands of the enemy. I mean it's an old saying, I think it's been demonstrated over and over that it's correct that once the people are divided, the enemy will be victorious. We will face defeat. And I think the attempt to isolate what's happening on the domestic scene, from the war in Vietnam is playing right into the hands of the enemy giving him the chance to be victorious.

And I think there's a much more concrete problem. If you talk about the anti-war movement as a separate movement, what happens? What happens if suddenly the troops are pulled out of Vietnam? What happens if Nixon suddenly says we're gonna bring all of the boys home? The people, the thousands, the millions of people who had been involved in that movement would feel as if they had been victorious. I think perhaps a, a number of them would think that they could return home and relish in their victory and say that we have won, completely ignoring the fact that Huey Newton is still in jail, that Erica Huggins and all the other sisters and brothers in Connecticut are still in jail. This is what we are faced with if we cannot make that connection between the international scene and the domestic scene. And I don't think there's any question about it. We can't talk about protesting the genocide of the Vietnamese people without at the same time doing something to stop the genocide that is -- that liberation fighters in this country are being subjected to. Now I think we

can draw a parallel between what's happening right now and what's-- what happened during the 1950s. As the United States Government was being defeated in the Korean War, more and more repression did occur on the domestic scene. The McCarthy witch hunt started. This is the communist party which was the main target of that. I think we have to ask ourselves, why that period served to completely stifle revolutionary activity in this country. People were scared, they run away, they lost their families, they lost their homes. They did not resist. This is the problem. They did not resist. Right now the Black Panther Party is the main target of the repression that's coming down in this society and the Black Panther Party is resisting. And we all ought to talk about standing up and resisting this oppression, resisting the onslaught of fascism in this country. Otherwise, the movement is going to be doomed to failure. I think we can say that if the anti-war movement defends only itself and does not defend liberation fighters in this country, then that movement is going to be doomed to failure, just as we can say also if we in the black liberation movement and the liberation movement for all people in-- all oppressed and exploited people in this country, defend only ourselves, then we too will be doomed to failure.

Within the whole liberation struggle in this country, the black liberation struggle and the and the brown liberation struggle there has continually been the sentiment against the American Imperialist aggressive policies throughout this world because we have been forced to see that the enemy is American imperialism and although we feel it here at home it's being felt perhaps much more brutality in Vietnam, it's being felt in Latin America, it's being felt in Africa, we have to make these connections. [Inaudible] has to see that unless it makes that connection, it's going to become irrelevant. And what we have to talk about now is a united force, which sees the liberation of the Vietnamese people as intricately linked up with the liberation of black and brown and exploited white people in this society, and only this kind of a united front, only this kind of a united force can be victorious.

Now I think that there's something else that we ought to consider when we try to analyze what has happened in the anti-war movement. And the anti war movement hasn't just depended on numbers. It hasn't just depended upon attracting more and more people into the movement regardless of their political orientation. If we remember, the debate a long time ago was whether the anti-war movement or the peace movement then should talk about demanding the cessation of bombing in Vietnam or whether it should talk about withdrawing troops. I think now it's very obvious that you have to talk about withdrawing all American troops from Vietnam. This has occurred only through the process of trying to raise the level of political consciousness of the people who were in that movement. And right now what we have to talk about is not just withdrawing American troops, but also recognizing the South Vietnamese provisional revolutionary government.

Now, I think we have to go a step further. This is what's happening inside the anti-war movement, but we have to take it further. And we have to say that if they, if we demand the immediate withdrawal of American troops in Vietnam [inaudible] of the South Vietnamese Provisional Revolutionary Government, then we also have to demand the release of all political prisoners in this country, here. This is what we have to demand. And I think

that the liberation struggle here sheds a lot of light on what's happening in Vietnam. It shows us that we can't just push for peace in Vietnam, that we have to talk about also recognizing a revolutionary government. There was a kind of a peace that was obtained right here in this country, in a courtroom, that was the peace which Judge Hoffman forced on Chairman Bobby Seale by coercion, by gagging him and binding him to his chair. This is not the kind of peace that we wanna talk about in Vietnam, the peace in which you have a puppet regime representing the interests of this country in which you have other means of establishing the power of this government in Vietnam.

And I think on a much more personal level, there's some parallels that we can draw. Some very profound parallels I think. And we have to say that Bobby Seale's mother who learned that he had been chained and gagged and that he had been sentenced to four years for contempt of court is no less grieved than an American woman who finds out that her son has been captured in Vietnam, I think we have to say that, that Erica Huggins and Yvonne Carter were no less grieved when they found that their husbands Bunchy and John [inaudible] liberation, then an American wife would feel about her husband there, but there is a different political consciousness involved and this is what we have to show the American people today. We have to show the American people that their sons and their husbands are being victimized by American imperialism. They are being forced to go and fight a dirty war in Vietnam. They are victims too and they have to be shown that their true loyalty's ought to be with us in the liberation struggle here and with the Vietnamese people in their liberation struggle there. Now Bobby Seale once made a statement at a peace conference in Montreal that the frontline of the battle against racism was in Vietnam. I think we have to ask ourselves what this means because a lot of people may have thought that what this means is that we can depend on the Vietnamese to win our battle here. This is not what he was saying. He was pointing to that inherent connection between what's happening there and what's happening here. And I think we can say and I'm talking from personal experience, I was in Cuba this summer and I met with some representatives of the South Vietnamese Provisional Revolutionary Government and they told us that we were -- we, revolutionaries in this country were their most important allies. And not just because we take signs and march in front of the White House saying US Government get out of Vietnam because -- rather because we are actively involved in struggling to satisfy the needs of our people in this country and in this way as they point out we are able to internally destroy that monster, which is oppressing people all over the country. I have to admit that I felt a little bit inadequate about that because what he's saying, what the representative of the South Vietnamese Provisional Revolutionary Government was saying is that we are to escalate our struggle in this country, we ought to talk about making more and more demands for the liberation of our people here and this is going to be what they will depend on. This is going to help them in their liberation struggle. Now I think that we ought to talk in the context of this upcoming march here and in Washington about the [inaudible] to make simultaneous demands and those demands ought to be immediate withdrawal of US Troops from Vietnam. There ought to be victory for the Vietnamese. There ought to be also recognition of the revolutionary government in South Vietnam and I think this is perhaps most important, we ought to demand the release of political prisoners in this country.

Just one last thing. You know Nixon made a speech on November 3rd, I think it was and he said something that we ought to take heed of, we ought to understand. He said, "Let us understand that the Vietnamese cannot defeat or humiliate our government. Only Americans can do that." I feel that it is our responsibility to fight on all fronts, to fight on all fronts simultaneously to defeat and to humiliate the US Government and all the fascist tactics by which it is repressing liberation fighters in this country.

Thank you very much.