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D E T R O I T , 1 9 6 5

*Gentlemen:*

This letter is in regards to a notice sent to me, General Gordon Baker, Jr., requesting my appearance before an examining station to determine my fitness for military service.

How could you have the NERVE knowing that I am a black man living under the scope and influence of America's racist, decadent society??? You did not ask me if I had any morals, principles, or basic human values by which to live. Yet, you ask if I am qualified. QUALIFIED FOR WHAT, might I ask? What does being "Qualified" mean: qualified to serve in the U.S. Army? . . . To be further brainwashed into the insidious notion of "defending freedom"?

You stand before me with the dried blood of Patrice Lumumba on your hands, the blood of defenseless Panamanian students, shot down by U.S. marines; the blood of my black brothers in Angola and South Africa who are being tortured by the Portuguese and South African whites (whom you resolutely support) respectively; the dead people of Japan, Korea, and now Vietnam, in Asia; the blood of Medgar Evers, six Birmingham babies, the blood of one million Algerians slaughtered by the French (whom you supported); the *fresh* blood of ten thousand Congolese patriots dead from your ruthless rape and plunder of the Congo—the blood of defenseless women and children burned in villages from Napalm jelly bombs . . . With all of this blood of my non-white brothers dripping from your fangs, you have the damned AUDACITY to ask me if I am "qualified." White man; listen to me for I am talking to you!

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I AM A MAN OF PRINCIPLES AND VALUES: principles of justice and national liberation, self-determination, and respect for national sovereignty. Yet, you ask if I am "physically fit" to go to Asia, Africa, and Latin America to fight my oppressed brothers (who are completely and resolutely within their just rights to free their fatherland from foreign domination). You ask me if I am qualified to join an army of FOOLS, ASSASSINS and MORAL DELINQUENTS who are not worthy of being called men! You want me to defend the riches reaped from the super-exploitation of the darker races of mankind by a few white, rich, super-monopolists who control the most vast empire that has ever existed in man's one million years of History—all in the name of "Freedom"!

Why, here in the heart of America, 22 million black people are suffering unsurmounted toil: exploited economically by every form of business—from monopolists to petty hustlers; completely suppressed politically; deprived of their social and cultural heritage.

But, all men of principle are fighting-men! My fight is for Freedom: UHURU, LIBERTAD, HALAUGA, and HARAMBEE! Therefore, when the call is made to free South Africa; when the call is made to liberate Latin America from the United Fruit Co., Kaiser and Alcoa Aluminum Co., and from Standard Oil; when the call is made to jail the exploiting Brahmins in India in order to destroy the Caste System; when the call is made to free the black delta areas of Mississippi, Alabama, South Carolina; when the call is made to FREE 12TH STREET HERE IN DETROIT!: when these calls are made, send for me, for these shall be Historical Struggles in which it shall be an honor to serve!

Venceremos!

*General G. Baker, Jr.*

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