

NOTES ON AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY SINCE 1900

The history of chattel slavery from 1619 to 1863 is a history of African-American resistance to the American slave system. African captives resisted slavery in various forms; from insurrections on slave ships during the Middle Passage, sabotaging, maiming and killing animals, non-cooperation, work slowdowns, running away, suicide, and work strikes, to organized rebellion. During slavery some two hundred and four slave insurrections occurred. Slave plots were recorded in New York as early as 1712 and 1741. The Stono insurrection in South Carolina in 1720, and again in 1739, created utter fear in the slaveholders. There was a slave plot in Georgia in 1739, but the largest and most notable slave plots or insurrections were the Gabriel Prosser Conspiracy in Virginia in 1800, the slave revolt in Louisiana in 1811, the Demark Vesey Conspiracy in South Carolina in 1821 and the Nat Turner insurrection in Virginia in 1831.¹

Probably the largest slave revolt in the United States took place near New Orleans in 1811. Four to five hundred slaves gathered after an uprising at the plantation of a Major Andry. Armed with cane knives, axes and clubs, they wounded Andry, killed his son, and began marching from plantation to plantation, their numbers growing. They were attacked by the U.S. army and militia forces; sixty-six were killed on the spot and sixteen were tried and shot by a firing squad.²

Resistance continued and became more intense along with anti-slavery agitation by white and African-American (Freedmen or runaways) abolitionists during the years preceding the Civil War. Sectional conflict, both within Congress and in the prairies and streets of America, became so violent, that with the election of Abraham Lincoln as president, the South seceded and attacked the Union. Economically slaves were being used increasingly as an industrial labor force for Southern industry prior to the outbreak of the Civil War.³ So, the question of which way the nation was to go, free labor or slave labor, was a paramount question for the developing white industrial class in northern cities. The combination of the Union Army and African-American ex-slaves (Union soldiers) destroyed the Confederacy and ended slavery.⁴

During the Civil War, at various meetings and through promises from the Union generals, African-Americans came to believe the previous slave plantations would be broken up into individual 40 acre sections, and two mules would be loaned to them by the federal government, for their participation in helping the (North) Union win the Civil War.

Who was Frederick Douglass?

Frederick Douglas was the only African-American leader to lead the National Movement through two economic formations (cultural capitalism) chattel slavery and industrial capitalism. Douglas correctly foresaw the major contradictions from 1848 on and foretold of the north engaging in a civil war to destroy slavery.

¹ Harvey Wish, "American Slave Insurrections Before 1861", *The Journal of Negro History*, XXII (July 1947) pp. 299-320

² Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States* [New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1980] p.169.

³ Robert S. Starobin, *Industrial Slavery in the Old South* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1975], especially Chapter 5.

⁴ W.E.B. DuBois, *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880* [New York: Atheneum, 1973], especially Chapter 4.

Frederick Douglass was born into slavery on the Eastern Shore of Maryland in 1818, and was given the name Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey (Baly), after his mother Harriet Bailey. During the course of his remarkable life he escaped from slavery, became internationally renowned for his eloquence in the cause of liberty, and went on to serve the national government in several official capacities. Through his work he came into contact with many of the leaders of his times. His early work in the cause of freedom brought him into contact with a wide array of abolitionists and social reformers, including William Lloyd Garrison, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, John Brown, Gent Smith and many others. As a major Stationmaster on the Underground Railroad he directly helped hundreds on their way to freedom through his adopted home city of Rochester, NY.

Renowned for his eloquence, he lectured throughout the US and England on the brutality and immorality of slavery. As a publisher his *North Star* and *Frederick Douglass' Paper* brought news of the anti-slavery movement to thousands. Forced to leave the country to avoid arrest after John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry, he returned to become a staunch advocate of the Union cause. He helped recruit African American troops for the Union Army, and his personal relationship with Lincoln helped persuade the President to make emancipation a cause of the Civil War. Two of Douglass' sons served in the 54th Massachusetts Regiment, which was made up entirely of African American volunteers.

All of Douglass' children were born of his marriage to Anna Murray. He met Murray, a free African American, in Baltimore while he was still held in slavery. They were married soon after his escape to freedom. After the death of his first wife, Douglass married his former secretary, Helen Pitts, of Rochester, NY. Douglass dismissed the controversy over his marriage to a white woman, saying that in his first marriage he had honored his mother's race, and in his second marriage, his father's.

In 1872, Douglass moved to Washington, DC where he initially served as publisher of the *New National Era*, which was intended to carry forward the work of elevating the position of African Americans in the post-Emancipation period. This enterprise was discontinued when the promised financial backing failed to materialize. In this period Douglass also served briefly as President of the Freedmen's National Bank, and subsequently in various national service positions, including US Marshal for the District of Columbia and diplomatic positions in Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

The Port Royal Experiment: 1861-1862

The U.S. Navy occupied the South Carolina Sea Islands (Port Royal) in November 1861 and all the white inhabitants fled to the mainland. At Port Royal the U.S. capitalists decided to set up an experiment among the slaves, to serve as an example that they could be organized into free laborers. At Port Royal, there was a community of 10,000 slaves who were accustomed to organizing their own labor remained. The system of labor employed gave these Africans a unique control over the pace, and length of their workday.

1. Their daily tasks were assigned to rice and cotton plantations.
2. After completion of their work, they were left with free time to hunt, fish, cultivate crops or enjoy leisure time.
3. The organization of free labor enabled slaves to acquire small amounts of property by selling to their masters or nearby towns, crops raised on their own time.

After a period of time the Gideonites, paternalistic white northerners (wage labor) prevented Africans from charting their own course to free labor.

The Homestead Act of 1862:

The Homestead Act of 1862 gave European immigrants most of the remaining native American lands to be formed into capitalist farms and extend the midwest and west for the railroads.

The Emancipation Movement in Congress:

On August 6, 1861 the first Confiscation Act was passed by Congress. This law provided that all slaves who were used by the rebels to prosecute the war were henceforth free. Lincoln reluctantly signed this law, fearing even this partial attack upon slavery would push the border-states into succession. He said that he would use his own discretion in applying the Act, and in fact, he practically ignored it.

The next step was taken on March 31, 1862 when President Lincoln signed a bill, passed by Congress, which prohibited the army and navy from returning fugitive slaves to slave holder claimants. Any officer violating the law would be discharged from service, and would be forever ineligible to any appointment in the military or naval service of the United States. This ended the shameful practice by northern generals of returning Africans to slavery, and it also stimulated the flight of slaves to the northern lines. On April 16, 1862 Congress took another important action and freed the 3,000 slaves in the District of Columbia; but a clause was included in the law providing \$300 compensation to the slaveholders for each slave set free. Despite its compensation feature, this Act was welcomed by the abolitionists.

The Confiscation Act of 1862:

In the Confiscation Act of 1862 Congress placed a powerful revolutionary weapon in Lincoln's hands. The Act authorized the president "to cause the seizure of all the estates and property, money, stocks, credit and effects" of all military and civil officers of the confederacy or of its states and after 60 days' notice to confiscate the property of all "engaged in armed rebellion" against the United States.

Emancipation of the slaves:

The demand for emancipation of the slaves was escalating as the civil war proceeded. Fredrick Douglass, Harriet Tubman and hundreds of freedmen constantly petitioned, picketed and demanded that Lincoln free the slaves. The outbreak of the civil war was accompanied by many slave revolts, a general strike by slaves on the plantations and a wholesale flight of slaves to the union lines. The civil war was a revolution because it brought about "a transference of power from one class to another". Among the several elements on the left were the African American people. They were the most definite revolutionary of any of the groups or classes in the civil war period. This was true of both the slaves in the south and of the freedmen and women in the north.

There were several basic plans in their general program, as formulated in the north, including: (a) the emancipation of the slaves; (b) the arming of the African slaves and

freedmen; (c) the enfranchisement of the African—American people; (d) the abolition of Jim Crow and social inequality; and (e) the redistribution of the land in the South. These were the national liberation demands of the African-American people at the - time.

General Fremont issued a statement on August 1, 1863 freeing slaves under his jurisdiction and General Butler did a similar one. Under mass and congressional-pressure, Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on September 22, 1863. Though Lincoln was ambiguous concerning the freed-people and lacked a concise plan for Reconstruction, he did have an outline for making confiscated confederate land available to African—American farmers.

An official agency called the direct tax commissioners of South Carolina, acting in the government's behalf, had bought a great deal of land that had been seized to satisfy war tax debts. On September 16, 1863, the president instructed the commissioners to dispose of 60,000 acres of this land. They were to sell the property at a public sale, in lots not larger than 320 acres, except for certain portions to be retained for military, educational and charitable purposes.

Lincoln specified that certain plantations named in the order be reserved for sale to "heads of families of the African race". He directed that sales be made in twenty—acre lots (not the legendary forty) at the cost of \$1.25 an acre. Although this provision was separate from the public—sale arrangement, land was not offered free to former slaves, nor was the price necessary below the going rate for similar property. This provision, significantly, was tucked into the rider on the order that reserved land for charitable and other purposes.

Lincoln's land order imposed its own difficulties from the start. When General Saxton and his officers went about carrying out the provision for freedmen, they faced the immediate problem of insufficient acreage. The plantations designated for sale to African Americans comprised only sixteen thousand of the total sixty thousand acres to be sold. Saxton and his friends turned to Washington for an answer. They persuaded Secretary Chase to increase the number of acres for freedmen; this Chase went beyond Lincoln's instructions and started things moving on a collision course. Chase's order opened up all government—owned lands for sale at \$1.25 an acre, excluding lands not reserved for military and educational purposes. Under the terms of preemption, the prospective buyer was to pay two-fifths of the cost initially and the balance on receipt of the deeds. Sales were open to "any loyal person" twenty—one years of age or older who had resided in union territory for six months or who was a resident of union land at the time that sales instructions were issued. Under these regulations the loyal could pre-empt twenty or forty-acre tracts. A further arrangement for sailors and soldiers allowed twenty acres to single men and forty to married heads of households. The legend of forty acres and a mule grew out of these last provisions, not from Lincoln's original order.

The land sales instantly attracted former slaves in Georgia and South Carolina -sometimes while cannons were roaring in the distance, blacks eagerly sought to exercise preemption (or squatter's rights, as the situation became in some cases) in the rush for land. With encouragement and assistance from the military, many remained to work and keep plantations that their masters had abandoned when the union forces approached. Others turned up, ragged and bewildered, behind the machine of liberation, pouring into union camps, wandering through the countryside in the shock of sudden change or traveling from place to place in nomadic bands.

After the Emancipation Proclamation, January 1, 1863, President Lincoln began to recruit African Americans to participate in the Civil War on the side of the Union.

African-Americans in the Civil War

In the annals of American History, many historians consider the Civil War between northern and southern states, to be the most pivotal event in determining the course of the nation that was the United States of America. The Civil War lasted a little more than three years, and like many civil wars, pitted brother against brother, which resulted in feelings of distrust and animosity that have continued for over a century. African-Americans fought valiantly to change the course of history and their status in a young nation that heretofore regarded them primarily as chattel slaves, or second-class citizens providing a source of cheap, if not free, labor.

Hundreds of books have been written about the Civil War, but few focus on the contributions of African-Americans. In addition to the books about African-Americans in the Civil War, there are movies, websites that provide excerpts from journals, brief articles and reference lists.

In recent years popular films and historical documentaries focusing on African-Americans and specifically the 54th regiment have been produced to provide a more balanced historical account of the soldiers who fought in the Civil War. Many of the resources that focus on the role of African-Americans in the Civil War were written, or produced, by African-Americans. Primary data describing the war and the treatment of soldiers are available in the form of letters from African-American soldiers on the battlefield to their loved ones. As historians, and scholars with a passion for uncovering the truth, these accounts are critical sources for recording and interpreting Civil War events because they offer a perspective of the war from those whose contributions were unjustly marginalized. There are many important stories as told by the descendants of soldiers whose sacrifices have gone unrecognized by mainstream historians. Not surprising to many of us, most accounts of the Civil War only briefly mention the contributions of African-Americans in passing. The following is by no means a full account of African-Americans in the Civil War.

Treatment of African-Americans in the Civil War

The contraband soldiers, as some were called, and other soldiers of African descent, were not viewed with the same degree of respect and reverence as white soldiers who fought in the war. African-American soldiers endured racist and prejudicial treatment when it came to medical treatment, training, and punishment as prisoners of war, rewards, and recognition as soldiers.

Events Leading African-American Soldiers into the Civil War

A growing number of Northern abolitionists argued that the Southern system was morally wrong and must be abolished. Northern abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison founded an antislavery newspaper in 1831 named The Liberator, calling for the end of institutionalized slavery in the United States. Other influential African-American abolitionist leaders included prominent men such as Frederick Douglass, James Forten and David Walker. In

1829, Walker published his pamphlet in Boston entitled Walker's Appeal, two years before Nat Turner's rebellion in Southampton, Virginia, in 1831, urging slaves to rise up and kill their masters.

Among the general population, it was widely held that under the constitution, the United States government lacked the power to set slaves free. The rights of the states were considered beyond the reach of federal legislation. The sovereign right of states was the prevailing sentiment. When the Civil War erupted in 1861, few Northerners were willing to fight for the freedom of slaves. The North's war goal was clear and simple - restore the Union. However, after Southerners won several opening battles, it became increasingly clear that in order to defeat the Confederacy, it would be necessary to destroy the South's social and economic structure.

Abolition of slavery would be an important step in this destruction. To accomplish this, it would be essential to utilize all available means to win, including employing African-Americans in the military forces. Northerners and the Union army gradually accepted this basic policy. The abolitionist movement aided their cause. One of the most prominent abolitionists of the period was Frederick Douglass. Susan-Mary Grant writes about Frederick Douglass in Pride and Prejudice in the American Civil War. Douglass, an escaped slave, was an abolitionist and frequently gave speeches and wrote about the vestiges of slavery. The following comment, summarizes his thoughts on the matter of African-American soldiers in the civil war as compared to their participation in the revolutionary war,

Colored men were good enough to fight under Washington; they are not good enough to fight under McClellan. They were good enough to fight under Andrew Jackson. They are not good enough to fight under General Halleck. They were good enough to help win American independence but they are not good enough to help preserve that independence against treason and rebellion.⁵

Douglass wrote and spoke eloquently as an abolitionist and advocate for the use of slaves and African-Americans in the war effort:

Douglass wrote, "When first the rebel cannon shattered the walls of Sumter, and drove away its starving garrison, I predicted that the war, then and there inaugurated, would not be fought out entirely by white men. Every month's experience during these dreary years has confirmed that opinion. A war undertaken and brazenly carried on for the perpetual enslavement of colored men, calls logically and loudly for colored men to help suppress it. Only a moderate share of sagacity was needed to see that the arm of the slave was the best defense against the arm of the slaveholder. Hence, with every reverse to the national arms, with every exultant shout of victory raised by the slaveholding rebels, I have implored the imperiled nation to unchain against her foes, her powerful African-American hand. Slowly and reluctantly that appeal is being heeded."⁶

⁵ Grant, Susan-Mary, "Pride and Prejudice in the American Civil War" History Today, September 1998, <http://www.findarticles.com>.Grant

⁶ Cornish, Dudley Taylor, The Sable Arm, Black Troops in the Union Army, 1861-1865, [Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1987] p. 108).

Americans went to war with each other in the 1860's partly because two very different societies had developed; one in the North, influenced by developing industry, and the other in the South, where agriculture remained dominant. Of these two societies, the South used Africans in much larger numbers as slaves for labor. Using slave labor was very expensive, allowing fewer than twenty percent of Southerners to own and maintain slaves. In the North, the vast majority of the citizens and immigrants labored for wages. The North enjoyed a higher standard of living, which allowed for the development of a middle class and the beginnings of an industrial working class. It was this economic advantage that was being threatened by the breaking up of the Union. The economic implications of maintaining or dismantling slavery were far more influential in shaping policy than the moral position denouncing slavery.

The new president, Abraham Lincoln, was also concerned about Europe's view of the United States. He was being forced to take into consideration the international status of the nation in making policy decisions related to the question of slavery because, if he could get Britain to support the North and boycott the South, it would affect the Southern economy. England could do this because it could get cotton for its textile mills from plantations in India that produced cotton. Closer to home, Lincoln was being pressured by northern abolitionists and African-Americans. He was very concerned about alienating Border States which, although technically Southern states, they still held solidarity with the Union as compared to those States which had already seceded from the Union. In response to the economic implications of a prolonged war and the military's inability to gain a solid victory against the Confederacy, a series of legislative policies were enacted.

In 1861, Congress had passed an act stating that all slaves employed against the Union were to be considered free. In 1862, Congress passed the Confiscation Act. This law stated that property used by the Confederates to further their rebellion could be seized by the U.S. government. Slaves, who had been Confederate property, were therefore considered "contraband of war" and could legally be taken from their owners. In an effort to placate the slave-holding Border States, Lincoln resisted the demands of radical Republicans for complete abolition. Yet some Union generals, such as General B. F. Butler, declared slaves escaping to their lines "contraband of war," not to be returned to their masters. Other generals decreed that the slaves of men rebelling against the Union were to be considered free. Congress, too, had been moving toward abolition.

In the early years of the war, the enthusiasm of African-Americans to contribute to the war was declined and thwarted continuously. By the end of 1861, only in the Union Navy had they been granted any opportunity, however limited, to prove their worth as men. The Confederacy used its colored population when and where it wanted. The North continued the policy of allowing states to use their discretion in whether or not to use slaves in the war effort. Lincoln was hoping to gain favor with the Border States by allowing them to decide for themselves on the question of slaves as soldiers. The Crittenden Resolution passed the U.S. House of Representatives on July 22, 1861, affirming the fact that the war was being fought to preserve the Union and not to interfere with slavery. In 1862, another act stated that all slaves of men who supported the Confederacy were to be considered free.⁷

⁷ Cornish, Dudley Taylor, *The Sable Arm, Black Troops in the Union Army, 1861-1865*, [Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of

Lincoln, aware of the public's growing support of abolition, issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, declaring that all slaves in areas still in rebellion were, in the eyes of the federal government, free. Congress eventually passed the Enrollment Act, which authorized equal pay for African-American soldiers.

Treatment of African-American Soldiers

The Emancipation Proclamation declared that as of January 1, 1863 all slaves in rebellious territories were forever free. The Emancipation Proclamation expanded the Union cause to include freedom for slaves. Therefore, African-American recruits were enrolled into segregated units led by white officers.

The War Department sanctioned the recruitment of African-American troops in August 1862 but, African-American troops were not properly raised until after Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation of January 1st, 1863.⁸ The decision came at a time when the war was not going well for the Union, and coincided with the first draft in the North. In some ways this helped. Racist objections to the arming of former slaves could easily, if cynically, be countered on the grounds that it was better that an African-American soldier die than a white one. As John M. Broomall, Congressman from Pennsylvania noted:

I have never found the shakiest constituent of mine, who, when he was drafted, refused to let the blackest Negro in the district go as a substitute for him.⁹

Some generals, such as William T. Sherman, did not want the African-Americans in their army, but most Union officers reported that African-American men made good soldiers who were highly motivated, did not get drunk, obeyed their officers, and rarely deserted. Principally, they were given non-combat assignments like garrison and occupation duty. These men guarded prisoner of war compounds, supply depots, and labor details such as building roads, digging fortifications, and driving mule powered wagons. Ironically, they also worked on cotton and sugar cane plantations confiscated by Union authorities. Although many African-American soldiers earned respect for hard work and courageous fighting, the price was high. Nearly one in three died in combat, while others died of wounds and disease. Medical supplies were limited, treatment was crude, and the best trained medics were assigned to white soldiers.

Despite their achievements on the battlefield, they suffered from discrimination and prejudice. Because African-Americans were not considered equals by Confederates, many were murdered instead of being taken prisoner and thrown into mass graves. When the Union began using African-American troops in combat, the Confederates announced that they would consider any African-American soldier they could capture not as a prisoner of war but as a fugitive slave. Many Southerners announced unofficially that they would execute any African-American soldier they captured. On April 12, 1864, General Nathan B. Forrest made this threat very real when his cavalry attacked a Union base at Fort Pillow, Tennessee. After the white and African-American soldiers of the Union army surrendered to

Kansas, 1987] p. 108.

⁸ Grant, Susan-Mary, "Pride and Prejudice in the American Civil War" [History Today, September 1998, www.findarticles.com](http://www.findarticles.com). Grant

⁹ Grant, Susan-Mary, "Pride and Prejudice in the American Civil War" [History Today, September 1998, www.findarticles.com](http://www.findarticles.com). Grant

Forrest's men, the Confederates proceeded to shoot their prisoners.¹⁰ It is estimated that between 277 and 297 Union soldiers were either killed or fatally wounded at what would be known as the massacre at Fort Pillow. The mortality rate among the African-American troops was a staggering 64 percent.¹¹ Word of the massacre spread quickly.

The most profound and immediate impact of Fort Pillow was felt by the African-American men already in the Union ranks, and by the white officers who commanded them. From Fort Pickering in Memphis, 2nd Lieutenant W.A. Price of the 55th USCT put down his thoughts for New York's *Anglo-African* newspaper:

While I meditate for a moment of the Fort Pillow massacre my very blood chills within my veins. I often ask myself the question; "Shall we as officers and men of colored regiments, ever be found with prisoners in our possession?" I can only answer for myself; I would be tempted in such circumstances to mow the infernal rebels to the ground, as I would mow the grass before my scythe. I know not how soon I may be called to share the fate of the gallant officers and men at Fort Pillow. God forbid that such should ever be my lot.¹²

It is reported that one regiment from Ohio led by Lieutenant Viers, was defeated and left twenty three wounded men on the battlefield who fell into the rebel's hands. Of the twenty-three prisoners, eleven died in Confederate hands. Five others met unknown fates after their capture and one soldier among those being held prisoner died in Richmond after being enslaved. Seven of the soldiers and their commander, Lieutenant Viers, received paroles.¹³

In another incident, one soldier who survived imprisonment to tell his story was Sergeant Rodney Long of the 29th USCT. After being released from prison in Danville, Virginia where he spent seven months in Confederate detention, he recalled "We suffered terribly while in prison and most of our men died there. His fellow prisoner, who survived capture because his bloody face disguised the fact that he was African-American, also said, "I never knew what it was to get anything respectable to eat while in prison, and there was not one third enough of the vile stuff that was given us. He said, "I was punished severely on account of my color. Out of 180 colored prisoners taken, only seven survived."¹⁴ Reports of the severe treatment and killing of prisoners resulted in abolitionists and recruiters demanding fair treatment of prisoners of war.

Upon learning about the treatment of members of the 54th Massachusetts Infantry taken as prisoners, Frederick Douglass wrote a letter to George L. Stearns explaining why he refused to continue his recruiting efforts for the Union army:

Douglass asked, "How many 54ths must be cut to pieces, its mutilated prisoners killed, and its living sold into slavery, to be tortured to death by inches, before Mr. Lincoln shall say, 'Hold, enough!'"¹⁵

¹⁰ Redkey, Edwin S. *A Grand Army of Black Men*, [Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, 1992] p. 7.)

¹¹ Trudeau, Noah Ander, *Like Men of War, Black Troops in the Civil War 1862-1865* [Boston, New York and London: Little, Brown, and Company 1998], p. 168).

¹² Trudeau, Noah Ander, *Like Men of War, Black Troops in the Civil War 1862-1865*, [Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, 1992] p. 171)

¹³ Washington, Varsalle F., *Eagles on Their Buttocks: A Black Infantry Regiment in the Civil War*, [University of Missouri Press, 1999]. p. 59).

¹⁴ Trudeau, Noah Ander, *Like Men of War, Black Troops in the Civil War 1862-1865*, [Little, Brown, and Company 1998] p. 249).

¹⁵ Cornish Taylor, Dudley. *The Sable Arm Black Troops in the Union Army, 1861-1865*, [Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas], p. 168).

Douglass was one man among many calling for the fair treatment of African-American soldiers. Finally, when African-American soldiers were captured in an engagement before Charleston and the Confederates refused to exchange the captured soldiers according to the terms of a previous agreement, President Lincoln issued the following order:

"Executive Mansion, Washington, July 30th, 1863. "It is the duty of every government to give protection to its citizens of whatever color, class, or condition, and especially to those who are duly organized as soldiers in the public service. The law of nations and the usages and customs of war, as carried on by civilized powers, permit no distinction as to color in the treatment of prisoners of war, as public enemies. To sell or enslave any captured person, on account of his color, and for no offense against the laws of war, is a relapse into barbarism, and a crime against the civilization of the age. The government of the United States will give the same protection to all its soldiers; and if the enemy shall enslave or sell any one because of his color, the offense shall be punished by retaliation upon the enemy's prisoners in our possession. It is therefore ordered that for every soldier of the United States killed in violation of the laws of war, a rebel soldier shall be executed, and for every one enslaved by the enemy or sold into slavery, a rebel soldier shall be placed at hard labor on public works, continued at such labor until the other shall be released and receive the treatment due to a prisoner of war.

"ABRAHAM LINCOLN" "By order of the Secretary of War"

"E.D. Townsend, Ass't. Adj't.-General."¹⁶

In addition to the mistreatment of African-American prisoners of war, there was also the difference in how the African-American soldiers were paid. At first African-Americans were paid only \$7 per month plus \$3 clothing allowance as compared to \$13 allowed for a white private. For ranks other than private, the pay differential was much larger. Since African-American sergeants received the same pay as African-American privates, they received eleven dollars less a month than their white counterparts, or less than half their pay.¹⁷ In many cases, the pay that the soldier received for serving in the USCT was less than he would have been earning at home. One soldier, Lieutenant Scroggs, wrote in his diary about the treatment of prisoners of war and the effect of unequal pay on the African-American soldiers,

The rebels have not yet recognized or treated such colored soldiers as have fallen into their hands as prisoners of war, but have butchered, starved and even burnt them to death. Yet to these men, who voluntarily brave these dangers, our government pays but the poor pittance of \$4 27/100 per month. Should this Congress adjourn without doing full and complete Justice to the free colored -volunteer it will deserve that "perfidious" be attached to its number in history. I did not enter this service from any mercenary motive but to assist in removing the unreasonable prejudice against the colored race, and to contribute a share however small toward making the Negro an

¹⁶ Wilson, Joseph T. *The Black Phalanx, African American Soldiers in the War of Independence, The War of 1812 & The Civil War*, [Da Capo Press, 1994], p. 319-320)

¹⁷ Washington, F. Versalle, *Eagles on Their Buttons: A Black Infantry Regiment in the Civil War*, [Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 1999], p. 38

effective instrument in crushing out this unholy rebellion.¹⁸

In an attempt to rectify the discrepancy in pay, a statute of June 15, 1864, equalized the wage scale for all soldiers retroactive to January 1, allowing African-Americans to collect back pay for 1862 and 1863, provided they had been free as of April 19, 1861.¹⁹ For the African-American soldiers who had either escaped slavery to enlist or who had been freed by the Emancipation Proclamation, the statute would have no impact on their pay. To get around this requirement, the commander of the 54th Massachusetts asked the soldiers to affirm the simple statement, "You do solemnly swear that you owed no man unrequited labor on or before the 19th day of April, 1861. So help you God."²⁰ With that statement, for the first time in their war service, the soldiers of the 54th Massachusetts Regiment were paid.

Regiments of Note

Nearly 180,000 African-American men enlisted, of whom 134,000 hailed from the southern slave states. They formed 166 regiments and fought almost 500 battles. In so doing they earned 23 Congressional Medals of Honor.²¹ The 1st South Carolina Colored Volunteers was the fifth regiment to African-American soldiers to join the ranks of the Union Army when it was mustered in on January 31, 1863. However, the first large scale, organized effort to arm African-American soldiers was Hunter's experiment at Beaufort. Even though Hunter failed, his work was continued by Rums Saxton and Captain Trowbridge's Company A, as it was known was officially mustered into service by General Saxton in November 1862, making it the first organization of African American Soldiers.

Two regiments made up of ex-slaves, **Corps d'Afrique**, from New Orleans became well-known for their heroic charge at Port Hudson, Louisiana. Units of both races fought side-by-side at the Battle of the Crater during the siege of Petersburg, Virginia. Confusion during the surrender of Fort Pillow in western Tennessee led to the accusation that Forrest's cavalry had deliberately massacred African-American and white members of the garrison.

The **54th Massachusetts Infantry** was one of the first African-American Civil War Regiments to be formed. The 54th was formed in March 1863 at Camp Meigs, in Readville, Massachusetts. Enlistees included former slaves and free African-Americans from the north. The most well-known of the recruits were Frederick Douglass' sons, Lewis N. Douglass and Charles Douglass. Their bravery and courage changed the minds of many who doubted their ability and inspired many other African-Americans to join in their ranks. It was organized in the north by Robert Gould Shaw, who was from a prominent Boston abolitionist family. Massachusetts's governor John A. Andrew appointed him colonel of the 54th in February 1863. Prior to that, he had served in the Seventh New York National Guard and the Second Massachusetts Infantry.

¹⁸ Washington, F. Versalle, *Eagles on Their Buttons a Black Infantry Regiment in the Civil War*, [Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 1999], p. 40).

¹⁹ Trudeau, Noah Ander, *Like Men of War, Black Troops in the Civil War 1862-1865*, [Boston, New York and London: Little, Brown, and Company 1998], p. 254.

²⁰ Trudeau, Noah Ander, *Like Men of War, Black Troops in the Civil War 1862-1865*, [Boston, New York and London: Little, Brown, and Company 1998], p. 255.

²¹ Cornish, Dudley Taylor, *The Sable Arm, Black Troops in the Union Army, 1861-1865*, [Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1987], p. 288

The 54th Massachusetts Infantry proved its strength and importance at Fort Wagner South Carolina after Brigadier General George C. Strong's brigade failed to take the fort. Union artillery on Folly Island together with Rear Admiral John Dahlgren's fleet of ironclads opened fire on Confederate defenses of Morris Island. The bombardment provided cover for Brigadier General George C. Strong's brigade, which crossed Light House Inlet and landed by boats on the southern tip of the island. Strong's troops advanced, capturing several batteries, to within range of Confederate Fort Wagner. At dawn, July 11, 1863, Strong attacked the fort. Soldiers of the 7th Connecticut reached the parapet but, unsupported, were thrown back.

After the July 11 assault on Fort Wagner failed, Gillmore reinforced his beachhead on Morris Island. At dusk July 18, Gillmore launched an attack spearheaded by the 54th Massachusetts Infantry, an African-American regiment. After recruitment and training, the unit was sent to Hilton Head, South Carolina. It was there that their actions proved their competence. On July 18, the troops were ordered to lead the attack at Fort Wagner. They charged ahead as they were bombarded by gunfire from Confederate soldiers. Casualties were high, and by the end of the battle, 250 troops had died, including Shaw. While the attack was unsuccessful, this battle brought them recognition. The regiment received praise for their bravery. William Carney, especially, was given individual praise for his heroism. Carney was a 23-year-old enlistee assigned to Company C. While wounded in his head, leg, and hip, Carney saw that the soldier who was carrying the flag had been wounded. He got up, ran to the flag through a volley of bullets, and delivered it to his regiment. As he fell to the ground he cried, "Boys, the old flag never touched the ground!" For his actions, Carney received the Medal of Honor. He was the first African-American to receive it. The flag now hangs in Boston's Memorial Hall, near the bronze mural honoring the 54th Infantry.²²

After Shaw's death, Edward N. Hall from Medford, Massachusetts became the new commander. The regiment participated in other battles in Charleston during the rest of 1863. In February 1864, the regiment was assigned to help the forces in Jacksonville, Florida. From Jacksonville they went on to the battle of Olustee where their assistance was in great need. The 54th, along with the 35th United States Colored Troops, helped the Union regiments on the front line. In addition to the 54th's participation in several battles, it was equally notable that even though they were paid less than white soldiers, they remained steadfast in their commitment. They did their best despite the inequality that existed. Little did the 54th know that while they fought in Olustee, Congress was busy passing a bill, which guaranteed equal pay for African-American soldiers. At the time, African-American soldiers were paid \$7 a month while white soldiers were paid \$10 a month. This was soon changed with the passage of the congressional bill. The 54th Infantry surprised its critics as they proved to be a strong force against Confederate troops. They received praise for their courage and bravery and became a vital part of the Civil War. Even today, the 54th Massachusetts Infantry is the most recognized African-American Civil War regiment.

Timeline of Major Civil War Battles Involving African-American Soldiers

1863

January 26 - The 1st South Carolina Volunteer Regiment (African Descent) engage the

²² Wilson, Joseph T. *The Black Phalanx, African American Soldiers in the War of Independence, The War of 1812 & The Civil War*, (New York: Da Capo Press, 1994) p. 129.

enemy at Township, Florida, shortly after being mustered in at Beaufort.

May 18 - 1st Kansas Colored Volunteer Regiment engage the enemy at Sherwood, Missouri.

May 22 thru July 8 - Battle of Port Hudson, Louisiana. In the Union forces were Louisiana Native Guard and the Corps D'Afrique Regiments.

May 28 - Newly organized 54th Massachusetts Volunteers depart Boston for an assignment in South Carolina.

June 7 - Battle of Milliken's Bend, Louisiana. Union forces were 1250 contrabands recently enlisted in the 9th and 11th Louisiana Colored Volunteer and the 1st Mississippi Colored Volunteer Regiments, and 160 whites from the 23rd Iowa Regiment. The battle fought mainly with bayonets and rifle butts was said to have been one of the most bloodiest of the war. Hundreds were killed on both sides.

July 17 - Battle of Honey Springs (Elk Creek), Indian Territory, (Gettysburg of the West). 1st Kansas Colored Volunteer Regiment fought with Union forces. Indian regiments fought on both sides.

July 18 - Assault on Fort Wagner, South Carolina by the 54th Massachusetts Volunteers in which heavy losses occurred.

1864

February 20 - Battle of Olustee (Florida). Heavy losses suffered by the Union forces that included the 54th Massachusetts Volunteers, the 8th and 35th United States Colored Infantry Regiments. The Union forces were defeated.

April 12 - Massacre of Union Soldiers, African American enlisted and White officers, at Fort Pillow, Tennessee. (See page for details)

September 12 - A letter was written by General Robert E. Lee to President Jefferson Davis stating that Blacks should be used in support services in the Confederate Army.

September 29 - Battle of Chaffin's Farm (New Market Heights), Virginia. Twelve U.S. Colored Infantry Regiments and one Cavalry Regiment charged into battle. Thirteen men serving with the United States Colored Infantry Regiments were awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

November 30 - Battle of Honey Hill, South Carolina. Participating were the 54th and 55th Massachusetts Volunteers, the 32nd, 35th, and 102nd U.S. Colored Infantry Regiments.

1865

March 31 - April 9 - Battle of Fort Blakely, Alabama and participating were nine U. S. Colored Infantry Regiments plus two U. S. Colored Infantry Regiments serving as Engineer units.

Honors and Recognition Bestowed on African-American Soldiers

There was finally some recognition of the contributions of men who fought valiantly in Civil War. The list of those who were officially recognized with medal is short and worthy of presenting²³

Sergeant-Major C.A. Fleetwood, 4th Regiment.

Color - Sergeant Alfred B. Hilton, 4th Regiment.

Private Charles Veal, 4th Regiment.

1st a Seargeant James Brownson, 5th Regiment. Sergeant-Major Milton M. Holland, 5th Regiment. 1st Sergeant, Robert Finn, 5th Regiment.

1st Sergeant Powhaten Beaty, 5th Regiment.

Sergeant Samuel Gilchrist, 36th Regiment.

Sergeant William Davis, 36th Regiment.

Corporal Miles James, 36th Regiment.

Private James Gardner, 36th Regiment.

1st Sergeant Edward Ratcliff, 38th Regiment.

Private William Barnes, 38th Regiment. African-American

African-American Women Aid the War Effort

African-American women took civilian jobs as cooks, servants, laundresses, seamstresses, and nurses. Through acts of sabotage, arson, strikes and even self-mutilation, the African slaves protested their lives of servitude. Many of these acts of resistance were led by women. The slaves inward desire for freedom, which plagued southern plantation owners, resulted in insurrections and flights through the Underground Railroad by fugitive slaves. Harriet Tubman was the recognized leader of the Underground Railroad of the two, the possibility of slave insurrections drew the most fear among Southerners. The establishment of the Underground Railroad also aroused angry protests from white Southerners that Northerners were assisting in the destruction of the southern way of life by aiding and abetting in the loss of southern wealth.

Seth Teter writes, the Underground Railroad was more than a means of escaping slavery. With the aid of a distinct community of white northerners, it was an overall resistance movement of African-Americans against an oppressive society. The principles of freedom and equality were the inspiration behind these actions that helped to destroy the institution of slavery. In light of this definition, the Civil War played an important role as an extension of the Underground Railroad.

The Union Army was the final station in the Underground Railroad for many African-Americans. After their escape, several thousand slaves found refuge among the men that were fighting for their cause. The roles that African-Americans, such as these men, played in furthering the attempts of the Union Army is described by Gen. Jenkins: "There are now over four thousand Contrabands, here, the men are being made soldiers, and, the women, and juveniles work on government farm."

Although the acquisition of contrabands might have come for the desire for more manpower, this was the first large-scale, aggressive act of removing African-America from

²³ Wilson, Joseph T. *The Black Phalanx, African American Soldiers in the War of Independence, The War of 1812 & The Civil War*, (New York: Da Capo Press, 1994).

slavery. It was not uncommon for a slave who escaped via the Underground Railroad to remain within the system in order to help others do the same.

At the time, the Civil War was viewed, by Underground Railroad activists, as another opportunity to help guide slaves to freedom any way they could. One such man, Benjamin Tanquary wrote: "Was a good hand in the late unpleasantness just before the Emancipation Proclamation took effect. I passed a few through the lines while in the employ of the U.S. was glad to have the chance."

Tanquary was referring to the actions of some soldiers who were able to guide slaves to freedom by leading them behind Union lines where they would be relatively safe. The attitude depicted by Tanquary ties in very closely with that of the pre-war abolitionism that helped to establish the Underground Railroad. The diverse backgrounds of the aforementioned soldiers indicate that the presence of the Underground Railroad in the Civil War was displayed throughout the nation. The statement made by this movement was an essential step in abolishing slavery that continued until the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation. The northern defiance of slavery born from the Underground Railroad reached its peak in the Civil War and was the turning point in leading African-Americans to freedom.

Timeline of African-American's Participation in Civil War Events

1861

April 19 - Frederick Douglass canceled a projected trip to Haiti, and called for the recruitment of African-American troops.

May 24 - General Benjamin Butler coined the term "contraband" and refused to surrender slaves who had sought refuge in his command at Fort Monroe, Virginia.

August 30 - General Fremont issued an order confiscating property of Confederates and emancipation of their slaves. The order caused wide protest and was disavowed by President Lincoln. General Fremont was subsequently relieved of command by President Lincoln.

1862

January 15 - A letter was written by General Thomas Sherman requesting the War Department send teachers to Port Royal, South Carolina to teach ex-slaves left on plantations under control of Union forces. Edward L. Pierce submitted a plan which subsequently began the Port Royal Experiment.

February 4 - The enrolling of free African-Americans in the Confederate Army was debated in the Virginia House of Delegates. No action was taken.

April 3 - The U.S. Senate voted 29-14 to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia.

April 11 - The U.S. House of Representatives voted 93-39 to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia.

May 9 - General David Hunter, Commander of the Department of the South (Georgia, Florida, and South Carolina), issued an Emancipation Proclamation freeing all slaves in those states and also authorized the arming of able-bodied ex-slaves. Shortly thereafter, he organized the first South Carolina Colored Regiment. The unit was subsequently disbanded except for one company.

May 13 - Robert Small sailed the Confederate gunboat Planter from Charleston and delivered it to Union Navy.

May 19 - President Lincoln repudiated General David Hunter's Emancipation Act of May 9 and disavowed his order.

July 17 - Adoption of the Second Confiscation Act and Militia Act by the Administration which authorized emancipation and the employment of fugitive slave labor as weapons of war. The two Acts declared "forever free" all captured and fugitive slaves of the Confederates and authorized the mobilization of African-Americans in "any military or naval service for which they may be found competent."

August 11- General Ulysses S. Grant issued an order in Corinth, Mississippi utilizing the services of all fugitive slaves behind his lines.

August 14 - President Lincoln advocated the colonization of African-Americans in Central America during a meeting with a delegation of free African-Americans.

August 21 - Union Generals David Hunter and John Phelps denounced by the confederate President because of their wish to recruit slaves for the Union Army.

September 16 - Abolitionist Frederick Douglass rejected the proposal by President Lincoln to colonize free African-Americans in Central America.

September 22 - The first draft of Emancipation Proclamation read to the cabinet by President Lincoln. Military Service begins.

September 27 thru November 24 - The 0, 2nd, and 3rd Louisiana Native Guard Regiments (African Descent) organized and mustered into the Union Army in New Orleans.

October 10 - Confederate President Jefferson Davis requested the state of Virginia to draft 4500 African-Americans to build fortifications around Richmond.

October 27-28 - The 1st Kansas Colored Volunteer Regiment engaged the Confederates at Island Mound, Missouri. The regiment was organized by General Jim Lane and engaged the enemy prior to being mustered into the Union Army.

December 23 - A proclamation issued by Confederate President Jefferson Davis declared that General Benjamin Butler's soldiers be considered "robbers and criminals, deserving death." Confederate soldiers interpreted the statement as justifying the massacre of African-American Union soldiers.

1863

January 1- President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. The document was directed only to the states that seceded from the Union. States that remained with the Union were not affected.

January 12 - The Confederate Congress approved President Jefferson Davis' proclamation of December 23, 1862.

January 20 - Governor John A. Andrew of Massachusetts was authorized by Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton to recruit and organize African-American soldiers.

March 21 - Frederick Douglass issued a declaration, "Men of Color, To Arms" He began to recruit troops, including his sons Charles and Lewis.

March 26 - The Secretary of War issued an order directing Adjutant General Lorenzo Thomas to organize African-American regiments in the Mississippi Valley.

March 30 - 54th Regiment Massachusetts Volunteers mustered in to serve with the Union Army. April 2 - Confederate government disturbed by "Bread Riot" in Richmond, Virginia.

May 22 - The War Department established U.S. Colored Troops to handle the recruitment, organization, and service of the newly organized African-American regiments commanded by white officers.

July 13 - New York City draft riots - numerous African-Americans were killed and others fled the city.

1864

April 8 - Thirteenth Amendment passed the U.S. Senate by a vote of 38-6.

June 15 - Thirteenth Amendment fell short of the required two-thirds majority in the U.S. House of Representatives by a vote of 96-66.

July 8 - President Lincoln announced support of the Thirteenth Amendment.

November 7 - President Jefferson Davis proposed that the Confederate purchase slaves for army support work, and freeing them on discharge.

November 8 - President Lincoln re-elected.

December 3 - The 25th Army Corps organized. (The first and only army corps made up of all African-American infantry regiments.)

December 6 - President Lincoln in the Annual Message to Congress requested reconsideration of the Thirteenth Amendment.

December 16 - General William T. Sherman departed, Atlanta and began the March to the Sea. Two days later

President Jefferson Davis ordered the use of African-Americans to build obstructions to the advancing army.

December 21 – Second Grierson raid launched from Memphis en-route to Vicksburg, Mississippi with the 3rd U.S. Colored Cavalry often leading the charge.

1865

January 1 - The U.S. House of Representatives began to debate the Thirteenth Amendment.

January 31 - Thirteenth Amendment passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 119-56. March 4 - President Lincoln inaugurated.

March 13 - Recruitment of African-American soldiers approved by the Confederate Congress and signed by President Jefferson Davis. Troops were enlisted under this act.

April 2 - Confederate government abandoned Richmond, Virginia and the city was occupied by Union soldiers the next day.

April 9 - General Robert E. Lee surrendered to General Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Courthouse, Virginia. Three of the 17 units that moved toward Appomattox from the west to block General Lee's army were U.S. Colored Infantry Regiments. Three other U. S. Colored Infantry Regiments were positioned in the rear. Thirty-six African-American Confederates were paroled at Appomattox.

April 14 - President Lincoln was shot and he died the next day. Andrew Johnson became President.

May 12 - General O. Howard appointed to head the Freedman's Bureau.

December 18 - Thirteenth Amendment ratified after approval by twenty-seven states. (Delaware, Kentucky, New Jersey, and Mississippi rejected the amendment.)

African-Americans in the Union Army during the Civil War:

178,975, organized into 166 all-African-American regiments

African-Americans in the Union Navy during the Civil War:

One in four Union sailors were African-American. Of the 118,044 sailors in the Union Navy, 29,511 were African-American.

Sherman's Special Field Order 15

After William T. Sherman's army arrived in Savannah; he announced freedmen would receive land.

On January 16, 1865, he issued Special Field Order #15. This military directive set aside a thirty-mile-wide tract of land along the Atlantic coast from Charleston, South Carolina, 245 miles south to Jacksonville, Florida. White owners had abandoned the land, and Sherman reserved it for black families. The head of each family would receive possessory title to forty

acres of land. Sherman also gave the freedmen the use of army mules, thus giving rise to the slogan “forty acres and a mule.”²⁴

In the period of six months, 40,000 freed people were working 400,000 acres in the South Carolina and Georgia low country and on the Sea Islands.

Congress established the Freedmen's Bureau on a temporary basis under the war department in 1863 to provide relief to the freedmen. During this period, African-Americans formed a mass protest organization, the National Equal Rights League in 1864. A main priority of the NERL was securing the right to vote for African-Americans (freedmen) John Mercer Langston was president of the organization and Fred Douglas was a guiding force

Who was John Mercer Langston?

John Mercer Langston was one of the first Black lawyers in Ohio. He was born in Virginia in 1829, the son of a plantation owner and a free woman of Indian and African descent. After he and his brother lost their parents in 1834 they lived in a white household in Ohio until the guardians moved to Missouri. They then lived with Black and white families until they reached maturity. He studied at Oberlin College from age 14-22, earning three degrees and perfecting his skills as an orator. He helped found the Ohio State Anti-Slavery Society. He served as township clerk and as an Oberlin councilman. Although never a slave, he strongly believed that the anti-slavery movement aimed at the "preservation of life itself."

He studied at Oberlin College earning A.B., M.A. and theological degrees. He attended his first black convention in Cleveland in 1848. His leadership emerged in Political Abolitionism. He helped establish the Ohio State Anti-Slavery Society, campaigned for the Free Soil and Republican parties. He became the first black lawyer in the West. He was also an Oberlin councilman.

Who was Isaac Myers and what was the National Equal Rights League?

He was an early labor leader in the Knights of Labor, which attempted to organize black workers following the industrial development of the Civil War and Reconstruction.

Isaac Myers was president of the Colored Caulkers Trade Union Society. He and then vice-president of the Society, George T. Downing spearheaded the formation of the Colored National Labor Union, founded December 6, 1869.

On December 6, 1869, 214 delegates from eighteen states assembled in the Union League Hall in Washington, D.C. to convene the first convention of the Colored National Labor Union. By 1869, Black leaders, North and South, had reached the conclusion that equal employment opportunities and better pay could only be achieved through independent organization. What began in July as a local Black workers' union in Baltimore, soon expanded into the Colored National Labor Convention in December. The Colored National Labor Union was organized as a confederation of autonomous local and state unions. Unlike the NLU, the CNLU included all workers-industrial, agricultural, skilled craftsmen,

²⁴ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harold, *The African-American Odyssey* [Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2000] pp.259 -260.

and common laborers - men and women alike, not just skilled mechanics.

Member unions were from kept barring Black workers from membership. The NLU also supported independent political action through the Labor Reform Party, and demanded that Blacks abandon the Republican Party to join with the Reformers. Blacks, however, were ardent supporters of the party that sponsored Radical Reconstruction.

National Equal Rights League formed in 1864.

Disbanded and join with the union leagues because they had faith in the Republican Party.

The major all-African American movement after the Civil War was the National Equal Rights League (NERL). The NERL was an outgrowth of the National African Americans (Negro) Conventions that resumed activity during the Civil War.

"Prior to the 1864 presidential election, a National Convention of Colored Citizens convened in October at Syracuse, New York. A total of 140 delegates, including 7 from Southern states, established the National Equal Rights League (NERL) and elected Frederick Douglass president."²⁵

The National Equal Rights League pushed for federal anti-lynching legislation and anti-discrimination.

1862 Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation September 22, 1862, implemented January 1, 1863 that affected only seceded states (not Kentucky, West Virginia, Maryland, Missouri, or Delaware).

Constitutionally, Lincoln could not recruit African-Americans to fight for the union unless they were free because they were property so he had to issue the Emancipation Proclamation.

In the South Reconstruction was more difficult to bear than defeat in the Civil War. A large number of Southern whites lost their vote while Blacks from the North could vote. For Southern whites it seems that all power was being placed in the hands of those who in their opinion were least qualified. This created a backlash and many secret societies such as the Ku Klux Klan arose as whites tried to fight the effects of Reconstruction.

"40 Acres and A Mule" - demand of ex-slaves Informal Promise of the union generals -that plantations would be broken and divided among slaves after Civil War. (Sherman) gives African-Americans Land (January 16, 1865) (20 miles inland) Special Field Order No. 15. Economics was a key to Reconstruction. Much of the land was taken back after Reconstruction.

Land and Reconstruction:

President Lincoln's Reconstruction plan included the sale of confiscated plantations to ex-slaves. Lincoln on September 16, 1863 instructed commissioners to dispose of 60,000 acres of land in South Carolina for public sale in lot, not larger than 320 acres, except for certain

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Hanes Walton Jr., Black Political Parties: An Historical and Political Analysis [New York: The Free Press, 1972] p. 44

portions to be retained for military, educational and charitable purposes. He specified that certain plantations named in the order be reserved for sale to "head of family of the African race." Lincoln directed that sales be made in twenty-acre lots at a cost of \$1.25 an acre. After his assassination, incoming President Andrew Johnson rescinded the order.

Radical Republicans Thaddeus Stevens and Charles Sumner pushed through Congress and official apology for slavery and provisions for 40 acres to be distributed to the freed people, but President Andrew Johnson vetoed the bill.

The Radical Republicans couldn't get a two-thirds vote in Congress to override Johnson's veto. As a last attempt to give the freed people some form of economic security, the Radical Republicans pushed through the Southern Homestead Act of 1866 where the Federal Government opened public lands for sale in Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas and Florida to all settlers regardless of race. Through racism in the Freedmen's Bureau, whites received the best land and African-Americans the worst.

Fort Pillow

Tennessee fort that, on April 12, 1864, was the site of a massacre of black Union soldiers by Confederate troops led by General Nathan Bedford Forrest. The Union garrison was composed of 577 men, of whom 262 were African American. Though the official report stated that 300 Union soldiers had been murdered after they had surrendered, it is believed that the actual total was closer to 200. The majority of these were African Americans, who were slaughtered amidst cries of "kill them, God damn them; it is General Forrest's orders." Eyewitnesses stated that Confederate soldiers deliberately murdered scores of unarmed men, some of whom were on their knees, asking for mercy. There were also numerous - though disputed - reports of wounded soldiers being shot and of others being burned or buried alive. Forrest himself bragged that the Mississippi River "was dyed with the blood of the slaughtered for 200 yards." Six days after the fall of Fort Pillow, the 1st Kansas Colored regiment lost 117 dead and 65 wounded at the battle of Poison Spring in Arkansas. Again, Confederate troops murdered wounded soldiers and those attempting to surrender. The 2nd Kansas Colored regiment took revenge for their sister unit on April 30, at the battle of Jenkins Ferry. Over 150 Confederate troops were killed or mortally wounded; 2nd Kansas Colored suffered 15 killed and 55 wounded. In response to the Fort Pillow and Poison Spring massacres, African American soldiers fought furiously, often refusing to take prisoners or to submit to surrender themselves. General Forrest became Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan after the war.²⁶

While Congress was debating the land question, voting suffrage and citizenship for the freedmen, General William T. Sherman with his 60,000-man army was marching from Atlanta in 1864 to the sea. Thousands of African-Americans left the plantations to follow the union army. Sherman not being able to persuade the Africans to dis-band was perplexed with the problem of what to do with them. On January 12, 1865 at the urging of Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton, who had joined him in Savannah, Sherman gathered twenty leaders of the city's black community. Mostly Baptist and Methodist ministers, the majority had been born in slavery, although several had acquired their freedom before the civil war. The

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From Susan Altaian, *The Encyclopedia of African-American Heritage* [New York: Facts on File Inc., 1997] p. 19. Also see: Andrew Ward, *River Run Red: The Fort Pillow Massacre in the American Civil War*, [England: Viking Press, 2005]

conversation revealed that the African-American leaders had a clear idea of freedom and what African-Americans wanted. They asked that the plantations be re-distributed (confiscated and given to the freedmen in 40-acre lots). Four days later, January 16, 1865, Sherman issued Special Field Order No. 15, setting aside the Sea Islands and a portion of the low country rice coast south of Charleston, extending thirty miles in land, for the exclusive settlement of blacks. Each family would receive forty acres of land and Sherman later provided that the army could assist them with the loan of mules. Here, perhaps lies the origin of the phrase "forty acres and a mule" that would soon echo throughout the South.

In a short time 40,000 freedmen settled on 400,000 acres of land and proceeded to work it as their own. Each freedmen was granted possessory title over forty acres of land for the duration of the war, with the understanding that the land would be given them permanently by Congress.

Congress and the land question:

Congress reigned on re-distribution of the confiscated land to African-Americans. Instead Congress passed a bill March 1865, creating the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands (the Freedmen's Bureau) under the supervision of the War Department. The main purpose of the Bureau, which was set up in each Southern state under the direction of a commissioner, was to manage the abandoned lands, supervise the labor relations of the freedmen with their employers, and extend temporary relief to refugees and former slaves. The Bill made it clear that redistribution of the land in the form of the grants to freedmen was not contemplated. Instead, the commissioners of the Bureau were authorized to assign to each freedmen and "loyal white refugee" not more than forty acres of land from the abandoned and confiscated plantations. The land was to be leased for a term of three years at an annual rent of six percent of its value in 1860, when land prices were at their peak.

As the Civil War was ending on March 3, 1865 Congress created the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands, known as the Freedman's Bureau.

In July 1865, the bureau took a first step toward distributing land when General Howard issued Circular 13 ordering agents to set aside 40-acre plots for freedmen. But the allocation had hardly begun when the order was revoked and it was announced that land already distributed under General Sherman's Field Order #15 was to be returned to its previous owners.²⁷

The Freedmen's Bureau was able to help establish through land grants, 160 African-American colleges and a Freedmen's bank. While land was taken back from African-Americans, land had been granted to European immigrants who were moving west in the Homestead Act of 1862. It opened up the West and Midwest for the railroad.

1865 Amendment of the Constitution abolished all slavery in the United States
December 18, 1868 (ratified)

After the Civil War, as before, the African-American nation primarily raised cotton. Before 1865, cotton plantations included some acreage of food crops. After the Civil War the

²⁷ Ibid. p. 260

Northern imperialists denied African-Americans the ability to raise any substantial amount of food crops to feed themselves or their livestock. Seed was provided from the North through the planter-merchant and that seed was cotton. Thus the African-American nation became directly dependent on the North for its food. As the attempts at land division were crushed, African-Americans focused their hope for land outside the Black Belt.

The assassination of Abraham Lincoln:

Lincoln was assassinated April 14, 1865. Though Lincoln did not have a concise Reconstruction program and represented the center/left forces, Andrew Johnson represented the conservative right of the Republican Party and attempted to bring in a counterrevolution to pardon the ex-confederates.

Counter-revolution occurs:

On April 14, 1865, Lincoln was assassinated and Andrew Johnson became president. Johnson on May 28, 1865 gave amnesty to ex-confederates who called themselves "redeemers"; that is redeemers for re-establishing white supremacy. They assumed power by any means necessary in eight Southern states evoking Black Codes.

What did Andrew Johnson do after Lincoln's Assassination?

Andrew Johnson betrayed Lincoln's plan by promising amnesty on May 29, 1865 and pardon to ex-Confederates with less than \$20,000.00 property, following their oath of allegiance to the Constitution (except for slaves) Andrew Johnson called it restoration instead of Reconstruction. Johnson hoped to build a new political coalition of northern democrats, conservative Republicans, and Southern Unionists. He opposed political rights for the freedmen.

Andrew Johnson was a secret Copperhead who provided for amnesty for ex-confederates (May 29, 1865). He also named former rebels Governors of Southern States, tried to save Jefferson Davis, the former President of the Confederacy. He also issued several Reconstruction proclamations to rebel States from May 29 – July 13, 1865. Eight Southern States evoked Black codes that were similar to slave codes:

The counter-revolution of Andrew Johnson:

One of the first acts of Andrew Johnson, tool of the slave- holders, was to declare an amnesty for the rebels (ex- confederates on May 29, 1865. He named former rebels provisional governors in the southern states. These governors gave amnesty to virtually every one of the confederate rebels. Over a period of several months he pardoned 14,000 active participants in the South's rebellion. He did all he could to save Jefferson Davis, the president of the confederacy, who was responsible for the premeditated murder of 50,000 soldiers and officers of the U.S. Army who had been taken prisoners of war. Between May 29 and July 13 1865, the president issued seven Reconstruction proclamations to the rebel states, which promptly held state conventions and elected governments. Thus seven "Johnson states" were soon added to the already existing four "Lincoln states" as reconstructed. Eight southern states evoked black codes similar to the ex slave codes denying freedmen the right to vote and serve on juries, prohibited marriage to whites and severely hindered their movement through vagrancy laws and freedmen were not allowed the right to bear arms. The ex-confederates organized terrorist extra-legal armies that waged a racist war of terror to subdue African- Americans. The sharp increase in anti-

African-American terror could also be attributed to the heightened pitch of the class struggle during Reconstruction, when the issue of eliminating the system of large-scale landowning was raised. The wide scale of violence can be seen from the fact that in Georgia 150 people were killed over a ten-month period in 1866. In four months, in the same year so as to weaken its enemy, the African- American people, the Ku Klux Klan killed off African-American leaders. The main point of the anti-African-American terror amounted to keeping the principle economic demand of African- Americans the expropriation of the lands of the former slave owners and their redistribution among the freed slaves from being carried out.

Ex-confederates called themselves redeemers, that is redeemers for reestablishing white supremacy. They assumed power by any means necessary in eight Southern states evoking Black Codes. The black codes have a:

- 1: Grandfather clause, which stated that if a man's grandfather had the right to vote before 1860, then he could vote, if not, he could not vote
- 2: African Americans could not bear arms
- 3: Interracial marriage was prohibited
- 4: African Americans could not serve on juries
- 5: Vagrancy laws, which stated that if an African American (male) was found loitering and did not have a slip signed by a white man, he could be imprisoned indefinitely. More than often, those arrested would be released by the state to former slave masters under the prison lease system, which could continue for the rest of the natural life of the prisoner.

In 1866 the Radical Republicans, led by Charles Sumner in the Senate, and Thaddeus Stevens in the House of Representatives were defeated, by one vote, of finding Andrew Johnson guilty of high crimes of impeachment. As a compromise, the Radical Republicans took over Reconstruction (Congressional Committee of 15) and divided the South, except Tennessee, into five military districts. Congress passed the 14th and 15th Amendments as well as the Reconstruction Act in 1867, creating Constitutional Conventions in the South where African American men were allowed to participate.

In December of 1865, African-Americans declared at a meeting in Alabama that unless they received some land, there would inevitably be bloodshed. Numerous petitions from African- Americans demanding the partitioning of lands of the former slave owners were sent to congress. Johnson withdrew part of the black federal troops who gave freedmen protection in many cases, from the south in the spring of 1866.

Johnson had done his utmost for the southern cotton planters. He had cooked up the reactionary state governments that had bought this amazing delegation of ex-rebel officers and representatives to the doors of Congress. But there his power ended; for the question of seating the new delegates rested entirely within the jurisdiction of Congress itself.

Meanwhile, in 1865, the freed slaves, alarmed by the growth of reaction in the south, developed a powerful political movement in Georgia, Tennessee, North Carolina, South

Carolina, Louisiana and elsewhere against the black codes and the newly "reconstructed" state governments. They held people's conventions all over the South protesting the dangerous situation. This was the first general political movement African-Americans had ever conducted in the South and it touched off the great struggle against the dangerous grab for power by the resurgent cotton planters.

The Battles for Land

The land struggle was aimed at bringing about bourgeois- democratic transformations in the southern states. This movement which was called Reconstruction, was aimed at resolving complex socio-economic and political problems which had not been resolved during the war. The years 1865-1866- were crucial. This was the point at which the bourgeoisie could have taken a decisive step in the direction of a revolutionary solution of the land problem. One African- American leader, Francis Cardozo, a member of the Constitutional Convention of South Carolina, said: "We will never have true freedom until we abolish the system of agriculture which existed in the Southern States... What is the main cause of the prosperity of the North? It is because every man has his own farm and is free and independent.

Even at the outset of Reconstruction there were instances of blacks taking lands from planters by force. As an example, in the spring of 1867 not far from Richmond, Virginia, 500 armed African-Americans refused to pay rent to the planter they were working for, saying the land they were tilling ought to belong to them. The uprising was put down by force. In the fall of 1866, several blacks were killed near Memphis, Tennessee, while attempting to seize lands that belonged to planters. Federal troops were employed to head off all attempts by emancipated slaves to resolve the agrarian problem by simply taking over the planters' lands.

The experiment done with African-Americans in the local department (the offshore islands) had been a complete success. Immediately after the war, the planters, counting on federal troops to help them, made an attempt to get back these lands. The blacks put up armed resistance. To avoid bloodshed, the army withdrew from the area. Forceful and well-organized action by the former slaves defending their rights to own the land gave positive results. At Davis Bend in Mississippi the enormous plantations of Jefferson Davis's family were taken over and administered by the slaves, resulting in enormous profits for them.

During the war confiscated property was sometimes sold for unpaid taxes or turned over to the government. The Freedmen's Bureau acquired 800,000 acres of land through confiscation. Blacks were allowed to rent land from the bureau with the result that in the first year, African-Americans financed the entire cost of the bureau, totaling some 4,000 African Americans succeeded in becoming property owners.

Most African-Americans got no land, and for those who did, the tide turned as early as the end of 1865 and they began to lose it. The federal government under Andrew Johnson sought to pardon the owners and return to them land on the South Carolina coast settled by 40,000 African-Americans. The return of property extended to Freedmen's Bureau land, so that by 1868 the bureau had only 139,000 of its original 800,000 acres left. Ex-slaves at the beginning of Radical Reconstruction expropriated the Davis family land. The return of lands continued under radical rule.

In South Carolina, African-Americans also pushed for using state funds to buy land and then provided reasonable terms for its purchase by the landless. A land commission was established for this purpose and it parceled out 100,000 acres to 4,000 black families. Similar proposals were made in other states, but in almost all cases were defeated. Tied to the struggle for land was the struggle over the conditions of labor on the land. Right after the civil war, African-Americans generally wanted to rent land in preference to working for wages. They feared that wage labor would mean working in gangs with white overseers as in the days of slavery. Since most landowners had little cash for paying wages, they generally preferred a rental-type agreement also. The argument that the landowners owed ex—slaves back pay was raised by an African-American representative from Dallas County, Alabama (where Selma is located). He proposed that former slave- owners be required to pay ex-slaves at least \$10 a month for every month after the Emancipation Proclamation of January 1, 1863 to May 20, 1865. Such an ordinance was adopted 53 to 31.

At Christmas 1867, in Mississippi, there had been widespread rumor of an African-American insurrection, due to the idea that land was going to be distributed among them. Humphreys, then Governor issued a proclamation reciting the apprehensions of combinations or conspiracies formed among the blacks to seize the lands, unless Congress should arrange to plan a distribution by January 1.

The capitalist class supported the breaking up of the plantations into small farms based on wage labor but confiscation into 40 acres for freedmen meant moving to a form of socialism.

What did the Congressional Committee of fifteen do?

They took over Reconstruction in the South from the President. Seven were from the house, eight from the Senate. They censored President Andrew Johnson bringing him up on impeachment charges and passed a congressional plan for Reconstruction. Many former slaves had received the impression that abandoned and confiscated lands were to be distributed to them in lots of forty acres by January 1866. This impression stemmed from the Confederate apprehension during the war that the Union government planned to seize their land and convey it to ex-slaves, and from the bill creating the Freedmen's Bureau, which gave tacit encouragement to such a plan. Although nothing came of it, the federal government sought to encourage the dispersion of populations from congested centers by opening public lands, under the Southern Homestead Act of 1866, in Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas and Florida to all settlers regardless of race. Eighty acres were available for the head of each family. Within a year ex-slaves secured homesteads in Florida covering 160,960 acres, and in Arkansas they occupied 116 out of 243 homesteads. By 1874 blacks in Georgia owned more than 350,000 acres of land. "Forty acres and a mule" as a gift of the government had not been realized, but blacks were acquiring land, wherever possible in their effort to achieve economic security.²⁸

Often when African-Americans seized plantation land the Union Troops (who were mainly African-American) would be called in to get the African-Americans off the land. On several occasions the Union Troops disobeyed orders and sided with the African-Americans occupying the land. This caused a crisis during Reconstruction.

²⁸

Op. Cit., (Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, Stanley Harrold) pp 234-235

Radical Reconstruction; the Congressional Committee of 15:

Responding to the ex-confederate counter-revolution, Radical Republicans responded by censoring Andrew Johnson, bringing him up on impeachment charges and counter passing a congressional plan for Reconstruction. But the clearest of all the radicals of this period were the African-American leaders, Douglas, Langston, Purvis, Garnett, Martin, Wier and others. For years they had been demanding emancipation, the franchise, full social equality and land for the slaves - which was at the heart of the program necessary to complete the bourgeois democratic revolution. African Americans supported these demands at African-American People's Conventions. The North Carolina African-American People's Convention in Raleigh in September 1865 approved the 13th amendment. The South Carolina Convention in Charleston in November 1865, demanded the repeal of the Black Codes, the right to serve on juries and testify in court, the right to vote, the right to the land in the Sea Islands, the right to bear arms, full civil liberties and free schools.

In setting up out of hand a whole group of new governments in the secession states, president Johnson's coup d'etat created a real problem for the northern bourgeoisie and its radical republican representatives in Congress. They were confronted with the immediate perspective of seeing the planters again in full control of the South of a vastly strengthened democratic party of a resumption of the pre-war struggle for power between the planters and the industrialists; with the threat that the planters might again be able to take control of the Federal Government. If Johnson's counter-revolutionary plan went through, there was the gravest danger that the land-won fruits of the revolution would be partly or wholly lost.

With his sharp realization of the true bourgeois class interests, Stevens proceeded promptly to forestall Johnson. On December 2, three days before Congress convened, the republican caucus met and under Stevens prodding adopted a reconstruction program. This had four phases; (a) to claim the whole question of Reconstruction as the exclusive business of Congress, (b) to regard the steps taken by the president as only provisional, (c) to have each House postpone consideration of the admission of members from Southern states, and (d) to elect a joint committee of 15 by the Senate and House (six senators and nine representatives) to inquire into the condition of the former confederate states.

At the opening of Congress in December 1865, the republicans gave official sanction to African-American emancipation by endorsing the 13th Amendment, which was duly ratified by the states in the North and West on December 18, 1865. Thenceforth ratification of the 13th Amendment became a condition for the re-admission of the rebel states into the union, in June of 1866, Congress passed the 14th Amendment and the life of the Freedmen's Bureau was extended. The South was divided into four military districts and the Federal Army assigned to assure the institution of the constitutional conventions. In the summer of 1867, elections to the constitutional conventions were held.

In March 1867, Thaddeus Stevens proposed the Homestead Bill in the House. Stevens stated in short, that 70,000 people in the South - the big planters - owned 394 million acres of land, besides the 71 million acres owned in farms of less than 200 acres. He would permit the small landowners to hold their farms of less than 200 acres undisturbed, but the lands of the big planters should be taken over by the government. The approximately one million families of the African ex-slaves would be given farms of 40 acres and \$50 each and the balance of the confiscated land would be sold off at the rate of \$10 per acre. The funds thus raised should be used to pay off the national debt, which had been enormously swollen

by the war. Stevens hoped in this manner to turn about two billion dollars into the national treasury.

Stevens could not get the support of the Joint Congressional Committee of 15 for his plan and the whole project died. The confiscation of the land and its distribution in 40 acre lots was too much for the capitalist class to stomach.

Black regiments in the U.S. Army offered considerable help to African Americans in their struggle for land. In October 1865, about 85,000 black soldiers, most of whom were located in southern states, were serving in the federal armed forces. Black soldiers quartered in Texas called for former slaves to adamantly demand the confiscation and partitioning of plantations. The commander of a black regiment at Jackson, Mississippi, declared that blacks ought to uphold their right to land "to the click of the pistol, and at the point of the bayonet". Since black regiments were given considerable aid to former slaves in the struggle for their rights, planters were adamant in demanding that black troops be withdrawn from southern states.

1868 14th Amendment grants blacks citizenship July 28.

1870 Amendment gave blacks the vote March 30

Forms of organization of the African—American people:

African-Americans decided to disband the National Equal Rights League because it paralleled the union leagues (Loyal League of the Republican Party). This proved to be a historical mistake when the Republican Party betrayed the African American people in 1877. They had no independent organization. The main forms of organization in this period was:

- a. Union Leagues
- b. African American "Colored" People's Conventions
- c. Black Militias

Union leagues played an especially great role in the struggle by African-Americans for their economic and political rights. Union leagues, which had emerged back during the civil war united black and white opponents of the confederacy. The great majority of their members were African-American. There were an estimated 500.000 members in the league in the southern states. Under the leagues, militarized African-American organizations were formed which protected the population from armed attacks by racists. The leagues turned into genuine "storm centers" of the revolution during Reconstruction. After the formation of the Reconstruction governments, the black militia was recognized as the official militia in a number of states.

Describe aspects of progress achieved by Radical Reconstruction.

The radicals had to destroy the provisional militias created after the Civil War. The first Reconstruction Act ordered the abolition of all such militias in the South. Congress also required each state to approve the 14th Amendment, which allowed males of all races, colors, or previous condition of servitude to vote and serve as delegates.

The end of the Civil War forced the U.S. to deal with questions about slavery and the status of Black Americans. The reunification of the nation was imperative as was the assurance of the freedom of Blacks and their rights as citizens had to be guaranteed. This resulted in the passing of three amendments to the Constitution that defined the place of Black freedmen in the life of the nation.

- a. The 13th Amendment - states that neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as punishment for crime, should ever exist in the United States.
- b. The 14th Amendment - or civil rights amendment assured that no state should abridge the rights of any citizens of the United States or "deprive any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of law," or
- c. Deny any person the equal protection of the laws.
- d. The 15th Amendment - stated that the right of citizens to vote should not be denied on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

The 13th and 14th Amendment and the Reconstruction Act of 1867 created Constitution Conventions in the South in which African American men were allowed to participate.

The Federal army assumed all power in the southern states. Over a million African-Americans were given the right to vote. In the ten southern states 700,000 Africans-Americans surmounted various obstacles and registered as voters. Some 200,000 white Southerners who had been involved in the rebellion lost their right to vote. All this created the necessary conditions for the Radical Republicans to win the elections and for the constitutional conventions to be held. Bourgeois/democratic constitutions were ratified at these conventions that proclaimed the Reconstruction of the entire socio-economic and political system of the south on bourgeois principles. During Reconstruction, for the first time, 14 African-Americans were elected to the House of Representatives and two to the Senate.

African-Americans made especially great progress in public education. The number of black school pupils was about 500 in 1860. By the end of the Reconstruction period they numbered over 500,000. It must be emphasized that in many states the Reconstruction governments passed laws on the integrated education of black and white children. During this period 1863-1875 some 160 black colleges were established through land grants from the Freedmen's Bureau.

Progress Under Radical Reconstruction:

Briefly, what were some of the gains of Radical Reconstruction? Over a million African Americans were given the right to vote. In ten Southern states, 700,000 African American men registered to vote. The number of African American school pupils increased from 500 in 1866 to over 500,000 by 1877. In many Southern states during the period, there were laws passed in favor of integrated education. During this period, 1863-1875 some 160 black colleges were established through land grants from the Freedman's Bureau. From 1868-1878, 1,465 African American men held political office in the South. African Americans elected 14 African Americans to the House of Representatives and two to the Senate. It was not until the elections of 1992 that African Americans surpassed the political gains won during Reconstruction.

What was the Southern Homestead Act?

In early 1866, Congress attempted to provide land for freedmen, with the passage of the Southern Homestead Act. More than three million acres of public land were set aside for black people and southern white people who had remained loyal to the Union. Much of the land, however, was unsuitable for farming and consisted swampy wetlands or unfertile pine woods. More than four thousand black families — three quarters of them in Florida — did claim some of this land, but many of them lacked the financial resources to cultivate it. Eventually Southern timber companies acquired much of it, the Southern timber companies acquired much of it, and the Southern Homestead Act largely failed.²⁹

What was HR 29, The Reparations Bill for the African Slaves in the United States about?

A Bill Introduced by Thaddeus Stevens of Pennsylvania. H.R. 29 First Session Fortieth Congress March 11, 1867: A Plan for Confiscation. This bill was defeated.

Whereas:

It is due to justice, as an example of future times, that some proper punishment should be inflicted on the people who constituted the "Confederate States of America, both because they, declaring an unjust war against the United States for the purpose of destroying republican liberty and permanently establishing slavery, as well as for the cruel and barbarous manner in which they conducted said war, in violation of all the laws of civilized warfare, and also to compel them to make some compensation for the damages and expenditures caused by the war:

Therefore,

Be it enacted. . . That all the public lands belonging to the ten States that formed the government of the so-called "confederate States of America" shall be forfeited by said States and become forthwith vested in the United States.

Sec. 2. *And be it further enacted.* That the President shall forthwith proceed to cause the seizure of such of the property belonging to the belligerent enemy as is deemed forfeited by the act of July 17, AD. 1862, and hold and appropriate the same as enemy's property, and to proceed to condemnation with that already seized.

Sec. 3. *And be it further enacted,* That in lieu of the proceeding to condemn the property thus seized as enemy's property, as is provided by the act of July 17, AD. 1862, two commissions or more, as by him may be deemed necessary, shall be appointed by the President for each of the said "confederate States," to consist of three persons each, one of whom shall be an officer of the late or present Army, and two shall be civilian, neither of whom shall be citizens of the State for which he shall be appointed; the said commission shall proceed to adjudicate and Condemn the property aforesaid, under such forms and proceedings as shall be prescribed by the Attorney General of the United States, where upon the title to said property shall become vested in the United States.

Sec. 4. *And be it further enacted.* That out of the lands thus seized and confiscated, the

²⁹ From Darlene Clarke Hine, William A. Hine and Stanley Harold, The African American Odyssey [Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2006] pp 294-295

slaves who have been liberated by the operations of the war and the amendment to the constitution or otherwise, who resided in said "confederate States" on the 4 day of March AD. 1861, or since, shall have distributed to them as follows, namely: to each male person who is the head of a family, forty acres; to each adult male, whether the head of a family or not, forty acres; to each widow who is the head of a family, forty acres; to be held by them in fee simple, but to be inalienable for the next ten years after they become seized thereof. For the purpose of distributing and allotting said land, the Secretary of War shall appoint in each State as many commissions as he may deem necessary, to consist of three members each, two of whom at least shall not be citizens of the State for which he is appointed. The title to the homestead aforesaid shall be vested in trustees for the use of the liberated persons aforesaid. At then end of ten years the absolute title to said homesteads shall be conveyed to said owners or to the heirs of such as are then dead.

Sec. 5. *And be it further enacted*, That out of the balance of the property thus seized and confiscated there shall be raised, in the manner hereinafter provided, a sum equal to fifty dollars, for each homestead, to be applied by the trustees hereinafter mentioned toward the erection of buildings on the said homestead for the use of aid slaves; and the further sum of \$500,000,000, which shall be appropriated as follows, to wit: \$200,000,000 shall be invested in the United States six percent securities; and the interest thereof shall be semi annually added to the pensions allowed by law to the pensioners who have become so by reason of the late war: \$300,000,000, or so much thereof as may be needed, shall be appropriated to pay damages done to loyal citizens by the civil or military Operations of the government lately called the "confederate States of America."

In order that just discrimination may be made, the property of no one shall be seized whose whole estate on the 4 day of March A.D. 1865, was not worth more than \$5,000, to be valued by the said commission, unless he shall have voluntarily become an officer or employee in the military or civil-service of the "Confederate States of America," or in the civil or military service of some one of said States, and in enforcing all confiscations the sum or value of \$5,000 in real or personal property shall be left or assigned to the delinquent.

If the owners of said seized and forfeited estates shall, within ninety days after the first of said publications, pay into the Treasury of the United States the sum assessed on their estates respectively, all of their estates and lands not actually appropriated to the liberated slaves shall be released and restored to their owners.

All the land, estates and property, of whatever kind, which shall not be redeemed as aforesaid within ninety days, shall be sold and converted into money, in such time and manner as may be deemed by the said commissioners the most advantageous to the United States: Provided, That no arable land shall be sold in tracts larger than 500 acres.³⁰

What is the historical mistake African-Americans made during Reconstruction?

In 1864, African-Americans formed the National Equal Rights League to fight against discrimination and encroachment against democratic rights. The Republican Party formed

³⁰ Congressional Globe, March 19, 1867, p. 203. from Raymond A. Winbush, Ph.D., Should America Pay? Slavery and the Raging Debate on Reparations [New York: Amistad, 2003, pp 334-336]

the Loyalist Leagues in the South. They were secretive, quasi-military groups, mostly African American and white businessmen and southerners who supported equality in the South. You knew who to vote for because the loyalist league told you. In 1877 there was the compromise and the Republicans would remain in power if they agree to move their troops out of the South. The African Americans did not support the National Equal Rights League. African Americans kept their loyalties to the Loyalist League. They needed dual organizational development. They needed their own organization to protect them in case a multi-racial ally did not stand by them. African Americans in the 1860s did not support their own self-organization and they relied on allies that looked like they were good allies. They forgot that allies may change, but interests stay the same.

Counter-revolution consolidation and sell-out:

They refused to employ African-Americans. The KKK and the White line movement were created. The KKK had 500,000 members in 1871. They committed assaults, robberies, arson, rape and murder. Terror and political intimidation helped to overthrow Reconstruction. In retaliation against black militias, many race riots were deliberately planned. The whites also refused to employ African-Americans who voted.

The year 1870 marked the beginning of a period of reaction in the South. The ex confederates posed as liberals, organized racist designs secretly and at times pretended to be friends of the African-Americans people. Secretly and through the KKK and other racists groups murdered 20,000 African-Americans in a 15-year period of time. Operating "legally" through the Democratic Party; the victory of the democrats in the elections of 1874 in the northern states lead to a shared activation of the terrorist elements of the Democratic Party in the South.

The Civil Rights Acts of 1875

Before Reconstruction finally expired, Congress made one final ~ some said futile ~ gesture to protect black people from racial discrimination when it passed the Civil Rights Act of 1875. Strongly championed by Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts, it was originally intended to open public accommodations including schools, churches, cemeteries, hotels, and transportation to all people regardless of race. It passed in the Republican-controlled Senate in 1874 shortly before Sumner died. But House Democrats held up passage until 1875 and deleted bans on discrimination in churches, cemeteries, and schools.

The act stipulated "That all persons. . . shall be entitled to the full and equal enjoyment of the accommodations, advantages, facilities, and privileges of inns, public conveyances on land or water, theaters, and other places of public amusement." After its passage, no attempt was made to enforce these provisions, and in 1883 the U.S. Supreme Court declared it unconstitutional. Justice Joseph Bradley wrote that the Fourteenth Amendment protected black people from discrimination by states but not by private businesses. Black newspapers likened the decision to the Dred Scott case a quarter century earlier.³¹

³¹ From Darlene Clarke Hine, William A. Hine and Stanley Harold, *The African American Odyssey*, (3rd edition) [Saddle, New Jersey: Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2006] p 329

The Shotgun Policy

In 1875 white Mississippians, no longer fearful the national government would intervene in force, declared open warfare on the black majority. The masks and hoods of the Klan were discarded. One newspaper publicly proclaimed that Democrats would carry the election, "peaceably if we can, forcibly if we must." Another paper carried a bold banner: "Mississippi is a white man's country, and by the eternal God we'll rule it."

White Mississippi unleashed a campaign of violence known as the Shotgun Policy" that was extreme even for Reconstruction. Many Republicans fled and others were murdered. In late 1874 an estimated three hundred black people were hunted down outside Vicksburg after black men armed with inferior weapons had lost a "battle" with white men. In 1875 thirty teachers, church leaders, and Republican officials were killed in Clinton. The white sheriff of Yazoo County, who had married a black woman and supported the education of black children, had to flee the state.

Mississippi governor Adelbert Ames appealed for federal help, but President Grant refused: "The whole public are tired out with these annual autumnal outbreaks in the South. . . [and] are ready now to condemn any interference on the part of the Government." No federal help arrived. The terrorism intensified, and many black voters went into hiding on Election Day, afraid for their lives and the lives of their families. Democrats redeemed Mississippi and prided themselves that they—a superior race representing the most civilized of all people—were back in control.

In Florida in 1876, white Republicans noted that support for black people in the South was fading. They nominated an all-white Republican slate and even refused to re-nominate black congressman Josiah Walls.

Who was Octavis Catto and how did his assassination dampen the politics of resistance by the Freedmen and set the stage for the politics of accommodation of the Nadir period?

Octavis Catto was born in Philadelphia 1839. Catto's father, William T. Catto advocated an articulate black ministry and spoke for Philadelphia blacks who favored higher education. In addition to his home training, Octavis Catto gained the rudiments of his education at local public schools. He attended the segregated Vaux Primary School held in a church near his home. Later Catto attended the more elaborate but also segregated Lombard Grammar School taught by Quaker James Bird. In 1853, Octavis gained admission to that city's white academy. In 1854 Octavis attended the newly opened black high school, the Institute for Colored Youth. By 1867 Catto married Caroline V. LeCount, a graduate of the Institute for Colored Youth and a teacher in the public schools of Philadelphia.

In June 1863 when General Robert E. Lee's army approached northward, toward an eventual showdown with the union army at Gettysburg, Octavis Catto organized an African-American union company and became active in the first division of the Pennsylvania National Guard where he achieved the rank of major and inspector for the Fifth Brigade. Catto was closely associated with the Republican Party and was a member of the newly formed Equal Rights League. In October 1864 Catto met with African-American leaders at Syracuse, New York at the National Convention of Colored Men Organization of

a National Equal Rights League supported by the league followed with Douglas as president.

In November of 1864, Pennsylvania's blacks met in Philadelphia to found the Pennsylvania State Equal Rights League. Catto was elected to the position of corresponding secretary, Jacob C. White Jr., recording secretary; and William Nesbit of Altoona, president. By the time of the first statewide convention in Harrisburg in February 1865, the Pennsylvania Equal Rights League had organizations in sixteen of the larger cities. The Philadelphia delegation of twenty-four men, headed by Catto and Joseph Bustill, constituted the largest bloc of voters.

Octavis Catto taught at the Institute for Colored Youth, a forerunner of Cheyney University. Catto's involvement in the Equal Rights League during Reconstruction helped win the desegregation of Philadelphia street cars from 1866 to March 22, 1867 when the state legislature passed a bill that desegregated the streetcars of the state.

In the summer of 1869, at the request of Republican leaders, Catto went south to speak in the state of Virginia on behalf of the Fourteenth Amendment. The next year he was granted a leave of absence to go to Washington, D.C., to organize the black schools of that city to accommodate the freedmen. Catto began to get threatening letters against his life after the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment in 1870. But this did not deter Octavis from organizing African-Americans for voting.

In the fall 1870, African-Americans, enfranchised by the Fifteenth Amendment, appeared in large numbers to vote. In the summer of 1871, Catto returned to Washington to aid in the administration of the freedman schools. His travels to the nation's capital increased his interest in politics. Catto returned to Philadelphia in early October 1871 to continue his teaching at the Institute for Colored Youth. On Election Day October 10, a fight broke out between black and white voters two blocks away and in the vicinity of Sixth and Lombard streets.

Mass violence erupted throughout these black sections, and local police, rather than federal troops, were called to intervene. They did little to stop the racial rioting that continued throughout the day. At the institute, the students had been dismissed at the first signs of disorder so that they might arrive at home before the situation became more serious. Catto used his free time in the school to write up some military reports, and then told a fellow teacher that he would go to vote. Warned of the dangers, Catto replied that he had no chance to vote earlier and that he intended to exercise his rights as a citizen. He left the school building unarmed. After a confrontation with some whites a block away from the school, Catto headed for the mayor's office to seek help. On Chestnut Street he was again accosted by some white ruffians who pointed a pistol at him, threatening his life if he went to vote. Catto went to a nearby store and purchased a pistol. When a friend reminded him that he had no cartridges, he replied he had some at home.

Catto now proceeded down Ninth Street onto South Street, where a white man with a bandage on his head came up from behind and called out to him. Catto moved away from the man, later identified as Frank Kelly, cognizant of the gun held in his hand. Whether Catto pulled his gun or not is unclear, but Kelly fired three shots into Catto, killing him instantly. Kelly ran from the scene while numerous citizens stood staring at the bleeding

body lying in the streets.⁶¹ The body was moved to a nearby police station, where in a heart rending scene Caroline LeCount identified her finance's body.³²

Even though Catto was given a full military funeral his assassination had a negative impact on the African-American community.

In a full military funeral led by Major Catto's Fifth Brigade, the cortege left the city armory at Broad and Race Streets in an hour-long procession down Broad Street. A contingent of grief-stricken students from the institute joined the funeral march. Thousands of whites and blacks lined the route of march to honor the fallen leader. Newspaper reports the next day judged the funeral to be the most elaborate ever held for a black person in America.

The assassination of Catto conditioned future leadership of the black community to become accommodationist to the arising reaction and eventual overthrow of Reconstruction just as the assassination of Malcolm X and Dr. Martin Luther King Dr. tended to damper progressive leadership after the 1960's.

The year 1870 marked the beginning of a period of reaction in the South, The ex-Confederates posed as liberals, organized racist designs secretly, and, at time, pretended to be friends of African American people. Secretly and through the KKK, and other racists, groups murdered 20,000 African Americans in a 15-year period of time. Operating legally through the Democratic Party, their victory in 1874 in the Northern states led to a sharp activation of the terrorist elements of the Democratic Party in the South.³³

Planter (racist) restoration and lessons for the present:

The year 1870 marked the beginning of a period of reaction in the south. Playing chiefly on racial prejudices, the plantation owners were able to split the united front of Republicans in the Southern states. This was the beginning of the end of Radical Reconstruction. Ex-confederates posed as liberals, organized their racist designs secretly and, at times, even tended to be friends of the African American people. Operating through the Democratic Party; their victory in the elections of 1874 in the Northern states led to a sharp activation of the terrorist elements of the Democratic Party in the South. The Ku Klux Klan killed many African-American leaders in the South in this period; especially those who had been vocal of demanding land redistribution.

Reconstruction concluded with virtually the direct betrayal of African Americans by the North's bourgeoisie (capitalists class). The 1876 presidential election gave a majority to neither the Republican candidate Hayes nor the Democrat Tilden. After secret negotiations between leaders of the two parties, the Republicans were recognized winners and sat their man in the presidency. As a sign of gratitude, the new Republican government agreed to withdraw Federal troops from the final three states where the Republicans still maintained power. The troops were withdrawn, and in April 1877 the planters seized power in these states.

³² Harry C. Silcox, "Nineteenth Century Philadelphia Black Militant: Octavis V. Catto (1839-1871)." From Joe William Trotter and

Eric Ledell Smith (eds.) African Americans in Pennsylvania [University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997] pp. 198-219

³³ Eric Foner, Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution 1853-1877 [New York: Harper and Row, 1988] p. 553-563

The racist ex-confederates called progressive whites (particularly progressive, usually poor, white men) who worked with African-Americans in reconstructing the south, Scallywags. Now being called Scallywags meant more than "Nigger Lover," a term used from the 1880's to the present. The ex-confederates organized themselves into the KKK to terrorize black workers into insubordination by any means necessary. In order to do this they had a propaganda campaign of "political disguise," to win over the white community for their plan. They called themselves the "redeemers" which meant they were going to restore the south to white supremacy and protect "white womanhood" giving the false impression (lies) that African-American men were sexually abusing white women. For the Southern white male "Scallywag" meant that the progressive Southern white male who supported the Republican Party "Reconstruction" was not protecting white womanhood, and that he was in agreement of letting African-American men sexually abuse white women. This had tremendous psychological affects of isolating progressive whites in the South. Calling whites from the North, Carpetbaggers had a similar affect, particularly on white males from the north, who it was said their only reason for coming South was to gain money.

The KKK's psychological war was "economic," to restore themselves into economic dominance. That's why it is called a counterrevolution. It was carried out by murdering 20,000 African-Americans in the South, in a 15-year period of time and murdering and beating many progressive whites as well. This was done in the African-Americans community by killing large African-American male landowners first, then raping their wives; sometimes "gang rape" and then forcing the wives through intimidation to sell the land to a KKK member. This is how they got the "Stolen Land." Then the KKK would murder, "lynch" African-American businessmen who were successfully competing with white business. Often the cry of raping of a white woman would kick off a lynch mob. Thirdly, the KKK came after the African-American politicians who were systematically murdered.

The Hamburg Massacre

South Carolina Democrats were divided between moderate and extreme factions, but they united to nominate former Confederate general Wade Hampton for governor after the Hamburg Massacre. The prelude to this event occurred on July 4, 1876, the nation's centennial, when two white men in a buggy confronted the black militia that was drilling on a town street in Hamburg, a small, mostly black town. Hot words were exchanged, and days later, Democrats demanded the militia be disarmed. White rifle club members from around the state arrived in Hamburg and attacked the - armory, where forty black members of the militia defended themselves. The rifle companies brought up a cannon and reinforcements from nearby Georgia. After the militia ran low on ammunition, white men - captured the armory. One white man was killed, twenty- nine black men were taken prisoner, and the other eleven fled. Five of the black men identified as leaders were shot down in cold blood. The rifle companies invaded and wrecked Hamburg. Seven white men were indicted for murder. All were acquitted.³⁴

The Hayes-Tilden Compromise of 1877

³⁴

Ibid. (From Darlene Clark Hine), p. 328

The 1876 presidential election gave a majority to neither the Republican candidate, Hayes nor the Democrat Tilden.

Both Democrats and Republicans claimed to have won in Florida, Louisiana and South Carolina, the last three Southern states that had not been redeemed. This created a stand off between the two presidential candidates, the Republicans Rutherford B. Hayes and the Democrat Samuel J. Tilden. Hayes had won 167 electoral votes; Tilden had 185. Whoever took the nineteen electoral votes of the three contested states would be the next president. The controversy precipitated a constitutional crisis in 1877.³⁵

By 1876, the year of the disputed **Hayes-Tilden** presidential election, only Florida, Louisiana, and South Carolina still had Reconstruction governments. In Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Georgia, where the former Confederates were quickly re-enfranchised, Reconstruction ended early. The Reconstruction governments in Mississippi, Louisiana, and South Carolina, which were among the last to fall, met with particularly violent fates. For as long as 30 years after the end of Reconstruction, the blacks of the Southern states continued to vote and to hold office, but as a beaten people.

Rutherford B. Hayes was responsible for the Compromise of 1877. As President he consolidated the acquiescence to white supremacy in the south by removing troops in the South and by promising federal subsidies for the construction of the Texas and Pacific railroads and other improvements. He feared a renewal of the Civil War if he did not build cooperative linkages between the regions.

After secret negotiations between leaders of the two parties, the republicans were recognized winners and set their men in the presidency. As a sign of gratitude, the new republican government agreed to withdraw federal troops from the final three states where the republicans still maintained power. The troops were withdrawn and in April 1877 and the racists seized power in these states and all of the south.

Perhaps more than any other single factor, the failure of Reconstruction to provide land for the freedmen contributed to their loss of political power and their continued status as an economically dependent people. Just as the failure of the United States to rid itself of slavery paved the way for civil war, so its failure to solve the problems and maintain the gains of Reconstruction led directly to the race problems of a later day.

³⁵

Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution 1853-1877* [New York: Harper & Row, 1988] pp. 575-577

At the end of Reconstruction, lynchings of African-Americans and often their allies were carried out to subordinate African-American labor and to curtail business competition from African-Americans. Lynching occurred mostly in South averaging about 100 lynchings a year climaxing in 1892 with 161. Between 1882 and 1968, 4,743 lynchings were recorded, including fifty African-American women, between 1889 and 1918.³⁶ 600,000 African Americans were killed from Reconstruction until the 1900s. eneral Texts:

1. William Z. Foster. The Negro People in American History [New York: International Publishers. 1973)
2. August Meier and Elliott Rudwick. From Plantation to Ghetto [New York: Hill and Wang. 1976]

General Reconstruction Texts:

1. Peter Camejo, Racism. Revolution. Reaction, 1861-1877 [New York: Monad Press. 1976)
2. James S. Allen. Reconstruction, The Battle for Democracy. 1865-1876 [New York: International Publishers, 1937)
3. W.E.B. DuBois. Black Reconstruction in America. 1860-1880 [New York: Russell and Russell, 1962]
4. Eric Foner. Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution 1863-1877

Other Related Materials

1. Vernon Lane Wharton. The Negro in Mississippi, 1865-1890 [New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1947]
2. Joel Williamson, After Slavery: The Negro in South Carolina During Reconstruction. 1861-1877 [Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press. 1965]
3. Bell Irvin Wiley, Southern Negroes, 1861-1865 [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1938]
4. John B. Boles, Black Southerners, 1619-1869 [Kentucky: The University of Kentucky, 1984]
5. Otis A. Singletary, Negro Militia and Reconstruction [New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1963]
6. Keneth M. Stampp, The Era of Reconstruction: 1865-1877 [New York: Vintage Books, 1965]
7. James M. McPherson, The Negro's Civil War [New York: Vintage Books. 1965]
8. Staughton Lynd, (ed.) Reconstruction [New York: Harper & Row Publishers. 1967]
9. Edward Peeks, The Long Struggle for Black Power [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971]

³⁶ Jacqueline Jane Royster (ed), Southern Horrors and Other Writings: The Anti-Lynching Campaign of Ida B. Wells 1892-1900 [Boston: Bedford Books, 1977] p. 1

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General Texts:

1. William Z. Foster, *The Negro People in American History* [New York: International Publishers, 1973]
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3. W.E.B. DuBois. *Black Reconstruction in America. 1860-1880* [New York: 1968]
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4. John B. Boles, Black Southerners, 1619-1869 [Kentucky: The University of Kentucky, 1984]
5. Otis A. Singletary, Negro Militia and Reconstruction [New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc, 1963]
6. W.R. Brock, An American Crisis: Congress and Reconstruction 18 65-18 67
7. James M. McPherson, The Negro's Civil War [New York: Vintage Books, 1965]
8. Staughton Lynd, (ed.) Reconstruction [NewYork: Harper & Row Publishers, 1967]

Edward Peeks, The Long Struggle for Black Power [New York: Charles Scribner Sons, 1971]

The Nadir (low) period 1877-1895 and mass terror:

At the end of Reconstruction, lynchings of African-Americans and often their allies were carried out to subordinate African-American laborers and to curtail business competition from African-Americans. Lynching occurred mostly in the South averaging about 100

lynchings per year climaxing in 1892 with 161. Between 1882 and 1968, 4,743 lynchings were recorded, including 50 African-American women, between 1889 and 1918³⁷

African-Americans resisted this period of organized terrorism by organizing themselves into the Knights of Labor along with progressive whites in the cities north and south as trade unionists. By 1896 there were 90,000 African-American members of the Knights of Labor (KOL). The KOL were smashed by the agents of big business.

Colored Farmers' Alliance (CFA)

- formed by black farmers in the South who faced many economic problems, and they were barred from joining the Southern alliance because they were African American. They formed it in Houston County, Texas, on December 11, 1886
- tried to help its members in a variety of ways:
 - o educated members on how to become better farmers, it established a weekly newspaper, the *National Alliance*
 - o received goods at reduced prices and obtained loans to pay off mortgages.
 - o raised funds to provide for longer public school terms, and in some places it founded academies.
- o urged members to uplift themselves by hard work and sacrifice
- o made up of landless people who picked cotton for white farmers.
- o tried to have cotton pickers in the South to strike, but it failed to materialize in most places. Colored Alliance started to decline rapidly. So the strike contributed to its demise.³⁸

African-American farmers in the rural areas of the South organized themselves into the Colored Farmers Alliance in Houston County, Texas on December 11, 1886 in conjunction with (white) Farmers Alliance. Known as populists, 1.5 million African-Americans joined what they thought would be permanent white agrarian allies in forming the People's Party to challenge the reactionary racists of the Democratic Party in the South. In 1891 when the CFA supported an African-American cotton pickers strike and the Farmers Alliance didn't, the unity between the alliances was weakened.

Who, were Tom Watson and Ben Tillman?

Tom Watson

- made small fortune as a lawyer and landowner prospered and entered politics in the 1880s. He was elected to the
- Georgia Legislature in 1882, elected to Congress as an Alliance democrat in 1890.
- attended first Populist Party congressional caucus. At that meeting, he was nominated for Speaker of the House
- founded Georgia Populist Party in early 1892

³⁷ Jacqueline Jones Royster (ed). Southern Horrors and other Writings: The Anti-Lynching Campaign of Ida B Wells, 1892-1900 [Boston:Bedford Books, 1997] pp.10.

³⁸ Martin Dann, "Black Populism: A Study of the Colored Farmers' Alliance Through 1891", The Journal of Ethnic Studies, Volume 2, Number 3, Fall, 1974, pp. 58071.

- Watson was nominated for Vice President
- was vigorous anti-Catholic crusader who called for the reorganization of the KKK
- elected to the U. S. Senate as a Democrat in 1920.³⁹

Ben Tillman

- a farmer who left school at 17 to enlist in the Confederate States Army, got very sick and lost his left eye in 1864
- became Senator for South Carolina, was censured for assaulting fellow Senator from South Carolina in the US Senate chamber in 1902
- during WWI, Chairman of U. S. Senate Committee on Naval Affairs
- known as “Pitchfork Ben”
 - because of defense of farmers’ interests or
 - because he wanted to stick a pitchfork into President Grover Cleveland⁴⁰

Tom Watson of Georgia and Ben Tilden of South Carolina were leading white populists leaders when the populists lost in the presidential election of 1896 and also positions on the state level. Watson and Tilden turned and became two of the South’s leading racists, eventually joining the Democratic Party. Watson became a racist Senator advocating segregation on the democratic ticket.

Local leaders and organizations emerged which generated into a national movement of the period.

Who were Ida B. Wells and T. Thomas Fortune?

Ida B. Wells

- African-American civil-rights advocate and feminist
- famous for her anti-lynching crusades
- became editor and co-owner of a local African-American newspaper called, *The Free Speech and Headlight*, wrote under pen-name “Iola.”
- moved to England because she got word that she was in danger returned to U.S., lived in Chicago and formed the Women’s Era Club, later changed to the Ida B. Wells Club
- in June of 1895 she married Ferdinand Barnett, a prominent Chicago attorney
- continued crusade for African American civil rights until her death in 1911⁴¹

T. Thomas Fortune. Name of his last newspaper? Organization led?

- prominent African-American journalist during post-Civil War era
- Howard University for two years
- started as printer for *the New York Sun*, edited the *Globe*, later became chief editor writer for the *Negro World*, and founded *New York Age*
- organization in the 1890’s led the Afro-American League/Council
- coined term “Afro-American” (instead of Negro in New York newspapers)

³⁹ Ferald J. Bryan, Henry Grody or Tom Watson? [Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1994] pp 63-87

⁴⁰ Gerald H. Gaither, Blacks and the Populist Movement [Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2005] pp 135-136

⁴¹ Alfreda M. Duster, Crusade for Justice: The Autobiography of Ida B. Wells [Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980]

- died in 1928, was writing for the *Negro World*⁴²

T. Thomas Fortune

- born in 1856 (the same year as Booker T. Washington)
- editor of *New York Age*, considered the best Black Newspaper
- in 1879, he came to New York City
- became editor of the *Globe* first, then it later turned into *The Freeman*
- in 1887 T. T. Fortune called for organization to fight for rights of Blacks
- led the Afro-American League later called the National Afro-American Council, advocated mass direct action against Jim Crow and disenfranchisement, economic cooperation and advocated self defense to stop lynching.

National Afro-American League had Six Major Grievances (NAAL):

1. Fight against suppression of voting rights
2. Fight against lynch and mob law
3. Fight against unequal funding allocations between African-American and White Schools
4. Fight penitentiary system: i.e. chain gangs, convict leases, and indiscriminate mixing of male and female prisoners
5. Fight tyranny practiced by southern railroads, which denied equal rights to African American passengers and permitted the indignities of whites
6. Fight against the denial of accommodation in hotels, theaters, restaurants etc.

T. T. Fortune wanted to organize national and state chapters:

In the North – New England, Pennsylvania, New York, Illinois, Minnesota

In the West – San Francisco

In the South – Virginia, Texas, N. Carolina, Tennessee, and Georgia

- Whites were not invited.
- 143 delegates met in 1890

Aug 1893:

The NAAL became defunct due to lack of funds and physical support.

With Booker T. Washington's beckoning and finance, T. Thomas Fortune reorganized.

1898:

National Afro-American Council founded

Ida B. Wells Barnett began her political career as a school teacher and fought the Jim Crow system of segregation on trains in Tennessee. She took her case to court and won \$500.00 but was forced to return it when the case was overturned by the State Supreme Court. After losing her job as a school teacher, she became editor of her own newspaper. As conditions became worse and some of her friends were lynched because they had a grocery store competing with a white proprietor, she made a scientific study of lynching and launched an anti-lynching crusade. The African-American Colored Women's Club movement came about to help launch the anti-lynching campaign. Mary Church Terrell emerged as one of

⁴² Emma Lou Thombrough, *T. Thomas Fortune: Militant Journalist* [Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1972] p. 370

the leaders of this anti-terrorism crusade. T. Thomas Fortune editor of the *New York Age Newspaper* worked with Ida B. Wells Barnett and helped form the African-American League/Council whose objective was to overturn Plessy vs. Ferguson, a case in which the Supreme Court upheld Separate but Equal as the law of the land in 1896.

The National African-American League failed for lack of adequate financial support. In this period of time, ex-slaves; those who had actually lived under slavery, petitioned the U.S. government for reparations, six times. The biggest lie told is that African-Americans never demanded reparations.

Who was Callie House?

Callie Guy House (1861-1928) was born into slavery in Rutherford County near Nashville, Tennessee in 1861 to parents Thomas and Ann Guy.

Callie grew to adolescence during Reconstruction and the reaction that followed it. In 1880, she lived in Rutherford County with her widowed mother, Ann Guy in the household of her sister, Sarah, and Sarah's husband, Charles House, a labor and minister. Callie attended school, and her mother, who could not read or write, took in washing.⁴³

In 1883, at the age of 18, Callie left her sister's household, marrying William House, a laborer, who may have been related to her brother-in-law, Charles. Callie and William House had six children, five of whom, three girls and two boys, survived. Thomas, the eldest was born in 1885 and Annie, the youngest in 1893. Callie House's mother apparently died sometime before the 1900 census was taken. She no longer lived in the household of any of the relatives, and she does not appear in the census anywhere thereafter.⁴⁴

It is my firm belief that honest labor should be rewarded, regardless the color of the man or women who performs that labor – Callie House (1898)⁴⁵

After the Civil War, Sojourner Truth led an unsuccessful petition campaign to obtain free public land for former slaves. During the 1890's Callie House organized the Ex-Slave Pensions and Bounty Society in Tennessee and filed lawsuits. The Ex-Slave Pension and Bounty Society was a reparations movement of former slaves seeking reparation payments for their forced free labor during slavery. The movement had about 1.5 million members. Ms. House petitioned Congress six times, proposing bills for reparations to ex-slaves. Before his death, Frederick Douglass endorsed the petition.⁴⁶

House grew up in a poor family in central Tennessee. In 1898 she was a member of five, earning \$2 a week as a Nashville washerwoman but finding time to organize the first convention of the National Ex-Slave Mutual Relief Bounty and Pension Association in

⁴³ Mary Frances Berry, *My Face is Black is True: Callie House and the Struggle for Ex-Slave Reparations* [New York: Alfred A. Knoff, 2005] p. 27

⁴⁴ Ibid p. 28

⁴⁵ Op. Cit., (Berry) p. 78

⁴⁶ Mary Frances Berry, John W. Blassingame, *Long Memory: The Black Experience in America* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1982] pp.406.

Nashville, Tennessee, an organization that provided direct aid to ex-slaves and lobbied Congress for bounties and pensions.⁴⁷

This was the first organization that was a mass reparation movement led by African-Americans.

House, who became the longtime secretary of the association, launched a petition drive to collect the signatures of all ex-slaves – about two million were still alive in 1898 – by using the local chapters to contact them⁴⁸

If the Government had the right to free us she had a right to make some provision for us and since she did not make it soon after Emancipation she got to make it now. – Callie House – (1899)⁴⁹

Callie House died in 1928 of uterine cancer.

From Accommodation to Protest 1895-1915

Starting in 1891 and extending to 1896, Walter R. Vaughan put forth the Freedmen's Pension Bill: A national proposition to grant pensions to persons of color emancipated from slavery. The bill was introduced by W. J. Connell, M.C., who was from the first Nebraska District.

. . . the proper thing for the government to do in the premises would be the placing of all ex-slaves upon a civil pension listing a sum sufficient to enable them to live without the fear of certain want in their old age. The government has suffered them to be taxed as chattel since its organization and as such they have contributed directly to the public support. To right a great wrong the government can do no better, it seems to me, than to make them pensioners for the residue of their existence, especially the aged and dependent.⁵⁰

Who were the Knights of Labor (KOL) & their Mistake?

- secret organization founded in 1869 by Uriah Stephens and five other former members of the Garment Cutters' Association of Philadelphia
- not open to bankers, lawyers, stockbrokers, doctors and liquor manufacturers
- first union to attempt to unionize women and African-Americans on a national scale
- went into decline after the formation of American Federation of Labour in 1886
- organized African Americans in its membership. The KOL grew from 200,000 in 1879 to one million in 1896
- in 1886 there were 60,000 African American members out of a membership of 700,000; by 1896 there were 90,000 African American members.
- Their mistakes were they had too many strikes at the same time that were unsuccessful and businesses through goons broke the back of the union.⁵¹

⁴⁷ Review by Michael Vorenberg, "My Face is Black Is True: Callie House and the Struggle for Ex-Slave Reparations," NationTime, Summer 2008, p. 18

⁴⁸ Ibid, P.18

⁴⁹ Op. Cit., (Berry) p. 52

⁵⁰ Walter R. Vaughan, Vaughan's: A Freedman's Pension Bill [Freeport, New York: Books For Libraries Press, 1971] p. 33.

⁵¹ Mari Jo Buhle, Paul Buhle and Dan Georgakas, Encyclopedia of the American Left [New York: Oxford University Press, 1998]

Who Was Booker T. Washington?

- born 1856
 - passed exam to get into Hampton Institute, convinced Dr. Armstrong that he should have a scholarship, and worked as a janitor to pay for school
 - graduated and got his PhD in 1875
 - began teaching at Hampton to teach Native Americans
- 1881
- given opportunity to be president of the Tuskegee Institute Industrial Education College
 - encouraged students not to bother whites
- 1895
- in 1895 at Atlanta, Georgia, Washington made a highly controversial speech on the place of the African Americans in American life. It was denounced by African American leaders, including W. E. B. DuBois. He emerged as the first spokesman for African Americans since Frederick Douglas
 - was the organizer of the National Negro Business League⁵²

Booker T. Washington in 1895 urged that African-Americans stay in their land and try to advance there. He incorrectly stated that we should not strive for political rights. He accurately indicated though that the tempting Northern economic benefits would be short lived. His efforts established and maintained some African-American trade schools and universities.

Between 1882 and 1968, 4,743 lynchings were recorded, including fifty African American women between 1889 and 1889 and 1980.⁵³

In the 1890's the average number of African-Americans lynched were 111 per year with highest being in 1892 (161 lynchings) and 1894 (134). Mississippi had the highest rate leading the nation of a recorded total of 539 African-Americans lynched between 1882 to 1968.⁵⁴

Who was Benjamin "PAP" Singleton ?

- called himself the "Father of the Black Exodus"
- made a living building cabinets and coffins
- preached to former-slaves about going west to farm & own federal Homestead lands
- called a convention in order to start the "Black Exodus"
- the convention formed the Tennessee Emigration Society
- established a colony at Dunlap, Morris County, Kansas, in June of 1879
- 1882 Black Exodus had stopped
- died out West during the late 1880s and was buried in an unidentified grave.⁵⁵

pp. 417-419

⁵² Booker T. Washington, Up From Slavery [Boston, New York: Bedford/st. Martins, 2003] and Louis R. Harlan, Booker T. Washington: The Wizard of Tuskegee, 1901-1915 [New York: Oxford University Press, 1983] pp 295-458

⁵³ Jacqueline Jones Royster (ed.) Southern Horrors and other Writings: The Anti-Lynching Campaign of Ida B. Wells, 1892-1900 [Boston: Bedford Books, 1997]

⁵⁴ Lea E. Williams, Servants of the People, [New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1998] pp 4

⁵⁵ Nell Irvin Painter, Exodusters [New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1986] pp. 108-117

Who was Edward Blyden?

- Liberian born in St. Thomas, moved to U.S. in 1850 to become a clergyman, but was turned down because of his race when he tried to enter theological college, so he emigrated to Liberia in 1851
- statesman, educator
- became an able handy linguist, classicist, theologian, historian, and sociologist
- Secretary of State in Liberia
- 1885 unsuccessful candidate for the Liberian presidency
- 1901-1906 director of Moslem education trying to build bridge of communication between the Moslem and Christian communities
- Produced more than two dozen pamphlets and books and edited many African American magazines.⁵⁶

Who was Alexander Crummell?

- Born March 3, 1819 in New York City.
- Parents: Boston Crummell and Charity (Hicks) Crummell born to free African parents
- 1820 attended the New York African Free School and had private tutors
- Attended the Oneida Institute in Upstate New York. He was refused admission because of race to the General Theological Seminary [Episcopal] in New York.
- Ordained by Bishop Lee of Delaware in 1844.
- Attended Queen's College of Cambridge University, while working with the abolition empowerment in England in 1853.
- Went to Liberia in 1853 and spent 15 years from 1853 to 1872, working as a farmer, educator, small businessman and Episcopal Missionary.
- Made two trips to the United States, during the time, kept in touch with the abolitionist movement and later the new emancipated "Freedmen"
- Returned to the United States in 1872.
- Settled in Washington, D.C. and established St. Luke's Episcopal Church in 1879
- Served as pastor until 1894.
- In 1897 he founded the American Negro Academy as a challenge to the increasing power of Booker T. Washington (DuBois was a member of the ANA).
- He wrote over 400 sermons and political essays.⁵⁷
- He rejected the get happy philosophy of "feel good religion". He believed in self-help and self-discipline
- He influenced the young W. E. B. DuBois. Two of his protégés John E. Bruce and William H. Ferris became senior officials in the Garvey Movement of the 1920's
- He passed in September 1898

Who was Mary Church Terrell?

- a writer, lecturer, educator
- born into one of the wealthier families in Memphis, Tennessee
- graduate of Oberlin college in 1884... one of the African American women to complete college education

⁵⁶ Edward W. Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and The Negro Race* [Baltimore, MD: Black Classic Press, 1991] pp. i-xv

⁵⁷ Wilson, Jeremiah Moses, edited, *Destiny and Race: Selected Writings, 1840-1898, Alexander Crummell* [Massachusetts: The University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst, 1992]

- married Robert Terrell, then resigned her teaching post to spend the rest of her life as a lecturer, women's rights activist, and leader of the African American Women's Club movement
- one of the first women presidents of the Bethel Literary and Historical Association.⁵⁸

Who was Henry McNeal Turner?

- one of the first Bishops in the African (AME) Episcopal Church
- an army chaplain, political organizer, magazine editor, college chancellor, and preacher
- introduced bills for:
 - o higher education for African Americans
 - o creation of the African American militia to protect African Americans from KKK
 - o give women the right to vote
- encouraged African Americans to return to Africa
- theologian
- declared: "God is a Negro"
- was an agitator and a prophet who addressed the hopes and frustrations of African Americans' struggling in the 19th century.⁵⁹

Who was George Washington Williams?

Born in Bedford Springs, Pennsylvania in 1849, he ran away at the age of 14 in 1864 and joined the Union army. After the civil war he went to Mexico and fought with Republican forces that overthrew Maximilian. Returning to the United States he enlisted in the Tenth Cavalry, one of the four all Negro units of the regular United States Army, from which he received a medical discharge from, in 1868. He attended the Newton Theological Institution and by the age of 25 was installed as a pastor of the Twelfth Baptist Church in Boston. The following year he went to Washington to edit The Commoner whose purpose was to replace The National Era published by Frederick Douglas which had gone bankrupt.

He soon settled in Cincinnati where he pursued various careers as pastor; columnist for The Cincinnati Commercial. He became the first African American member of the state legislature of Ohio since Reconstruction. In 1882, he wrote a two-volume history titled A History of the Negro Race in America from 1619 to 1880; Negroes as Slaves, as Soldiers and as Citizens published by Harper and Brothers.

In 1890 Williams went to study conditions in the Belgian Congo under the patronage of the railroad magnate, Collis P. Huntington. After an extensive tour of the country, he wrote an Open Letter to King Leopold II, assailing him for his inhuman policies in the Congo.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Amy Alexander, Fifty Black Women Who Changed America [Secaucus, NJ: A Birch Lane Press Book, 1999] pp. 35, 38

⁵⁹ Edwin S. Redkey, Black Exodus [New Haven: Yale University Press] pp 24-46

⁶⁰ John Hope Franklin, George Washington Williams: A Biography [Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961] pp xvi, introduction

It was the first time King Leopold II had been publicly attacked for his policies of Genocide against the Congolese people. Williams then went to England with the intention to write a book on Africa but became ill and passed in Blackpool at the age of forty-one in 1891.

Who Was Lucy Parsons?

- forced out of Texas because of her mixed marriage to a former confederate soldier... moved to Chicago
- opened a dress shop when her husband lost his job
- powerful writer and speaker, crucial role in worker's movement in Chicago.
- 1883 helped founded IWPA
- A woman of color or mixed African American, Mexican, and Native American heritage, founder in the 1880s of the Chicago Working Women's Union that organized garment workers and called for equal pay for equal work, and also invited housewives to join the demand of wages for housework – and later (1905), co founder of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), which made organizing women and people of color a priority
- led a march representing the IWW of unemployed men in San Francisco in 1914. The police attacked the marchers and Parsons was arrested.
- "To Tramps," famous article she wrote for the IWPA paper
- rally at Haymarket Square: bomb was hurled at police officers after they attacked the demonstration. Police blamed the IWPA, and arrested her husband Albert
- all found guilty of murder, in November of that year her husband was hanged
- 1927 became member of National Committee of the International Labor Defense
- 1939 joined communist party after working for them for a number of years
- Parsons died in a fire in her Chicago home in 1942.⁶¹

In 1900, 115 lynchings were recorded.

Opposition to Booker T. Washington began to develop among African-American middle class intellectuals in the North. William Moore Trotter of Boston and George Forbes were two of the leading spokesmen who had organized the Boston Guardian. They began to attack Booker T. Washington's conservatism towards the struggle for political rights of African-Americans. When Washington came to Boston to speak, Monroe Trotter and a group of African-Americans threw rotten eggs and tomatoes at him and Trotter was jailed.

Who was W. E. B. DuBois?

1868 - born on February 23 at Great Barrington, Massachusetts

1888- graduated from Fisk University, Nashville, Tennessee

1890 - graduated from Harvard cum laude

1892 - attended University of Berlin

1896 - Ph.D from Harvard University

1896 - joined sociology faculty at University of Pennsylvania

1897 - 1910 professor of economics and history, Atlanta University

1910 - editor of annual Studies on the American Negro

1900 - secretary, first Pan-African Conference in England

⁶¹ Gale Ahrens (ed.) Lucy Parsons: Freedom, Equality and Solidarity: Writings and Speeches 1878-1937 [Chicago: Charles H. Kerr Publishing Company, 2004] p. 48

- 1903 - the Souls of Black Folk published
- 1903 - the Talented Tenth published
- 1905-09 - founder of the Niagara Movement
- 1909 - one of original founders of the NAACP
- 1910 - joined Socialist Party (resigned two years later)
- 1911 - published first novel: Quest of the Silver Fleece
- 1915 - published the Negro (history, from ancient Egypt to U.S.A.)
- 1910-34 -Director of Research for NAACP, board member, founder and editor of The Crisis
- 1911 - participated in First Universal Congress Races in England
- 1919 - Chief organizer of Pan-African Conference in Paris
- 1919 - For NAACP, investigated racist treatment of Negro troops in Europe, creating an international scandal
- 1921 - second Pan-African Congress, London, Brussels, Paris
- 1921 - Darkwater: Voices from Within the Veil published
- 1923 - third Pan-African Congress, London, Paris and Lisbon
- 1926 - first extensive trip to USSR
- 1927 - founds Negro Theatre in Harlem; Fourth Pan-African congress
- 1934 - resigned from The Crisis and NAACP Board
- 1934-44 - chair, Sociology Department, Atlanta University
- 1940 - founder and editor of Phylon magazine 1946 Dusk of Dawn, his second autobiography, published
- 1943 - organized Conference of Negro Land-Grant Colleges
- 1944 - extended visits to Haiti and Cuba
- 1944-48 - returned to NAACP as Director of Special Research
- 1945 - with NAACP's Walter White, accredited consultant to U.N. founding
- 1945 - Presided at Fifth Pan-African Congress, Manchester, England
- 1947 - edited and presented to the United Nations, An Appeal to the World protesting Jim Crow
- 1947 - The World and Africa published
- 1948 - co-chaired Council on African Affairs
- 1949 - attended Paris Peace Conference and Moscow Peace Conference
- 1950 - chaired, Peace Information Center
- 1950-51- indicted, tried and acquitted on charge of "Unregistered foreign agent" with regard to Peace Information Center
- 1961 - joined communist party, USA
- 1961 - resided in Ghana at invitation of President Kwame Nkrumah; Director of Encyclopedia Africana Project
- 1963 - became citizen of Ghana
- 1963 - Died on August 27, the date on the March on Washington; given state funeral; buried in Accra
- 1968 - Posthumous publication of Autobiography of W. E. B. DuBois edited by Herbert Aptheker.⁶²

⁶² W. E. B. DuBois, *The Autobiography of W. E. B. DuBois* [New York: International Publishers], David Levering Lewis, *W. E. B. DuBois: Biography of a Race: 1868-1919* [New York: A John Macrae Book, 1993], David Levering Lewis, *W. E. B. DuBois: The Fight for Equality and the American Century, 1919-1963* [New York: A John Macrae/Ciy Book, 2000]

W.E.B. DuBois was stirred by the incident and soon linked up with Trotter. The two organized the Niagara Movement. The Niagara Movement was a reaction to Washington by African-American middle class intellectuals or the developing African-American intelligentsia at that time who wanted to begin a movement, a more aggressive movement for the demanding of political rights. And they met on the Canadian side of Niagara Falls and later went to Harpers Ferry. The Niagara Movement never was successful because of the lack of organization and the lack of funds. In 1909 a group of white liberals came together and formed the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the NAACP. W.E.B. DuBois joined the NAACP and became editor of the organization's monthly journal, "The Crisis".

William Edward Burghardt DuBois was born in 1868 in Great Barrington, Massachusetts only five years after the Civil War. As a young man, DuBois sought a private and personal liberation from the burden of race through individual achievements. Early demonstrating rare intellectual gifts, he became an academic paragon – a Harvard doctor of Philosophy, a student on fellowship in Germany and the leading Negro scholar of his day, and still he was not free.

As a young man in high school, DuBois thought that hard study would grant him immunity to racial disabilities. He became concerned with the social development of his race and at age 15 he became the local correspondent for the New York Globe, where he used his position as a vehicle to mobilize African Americans. His column urged them to become more politically aware and active by participating in various community betterment programs. He also wrote articles to persuade them to cultivate an interest in literature and literary societies. After graduating from high school, DuBois received a scholarship to Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee. He was ready to leave New England with a feeling of tremendous expectation, for he had assimilated the post-Civil War abolitionist theory of race leadership that the Southern Negroes would prove themselves to all Americans when they were led by college trained Negroes. At Fisk, DuBois, and other future leaders of the African race in the United States and Africa, received large doses of Latin, Greek, and philosophy. Little attention was given to industrial training, and the students were expected to learn "mental discipline" in order to assimilate a "broad, genuine, culture".⁶³

As DuBois' time at Fisk went on, he embraced his race with even greater determination. His early speeches revealed an affirmation of the dual themes of Negro Nationalism and American heritage. He was proud to be a Negro, but wanted for his people all the rights to which they were entitled to as American citizens. DuBois graduated from Fisk in 1888, and took on another undergraduate course load at Harvard, where he further experienced racism and his interests in history, economics and sociology were expanded.⁶⁴

DuBois admonished that Negroes were not living properly unless they possessed an all-absorbing passion for knowledge. In 1895, he became the first black person to receive a Ph.D. in the social sciences at Harvard University. In 1897, DuBois became a professor of history and economics at Atlanta University and taught there until 1910. During this period, he helped form the American Negro Academy, which was the first formal black

⁶³ Elliot Rudwick, W.E.B. DuBois: Propagandist of Negro Protest [New York: Antheneum Press, 1972] p. 23
⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 23

intelligentsia group in America.⁶⁵ It was also during this time that DuBois wrote Souls of Black Folk, a compilation of essays on the African American experience including his views on Booker T. Washington's tactics of accommodation and conciliation to whites. The polarization between Washington and DuBois was much publicized and often oversimplified.

In 1905, it was DuBois who, sensing the urgent need for organized determination and aggressive action on the part of men who believed in freedom and growth for African Americans, proposed a conference to map plans for counteraction against the rising tide of disenfranchisement, segregation, and lynching, and against the dominance of Booker T. Washington's leadership in racial matters. In response to this call, a conference of 29 African American men from 14 states met. Out of this conference was born the Niagara Movement, a group of articulate, highly intelligent African American elite, denouncing racism as "unreasoning human savagery".⁶⁶ The Niagara Movement advocated and fought for, among other issues, the abolition of all caste distinctions based simply on race and color, manhood suffrage, and recognition of the highest and best human training as a monopoly of no race or class.⁶⁷

Ideological splits and financial troubles weakened the Niagara Movement. Its program of racial equality was too far ahead of the historical period and most of its members felt psychologically isolated from the African American masses.⁶⁸ The Niagara Movement was the first national organization of African Americans, which aggressively and unconditionally demanded the same civil rights for their people that other Americans enjoyed. The men of the Niagara Movement helped to educate African Americans to a policy of protest and taught whites that some colored men were dissatisfied with the prevailing pattern of race violations. The organization hewed a path for younger men to follow and helped to lay the foundation for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.⁶⁹

After the breakup of the Niagara Movement, DuBois encouraged its members to join the newly founded NAACP. From 1910 to 1934, DuBois was the most prominent and visible leader of the NAACP. He served as its director of research and publicity, and as editor of Crisis, a monthly magazine addressing African American political issues and often featuring African American writers and artists. He used the pages of Crisis to attack Marcus Garvey and to foster Pan-Africanism, labor solidarity, racial chauvinism and a separate African American economic order, thus ignoring the NAACP's integrationist platform.⁷⁰

At odds with other members of the NAACP, DuBois resigned from his post in 1934, and returned to teaching at Atlanta University for another decade, during which time he wrote such books as Black Reconstruction and Dusk of Dawn. It was also during this time that he founded Phylon magazine. His published criticism of Atlanta University in Phylon

⁶⁵ Columbus Salley, The Black 100 [Secaucus, New Jersey: Citadel Press, 1993] p. 19

⁶⁶ Henry Moon, The Emerging Thought of W.E.B. DuBois [New York: Simon and Shuster, 1972] p. 20

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 22

⁶⁸ Op. Cit. (Elliot Rudwick) p. 96

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 118

⁷⁰ Edgar Toppin, A Biographical History of Blacks in America Since 1528 [New York: David McKay Co., Inc., 1971] p. 285

contributed to his being dismissed in 1944.⁷¹ DuBois then returned to the NAACP, this time playing only minor roles in its functions.

Other measures of DuBois' success are his co-founding of the Pan-African Congress (1919); his co-chairing, with Paul Robeson, of the Council of African Affairs; and his chairing of the Peace Information Center, an anti-atomic bomb proliferation group. These latter two associations made him the target of "red baiting" and "witch hunting". DuBois was accused and acquitted of being an unregistered foreign agent because of his peace activities.

Because of his alienation from America and the opportunity to fulfill a scholarly dream, DuBois accepted Kwame Nkrumah's invitation to move to Ghana permanently. In late 1961, he became a Ghanaian citizen. At the age of 93, while living in Ghana as an expatriate from the United States, DuBois officially joined the Communist Party. DuBois died on August 27, 1963, at the age of 95. The announcement of his death was made in America at the 1963 March on Washington, to an audience of people who saw DuBois as a symbol of dedicated, uncompromising, militancy, who had made an enormous contribution to the civil rights movement in America.

Who Was William Monroe Trotter?

- born Springfield Township, Ohio
- graduated from Harvard in 1895
- 1899 married daughter of prominent fighter who fought to integrate Boston schools
- in 1901, Trotter and George Forbes founded Boston Guardian.
- As a political activist, led protests against segregation in the federal government, led pickets against the Birth of a Nation, and defended the Scottsboro Boys.
- one of the founders of the Niagara Movement in 1905, withdrew to form the National Equal Rights League.⁷²

William Monroe Trotter was born in Ohio on April 17, 1872. Shortly after his birth his family moved to Boston, where he spent most of his adult life. Trotter and his family lived in Hyde Park, an area of Boston that was predominantly white. His father, James Trotter, was a very militant man. He had served in the Massachusetts 55th regiment in the Civil War and had been a leader in the petition for equal pay. Although they lived among whites in an affluent neighborhood, James Trotter remembered, and insisted that his children remembered that most of their people were still being deprived of their basic human rights. It is because of this, perhaps, that Monroe Trotter's desire for equal rights began at a surprisingly young age. Trotter recalls that, at the age of five, he believed that "excelling white people" at school and at play, would be a big step toward racial equality. Twenty-one white peers, because of this determination, elected Trotter president of his senior class.

Trotter entered Harvard University in the fall of 1891, where he continued to excel academically. He graduated third in his class and was the first African American student at Harvard to be elected to Phi Beta Kappa, an extremely prestigious honorary society. When Monroe Trotter left Harvard University in the spring of 1895, he was a rich man, by the standards of the day. His father's death had left him an inheritance of \$20,000 and with it,

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 285

⁷² Stephen R. Fox, The Guardian of Boston: William Monroe Trotter [New York: Athenaeum, 1970] p. 140

he and his new wife purchased a home in a section of Boston that had previously been all white. In these early days, Trotter's political outlook could be described as "aware, but aloof". In other words, he didn't forget that a majority of African Americans were suffering the ills of racial injustice, but he wasn't actively involved in correcting them. However, this changed around the turn of the century. There were four major factors that outwardly influenced Monroe Trotter's decision to become an active part in the struggle for equal rights. First were the worsening conditions in the South, as the period of Reconstruction came to an end. Second was the fact that the feelings harbored by Southerners regarding race issues were rapidly gaining popularity in the North. The third reason Trotter felt the need to get involved was his dissatisfaction with Booker T. Washington's political stance. He felt that Washington's ideals and teachings were encouraging racial inequality instead of remedying it. Finally, Trotter remembered the militant approach of his late father, and decided that he would not be satisfied with what his son was doing to help gain equal rights for African American people.

In 1901, Monroe Trotter helped organize the Boston Literary and Historical Association. This group became a forum for militant race opinion. Trotter was also a founder of the Massachusetts Race Protection Association. It was in the meetings of this organization that Trotter gave his public speeches against the doctrines of Booker T. Washington.

Trotter's most prized accomplishment and the one for which he is most noted, also originated in 1901. The first issue of the Boston Guardian ran on November 9th of that year. Founded by Monroe Trotter and two other members of the Boston Library and Historical Association; Trotter was chosen as its editor.

Trotter was an advocate of resistance and aggression. He was in total disagreement with Booker T. Washington's plan of compromising with white people to gain social and political privileges and used the Boston Guardian as the medium to express his beliefs. While Washington asserted that Black people were at their best as farmers, and should concentrate their education accordingly, Trotter found it ridiculous and self-defeating to encourage African Americans to strive for anything besides complete racial equality with white people.

Trotter also advocated that African Americans vote independently. He believed that neither the Democratic nor Republican parties would ever adequately serve the needs of the African American community and that they should use their vote to collectively support an independent candidate of their choice.

The feud between Trotter and Washington climaxed on July 3, 1902 in an incident that became known as the Boston Riot. Trotter and several others who were affiliated with the Boston Guardian were arrested when they attempted to ask several questions of Washington at a speech he was delivering. Washington and his associates viewed this as an attempt to stop the speech and Trotter was arrested and subsequently jailed. Although this appeared to be a defeat for Trotter in his effort to oppose the principles of Booker T. Washington, it did have a positive effect; the incident gained the attention of W. E. B. DuBois. After learning more about Trotter and his political beliefs, he decided to enlist his help in organizing the Niagara Movement. Twenty-nine men founded the Niagara Movement in 1903, headed by DuBois. He was elected General Secretary and Trotter was chosen to be the Secretary of Press and Public Opinion. Trotter also helped DuBois to draft

the organization's declaration of principles.

Throughout his life, Trotter continued to be a leader in the struggle for equal rights and social equality. He founded the National Equal Rights League. He greatly respected the accomplishments of Williams Lloyd Garrison and other abolitionists and strove to make the memory of their deeds work to the advantage of those currently working towards equality. During the years of World War I, Trotter spoke out for equality among black and white soldiers.

Trotter's ideals and tactics often came under fire during his career. He was frequently referred to as being closed-minded, arrogant and uncompromising, even by his allies. The circumstances surrounding his death are uncertain. Some believe that he committed suicide on April 6, 1954, his 60th birthday. Others believe that his fall from the roof of his home was an accident.

William Monroe Trotter's political career was a foreshadowing of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. His focus on integration, legal rights, and the importance of the ballot, were all major themes during the 60s as well. His life and work were major assets to the history and shaping of our people.

Who was Anna Julia Cooper?

- worked with W. E. B. DuBois
- enrolled in St. Augustine Academy
- married St. Augustine graduate George Cooper
- began to pursue career as a teacher when her husband died
- received bachelor's and master's from Oberlin College
- subject of public controversy because of education philosophy
- 1925 received doctorate from University of Paris
- fourth African American woman to receive doctorates
- was an anti-lyncher
- only woman elected to prestigious American Negro Academy
- received PhD age of 66.⁷³

William Monroe Trotter and Ida B. Wells Barnett, who were also part of the Niagara movement never trusted the white liberals. Trotter did not join the NAACP.

Who Was Chief Alfred Charles Sam?

A Ghanaian who studied in African Missionary Schools, he arrived in Harlem in 1911 to inaugurate the Akim Trading Company on the premise that the "civilized Negro is responsible to develop Africa". Sam hoped to promote trade between Africans and African Americans while expanding Christianity in Africa. Sam bought land in Britain's Gold Coast colony in order to trade in mahogany and rubber, which were available there. He purchased the steamship Liberia to settle African Americans from Oklahoma and Texas in the Gold Coast.

⁷³ Louise Daniel Hutchinson, Anne J. Cooper, A Voice from the South [Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1982] p. 187

By 1914 the Akim Trading company had recruited African American farmers, business people, and professionals through nearly 200 emigration clubs in the southwest. Despite arrest and federal investigation for mail fraud, Sam persevered managing to launch a small excursion to the Gold coast. Ultimately, however, epidemics in Africa decimated the settlers there and Sam's mysterious disappearance in Africa ended the venture, but a few settlers remained in Africa, helping plant Western ideas in established African towns. Like similar back to Africa movements, Sam's dream foundered on lack of funds and over reliance on a charismatic leader.⁷⁴

Who was Madam C. J. Walker?

- Birth name Sarah Breedlove
- Built her empire developing hair products for African American women to regrow their hair.
- She gave lectures on African-American issues
- After East St. Louis Race Riot of 1917, devoted herself to having lynching made a federal crime.
- 1918 she was keynote speaker at many NAACP fund raisers for anti-lynching effort and donated large sums of money to them for that cause at death: considered to be wealthiest African-American woman in America and known to be the first African-American woman millionaire⁷⁵

Who was Noble Drew Ali?

Sharif Abdul Ali known as Noble Drew Ali (born Timothy Drew) was born on January 8, 1886 in North Carolina. He was a child of ex-slaves, who was raised among Cherokee Indians (Native Americans) and adopted into the tribe. At the age of sixteen he began his wanderings as a circus stage magician in a traveling circus with a band of Roma (gypsies) with whom he traveled the world and became a merchant seaman. Venturing to Egypt, Ali met a master high priest of a cult of Egyptian magicians at the pyramid of Cheops. His followers believed that he received initiation into the cult and took the Muslim name of Sharif Abdul Ali.

Noble Drew Ali is said to have made an historic visit to Washington, D.C., in order to reclaim the Moorish flag and to obtain official recognition to call his people to "Al-Islam". The U.S. President, believing that African Americans would not embrace Islam, gave Noble Drew Ali the authority through a Federal charter to teach Moorish Science in America.

At the age of twenty-seven. Noble Drew Ali (Timothy Drew) found employment as an expressman in Newark, New Jersey in 1913. Also in that year he formed the Canaanite Temple, later to be known as the Moorish Science Temple. Forced to flee town for his views on race, Drew Ali and his followers settled in Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., and Detroit.

⁷⁴ Carson Clayborne, Emma J. Lobsansky-Werner, Gray B. Nash, African-American Lives: The Struggle for Freedom [New York: A Lisa Drew Book, 2001] p. 231

⁷⁵ A; Lelia Bundles, On Her Own Ground: The Life and Times of Madam C. J. Walker [New York: A Lisa Drew Book, 2001] p 231

Temples were established in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Ohio; Washington, D.C.; Detroit, and eventually in Chicago by 1925. Temples also developed in cities in the South during the 1920s. Ali settled in Chicago in 1925 and in 1926 he officially registered Temple No. 9 there. By the late 1920s, it was estimated that the Moorish Science Temple had 15,000 members in 17 temples.

Noble Drew Ali introduced The Holy Koran (7) in 1916 for the Moorish Science Temple. A large part of The Holy Koran (7), especially the first section, seems to be taken from the Aquarian Gospel of Jesus Christ written by “Levi” H. Dowling of Ohio in 1905, which describes the lost history of Jesus as a child and young man traveling in Palestine, Egypt, Europe, India and Tibet. Other aspects stem from Ancient Kemetian and Christian texts used by other groups. The other sections of The Holy Koran (7) are attributed to Noble Drew Ali.

Moorish Americans were usually vegetarians, believed in Peace, Love and Brotherhood among the races and saw themselves as descendants of the ancient Asiatic Moorish Nation of the Americas that was part of the Moorish empire. Moorish American identification cards and/or Moorish passports were granted to members.

Noble Drew Ali taught that there were only two races, Asiatic and European; that Europeans represented the “Lower Self” (Satan) and were driven out of Mecca by Muslims. Ali felt that the empowerment of the Moorish people could only come about through their acceptance of Islam. He felt Americans of all races should reject hate and embrace love, and thought that Chicago would become a second Mecca. Moorish Science members symbolized their Asiatic status by wearing red fezzes and adding “El” or “Bey” to their names. Noble Drew Ali cooperated and later worked with Marcus Garvey and the U.N.I.A. In 1929,

Following a conflict over funds, the business manager of the Chicago Temple, Claude Green-Bey, splintered off, declaring himself Grand Sheik, and taking a number of members with him. On March 15th, Green-Bey was stabbed to death at the Unity “mosque”, 3640 Indiana Avenue, Chicago. Although out of town at the time, Drew was arrested as an instigator along with other members of the community. Allegedly beaten by police, Drew was released on bond pending an indictment.⁷⁶

Shortly after his release, Noble Drew Ali died at his home in Chicago on July 20, 1929. Some say his death was caused by a beating by police; others from being beaten by Green-Bey’s followers or possibly pneumonia. At a unity conference later in 1929, the governors’ declared C. Kirkman-Bey Grand Sheik, successor to Noble Drew Ali. John Givens-El, Drew’s chauffeur, declared that he was Drew Ali incarnated, leading to a further split in the temples. In 1930, David Ford-El (later to be known as Wallace Fard Muhammad) claimed to be the reincarnation of Noble Drew Ali. When his claims were rejected, he left the Moorish Science Temple and moved to Detroit, Michigan. Traveling as a door-to-door salesman, he established his own organization, which would eventually become the Nation of Islam. The Moorish Science Temple membership in the 1930s is estimated to have reached 30,000, with major congregations in Philadelphia, Detroit and Chicago. The

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“Moorish Science Temple of America” from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, p. 3

Moorish Science Temple was the predecessor of the Nation of Islam and religious messianic nationalist movements.

World War I was the turning point in black radicalism because of the social, economic, and political conditions that accompanied this war.⁷⁷ Hundreds of thousands of African-Americans migrated to major Northern cities looking for jobs and /or escaping the Ku Klux Klan terror in the South. Overcrowded conditions, poor housing and de facto desegregation destroyed the illusion for the recent immigrants that things were okay in the North. The racism African-Americans soldiers faced in the U.S. Army included several gun battles with white racists in Southern towns. This heightened the national consciousness of African-American people.

Between 1916 and 1921, there were some four dozen major occurrences of civil unrest as whites rampaged against African Americans. Cities and towns touched by outbreaks included Chicago, Elaine Arkansas; Knoxville, Tennessee; Longview, Texas; Omaha; and the District of Columbia. These racist attacks on African-American communities; the mechanization of Southern agriculture resulting from the use of the mechanical cotton picker introduced in 1944 plus lynchings resulted in approximately two-fifths (37.2%) of the South's African American population migrating to the North from 1860 to 1960.

African-Americans and the 1920's

During the summer of 1919, known as the Red Summer, approximately 14 African-Americans were killed as whites lead by the Ku Klux Klan attacked African-Americans in various areas of the United States. The African-American people fought back with arms and were in a near mass insurrectionary mood.⁷⁸

Who were Marcus Garvey and the UNIA?

Garvey founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) which sought to liberate Africans from their oppression. He was a protégé of Booker T. Washington and espoused his theory of economic independence as a goal to equality.

Garvey felt that in order for Africans to achieve political power, it was necessary for Blacks to carve out their destiny in a state of their own on the African continent. He turned his attention to developing the necessary mechanisms to allow this to happen. His efforts including founding the Black Star Steamship Line which would be the vehicle to transport Africans from the United States to their own homeland in Africa.

In the 1920's Marcus Garvey adapted Booker T. Washington's basic program of self help with the added concept of African nationalism. Garvey concluded that the African-Americans would never gain civil equality in America and that the only way the African-American people would be protected from racial abuses by Caucasians in the country and others would be the forming of a strong independent African continental government. His program was one of mass migration back to Africa for those with skills and a spiritual and cultural return to Africa by all persons of African descent. He said that if all persons of

⁷⁷ Earl Ofari, "Black Radicalism in the 19th Century", *Black Scholar* Vol.5, No.5 (February, 1994), p. 5

⁷⁸ Florette Henri, *Black Migration Movement North, 1900-1920* [Garden City, New York: Anchor Press Doubleday, 1975] pp.17

African descent supported a central continental government it would have the power to protect African people throughout the world. Garvey's concept was a form of black Zionism. He felt that a vanguard was needed to liberate the Motherland, Africa. Garvey organized a black army for the purpose of liberating Africa called the African Legion. He also organized a Nurse corps called the Black Cross Nurses. He had the beginnings of an air force, motor corps, and brought several ships to transport his vanguard to the Motherland.

Garvey organized the first nationwide black nationalist newspaper called The Negro World, which had a weekly circulation of several thousand.⁷⁹ Through these vehicles Garvey organized approximately five million African-Americans into the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). The Garvey Movement was part of the New Negro movement in which black radicalism came into full blossom. In a certain sense the Garvey movement though it represented the feelings of millions of African-Americans was the right to center wing of the Black Liberation movement of its time. The UNIA roused pride in black people and several incidents between authorities and Garveyites occurred. For the most part the Garvey movement channeled black activism away from agitating against the racial class oppression in the United States and towards returning back to Africa. This became the bone of contention between most black radicals and Garvey as his movement intensified.

But even though the Garvey movement concentrated its efforts on repatriation it affected the political atmosphere in the States. In New Orleans, Garveyites protested Jim Crow trolley car seating, refusing to sit in the colored section. Blacks turned out en masse with guns to demand that the Mayor of New Orleans allow Garvey to speak after Garvey had been refused. Garvey came to New Orleans and spoke in the black community. On one occasion the white police entered an auditorium where Garvey was speaking and according to an eyewitness account, the entire audience rose to its feet with guns and demanded that the white police leave. The white police left and Garvey had a peaceful meeting.⁸⁰ In New York City, Garveyites attacked white men at random. Such an incident occurred on June 20, 1920 when 200 Garveyites burned two American flags in a bonfire on E. 35th Street in Chicago. Two white men were killed and a Negro policeman was wounded in the uproar that followed.⁸¹

What was the argument between W. E. B DuBois of the NAACP and Marcus Garvey about?

Garvey could not accept the interracialism of the NAACP and was very leery of the dominance of light skinned college education Negro in the Black community.

During the same period black members of the left were also very active. Among those representing the left wing of the Black Liberation movement in the 1920's were Hubert Harrison, Chandler Owen, A. Philip Randolph, W.A. Domingo, and Cyril P. Briggs. Chandler Owen and A. Philip Randolph, editors of The Messenger magazine were close to

⁷⁹ Amy Jacques Garvey, Garvey and Garveyism [New York: Collier Books, 1963] pp.40.

⁸⁰ Interview with Queen Mother Audley Moore, New York, March 1975. (Queen Mother Moore joined the UNIA, Garvey Movement in New Orleans in 1919)

⁸¹ Robert Brisbane, The Black Vanguard [Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1970] pp. 97.

the Socialist Party and advocated a democratic transition to socialism as a solution to the race problem, while W. A. Domingo who headed The Emancipator, became a black bolshevik.⁸²

Who was Hubert Harrison?

- born 1883 St. Croix, Virgin Islands
- traveled as a cabin boy
- science student
- well-off parents; after his parents' death, he immigrated to U. S.
- became a postal worker
- joined Socialist Party
- contemporary of Marcus Garvey
- He wrote 2 articles critical to Booker T. Washington
- later he was hired as an organizer for party (Socialist)
- 1911 he began to criticize party for practicing racism, i.e., lower pay for African American workers. He quit, but still remained a socialist.
- in 1921 became professor of empiriology
- in 1922 staff lecturer also associated with YMCA⁸³

Hubert H. Harrison was born on April 27, 1883, in St. Croix, Virgin Island. His parents, William Adolphus and Cecilia Elizabeth Harrison were considered wealthy people by island standards and sent young Harrison to the best institutions on the island.⁸⁴ During his youth, because of his academic excellence, Harrison traveled around the world as a cabin boy or as a science student after completing his primary education.⁸⁵ Both of his parents died, leaving Harrison penniless. He migrated to the United States in 1900, got a job as a postal clerk and eventually joined the Socialist Party. At a young age Harrison began writing for various publications, from The New York Times to the International Socialist Review.⁸⁶

At the age of twenty-four, Harrison was writing book reviews for The New York Times. He also wrote for The New York Sun, The Tribune, and The World. He wrote articles for such magazines as The Nation, The New Republic, and The Masses. He was assistant editor of The Masses for four years. For four years he was also editor of The Negro World, a paper published by Marcus Garvey.⁸⁷

Harrison was a great scholar, orator and writer. He was an avowed atheist and criticized Christianity, saying it had no relevance for African Americans. In 1909, Harrison joined the Harlem branch of the Manhattan local of the Socialist Party.⁸⁸ After he had published two editorial letters critical of Booker T. Washington, pressure from the Tuskegee political

⁸² Jeff Henderson, "A. Philip Randolph and the Dilemmas of Socialism in the United States, 1917-1941," Race and Class, No. XX, p. 143.

⁸³ Kevin K. Gaines, Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership Politics and Culture in the Twentieth Century [Chapel Hall: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996] pp. 234-260

⁸⁴ p. 33

⁸⁵ John G. Jackson, Hubert Henry Jackson, The Black Socrates [Austin: American Atheist Press, 1987] p. 4

⁸⁶ J. A. Rogers, World's Great Men of Color: Volume II [New York: MacMillan, 1947] p. 433

⁸⁷ Ibid. p. 434

⁸⁸ Mari Jo Buhle, Paul Buhle, Dan Georgakas (ed.) Encyclopedia of the American Left [Chicago: St. James Press, 1998] p.

machine caused him to lose his job at the United States Post Office. He was hired as an organizer by the New York local of the Socialist Party in 1911, but began to criticize the party for racism coming from some of its members in 1912.

Soon after the Industrial Workers of the World was founded, he became an organizer. He participated in the 1913 Patterson, New Jersey silk mills strike, where he cooperated with John Reed, “Big Bill” Haywood, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn and Morris Hillquit.⁸⁹

As a result of his support, Harrison was suspended from the Socialist Party in 1914. In 1917, he found out that he was paid less than white party organizers, protested and immediately resigned. He returned to the Harlem community as an independent African American organizer. Though disillusioned with the Socialist Party, he remained a Socialist.

Adopting Marxist-Leninist ideology, he argued that racial injustice in the United States was deeply rooted in the competitive economic system created by industrialization, rather than in racial values or “racialism”.⁹⁰

During the period of intense racial attacks in June 1917, Harrison called for the formation of a revolutionary black nationalist organization. Over two thousand people attended the organizational meeting, which formed the Liberty League of Negro Americans. Hubert Harrison was elected president of the League and editor of its journal, The Voice.⁹¹

The Liberty League denounced lynchings, riots (racial attacks against various African American communities by white mobs), Jim Crow, political disenfranchisement, and unjust living and labor practices. The Liberty League took a militant position against African Americans being attacked in riots in East St. Louis; Waco, Texas; and Memphis, Tennessee; and against black soldiers being killed by white policemen in Houston, Texas.⁹²

Speaking in Harlem, Harrison advocated to kill rather than submit to being killed. Harrison proposed a “New Negro Manhood Movement”.⁹³ In meetings of the Liberty League, Harrison advocated leadership training for African American youth. As a revolutionary nationalist, he expressed racial unity and the possible formation of a “Negro Political Party”.⁹⁴ As in many African American organizations, splits and divisions occurred in the Liberty League. Harrison was not able to handle the divisions, and in 1918 the Liberty League began to flounder, and eventually became defunct. Many former members of the League joined the UNIA under the leadership of Marcus Garvey.⁹⁵

In 1921, Harrison became a professor of embryology at the College of Chiropractic in New York, and in 1922 became a staff lecturer with the New York Board of Education. He also lectured at New York University, Columbia, the New York Public Library, 135th Street

⁸⁹ Op. Cit., (John G. Jackson) p. 4.

⁹⁰ Wilfred David Samuels, Five Voices in American Culture, 1917-1929: Hubert H. Harrison, Wilfred A. Domingo, Richard B. Moore, Cyril Briggs, and Claude McKay (Ph.D. The University of Iowa, 1977: Dissertation Abstracts International Volume: 38-07 unpublished) p. 54

⁹¹ Ibid. p. 61

⁹² Mari Jo Buhle, Paul Buhle, Dan Georgakas, Encyclopedia of the American Left [Chicago: St. James Press, 1992] p. 292

⁹³ Op. Cit., (Wilfred David Samuels) p. 67

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 70

⁹⁵ Op. Cit., (Samuels) p. 73

branch, and at the Central Y.M.C.A.⁹⁶

In 1925, Harrison helped to form the International Colored Unity League (ICUL), which was to have served as an educational forum. In the first issue of the ICUL's journal, The Voice of the Negro, which appeared in April 1927, Harrison, the editor of the journal and the president of the organization, revealed that the organization had evolved into a political body.⁹⁷

In 1927, Harrison began to advocate an African American state, or several states, to be the solution solving the question of equality and self determination for African Americans in the United States. Harrison's emphasis on youth development helped influence younger radicals such as Wilfred A. Domingo, Cyril Briggs and Richard B. Moore, who considered Harrison the godfather of Harlem black radicalism. Harrison died on December 17, 1927, and left a legacy of mentorship for the radicals of his period.⁹⁸

Who Was Ben Fletcher?: A Review

Benjamin Harrison Fletcher was born in Philadelphia on April 13, 1890. Both of his parents were born in the Upper South- his father in Virginia, his mother in Maryland in 1890, Philadelphia had the largest African American community outside of the South. Fletcher's parents migrated to Philadelphia from Virginia and had fourth children, two boys and two girls.

Little is known about Fletcher's life prior to 1910. The Philadelphia Tribune reported in his obituary that he attended both Wilberforce University, The first African American school of higher education in the nation affiliated with the African Methodist Episcopal Church, based in Ohio and Virginia Union University but neither institution had any record of his attendance⁹⁹

In 1910, at the age of 20 years old Fletcher left his parents' home and began working on the docks of Philadelphia. Fletcher boarded with other African-American men. Fletcher was reportedly a member of the Socialist Party (Sp) in 1910. He was reported to have met Joe Hill and John Reed around 1910. In 1910 there were 3,063 dockworkers in Philadelphia of which 1,369 were African American.

Ben Fletcher became associated with the IWW in 1911 as a longshoreman who was earning 16 dollars weekly prior to becoming a labor organizer in 1913. The wobblies did not tolerate racial discrimination and that factor plus Fletcher's above average intelligence resulted in him becoming correspondence secretary of local No. 57 in Philadelphia¹⁰⁰

Fletcher became a prominent contributor to the IWW's paper Solidarity starting in 1912. In May 14, 1913 Fletcher began to organize for the IWW. Philadelphia dock workers walked out and struck for better wages and voted to affiliate with the IWW forming local 8 of the Marina Transport Workers of Philadelphia.

⁹⁶ Op. Cit., (John G. Jackson) p. 5

⁹⁷ Op. Cit., (Samuels) p. 75

⁹⁸ Op. Cit., (Rogers) p, 434

⁹⁹ William Seraile, "Ben Fletcher, I.W.W. Organizer, Pennsylvania History 46 (1979) p. 214

¹⁰⁰ Ibid

Since 2,200 of the 4,200 dock workers were African American, Fletcher's powerful voice and high intelligence of articulating workers solidarity across racial lines in the concept of One Big Union was an asset.

Local 8 conducted a series of strikes between 1913 and 1916 which resulted in benefits for workers and a stronger union. By 1916 all but two of Philadelphia's docks were under IWW control. By 1917 dock workers had won their demand for .65 cents per hour wage against the bosses preference of 2.5 cents.

In 1913 the IWW began to achieve a substantial gains as the Union demanded. Thirty five cents an hour instead of accepting the then present rate of twenty to twenty-five cents per hour. By 1916, they IWW controlled all but two of Philadelphia's docks. On April 5, 1916, the dock workers had without restoring to a strike or without any workers losing time from their jobs. By February 1917, 20 new members a week were being recruited into the Marine Transport workers Union No. 8. They had won a raise demand for sixty cents an hour for loading powder, time and one half for night work, double time for Sundays, holidays, Saturday afternoon, Saturday night and all meal hours.¹⁰¹

Local 8 of the IWW was democratic and inclusive of the rank and file of its members. Committees of 15 Longshoremen, with at least one member of each nationality on strike was elected to represent the workers.¹⁰² Fletcher had Local 8's meetings chaired in rotation by different ethnic group's diversity. By 1917 nearly sixty percent of Philadelphia's dock workers were African-American who displayed workers solidarity with workers of all ethnicity on the docks.

Local 8 (IWW) dock workers sponsored anti-racist forums to educate members and IWW picnics for workers and their families to socialize with the intention of building comradely.¹⁰³

Fletcher was an active organizer along the eastern seaboard.

Though the IWW never formulated a strike policy to interfere with the U. S. Government war effort of World War I, on September 5, 1917 the newly created FBI vandalized IWW offices across the country, stealing membership records on the false pretext that the union was aiding to Axis (Germany) nations and was plotting to strike and render America weaker. Within a short period of time 166 Wobblies were indicated, with 101 being to trial in Chicago. Later, others were tried in Wichita and Sacramento. In spite of Local 8's loyal and vital role in the war effort, Fletcher and five other Philadelphia Wobblies were part of the federal government's dragnet of the IWW in the fall of 1917.

Many African-American longshoremen who were drafted served in a segregated section of the U. S. army, worked as longshoremen in Europe. African-Americans in Local 8 loaded

¹⁰¹ Op. Cit. (p. 217)

¹⁰² Peter Cole, *Ben Fletcher: The Life and Times of a Black Wobbly* [Chicago: Charles H. Kerr Publishing Company, 2007] p. 9

¹⁰³ Fellow worker Ben Fletcher a Legacy of Solidarity p. 1, <http://www.iww.org/culture/biography/benfletcher>

war materials in Philadelphia and unloaded them in Europe. Philadelphia was probably the most important U. S. port for the war effort. During the war (WWI) there was not one accident or strike on the port.

Fletcher was indicted on September 28, 1917 and arrested on February 10, 1918. After being charged with interfering with the Selective Service Act, violating the Espionage Act of 1917, conspiring to strike, violating the constitutional right of employers executing government contracts and the using the mails to conspire to defraud employers. Fletcher was arrested in Philadelphia and granted bail. A total of 166 Wobblies were indicted but Fletcher was the only African American Wobbly caught in the web. The trial against the Wobblies was definitely a trial to break the back of the IWW. The longest mass trial in American history began April 15, 1918 and lasted for four months. Fletcher was convicted on four counts. He was given a 10 year sentence and a 30,000 fine. Fletcher started serving his term on September 7, 1918 and was out on bail from February 7, 1920 to April 25, 1921 due to a court of appeals ruling that Fletcher had not violated the Espionage Act. His fine was lowered to 20,000 but the Supreme court declined to review the case. Fletcher was out of prison on bail for nearly 15 months. A defense fund was established which contributed to sustaining Fletcher's wife. For instance, Ben Fletcher's wife received \$10.00 per week to help care for their children a young step-daughter and son.¹⁰⁴

Chandler Owen and A. Phillip Randolph, editors of The Messenger magazine took up the cause to free Fletcher.

Ben Fletcher continued to call for workers solidarity. In an article in the The Messenger magazine he stated:

The class struggle has, at last, driven the proletarians to see that education, organization and agitation must go hand in hand and that not until the workers have achieved a working class solidarity based upon scientific knowledge, will they seriously struggle for emancipation. This, of course, does not mean that each worker must be a political economist, but it does mean that the workers must understand the nature of the class organization of society; they must realize what a menace to the interests of the workers, divisions upon race, religion, color, sex, nationality and trade constitute.¹⁰⁵

Because of the bottom up approach of having a democratic rank and file inclusive union based on ethnic diversity Local 8 produced many leaders, rather than one or two.

Hence a second cadre of leaders, black and white, stepped into the void created by the arrest and imprisonment of local 8's top leaders. Black members such as Charles Carter, Williams "Dan" Jones, Glenn Perry, Alonzo Richards, Ernest Varlack, Joseph Weitzen, and Amos White, took leadership notes in the organization¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ Op. Cit. (Cole), p. 19

¹⁰⁵ Ben Fletcher, "The Task of Local 8 The Marine Transport Workers of Philadelphia", printed in The Messenger 3 (October 1921): 262-63, from Peter Cole, Ben Fletcher: The Life and Times of a Black Wobbly [Chicago: Charles H. Kerr Publishing Company, 2007] p. 90

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 21

While in prison the Wobblies read, taught each other and corresponded with activists. Fletcher kept in touch with African American socialists and Wobblies such as R. T. Sims who had organized janitors in Chicago and A. Phillip Randolph and Chandler Owen in New York.

In 1922, fifty congressmen asked President Harding to grant freedom to the jailed Wobblies. Personal letters and petitions were sent to the Justice Department on behalf of Fletcher in December 1921 and throughout most of 1922. the House Judiciary committee held a public hearings on the subject of amnesty of political prisoners in March 1922. Frances T. Kane, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania from 1913 to 1920, stated that the IWW had not engaged in sabotage. He said that the men were not guilty of war crimes and should be granted executive clemency. A similar review was forward by the justice Department's Philadelphia Division head Todd Daniel. In June 1922, Pardon Attorney James A. Finch told Warden W. I. Biddle of Leavenworth that the Justice Department was considering recommending executive clemency for Fletcher, Nef. Doree and Walsh.

In October, 1922, President Harding announced that Fletcher and others would be released on the condition they stay out of trouble.

Fletcher and the others were not permitted to leave Leavenworth until they signed a receipt for the warrant commuting.¹⁰⁷

Being given a conditional pardon seriously hindered Fletcher's leadership role in the union even though he continued activity. Upon his return to Philadelphia Ben Fletcher continued in the IWW's weekly series of open forums. In June 1920, thousands of Philadelphia longshoremen decided to strike for the eight hour day. The strike grew to almost 10,000 waterfront workers and was the largest strike in the history of the port of Philadelphia. The strike was not successful but after the month it ended without local 8 collapsing.

Sectarian ultra left control politics began to lead to local 8's decline and demise. In what became known as the "Philadelphia Controversy" was the result of a vicious power struggle that greatly harmed the American left; the IWW/Communist Party (CP) conflict.

The Ultimate IWW rejection of Bolshevik overtures (and Lenin's decision to focus on capturing the mainstream American Federation of Labor) resulted in a fierce split between these two competing left-wing organization. As a result, Communists in the U. S. sought to destroy the IWW beginning with its most powerful branch, Local 8.¹⁰⁸

Several in the Leadership of IWW in Chicago were leaning to join the Communist Party (USA). As a result Local 8 was to join the communist Party (USA). As a result Local 8 was suspended twice, in the summer and fall of 1920; under false charges for allegedly loading ammunition for anti-Soviet forces in the Russian Civil War and then for violating the IWW constitution by charging initiation fees. Local 8 was not reinstated in the IWW until 1921.

¹⁰⁷ Op. Cit. (Servaile) p. 228

¹⁰⁸ Op. Cit. (Cole) p. 30

Local 8 with more than 4,000 members in October 1922 tried again to achieve the eight-hour day. But the climate of the country had changed since 1913 and the bosses knew it. The city's waterfront employers locked out the longshoremen. This plus "The Philadelphia Controversy" helped the rival IIA sign up hundreds of longshoremen who likely would scab in the event of an IWW strike or employer lockout. Ben Fletcher, Walter Nef, and Jack Wash sentences were commuted on October 31, 1922. Local 8's interracial solidarity broke down because of several factors. As a result of the Red Summer of 1919, with whites attacking African American communities and African American fighting back, race relations across the nation were deteriorating as there was a resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan at the same time there was a rise of narrow reactionary nationalism among African Americans represented with the rise of Marcus Garvey's black nationalist "back to Africa" movement. The Philadelphia city waterfront employers actively worked to split the longshoremen along racial lines by hiring African American replacements; a practice African American employers had used regularly which worked until the 1930's. Local 8 began to split along racial lines with the African American majority losing faith in the union and wanting to return to work.

Fletcher was not an active participant during the lockout. With Fletcher under a conditional pardon he declined to address the workers when he came to Local 8's hall. Fletcher also felt that the IWW leaders were under Communist party influence and he did not want to have his pardon revoked, especially not having back up from the national office. Fletcher would later blame Local 8's disastrous 1922 lockout on communists, who he labeled "disrupters".

African American dock workers in particular, stayed away from the IWW and after the fall of 1922, Local 8 no longer commanded the allegiance of most of Philadelphia's longshoremen. In 1923 William "Dan" Jones, an African American Longshoreman, founding member of Local 8 and former secretary of the union and Ben Fletcher led a group of Wobbly longshoremen out of the MTW and formed the independent Philadelphia Longshoremen's Union the (PLU).

Fletcher complained about the universal transfer system of the IWW, that allowed Wobblies from other locales to come to the Philadelphia waterfront and be eligible for work without paying the "proper" assessments.

Fletcher continued to speak for the IWW but his base, Local 8 had withered almost away. Though he was a charismatic working class leader, whom the communist party feared; he was curtailed in his speaking engagements.

In December 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued a full pardon to the ISO IWW political prisoners including Ben Fletcher. Fletcher had a stroke on January 21, 1933. With his health failing Fletcher spoke less and limited his union activities. Fletcher had a heart attack in 1945. Fletcher died at his home in Brooklyn on July 10, 1949. Ben Fletcher was a fearless leader of the working class. The union he led was the most successful interracial local of its time and what he achieved on the Philadelphia waterfront in the 1910s has yet to be surpassed. Though he did not receive the fame of a Big Bill Haywood or an A. Phillip Randolph, his contribution to both labor and African American history was monumental and should be remembered.

Rough Timeline from 1890's to 1929

1890's

Mississippi Plan: disenfranchised African Americans. Democrats control the state. Southern states follow suit.

- Policies of Poll Tax, Property Tax, Literacy Tests used.
- Sharecropping – Tenant farming – rent the land and pay the landlord for use of the land became debt peonage.
- Convict lease system.

Liberal Arts Colleges: Howard University, Fisk University, Atlanta University, Shaw University, Wilberforce University grow but get less resources because they are Liberal Arts colleges as opposed to Industrial Education.

1893

Colombian Exposition: in Chicago, earned the city name “White City” for excluding African American participation

1895

Ida B. Wells Barnett published “The Red Record”, an account of three years of lynching.

Booker T. Washington gave his in famous “Atlanta Compromise” speech at the Atlanta Exposition

Between 1890 and 1910 the number of African American men in Agriculture increased by over half a million or 31%. During the period, three out of five African American men were employed in agriculture 1890 to World War I.

During this era monopoly capitalism grew so rapidly that by 1909 one-half of the manufacturers were by 1% of the firms and U.S. investments abroad in 1914 were five times what they had been in 1897. By 1900, Wall Street capitalists with a billion dollars invested in the South, dominated not only the economy of the area but also its political life.

Death of Frederick Douglas

The first National Conference of Colored Women convened

Josephine Pierre Ruffin; National Federation of Afro-American Women founded with Mary Margaret Washington as president

1896

Plessy V. Ferguson

U. S. Supreme court upholds “Separate but Equal”

National Association of Colored Women formed from several groups with Mary Church Terrell as president in Washington D. C.

1900

Booker T. Washington formed the National Negro Business League.

In over 20 cities across the South from 1901 to 1907, African Americans boycott street car companies that segregated their cars. In some cities the boycotts forced street car companies into bankruptcy. In other cities, African Americans formed their own transit companies.

First Pan-conference – DuBois, Secretary

1901

William Monroe Trotter founder of the Boston Guardian where he attacked Booker T. Washington.

1903

W. E. B. DuBois:

- Challenged Washington on the basis that he was not striving to reverse Plessy v. Ferguson
- Published “Souls of Black Folk”, in it DuBois advocated Liberal Arts education as well as industrial education and a “Talented Tenth” of people trained in Liberal Arts to lead the under educated masses. He also criticized Booker T. Washington.

July 1903

Monroe Trotter and associates unsuccessfully challenged Booker T. Washington’s control of the Afro-American Council.

August 1903

Trotter and associates harassed Booker T. Washington by throwing eggs and rotten tomatoes at him. Trotter jailed. Event called the “Boston Riot”. Libel suit was brought against the Guardian by supporters of Booker T. Washington.

1905

Niagara Movement:

- W. E. B. DuBois, Monroe Trotter, and 29 other African American men meet and form the Niagara Movement, demanding immediate political equality.
- to promote civil rights (anti-Washington)
- immediate voting rights
- immediate desegregation
- immediate right to self-defense
- Referred to as the Niagara Movement because they met on the Canadian side of Niagara Falls.
- Did work with White allies
- Socialist and frontal assault on Jim Crow and segregation

1906

Harpers Ferry meeting included women.

1907

Split occurred between Trotter and DuBois and weakened the feuding Niagara Movement.

1909

Riot in Springfield, Illinois

- African American community was destroyed

-Liberals called for action as Springfield was Lincoln's hometown.

Oswald Garrison Villard issued a call along with Mary Overton for A National Negro Conference; invited those from Niagara movement. Led to the formation of the (NAACP).

1910

Founding of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)

-New York as its base.

-Its leading members are a handful of African Americans and some whites. Among them are W. E. B. DuBois, Mary Church Terrell, Mary White Ovington and Ida B. Wells (Trotter didn't join).

-The first local branch was established in Chicago, Illinois in 1911.

-DuBois became the editor of the NAACP's magazine, The Crisis.

-James Weldon Johnson (Washington Camp) joined the staff as an organizer.

-By the end of its first decade, the NAACP had over 400 local branches with more than 91,000 members.

-The Crisis had a circulation of 16,000 copies; by 1919 it had a circulation of 100,000.

-Decide to legally challenge Plessy v. Ferguson.

1910-1911

The National Urban League established

-Made up of Washington supporters and women from both sides

-Helped migrants get city jobs and housing.

-Did social work.

-Established affiliates from existing services.

1913

Noble Drew Ali: Founding of Moorish Science Temple

-Predecessor to the Nation of Islam

The Great Migration

Between 1890 and 1922, the boll weevil ruined 85% of the South's cotton fields. Rains also ruined the land. In 1917, with the beginning of World War I, four million white workers were called in the U. S. armed forces, leaving vacancies in Northern factories. Between 1915 and 1930, over a million African Americans left the South (fill the jobs). Geographical dispersion of African Americans. White immigration dropped due to war.

African American Newspapers

The Washington Bee, The New York Age, The Cleveland Gazette, and The Pittsburgh Courier. The most influential paper was The Chicago Defender founded by Robert S. Abbott. It had headlines such as "Get Out of The". At its peak, the Defender had a national circulation of 300,000.

-From 1900 to 1920 between 100,000 and 500,000 African Americans needed to calls of labor recruiters championed by Robert Abbott.

1914-1917

Marcus Garvey: Universal Negro Improvement Association; Garvey/DuBois debated

- Garvey (Jamaican) sees the way African Americans were treated around the world and reports on it.
- Rise of national consciousness

1915

Association for the study of Negro Life and History

- founded by Carter G. Woodson.
- Birth of a Nation film, by D. W. Griffith.

1917

26 Riots occurred across the country and the KKK was in revival. Race Riot of East St. Louis.

Cyril Briggs

- Editor of The Crusader
- Organized the African Blood Brotherhood (ABB)
- Began to fight back for rights, jobs, etc.

July 28, 1917

NAACP staged a protest parade against lynching

DuBois issued statement in The Crisis, "Close Ranks" and most African American leaders supported war efforts except A. Phillip Randolph.

World War I

- African American soldiers faced discrimination while in basic training and were put into segregated units.
- 370,000 African Americans were trained for combat and about 100,000 fought and performed with distinction.

August 1917

A racial incident took place in Houston, Texas. An African American soldier attempting to get on a public street car was pulled off and racial insults hurled at him. A group of armed angry African American soldiers came to town and a street fight took place, leaving 12 white civilians dead. Thirteen soldiers in an army court martial were found guilty of murder and were hanged. Fourteen others were jailed for life.

1916-1925

"Up You Mighty Race"

- Marcus Garvey built the UNIA into a mass organization which claimed four million in ranks.
- Marcus Garvey placed emphasis on knowledge of Afrikan history unlike Hon. Elijah Muhammad.
- "No race should accept inferiority"
- Africa for Africans

Industrial Workers of the World (IWW)

- Another party of interest for African Americans

-Big Bill Haywood, Elizabeth Worley and John Reed supported a strike in Patterson, New Jersey

1917

Formation of Revolutionary Black National Organization

-Prior to Garvey – “Liberty League of Negro Americans”

Harrison was elected president and Editor of “The Voice”

-He denounced lynchings, Jim Crow practices laws

-Advocated kill, instead of being killed

Formation of African-American Political Party

-splits & divisions occurred in Liberty League

-Organization couldn’t handle it and therefore became defunct

-Many former members joined “UNIA”

November 1917

Workers’ Soviet Union was established

-Socialism was supposed to present an alternative economic system to capitalism

1919

“Red Summer”

-African American and White men return from WWI. Jobs are filled. Leads to confrontation.

-African Americans were treated as heroes in France during WWI. Return to U.S. and are considered “uppity niggers” and are therefore lynched.

-Hundreds of African Americans are killed

-25 Riots

-Washington, D. C. 6 dead – 150 injured; Chicago 38 dead – 537 injured

-Garvey and DuBois debated because Garvey felt that equality could never be achieved.

1920

Harlem Renaissance

-Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, Claude McKay, James Weldon Johnson wrote significant poems, prose and songs for the period representing the “New Negro”.

-Sculptor: Meta Warrick Fuller, Writer: Dorothy West.

-Blues: Ma Rainey, Blind Lemon, and Bessie Smith.

-Two Pan-African Conferences (convened by DuBois)

-one in Brussels, one in Paris.

1921

Committee (including DuBois, Walter White, Cyril Briggs) called for Government investigation of Garvey

1922

Garvey indicted by the federal grand jury for mail fraud (imprisoned).

1925

Beginning of student strikers at Negro colleges; Fisk University – fight for student activities and for African American presidents of African American colleges.

June 25, 1925

Pullman Porters Organization

- A. Philip Randolph involved
- had fewer African Americans employed as repair and erection of trains, higher paying jobs or as management and no African Americans could be conductors.
- African American workers were relegated to positions of personal service
- 15,000 Pullman Porters had to pay cost of uniforms, shoes, polish and own meals; which cut into already comparatively lacking wages.

400 hours of work, not including prep time

Created Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters

- The “Messenger” was to be main voice of Brotherhood
- drafted a letter of grievance to Pullman Organization
- first organized union to off set union workers
- Chinese, Phillipines and other workers were hired
- Brotherhood called a strike. Pullman Company caved in.

Revival of KKK to a membership of four million

Persecution of I.W.W.

1927

Harding pardoned Garvey and he is released from federal prison in Atlanta and immediately deported.

Student strike at Tuskegee Institute.

International Colored Union League

- Hubert Harrison
- began to advocate a Black State
- Emphasis on Youth Development
- Worked with Marcus Garvey

December 17, 1927

Hubert Harrison died; legacy of radical mentorship.

New Leaders of the 1930s and the 1940s

African-Americans first demonstrated political clout when they elected a black Republican, Oscar DePriest of Chicago to Congress in 1928. In 1934, Chicago’s Arthur W. Mitchell became the first African-American Democrat elected to Congress. The urban concentration of African-Americans was reflected in the election of thirty African-Americans to state legislatures in 1946 and the election in 1944 to Congress of Harlem’s Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., and Chicago’s William L. Dawson and Detroit’s Charles Diggs in 1954.

Of the many African-American leaders to emerge in the 1930s and 1940s, A. Philip Randolph, Paul Robeson and Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. stand out. Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. entered the political arena while A. Philip Randolph concentrated on labor.

Who was Adam Clayton Powell, Jr.?

Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. became a political race militant minister who emerged out of the “Don’t Buy Where You Can’t Work” campaign against white merchants who discriminated against hiring African-American sales persons in Harlem. “Don’t Buy Where You Can’t Work” was an African-American initiated boycott movement which used direct action tactics (pickets, etc.).

Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. was born on November 29, 1908 in New Haven, Connecticut. His father, the Reverend Adam Clayton Powell, Sr., moved the family to New York City to take over the pulpit of Harlem’s Abyssinian Baptist Church. Adam, Jr. went to public schools and then to the City University of New York where he flunked out because of his love of the “party life”. His father was instrumental in getting Jr. enrolled in Colgate University in 1926, where he was one of only four African-American students. After graduating from Colgate in 1930, he entered Columbia University and earned a MA in Religious Education in 1931. In 1937, Powell, Sr. retired as pastor of Abyssinian Baptist Church and handed over the pulpit to his assistant minister, Adam, Jr. Abyssinian, located on West 138th, had the largest African-American Baptist congregation in Harlem, with over 10,000 members.

Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. began building a base of mass support from the success of the demonstrations and strikes he helped lead during this time. New York City, and particularly Harlem, had become the center for progressive politics of the period. La Guardia, an urban progressive populist, had become Mayor of New York City, and the Tammany Hall Machine was cracking. Powell, Jr. was the co-editor of the Harlem Weekly, “The People’s Voice” in 1942, and he began to build up a following through it and his protest activities.¹⁰⁹

Powell, Jr.’s first attempt at this approach occurred when he responded to a request from five doctors in Harlem, who charged that their dismissal from Harlem Hospital, a city institution, was racially motivated. Dr. Ira McCown, the leading figure among Harlem’s doctors during the 1930’s, invited Powell, Jr. to organize to exert political pressure on behalf of Harlem’s beleaguered African-American doctors.

Harlem Hospital served a predominantly African-American clientele, but was run exclusively by white, largely Irish-American doctors and administrators. Powell, Jr., a 22 year old upcoming leader, organized mass direct action and mobilized 6,000 people to march on the hospital and City Hall. As a result the Board of Estimates launched an investigation. All five doctors were reinstated, and Harlem Hospital had an interracial staff with an African-American Medical Director.

In 1937, Powell, Jr. formed the Greater New York Coordinating Committee for Employment, comprised of 207 groups with a combined membership of 170,000. By 1941, the Coordinating Committee had expanded to embrace a variety of white radical

¹⁰⁹

Will Haygood, “Keeping the Faith”, Winter 1998, American Legacy pp. 26

organizations, including the Communist Party, and became the People's Party.

"Between 1937 and 1941, the Coordinating Committee for Employment and the People's Party began to boycott white businesses on 125th Street (businesses that in 1933 hired some 5,000 persons, but only 93 African-Americans), to force the Omnibus Corporation that ran New York City's buses to upgrade African-American workers, to negotiate hundreds of jobs for African-Americans in bottling and bread companies, and in large firms like Consolidated Edison and the New York Telephone and Telegraph Company".¹¹⁰

In 1941, Powell, Jr. ran for City Council. In a field of 29 candidates Powell Jr. received 65,000 votes, placing third, and winning a seat, the first African-American to do so. In 1942, he became the co-editor of a weekly newspaper, "The People's Voice".

In August, 1944, Powell, Jr. not only gained the Democratic and Republican Party's nomination for the first African-American majority Congressional District in New York, but also the left wing American Labor Party's nomination. He won that seat without opposition.

"In the twentieth century, Powell, Jr. was preceded in Congress by three other northern African-Americans, all elected from Chicago's Southside; Oscar DePriest (1929-34), Arthur Mitchell (1934-42) and Dawson (1942-71). Whereas these African-American predecessors gained office largely through use of pragmatic style and deference, to a city machine, Powell launched his congressional career in the same way that he commenced his Harlem leadership, relying on ethnic militancy and black populist arousal".¹¹¹

Powell, Jr. stood alone in the years before sizeable African-American representation in Congress, using national politics as a platform for articulating a form of African-American militancy. In the mid-1950's Powell, Jr. supported the Republican candidate, Dwight D. Eisenhower, for President. He was unhappy with the Democratic candidate, Adlai Stevenson, who was not forceful on civil rights. Powell, Jr.'s influence was felt during he election, because, for the first time since 1936, more than one-third of African-American voters backed the Republican Party. As a result the New York Democratic Party tried to remove Powell, Jr. from the Party.

By 1959, Powell, Jr. and Dawson from Chicago were joined in Congress by two new African-American Democratic Congressman, Charles Diggs of Michigan and Robert Nix of Pennsylvania. They voted against a civil rights amendment to the Housing Act, because the amendment, which had been initiated by Republicans, was designed to make it unacceptable to Southern Congressmen, thus defeating the entire Housing Act.

Powell, Jr. also, in the same session, initiated another civil rights amendment, this time to the Education Act. The amendment was adopted, but the Education Act itself was defeated. When Powell, Jr. was elevated to chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee

¹¹⁰ Martin Kilson, "Adam Clayton Powell, Jr.: The Militant", August Meier, ed., Black Leaders of the Twentieth Century, [Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1982], p. 269

¹¹¹ Ibid, p. 269

in 1961, his effectiveness increased. He would occasionally attach a pro-civil rights amendment to crucial legislation that came from his committee. These amendments were eventually called the “Powell Amendments”.

Through these amendments, and having a competent staff, Powell, Jr.’s committee produced significant public policies that were beneficial to African-Americans, the aged, the handicapped, women, poor whites, and Hispanics. In his first five years as chairman, (1961-66), Powell, Jr.’s committee generated nearly sixty pieces of significant social legislation, forty-nine of which were bedrock bills, and eleven amending bills. This social legislation covered such areas as fair employment practices, elementary and secondary school aid, manpower development and training, vocational rehabilitation, school lunch programs, war on poverty, federal aid to libraries, barring discrimination in wages for women, and increasing the minimum wage.

Powell, Jr.’s weaknesses were women and lavish spending, which were eventually used against him. In August 1966, racist elements in the House charged him with cashing checks meant for members of his staff, particularly his wife. The House stripped him of his chairmanship and denied him his seat when the 90th Congress opened on January 10, 1967. Powell, Jr. was re-elected in April 1967, and was again denied his seat. He took the issue to the U.S. Supreme Court, which ruled that he should be reinstated.

In 1970, Charles Rangel defeated Powell, Jr. in the Democratic primary. Thus ended the political career of one of the first African-American political militants.

In the 1930’s, African-American political protest began to mature. The NAACP, and its strategy of legalistic advancement, was replaced by aggressive militant protest. The “Don’t Buy Where You Can’t Work” movement developed in large cities concerned over the fact that African-Americans were not employed in white owned stores located in areas which depended on African-American patronage.

Who was John O. Holly?

John O. Holly formed the Future Outlook League in Cleveland between February 11 and March 4, 1935, with the intention of securing employment for African-Americans. At the time there were 13,000 businesses operating in central Cleveland that were patronized exclusively by African-Americans. Less than 100 African-Americans were employed in these businesses and they were principally porters and janitors.

John Oliver Holly, Jr. was born December 3, 1903 in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. He attended a private school until he reached the fifth grade after which he attended the public schools in Tuscaloosa. After World War I, the family moved to the small town of Rhoda, Virginia. At the age of 15, Holly dropped out of school to work in the coalmines. The Holly family moved to Roanoke, Virginia where John, Jr. completed his high school education at Roanoke Harrison High School.

John’s father moved on to Detroit, Michigan and established a trucking business. At age 20, John, Jr. joined him and, for a while, attended Detroit’s Caso Technical Commercial School. John Holly, Jr. dropped out of school and took a job with the Packard Motor Company as a gas tank finisher. From 1924 to 1926, he held many odd jobs, but finally

landed a job as a chauffeur, which afforded him the opportunity to travel extensively. At the age of 23, John married Miss Leola Lee and moved to Cleveland, Ohio. In Cleveland, he obtained employment at Halle's Department Store as a porter and three years later took a job as a shipping clerk for the Federal Sanitation Company, a chemical manufacturing company. He held this job for 10 years until he became a full time organizer for the Future Outlook League.

The Future Outlook League succeeded in securing several hundred jobs for African-Americans by applying direct action picketing and a selective boycott. At its peak the FOL had over 20,000 members and secured employment for over 15,000 African-American Cleveland residents using these methods. In addition juvenile delinquency rates were cut by 50% and over 6,000 homes were renovated.¹¹²

The Communist Party challenged the NAACP and the Urban League for their conservative, accommodationist (go-slow) attitude. Ten thousand African-Americans joined the Communist Party between the 1930's to the early 1950's, and Benjamin Davis, Jr. was elected to the New York City Council in 1942 as an African-American communist. Sharecroppers were organized into a union, the unemployed were organized into unemployment councils and marches were held all over the country. A labor/Communist Party/New Deal/African-American alliance was formed in 1932, which supported Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the Democratic candidate for President. This was the time when African-Americans collectively shifted from the Republican to the Democratic Party.

Who was Asa Philip Randolph?

- editor of Socialist monthly, The Messenger
- J. Edgar Hoover held conspiracy investigations.
- Hoover wanted magazine to stop circulation of the Messenger because it was against lynching and for arming ourselves
- A. P. Randolph third to Martin Luther King Jr. and Garvey in popularity.
- advocated physical resistance to white mobs
- organizes Sleeping Car Porters (first African American Union)
- talked about change and resistance
- was more militant than W. E. B. DuBois
- worked with Chandler Owens
- saw that World War I was capitalist in nature; spoke out against U. S. involvement
- was arrested in Cleveland.

Randolph especially believed in organizing and federating all black labor. White unions were almost 100% anti-black and most of the violence of the period was the result of racism in the field of labor. African-Americans, however, continued to be good union men in those unions that admitted them, broke strikes when forced to by white chauvinist unions and formed their own unions like the Colored Waiters, Afro-American Steam and Gas Engineers, and Skilled Laborers. Randolph and Chandler joined the Black National Brotherhood of Workers of America in 1919 whose growth presented a sufficient threat to the racist A.F. of L., that it liberalized its policies on admitting blacks.

¹¹²

Charles H. Loeb, The Future is Yours [Cleveland, Ohio: Future Outlook League, May 1, 1947] p. 82

Asa Philip Randolph was born on April 15, 1889 in Crescent City, Florida, into a religious family. He was the second son of an African Methodist Episcopal (AME) preacher who also operated a tailoring business to make ends meet. His mother took in wash to help with the family income. The family moved to Jacksonville in his youth.

In the household there was always debate about various leadership strategies. Asa and his older brother were constantly induced with a strong sense of self-esteem, racial pride, and were excellent students in school, but lacked the money to go beyond high school. His older brother financed his college education by working as a porter.

In 1905, Randolph entered Cookman Institute in Jacksonville, which later became Bethune-Cookman College. After graduation, Randolph began to experience despair, because, as an African American, he could only find manual labor jobs in the South. He had spent several summers in New York, traveling by ship, because it was cheaper than the train, and even worked as a waiter on the Fall River Line. At the age of twenty-two, Randolph decided to emigrate to New York in 1911. Randolph took a series of odd jobs to support himself, working as an elevator operator, a porter and a waiter. He formed an Elevator and Switchboard Operators Union while attending City College of New York at night.

In Harlem, New York, Randolph gained an education and exposure to radical politics attending lectures at the Socialist Rand School of Economics and attended classes at the City University of New York.

Randolph became involved with political radicalism through exposure to the soapbox oratory of the pioneer black Socialist Hubert Harrison, as well as that of white radicals like Elizabeth Hurley Flynn, “Big Bill” Haywood, and Eugene Debs.¹¹³

Randolph married Lucille Campbell Greene, a beauty shop operator with ties to Madame C. J. Walker, in 1913. Lucille Randolph became a crucial source of financial support for her husband’s subsequent undertakings. Through Lucille, Randolph met Chandler Owen.

During World War I, the two followed the international position of socialism and refused to support the war effort, a capitalistic venture. Randolph had supported the work of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), while opposing the work of the American Federation of Labor (AFL)¹¹⁴

In 1917, Randolph and Owen opened a job bureau, the Brotherhood, through which they worked to organize African Americans into unions, and attempted to form a black labor federation. But they received resistance from white workers and the AFL.

In November 1917, both men founded The Messenger, a monthly magazine, which charted a unique radical path. In 1919, The Messenger became the official organ of the National Brotherhood Workers of America, an organization seeking to federate all black unions, and organize African Americans having no union membership. By 1923, The Messenger was criticizing both DuBois and Garvey and also calling for African Americans to

¹¹³ Paula F. Pfeffer, A. Philip Randolph, Pioneer of the Civil Rights Movement [Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1990] pp. 8

¹¹⁴ Dorothy C. Salem, The Journey: A History of the African American Experience [Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 1997] p. 298

organize.

Both were arrested for treason for opposing U.S. involvement in the war at an anti-war rally in Cleveland, Ohio in 1918. They were jailed, and then released. Charges were dropped, but the two had to get out of town. Both men joined the Socialist Party, because they felt that the Socialist Party represented the interests of workers, which was logical since 99% of African Americans were workers.

Advocating cooperatives and economic boycotts, Randolph and Owen organized the Friends of Negro Freedom in an attempt to build a national civil rights organization with an economic strategy in 1920. The effort failed, mainly because it was involved in the derailment of the Garvey movement.

After the Elevator and Switchboard Operators Union was taken over by whites, and after many failed attempts at organizing trade unionism among African Americans, Randolph concentrated his appeals to the Pullman Porters. On June 25, 1925 Randolph met with porters of The Pullman Palace Car Company, one of the largest employers of African Americans in the country. Though the company claimed to have hired so many African Americans out of concern for their well being, the fact is that Pullman hired very few of them in its repair and erection shops; in addition, management explicitly excluded African Americans from service as conductors. Pullman officials chose to use African American men as providers of personal services on sleeping cars, thereby maintaining their ex-slave status of personal servants. The discussion at the meeting centered on the conditions under which they worked. Porters were required to remain on call at sign-out offices for several hours a day, without pay; porters in charge often had to perform conductor's work without adequate compensation for extra services.¹¹⁵

There were 15,000 Pullman porters traveling all over the country. Those assigned to regular runs began work at \$67.00 a month; if they remained in service for 15 years, they would thereafter receive \$94.50. Tips increased the actual earnings, but the cost of uniforms, shoe polish, meals, etc. was deducted from their wages. Their 11,000 miles of travel per month usually meant 400 hours, excluding preparatory time and time spent at terminals. To aggravate the situation, porters often "doubled out" or ran "in charge" of a car, taking increased responsibility under unfavorable physical conditions for added pay at a diminishing rate.¹¹⁶

Despite opposition from the Pullman Company, many porters were convinced that they needed a real union to end the unconscionable conditions under which they labored. Agreeing that the solution to their problems lay in trade unionism, several porter organizers, Billy Bowers and Ashley Totter asked Randolph, who didn't work for the company, to organize them in 1925. The Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP) was formally organized on August 25, 1925. The intention of the BSCP was to deal with the low wages, long hours, lack of adequate rest on trips, lack of bargaining power and, lack of job security in their work. The porters of the Pullman Company chose Randolph as their leader and agreed that The Messenger would be the official organ of the union.¹¹⁷ The rally

¹¹⁵ Philip Foner, Organized Labor and the Black Worker, 1619-1981 [New York: International Publishers, 1982] p. 177

¹¹⁶ Ibid, p. 178

¹¹⁷ William Harris, Keeping the Faith: A. Philip Randolph, Milton P. Webster and The Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (1925-1937) England: University of Illinois Press, 1977] p. 35

publicly launching the brotherhood was hailed as the greatest labor mass meeting ever held, of, for, and by African American working men, Randolph drafted a set of demands that were to be met without exception:

1. Recognition of the brotherhood.
2. Increase of wages to \$150.00 a month.
3. A 240-hour month and relief from doubling out.
4. Pay for preparation time.¹¹⁸

The Pullman Company had a strong anti-union stance, so the Brotherhood held to the highest standards of secrecy, even after the union was publicly known to exist. Randolph was not a porter, and thus was immune from Pullman vengeance.

At first the Pullman Company did not take the Brotherhood seriously, but as membership and support increased, they knew that the BSCP was a force to be reckoned with, and the Pullman Company launched an all-out attack on the BSCP. Many porters were “dishonorably” discharged or physically harmed. Pullman even went so far as to subsidize the black press, in exchange for an anti-union stance. The Brotherhood also face opposition from the Ku Klux Klan in the South. Below the Mason-Dixon Line, BSCP organizational drives were restricted to a porter “underground”. Furthermore, to let the black porters know that they were not indispensable, the Pullman Company began hiring a few Chinese, Mexican and Filipino porters. The Brotherhood tried to reassure the black porters that the U.S. immigration laws made this company threat meaningless, but the threat did have an effect.¹¹⁹

With shrinking membership and a corresponding decline in dues, the Brotherhood was forced to close many of its branch offices. It appeared that the efforts to unionize black porters would have the same fate as Randolph’s previous attempts to organize blacks into unions. But the Brotherhood’s efforts in the face of “Pullman’s vicious counteroffensive” had earned the BSCP the respect and support of many, including the NAACP, several labor and liberal publications, the Chicago Federation of Labor and the AFL.¹²⁰

Motivated by the widespread support, the BSCP continued on. After failed attempts at negotiating with Pullman officials, the BSCP moved against the company on a governmental level. However, the U.S. Government was clearly unwilling to stand up for the African American worker, and the Brotherhood announced that it would strike. Although the strike did not take place, the Brotherhood’s leader argued that the mere threat of a strike had brought the union great gain, since it had “reversed the concept of the American public stereotype of a shuffling, tip-taking porter to an upstanding American worker, demanding his right to organize a union on his own, as well as a living wage”.¹²¹

With the election of Franklin Roosevelt in 1933, as President of the United States; his New Deal sponsored the National Industrial Recovery Act, which had a clause, Section 7A, that gave specific guarantees to labor. Workers were assured of the right to organize and select their own representatives, free of interference from their employer.

¹¹⁸ *Op. Cit.*, (Philip Foner) p. 179

¹¹⁹ *Op. Cit.*, (Philip Foner) p. 182

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 182

¹²¹ *Op. Cit.*, (Philip Foner) p. 184

The BSCP finally won recognition from the Pullman Company after twelve years of struggle on August 25, 1937. This was the first time that a major corporation had signed a contract with the first African American union in the country.

Under the direction of A. Philip Randolph as president, the Brotherhood grew to the point where the Pullman Company was forced to bargain collectively for porters and maids. The contract as recently signed grants a 240-hour month, time and one-half for overtime, a minimum wage of \$89.50 a month for the first year with progressive increases to \$110.50... Over 8,000 porters and maids benefited by a wage increase of \$1,152,000 for 1937.¹²²

The Pullman Company tried to buy Randolph by sending him a blank check offering him up to the sum of one million dollars. Randolph photostatted the check, put the copy up in his office and sent the original back to the Pullman Company, saying that his leadership was not for sale. The success of the organizing campaign and his refusal to sell out immediately propelled Randolph into national leadership.

By 1936, 500 organizations gathered to form the National Negro Congress, which placed heavy emphasis on unionizing unskilled African-American labor. Through the NNC, support for the organizing efforts of the Council of Industrial Organizations (CIO) was secured in the African-American community. As a major respected labor leader, A. Philip Randolph was elected Chair of the NNC. The Southern Negro Youth Congress, the youth branch of the NNC, held demonstrations against segregation and for economic equality in the South.

By 1939, a very broad spectrum of the African-American community was united behind the labor/Communist Party/New Deal/African-American alliance. However, the Communist Party changed its position several times during this time in accordance with the changes that were occurring in the Soviet Union. This abrupt change of tactics by the Communist Party, and its African-American cadre, as well as the introduction of foreign policy within the NNC, ruptured the united front between A. Philip Randolph, other African-American leaders and the Communist Party.

In 1940 A. Philip Randolph resigned as Chairman of the National Negro Congress. After a meeting with President Roosevelt, which he felt accomplished nothing, Randolph issued a call through the African-American newspapers for 10,000 African-Americans to march on Washington D.C. This march was to demand the right to federal employment and the right to fight for the United States in World War II in non-segregated Armed Forces.

The March on Washington Movement (MOWM) was all African American and mobilized thousands through rallies in African American communities. It forced Roosevelt to desegregate hiring in the defense industry and to create the Committee on Fair Employment Practices (FEPC).

Randolph began making plans to build an independent, African-American mass movement, but in 1941, Japan attacked the United States. The U.S. entered into World War II on the

¹²²

Ibid., (Foner) p. 184

side of the allies, against Japan, Germany and Italy, the axis powers. The Soviet Union was an American ally. The Communist Party's position was that the struggle for racial equality would have to wait until after the war; their immediate strategy was to help the allies defeat fascism.

Who were Cyril Briggs and Richard B. Moore and What were they leaders of?

Briggs founded the African Blood Brotherhood (ABB) in 1919. ABB was a semi-secret organization that advocated Black armed self-defense and aligned itself with the Communist Party.

During this period the African Blood Brotherhood (ABB), the first nationwide revolutionary nationalist organization in the history of the Black Liberation Movement emerged. The ABB was a secret organization organized by Cyril P. Briggs in 1919. The ABB was tight knit, semi-clandestine, paramilitary group which saw itself as the Pan African army of a world wide federation of black organizations. ABB membership ranged from 3,000 to 5,000, most of whom were ex-servicemen, though a sizeable contingent was West Indian. The membership was kept small to keep the organization tight. Briggs started a monthly magazine titled The Crusader in 1919.¹²³

Between 1921 and 1924, White racists destroyed at least two towns that were predominantly African-American (Tulsa, Oklahoma and Rosewood, Florida).¹²⁴ Initially Moore was a member of the Socialist Party. However, he became disenchanted with the Socialist due to their lack of concern with the plight of African American people. After leaving the Socialist Party, he joined the Communist party. He joined the ABB and worked in a position of leadership along with Briggs. Richard B. Moore was the mass orator for the ABB.¹²⁵

The Crusader became the ABB's official organ and at its peak had a circulation of 33,000.¹²⁶ The monthly magazine expressed a program including (1) the possibility of a black republic in the Southern U.S. for which they worked openly in the North, underground in the South, (2) control of the rich resources of the land, (3) international unity, Pan Africanism and alliances with other oppressed nations, (4) support for socialism, especially Lenin's emphasis on oppressed nations, (5) force as necessary to achieve goals, (6) protective, economic, educational, physical, and social benefits for their members.¹²⁷ Briggs also circulated The Crusader News Service, which was distributed to 200 black newspapers. The ABB's headquarters were in New York with fifty branches including locations in Chicago, Baltimore, Oklahoma, Omaha, West Virginia, the Caribbean, Trinidad, Surinam, British Guyana, Santo Domingo, and the Windward Islands and throughout Africa.

¹²³ Harry Haywood, Black Bolshevik [Chicago, Illinois: Liberator Press, 1978] p.123.

¹²⁴ Scott Ellsworth, Death in a Promised Land: The Tulsa Race Riot of 1921 [Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press 1982] and Michael D'Orso, Rosewood: Like Judgment Day [New York: Boulevard Books, 1996]

¹²⁵ W. Burghardt Turner and Joyce Moore Turner (ed), Richard B. Moore, Caribbean Militant in Harlem: Collected Writings 1920-1972 [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988] pp 27-68

¹²⁶ Theodore G. Vinent, Black Power and the Garvey Movement [San Francisco: Ramparts Press, 1971] p. 1

¹²⁷ Ibid, p.77.

The African Blood Brotherhood was a revolutionary nationalist organization which applied a Marxist world view and the theory of class struggle to the plight of New Africans. The organization was headed by a Supreme Council, led by Briggs. It was the first black revolutionary organization to utilize a race and class analysis.

Unlike the Pan African Movement led by Dr. DuBois, the Brotherhood emphasized working class leadership and consciousness. This also distinguished it from Marcus Garvey's Movement. As to the latter it was differentiated because it felt that a successful struggle for liberation by the black millions inside the United States was possible and necessary and would itself be a decisive contribution to the liberation of Africa. In that regard the Brotherhood's outlook and that of DuBois were very close.¹²⁸

The ABB advocated armed self-defense and applied this theory in 1921 in the armed defense of the black community of Tulsa. It took the National Guard and aerial bombings to defeat them.¹²⁹ Part of the ABB's program was organizing black workers in labor unions which would work for the betterment of their economic conditions and would act in close cooperation with class conscious white workers on common issues. The ABB also proposed establishing cooperatives as an economic strategy. On alliances the ABB saw a coalition with the Third World and radicalized white workers in the United States.

There can only be one sort of alliance with other peoples and that is an alliance to fight our enemies in which case our allies must have the same purpose as we have. Our allies may be actual or potential just as our enemies may be actual or potential. The small oppressed nations who are struggling against the capitalist exploiters and oppressors must be considered as actual allies.

The class-conscious white workers who have spoken out in favor of African Liberation and have a willingness to back with action their expressed sentiments must also be considered as actual allies and their friendship cultivated.¹³⁰

The ABB and the Crusader were supporters of the Russian Revolution and saw social revolution as the answer to African-American liberation.

Briggs was definitely a revolutionary nationalist, that is he saw the solution of the race problem in the establishment of independent black nation states in Africa, the Caribbean and the United States. In America he felt this could be achieved only through revolutionizing the whole country. This meant he saw revolutionary white workers as allies.¹³¹

Briggs raised the question of a self-governing black state in the United States in an editorial as editor of the Amsterdam News in 1917. This idea of a black republic in the United States was to reoccur often in the 1920's, and at a UNIA convention in the early part of the decade,

¹²⁸ Herbert Aptheker, ed., A Documentary History of the Negro People in the United States, 1910 - 1932, Vol. II [Secaucus, New Jersey: The Citadel Press, 1973], pp.413-420.

¹²⁹ R. Halliburton, Jr., "The Tulsa Race War of 1921," Journal of Black Studies, Vol. 2, No.3 [March 1972], p.333.

¹³⁰ "Programme of the African Blood Brotherhood," The Communist Review, Vol.2, No. 6 [April 1922], pp. 453 -454

¹³¹ Harry Haywood, Black Bolshevik [Chicago: Liberator Press, 19078], p.124.

the question of a Black Republic in the South was raised, but the proposal was defeated.¹³² The ABB's early ideological development of the notion of an independent Black Republic in the United States paved the way for its refinement in the Communist Party of the United States of America.

By 1923-24, the Brotherhood had ceased to exist as an autonomous organized expression of the National Revolutionary trend. Its leading members became Communists or close sympathizers and its posts served as one of the Party's recruiting grounds for Blacks.¹³³

What was the Harlem Renaissance about?

Harlem attracted a cultural milieu of African people from around the world, especially Caribbeans, Africans and former slaves all seeking a place where they might best express their cultural heritage through the arts. This mixture spawned an outpouring of literature, poetry, dance and theater which launched the careers of several well known artists – including Zora Neale Hurston, Langston Hughes, and Paul Robeson to name a few.

During this period, Marcus Garvey and W.E.B. DuBois engaged in a bitter ideological debate that often degenerated into personal attacks. Essentially, DuBois was opposed to Garvey's de-emphasis of domestic mass activity against racial segregation in the United States and his emphasis on separation of the races and race purity. DuBois believed Garvey's ideas about capitalism were naive, his business adventures grandiose, and his concepts of building an African Empire were romantic. Garvey on the other hand criticized DuBois for being an elitist and alienated from the masses of Africans. Garvey built a mass movement and DuBois worked with the radical intelligentsia. Both were staunch Pan Africanists but varied in style and tactics.¹³⁴

October 1929

Stock market crashed

African Americans are left in a situation worse than "Depression standards"

**Note African Americans has been loyal to Republicans

The Great Depression, New Deal and World War II

The Stock Market began to fall on October 24, 1929 and crashed on October 29, 1929. In the early 1930's thousand of banks and small businesses failed. The Stock Market continued to decline throughout 1932. By 1932 approximately one-quarter of the employable population was out of work. In Chicago, the unemployment rate for African-American men reached 40%, in Pittsburgh it rose to 60%. Two-thirds of all families and persons living alone had incomes below \$1500.

In the 1930's fifty million Americans were dependent upon the bread lines set up by the Salvation Army or other charitable institutions. At that time, the population was about 150 million.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Mark Naison, "Marxism and Black Radicalism in America: The Communist Party Experience," pamphlet p. 4'

¹³⁴ Martin O. Ijere, "W.E.B. DuBois and Marcus Garvey as Pan Africanists: A Study in Contrast," *Presence African*, No. 89, 1st Quarterly 1974, pp. 188-206.

At the beginning of the 1930's, most African Americans still lived in the rural South. As cotton prices plunged from 18 cents a pound to 6 cents, sharecroppers could no longer make a living on the land. Unemployment among African Americans soared. In Chicago, the unemployment rate for African Americans reached 40%, in Pittsburgh it rose to 60%. The rate of unemployment among African Americans was greater.

During the 1930's and 40's an estimated 10,000 African-Americans joined the Communist Party, making up 10% of its 100,000 membership at its peak. By linking its work with the unemployed leagues in massive campaigns to protect evicted tenants and victims of police brutality the Communist Party throughout 1934 expanded its popular base. In the 1930's, the Communist Party decided to champion the cause of Negro rights. Its willingness to fight racism won many African-American recruits. The Communist Party fought the infamous Scottsboro Boys case in Alabama. Coming to the defense of the Scottsboro Boys, the Communist Party began to clash with the NAACP and other traditional Negro organizations.

Who were the Scottsboro boys?

Nine young African Americans boys who hitch-hiked a ride on a train during the Depression along with several white men. A fight broke out and when the dust settled the nine young African Americans stood accused of raping two white women who were also riding the train. Although the alleged victims testified that no rape occurred, the boys were tried and convicted of the rape. This was a landmark case that highlighted the injustices of the American justice system.¹³⁵

The Scottsboro Boys were nine African-American youth ranging from age 12 to 19, who were convicted on false charges of having raped two white girls while riding on the same freight train in 1932. The Communist Party through the ILD (International Labor Defense), took up the case and came into conflict over legal strategy with the NAACP. The case became a famous international case and reached the Supreme Court twice. It was not until the 1950's that all the Scottsboro Boys were let out of jail.

Who was Jesse Owens?

Jesse Owens was a track and field star who grew up in Cleveland. In 1936, he won four gold medals at the International Olympics held in Germany. Prior to the event, Adolf Hitler had declared the superiority of the "Aryan" race. After Owens win, Hitler refused to invite Owens to his box to receive his personal congratulations as he had the other gold medal winners. Be that as it may, Owens was a hero to the German People.¹³⁶

Who was Joe Louis?

¹³⁵ Clarence Norris and Syril D. Washington, *The Last of the Scottsboro Boys: An Autobiography* [New York: A. P. Putnam's Sons 1979] p. 17-63

¹³⁶ Susan Altman, *The Encyclopedia of African American Heritage* [New York: Facts on File, Inc., 1997] p. 183

Louis, also known as the Brown Bomber, was a professional prize fighter who became heavyweight champion of the world in 1937. Although a formidable foe in the ring, outside of the ring he was known for his dignity and gentlemanly demeanor. He was revered by the Americans both Black and White. For African Americans he symbolized victory and accomplishment in their struggle for acceptance and racial parity.¹³⁷

Who was Paul Robeson?

Robeson was a gifted singer, actor, scholar, and political activist. He was sympathetic to communism and was harassed by Senator Joe McCarthy during McCarthy's witch hunt to rid the country of communist influences. Robeson lived abroad for some time in England and the USSR.¹³⁸

The Multi-Racialism of Paul Bustill Robeson

Paul Bustill Robeson was born on April 9, 1898 in Princeton, New Jersey to ex-slaves. In 1909 the family moved to Somerville, New Jersey where Robeson attended predominately white Somerville High School. In 1915, Robeson became the third Negro to enter Rutgers College. Tall and broad shouldered he became a star athlete at Rutgers. By the end of his college career the football team was built around him. "His versatility in the sports field was increasingly evident at Rutgers: he was catcher in the varsity baseball team, center in the basketball team, and threw the discus for the track team"¹³⁹. However, Paul never lost sight of his studies. He was elected to the national honor fraternity of Phi Beta Kappa, America's highest scholastic honor at the end of his junior year.

After graduating from Rutgers in the summer of 1919 Robeson moved to Harlem where his reputation preceded him. He had been nationally publicized in the country's newspapers and was received as a hero, admired for his sporting achievement as well as for his intellect. "He had transcended seemingly insurmountable hurdles, with honour"¹⁴⁰ Robeson had come to Harlem at a time that would come to be known as the Harlem Renaissance.

Here the creation efforts of the Renaissance brought into being various forms of protest from black intellectuals against economic and social injustices. Uninterested in revolutionary politics, through novels, poetry, drama and music, many of them criticized the white establishment. This coterie of black intellectuals included James Weldon Johnson, Claude McKay, Jean Toomer, Langston Hughes and Countee Cullen. Another Harlem resident W. E. B. Du Bois, the distinguished black scholar, had preceded them by a generation. This was the intellectual Harlem that Robeson called his homeland¹⁴¹

In 1920 Robeson entered Columbia University Law School. During this time he took a number of jobs to cover his tuition and personal care. This coupled with participation in a

¹³⁷ Ibid, pp. 148, 149

¹³⁸ Martin Duberman, *Paul Robeson: A Biography* [New York: The New Press, 1989] pp. 351-404

¹³⁹ Ron Ramdin, *Paul Robeson: The Man and his Mission* [New York: Peter Owen Publishers] p. 31

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 32

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p. 30

number of activities limited his time to socialize. However, during his second year at Columbia he met and married Essie Goode – Upon seeing that Paul did not possess the same brilliance and zest for law as he had in his undergraduate years, it was Essie who prompted him to try his hand at acting. She once said of Paul: “Unless he was wild about something he wasn’t good at it at all”¹⁴²

Paul Robeson began his acting and singing career with a very minor role in a YWCA production of “Simon the Cyrenian”. Robeson’s career flourished with appearances in “Taboo” (1922) and plays such as “All God’s Chillun” and “The Emperor Jones” in 1925. Also in 1925 Robeson performed a concert consisting of all Negro or black music – spirituals, folk and dialect songs. In doing this he launched the use of black culture to assist the black struggle in America and throughout the world¹⁴³

From the late twenties and throughout the thirties Robeson spent most of his time in Europe linking the black struggle for freedom and equality with non-black working class people concluding “the Negro must be conscious of himself and yet internationally linked with the nations which are culturally akin to him”¹⁴⁴ “Robeson had the ability and courage to politicize black aesthetics and black culture for the liberation of black people in America and throughout the world. On his performances he used elements of black culture such as Negro spirituals, black folk songs and black dialect as his “weapons” to enlighten and sensitize whites and blacks to unjust conditions among African Americans”¹⁴⁵. Paul Robeson once said: “In my Music, my plays, my films I want to carry always this central idea: to be African. Multitudes of men have died for less worthy ideals; it is even more eminently worth living for”¹⁴⁶

Paul Robeson was the first American artist who used his artistry as a political weapon for his race. His use of black culture for the liberation of black and white workers in America, Africa and throughout the world caused him to suffer greatly in America¹⁴⁷. This situation was exacerbated by his respect and embrace of the Soviet Union and its peoples in the thirties, forties and fifties. In 1949 Robeson declared:

The Soviet Union is the friend of the African and West Indian peoples. And no imperialist wolf disguised as a benevolent watchdog, and not Tito disguised as a revolutionary, can convince them that Moscow oppresses the small nations. Africa knows the Soviet Union is the defender and champion of the rights of all nations – large and small – to control their own destinies.

To those who dare question my patriotism, who have the unmitigated insolence to question my love for the true America and my right to be an American –to question me, whose father and forefathers fertilized the very soil of this country with their toil and with their bodies – to such people I answer that those and only those who work for a policy of friendship with

¹⁴² Edwin Embree, *Thirteen Against the Odds* [Port Washington: The Viking Press, 1944] p. 248

¹⁴³ Op. Cit. (Columbus Salley) p. 95

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p 97

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 95

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 95

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 96

the Soviet Union are genuine American patriots¹⁴⁸

As Robeson biographer, Lloyd Brown states, “America’s No. 1 Negro had become for many whites their number one hate. Robeson, they said, was a dangerous Red. Robeson, they said, was a dangerous Black. Thus there was directed at him both the virulence of anti-communist witch hunt which had developed as a consequence of the Cold War, and the corrosive poison of American racism, which historically saw a so called ‘uppity nigger’ as a threat that could not be tolerated¹⁴⁹ Robeson was viscously attacked from all angles. Angry letters were published in U. S. Newspapers, record companies would not release any of his recordings and radio stations would not play any of his songs. Many Blacks also joined the anti-Robeson crusade. Yielding to editorial pressure various Black writers omitted any mention of Robeson from their books¹⁵⁰. The wiping out of Robeson’s name, which began when he was about fifty, would be continued long after the “red scare” had faded and long after expressions of Black militancy had become common place. Still, his viewpoints never changed. Robeson was an staunch anti-imperialist. One his 75th birthday in 1973, Robeson summarized his position:

Here at home, my heart is with the continuing struggles of my own people to achieve liberation from racist domination, and to gain for all black Americans and the other minority groups not only equal rights but an equal share. In the same spirit, I salute the colonial liberation movements of Africa, Latin America and Asia, which have gained new inspiration and understanding from the heroic example of the Vietnamese people, who have once again turned back an imperialist aggressor¹⁵¹

Paul Robeson died January 23, 1976, in Philadelphia one year to the day before “Roots” by Alex Haley appeared on national television¹⁵²

Who was Mary McLeod Bethune?

In addition to being the founder Bethune-Cookman College in Daytona Beach, Florida, she was also a well respected adviser – “kitchen cabinet member” – of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, especially on issues pertaining to race relations. She was also founder of the National Council of Negro Women.¹⁵³

Who were W. D. Fard and Elijah Muhammad and what did they organize?

They were both leaders in the African American community who believed in and taught Eastern theology and were instrumental in founding the Nation of Islam.¹⁵⁴

The American Communist Party began a major cultural program in the African-American community publishing the Negro Liberator newspaper, combining artistic events with

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 96

¹⁴⁹ Lloyd Brown, Paul Robeson Rediscovered [New York: The American Institute for Marxist Studies, 1976] p. 9

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 14

¹⁵¹ Ibid., p. 14

¹⁵² Op. Cit., (Columbus Salley) p. 98

¹⁵³ Joyce A. Hanson, Mary McLeod Bethune and Black Women Political Activism [Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2003] pp. 56-205

¹⁵⁴ Karl Evenzz, The Messenger: The Rise and Fall of Elijah Muhammad [New York: Pantheon Books, 1999] pp. 73-112

politics and encouraging young African-American writers to write for The New Masses, The Communist and The Daily Worker. Black cadres of the Communist Party worked with almost every African-American organization during this period. The Communist Party was instrumental in helping a group of African-American Alabama sharecroppers, threatened with eviction, to organize the Alabama Sharecroppers Union. The Alabama Sharecroppers Union organized 12,000 African-American sharecroppers around a program calling for redistribution of the land, total racial equality and extensive federal relief. The Union engaged in several gun battles with local authorities which was the beginning of mass radical armed struggle of the rural African-American poor against the ruling class. But the independent organizing of African-Americans by the Communist Party threatened many white cadres inside the Communist Party. Concerns around African-Americans having nationalist tendencies were always raised against radical working class organizing. The principle objection was that nationalism and independent African-American organizing divided the working class and alienated white workers. The working class was already divided by racism.

In the early 1930's a Black mass don't buy where you can't work campaign started in Chicago. Soon it spread to Detroit, Cleveland, Los Angeles, Baltimore, Maryland, Washington, D.C., and New York.¹⁵⁵ In the Spring of 1933 Sufi Ali Hamed began organizing this movement in Harlem. Garveyites joined Sufi and they organized mass rallies and picketing of stores in Harlem on 135th Street. During the campaign anti-white and anti-Jewish sentiments came from the demonstrators and the Communist Party, fearing the rise of another black nationalist movement they did not control, labeled Sufi a Harlem Hitler. To counter the black nationalist movement, the Communist Party initiated demonstrations and a boycott of large Harlem cafeterias. The campaign was fully integrated and had the support of the CIO and Adam Clayton Powell, Jr.

The Don't Buy Where You Can't Work movement in Cleveland was led by John O. Holly who helped organize in 1935 the Future Outlook League (F.O.L.). The F.O.L. was organized because the NAACP didn't have an economic program of action to deal with the crisis. The F.O.L. used direct mass action picketing to desegregate businesses in Cleveland. African-Americans were asked to pay their phone bills in pennies when the Cleveland telephone company refused to comply with the F. O.L.'s fair hiring demands. Long lines of picketers and African-Americans filing in to pay their telephone bills in pennies caused the Cleveland telephone company to become of the first major Cleveland company's to desegregate. Holly later mentored Carl B. Stokes.¹⁵⁶

In 1932, Franklin D. Roosevelt of the Democratic Party was elected President with his New Deal program. Roosevelt's New Deal in which the federal government provided eventual relief for the poor and destitute saved capitalism from socialist revolution.

1933: Communist Party

-Organized unemployment councils.

-Led march on unemployed of 1.5 million to demand unemployment insurance

¹⁵⁵ Robert H. Brisbane, The Black Vanguard [Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1970] pp.137.

¹⁵⁶ Louise D. Freeman, "John O. Holly and The Future Outlook League", Renaissance Magazine, February, 1990, pp.15 -18, Kimberley L. Phillips, Alabama North: African-American Migrants, Community and Working-Class Activism in Cleveland, 1915- 45 [Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999]

- Demand for social security

Congress of Industrial Organizations (C.I.O.)

- Led By John L. Lewis.
- White workers began to organize in unskilled jobs. United with African American community to avoid big businesses response to strikes. Wanted social security and unemployment benefits
- NAACP supports CIO, and urges Blacks to join.

The Communist Party led a march on Washington in 1933 of unemployed of one and a half million people to demand unemployment insurance and social security. Both were enacted into law by Congress and the President. John L. Lewis of the United Mine Workers helped organize the Committee of Industrial Organizations (C.I.O.), which organized industrial workers. The C.I.O. won the right to unionize through the U.A.W. which initiated Sit-Down Strikes of auto workers occupying the plants in 1937.

How did African Americans respond to the sit-down strikes of white auto workers trying to unionize?

Supported by the NAACP, African Americans in the 1930's refused to be used by big business as strike breakers, supported white auto workers in their "sit down" strikes in efforts for them to unionize. As a result of African American support the CIO had a non-racist policy when they won the right to unionize. Three and one half million African Americans gained jobs as trade unionizes in the CIO.

What was the National Negro Congress (NNC)?

- A. Philip Randolph was elected president of NNC.
- composed of the Communist Party, the NAACP, the National Urban League and 500 African Americans organizations.
- First United Black front

The NNC, organized in the mid 1930's filled a void that was not being met by the NAACP. The NAACP focused primarily on issues surrounding civil rights. The NNC was more concentrated on economic issues and the rights of African Americans not to be denied access to jobs and or equal compensation. Included in its leadership was Ralph Bunche and Adam Clayton Powell).

Similar strikes in Chicago and Pittsburgh won steel workers the right to unionize in Detroit, Michigan, W.D. Fard and his assistants Elijah Muhammad found the Nation of Islam.

1934

The Communist party established the *Negro Liberator* newspaper.

- Through its African American Organizer, Harry Haywood, the Communist Party organized the Alabama Sharecropper Union which organizes 12,000 African American sharecroppers demanding redistribution, total racial equality and extensive federal relief.
- Several gun battles with local authorities took place.

DuBois left the NAACP because it lacked an economic program. DuBois advocated the establishment of black cooperatives.

Joe Lewis won fights

Works Progress Administration (WPA)

-renamed the Work Projects Administration

-Public Works Administration (PWA), and the National Youth Administration (NYA) established.

-Italy attacked Ethiopia bombed women and children using mustard gas.

-Roosevelt signed the Social Security Act of 1935

The NAACP established special legal counsel and hired Charles Houston of Howard University Law School.

1936

Re-election of FDR – 75% of African Americans supported him.

Jesse Owens won four gold medals in the Olympics.

The Black Cabinet, an informal group of African American advisors led by Mary McLeod Bethune gained influence in segregated bureaucracies.

1937

National Negro Youth Congress formed and started demonstrations in the south for racial equality

Hitler attacked Poland, but because of Soviet/Nazi – anti-Aggression pact, the Communist Party Abandoned the popular front strategy and attacked the NAACP and others inside the NNC.

1939

-Hitler attacked the Soviet Union and the Communist Party said African Americans must shelve cause for civil rights and fight to save mother Russia.

-A. Philip Randolph resigned from the NNC.

-The most famous African American writer of the 1930's and 40's was Richard Wright.

-Richard Wright wrote "Native Son".

The Roosevelt administration established the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and employed 200,000 young African-American men. In 1935 the federal government formed the Work Projects Administration (WPA), Public Works Administration (PWA), the National Youth Administration (NYA) and signed the Social Security Act of 1935. The NAACP established a special legal counsel and hired Charles Hamilton Houston of the Howard University Law School. Houston trained Thurgood Marshall and a battery of civil rights lawyers; developed of legal strategy to breakdown Jim Crow, separate but equal segregation. DuBois left the NAACP because it lacked an economic program and advocates the establishment of African-American cooperatives. Paul Robeson united with British workers in England of their right to unionize and worked with George Padmore,

C.L.R. James, Jomo Kenyatta and Kwame Nkrumah to help the African independence movement. Mary McLeod Bethune worked closely with the Roosevelt administration and headed an informal group of African-American advisors called the black cabinet.

The Black Internationalism of George Padmore and C.L.R. James

George Padmore was born Malcolm Ivan Meredith Nurse in Arouca District, Tacarqua, Trinidad, in 1902. His father, James Hubert Nurse, was a local schoolmaster married to Anna Susanna Symster of Antigua, who was a naturalist. Padmore was brought to Port Spain where he attended school.

After finishing at the Tranquility School, he went to St. Mary's College of the Immaculate Conception, the secondary school of the Holy Ghost Fathers.¹⁵⁷

Padmore attended St. Mary's for two years. He got a job with the Trinidad Publishing Company, reporting shipping news for the Weekly Guardian, and married Julia Semper in September 1924. Also in September 1924, Padmore moved to the United States to attend Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee. Originally planning to study medicine, Padmore finally enrolled in Fisk in the fall term of 1925, changed his major to law, and began studying political science. He began writing for the student newspaper, The Fisk Herald, began public speaking on colonial issues, and attended student conferences. Due to the turbulence of the period and rumored pressure from the Klan, Padmore and his wife moved to New York where he enrolled in New York University Law School. He dropped out of New York University in December and enrolled in Howard University in Washington, D.C.

In the meantime, he joined the Communist Party and took the name George Padmore for his political work. While at Howard, Padmore joined an organization called the International Anti-Imperialist Youth League (IAIYL) and become its secretary. When the British ambassador to the United States spoke at Howard University's International House, the IAIYL politically attacked him.

During this period, he traveled extensively for the Communist Party. By 1928, he was important enough to appear in The New York Daily Worker and, with Richard B. Moore, began editing a party paper in Harlem, The Negro Champion, which became The Weekly Liberator in late 1929.¹⁵⁸

Padmore was sent to the Second Congress of the League Against Imperialism and for National Independence (LAI) along with James W. Ford, which met near the zoological gardens in Frankfurt, Germany from July 20-31, 1929. Shortly after the Congress, Padmore attended the Trade Union Unity League Convention in Cleveland, which marked the end of his American period. Padmore was chosen by the American Communist Party to give a report on the Cleveland meeting in Moscow. He was selected to be part of the Profintern (Red International of Labour Unions or RILU) and lectured on colonialism at Kutiu (The University of the Toilers of the East), a training center for colonial students.

He was soon chosen to head the RILU's Negro bureau. Padmore wrote articles on Negro and African matters in The Moscow Daily News and sat on various commissions

¹⁵⁷ James R. Hooker, Black Revolutionary: George Padmore's Path from Communism to Pan Africanism [New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970] p. 3

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 8

concerning colonial issues. His main job was to supervise the activities of black people worldwide. The First International Conference of Negro Workers, which Padmore helped plan, was held in Hamburg, July 7-9, 1930.¹⁵⁹

Padmore had to move to various countries and cities, because of the rise of fascism in Europe. He wrote about six pamphlets during this time dealing with trade union work of 'Negro' workers. In 1933, Padmore was arrested with others in Copenhagen. After serving six months in jail, he was deported to England. Also, in August of 1933, the Comintern (Communist International) decided to disband the ITUC-NW (International of Negro Workers). Padmore, upon learning of this decision, resigned from the Comintern. By 1935, Padmore was being attacked as being a traitor to the cause of communism by blacks in the Communist Party in various countries, particularly the United States.

Padmore began to work with African students when he returned to London. He established rapport with, among others, the West African Students' Union (WASU).

Amy Ashwood Garvey joined James Padmore, Kenyatta, Makonnen, Wallace-Johnson, W.E.F. Ward, and Fitz Braithwaite to form a successor organization, the International African Service Bureau (IASB), with the aim of furthering the cause of anti-colonialism.¹⁶⁰

Padmore began working with C.L.R. James and the International African Friends of Ethiopia and the League of Coloured Peoples in 1931. He moved to London in 1935, contacting C.L.R. James while he was there. He remained in London from 1931 to 1945 conducting political study classes for some colonial students.

In 1937, Padmore, with others, established the International African Service Bureau (IASB). The IASB's motto was "Educate, Cooperate, Emancipate". The IASB published a journal, The International African Opinion, which C.L.R. James edited before leaving for, what he thought would be, a brief stay in the United States. The IASB agitated for Africa's freedom from colonialism during World War II. Padmore received a West African student, Kwame "Francis" Nkrumah, who had come to England for graduate study. Nkrumah met C.L.R. James at the University of Pennsylvania in the United States. James had initial discussions with Nkrumah in New York and James knew that Nkrumah was going to England. So he sent an introductory letter with Nkrumah, asking Padmore to train Nkrumah. This relationship would change the course of history in Africa at a later date.

In late 1944, Padmore and others formed the Pan African Federation (PAF). Francis K. Nkrumah (Kwame Nkrumah) became a joint secretary of the Federation. He soon established a secretariat for West African affairs and worked with WASU. With the blessings of Dr. DuBois at Padmore's and Nkrumah's initiative, the fifth Pan African Congress was held in Manchester, England in October of 1945.

At Padmore's prodding, a couple of years after the conference, Nkrumah accepted a position with a Gold Coast Political Party. After much infighting, Nkrumah broke with the party and formed his own Convention People's Party, initiating nonviolent direct action, "positive action" demanding immediate independence of the Gold Coast, which was later

¹⁵⁹ *Op. Cit.*, (Hooker) p. 8

¹⁶⁰ Kant Worchester, C.L.R. James: A Political Biography [New York: State University of New York Press, 1966] p. 83

named Ghana. Ghana won its independence in 1957, becoming the first independent African country south of the Sahara Desert. Padmore joined Nkrumah, becoming a personal advisor where he remained until departing for London in 1959, where he died.

Who was C. L. R. James?

The early years of his socialist activism took place primarily in England where he was an organizer and active member of the Independent Labor Party. Along with Paul Robeson and others, James was instrumental in African Friends of Ethiopia to facilitate that mission.

Cyril Lionel Robert James was born in Trinidad in 1901. In young adulthood James left to write and study in London. He began as a sports writer, writing primarily about cricket, as well as some fiction. James soon became involved in the Pan African and Trotskyist movements in England. Around 1934 he became an active member and organizer in the Independent Labor Party (ILP) and led strikes of English workers, and worked with the unemployed for immediate relief. He soon joined the Revolutionary Socialist League (RSL) and edited the newspaper Fight. While in England, James met and worked with Paul Robeson. Both worked together to spread socialism among persons of African descent. He also met George Padmore. There, James, Robeson, and Padmore began to develop strategies for world-wide African liberation. When fascist Italy attacked and invaded Ethiopia, James helped organize the International African Friends of Ethiopia (IAFE).

In 1937, James, Padmore, and Africans such as Jomo Kenyatta organized the International African Service Bureau (IASB), which advocated the decolonization of Africa. James became an international figure through his early books. He wrote World Revolution 1917-1936, which was published in 1937. In 1938, James established himself as a historian and theoretician with the publication of Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolutions, and a study of the 1791 Haitian Revolution and History of the Negro Revolt.

James was invited to come to the United States by the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). He arrived in November 1938 and immediately embarked on an extensive speaking tour which took him across America – from the East Coast through the Midwest and down into California.¹⁶¹

Originally scheduled to spend three months in America, James ended up staying fifteen years. James went to Coyoacan, Mexico in 1938 and met with Leon Trotsky. Out of those initial discussions came the Trotskyist position on the progressive character of Black Nationalism.

During 1941, James spent five months in Southern Missouri helping to organize a strike of African American sharecroppers and union activists. The strike was a success and James reported about it in the Workers' Party newspaper, Labor Action. James insisted, in a paper written subsequent to the Coyoacan meeting that:

1. The Negro represents potentially the most revolutionary section of the population.
2. African Americans are ready to respond to militant leadership.

¹⁶¹ Anna Grumshaw, Keith Holt, C.L.R. James and the Struggle for Happiness [New York: The C.L.R. James Institute and Cultural Correspondence, 1991] p. 37

3. African Americans will respond to political situations abroad that concern him.
 4. African Americans are more militant today than ever.
- To bring large numbers of blacks into the party's orbit, James argued that the SWP must take the lead in establishing an independent, all-black organization that would fight for civil rights.¹⁶²

Trotsky questioned if the SWP had the resources to do this. Soon after the meeting in 1941, an agent of Stalin assassinated Trotsky, but James and Trotsky had a split prior to that. Trotsky called for all workers of all countries to support the Soviet Union in World War II, because even though a bureaucracy ruled, it was still a workers state. James disagreed, stating that workers in Western capitalist countries should try to turn the imperialist war into a civil war and should oppose the war.

Returning to New York, James began writing for Socialist Appeal and the SWP's theoretical journal, New International (a monthly organ of revolutionary Marxism). His articles played a significant role in articulating the party's opposition to the war, which James regarded as an imperialist quarrel over the contours of political power in the second half of the twentieth century.¹⁶³

In 1940, a split took place inside the SWP concerning whether the Soviet Union was progressive or not. Led by Max Shachtman, the faction stated that the Soviet Union was an anti-democratic state of a new type, neither capitalist, nor socialist. Disagreeing with the split in the SWP, but siding with the Shachtman group (who had formed the party in 1940); James traveled to the West Coast. He began working with Raya Dunayevskaya, translator and personal secretary to Trotsky. She encouraged him to stay in the United States in order to develop his ideas, that the Soviet Union was a capitalist state.

When James' visa expired, he assumed the name J.R. Johnson, ceased public speaking and went underground. In 1941, working with Dunayevskaya, they formed the Johnson (James) –Forest (Dunayevskaya) Tendency. The Johnson-Forest Tendency advanced the theory of state capitalism, further developed Marxist theory (The Americanization of Bolshevism), and advocated that African Americans form their own black led organizations to advance their liberation cause. In essence, James posed the point that the African Americans struggle for democratic rights in the United States was a direct part of the struggle for socialism. The Johnson-Forest Tendency left the SWP and joined with the Workers Party, then split with the Workers Party in 1947 to rejoin the SWP. In working with the Workers Party, James (Johnson) wrote over twenty articles for its journal, New International, between 1940 and 1947.

The Johnson-Forest Tendency grew to upwards from 70 to 100 members by 1947. It emphasized the self-activity of the working class, favored decentralization as opposed to bureaucracy, and the free association of individuals. This was described in a pamphlet, The Invading Socialist Society. In the 1950s, the Johnson-Forest Tendency engaged in voluminous theory work.

The group translated sections of Marx's 1844 Economic-Philosophical

¹⁶² Op. Cit., (Kent Worcester) p. 81

¹⁶³ Ibid. p. 63

Manuscripts, urged rejuvenation of Hegelian philosophical discussion among Marxists, and publicized the extra-political and extra-union activity of militant workers.¹⁶⁴

The Johnson-Forest Tendency was strong in New York and Detroit. The formed a periodical called Correspondence. James, in the early fifties, lived in Detroit for a while. In 1952, during the height of the cold war, the United States declared James an “undesirable alien”. James was arrested for visa violations, held prisoner for nine months, and deported in 1953. James moved back to England. In that time James wrote a book to describe his case against deportation called, Mariners, Renegades and Castaways.

The Johnson-Forest Tendency soon split. Dunayevskaya broke off from Correspondence to form a Marxist/humanist group, News and Letters, in 1955. The Correspondence group continued to publish with James Boggs named as editor. James Boggs, with his wife Grace Lee continued to be a major force on the developing African American Left, in Detroit and around the country. In the winter of 1962, the Correspondence group of about 25 individuals had a major split. Grace Lee Boggs writes on the split,

It centered around the changes in the work force because of cybernation and automation which Jimmy (James Boggs) grappled with more seriously than any other theoretician in the black movement. Because Jimmy was such an “organic intellectual”, developing his ideas from living struggle, because he was actually on the scene, (working in the plant since the early 40s), he recognized that the changes in production had weakened the unions and that the next great movement was going to come from blacks. C.L.R., who was in Europe, was living by the ideas that had come out of an earlier struggle. He saw Jimmy’s analysis and his proposal that the organization undertake a serious study of the development of American capitalism as a threat and repudiation of Marxism. Those who supported Jimmy on this issue kept Correspondence. Those who supported C.L.R. formed a group called Facing Reality (which was led by Martin Glaberman).¹⁶⁵

While C.L.R. James direct influence in the United States decreased, that of James and Grace Lee Boggs, his previous co-workers, increased. James and Grace Lee Boggs profoundly influenced Malcolm X, organizations such as the Revolutionary Action Movement, and the League of Revolutionary Black Workers.

In 1948, at the SWP convention, James elaborated on the theory of an autonomous black liberation movement (BLM) in an article titled The Revolutionary Answer to the Negro Problems in the United States. James raised the position that:

1. The independent Negro struggle, has vitality and a validity of its own.
2. This independent Negro movement is able to intervene with terrific force upon the general social and political life of the nation despite the fact that it is waged under the banner of democratic rights.

¹⁶⁴ C.L.R. James: The Independence of the Black Struggle [Washington, D.C.: All African Peoples Revolutionary Party, November 1975] pp. 2-3

¹⁶⁵ Mark Naison, “The Communist Party in Harlem in the Early Depression Years” Radical History Review, III (1976), pp. 68-95

3. The “BLM” is able to exercise a powerful influence upon the revolutionary proletariat, that it has a great contribution to make to the development of the proletariat in the United States, and that it is in itself a consistent part of the struggle for socialism.¹⁶⁶

In his document James foresaw that African Americans would soon disrupt American society reaching a new stage of national consciousness that would lead them into militant independent political action. From this concrete day-to-day practice to secure national democratic rights, African Americans would realize their collective power and find allies. This new African American protest movement would inspire, instruct and transform working class politics.

Much of the American Communist Party’s theoretical position came from the prodding of leaders of the African Blood Brotherhood (ABB), Cyril Briggs, Otto Husswood, and Richard B. Moore. They advocated achieving African American self-determination by creating a republic in the Black Belt South. Husswood and Haywood raised it with Stalin and Finnish comrades in the USSR while Stalin was preparing for the Third International, during his theoretical battles with the remaining supporters of Leon Trotsky. Husswood’s objective was to proceed linearly from Lenin’s 1913 analysis, where he said that African Americans appeared to be an oppressed nation in the Southern United States. Getting this position fought out inside the American Communist Party was a sixteen-year battle for the African Blood Brotherhood. The ABB raised these concepts with Garvey inside the U.N.I.A., and Garvey briefly called for a Black Republic in the South, only to drop it in favor of “Returning to Africa”.

The methodology imposed by Stalin, Third International and the American Communist Party, was mechanical in the sense that such a struggle for “autonomy of self-determination” up to and including independence, was relegating revolutionary African American organizations to Communist Front organizations. The whole process would be led from the democratic centralist control of a multi-national Communist Party.

James, on the other hand, responding to the Communist Party’s position, which had become formalized by 1936, discussed the Stalinist position with Trotsky in Mexico in 1939. He formulated his thesis, The Revolutionary Answer to the Negro Problem in the United States in 1948, the same time that Harry Haywood had further developed the Stalinist position in his book, Negro Liberation, also published in 1948. James stated that the African American protest movement would, in itself, be a powerful influence upon revolutionary proletariat, and a constituent part (vanguard) of the struggle for socialism.

In the early 50’s James split from the SWP and helped form the Worker’s Party. He moved to Detroit where he led study circles with Grace Lee Boggs and James Boggs, an autoworker from Alabama. He would later break with Grace and James Boggs, but through them indirectly impact on RAM, and the League of Revolutionary Black Workers (LRBW). In 1952, the United States government declared C. L. R. James to be and “undesirable alien”. James was imprisoned on Rikers Island and deported in late 1953. James stayed in England for five years and later moved back to Trinidad. Though C. L. R.

¹⁶⁶ C. L. R. James, The Independence of the Black Struggle [Washington, D. C.: All African Peoples Revolutionary Party, November 1975], pp 2-3

James' immediate impact on the BLM was thwarted, he deeply influenced the revolutionary movement. He returned to the United States in 1968, periodically lecturing and advising the LRBW.

In 1935 the Joint Committee on National Recovery, a coalition of twenty-three Black organizations met at Howard University and discussed the idea of forming a National Congress. The National Negro Congress (NNC) met in February 1936 in Chicago.¹⁶⁷ There were 817 delegates present representing 585 organizations from 28 states. A. Philip Randolph was elected President of the NNC and within a year 30 local councils of the NCC were formed around the country. The NCC forged an alliance with the CIO and was effective in helping to organize Black steelworkers. Through the NNC support of the CIO, black workers viewed the automobile sit-down strikes in the late thirties as a progressive development. A second meeting of the National Negro Congress was held in Philadelphia in 1937. A youth group, the Southern Negro Youth Congress, was also set up in that year. In 1939 the Soviet Union signed a non-aggression peace pact with Nazi-Germany. With the change in foreign policy of the Soviet Union the line of the Communist Party (USA) changed also.

Overnight the line of the Communist Party (USA) shifted from organizing a popular front against fascism to attacking Franklin Delano Roosevelt and keeping the United States out of an imperialist war. In the National Negro Congress a showdown occurred between A. Philip Randolph and the Communists. The Communists seized control of the NNC and railroaded their denunciation of Roosevelt's war preparation and British and French imperialism. Randolph and others felt domestic issues were more important than issues of foreign policy and in protest Randolph resigned as President of the NNC, denouncing the Communists.

Blacks at this time were generally anti-war in that they saw little reason to fight for a country that was not prepared to grant them even basic human rights. The Communist Party, for its part, sought within the NNC to shift the entire emphasis of the program from domestic issues to foreign aid. Randolph had no trust with such an opportunistic approach to the concerns of Black people.¹⁶⁸

As America prepared for World War II, African-American leaders turned their concern to segregation in the armed services. When a White House conference in 1940 failed to bring any results, A. Philip Randolph called for a Black March on Washington. Through the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters of which he was President, A. Philip Randolph began mobilizing in New York most of the African-American civil rights organizations into the March on Washington Movement. Randolph had called for a March on Washington of 50,000 African-Americans to demand the federal government provide African-Americans with jobs in the war industry. The March on Washington Movement branches formed all over the country. At Randolph's insistence the March on Washington Movement was kept all black. The Communist Party came out against the March on Washington Movement.

¹⁶⁷ Mark Naison, "The Communist Party in Harlem in the Early Depression Years," *Radical History Review*, III (1976), pp.68-95

¹⁶⁸ Mark Naison, "Black Agrarian Radicalism in the Great Depression: The Threads of a Lost Tradition," *Journal of Ethnic Studies* (Fall 1973), pp.49-68.

A. Philip Randolph was called “the most dangerous black man in America” by J. Edgar Hoover and a “black Hitler” by the American Communist Party. The March on Washington Movement which forced FDR to pass executive order 8802 eliminating racial discrimination in all he helped secure employment of one million African Americans

At its inception, the C.P. attacked the March on Washington Movement as a key component of the government’s strategy to seduce Blacks into the war effort and stripped of its conspiratorial overtones this analysis does carry some weight. However, after Hitler’s invasion of the U.S.S.R., in June, 1941, C.P. policy took another about face. Now the Soviet Union must be defended at all costs and organizations such as the March on Washington Movement, which might hinder the intervention of the United States, were no longer seen as agents of the federal government, but rather as agents of the Nazis.¹⁶⁹

On the eve of the March on Washington Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8802, establishing the Committee on Fair Employment ending racial discrimination in government hiring. A. Philip Randolph called the March on Washington off. As a result of the March on Washington Movement, one and half million African-Americans obtained federal employment during the 1940's. Japan attacked Pearl Harbor sinking American ships and the United States entered World War II.

1941-1943

Three million African American men register for the draft, one million African Americans in uniform in its armed forces.

One million African-Americans were in the armed forces of the U.S. during World War II and three million African-Americans men registered for the draft. In 1943 whites attacked African-Americans in Harlem and in Detroit. African-Americans fought back and riots breakout; in Detroit thirty-three are killed and three hundred wounded and the army was sent in to restore peace. African Americans fight in the “Battle of the Bulge,” Black Eagles (fighter unit) fly 400 missions, not losing one bomber.

Who was Harry Haywood?: Theory and Practice of a Black Bolshevik

For sixty years Harry Haywood was one of the most important black communist in America, party leader, intellectual, political theorist, union organizer, author and committed revolutionary¹⁷⁰. Harry Haywood was born in South Oklahoma in 1898, the youngest of three children. To understand Mr. Haywood’s world view one must understand the era into which he was born. This was the period of history known as ‘manifest destiny’. The United States of America sought to expand beyond the coast of the Pacific and Gulf. At the same time the Ku Klux Klan was resurging and the last of the black Reconstruction congressmen were exiting their offices. This struggle for equality did not begin with Haywood: his parents were slaves and his grandfather killed a Ku Klux Klansman.

¹⁶⁹ Jeff Henderson, “A. Philip Randolph and the Dilemmas of Socialism and Black Nationalism in the United States, 1917 -1941,” *Race and Class*, XX, 2 (1978), p.156.

¹⁷⁰ Daryl Russe Grigsby, *For the People: Black Socialists in the United States, Africa and the Caribbean* (San Diego: Asante Publications, 1987) p. 145

A former slave and follower of Booker T. Washington's theories, the elder Haywood, taught Harry the history of African Americans. This knowledge of self proved to be quite useful as tensions between whites and African Americans grew in Oklahoma. Harry Haywood served in the military and held various menial forms of employment. As an African American living in America, especially being male, Mr. Haywood grew angry and yet found revolutionary means to express this anger creatively.

Mr. Haywood joined the African Blood Brotherhood (ABB). This organization was founded in 1919 by a group of African American men with radical views on solutions to dilemma of the African American. One notable founder, Cyril Briggs, grew disgruntled with The Amsterdam News' views and began his own leftist anti-war paper The Crusader as well as the ABB. After a short time Mr. Briggs left the ABB to join the Young Communist League. Mr. Haywood would soon follow and in 1925 did just this.

Joining these organizations was Mr. Haywood's attempt to answer the questions of the nature of African American subjugation and its components of ghettos and second class citizenship. The situation of African Americans, he surmised, was a result of the incomplete efforts of the federal government to reconstruct the South. In effect to completely dismantle the system of white oppression and oligopoly of land control, Haywood, feeling that racism was a front for the true issue of socio-economic dominance, believed that self-determination for African Americans could only be gained through an alliance with the masses of oppressed white workers. Haywood viewed Jim Crow laws as a means to keep African Americans docile and dependent while giving the equally oppressed poor white psychological benefit in the belief that they belonged to a superior race¹⁷¹

With this belief in alliance, it is not at all surprising to learn that Mr. Haywood rejected the philosophy of Marcus Garvey. Haywood favored the celebration of blackness, the discipline and self-reliance themes of Garveyism. On the other hand he totally rejected the 'Back to Africa' slogan and goal of Garvey's movement. Garvey espoused that evilness was natural for whites. Haywood viewed these viewpoints as divisive and equally bigoted as the white chauvinist. Also, Mr. Haywood did not condone Garvey's suggestion that African Americans price their labor lower than others or work as scabs during strikes.

For tactics of nationalistic movements, Haywood felt, would only further isolate African American and create more tension between the oppressed thus shifting focus from the real issue. While Haywood did not condone the separatist views of Garvey, neither did he condone the integrationist viewpoint of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. He felt that the corporate elite profited from these organizations. Haywood questioned the true agenda of organization such as the NAACP as they were created, financed and controlled by wealthy whites. Furthermore, Mr. Haywood asserted that the actions of such organizations to uplift the black race were merely public relations vehicles.

While Harry Haywood found fault with organizations at both ends of the spectrum, so too did he find it with the Communist Party. Within the party Haywood found racist or perhaps paternalistic viewpoints. For example, it was fully accepted communist philosophy that all

¹⁷¹ Ibid., p. 150

African Americans, being oppressed and having few differences in values or beliefs, shared the same goals of revolution¹⁷²

Haywood joined the communist party in 1925 and was a member for 35 years. In 1926 he sojourned to Moscow to study in cadre training schools where he eventually supported the position that African Americans were an oppressed nation in the black belt South with the right to self determination.

In the early 1930's Haywood went into Alabama where he organized 10,000 African Americans sharecroppers into the Alabama Sharecroppers Union. After several shootouts with landlords the union eventually dissolved. Haywood also worked with the Trade Union Unity League in organizing African American and white miners to struggle against brutal working conditions in western Pennsylvania mines¹⁷³. Haywood worked with the LSNR (League of Struggle for Negro Rights) in leading demonstrations in regards to police brutality in Memphis, Tennessee. Forced to leave the South, Haywood helped organize Councils of the Unemployed in Chicago and New York. Haywood also worked with anti-war committee's against fascist Italy's invasion of Ethiopia leading demonstrations of 10,000 people and worked inside the National Negro Congress.

In 1936 Haywood ran as a candidate for the Communist Party in a Chicago congressional election. Haywood joined the Abraham Lincoln Brigade (An African American dominated brigade) that went to Spain to combat fascism on the battlefield. After the Spanish Republicans suffered defeat to the fascists Haywood returned to the United States. It was in this period that he was politically attacked and purged from Central Committee of the Communist Party. The Communist party dropped the "black belt" position and Haywood was in opposition of the position being dropped until he left the Communist Party in 1959.

Haywood discussed the fact that two dominant themes exist in Black movements: nationalism and reformist. The nationalist movements he felt came predominately from the "...small businessmen, the intelligentsia, ministers, professionals.." ¹⁷⁴. On the other end of the spectrum he felt that there was also the tendency of black movements to be compromising and assimilationist. Haywood viewed both philosophies as reformist as they both sought a solution within the present system. Neither saw an end to capitalist aggression and oppression as either feasible or foreseeable.

Additionally he viewed W. E. B. DuBois' talented tenth theory as assimilationist as well. It was Haywood's opinion that this top echelon of African Americans sought to appease whites. With this in mind this group of African Americans surmised that freedom and self-determination for people of color would be a slow evolving process achieved through benevolence of white liberals¹⁷⁵. The power to be 'the Black voice' yielded by this group in Haywood's opinion came from their control over the Black media and acceptance by the white mass media.

In 1944 the Communist Party was dissolved and the Communist Political Association was

¹⁷² Harry Haywood, *Black Bolshevik: Autobiography of an Afro-American Communist* (Chicago: Liberator Press, 1978) p. 375

¹⁷³ Op. cit. (Aryl Grigsby) p. 152

¹⁷⁴ Op. Cit (Harry Haywood) p. 421

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 422

formed. In his opinion Browder's book, "Out Path to War and Peace" was responsible for this dissolution. Browder theories were revisionist and especially damaging to the struggle of African Americans. This book centered on five basic principles: "(1) American capitalism is exempt from Marxist laws of decay; (2) the struggle for socialism in America is impossible; (3) The imperialist class are bearers of prosperity and democracy; (4) Period of class peace in America resulting in progress for all; (5) African Americans had full equality through peaceful development in capitalism and had abandoned the right of self-determination"¹⁷⁶

In short the Communist party felt that reforms through the American two party system was best. The Party maintained, in spite of these revisionist tactics, its reputation as a warrior for the African American struggle. In contrast, however, Haywood states that the Party became more reformist and betrayed African Americans. Furthermore, despite the NAACP's agreement with the Truman administration's "...anti-communist demagogu..." and its launching of "...vicious red-baiting campaigns..." the Communist Political Association continued to insist upon coalition activities with the Black reformist group¹⁷⁷.

Soon Harry Haywood, not wanting to bow to the pressure of the party to be a reformist began to be ostracized and alienated. Later, while in Paris and awaiting a Polish visa, Harry Haywood and his wife were accused of being spies for the United States government. The French Central committee, upon word from the U. S., had sent warnings out to all progressive organizations that the Haywoods were gathering information on communist activity. As proof that he was in fact a spy, Haywood could not produce any Communist Political Association credentials, these credentials oddly enough had been denied Haywood. Haywood was informed that the time that such credentials were unnecessary¹⁷⁸. The cold war began and Haywood was not the only victim of rumors. The top communist leadership was jailed. Without leadership the communist Party was forced to go underground and reduce its membership¹⁷⁹. With this Communist Party abandoned the question of Black self-determination. Haywood became a target of FBI harassment. These occurrences led the CPA to become critical of itself and shift its focus to driving any remnant of white supremacy out.

In turn this led the white members to avoid saying anything negative, whether true or not, about their fellow African American comrades. Finally, white comrades began to avoid African American members in an effort to avoid any accusation of racism. This effort became so petty that using expressions like "...black coffee or black sheep..." could lead to expulsion from the party¹⁸⁰. Lastly, Haywood asserts that the party's decisions to avoid work with the masses, or to put itself in the lead of any activities led to a wide disrespect for the party among African Americans.

The reformers won the Communist Party as the left wing factions, predominately African American and Puerto Rican left were expelled and they formed the PC in 1958. the PC, Provisional Organizing Committee for a Communist Party soon became filled with infighting. Haywood was expelled. Later he moved to Mexico with his new wife. In the

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 531-532

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 567-568

¹⁷⁸ Mari Jo Buhle, Paul Buhle, Dan Georgakas, *Encyclopedia of the American Left* (Chicago: St. James Press, 1990) p. 298

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 581-582

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 587-589

1970's Haywood was instrumental in organizing the Communist Party (M-L), a Marxist Leninist party that dissolved in 1979.

1944

Adam Clayton Powell Jr., was elected to Congress – New York, became second Northern City to send an African American to congress.

Oct. 1944:

Mechanical cotton picker put in use which begins the mechanization of southern agriculture, each replaces 50 workers.

Whereas “civil rights organizations like the NAACP had lost prestige in the context of the 1930's communist Party's fight for the Scottsboro boys, they now reclaimed the initiative on behalf of African American rights. The NAACP rapidly expanded under the impact of wartime mobilization. The number of branches increased from 355 in 1940 to over 1,000 by war's end. The number of members rose from over 50,600 to over 500,000. The organization continued to work through the courts to end lynchings, the poll tax, the white primary, and inequality in teachers' salaries.”¹⁸¹

April 12, 1945

Roosevelt died. Harry Truman, vice president under Roosevelt, becomes President.

During World War II, once again the U.S. needed African-American labor to close the gap between war production needs and military depletion of the white labor force. African-Americans migrated North to find jobs in industry despite white labor's resistance. Segregation continued at home and in the military. During the war, African-American demands won a Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC) and softening of segregation in the armed forces, and in some labor unions. White reaction fanned even by these minor concessions caused several severe fierce rebellions. As after World War I, when World War II was over, African-Americans lost most of the better jobs. The FEPC was disbanded in 1946. However, the setbacks weren't as sudden as World War I because of the new international situation. Black political consciousness was sharpened by exposure to international events and military struggle. There was stronger out-cry against the hypocrisy of fighting for freedom against fascism when African-American life exposed similarities between the U.S. and axis imperialists.

1945

- World War II ends. United States drop two Atomic bombs on Japanese civilians.
- Jackie Robinson signed with the Montreal Royals farm team for Brooklyn Dodgers baseball team.
- Fifth Pan-African Congress held in Manchester England under guidance of George Padmore and his mentee Kwame N. Krumah, Aziwee from Nigeria and Jomo Kenyatta from Kenya are also present. The Congress calls for positive action for the immediate independence of Africa. Attendees eventually go home and escalate independence movements.

Toward Pan African Liberation

¹⁸¹ Joe Williams Trotter Jr. *The African American Experience Volume 11 From Reconstruction* [Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 2001] p 512.

No black person is free until all black people are free. Black liberation is impossible until there is world liberation and all vestiges of white power are destroyed. The revolution in the world and in America, are all interdependent upon one another.

In order to achieve power, the third world peoples (black underclass) must realize their oppression is of an international order and they must organize to destroy and overthrow it *internationally*. The black underclass cannot achieve peace, justice and world harmony until the existing white power forces, worldwide, are completely removed from political, economic, social and cultural positions of power.

People in Africa, Asia, South Central and African America will remain under the yoke of neo-colonialism until they organize independently, internationally forming a world force, a world united front

The African in America holds the key to breaking white imperialist, neo-colonialist holdings and maneuverings in Africa by engaging in a massive international action movement inside the United States. The strategic residing of Africans the world over could give Africa a balance of position of world power, more so than if it had a hundred atomic or hydrogen bombs; if it appealed to the revolutionary internationalist feelings of the vast masses of the black world. If Africa does not do this, it and all Africans abroad, face neo-colonialist rule and possible extermination soon.

The black underclass must make decisions for themselves; one thing is evident from present neo-colonialist and imperialist control of Africa: The black revolutionary must become more aggressive and bold in terms of national liberation and self-determination. Black revolutionaries must create a condition that will mobilize all third world people to support the world revolution.

National liberation and control of a revolutionary state will be set back or destroyed if not surrounded by other bases of revolutionary action that are constantly harassing the enemy, not allowing him to focus on the particular liberation force. The whole world must be seen as one large battlefield in the world revolution and given land areas viewed as liberated or colonized zones in a world wide protracted war to out-manuever the enemy. Control of nation states becomes part of world liberation tactics rather than ends in themselves, in the strategy of the black underclass to free itself of world racism.

Pan Africanism or Revolutionary Black Nationalism obtains a new dynamism, that of international consciousness, that of achieving international consciousness, that of achieving international, world power for the people. *Control of the formation for a world state that represents and works for the benefit of the world's majority, the black underclass, becomes the ultimate focus of Pan-Africanism, Revolutionary Black Nationalism, Black Power or Revolutionary Internationalism.* National liberation of nation states is an intermediate period for the creation of a world union of People's Republic.

It becomes evident that black people must organize for power internationally. In order for the African world to win it must develop a battery of African thinkers who develop revolutionary ways to reeducate and train the millions of African youth worldwide for revolutionary power. There is a great need for an international Peoples' Guards movement.

The African world must have a power base that must exist outside of any state governmental structure, so that its base couldn't be zeroed in on. Revolutionary internationalists must form revolutionary internationalist parties that are part of an *International Peoples' Congress*. The International Peoples' Congress must be a mass movement, organizing national, regional, and local congresses serving as non-governmental international means of third world peoples communicating with one another.

All Africans at home and abroad must realize their fate is inter-connected with the fate of Mother Africa. All Africans at home and abroad must become revolutionary internationalists in their approach, using their technical skills gained in the oppressor's world to build a *United People's Republic of Africa*.

The principal contradiction in the world is between imperialism, particularly U. S. imperialism, and the colonies, between the haves and have-nots. This contradiction manifests on both a class and race basis. *In the present situation there's a dialectical relationship between race and class because the exploitation of the have-nots by the haves, though initially perpetrated on class lines is reinforced on race lines.*

It becomes pertinent to analyze the present state and to draw a clear line for the future. In order for this contradiction to be resolved, imperialism and capitalism must be destroyed by the have-nots. The destruction of these systems will mean the end of class exploitation and will also mean the end of racial exploitation. The European forces have consolidated along racial lines and maintain their exploitation on the basis of racial lines. The world revolution will be a racial/class war between the haves (the imperialists) and the have-nots (the third world majority of the world). At the same time it will be a class war between the black underclass and the white over-class. *The line of revolutionary internationalists is that the black underclass is the vanguard of the world revolution.*

The European ruling class (bourgeoisie) duped the European the European middle class (petty bourgeoisie) and the European working class (proletariat) into believing that it was to their interests to oppress peoples in the colonies (Africa, Asia, South and Central America and enslave Africans in America in the form of chattel slavery. They did this so that the European middle class and European working class would not see the class contradictions and antagonisms in Europe and to keep them from uniting with the have-nots and seize power. The European working class chose and continues to choose to reap the profits of super exploitation of the colonies. The European working class in not dealing with the cultural (racial) contractions of the world, became a tool of imperialism, revisionism, and other counter-revolutionary forces.

Lenin, the architect of the October Bolshevik Russian Revolution, proposed that the European working class being racist had allowed the bourgeoisie to consolidate capitalism internationally, to develop "Imperialism." Lenin developed the thesis that the principal contraction was between oppressing nations and oppressed nations. Lenin pleaded for the European working class to rally to the support of the oppressed nations before working class unity broke down. This he described vividly in the *Right of Nations to Self-Determination*. Lenin's hope was for the European working class to rally to support the October Russian Revolution.

Even Lenin could not deal thoroughly with the racial contradictions, for at the Second Congress of the Communist International held in Moscow in 1920, M. N. Roy of India challenged and debated Lenin on the future world revolution. Roy's position was that the revolution was going to come from Asia and the European proletariat would be led by colonial revolutions while Lenin, a European, did not foresee the hopelessness of the European proletariat. As far as he was concerned, Roy had taken the matter a little too far. *Lenin stated that he saw and recognized the emergence of national bourgeois revolutions in the colonies (Asia, Africa, etc.), but did not see where they would become the vanguard of the world revolution. (M. North, Roy's Mission to China.)*

Roy and Lenin debated for hours to a draw. Although the Second Congress of the Communist (third) International approved and adopted both Roy's and Lenin's thesis, Roy's was seldom referred to and little heard of. History has proven Lenin *wrong*. The initiative came from Asia. Stalin likewise followed in Lenin's shoes of remaining indifferent to racial contradictions. While Stalin wrote on *The National Question* he manipulated the American Communist Party to use the Afro-American Liberation struggle to benefit Russian European Nationalism. The American Communist Party opposed Marcus Garvey, who refused to be controlled by them. By helping to crush Garvey, they helped no one but the European Bourgeoisie because Garvey threatened its control over Africa and other colonies. The American Communist Party later dropped the "Negro struggle" to form a united front against fascism. They urged everyone to support Roosevelt (orders coming from Stalin who had a pact with Roosevelt after Hitler attacked Russia). The Communist Party even opposed A. Philip Randolph's proposed March on Washington in 1941 against job discrimination against African Americans in Federal Government contracted work. Time and time again the American Communist Party sold the African-American out for the "Mother Country."

George Padmore's disillusionment with Stalin came while he was head of "Negro Affairs" in Moscow. He saw Stalin make opportunistic maneuvers with the African Liberation Movement in order to "save the Mother Country." In China Stalin made disastrous blunders which almost cost the lives of the entire Chinese Communist movement. All black (Africa, Asia, South, Central and North) movements were set back and suffered many losses at the expense of Russian nationalism. Padmore attempted to deal with the racial contradictions by organizing the Fifth Pan African Congress held in 1945 in Manchester, England. Padmore's experiences were similar to the experiences other brothers suffered with the European Communists, particularly between the French Communists and African and Asian revolutionaries.

The racial contradictions began to manifest more when the Chinese Communists came to power in China. Long struggling against the social chauvinism (racism) of the Soviet Union, the emergence of Revolutionary China began to polarize racial and class contradictions within the world, in both the bourgeoisie imperialist camp and also in the European bourgeoisie Communist-Socialist camp.

The modern European socialist societies that have sprouted from the weak spots in European capitalism, though eliminating major class antagonisms, have not done away with racial antagonisms. They have but established new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of old ones.

The failure of European socialism and its vanguard, Lenin, Stalin and Trotsky, to deal comprehensively with the international racial curtain formed by capitalism in its highest stage, imperialism, has helped consolidate the chauvinistic cultural aspects of capitalism in all parts of the western world and has led to revisionism among the European Communist countries. The European working class has thus sold out to the western bourgeoisie.

Objectively, the European working class must either *unite* with the black underclass, the vast majority of the world or *perish* with the European bourgeoisie and revisionist Marxist leaders in the world revolution.

Brother Lin Piao stated in Long Live People's War: Taking the entire globe, if North America and Western Europe can be called 'the cities of the world,' then Africa, Asia, and Latin America constitute 'the rural areas of the world'... In a sense, the contemporary world revolution also presents a picture of the encirclement of cities by the rural areas. *In the final analysis, the whole cause of world revolution hinges on the revolutionary struggles of the African, Asian and Latin American peoples who make up the overwhelming majority of the world's population.*

An International racial curtain has been formed by capitalism's advanced stages, colonialism, imperialism, and neo-colonialism. Frantz Fanon stated in Wretched of the Earth, "When you examine at close quarters the colonial context, it is evident what parcels out the world is (to begin with) the fact of belonging to a given race, a given species. In the consequence; you are rich because you are white, you are white because you are rich." The colonized become a new class, "a thing-nigger, chink, spick" all lumped together. All become one Black Underclass oppressed by all of European society, both its bourgeoisie and its proletariat. Though class antagonisms exist within the Black Underclass, among its bourgeoisie, middle class, working class, peasantry and unemployed, they are secondary to the racial (nationalist) antagonisms or contradictions between the colonized and the colonizer, the haves and the have-nots. This racial system has been established for a period of four hundred years and is embedded as a way of life in European society and transplanted throughout the rest of the world. The essence of world revolution being a total "social revolution" is not just the elimination of the reactionary political and economic institutions of the old order, but also the social and cultural institutions, of the old order. The international racial system predetermines all relations between dark peoples and European, regardless of class (economic and political), status or position. Class becomes interlocked with race. In order for black peoples to revolutionize the world, we must destroy the racial system, European racial "cultural" superiority, at the same time destroying the class system since, "In the final analysis, the whole cause of world revolution hinges on the revolutionary struggles of the Asian, African, and Latin American peoples who make up the overwhelming majority for the world's population," the world revolution takes on a different character. It takes on a racial character or nature of being largely a world "black" revolution that is primarily of the black underclass.

The world revolution is a new democratic revolution of the world's majority rising up, seizing power and destroying the international racial system created by the oppressor. At the same time it destroys the foundations of capitalism, the class system. This stage is the first step for the transformation to a world communalist society. The world revolution is different from all others. It must be a revolution against the international racial system, imperialism, capitalism and neo-colonialism. It must be led by the non-white masses of the

world under the leadership of the black peasantry, working class element of the black underclass. The world revolution embraces in its ranks all classes within the black underclass for a final showdown with imperialism.

M. N. Roy of India in the Second Congress of the Communist International held in Moscow in 1920 stated that the proletariat and revolutionary movement in Europe was dependent upon the course of the revolution in Asia; if the Western European working class was going to cause a revolution, they would in essence do it in order to save their own skins. In stating this Roy in actuality repudiated Marx's theory that "the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class." Roy saw that white workers benefited from oppression in the colonies and semi-colonies and were not about to give up those benefits. Lenin also saw this but failed to see that the revolutionary initiative in the world was not in the hands of the European working class but the black underclass. Trotsky failed to see this because he, like Lenin, thought the "permanent revolution" was coming from Europe.

Lenin saw clearly what Marx, having died before Imperialism attained its zenith, was unable to foresee; namely, the gradual corruption of the European Socialist movements through "Bourgeoisification." The capitalist system, which Marx had so brilliantly analyzed, had, in Lenin's lifetime, reached out into the remotest corners of the earth—into Asia and Africa—drawing the great continents into its tentacles and squeezing super profits from the toil of hundreds of millions ...Lenin's saw that Western Capitalism had become converted by international monopolies which had established, on a world scale and whole continents and countries, Indonesia, Burma, Indo-China, etc., that had been reduced to colonies and economic dependencies of European nations. The financial and military strength of the Great Powers rested upon the continued exploitation of the colored people and the super profits derived from colonial spoliation enabled the ruling classes of the West to corrupt the white workers of the metropolis and blunt their revolutionary ardor.

Lenin stated in the Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination, that, "the proletariat must demand freedom of political secession for the colonies and nations that are oppressed by its nation. Unless it does this, proletarian internationalism will remain a meaningless phrase; neither mutual confidence nor class solidarity between the workers of the oppressing and oppressed nations will be possible."

Though Lenin even admitted that, Marx was thinking mainly of the interests of the proletarian class struggle in the advanced countries, but could not see the incorrectness in Marx's thesis on revolutionary initiative and what made up the vanguard of the world revolution. He, therefore, could not understand that M. N. Roy was correct on both the national and international questions.

Roy correctly analyzed tactics to be used in the colonial revolution when he developed the theory for revolutionaries to only cooperate with bourgeois nationalists when necessary primarily in the initial stages and with caution, develop working class parties which would organize workers and peasants and inspire them to revolution "from below." Lenin's thesis was the use of tactics primarily from the vanguard but the debating over the issue was so great between him and Roy at the Second Congress of the Communist International that

Lenin compromised and met Roy half way, and the Congress adopted a dual thesis for the colonial situation, that of organizing from above and below.

Marx thought that socialist revolutions would occur in Western Europe in countries where capitalism had developed to a high level and where the proletariat was organized and strong. Instead, revolutions occurred in essentially underdeveloped countries where capitalism was just developing and where the proletariat was basically unorganized and weak.

According to the present world situation, the European proletariat is no longer a revolutionary class. This proletariat, due to the opportunism of a European labor aristocracy, has refused to unite with the international third world proletariat to demand its right of self-determination. They are acting as the counter-revolutionaries for the Western bourgeoisie by supporting their regime's domestic and foreign policies. So, as Lenin foresaw but did not thoroughly deal with *Proletarian Internationalism has remained a meaningless phrase and there is no mutual confidence nor class solidarity between the workers of the oppressing and oppressed nation*. Proletarian internationalism has been superseded by Revolutionary Internationalism (the unification of peoples of Asia, Africa, Afro., South and Central America). *The black underclass becomes the revolutionary class within the world with the black working class-the peasant element being its most revolutionary sector*.

The first stage of the struggle for liberation of the black underclass against the white over-class is a national struggle. The black underclass must struggle against the particular imperialist power that is directly oppressing it nationally, but it must be remembered that behind all imperialism today is U.S. Imperialism. Therefore, while waging a war of liberation against its immediate oppressor, it must also wage war against U. S. imperialism internationally.

Since the end of the second imperialist war, U.S. Imperialism has become the leader of world Imperialism. As Mao Tse-Tung observes, "Like a vicious wolf, it is bullying and enslaving various peoples, plundering their wealth; encroaching upon their countries' sovereignty and interfering in their international affairs. It is the most rabid aggressor in known history and the most ferocious common enemy of the people of the world. Every people or country in the world that wants revolution, independence and peace cannot but direct the spearhead of its struggle against U.S. Imperialism... The U.S. Imperialist's policy of seeking world domination make it possible for the people throughout the world to unite all the forces that can be united and form the broadest possible united front for a conveying attack on U.S. Imperialism..." Lin Piao.

Successful movements of the black underclass against the white over-class since the end of the second imperialist war have taken the form of "people's war," better known as guerilla war. The nature of these people's war are protracted wars that mobilize the mass of the "black underclass to form national democratic revolutions" to violently overthrow or throw out the oppressor. The revolution embraces in its ranks, not only workers, peasants, and the urban petty bourgeoisie, but also the national bourgeoisie and other patriotic and anti-imperialist democrats, but is led by the black working class peasant element of the black underclass.

Marx stated in the *Communist Manifesto* “every form of society has been based, as we have already seen, on the antagonism of the oppressing and oppressed classes.” In today’s world society, the oppressing class is the white over-class and the oppressed is the black underclass, therefore, the world revolutionary initiative and leadership is in the hands of the black underclass.

Revolutionary internationalists constantly struggle through various stages of their national movements against colonialism, capitalism, imperialism and neo-colonialism but always emphasize that without the correct international perspective, national liberation movements can fall prey to neo-colonialism. Revolutionary internationalists are the *avant guard*’ of the black underclass in every country: they act as catalysts, vanguard and theoretical clearinghouse in national revolutions.

The immediate aim of revolutionary internationalists is the formation of the black underclass into a powerful national liberation movement, overthrow of colonialism, imperialism, and neo-colonialism and the conquest of the world political power by the black underclass. While revolutionary internationalists are at the same time revolutionary nationalists in their own countries, they understand that “the world is the people’s land” and a world government under the democracy of the black underclass is the ultimate solution of the world revolution.

The question of a democracy of the black underclass opposed to the theory of a dictatorship of the proletariat (the working class) is a historical question. *To be a revolutionary internationalist is to admit the need for the democracy of the black underclass.* The democracy of the black underclass is the central issue of the ideological differences between third world internationalists and reformists. The theory of the black underclass democracy is the only means capable of putting an end to the universal slave-master, the capitalist’s evil, cruel system and his exploiting nationalists’ movements and their leaders. It is not enough to see the necessity of eliminating entirely the European’s rule, influence and control over the world by the establishment of a democracy of the Black Underclass.

This is what constitutes the most profound difference between *revolutionary internationalists and others*. This is the birthstone on which real understanding and recognition of revolutionary internationalism is to be tested. *The question of the democracy of the third world underclass should occupy a special place in revolutionary internationalism because without the seizure of political power, without the democracy of the third world underclass, there can be no victory for communalism. The third world internationalists’ theory of the establishment of a society without race, class and gender exploitation would remain wishful thinking if the third world underclass and its Revolutionary Internationalists’ Movements did not concentrate their efforts on what is most decisive, the seizure of power to reorganize society along communal lines.*

The International race system has produced two nations internationally—the black nation (oppressed nation) and the white nation (the oppressing nation). There are two types of nationalism. One type suppresses or oppresses, i.e., a nation or particular group reaps profits or advances materially at the expense, exploitation, slavery or torture of another group of nations. In this nation and in the world today, this nationalism is considered “white nationalism” or the cooperation of the white western nations to keep the new emerging oppressed world in bondage. This is capitalism or reactionary nationalism. The

other type of nationalism is to liberate or free from exploitation. That is the binding force of a nation or particular group to free itself from a group or nation that is suppressing or oppressing it. In this country and in the world, this is considered revolutionary nationalism.

We can see that revolutionary nationalism is the opposite of white nationalism-revolutionary nationalism being innovative and white being reactionary. We can see that the international perspective in the world today is built on internationalist interests, dividing the world into two international nations: the white nation and the black nation.

The present world scene is one of chaos and turmoil caused by white nationalism (white power). The vast majority of the world, the black underclass, knows that they can only achieve peace and harmony through a world revolution that demolishes white power. Only then can the world be in “universal” harmony and revolutionary internationalism will then prevail. The need for national boundaries and barriers will be eliminated. National sovereignty will still be respected, but the need for nationalism in its aggressive form will be eliminated. When white counter-revolutionary nationalism is completely annihilated, a “United World People’s Republic,” a new level of social order, can be created. The world revolution brings with it a new world society. It also brings with it the concept of universal law and order.¹⁸²

In 1947 the NAACP won a major case which declared the white primary in political parties unconstitutional in *Smith vs. Allwright* in Texas.

Who was Oliver C. Cox?

Oliver Cromwell Cox was born August 24, 1901 in Port of Spain, Trinidad, the son of Virginia Blake and William Raphael Cox. Cox was one of nine children and was raised by his uncle Reginald V. Vidale, who was a teacher. Oliver received his primary education from St. Thomas Boys School. In 1919 Oliver went to the United States planning to become either a doctor or lawyer, and then to return home.

When Oliver Cox arrived in the United States, he was eighteen years old. The following year he began to prepare for college by attending the Central YMCA High School in Chicago, from which he graduated in 1923. He then spent two years at Lewis Institute, majoring in history and economics, and received his associate degree in 1927. In the fall of that year he entered Northwestern University to study law, and received his Bachelor of Science in Law degree in 1929. He still expected to become a successful lawyer and return to his native country, but suddenly his plans were destroyed when he was stricken with poliomyelitis.¹⁸³

Doubting a full recovery, having to walk with crutches for the rest of his life forced Cox to reconsider his plans of being a lawyer. He felt academic life might be less strenuous on him physically, so he pursued becoming a professor. In 1930, after spending a year and a half recovering, he entered the department of economics at the University of Chicago. In June 1932 he graduated with a Master’s Degree. Disillusioned with the lack of answers provided

¹⁸² Muhammad Ahmad, “Toward Pan African Liberation”, *The Black Scholar*, Volume 5, Number 7, (April 1974), pp. 24-31

¹⁸³ Herbert M. Hunler & Sameer Y. Abraham (eds.) *Race, Class and the World System: The Sociology of Oliver C. Cox* [New York: Monthly Review Press, 1987], p. xxix

by classical economics, Cox switched to sociology at the University of Chicago, graduating with a Ph.D. in sociology in 1938. Cox's first major teaching position was at Wiley College, a small Methodist school in Marshall, Texas. He taught there from 1939 to 1944. In 1944 he moved to Tuskegee Institute, where he taught economics and sociology until 1949. In July 1949 he accepted a position as associate professor at Lincoln University, which he held for twenty-one years. In 1970, Cox accepted the post of Distinguished Visiting Professor of Sociology at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan.

Supporting the concept of integration in his latter years, Cox spent time criticizing "black" nationalism on the grounds that it was an inappropriate platform for African Americans who were a small minority and a concept that could be manipulated by conservatives. Oliver Cromwell Cox died September 4, 1974.

Oliver C. Cox was one of the most important African American sociologists in contemporary times, standing second only to Dr. W.E.B. DuBois. Because of Dr. Cox's content analysis, which is a critique of the contradictions of capitalism from its origins to its internal workings he was not recognized by the traditional academic establishment as a sociological scholar.

Oliver C. Cox wrote and published 36 articles and five books in his literary lifetime. Among his books are The Foundations of Capitalism [New York: Philosophical Library, 1959]; Capitalism and American Leadership [New York: Philosophical Library, 1962]; Capitalism as a System [New York: Monthly Review Press, 1964]; Race Relations: Elements and Social Dynamics [Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1976] and his famous Caste, Class and Race [New York, Doubleday and Co., 1948].

Dr. Cox laid out a conceptual framework for an African American or Black paradigm that provides us with the theoretical underpinnings for explaining our historical and contemporary realities. As early as 1948 Cox predicted the significance and strategic positioning of the African American proletariat that may remain intact until the next 25 years or so.

Oliver C. Cox adequately predicted the positioning of the African American proletariat as the most oppressed sector of organized labor in the strategic center of industrial production in the late 50's to mid 60's. In conjunction with this evolutionary process was African American workers' involvement in a nonviolent passive resistance movement to eliminate the barriers of racial discrimination and their spontaneous violent outbursts (rebellions) against racial incidents and the slow pace of the objectives of African American national democratic revolution being achieved under capitalism.

Since that time for twenty-five years the racist multi-national capitalist sector of the U.S. capitalist class has initiated a policy of dislocation of the African American proletariat from the industrial centers of the U.S. empire. Using the pretext of seeking cheaper labor in foreign countries (which is true) U.S. multinationals have reinforced a new racial division or stratification of the labor force in the U.S.; often African American workers in strategic industry are forced to retire, or don't get jobs in relocated plants usually located in lily-white (Euro-American) suburban or rural communities.

This is a conscious policy of the capitalist ruling class who realizes that the African

American proletarian sector of the U.S. proletariat is the most “class conscious”, aware of itself as a class and still struggles against national and racial oppression (consciousness of and for itself) and therefore potentially dangerous for their plan of increased super-exploitation of the U.S. proletariat.

This is why only 3.8% of black men are projected to be included in the labor force in the year 2000 and 5.6% of black women are projected to be in the labor force. While young African American workers are being displaced from the strategic industrial centers, they are being trained for nonproductive work in the service sector. This frontal assault against the African American working class must be struggled against.

If Dr. Cox were alive today, his scientific materialist analysis would provide us with the strategy for organizing at the point of production against these forms of oppressions. The importance of Cox’s concepts for this period is expressed in his ideas on the political class. Dr. Cox says, “The political class is a power group which tends to be organized for conflict.”

Although the political class is ordinarily weighted with persons from a special sector of the social-status gradient, it may include persons from every position. Hence we do not speak of political classes as forming a hierarchy; they may conceivably split the social hierarchy vertically: therefore there is here no primary conception of social stratification. In other words, members of the political class ordinarily do not have a common social status.

As a power group the political class is preoccupied with devices for controlling the state... Since the power of the ruling class is always concentrated in the organization of the state, the oppressed class must aim directly against the mechanism of the state. Every class struggle is thus a political struggle, which in its objectives aims at the abolition of the existing social order and at the establishment of a new social system...Class struggle is not only course of action, but also a process of winning new adherents to some political ideal or of maintaining old convictions... A new political class develops naturally—that is say new political classes come into being inevitably with significant changes in the method of economic production and economic distribution. A political class becomes conscious of itself only through successful propaganda the objective position of the class and, its aims must be focused by its leader.

How does this process take place? Referring Robert Michels’ concept of intellectual proletariat (working class); the intellectuals of the working class come forth in debating the future and power of the class; fuse themselves with the class through agitation of actions and development of organization coming from the action, politically training the workers, arming them with theory, strategy and program.

It is this fusion process that Dr. Cox describes, which makes his theories so important for us in this period. Dr. Cox also described the essence for the emergence of the full-blown African American National Democratic Revolution when he says: “a political-class movement will develop when, because of new methods, production, or maturation of old methods, economic power has been shifted to some section of the population without at the same time shifting the political power. This is the basis of political-class discontent.” This was the case with the civil rights movement.

In the descending line of development of capitalism with the shifting of the majority of African American workers to the service sector, depreciating wages, causing gross unemployment for the black males, advanced democratic demands that call for the social restructuring of the economy and American society is the only kind of program that can meet the objective needs of the African American proletariat in the forthcoming period. Also, the progressive political education of the African American female workers will be vitally important because within the African American working class, they will have more labor power.

Dr. Oliver Cox also goes on to explain that “Although a significant number of persons in a society may be characterized by some common economic or other social interest, they do not become an active political class until they develop class consciousness. Thus, the search for conversion of potential class members, are major functions of political class leaders.” Cox goes on to explain that while the political class may strive to attain its ends through political machinery, he says ultimately the supplanting of one class by another literally calls for the overturning of one class by another.

Dr. Cox goes on to explain how the national units of the capitalist system tend to be of unequal economic weight and significance. Even those powerful enough to control minor territories as dependencies, tend to cluster in turn, around a dominant nation, which sets the standards for all. Thus the capitalist system comprises functionally, a gradient of nations and territories with a recognized leader at the top. At all times, however, the internal organization of the leader nation tends to be reciprocally affected by the circumstances of the led.

One obvious, though vital, conclusion to be drawn from this relationship is that capitalism does not and cannot mean the same thing to all nations and territories included in the system.

Race and class exploitation is the foundation of the worldwide capitalist system presently being led by the United States. The elimination of this system of dual oppression rests in the internal contradictions (national, race/class struggle) inside the leading nation of the capitalist system. African American workers whose oppression is the antithesis of the system are a strategic center within the internal class struggle of the leading capitalist nation. Central to that will be African American workers struggles in the South, where 53% of the African American workers reside. Paramount to the national, racial and class awakening of the African American working class is their strategic position to the worldwide liberation struggle.

Dr. Cox states that “Capitalism itself depends pivotally neither upon the market situation among advanced capitalist nations, nor upon domestic transactions, but rather upon the economic and political relations developing between major capitalist nations and the backward peoples.” Hence lies the heart of the imbalance and elasticity of capitalist market situations.

With the present reduction of East-West conflict and increased antagonism between North-South (Asia, Africa and Latin America), the race and class awakening of the African American working class is more important to the international struggle for class emancipation in this period than ever before.

To this end, the ideas of Dr. Oliver Cox are needed, that of developing a critical consciousness among the African American proletariat of and for itself; in order to eventually mobilize citywide congresses of cadres to develop a revolutionary African American national democratic organization of a new type that is fused in mass struggle.

Who was Edward Franklin Frazier?

Edward Franklin Frazier was born in Baltimore, Maryland on September 24, 1894, to James H. Frazier, a bank manager; and Mary Clark Frazier, a housewife. He was one of five children and graduated from Colored High School in June 1912 receiving an annual scholarship to Howard University. Frazier graduated, with honors, from Howard in 1916. He went to Tuskegee Institute where he taught mathematics, history and modern languages from 1916-1917. From there he taught English and history at St. Paul's Normal and Industrial School in Lawrenceville, Virginia (1917-1918) and French and mathematics at Baltimore High School (1918-1919).

In 1919 Frazier attended Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts obtaining a M.A. degree in sociology in 1920. After spending 1920-1921 as a Russell Sage Fellow at the New York School of Social Work (later the Columbia School of Social Work) and a year at the University of Copenhagen as a fellow of the American Scandinavian Foundation, Frazier accepted an appointment at Atlanta University where he served as the Director of the Atlanta School of Social Work and an instructor of sociology at Morehouse College.

During this time, Frazier published a number of articles, including "The Pathology of Race Prejudice" in 1927. This article, which argued that race prejudice was analogous to insanity, stirred such strong reactions among residents in Atlanta that Frazier was removed from his position.

Frazier moved from Atlanta to Chicago, where he received a fellowship from the University of Chicago's sociology department. His studies at Chicago culminated in his earning a Ph.D. in 1931. Along with Howard University colleagues, Ralph Bunche and Abram Lincoln Harris, Frazier delivered an attack on older generations at the NAACP's 1933 Amenia Conference.

Frazier published a series of articles on African American life and his Ph.D. dissertation, The Negro Family in Chicago, was published in 1932. Critics claimed that it was the most important study since The Philadelphia Negro was published by William DuBois in 1899.

Frazier became research professor of sociology at Fisk University (1927-1934) before becoming head of the sociology department in Howard University in 1934. While in this post he published his most important work, The Negro Family in the United States (1939). The book was an analysis of the history of the African American family since the 18th century. This included the impact of slavery, segregation, racial discrimination and migration on the family.

E. Franklin Frazier wrote twelve books, of which Black Bourgeoisie in 1957 was the most controversial. He died at age 68 on May 17, 1962.

The works of E. Franklin Frazier:

- The Free Negro Family: a Study of Family Origins Before the Civil War [Nashville: Fisk University Press, 1932]
- The Negro Family in Chicago [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1932]
- The Negro Family in the United States [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939]
- Negro Youth at the Crossways: Their Personality Development in the Middle States [Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1940]
- The Negro Family in Bahia, Brazil (1942)
- The Negro in the United States [New York: Macmillan, 1949]
- The Integration of the Negro into American Society (editor) [Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1951]
- Bourgeoisie noire [Paris: Plon, 1955]
- Black Bourgeoisie (translation of Bourgeoisie noire) [Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1957]
- Race and Culture Contacts in the Modern World [New York: Knopf, 1957]
- The Negro Church in America [New York: Schocken Books, 1963]
- On Race Relations: Selected Writings, edited and with an introduction by G. Franklin Edwards, [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968]

Who was Charles Hamilton Houston?

In the fall of 1895, an event that would prove momentous for black America passed virtually unnoticed. On September 3, a black hairdresser named Mary Hamilton gave birth to a son, Charles Hamilton Houston (after Charles I), in a modest house just blocks from the Supreme Court. He would command the attack that would kill Jim Crow.

Charles Houston undoubtedly owed much of his early success to his remarkable parents. His mother's clientele included senators and cabinet officers; and his father, William, was a general practice lawyer. He was their only child and they lavished love and attention on Charles and resolved to give their intellectually curious and "serious minded" child every advantage they could. Even though their budget was tight, they took Charles to the zoo, concerts, and matinee theaters and provided him with books. They provided him with a piano and soon he began to spend long hours alone practicing on the piano as well as being somewhat of a bookworm.

At age twelve, Charles' parents enrolled him in the remarkable M Street High School, the first black high school in the United States. This was perhaps their greatest gift to him. M Street, led by Anna Julia Cooper, proudly offered its students a traditional classical curriculum, taught by some of the best Negro teachers in America, at a time when most secondary black schools provided mostly vocational or "general" curricula. Charles went through a period where his teachers commented on his "persistently annoying conduct and nonchalant attitude", but he finally settled down. In his senior year, Charles earned no grade lower than 'G' (good). His record at M Street persuaded Amherst to offer Charles a partial scholarship. The Houstons readily accepted the offer—despite the strain an Amherst education would put on their finances—and on September 13, 1911, Charles boarded a train for Massachusetts.

As the only black student in Amherst's class of 1915, Charles devoted himself to his studies. He had "very few friends in town and rarely paid a social visit", describing himself as "too shy or too proud" to visit his classmates in the all-white fraternity houses. The alienation he felt on account of racism seemed to spur his academic achievement and growing self-reliance. He wrote to his father, "Let us...resolve to depend upon ourselves exclusively as much as possible, in all walks of life. He attributed his excellent grades—almost entirely A's and B's in an era long before grade inflation—to hard work rather than innate ability. "Genius," he told his father "is not half so much inspiration as it is the culmination of endless, painful and infinitely applied careful application. Charles did manage, in June 1915, to climb the tower of Johnson Chapel to carve "CHH '15" alongside the initials of other Amherst graduates in accordance with senior tradition and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa.

Charles Houston returned to Washington upon leaving Amherst. He began teaching English and "Negro Literature" at Howard University part time. When the United States entered World War I in 1917, Charles was still of draft age. He was anxious to avoid being "herded into the Army," where he expected front line duty and endless menial chores like most African Americans, so he decided to become an officer. He hoped that by enlisting he might have the status to have "something to say about how this country should be run." Charles earned a position at the first black officers' training camp, Fort Des Moines, in Iowa, due to the persistent efforts of his father.

He received a birthday greeting from his mother on the occasion of his 22nd birthday as he trained for service abroad.

At the close of the day I turn to you my dear for a break with the tasks, for sunshine, for happiness. I have a mental picture of 22 years before me now, the canvas thank God is not full, there is room for many more years. But that part of the picture which [is finished] is satisfactory—yes even more than I ever dreamed. God keep you my Boy, fill your life from good deeds so that when evening of life comes, that your path may be made as bright as the noonday sun by the blending of the lights from the canvas.

He also received practical advice from his father, at about the same time, "Charles, do your all," he wrote. Later, in the same letter, he suggested, "If troubled with mosquitoes, use citronella."

Mosquitoes, however, proved far less irritating to Charles than the racist attitudes of his Camp Commander Charles Ballou. He claimed his black troops, forty percent with college degrees, lacked the "mental potential and higher qualities of character essential to command and leadership." Charles Houston found himself harassed, abused, and reprimanded in months of training at Fort Des Moines, then Camp Meade, and then Camp Dix, for his audacity to "raise hell" about racial discrimination and arbitrary assignments.

Charles' first military appointment was as a judge-advocate. He was assigned the task of prosecuting a case involving two black soldiers charged with disorderly conduct. Charles investigated the incident and found the charges to have little substance. His superior told him he was "no good" when he subsequently failed to win a conviction of the two accused soldiers. When he witnessed the conviction of a black sergeant, regarded by others blacks as one of the best in the company on charges of disorderly conduct and insubordination,

Charles became further embittered. The sergeant was convicted despite the fact that he was carrying out the orders of a superior officer. Houston wrote, "I made up my mind that I would never get caught again without knowing my rights; that if luck was with me, and I got through this war, I would study law and use my time fighting for men who could not strike back."

Charles Houston's resolve to fight racial injustice was strengthened several months later when he found himself in the Jim Crow army camps of France. Houston found that "the hate and scorn showered on Negro officers by our fellow Americans, convinced me there was no sense dying for a world ruled by them." Houston and other Negro officers ate on benches in the enlisted men's area, not in the officer's mess. In order that they would not "physically come in contact with white enlisted men" they were forced to use special latrines and "showers boarded off." They were denied the use of white orderlies and white instructors constantly found new ways to embarrass them and portray them as ignorant. White women such as waitresses and maids were warned by officers not to befriend black officers or they would risk inviting a sexual assault. Houston found the discrimination by American officers "obnoxious" and a violation of "every principle of Army regulations."

In one nightmarish episode in France, Charles found himself in the company of another black lieutenant returning to base after a late night showing of a French film. They met two white officers berating a black officer. This black officer had won the company of a French woman one of the white officers had decided was his. Houston recalled later, "I was not taking part in the argument but merely standing by listening. The next thing I heard and saw, a lot of white officers running down the street." Then, according to Houston, one of the officers ran "two blocks away to where two quartermaster trucks loaded with white enlisted men were waiting to start to camp and told them to come down and lynch us... The officer who led the mob began to yelp about "niggers forgetting themselves just because they had a uniform on, and that it was time to put a few in their place, otherwise the United States would not be a safe place to live after they got back. Physical violence by the white mob was only prevented by the timely arrival of the captain of the American military police.

In February 1919, Charles returned to the United States. Aboard a train for Fort Dix from his arrival point in Philadelphia, Charles and a fellow black officer took a seat at table in the dining car next to a middle-aged white man. The man immediately demanded that the waiter find the Negro officers another table. Houston remembered, "I told the man that we had just landed from overseas and asked him if he was going to order us to leave the table just because we were colored. He replied that he could not help it if he was from the South. He got up and moved. We ate our meal and I felt damned glad I had not lost my life fighting for this country." In April 1919, Charles Houston left the army declaring that, "My battleground is in America, not France".

Charles Hamilton Houston watched an America in turmoil as he returned to civilian life. About 25 race riots broke out during what was called "Red Summer". Thousands of unemployed southern blacks headed to the urban north looking for jobs and a better life, because of boll weevil damage to the cotton crop. They crowded into rundown tenements recently abandoned by immigrants who resented the newcomer's competition for jobs and wages. This resentment soon turned to violence. Houston later described that summer as "the greatest period of interracial strife the nation had ever witnessed." Mobs shot, flogged, tortured and lynched blacks, as well as burning homes. Race riots broke out from

Washington, D.C. to Chicago to Longview, Texas.

An incident during the troubled summer of 1919 affected Houston personally. A 25-year-old black named Theodore Micajah Walker was out looking for the children of a friend, concerned about their welfare in riot-torn Washington. He was chased by a white mob who was yelling “kill the nigger, kill the nigger.” Someone hit Walker with an iron pipe and he drew a revolver, which he had been carrying since being attacked earlier in the summer and fired low into the throng, hoping not to kill anyone, but the bullet hit and killed a 19-year-old white marine private. The mob dispersed. Authorities later arrested Walker and charged him with murder. Houston’s father, a lawyer who handled civil matters exclusively, took Walker’s case because of the clear injustice of the prosecution. Despite the best efforts of the elder Houston and two other attorneys, an all-white jury convicted Walker.

Charles came to see even more clearly how racism permeated society and violated human beings through the unjust conviction of Theodore Walker. In the fall of 1919, Charles Houston applied for and was accepted to Harvard Law School. His sense of purpose and hard work enabled him to be an exception student. His grade point average earned him a position on the editorial board of the Harvard Law Review, the first African American to be so honored.

Writing to his parents, Houston assessed his position at the famous law school, “I still go my way alone. They know I am just as independent and a little more so, than they. My stock is pretty high around these parts. God help me against a false move.” He graduated in the top 5% of his class and applied for additional work leading to a degree if Doctor of Juridical Science.

His graduate law studies took him to Tunisia, Algeria and Spain. He wrote to his grandmother about his experience of standing for the first time on the African continent, “Thank God one of the Houston clan stands back on native soil. I count it a happy privilege.” He returned to a changed America in 1924 to begin his calculated assault on Jim Crow.

The training of African American lawyers was key for Charles Houston in mounting an attack on segregation. He wrote, while at Harvard, “there must be Negro lawyers in every community,” and that “the great majority must come from Negro schools.” He concluded that, “It was in the best interests of the United States...to provide the best teachers possible at law schools where Negroes might be trained.” He decided to seek a teaching position at Howard Law School, which had trained three-fourths of the black lawyers in the U.S. since being established in 1869. Notable members of Harvard’s faculty, including Dean Roscoe Pound and future Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter were enlisted to write letters in support of his application. Pound’s letter assured Howard this Houston “gives promise of becoming a real legal scholar.”

In the fall of 1924, Professor Charles Houston began teaching “Surety and Mortgages,” “Agency,” “Jurisprudence,” and “Administrative Law” to first- and second-year law students. He demanded a lot from his students, with no tolerance for laziness, accepting no excuses for complaints about too-long assignments. He strove to make Howard into the same sort of intellectually rigorous center of learning that he saw at Harvard.

In 1929, Mordecai Johnson, Howard's first African American president, made Houston Vice Dean of the School, charged with revitalizing the moribund institution, which had been denied accreditation by the American Bar Association. He eliminated the night program, toughened the curriculum, lengthened the school year, hired new faculty, coordinated guest lectures and workshops and designed a more rigorous curriculum aimed at his dream of "litigation against racism". He recruited bright young men, including future civil rights leaders Thurgood Marshall and Oliver W. Hill, telling them, "a lawyer's either a social engineer or he's a parasite." His favorite expression, to faculty and students alike was "no tea for the feeble, no crepe for the dead." His demands often met with opposition, from colleagues and students, who called him more of a machine than a man and insensitive. A more charitable observer stated that "although Houston insisted upon perfection, there wasn't a nicer person." All who knew him conceded that he demanded more from himself—integrity, hard work, principled conduct, thoroughness, and intellectual rigor—than he demanded from others. Due largely to Houston, the school was accredited in 1931.

His conduct extended to his personal life, he often interrogated his girlfriend, who had been with him since his Amherst days, Gladys Morgan. However, she readily accepted his offer of marriage, they wed in August 1924, and amicably divorced in 1937.

Houston was ready for a new challenge after he established Howard as the nation's premier training ground for "capable and socially alert Negro lawyers." He was the informal advisor to secretary Walter White since the early 1930s on the NAACP's Legal Committee and in 1934 reluctantly agreed to assist in the defense of George Crawford, an African American accused of murder in Virginia. In Virginia, African Americans were systematically excluded from jury duty and Houston lost the case (though the following year the U.S. Supreme Court ruled such jury discrimination unconstitutional), but saved Crawford from execution.

In 1935, when Houston accepted White's invitation to become NAACP chief counsel, he became indispensable in the field of educational equality. With financial support from the Garland Fund (later called the American Fund for Public Service), the Margold Report, a rough blueprint for the fight was commissioned. Houston agreed that education should be the primary battlefield, writing in 1935 that "discrimination in education is symbolic of all the more drastic discriminations which Negroes suffer in daily life." His strategy differed from the Margold Report, based on his understanding of political power and sensitivity to public opinion in its emphasis on gradual change and the building of legal precedent. Three primary targets were chosen: the inequality in opportunity for graduate study at state-supported segregated institutions; the disparity in transportation provided for African American and white students; and the different pay scales for African American and white teachers. The first approach proved most successful, spawning the three Supreme Court cases that together provided the ammunition to topple Plessy v. Ferguson's prescription for "separate but equal" accommodations.

The first, Missouri ex rel. Gaines v. Canada, involved Missouri's refusal to admit African American students to the state university's law school, offering applicants instead the choice of going out of state or attending a yet to be established separate black law school. The court found in 1938 that such unequal provisions created an unfair "privilege...for white law students" that was denied African Americans. Argued by Marshall, who had succeeded Houston as chief counsel, it was Houston's strategy and advice that helped two

cases in which inequality was less blatant. Sweatt v. Painter, Texas provided a separate black law school that shared some facilities with the white institution and McLaurin v. Oklahoma concerned a lone black student who was segregated within the state's graduate school of education. In 1950, the year of Houston's death, in both cases, the court edged closer to overturning Plessy, ruling that intangible effects of inequality could violate a plaintiff's right to equal protection under the 14th Amendment.

In 1938 Houston stepped down as chief counsel, citing poor health, but continued to fight for racial justice on diverse fronts. Returning to Washington, he rejoined his father's law firm and began to focus on economic inequality, while serving on the district's board of education from 1933-35. He challenged discriminatory practices by government negotiators and contractors. He was appointed to the Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC) in 1944, and in 1945 resigned in protest over its imminent disbanding. Hospitalized for exhaustion once before, Houston suffered a serious heart attack in 1948 and died two years later, leaving behind his second wife Henrietta, and their only child, Charles Hamilton Houston, Jr.

At Charles H. Houston's 1950 memorial service his cousin, Federal Judge William H. Hastie, eulogized Houston as the "Moses of our journey." Referring to the hard-won victory against segregation, Houston's protégé and successor as the NAACP's chief counsel, Thurgood Marshall described him as "the engineer of it all."

He is remembered as hard-driving and brilliant, a perfectionist with a dignified demeanor which belied his passion "lose your temper, lose your case" was one of many aphorisms his law students heard. He was posthumously awarded the Spingarn Medal from the NAACP for his work on behalf of school desegregation, which ultimately prevailed in 1954's Brown v. Board of Education. Howard University in 1958 renamed its main law school building after the man who had written to one of his students, "The most important thing...is that no Negro tolerate any ceiling on his ambitions or imagination." He was one of the most influential American lawyers of the twentieth century.

Postwar Changes: Truman

The Pan African Party

The African captive in America has always been active in the liberation of our motherland, Africa. Dr. DuBois, as early as 1919, organized the first Pan African Congress. From 1919 to 1945, the Pan African Congresses served as a forum for African intellectuals at home and abroad. The Pan African Congress of 1945 developed the tactics of direct action for the liberation of the mainland. The Pan African movement has advanced in gradual steps. Marcus Garvey, the father of nationalism, also had, as an objective, the liberation of a unified central African government.

Stokely Carmichael, the mass spokesman for Black Power, recently returned from Africa saying that Pan Africanism must become the mass philosophy of the African American. Stokely studied for some time under Nkrumah in Guinea. Brother Carmichael's new strategy is that the African American should concentrate his efforts on possibly bringing Nkrumah back into power in Ghana. The land base that would be liberated would become a Pan African state on which the Pan African revolution would be based.

Brothers and sisters in the states are told that struggling for revolution in the states will be a protracted affair and not possible at this time. Stokely fails to realize that all people must make their own indigenous revolution led by people from their own country. This does not mean we should not help the brothers and sisters on the mainland. We should help where we can, but we must concentrate our efforts where we are. And, if we understand the nature of imperialism and neocolonialism, we will realize that if we did create a Pan African socialist state, it would be faced with encirclement and intervention from the United States government. Africans in America and the Caribbean are actually Africa's military rear.

In order for Africa to be truly liberated, a world war of liberation must be fought between Africa, Europe and America. We are engaged in a world black revolution. It is then necessary to develop tactics for all Africans worldwide. Being in a protracted international war of national liberation, it is necessary for Africans to wage struggle in the country where they are colonized. We are up against an international crisis in the capitalist-imperialist system. This means we must organize national Pan African movements that can move to seize state power in their regions. At the same time, we must develop an international African consciousness among our people so that when the enemy moves to encircle and crush a national African revolution we can come to its aid by creating a crisis somewhere else, forcing the enemy to over-extend himself. While this may be our war strategy, we must encourage Africans in America and the Caribbean with skills to go to progressive African states and build those states into strong Pan African bases.

In developing a scientific position that relates to African people, it is important that our interests of national liberation and self-determination be protected and organized through the formation of Pan African parties. Pan African parties are the highest form of organization of African people in the struggle for national liberation. While scientifically analyzing the historical role of African people, it is necessary, at the same time, to know that African people need an independent political party and ideological framework to create a revolutionary change of society and develop African communalist society.

Of all organizations created by African people, only a political party can give proper expression to the basic interests of the black underclass and lead it to complete victory. While the basis of the struggle is through organizing our people into unions and immediate issue organizations, with these organizations alone African people will never be able to defeat capitalism and build an African communalist society.

To do this, African people need an organization of a higher type, an organization that does not confine itself to the current needs of the people, but aims at bringing the people to power through an economic, political and cultural revolution. The organization best suited to bring a complete revolution and serve the needs of African people is the Pan African Party.

Working through all channels and avenues, the white over-class tries to persuade the black underclass that it doesn't need a black internationalist party, its own ideology or its own internationale. This is nothing but a neo-colonialist trick to keep the African people from having our own power base and theoretical frame of reference. Only a political party of African people is capable of uniting, educating and organizing a vanguard of African people. The party must be able to fight incorrectness, vacillations, narrowness and falsehood within our own people. By doing this the party can lead the overall actions of the

people.

The main characteristic of Pan African parties is their goal: to replace capitalism with communalism. Pan Africanists are in the forefront of African people's struggle for power, because they believe that for revolutionary change of capitalist society, African people must seize political power and establish a democratic centralized government controlled by us. Pan African parties do not act blindly. They are guided by the revolutionary theory of Pan Africanism that scientifically expresses the basic will of the people.

The party is a voluntary union of like-minded brothers and sisters united for the purpose of implementing the black world outlook and carrying out the historic mission of our people. The revolutionary character of the party determines its organizational principles, its unity, its identity of action and flexibility of its tactics. Pan African parties get their strength from the people; therefore, they must constantly guard against becoming parties of isolated individuals of narrow groups of professional revolutionaries. Pan African parties must be firmly grounded in the people, keeping (a) constant contact with the people, (b) learning from the people and (c) applying the principle of, "from the people back to the people."

The Pan African party is the vanguard of African people, their advance conscious section, capable of leading the people in the struggle for building of national independence, self-determination, and communalism. The Pan African party, while being a black working class party, has deep roots, not only among workers and street people, but also among other sections of the people. Pan Africanists are people only distinguished by a greater nationalist consciousness, a more serious revolutionary character (self-discipline) and readiness to develop any situation for the cause. Our life is bound with the people and we are deeply concerned with everything that agitates our people's minds.

History shows us that before becoming real vanguards, revolutionary parties usually pass through several stages of political and organizational development:

- 1) They are propagandist groups conducting most of their work within their own ranks. This is necessary to insure:
 1. Ideological (political) unity
 2. Educate the membership
 3. Improve the organization
- 2) Then the party goes to the people and begins to lead mass actions of the people. This period signifies the merging of the spontaneous movement with the ideas of Pan Africanism and the development of a revolutionary movement.
- 3) The party becomes a real political force capable of leading the majority of our people and African people as a whole. In order to do this, the party must be active in organizing unions among our people, preparing them for the general strike, the last legal stage of nationalist struggle in the process of decolonialization.

The party must be able to unite the people around the party's program before it can become a significant political force capable of leading the people to national liberation.

The principle of the organizational structure of a Pan African party is called democratic centralism. The interests expressed by a Pan African party are not the private interests of individuals or groups; they are interests of all our people and express themselves only through the united will which fuses various isolated actions into one struggle. *Only a centralized leadership is capable of uniting all the forces, directing them towards a single*

goal, coordinating the uncoordinated actions of individual brothers, sisters and groups. The united will of the party cannot be created except by democratically, collectively comparing the different opinions and proposals and then adopting decisions binding for all. The united will has the advantage in that it gives the fullest and therefore truest expression to the objective needs of the nationalist struggle of our people. In practice democratic centralism means all the leading party bodies, from top to bottom, are elected. Strict party discipline means subordination of the minority to the majority. A Pan Africanist is one who actively carries out the party program and works in one of its organizations.

The internal life of the party is organized to have full participation of party members in practical work. Conditions are established for giving party members the opportunity to discuss questions, to check the fulfillment of adopted decisions, to elect the leaders, and to know and check their activities. Discussions of all fundamental issues and collective elaboration of decisions form one of the most important methods of party work.

Each discussion involves extensive criticism, disclosing shortcomings, finding their roots, and submitting proposals for their elimination. Such criticism assists progress and properly educates the membership. But the party always distinguishes criticism which strengthens it from that which weakens it, which turns into criticism for criticism's sake. *Under all conditions, the party program, the decisions of the part, and its rules serve to determine its line.* While granting rights to its members, the party at the same time demands loyalty to its programs, aims and objectives. It does not tolerate advocacy of anti-party views, considering it incompatible with the membership in the party. Before a decision is adopted, various views may be expressed and opposite points of view may clash in the party, but once a decision has been adopted, all Pan Africanists act as one person.

This is the essence of party discipline, which requires subordination of the minority to the majority and makes the adopted decisions absolute. Discipline supports the party decisions in which they have taken an active part.

Pan Africanists can become a party only if they are closely linked with the people and enjoy their support. A party may declare itself the vanguard as much as it likes, and yet fail to become one. A party cannot force people to follow it, nor can it win prestige by merely claiming a leading role in its statements to the people. There is only one way for the party to become a real leader and that is by convincing the people that it correctly expresses and defends their interests, by convincing them through deeds, rather than words, through its policies, initiative and devotion. The party must win the confidence and recognition of the people by its work. A Pan African party has a program—a scientific statement of its aims that corresponds to the vital interests of the people. The party must make the final aims of the struggle intelligible to the people.

At the same time the party must have a program of action to satisfy the *immediate* needs of the people. Party members work wherever our people are. This requires the closest day-to-day ties with the people. To serve the people and express their interests properly, the party must conduct all of its activities in the core of the people, drawing from the people the best forces, checking with each step, thoroughly and objectively (1) whether the ties with the people are maintained, (2) whether they are real and (3) alive. Only in this way does the party educate our people, guiding all the activity of the people along the path of conscious revolutionary nationalist action.

Party members attach great importance to mass organizations—black labor unions, neighborhood groups, black women’s associations, and black youth groups. *The African People’s party has no desire to deprive these organizations of their independence.* The party believes that mass organizations can play their role only when each of them effectively accomplishes its own tasks. Party members respect the decisions and discipline of mass organizations in which they work, observe their rules and make it their duty to help each organization defend the interests of the people. In unions, party members show themselves consistent fighters for the interests of black workers. When it comes to strikes, they show themselves the strongest and most energetic organizers of the strike. Among youth, women’s and all other organizations, party members build the influence of the party, *not by commanding*, but by consistency (self-discipline), whether they are members or leaders of the organization. Party members must find ways to the people; we should belong to organizations where leaders and sometimes a large number of the members are indifferent or hostile to nationalism. We must find a *way to the minds and hearts of the people without fearing sacrifices.* To lead the people does not mean continually preaching to them. Pan Africanists should take part in solving our people’s everyday problems and by dealing with them from a Pan Africanist point of view, we will win them over to nationalism. In order to lead the people, we must take into account our people’s experience and their present level of consciousness. This way we will not lose touch with reality and will not run ahead. Otherwise there is a risk of being in the position of a vanguard that has lost contact with the main elements of the people.

The revolutionary nationalist party generalizes the experiences of the whole people and interprets it from the lessons of our historical experience. The party must be able to perceive tendencies which have not fully manifested themselves, but which will develop in the future. A black internationalist party does not invent circumstances; it moves from life, being part of the spontaneous (present) movement. The party can lead the people and teach the people only if it itself learns from the people, *carefully studies all that arises out of the people’s practical activity, and assimilates the wisdom of the people.* To learn from the people in order to teach the people is the principle of leadership practiced by the Pan Africanist party. Party prestige will be continuously increased by winning the support of the people and by actions carried out by it. At the same time, the party cannot adopt the attitude of an infallible teacher, it must speak to the people frankly about both their successes and failures. Pan Africanists are not afraid to speak of their weaknesses. We must show the people we are human and are capable from learning from our mistakes.

The activities of the Pan African party are not just creations of the party leadership. They are the concrete expressions of the political line elaborated by the party on the basis of a scientific analysis of the given stage of the struggle in a given situation. *The term “tactic” means a political line drawn up for a short period of time determined by particular concrete conditions. “Strategy” means the line for a whole historical stage.* Strategy, or the strategic line, is a question of the general tasks of a given historical stage.

Political leadership requires not only a correct, scientifically trustworthy analysis of the situation and drawing up the correct line, but also great ability and skill in putting this line into effect. Without such skill, even the best political line will be of no avail. For political leadership, it is important not only to know, but also to be able to put this knowledge into practice. Theoretical studies alone are not enough.

The party can master the art of leadership only from its practical experience. For a revolutionary party, there is no school that can replace the school of practical struggle, *trial and error*, with all its trials and tribulations, victories and defeats, successes and failures. But by studying other people's mistakes ourselves, we can avoid many mistakes ourselves and can learn from other people's struggles of what not and what to do. The people view reality from the fact of what they experience day to day that directly affects them.

A revolutionary party can only become the vanguard to the people by leading the struggle for immediate economic needs and political interests of the people, by putting forth and fighting for demands that meet the people's needs. An important aspect in the art of political leadership is the ability to *unite* the efforts of *all forces* with whom it's possible to achieve unity, including those with whom there are fundamental differences. The art of political leadership means having the ability to *apply correct tactics for a certain period* and the ability to *change tactics when the historical situation calls for different tactics*, to *find the proper tactics that provide the people with victories*.

Within the collective unconsciousness of the people (discontinuity) is a people's mind's eye; that is to say, people respond when they see their interests collectively being moved upon, a collective urban fire. Show the people the interconnection of events. Provide them with historical continuity, linking events with the main problem on their minds. Show them it is to their interests to carry out the revolution, to move to the next step and finally to the final step, *people's power*.

1947

"White Primary" outlawed – declared unconstitutional (NAACP).

-President Truman integrates the armed services.

-On June 24, 1947, Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier in baseball becoming the first African American player for the Dodgers team in Brooklyn, New York in the national league. On July 5, 1947, Larry Doby became the second African American player in the major leagues playing for the Cleveland Indians and the first African American baseball player in the American League

1948

Race became a key issue in the presidential elections. African Americans were a decisive vote because of the international situation with decolonization in Africa and Asia and the Cold War with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Truman made racial equality a plank in the Democratic Party. Southern Dixiecrats (racists) broke from Truman and ran their own candidates. Thomas Dewey, Republican candidate from New York under estimated Truman and didn't campaign. Henry Wallace ran as a third party candidate, (Progressive Party) on an anti-racist, anti-imperialist, anti-monopoly capitalist campaign. (Truman was aware that the African American population was going to break from the Democratic Party. He stole the program of Henry Wallace and implements it). Truman wrote a "white" paper (office white house documents) titled to Secure These Rights. The NAACP wins primary cases against segregation building legal presence to Brown. Wall failed to win the African American vote, which went overwhelming to Truman. Wallace got 1.5 million votes. Truman took a train ride to local whistle stops. "Give em Hell, Harry!" became a mass slogan.

1949

Mao Tse Tung and the Chinese Communists are victorious in China.

The 1950's, the Terror of McCarthyism and the Mass break in Montgomery, Alabama:

In 1950 the United States and the United Nations after the Soviet Union walked out of the Security Council, entered the Korean Conflict. Integrated U.S. troops were used for the first time in war. Paul Robeson, president of the Civil Rights Congress (CRC) in a mass rally in Madison Square Garden of 10,000 persons advocated that African-Americans not participate in the Korean War. The Civil Rights Congress which existed from 1946 to 1956 led freedom rides in Virginia and engaged in mass demonstrations against racial discrimination. The CRC also attempted to save the lives of Willie McGee, an African-American accused of raping a white woman and the Martinville Seven in Virginia in 1951. Attorney William Peterson drafted the CRC's petition to the United Nations charging the U.S. government with crime of genocide against African-Americans. The CRC had 10,000 members and was subpoenaed by the House on Un-American activities Committee (HUAC).

The mass hysteria created by Senator McCarthy in his anti-communist crusade put extreme pressure on the NAACP and the AFL and CIO to purge their ranks of communists. The NAACP and some labor unions complied.

The National Negro Labor Council (NNLC)

The National Negro Labor Council (NNLC), an interracial group that fought employment discrimination was founded October 27, 1951 in Cincinnati, in response to Union practices of collecting dues from African-American workers but barring them from office. Under the leadership of William R Hood, the membership was 5,000 consisting of African-Americans and whites; mostly trade unionists. The NNLC picketed and protested for labor equality in Unions and private companies nationwide. Through picket lines and protests, the group helped African-Americans get jobs in banks, the airlines, and department stores. The NNLC led the first picket around American Airlines in Cleveland, because the company was not hiring African-American female flight attendants. The NNLC picketed the Commonwealth Bank in Detroit creating jobs for African-Americans as tellers and protested the hiring practices of Sears, Roebuck and Co. The organization also pushed San Francisco's T System Street Railway to hire African-American drivers. The NNLC disbanded on April 29, 1956 rather than submit its membership list to the government for which a hearing had been scheduled before the subversive Activities Control Board in Washington, D.C.¹⁸⁴

Joe William Trotter, Jr. in The African-American Experience Volume II From Reconstruction, states, that when the NNLC disbanded in 1956, African-American trade unionists formed the American Labor Council (ALC) in 1959 which heightened the connection between the labor and civil rights movements emphasizing the utility of non-violent direct action strategies for social change.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁴ Elizabeth Atkins, "400 Come Together to Share History," The Detroit News, (Sunday, March 23, 1993).

¹⁸⁵ Joe William Trotter, Jr., The African-American Experience, Volume II, From Reconstruction [Boston: Haughton Mifflin

In 1954 the NAACP won a major decision from the Supreme Court outlawing Separate but equal and overruling Plessey vs. Ferguson of 1896. Charles Houston's protégé, Thurgood Marshall won the case for the NAACP. A year later two major events occurred, Emmett Till, an African-American teenager visiting relatives in Money, Mississippi was lynched because he whistled at a white woman. The event shocked the nation. Then on December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks, the secretary for the Montgomery, Alabama NAACP and a member of the Women's Political Council decided not to give up her seat in a segregated arrangement to a white man on a bus while she was riding home from work.

What was the Women's Political Council in Montgomery, Alabama and what did they do?

The Women's Political Council in Montgomery was an organization of African American women that had been working in Montgomery trying to change the segregated bus system even before the arrest of Rosa Parks. Upon Mrs. Parks' arrest, it was the council women who contacted the local ministers and organized the first Montgomery bus boycott.¹⁸⁶

This event led to the development of the Montgomery Improvement Association and the mass ascendancy of its leader, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. King advocating the use of non-violent resistance and creative social disorder to end Jim Crow emerged as new and dynamic leader.

In 1955, Queen Mother Audley Moore founded the Reparations Committee of Descendants of United States Slaves. Queen Mother who pioneered grassroots education on reparations for more than three decades, taught young African-American activists and intellectuals the importance of demanding reparations.¹⁸⁷ Queen Mother explained reparations in her pamphlet, Why Reparations?

After 244 years of free slave labor and the most inhuman, sinister and barbaric atrocities which surpass in magnitude any savagery perpetrated against human beings in the history of the planet earth and an additional one hundred years of so-called freedom accompanied by terror, the Committee seeking Reparations for the descendants of African Slaves concludes that the payment of Reparations is an absolute necessity if the Government of the United States is ever to wipe the slate clean, redeem herself and pay for the damages she has inflicted upon more than 35 millions, who are members of the African Race. The payment of Reparations is the only position the U.S.A. can take in the interest of justice and make an effort to restore the dignity to 15 percent of the people thus injured.¹⁸⁸

Who was Queen Mother Audley Moore?

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¹⁸⁶ David J. Garrow (ed), *The Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Women Who Started It*, [Knoxville, Tennessee: The University of Tennessee Press 1987], Roberta Hughes Wright, *The Birth of the Montgomery Bus Boycott* [Southfield, Michigan: Charro Press, Inc. 1991], Rosa Parks with Jim Haskins, *Rosa Parks: My Story* [New York: Scholastic, Inc., 1992]

¹⁸⁷ Martha Biondi, "The Rise of the Reparations Movement," *Radical History Review*, Fall 2003/87 p. 7

¹⁸⁸ Queen Mother Audley A. Moore, *Why Reparations?* [Philadelphia, Pa: The Reparations Committee, 1962] p. 2

Moore, Queen Mother (1898-1997). Born on 27 July 1898 in New Iberia, Louisiana, Audley “Queen Mother” Moore was involved in both the communist and black nationalist movements. While Audley only had three years of formal schooling, her education in southern folkways prepared her for a political life. After marrying at an early age into a black middle-class family, she promptly repudiated this background and joined Marcus Garvey’s black nationalist movement in 1919. That same year, Queen Mother organized a massive demonstration of armed blacks to support Garvey’s right to speak at Longshoreman’s Hall in New Orleans. In the early twenties, Moore, as one of Garvey’s most ardent supporters, migrated to New York City to work in the Garvey organization. Garvey’s incarceration and subsequent deportation left her searching. In 1936 Moore joined the Communist Party. She was an active street agitator and orator, enjoining Harlemites to come to the aid of Ethiopia after its Invasion by Italy. In 1938 she was the Party’s candidate for state assembly from the Twenty-first District and in 1940 she ran for alderman from the Nineteenth Assembly District. In 1941 she was elected executive secretary of the Twenty-First District, the Harlem section of the Communist Party. By 1942 she had risen to become secretary of the New York State branch of the Party. In the late 1940’s she, along with others, began to assert the Afro-American “national question” within the Party, after its suppression during the Earl Browder years. For this she was ignored, and she finally left the Party in 1950.

In the early 1950’s Queen Mother Moore’s political activities took on a decidedly nationalistic bent. She and her sister Eloise, Mother Langley, and Dara Collins founded the Universal Association of Ethiopian Women, which protested the reign of lynch-law in the South. She led the support teams for Robert Williams, an advocate of armed self-defense, after his standoff with authorities in Monroe County, North Carolina, in 1959. She also tutored the young Malcolm X and prodded Elijah Muhammad to call for a separate state for black Americans in the south. During the centennial of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1963, she established a Reparations Committee to advocate compensatory payments to descendants of slaves for their ancestors’ forced labor and for subsequent social and economic injustice. Throughout the 1960’s, Queen Mother Moore’s presence became a catalyst for the new generation of “Black Power” advocates. In 1968 she was one of the critical forces involved in the declaration of the Republic of New Africa and initiated its statement of independence. Throughout the 1970s, she was actively engaged in support of nationalist political prisoners. During her long career of political activism, Queen Mother Moore fused black nationalism, socialism, and Pan-Africanism. She was mentor to many of the sixties and seventies generation of activists. In 1956 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled Alabama laws regarding public transportation were unconstitutional. The Montgomery Bus Boycott lasted about a year and was successful. Daisy Bates of the Little Rock, Arkansas, NAACP helped organize a group of nine African-American students to integrate Central High School in Little Rock. President Eisenhower eventually had to send troops to Little Rock to protect the African-American students. On the third anniversary of the Brown decision, Dr. King along with A. Philip Randolph and Roy Wilkins of the NAACP, organized a mass prayer vigil in Washington, D.C. of some 15,000 to 20,000 people, which was the largest African-American protest demonstration, up until that time, in history. Highway construction programs cut up African American Communities.

Notes on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

We must face the appalling fact that we have been betrayed by both the

Democratic and Republican Parties. The Democrats have betrayed us by capitulating to the whims and caprices of the Southern Dixiecrats. The Republicans have betrayed us by capitulating to the blatant hypocrisy of right-wing reactionary Northerners.¹⁸⁹

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was a 25-year-old minister when the Montgomery boycott began. Dr. King eventually became the spokesman for a mass resistance movement, which lasted for nearly a year. After several clashes with authorities and brutalities concerning segregation on the buses in Montgomery by individuals, the African American community responded when an African American female organizer (Mrs. Rosa Parks), who had a base of mass support, was arrested for refusing to give up her seat to a white passenger.

When Mrs. Rosa Parks, a seamstress at a downtown Montgomery, Alabama department store, a loyal member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and a model of personal industry and propriety, defied the city's segregated transportation ordinance, by refusing to surrender her seat to a white person on the first day of December, 1955, she inaugurated an era in the struggle for civil rights.¹⁹⁰

After several African American women's groups rallied around Mrs. Parks' arrest, they went to Dr. King to seek his support. The idea of a bus or mass boycott had long been discussed in movement circles in Montgomery by E. D. Nixon, a Pullman porter and union organizer. The mass turnout in court to bail out Mrs. Parks, and the 100% support of the boycott of the buses on the first day radicalized Dr. King's thinking and led to a new phase in the civil rights movement—mass civil disobedience. The Montgomery Improvement Association, a broad unified front, was created, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was chosen as its President. During the boycott, from December 1, 1955 until December 21, 1956, car pools were organized to carry African Americans to and from work, and weekly mass rallies were held. At these mass rallies, one could see democracy at work, with the masses voting on, and deciding what strategies to utilize.

Dr. King emerged as an eloquent speaker, and a competent philosopher in describing his variation of nonviolent civil disobedience. Accompanied by Reverend Ralph D. Abernathy, the MIA shaped and molded a mass resistance movement against segregation. Facing harassment, terror, bombings, and beatings, the Montgomery African American community held fast. On November 13, 1956, the United States Supreme Court decreed Alabama's state and local laws enforcing segregation on buses unconstitutional. The entire national African American community, and the nation at large, had watched the event in Montgomery. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. emerged from the success of the Montgomery bus boycott as a new Southern based leader of the civil rights movement. By the late fifties, Dr. King symbolized the new African American spirit and was generally acknowledged as the most important African American leader in America.

In 1957, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. called together progressive African American ministers from around the South. Ministers replaced schoolteachers, as the principle spokespersons in this initial period of mass social protest against segregation, because the

¹⁸⁹ Jack M Bloom, Class, Race and the Civil Rights Movement [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987], p. 151

¹⁹⁰ David Levering Lewis, "Martin Luther King Jr. and the Promise of Nonviolent Populism" in John Hope Franklin and August Meiers' Black Leaders of the Twentieth Century [Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1982], p. 278

African American community directly financed the ministers, and they were less vulnerable to economic reprisals from the white community. The ministers formed the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). Dr. King was elected SCLC's president and the new trend of mass nonviolent resistance took an organized form. Dr. King was also careful in not making the SCLC into a mass-membership organization, in order not to compete with the NAACP. As we shall see later, this may or may not have been a mistake. While SCLC did not advocate the right of armed self-defense, as NAACP did, SCLC from its inception was more mass oriented.

The formation of the SCLC meant that, for the first time in American history, Southern blacks were openly organizing to confront the structure of white-ruled society. And, for the first time, Southern blacks began openly providing leadership for blacks in the nation.¹⁹¹

Dr. King called a conference on civil rights with President Eisenhower. When Eisenhower didn't respond, King approached Roy Wilkins, head of the NAACP, and A. Philip Randolph, to discuss an SCLC proposal of a pilgrimage to Washington, D.C. Some 15,000 to 20,000 people, ninety percent of them African American, assembled at the capitol on the third anniversary of the Brown decision in 1957, because the Eisenhower Administration was dragging its heels in the matter of voting rights.

In 1959, the Louisville NAACP tried sit-ins. Sit-ins were tried in Charleston, West Virginia, and in Lexington, Kentucky CORE tried them. But it was not until February 1, 1960, that the sit-in movement caught on. On that date, four African American college students sat down at the food counter of the local Woolworth's in Greensboro, North Carolina and ordered lunch. The four were asked to leave. They refused, and remained there until the store closed. They returned the next day, and for several days with more people. The sit-in movement spread like wildfire across the South. In two weeks, sit-ins spread to fifteen cities in five Southern states. Within two years, over 50,000 people, mostly African American, participated in some kind of demonstration or another, and over 3,600 demonstrators spent time in jail. In one year, several hundred lunch counters had been desegregated in Southern cities.

Miss Ella Baker, an organizer for SCLC, asked Dr. King and SCLC to financially underwrite a conference to bring the sit-in leaders together. Although Dr. King was at the student conference, the students decided not to affiliate with SCLC, but to form their own organization called the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). When the students sat-in in Atlanta, Dr. King joined them.

In 1961, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), organized freedom rides to test interstate laws of desegregation. The buses were attacked, and SNCC carried the freedom rides on. In 1962, SNCC started mobilizing a Southern rural community in Albany, Georgia. The president of the Albany movement asked Dr. King to come there to help with the leadership of the movement. Little preparation was made for various changes in strategy and tactics. What resulted was thousands of demonstrators being jailed with no negotiated settlement for desegregation taking place. Albany, Georgia proved to be the first setback for Dr. King.

Birmingham, Alabama, 1963

¹⁹¹

Op. Cit. (Jack M. Bloom) p. 149

The struggle to desegregate Birmingham, Alabama was the turning point for Dr. King, SCLC and the civil rights movement. Dr. King, and SCLC, learning from the Albany experience, made careful preparations for the Birmingham campaign.

King, Abernathy and Walker visited Anniston, Gadsden, Tallageeda, Montgomery, Birmingham and the rural areas around Selma, as part of SCLC's People to People tour to stiffen the resolve of Alabama's African Americans to place their names on voter rolls (thirty-seven teachers had recently been fired for trying), and to garner needed area support and national publicity for the campaign.¹⁹²

Birmingham had a reputation of being the most segregated large city in the country. Local ordinances and customs prevented its approximately 140,000 African Americans (out of 350,000) from using "whites-only" public facilities, such as lunch counters, dressing rooms, and water fountains. At that time, only the interstate transportation terminals were integrated.

April 3:

Dr. King arrived in Birmingham. Bull Connor obtained a court hearing banning demonstrations until a full court hearing could be held. King protests anyway. Connor then set about arresting the demonstrators. At first, the protests were peaceful, and relatively few African-Americans were jailed.

April 12:

Dr. King stepped into the streets, joined the demonstrators and was arrested on Good Friday, for violating a court injunction against protest marchers. It was while he was confined over Easter weekend that Dr. King wrote his famous Letter from a Birmingham Jail.

April 20:

King posted bail, but he did not leave Birmingham. The demonstrators continued and Dr. King continued to march.

May 2:

SCLC organized the Children's Crusade coordinated by James Bevel, which recruited 16,000 elementary and high school students aged 6 to 16 into the movement. Thousands of school-age children poured out of the public schools and into the streets. Over 900 children went to jail on May 2nd alone. Helmeted police swept marchers off their feet by turning high-pressure fire hoses on them. Police K-9 dogs tore at marchers' arms, legs and clothes. As protesters lay helpless on the ground, police beat them with clubs and dragged them into waiting police wagons.

King's brother (A.D. King) home and hotel room were both bombed. King still pleaded with the masses of African-Americans to remain non-violent. The African-American masses responded by throwing rocks and bottles at police during the night. During this crisis, Kennedy sent federal troops around Birmingham. The city remained calm as civil

¹⁹² John Hope Franklin and August Meier, Black Leaders of the Twentieth Century [Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1982] p. 285

rights activists agreed to halt demonstrations in exchange for an agreement that businesses would desegregate and hire African-Americans.

June 10:

President Kennedy addressed the nation about the tense racial situation and his proposed Civil Rights bill.

June 11:

Medgar Evers, Mississippi state chairman of the NAACP, was shot in the head from behind and assassinated within 24 hours of Kennedy's television appearance.

The emphasis of direct action mass demonstration in the North was on increased job opportunities and an end to de facto segregation in housing and education. In New York and Philadelphia demonstrators sought to block tax-supported construction on which African-Americans received little or no employment. In Philadelphia, PA, RAM working with the NAACP organized mass demonstrations against union discrimination in the building trades, centered in North Philadelphia's African-American community. In a week's time, over 30,000 people participated in the demonstrations. This was considered the first mass breakthrough in the North, which led to others patterning their demonstrations after the Philadelphia demonstrations.

Dr. King spoke at a Los Angeles fundraising rally, organized by singer, Harry Belafonte, and had private meetings with the press to prepare for the campaign. Demonstrations began on April 3rd, led by the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights (ACMHR) and SCLC. Thousands demonstrated and filled the jails in Birmingham. Sheriff "Bull" Connor turned his police loose on the demonstrators, using dogs to attack children, police using clubs on women, firemen using high pressure water hoses to strip the backs of demonstrators bare and tear gas to strangle demonstrators. Dr. King was jailed, and wrote his famous "letter from a Birmingham jail." Millions were shocked by the atrocities they saw on television, and hundreds of protest demonstrations started across the nation. Burke Marshall, assistant United States Attorney General in charge of civil rights, was sent to Birmingham to set up negotiations.

The UAW raised nearly \$300,000.00 in bail money, and the U.S. Supreme Court declared sit-in demonstrations legal in cities that enforced segregation ordinances. While segregation began to end in Birmingham, the civil rights movement had picked up momentum nationwide, with African Americans demanding that Washington do something.

Militant activists in CORE, while holding impromptu street rallies, started the rumor, which turned into a mood, to "March on Washington". The second March on Washington movement was in full swing when President Kennedy called the leaders of the "big four" together (SCLC, NAACP, SNCC, CORE) to gain relative control over the movement, which was calling for total social disobedience to close down Washington. All of the civil rights organizations cooperated to have a peaceful, nonviolent march, where 250,000 people converged on Washington to demand full equality. The March on Washington was the largest demonstration for civil rights ever held in the country up until that time. Dr. King gave his famous, "I Have A Dream" speech, as the highlight of the demonstration.

But soon after, the reality of the white black-lash, racist reaction struck. On September 22nd, four African American girls attending Sunday school in Birmingham were murdered when a bomb exploded in the church. Dr. King had to call on his reserves, to ask thousands of African Americans to remain nonviolent in the aftermath.

President Kennedy was assassinated not long afterward. In 1964, Congress, under the approval of President Lyndon B. Johnson, passed the Civil Rights Act. In return, Dr. King, fearing that Barry Goldwater would be elected, called for a moratorium on demonstrations and support Lyndon Johnson for President. But the mood of African Americans was getting consistently more militant, and this eventually became a crisis for Dr. King. African Americans began to react violently against police brutality in the North, and urban rebellions spread during the summer of 1964, in Rochester, New York, spreading to New York City, Chicago, Jersey City, New Jersey and Philadelphia, PA. SNCC was engaged in the Mississippi Freedom Summer campaign designed to register African Americans to vote.

In August 1965, the bodies of three SNCC volunteers, two white and one African American were found in Philadelphia, Mississippi. In late 1964, SCLC targeted Selma, Alabama to launch a major voter registration campaign. The campaign got underway in early 1965. Dr. King came in, mobilized demonstrators, and was put in jail. Malcolm X, who had met with Dr. King, came to Selma and spoke, promising support from his forces. As the campaign dragged on, Dr. King was released from jail and went back to Atlanta to raise funds.

On Sunday, March 7th, as thousands of singing demonstrators marched across Selma's Pettus Bridge, on their way to petition their right of the ballot to Governor George Wallace in Montgomery. There, they were savagely repulsed and chased by state troopers and Sheriff Clark's deputies. Some demonstrators retaliated with rocks and bottles.¹⁹³

A couple of days later, Dr. King led 3,000 demonstrators across Pettus Bridge, but to avoid the possibility of bloodshed, Dr. King knelt in prayer and turned back, rather than break a court order blocking the march. SCLC, working diplomatically, managed to get the Federal injunction lifted. On March 21st, thousands marched with Dr. King on the Selma to Montgomery march, demanding voting rights. In Montgomery, Dr. King gave one of his most important speeches. Congress passed the Johnson sponsored, Voting Rights Act.

Dr. King moved to Chicago in early 1966, where he demanded adequate housing, jobs, and complete public school integration for African Americans. Dr. King and Ralph Abernathy rented an apartment in the inner city and used that as their base. Dr. King also met with Elijah Muhammad, leader of the Nation of Islam. Dr. King's demand for open housing led him to march into white community. He had made an alliance with African American street gangs in Chicago and they marched with him and were mobbed by white racists. Dr. King himself was stoned. The Chicago campaign ended with a summit agreement between Dr. King and Mayor Richard Daley.

SNCC changed its policy in 1966, from the goal of integration to achieving "Black Power" (cultural pluralism), and from nonviolent to armed self defense. SNCC opposed the U.S. involvement in Vietnam, and supported the PLO in its struggle against Israel. SNCC also

¹⁹³

Op. Cit., (Franklin and Meiers), p. 290

sought to form a third black political party in Alabama, which spread to other parts of the country, called the Black Panther Party.

The Meredith March: Black Power, the Movement Shifts

When James Meredith was shot in the March Against Fear, in Mississippi, the civil rights movement was floundering, or in flux. By that point, Dr. King was already beginning to realize that in order for African Americans to achieve freedom, the American social order had to be radically altered. He said, “Some of the nation’s industries must be nationalized” and a guaranteed annual wage enacted.”

Dr. King had also become a target of J. Edgar Hoover, of the FBI, and the rumor that Southern businessmen had a contract on his head, was widespread. During the Mississippi March, Stokely Carmichael of SNCC, and Floyd McKissick of CORE, embraced the concept of “Black Power” and openly challenged Dr. King for leadership of the movement. Though Dr. King felt that he couldn’t embrace the concept of Black Power, he refused to aggressively attack it publicly. Thousands of African Americans participated in spontaneous violent uprisings in Northern cities in 1966. How to harness this anger into a positive social outlet, and the change in SNCC policy caused Dr. King to make a reassessment and develop a radical alternative to changing a racist society.

After writing his book, Where Do We Go From Here?, Dr. King became critical of the fact that the Johnson Administration was spending \$30 billion on the war in Vietnam, monies which could help eliminate poverty. In April 1967, Dr. King began his anti-war moves in New York City, speaking at the Spring Mobilization Rally in Central Park, and the United Nations Plaza. Many of the more conservative leaders of the NAACP and the Urban League criticized Dr. King for his anti-war stance. Even some of his lieutenants in SCLC disagreed with him.

It was in 1967 that Dr. King said, “we are no longer in a race war; this is a class war.” He sent word to militants all over the country that he was going to create a broad popular united front to mobilize people of all nationalities, creeds and colors for a showdown with racism and class oppression. In other words, he was planning to bring things to a head.

African Americans exploded in some 200 cities in the summer of 1967. The country was becoming polarized. But, Dr. King was planning to mobilize the progressive majority of Native Americans, Chicanos, Asians, African Americans, laborers, and poor whites into a Poor People’s Campaign. He intended to start with a small group of about 3,000 activists, who would camp out in Washington, D.C., lobby, and begin civil disobedience that would eventually escalate to hundreds of thousands, shutting the city down.

The core of this Poor People’s Campaign was SCLC’s \$12 billion Economic Bill of Rights (originally proposed by A. Philip Randolph), guaranteeing employment to the able-bodied, viable incomes to all those legitimately unemployed, a Federal Open Housing Act, and vigorous enforcement of integrated education.¹⁹⁴

Responding to the struggle of striking municipal sanitation workers (mostly African American), Dr. King went to Memphis, Tennessee, on March 28, 1968. While leading a demonstration, African American teens, known as the Invaders, clashed with police and

¹⁹⁴

Ibid. (Franklin and Meier) p. 299

started a mini-rebellion, which grossly upset Dr. King. He was also aware of a plot against his life, but was determined to go on. He planned to return to lead the struggle, and if necessary, to ask the Teamsters to go on a general strike. After receiving a message of his impending assassination, delivered by Bayard Rustin, Dr. King gave his last message, after returning to Memphis, "I've Been to the Mountaintop". Dr. King was ruthlessly assassinated on April 4, 1968. His goals of mobilizing and eventually organizing poor people, to demand political, social and economic democracy (equity) still burns in the hearts of many who say that the struggle continues.

Who Was Robert F. Williams?

In 1957 Robert F. Williams president of the Monroe, North Carolina branch of the NAACP organized an armed defense guard and had gun battles with the Ku Klux Klan. Robert F. Williams, known as "Rob," was born February 25, 1925, in Monroe, North Carolina.

Robert Williams was raised on stories from his former-slave grandmother, Ellen, and tales of his grandfather Sikes Williams, also born into slavery, who stumped North Carolina for the Republican Party during Reconstruction and published a newspaper called "The People's Voice." Before she died, Ellen Williams gave young Robert the rifle which his grandfather had wielded against the terrorist "Red Shirts" who ravaged Southern blacks at the turn of the century.¹⁹⁵

As a youth, Rob Williams became radicalized by blatant racist Southern terror. Williams came face to face with racism early on. As an 11 year-old in 1936, he saw a white policeman, Jesse Helms, Sr., beat an African-American woman to the ground. Williams watched in terror as North Carolina Senator Jesse Helm's father hit the woman and "dragged her down the street to a nearby jailhouse, her dress over her head, the same way that a cave man would club and drag his prey."¹⁹⁶

In his mid-teens, Rob Williams organized a group called X-32 to throw stones at white men who drove nightly into town trying to assault African-American women.¹⁹⁷

Later, Rob Williams was trained as a machinist in the National Youth Administration, where he organized a strike of workers at the age of 16.¹⁹⁸ During World War II, he went north to find work. He moved to Michigan where he worked for a year at the Ford Motor Company as an automobile worker. Rob and his brother John Williams fought in the Detroit 1943 riot, when white mobs stormed through the streets and killed dozens of African American citizens.¹⁹⁹

Drafted into the army in 1944, Rob Williams served for 18 months, fighting for freedom in a segregated army. In the late 1940s Williams wrote a story in *The Daily worker* entitled

¹⁹⁵ Timothy B. Tyson, "Robert Franklin Williams: A Warrior for Freedom 1925-1996." Southern Exposure, Winter 1996, p. 6.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁹⁷ Darci McConnell, "The Father of Black Revolutionaries: White God Lay Sleeping, Robert F. Williams Changed Lives," The Grand Rapids Press, Sunday, February 19, 1995, p. E2.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., p. E2.

¹⁹⁹ Timothy B. Tyson, "Robert Franklin Williams: A Warrior for Freedom 1925-1996," A Legacy of Resistance [Detroit, Michigan: Robert Williams Tribute Committee, 1996], p. 47.

“Some Day I Am Going Back South.”²⁰⁰ Williams returned to Monroe and in 1947 married Mabel Ola Robinson, a beautiful and brilliant 17 year-old whom he had known for several years and who shared his commitment to social justice and African-American liberation. In 1953 Williams joined the U.S. Marines before attending West Virginia State College, North Carolina, and Johnson C. Smith College in Charlotte, North Carolina. In 1955 as a husband and father of two sons (Robert F. Williams, Jr. and John C. Williams), he returned home with an honorable discharge from the U. S. Marine Corps.

Keenly aware of social injustice, Rob Williams joined the local NAACP and became its president. As president of the Monroe, North Carolina, NAACP branch he went into the bars and pool rooms to recruit members of the African-American working class. He was also a member of the Monroe Unitarian Fellowship and the Union County Human Relations Council. Facing armed harassment and intimidation of African American women by the KKK and denied justice in the courts, Williams began to advocate armed self-defense of the Monroe, North Carolina African American community. Members of the NAACP branch formed a rifle club, with a National Rifle Association charter, and protected their homes with rifles, machine guns, and sandbag fortifications.

The Monroe, N. C., NAACP branch fought the KKK on numerous occasions with rifles and Molotov cocktails. From 1957 to 1961 the armed self-defense units militarily fought the racists. Because of his militancy, Rob Williams was stripped of his presidency of the branch by the national NAACP. But through Williams’s leadership, the Monroe branch had grown from a membership of 50 to 250.

The Kissing Case

Williams attracted worldwide attention in 1958, when he took up the defense of two black Monroe boys accused of molesting a white girl.

David “Fuzzy” Simpson, 8, and James “Hanover” Thompson, 10, were convicted of molesting the 7-year-old girl after she kissed them on the cheek during a game instigated by a white boy. Police nabbed the boys later that day as they pulled their wagon down Franklin Street. They were tossed into jail and held for six days without seeing or speaking to their parents.

The peck on the cheek set off a tempest. A white mob surrounded the jail. White supremacists fired shots into Fuzzy and Hanover’s homes. Six days later during a court hearing a judge sentenced the children to reform school near Rockingham indefinitely.

As head of the NAACP, Williams rushed to defend the children and masterminded a media blitz that landed the “kissing case” on the front page of newspapers from the *New York Post* to the *London News chronicle*. He sent out press releases, called major newspapers and embarked on a national speaking tour.

²⁰⁰ Stephanie Banchero, “Hero or Renegade?” *The Charlotte Observer*, Sunday, February 26, 1995, p. 10A.

The publicity sparked worldwide protests. Activists implored President Dwight Eisenhower to intervene. N.C. Gov. Luther Hodges received tens of thousands of letters beseeching him to release the boys. He finally relented. Three months after they were snatched off a Monroe sidewalk, Fuzzy and Hanover came home. And Williams became a hometown hero among African-Americans.²⁰¹

The Fight for Desegregation

Between 1960 and 1961 Williams organized demonstrations (peaceful pickets) to desegregate the city-owned, white-only swimming pool. The African American community engaged in a struggle to use the local swimming pool that had been constructed with federal funds. Local white authorities would not allow integrated use nor would they consent to separate use. When the African American community refused to give up and did not accept promises of construction of a pool at some undefined date in the future, the town government filled the pool with concrete rather than let the African American community use it.²⁰²

When the sit-in movement began among Southern African American students, Rob Williams staged sit-ins at lunch counters, organized boycotts of department stores and desegregated the local library. He was a candidate for mayor of the city of Monroe in 1960, running as an independent.

Also in 1960, Williams visited Cuba, met Fidel Castro, and became a member of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee. He would even fly a Cuban flag in his back yard.²⁰³ Rob Williams was a forerunner in the motion toward black political empowerment.

Rob Williams's physical and political stance on armed self-defense impacted upon Malcolm X, who then was a minister of the Nation of Islam. Minister Malcolm X on one occasion let Williams speak at Mosque No. 7 in New York to raise money for arms.

Freedom Riders Come to Monroe

When the Freedom Rides began in 1961, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Rob Williams – who had debated nonviolence vs. self-defense as a tactic or philosophy – agreed to test nonviolence in Monroe. It was Rob Williams's belief in the right of having peaceful demonstrations but using them in tactical flexibility with self-defense that led him to invite Freedom Riders to Monroe, North Carolina, in 1961 to test nonviolence. But when the Freedom Riders came to Monroe, white mobs numbering in the thousands attacked them.

The final confrontation came when the Black community came to the aid of nonviolent freedom riders who were demonstrating in front of city hall. The demonstration had been attacked by a vicious mob that had beaten Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) activist James Forman with a shotgun, splitting his head open. Unsuccessful efforts were made to rescue them and get them back to the Black community. Armed Black people set up defenses at the border between the white section of town and the Black community of Newton.²⁰⁴

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Interview with Robert F. Williams, Cleveland, Ohio, 1994.

²⁰³ Ibid

²⁰⁴ "Black Freedom Movement Loses Giant: Robert F. Williams of Monroe, N.C. Succumbs to Cancer," Justice Speaks. Volume 14.

A racial riot broke out as shots were fired. During the race riot a white couple wandered into the angry African American community. Their car was surrounded by African Americans from adjoining communities who had come to Newton for a showdown with the Klan. Rob Williams allowed the couple to take shelter in his home. Although the couple left unharmed, the local authorities pressed kidnapping charges against Williams. Receiving word that he would be held accountable for all the violence that was taking place and knowing the racists were preparing to kill him, Robert F. Williams, along with his wife and two sons, left town.

Escaping a nationwide manhunt of at least 500 FBI agents, Rob Williams and his family were forced out of the country and into exile. His successful escape from “legal” racism was one of the early victories of the civil rights movement. Rob Williams’s example of courageous struggle stimulated a young generation of activists to emulate his actions.

Williams in Exile

Williams went to Cuba, where he was given political asylum by Fidel Castro and welcomed by the Cuban people. He was a personal friend of Ernesto “Che” Guevara. While living in Cuba for five years, Rob and Mabel Williams organized a radio program called “Radio Free Dixie.” Radio Free Dixie brought the message of collective armed self-defense to the African American masses who were battling the racists in America’s streets.

From exile in Havana Williams wrote the book *Negroes with Guns* (published 1962) about his experiences from 1957 to 1961. He also continued to publish his newsletter *The Crusader*, which called upon African Americans to unite with their allies in Africa, Asia, and Latin America (the Third World) and with progressive whites in the United States and through out the world. Appealing to all heads of state to make a call in support of the civil rights movement, Robert F. Williams was influential in the issue by Chairman Mao Zedong of the People’s Republic of China of a declaration of support to the cause of African American Liberation.

As international chairman of the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM, 1965), Rob Williams traveled in Asia representing the African American freedom struggle. He moved to the Peoples’ Republic of China in 1966 and resided there during the height of the “Cultural Revolution.” While there he met and talked with Chinese leaders and toured the country. He visited North Vietnam, met and talked with President Ho Chi Minh. He also broadcast antiwar messages to African American soldiers in South Vietnam from North Vietnam.

The example Rob Williams set in the African American Freedom movement inspired the formation in the South of groups such as the Deacons for Defense (1965) and the development of the student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), which changed its policy from nonviolence to armed self-defense in 1966; the Black Panther Party (BPP, 1966) and the League of Revolutionary Black Workers (LRBW, 1969) considered Rob Williams the godfather of the armed self-defense movement.

White in China, Williams was elected President-in-Exile of the Detroit-based self-determinationist organization, the Republic of New Africa. Williams visited Africa and was imprisoned in Britain while trying to return to the U.S. In 1969 he returned to the U.S.A. and fought extradition from Michigan to North Carolina. He finally returned to North Carolina in 1976, after all charges against him had been dropped.

Back in the U.S.A.

After returning to the United States he continued his political relations with the People's Republic of China, helping to establish an import-export trade agreement with China and paving the way for President Nixon's historic trip to that country in 1972. Rob Williams was a Fellow at the University of Michigan's Center for Chinese Studies. Williams also published an article on the "Cultural Revolution." He served as director of the Detroit East Side Citizens Abuse Clinic, where he was "too" successful in rehabilitating clients.

Rob William resided in Baldwin, Michigan, remaining active in the People's Association for Human Rights. In the late 1970s he traveled the country speaking for the U.S.-China People's Friendship Association.²⁰⁵ Rob Williams completed the first draft of his autobiography, *While God Lay Sleeping: The Autobiography of Robert F. Williams*.

Up until his untimely death, October 15, 1996, due to Hodgkin's disease, Williams was planning to further escalate his leadership activities in the African American liberation movement, even at the age of 71.²⁰⁶ His fighting spirit and leadership will be felt forever. Rob Williams's shining example as a courageous, sincere, scientific, spiritual, visionary, and honest freedom fighter will be honored. Robert F. Williams's insight and foresight is an inspiration for those who cherish the establishment of a people's democracy based on humanitarian principles.

In 1958 Dr. Martin Luther King in a meeting with sixty ministers from across the South was elected president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). The SCLC advocated the use of non-violent direct action as a strategy for achieving equality. Ella Baker is chosen interim executive secretary of the organization.

Why did Southern African-American Ministers led by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) provide leadership to the southern civil rights movement in the 1950's and early 60's?

The African American church and its leaders have always had a prominent role in all facets of life in the African American Community. It not only nourishes the spirit but the minds and hearts of African Americans and its leaders are usually well respected in the community. The church is the place of solace, guidance, information and social interaction. Thus, when the civil rights movement began, the church and its leaders were the ones who could rally the support and cohesiveness necessary to affect change. It was also because the previous leaders, (the teachers), could be fired by the southern state governments.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁵ "An Interview with Robert Williams," *Black News, Volume 4, No. 7*, May 1979, p. 16.

²⁰⁶ Conversation with Robert F. Williams, Baldwin, Michigan, 1995

²⁰⁷ Ahon D. Morris, *The Origins of The Civil Rights Movement* [New York: The Free Press, 1984]

1956

Integration of the University of Alabama by Autherine J. Lucy. Supreme Court rules Montgomery's (Alabama) laws, Separate but Equal, on public transportation is unconstitutional.

1958

Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)

- Formed by Martin Luther King (elected president)
- Meets with 60 ministers from across the south.
- Advocates nonviolent direct action as a strategy for achieving equality.
- Starts non-violent movement to the end of Jim Crow and gain voting rights in South.
- Jim Crow is ruled unconstitutional.

1959

Different groups experiment with nonviolent direct action. The Louisville NAACP tries sit-ins to desegregate public facilities. Charleston, West Virginia and Lexington CORE try sit-ins.

On February 1, 1960, four students, Joseph McNeil, David Richmond, Franklin McCain, Izell Blair from the North Carolina Agricultural and technical College in Greensboro, North Carolina sit-in (white only section) at a segregated lunch counter. This was the beginning of the sit-in movement. The center of focus was Woolworth's national chain. On Tuesday the 4 freshmen were joined by about 20 new recruits from North Carolina A&T and returned to the same counter²⁰⁸ On February 3 over fifty African-American and three white students participated in the demonstration. Demonstrations spread to Nashville, TN, Charleston, SC, Atlanta, GA. By April 50,000 African-American and white students had joined the sit-in movement.

1960

Slater King runs for Mayor of Albany, Georgia and Robert F. Williams runs for Mayor of Monroe, North Carolina. Both run as independents.

Who Was Ella Baker (1903-1986) and what did she believe in?

Ella Baker was born on December 13, 1903 in Norfolk, Virginia.²⁰⁹ She did not consider a teaching career, because she considered it traditionally "women's work". Graduate studies in sociology at the University of Chicago were too expensive, so Baker moved to New York City where she lived with cousins. She obtained a job as a restaurant waitress and later as a factory worker to pay her bills.²¹⁰ Baker came in contact with radical politics for the first time when she arrived in New York in 1927. It was there, in New York, in the early days of the Great Depression at Washington Square Park in Harlem that she heard debates over ideas such as communism, socialism, and capitalism discussed. Baker participated in discussion groups and demonstrations that were concerning themselves with praxis. Often, Baker would be the only woman and the only African-American in attendance. Politically she was becoming

²⁰⁸ James McEvory & Abraham Miller (ed), Black Power and Student Rebellions [Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, Inc., 1969] p. 379.

²⁰⁹ Elizabeth D. Schafer, Dorothy C. Salem "Baker, Ella (1903-1986)", African-American Women: A Biographical Dictionary [New York: Garland Publishing, 1983], p. 25.

²¹⁰ Ibid. (Schafer) p. 25.

increasingly class conscious. Baker also began attending graduate courses at the New School for Social Research.²¹¹

In 1932, Baker joined with George Schuyler, an African-American writer with the Pittsburgh Courier, to organize the Young Negro Cooperative League. The Young Negro Cooperative League (YNCL) was an attempt at community organizing for African-American economic self-sufficiency. It attempted to discourage consumers from patronizing businesses with racist hiring practices.²¹² The YNCL initiated "Buy Black" campaigns seeking to get African-American customers to patronize African-American businesses and use economic boycotts as a labor strategy. The YNCL also critiqued structural unemployment and was critical of "black capitalism". Eventually working as national director of the YNCL, Baker organized stores and collective buying clubs throughout the country. During this time, the Harlem Labor Union was picketing for jobs for African-Americans on 125th street, as part of the "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work" movement. The YNCL collectively banked funds, donated services and resources to cooperatives, and collectively purchased goods. The group cooperated with the New Deal Program Administration to develop a consumer education project.²¹³ In 1935, Baker accepted a position as director of the Consumers Education Project in the Works Progress Administration.

In the times of the Depression, African-Americans established cooperative classes in settlement houses and African-American women's clubs. For much of the 1930's, many African-Americans' social relations were based on an extended communal socialist economic interdependence family basis. This began to break down in the 1940's as the economy recovered. Starting in 1929, Baker joined the editorial staff of the American West Indian News and later served as office manager and editorial assistant for the Negro National News.²¹⁴ In 1932, Miss Baker began to freelance for The Crisis, the NAACP's publication of which W.E.B. DuBois was editor.²¹⁵

In 1935, as an experienced labor organizer, Ella Baker co-wrote with Marvel Cooke, "The Bronx Slave Market". The article, which was researched by both women posing as domestic workers, exposed the roles of white working class women as employers, many of which cheated African-American women domestics. These activities earned Baker renown for her organizing abilities. In 1938, Baker began working for the NAACP as an assistant field secretary, traveling throughout the South to recruit, collect money and publicize the inequalities of African-Americans in the region. Eventually, Ella Baker became national field secretary for the NAACP and traveled throughout the South to organize NAACP branches and developed membership drives. In two years, Miss Baker attended 362 meetings and traveled 16,244 miles. "Because of her impressive success in the field, Baker was named the National Director of Branches in 1943."²¹⁶

In 1943, Baker returned to New York. Under her leadership, Baker emphasized the need for

²¹¹ Op. Cit. (Schafer) p. 25.

²¹² Joy James, Ella Baker: Black Women's Work and Activist Intellectuals," The Black Scholar Volume 24, No. 4, Fall 1994 p. 10.

²¹³ Britta W. Nelson, "Ella Baker – A Leader Behind the Scenes," Focus Volume 21 No. 8, August 1983 p. 3

²¹⁴ Op. Cit., p. 10.

²¹⁵ Ibid. (James) p. 10.

²¹⁶ Joan Corl Elliott, Ella Baker (1903-1986) in Jessie Carney Smith (ed.) Notable Black American Women [Detroit: Gale, 1992], p. 40.

job training for African-Americans to gain equal rights. Baker held leadership conferences and recruited low-income members into the organization. The NAACP's agenda was geared towards the middle class, that is, the leadership was more concerned with recognition from white liberals and did not have the foresight of realizing the potential of mass-based confrontational politics, often neglecting economic issues. As a result of Baker's criticism, several regional leadership conferences took place and a youth program was introduced. Ella remained in a confrontational status with the conservative NAACP leadership until she resigned her national post in 1946. In 1946 Baker became guardian to her eight-year-old niece, which restricted her ability to travel and she resigned from the NAACP. Baker's resignation was due more to the NAACP's conservative national leadership and its inability to incorporate the African-American working class in its ranks and establish participatory democracy for its members. Baker also felt that the national leadership of the NAACP catered to white interests. In 1954, Baker became president of the New York City branch of the NAACP and chaired the education committee. Under Baker's leadership, the New York branch of the NAACP became the best organized and most active in the country. Baker assisted in the beginnings of community action against de facto segregation in New York public schools.²¹⁷

Baker became disillusioned with the NAACP, because it was directed from the top down rather than by the branches. Baker wanted the branches to be more active and in complete control.²¹⁸ Baker also raised funds for the National Urban League and ran unsuccessfully for the New York State Assembly as the Liberal Party candidate in 1953.

When the bus boycott erupted in Montgomery, Alabama, Baker and Stanley Levison offered assistance to the boycott movement. Baker, who had worked with Rosa Parks during her NAACP fieldwork in Alabama in the mid-1950's, collaborated with civil rights activist Bayard Rustin to found a new organization in New York called "In Friendship," which provided financial and organizational support to African-Americans who were fighting discrimination in the South, including the participants in the Montgomery (Alabama) bus boycott. Supporting the boycott was consistent with Baker's belief in building strong mass movements in the South that would pursue a more confrontational course of direct action than had been pursued by the NAACP, which Baker felt had become increasingly "hung up in its legal successes".

It was Ella's and the In Friendship group's influence that convinced Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and other southern civil rights leaders that the Montgomery bus boycott mobilization should be used as a foundation to form a mass organization built on mass confrontation with Jim Crow and the racist capitalist system to advance democratic rights for the masses of African-Americans. Baker felt that there was a need for a new organization. Her consistent arguments with Dr. King contributed to the founding of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) in 1957, with Dr. King as its president and Ella Baker as its interim executive secretary.

Baker consequently exhorted the leadership of the Montgomery Improvement Association to continue its fight against widespread racial injustice, not for just the desegregation of buses. Through Baker's efforts, in 1957 the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) was formed

²¹⁷ *Op. Cit.* (Elliott) (Notable Black American Women), p. 40.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.* (Elliott) p. 40

to fight all types of racial injustice.²¹⁹

Baker built up the SCLC's organizational structure; set up office in Atlanta, hired staff, worked with the community to prepare voter registration drives, created the SCLC newsletter, "The Crusader", and organized the 1958 Citizenship Crusade, the massive campaign to educate African-Americans in the South on how to participate in the electoral process. She began to work closely with her co-worker, Septima Clark. Baker came into conflict with the chauvinist African-American preachers, who dominated the SCLC structure. She felt SCLC was too centered on the charisma of Dr. King (single leadership oriented) and that the movement should have group-centered leadership. Instead of trying to develop people around a leader, efforts should be made to develop leadership out of the group.

"Spread the leadership roles so you're organizing people to be self-sufficient rather than to be dependent upon...a charismatic leader."²²⁰

In 1960, the sit-in movement to desegregate lunch counter facilities in restaurants in the South broke out mobilizing 50,000 African-American students to participate in non-violent direct action protests against the Jim Crow system. Ella Baker realizing the movement's potential borrowed \$500 from SCLC and asked Dr. King's permission to call a conference of the sit-in leaders. The conference was held at Ella Baker's alma mater, Shaw University on April 14-17, 1960 (Easter weekend). It drew two hundred and fifty leaders and their supporters. Upon Ella Baker's insistence that the students had something no one could match, they formed themselves into the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and became an independent action oriented civil rights organization instead of affiliating with Dr. King's SCLC.

Ella Baker always believed in the concept of mobilizing the grassroots, therefore, she would participate in workshops and projects.

Ella Baker's philosophy of participatory democracy:

She also organized workshops for civil rights activists at the Highlander Folk School with Septima P. Clark. Believing that leaders should empower others, Baker emphasized that the people, knowing what they needed and wanted should be taught how to resolve their problems and help themselves. Through citizenship, education, and decentralized local leadership, Baker projected that national civil rights goals could be met.²²¹

Baker left SCLC to become a staff organizer/advisor for SNCC. It was through her guidance that SNCC operated in rural counties in the deep racist South and organized the "Mississippi Freedom Summer" project in Mississippi in 1964. SNCC conducted successful voter-registration drives and raised the political consciousness of poor African-Americans to the point where they formed the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party and challenged the racist Mississippi democrats in Atlantic City. Baker never imposed her will on SNCC and advised those who sought her advice.

²¹⁹ *Op. Cit.* (Elliott), p. 41.

²²⁰ *Op. Cit.* (Nelson), p. 4.

²²¹ *Op. Cit.* (Schafer), p. 17.

Ella Baker often said, "Hitting an individual with your fists is not enough to overcome racism and segregation. It takes organization, it takes dedication, it takes the willingness to stand and do what has to be done when it has to be done."

Ella Baker taught that participatory democracy had three themes:

1. the involvement of grassroots people in the decisions that affect their lives;
2. the minimization of hierarchy and professionalism in organizations working for social change; and
3. engagement of direct action to resolve social problems.²²²

Baker emphasized, "in organizing a community, you start with people where they are."²²³ Meaning that the organizer does not go in a community and start a new organization or struggle over something the people are not concerned with. The organizer agitates over the issues that the community is concerned with.

Ella Baker asked the questions,

On what basis do you seek to organize people? Do you start to try to organize them on the fact of what you think, or what they are first interested in? You start where the people are. Identify with people.²²⁴

Baker stressed that the role of the organizer in the community is to act as a catalyst in the process that would bring to the forefront indigenous (local) leadership that should not be dependent upon the organizer or organizers and should avoid the "charismatic" messianic leadership approach. Ella Baker stressed group-centered leadership in which she emphasized that the role of leadership is to act as a facilitator, who brings out the potential in others, rather than a person who commands respect and a following as a result of charisma or status. Baker believed in empowering people through their direct participation in the process of social change. So at that point in the struggle, most young organizers saw that key to the development of people's organizations was mobilization of the masses around the immediate issues that affected them, then the organizers would guide the people's movement, once mobilized, to the goal of socialism. Ella Baker believed political action should empower people to solve their own problems. She felt the movement should be organizing people to act on their own behalf.

Baker taught how to work with the local leadership in a community by first assisting their activities before proceeding in a different direction. Baker constantly repeated that the common working masses had the power to change the system, once they saw their power and were determined to use it. Baker said,

My sense of it has always been to get people to understand that in the long run they, themselves are the only protection they have against violence or injustice...People have to be made to understand that they cannot look for salvation anywhere but to themselves.²²⁵

²²² Carol Mueller, "Ella Baker and the Origins of Participatory Democracy" in Vicki L. Crawford, Jacqueline Anne Rouse, Barbara Woods (ed.) *Women in Civil Rights Movement: Trailblazers and Torchbearers 1941-1965* [Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990], p. 56.

²²³ Gerda Lerner, "Developing Community Leadership" in *Black Women in White America* [New York: Pantheon, 1972], p. 20.

²²⁴ Ella Cantarow and Susan Gushee O'Malley, "Ella Baker: Organizing for Civil Rights" in *Moving the Mountain: Women Working for Social Change* [New York: The Feminist Press, 1980], p. 16.

²²⁵ Charles Payne, "Strong People Don't Need Strong Leaders: Ella Baker, Models of Social Change," unpublished paper, Northeastern University, Department of African Studies, 1987, p. 5.

Ella Baker summarized her philosophy that political activists should work to build a strong people, not strong leaders by saying, it is important to keep the movement democratic and to avoid struggle for personal leadership.²²⁶ Baker taught this philosophy of organizing, of creating mass oriented movements and organizations to a generation of organizers. Baker's importance of passing lessons of a creative pedagogy of teaching through involvement-participation and critical analysis by doing; was invaluable for young organizers of the 1960's - 70's. In 1972, when SNCC dissolved itself, Baker moved to Harlem and served as vice chair of the Mass Party Organizing Committee and as a national board member of the Puerto Rican Solidarity Committee. Baker lectured about human rights, especially for South Africans. Baker continued her spirit of organizing until her death, December 13, 1986.

Though they never publicly worked together Baker's contemporary in the black nationalist movement who also nurtured many of the 1960's African-American activists was Queen Mother Audley Moore.

Ella Baker was a civil rights activist who believed that strong effective local activism as opposed to centralized top down activism was essential to bring about the changes necessary to foster political and economic change for African Americans. She facilitated the organizing of SNCC (Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee) by calling together student leaders from across the country to a conference at Shaw University in 1960.²²⁷

On April 15, 1960, Ella Baker called all the student sit-in leaders to Shaw University over Easter weekend under the auspices of the SCLC and the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was founded. The Conference included 126 students and 58 adult delegates from different southern communities.

THE STUDENT NON-VIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE (SNCC)

The Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) grew from the black student movement. The black student movement of the 1960's began with the sit-ins.

On February 1, 1960, four students, Joseph McNeill, David Richmond, Franklin McCain, and Izell Blair from the North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College in Greensboro, North Carolina sat-in (white's only section) at a segregated lunch counter. This was the beginning of the sit-in movement. The center of focus was Woolworth's nationwide chain.

S.E. Anderson, in his article, "Black Students: Racial Consciousness and the Class Struggle 1960-1976," said:

Their audacity, their non-violent defiance marked a turning point on black American history. Their militant action marked a qualitative change, not only among black people, but also within the general class struggle. Within a few months, thousands of black students and folk from the towns and rural areas were to join the numerous sit-in demonstrations at drug stores and national

²²⁶ Carol Miller, "Ella Baker and the Origins of Participatory Democracy" in Darlene Clark Hine (ed.) Black Women in United States History, Volume 6. [Brooklyn, New York: Carlson Publishing, Inc., 1990], p. 57.

²²⁷ Joanne Grant, Ella Baker: Freedom Bound [New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1998], Barbara Ransby, Ella Baker & The Black Freedom Movement [Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003]

chair store lunch counters throughout the South.²²⁸

On Tuesday the four freshmen were joined by about 20 recruits from North Carolina A and T and returned to the same counter.²²⁹

On February 3rd, over 50 African-Americans and three white students participated in the demonstration. Demonstrations spread to Nashville, Tennessee, Charleston, South Carolina and Atlanta, Georgia. By February 11, the protests were already expanding their base of popular support when High Point, North Carolina, high school students sat-in. On the 12th, Rock Hill, South Carolina became the first sit-in city in a Deep South state. By the end of February, sit-ins had occurred in 30 cities in seven states (including, deep south Alabama and South Carolina) and the action focus had broadened with a sit-in at a library in Petersburg, Virginia.²³⁰

In less than a year more than 3,600 demonstrators spent time in jail and several hundred lunch counters had been desegregated in Southern cities. By spring of 1960 nearly 1,300 arrests had been made.

In Orangeburg (South Carolina) there were four hundred arrests, about one hundred and fifty in Nashville, Tennessee, nearly forty in Florence (South Carolina) and Tallahassee (Florida), about eight in Atlanta, Georgia, about sixty-five in Memphis, Tennessee and nearly eighty-five in Marshal, Texas.²³¹

Within six months after the sit-ins started, 28 cities had integrated their lunch counters; by the fall of 1960 the number had risen to almost 100, with protest movements active in at least 60 more.²³²

College students in the north, African-American and white staged supporting demonstrations and raised funds for arrested Southern students. Sit-ins began to broaden focus in the South to include libraries, museums and art galleries. Methods also expanded to include wade-ins on the beaches, stand-ins, kneel-ins and other forms of non-violent direct action.²³³

Activist Jim Lawson already was conducting non-violent direct action workshops for the students and local churches. He decided to target segregated lunch counters of downtown Nashville. The first three students to stage a sit-in were John Lewis, Diane Nash, and Angela Butler. These students and others who followed weren't seriously taken as threats at the outset of the endeavor. Most of the merchants of downtown Nashville looked at these students as outside "agitators" from the north. They felt they didn't have to worry about their "Southern Negroes." After two weeks without incident a gang of whites attacked and beat the students, who did not fight back. Eighty students were arrested while nothing was

²²⁸ S.E. Anderson, "Black Students: Racial Consciousness and the Class Struggle, 1960-1976," *The Black Scholar*, January/February 1977, p. 35

²²⁹ Donald Mathews and James Prothro, "Negro Students and the Protest Movement" in James McEvoy and Abraham Miller (ed.) *Black Power and Student Rebellion* [Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, Inc., 1969], p. 379.

²³⁰ James H. Lane, *Direct Action and Desegregation 1960-1962: Toward a Theory of the Rationalization of Protest* [Brooklyn, New York: Carlson Publishing, Inc., 1989], p. 76.

²³¹ Martin Oppenheimer, *The Sit-In Movement of 1960* [Brooklyn, New York: Carlson Publishing, Inc., 1989], p. 43.

²³² Anne Braden, "The Southern Freedom Movement in Perspective," *Monthly Review Magazine*, July-August 1965, pp. 26-27.

²³³ James H. Lane, *Direct Action and Desegregation 1960-1962: Toward a Theory of the Rationalization of Protest* [Brooklyn, New York: Carlson Publishing, Inc., 1989], p. 79.

done to those who attacked. The African-American community united behind the students. The property owners put up their homes as collateral for the students bail. African-American business owners fed the students in jail. More and more jail, which had been a source of shame in the African-American community, became a badge of courage and honor to those associated with the movement. John Lewis and many other students went to jail for 33 days rather than pay a \$50 fine after being found guilty.

Ms. Ella Baker, a veteran organizer and interim executive secretary of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), realizing the potential of the sit-in movement, borrowed \$500 from SCLC and asked Dr. Martin Luther King for his permission to call a conference of the sit-in leaders. Ms. Baker went to Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina; her Alma Mater and got Shaw University to provide facilities for a meeting of about a hundred students. The conference was held on April 14-17, 1960 (Easter Weekend). By this time there were sixty active centers of sit-in demonstrations. Over two hundred people came to the conference, one hundred and twenty-six student delegates from different communities in twelve states. Nineteen northern Colleges sent delegates.²³⁴

Ms. Baker who long had disagreements with Dr. King and the ministers of SCLC concerning the emphasis of single charismatic leadership as opposed to group centered leadership advised the students to strike on their own rather than become a youth affiliate of the SCLC. Ms. Baker also in her speech at the conference emphasized that the movement was about “more than a hamburger” (lunch counter desegregation).²³⁵

When SNCC (the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee) was formed it served as an ad hoc coordinating committee for local centers of action. In the early sixties SNCC provided the movement with a center for non-violent direct action against racial discrimination.

In the north, white students formed the Northern Student Movement (NSM) that raised funds for SNCC.

Some researchers have analyzed the sit-in movement as a movement of middle and upper class African-Americans under what has been termed relative deprivation.

...It is only when the subordinate group sees itself as being deprived (which implies a standard of comparison, a group relative to which the deprivation exists, or is perceived) that the type of situation arises in which a solution becomes desired.²³⁶

One effective cause of the spread of the 1960 sit-ins was a profound impatience over the rate of change in terms of desegregation among African-Americans and disillusionment over the progress of race relations in America.

SNCC met in Atlanta once a month from April to August 1960. On May 13 and 14, 1960, students from across the south came to Atlanta, Georgia, for the first official meeting of

²³⁴ Dallad Shyrlee, Ella Baker [Englewood Cliffs: Burdett Press, 1990], p. 70.

²³⁵ Anne Braden, “The Southern Freedom Movement in Perspective,” Monthly Review Magazine: Vol. 17, July-August 1965, p. 28.

²³⁶ Jo Freeman (edited) Social Movements of the Sixties and Seventies [New York: Longman, 1983], p. 35.

SNCC.²³⁷ Brothers and sisters who founded SNCC were, for the most part, first generation college students with solid working class backgrounds.²³⁸

Ms. Baker offered SNCC an office in SCLC headquarters. Ms. Baker persuaded Jane Stembridge, a white female ministerial student to run the office. Later, Ms. Stembridge and others published The Student Voice, SNCC's first newspaper.²³⁹ In October, there was a general meeting at which the name the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was chosen and Marion Barry was retained as chairman.²⁴⁰

According to Ella Baker a basic goal of SNCC was to make it unnecessary for the people to depend on a leader. SNCC's hope was to develop leadership from among the people.²⁴¹ At the Highlander Folk School (1960) meeting the decision was made to go into hard-core rural areas under minority rule. During the meeting a split occurred between those who favored non-violent direct action mass demonstrations and those who favored voter registration. Those favoring non-violent direct action feared the movement would be corrupted and compromised if SNCC concentrated on voter registration. Diane Nash from the Nashville, Tennessee student movement and the freedom rides proposed that SNCC split into two separate organizations. Fearing that would weaken SNCC and serve the purpose of the enemy Ms. Baker opposed the split. Charles Jones was chosen as the director of voter registration and Diane Nash director of non-violent direct action. Charles Sherrod would later be proved correct when he said you couldn't possibly have voter registration without demonstrations.

Julian Bond said that tensions within SNCC were about an organizing approach. The debate was whether to proceed as a vanguard approach versus a pedagogic direction to organizing. He felt northerners were better able to articulate their ideas.

This caused tensions in the organization between those who thought of themselves as organizing a faceless mass and those who thought you ought to let the faceless mass decide what to do.²⁴²

SNCC began to grow with the movement, as did its leaders. One of the main people involved with the state of Mississippi was Bob Moses. Bob Moses was a math teacher in New York who had graduated with a Masters degree from Harvard University. He met a SCLC worker who asked him to come to Mississippi for the summer. Moses did and was asked by Ella Baker to stay on and help recruit people for a SNCC conference.

Bob Moses went into Mississippi in early summer 1960 to recruit black students to come to the SNCC October 1960 meeting. While in Southwest Mississippi local people asked Moses to give them some help in trying to start a voter registration campaign. From there he also traveled to Alabama and Louisiana. This is what led to his involvement with SNCC. Moses would become a powerful leader in Mississippi. "Moses established the pattern

²³⁷ Jacqueline Johnson, Stokely Carmichael: The Story of Black Power [Engle Cliffs, N.J.: Silver Burdett Press, 1990], p.

²³⁸

Op. Cit. (S.E. Anderson) p. 36

²³⁹

Ibid., p. 27.

²⁴⁰

Emily Stoper, The Student Non-Violent Coordinator Committee [Brooklyn, New York: Carlson Publishing, Inc., 1989],

p. 266.

²⁴¹

Ibid., p. 266.

²⁴²

Op. Cit. (Stoper), p. 275.

that SNCC followed for the next four years: involving local people in all phases of the movement, depending on them for support and protection.²⁴³ On October 14-16th the second conference of SNCC took place in Atlanta, Georgia. There were present ninety-five voting delegates, plus SNCC staff, which voted, plus thirteen alternates. There were probably about a dozen whites out of the ninety-five delegates and there were ninety-eight registered observers, twelve of whom represented eleven different groups or publications.

SNCC began a voter registration drive in McComb Mississippi. Several organizers were severely beaten and a crisis situation developed with mass arrests of students and SNCC activists.²⁴⁴ After the October 14-16, 1960 SNCC conference in Atlanta, the students asked Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to join them in sit-in demonstrations.

On October 19, 1960, King and some fifty other African-Americans were arrested for sitting in at the Magnolia Room of Rich's Department Store in Atlanta. The others were released but King was sentenced to four months of hard labor in the Reidsville State Prison. On October 26, Kennedy called Mrs. King and expressed his sympathy and concern. His campaign manager and brother, Robert F. Kennedy telephoned the Georgia judge who had sentenced King and pleaded for his release. On the following day King was released. The news of the action of the Kennedy brothers swept through the African-American community, plus distribution of one million pamphlets telling of their deed.

In November 1960, the closest presidential election of the century occurred which African-Americans felt their vote was decisive in the election of Kennedy. Two hundred and fifty thousand African-Americans voted for Kennedy in Illinois, which he carried by 9,000 votes. In Michigan, Kennedy won by a margin of 67,000 votes; some 250,000 African-Americans supported him. He carried South Carolina by 10,000 votes including an estimated 40,000 African-American votes. Within two years, 70,000 persons had demonstrated and over 3,600 demonstrators spend time in jail.

In early 1961, the first group of SNCC activists experimented with the concept of going beyond their own community to challenge segregation.²⁴⁵ Their decision was precipitated by the actions of Tom Gather, CORE field secretary. On January 31, 1961, he and nine African-American students sat in at a segregated lunch counter in Rock Hill, South Carolina. The following day a judge found all ten guilty of trespassing and sentenced each to thirty days in jail or a fine of \$100. Gather and eight of the students chose to serve the sentence. CORE appealed for outside help.

At a SNCC meeting in early February, the fifteen students present unanimously decided to support the Rock Hill protesters. Four black activists volunteered to travel to Rock Hill and join those in a jail. The four volunteers were Diane Nash, Charles Jones of John C. Smith University in Charlotte, NC, Ruby Doris Smith of Spelman College in Atlanta, and Charles Sherrod of Virginia Union in Richmond Virginia.²⁴⁶

²⁴³ John Dittmer, Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi [Urbana & Chicago: Univ. of Illinois Press], p. 104.

²⁴⁴ Op. Cit. (Braden), p. 321.

²⁴⁵ Clayborne Carson, In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 60's [Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1981], p. 32.

²⁴⁶ Op. Cit. (Braden), p. 32.

The SNCC activists advocated “Jail, No Bail.”

The SNCC contingent arrived in Rock Hill, was arrested and convicted for attempting to obtain service at a lunch counter and joined the group already imprisoned. There were some efforts at a jail instead of bail movement on Southern campuses, and at one point there were in various towns as many as 100 students serving sentences instead of appealing.

Although the jailed activists hoped that many others would join them in Rock Hill, few students were willing to leave school for extended jail terms. After a month in jail, the activists were forced to concede they had not achieved their objective. Despite the collapse of the Rock Hill jail-in movement, the decision of the four SNCC representatives to participate demonstrated the willingness of activists associated with SNCC to become involved whenever a confrontation with segregationists forces developed.²⁴⁷

Meanwhile student protest spread from Greensboro to San Antonio. A national campaign was organized and store chains that were boycotted in the South were picketed in the North. African-Americans controlled 10 million dollars of business in downtown Nashville alone. The local African-American community leaders and the students organized a boycott for all of the downtown area and also a picket line. After the home of Z. Alexander Lube, defense lawyer of the incarcerated students, was bombed, students came from campuses all around to form the first major march of the civil rights movement in Nashville. Mayor Ben West was asked whether he believed if it was morally permissible for a man or a woman to be discriminated on the basis of their color or race, and he responded, “no”. Three weeks later, African-American customers were served at a lunch counter in downtown Nashville. African-American students had established themselves as a force to be reckoned with in the civil rights movement.

By April 1960, 50,000 African-American and white students had joined the sit-in movement.

Direct Action vs. Voter Registration: Freedom Rides

The turning point for SNCC came when CORE (Congress of Racial Equality) started the freedom rides in 1961 in order to put an end to segregation on buses and trains. In 1961, the movement took on national scope with mixed groups of Freedom Riders converging on cities in the Deep South from both the North and the South.

African-American youth employed the non-violent tactics that had been evolved by Martin Luther King, Jr. in the Montgomery boycott. These tactics were extremely effective insofar as they enabled the youth to take initiative in a disciplined manner, achieve cooperation between white and African-American youth, and dramatize the realities of Southern justice.²⁴⁸

CORE decided to call off the Freedom rides, but SNCC, led by Diane Nash of the Nashville Student Movement, decided to continue them. On May 23rd, Dr. King, James Farmer, Ralph Abernathy, Diane Nash, and John Lewis held a press conference. They announced

²⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 33.

²⁴⁸ James Boggs, The American Revolution (40th Anniversary edition) [Detroit, Michigan: LeAdfoot Press, 2003] p. 82

that the Freedom Rides would continue regardless of the cost.

...The White mob in the South responded with violence, and it was the mobs that were upheld by the Southern authorities as they restored order by hosing the students, throwing tear gas at them, arresting and jailing them, convicting them of breaking the law and fining or imprisoning them.²⁴⁹

Other buses joined the Freedom Rides. Most of the Riders were professors and students from the North. On May 25th, Riders in Montgomery were arrested at a Trailways station while trying to eat, among them: Fred Shuttlesworth, James Farmer, Ralph Abernathy and Reverend Wyatt T. Walker. Dr. King announced a “temporary lull but no cooling off” in the Freedom Rides. In Jackson, Mississippi, 27 Freedom Riders were convicted, fined \$200 each and given 60 days’ suspended sentences. Both Roy Wilkins of the NAACP, and the Americans for the Democratic Action urged Riders to disregard Dr. King’s “cooling off” period. In order to organize the remaining attempts of the Freedom Riders, a Freedom Riders Coordinating Committee was formed in Atlanta. Representatives included members of CORE, SCLC, SNCC and the Nashville Movement. For the cause of the Rides these groups put aside their differences, to bond together for the impending success of the Freedom Rides.²⁵⁰

By the end of May a few more non-violent arrests of Freedom Riders in Jackson had taken place. Several Riders were being put to work at a prison farm. More convictions were made and trials against the Montgomery and Birmingham police began. A ray of light appeared in May when Attorney General Robert Kennedy requested the ICC to ban, by regulation, segregation in interstate bus terminals (which had already been accomplished *in theory* by the earlier ICC rulings and the Supreme Courts—Boynton Decision). By June some Riders headed back North, but most would not be out of jail until CORE posted \$500 bond 40-days after they were arrested.²⁵¹ CORE, SCLC, SNCC and the Nashville Movement were still organizing the Freedom Rides.

More Riders from the North and the West Coast were being sent into Jackson in order to keep the focus on the symbolic efforts for the Rides. All together, more than 400 Riders were arrested in Jackson under a cut and dried procedure, which allowed for no mob violence (and little exercise of constitutional rights on the part of the Riders). During June and July, more than 300 Riders spent from a week to two months in Parchman Prison and other Mississippi jails, experiencing beatings, torture and other mistreatment. For those who were released on bond, the City of Jackson informed CORE that if they don’t appear in court on August 14th in Jackson they would forfeit their bond (\$500). This was Mississippi’s way to financially break the Freedom Rides. But the NAACP provided legal support and CORE got the majority of the defendants to Jackson.

On September 22, 1961, the ICC (after hearings requested by Attorney General Robert Kennedy) issued the order banning segregation in interstate terminal facilities effective November 1, 1961.²⁵²

²⁴⁹ Ibid., p.82

²⁵⁰ Op. Cit., Direct Action and Desegregation, 1960-62, p. 104.

²⁵¹ Op. Cit., August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, CORE, p. 143.

²⁵² Op. Cit., Hampton and Foyer, Voices of Freedom, p. 94.

Robert Kennedy petitioned the Interstate Commerce Commission to ban segregation during interstate travel. In September, the Commission complied:

By the summer of 1961, SNCC had sixteen full-timers, fourteen of which were college dropouts and two young ex-school teachers: James Forman from Chicago, and Bob Moses from New York City. These two brothers became key figures in SNCC's ideological development as well as leaders in organizing and general practice. SNCC also had no funds and a tiny symbolic office in Atlanta.²⁵³

SNCC's Executive Secretary, James Forman, solidified SNCC's infrastructure. He recruited Norma Collins to become a full time secretary, Julian Bond as communications director, Casey Hayden (wife of SDS member Tom Hayden) and Mary King to handle publicity. Though the student representative committee was officially in charge of SNCC, field secretaries such as Bob Moses, who organized a voter registration drive in Pike County, Mississippi made most decisions.²⁵⁴

By the winter of 1961, SNCC members had begun to walk, talk, and dress like poor African-American farmers and sharecroppers of rural areas of Georgia and Mississippi. SNCC displayed a high level of self discipline and self-sacrifice and won respect of entire communities.

One project report listed "five rules of staff decorum." The rules are indicative of the lengths to which SNCC members were willing to go in order to win respect and support from the people: "(1) There will be no consumption of alcoholic beverages, (2) Men will not be housed with women, (3) Romantic attachments on the level of 'girl-boy friend relations will not be encouraged within the group, (4) The staff will go to church regularly, (5) The group shall have the power to censure...when an organizer in southwest Georgia got a local teen-ager pregnant, he was given a small sum of money and told to 'marry her!'"²⁵⁵

President Kennedy was convinced he had to stop the Freedom Rides as he felt a crisis was being created. In his eyes, the Freedom Riders were acting as peaceful provocateurs and the white reaction was embarrassing to the administration.²⁵⁶ President Kennedy was also worried about the political repercussions nationally and internationally. Requests were made to White House Assistant (for Civil Rights) Wofford by President Kennedy to "Stop them! Get your friends off those buses". The main reason for this request was the President's meeting with Soviet Union leader Khrushchev. President Kennedy did not want to have an embarrassing situation damage any plans he had with the Soviet Union. Although President Kennedy admired the courage of the Freedom Riders and shared the goal of opening the Closed Society, he seemed reluctant to accept that you had to choose a side. The handling of the Freedom Rides set in motion a pattern for the next three years of the Kennedy Administration. They avoided direct involvement with movement activists and preferred behind the scenes contact with officials.²⁵⁷ The President's objective was to

²⁵³ Op. Cit. (S.E. Anderson) p 37

²⁵⁴ Op. Cit. Meir and Rudwick, CORE, p. 140.

²⁵⁵ Cleveland Sellers with Robert Terrell, The River of No Return: The Autobiography of a Black Militant and the Life and Death of SNCC [Jackson and London: University Press of Mississippi, 1990] p. 53-54

²⁵⁶ Op. Cit., Blumberg, Civil Rights, p. 84.

²⁵⁷ Op. Cit., Branch, Parting the Waters, pp. 472-473.

prevent violence and he felt that if he stepped in federally another civil war would start in Mississippi. Assistant Attorney General Burke Marshall (an African-American man) tried to justify this by saying “the responsibility for the preservation of law and order, and the protection of citizens against unlawful contact on the part of others, is the responsibility of the local authorities.” The Kennedy Administration was forced to abandon this when mob violence was so severe against the Riders that President Kennedy had to send federal marshals to Alabama to protect them. While President Kennedy seemed reluctant to support the Freedom Riders, he did support voting rights for African-Americans.²⁵⁸

There is not a question that the Freedom Rides marked an important turning point in the movement towards equal rights for African-Americans. More than any other attempt, the Freedom Rides represented a major move forward for the movement from the early spontaneous activities to a more organized “down to the nitty-gritty” movement style. The Rides went further than previous direct action movements in that the Rides attacked a broader problem and they involved more intense organizational support and participation. Important also was the challenge put to the federal government to uphold the laws they created. The Freedom Rides also brought together non-southerners and whites, clergy and academicians in greater than ever numbers, even groups who had previously not worked together. The Freedom Rides brought a halt to the fighting in major organizations such as CORE, SNCC, SCLC and NAACP in order to mobilize people, money, legal aid and publicity in a short period after the Alabama violence. The Rides created a deeper commitment than ever before. There were few participants, but those involved knew they faced almost certain physical or mental harassment. The deeper commitment is evidence early in the Rides when a “cooling off” period was requested after the Montgomery violence and the Riders rejected that request. The Rides provided a great stimulus for massive protests in the South, as well as a model for mass mobilizations of African-American communities.²⁵⁹

The national media coverage the Freedom Rides received was also instrumental in civil rights decisions to the Deep South. Before the Rides, the SNCC organization in the South was a mere dream, but that changed with each bus stop. The racist lifestyles revealed from the Rides were too brutal, too shocking, for any to keep quiet. Crisis forces people to take a stand. Only a few newspapers defended or took the side of people like Alabama Governor John Patterson and the police forces of Montgomery and Birmingham. Not until the Rides did the entire country pay attention to the grievances of the African-American community, but the nation was faced daily with pictures and news coverage that they could no longer ignore. CORE leader James Farmer said it best: “We were successful; we created a crisis situation. It was worldwide news headlines and everybody was watching it, people all over the world. The Attorney General had to act; and he did. He called upon the ICC to issue an order; a ruling with teeth in it which he could enforce.”

While the sit-ins had made the movement look too easy, the Freedom Rides showed the defiance and determination of the African-American community.

...SNCC had three main foci of struggle in 1961: Southwest Georgia, where former divinity student, Charles Sharrod became project director in 1961; the Mississippi Delta, which was under Bob Moses, former Howard

²⁵⁸ James H. Lane, *Direct Action and Desegregation*, p. 106.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

student and mathematics teacher; and the area around Selma, Alabama, where Bernard Lafayette asked his wife, Colia, and later, Norman, to run the voter registration projects. SNCC also had projects in Pine Bluffs, Arkansas; Danville, Virginia; and Cambridge, Maryland.²⁶⁰

1962 – Albany, GA

During the early fall 1961; SNCC headquarters in Atlanta assigned a field secretary and two staff members to Albany, Ga. These men, Charles Jones, Charles Sherrod and Cordell Reagan, set up a SNCC office in a run-down building in the African-American community. They began to recruit young African-Americans for instruction in the philosophy and tactics of non-violence.²⁶¹ Sherrod, a proponent of the voter registration action of SNCC soon found that one had to take direct action if the organization was going to lead in voter registration.²⁶²

The Interstate Commerce Commission on September 22, 1961 issued a ruling banning segregation on buses and in terminal facilities. The order was scheduled to go into effect November 1, 1961.

SNCC representatives in Albany decided to test the ruling on November 1, 1961. Their efforts led to a sit-in at a bus station by nine students to test compliance with the Interstate Commerce ruling, which became effective that day, barring segregation in transportation terminals.²⁶³

Through SNCC's efforts a coalition of African-American community groups and civil rights organizations formed after the bus terminal demonstrations. The coalition came together on November 17th and was called the Albany Movement, which consisted of the NAACP, the Ministerial Alliance, the Federation of Women's Clubs, the Negro Voters League and other groups. William G. Anderson, a black osteopath, was elected president and Slater King, a black realtor, became vice-president.²⁶⁴

Over 700 people were arrested in a demonstration held in Albany, Georgia in December of 1961 to protest the segregation of the city's public facilities. Demonstrations continued into the spring and summer of 1962. Slater King, the brother of C. B. King and Vice President of the Albany Movement became more militant as the Albany movement preceded. After his wife was beaten and lost a child as a result of it, King began to advocate armed self-defense and became a supporter of Robert F. Williams.²⁶⁵

In July of 1962, Martin Luther King and three other African-American leaders were convicted of failing to get a permit. Police Chief Prichett arranged that an anonymous donor bail Dr. King out of jail taking the steam out of a publicized confrontation. Mass protests continued throughout the summer and at the height of the protest, 1,500 were arrested. The Albany movement was considered a set back for Dr. King but a mass breakthrough for SNCC.

²⁶⁰ Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, *A Circle of Trust: Remembering SNCC* [New Brunswick, New Jersey and London: Rutgers University Press, 1998] p. 5

²⁶¹ Robert H. Brisbane, *Black Activism* [Valley Forge, Pa.: Judson Press, 1974] p. 59.

²⁶² Fred Powledge, *Free at Last? The Civil Rights Movement and the People Who Made It* [New York Harper Perennial, 1991] p. 341.

²⁶³ Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 60's* [Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1981], p. 58.

²⁶⁴ Ibid., (Carson), p. 58.

²⁶⁵ Interview/conversation with Slater King, Albany, Georgia, November 1962.

In the winter of 1962, NAG, the Nonviolent Action Group in Washington, D.C., had about twenty-five to thirty students who belonged to it. Among the group, Courtland Cox, *Muriel T. Winghaust*, Stokely Carmichael, Stanley Wise, William (Bill) Mahoney, Ed Brown (H. Rap Brown's bother), Phil Hutchins, and Cleveland Sellers. While NAG sponsored dances, its primary task was demonstrating against racial discrimination.²⁶⁶

Some members of NAG from Washington, D.C., working in Cambridge, Maryland with the Cambridge Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (CNAC) in early 1964 protesting the speaking of Governor George Wallace witnessed their first experience with community self-defense on the evening of May 11, 1964, when a demonstration of six hundred were gassed, beaten, chased and shot at by the Maryland National Guardsmen; shots were returned. A small group of African American men had started shooting at the guardsmen in order to slow them down. The men would run a few steps, crouch on one knee, fire; run a few steps, crouch on one knee, and fire again.

1963-1964: The Mississippi Project

SNCC's voter registration projects were concentrated in small rural southern towns. The first was held in McComb, Mississippi in August 1961, organized by Bob Moses, who having moved to McComb had requested the support of the African-American ministers and storekeepers. SNCC needed them to help secure places to live and transportation for ten students who would be working with the voter registration school.

On August 26, 1961 Hollis Watkins and Curtis Hayes held a sit-in at a Woolworth's store in McComb, Mississippi. The two men were arrested, along with some high school students that joined the sit-in.²⁶⁷

This was the first of non-violent direct action demonstrations in McComb. The town of McComb was in an uproar. Some of the high school students were kept in jail for five days. They were sentenced for thirty-four days but were released after the murder of Mr. Herbert Lee (a local African-American man):

McComb, Mississippi became the site of one of the biggest demonstrations. Mr. Herbert Lee, an African-American farmer who had been working with Bob Moses was found shot to death. A white man who was against SNCC's registration efforts had murdered him. After the individual suspected of Lee's murder was released, 100 McComb high school students marched to the City Hall to protest. They were arrested. McComb, with its bitter legacy, was a beginning for SNCC in Mississippi. "We had, to put it mildly, got out feet wet," Moses said.²⁶⁸

Upon their release, the students tried to return to school. When they arrived, school officials were telling them they had to sign a petition saying they wouldn't protest any longer greeted them. Anyone who didn't sign was not allowed to re-enter the school. Some of the students refused and decided to boycott the school.

²⁶⁶ *Op.Cit.* (Cleveland Sellers with Robert Terrell) p. 60

²⁶⁷ Fred Powledge, *Free At Last?* [Boston: Little, Brown and Company 1991] p. 325

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p.340

Parents were upset with SNCC for encouraging the students. SNCC was not against the boycott but tried to be cautious with the African-American community. The parents were also upset with the school for keeping their children out. SNCC wanted the community to stay united so they decided to set up a freedom school. This is when SNCC realized how deep the “southern way” was embedded in African-American children’s minds.

A student asked whether they were fighting for southern independence. The child had meant the Civil War.²⁶⁹

Whites had become angry. Violence against African-Americans during this time rose significantly. SNCC leaders were also attacked. McComb was one of the worst parts of the state. It was well known for its Klan involvement. Many churches and homes were bombed and set afire. This terrified the African-American community as well as the white. SNCC was to move elsewhere to help. Following McComb SNCC arrived in Greenwood. SNCC learned from its mistakes in McComb.

It understood that direct action protest conducted against an intransigent and lawless white establishment could be counterproductive.²⁷⁰

Bob Moses became the director of voter registration for the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO). COFO was a coalition of civil rights organizations including the NAACP, SCLC, CORE and religious groups formed to prevent haggling over the distribution of funds and to coordinate voter registration in Mississippi.

The project focused in western Mississippi. Moses gained a reputation among the local community and other workers for being gutsy and taking many harsh beatings. His reputation became almost legendary. The townspeople were for the most part too scared to participate in Moses’ efforts. SNCC started a food drive for local residents drawing on its supporters. Moses sustained effort paid off. By 1963 groups of several hundred African-Americans were trying to register to vote in the Greenwood courthouse.²⁷¹

African-American businesses were burned and some workers were shot. Moses and six of his workers filed suit against FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover and Attorney General Kennedy to prosecute southern officials responsible for acts of violence against civil rights workers. The suit failed. After meeting Harvard Law School student Allard Lowenstein, Moses started a “one man, one vote” campaign based on an old Mississippi law in which protest votes could be cast, by those illegally restricted from voting. These votes would be set aside until the exclusion would be eliminated. Lowenstein contacted 100 white students at Yale and Stanford to come register the people in the county.

A SNCC method of organizing was for a field secretary to go into a community and find a place to live. He would begin to listen and talk to people who would talk to him. He would nurture their development to take up the leadership of the local movement. Through weeks of house-to-house organizing and holding mass church meetings a mass voter registration march of

African-Americans in a county would cumulate with a “Freedom Day” with numbers of African-Americans marching to the courthouse to register to vote.

²⁶⁹ Howard Zinn, *SNCC-The New Abolitionists* [Boston: Beacon Press, 1964], p. 78.

²⁷⁰ John Dittmer, *Local People* [Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994], p. 112.

²⁷¹ Ibid., (Dittmer), p. 115.

SNCC in Mississippi through COFO started an independent electoral challenge by first running a project “Freedom” election in 1963. They ran Dr. Aaron Henry for Governor of Mississippi and Ed King for Lieutenant Governor. More than 80,000 African-Americans cast symbolic votes for Henry and King.²⁷² SNCC made other breakthroughs in leading mass voter registration efforts in Greenwood, Mississippi in 1963. Led by SNCC organizers Sam Block and Willie Peacock who had been recruited by Bob Moses; SNCC workers suffered beatings, jailings, and shootings in their efforts to register African-Americans.

It was also during this time that three SNCC workers, seated in a car were shot at and the Greenwood SNCC Mississippi office was set on fire. In protest, fellow SNCC workers marched to the Greenwood courthouse where they were arrested and jailed for a week. This became the first incident where SNCC workers refused bail (a tactic which was used many times) and helped people to see the seriousness of their cause and the firmness of their beliefs. The Justice Department responded to the situation by seeking a temporary restraining order to force the release of the jailed workers and to prevent the town officials from interfering in the voter registration campaign.²⁷³

The SNCC activists had two immediate goals in Greenwood. To show they were not there simply to stir up trouble and then leave, and to help local blacks overcome the paralyzing fear that had stopped the registration drive.²⁷⁴

SNCC began another voter registration campaign. Again, they faced the same problems as in McComb. Whites all over Mississippi began to fear the movement. They reacted the only way they knew how, with violence. SNCC believed in what they were doing. They believed that voter registration was the most important way to empower African-Americans in the south. Although almost half of the state was African-American there were very few African-Americans registered. “Negroes of the voting age far outnumbered whites. Only 2% of African-Americans were registered while 95% of whites were on the roles.”²⁷⁵ This figure is very disturbing. For African-American voters it wasn’t just an easy trip to city hall. It was a life or death situation. Many people were beaten and later found murdered because they attempted to vote. SNCC helped in many ways, but it was still a fairly small organization:

According to Cleveland Sellers, SNCC had 130 members through the winter and spring of 1963-1964 preparing for the summer projects.²⁷⁶

It didn’t have much money. Most of the staff wasn’t getting paid. This is when SNCC called for a new plan involving more people and national attention. This was called the Mississippi Summer Project.

John Lewis, then chairman of SNCC put Roland Snellings and myself on the Mississippi field staff to test our ideas of building an all African-American black nationalist self-defense project. Greenwood, Mississippi became a base for revolutionary nationalist activity as the organizers from Mississippi notably Jessie Morris, Jesse Morrison, McArthur Cotton, and Willie Peacock concentrated there. The purpose was to win them over to the position of all African-American independent political empowerment, rather than the goal of integration. A

²⁷² Nicolaus Mills, “Forgotten Greenville: SNCC and the Lessons of 1963,” *Dissent*, Summer 1990, p. 339.

²⁷³ *Op. Cit.* (Powledge) p. 474.

²⁷⁴ *Op. Cit.* (Dittmer) p. 135

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 136

²⁷⁶ *Op. Cit.* (Sellers) p.56

showdown occurred in Greenville, Mississippi in May 1964 at a Mississippi SNCC staff meeting. The majority of the African-American members of the SNCC Mississippi field staff revolted against the SNCC hierarchy represented by Bob Moses and most of the white radicals. The field staff didn't want the whites to be brought into Mississippi. The revolutionary nationalists position was that whites should organize in the white community to divide the white racist front.²⁷⁷

Meeting at Amize Moore's house (a Mississippi leader in the NAACP), in early summer of 1964 many of the African-American members of the Mississippi SNCC field staff discussed preparing for a shift to armed self defense and entering into an alliance with the Revolutionary Action Movement.

After SNCC had built up a statewide network through its voter registration drives SNCC decided to form the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, a challenge to the racist regular Mississippi Democratic Party. After they first tried to join the local Mississippi Democratic Party and being denied membership, a multi-racial coalition called a convention on April 24, 1964 in Jackson, Mississippi, and the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party was formed. Its purpose was to register votes with the MFDP and challenge the Mississippi regular democrats at the National Democratic Party Convention. After the convention, Ms. Fannie Lou Hamer estimated the membership of the MFDP at 78,000. Sixty-three thousand people in Mississippi registered with the MFDP in 1964 prior to the August National Democratic Convention. The turning point of SNCC's road to radicalism was the Freedom Summer of 1964. COFO organized the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party as a multi-racial party, printed its own ballots, and in October conducted its own poll. The Freedom Democratic nominee for governor, Aaron Henry, head of the state NAACP received 70,000 votes, which was a tremendous protest against the denial of equal political rights.

"One reason for the success of the project was the presence in the state of 100 Yale and Stanford students, who worked for two weeks with SNCC on the election. SNCC was sufficiently impressed by the student contribution to consider inviting hundreds more to spend an entire summer in Mississippi. Sponsors of this plan hoped not only for workers but for publicity that might at last focus national attention on Mississippi. By the winter of 1963-64, however, rising militancy in the SNCC had begun to take on overtones of Black Nationalism, and some members resisted the project on the grounds that most of the volunteers would be white."²⁷⁸

The Freedom Summer of 1964 was very important to SNCC. SNCC wanted national attention to focus on the conditions that African-Americans had to live under in the state of Mississippi. The basic idea was to bring people in from the north to help with the project. The project consisted of voter registration, Freedom schools and political awareness. SNCC did not lead the project alone, although they had been the main organizers.²⁷⁹ Others involved were NAACP and CORE. James Forman was the executive director of the summer project. SNCC was organizing projects in four out of the five Mississippi districts. CORE would take the remaining district. The first priority was to recruit volunteers. SNCC was fairly particular

²⁷⁷ Participant-Observer report interview, Max Stanford 1996, from attendance at SNCC Field Staff retreat in Greenville, Mississippi, Spring 1964.

²⁷⁸ Bracey, Meier, Rudwick (ed.) Conflict and Competition: Studies in the Recent Black Protest Movement [Blemont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1971], p. 140.

²⁷⁹ Doug McAdam, Freedom Summer [New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988], p. 42.

about who got an application. They were looking for a certain type of activist. SNCC wanted, “students from the nation’s highest public and private colleges and universities. This made up 57% of the total application pool. Less than 10% of the applicants were African-American.”²⁸⁰

SNCC was looking “to focus national attention on Mississippi as a means of forcing federal intervention in the state. For the project to be successful it had to attract national media attention.” This was true; in fact nothing attracted more attention than white liberals helping “the downtrodden Negroes of Mississippi.”²⁸¹ Before picking just anyone to volunteer, SNCC looked at his or her background, characteristics and motives. They also considered funding. Since SNCC wasn’t that big, the organization couldn’t pay for everyone to stay in Mississippi for the summer. They wanted the volunteers to pay their own way. This was very smart because students that did come to the south did it because they wanted to. The students that applied also considered themselves political. Many were already involved in political organizations.²⁸²

Another concern was the parents. Most parents were afraid to send their children south. But the parents couldn’t argue with their children because this is what their parents had taught them. The volunteers and their parents knew this was going to be difficult. When the project got underway in the summer of 1964, there were 1,000 people involved. Most of these were volunteers from the North. The students first attended an orientation session. Then they had role-playing sessions and lessons on how to protect oneself if attacked.²⁸³ All the volunteers were trying to prepare for the violence that awaited them. No one could really prepare anyone for what was going to happen in the next three months. “Most of the Mississippi staff had been beaten at least once and also shot at.” No one really knew what to expect after this. The plans still continued. After the first week, voter registration workers arrived and 300 Freedom schools were opened.²⁸⁴

There were many projects going on all over the state of Mississippi. SNCC was soon to learn of both the safest and most dangerous places in Mississippi. The safest was the fifth district that included the northeastern part of Mississippi, including Biloxi. The most dangerous place in the state was the southwest corner, McComb. This was the home of the Ku Klux Klan.

It was now time to get the plan into action. The main focus for SNCC was the voter registration campaign. SNCC assigned volunteers to go around door to door and ask people to register. SNCC had two jobs when they registered voters. First, “SNCC conducted a mock international election among the Mississippi black population.”²⁸⁵ Bob Moses was involved in getting this started. The “Freedom Vote” was the vote cast for the newly formed Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party. First the SNCC staff would ask people to vote in this “mock election.” This way people could see the end results. Bob Moses planned a regular non-election. African-Americans were asked to vote not in a regular election but in a parallel

²⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 39.

²⁸¹ *Op. Cit.*, p. 40.

²⁸² Ibid., (McAdam) p. 4.

²⁸³ Ibid., p. 71.

²⁸⁴ Mary Aickin Rothschild, *A Case of Black and White: Northern Volunteers and the Southern Freedom Summers, 1964-1965* [Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1982], p. 118.

²⁸⁵ Emily Stoper, “The Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee: Rise and Fall of a Redemptive Organization in Joe Freeman” (ed) *Social Movements of the Sixties and Seventies* [New York: Longman, 1983], p. 324.

‘Freedom Vote.’ This was designed to minimize the potential of violence and insure maximum voter turnout.²⁸⁶ This would show the community how they could change the system. Most voters found it much easier than expected. This was also the easier part of the two. The second part was to show people parts of the Mississippi Constitution. This would prime them for going to the courthouse to pass the test. For African-Americans this was a potentially dangerous act.²⁸⁷ Even after this, very few of the voter registration applications were accepted. “Only 1,600 of the completed applications were accepted due to discrimination.”²⁸⁸ This was not an easy task. But despite the setbacks, there were few African-American volunteers.²⁸⁹ Going to the courthouse wasn’t just another day. It was another step toward liberation. This was happening all over the state of Mississippi. It was also taking its toll on whites. McAdam (1988) provides a day-to-day account of incidents of violence and harassment that occurred during the summer project.

It was because the people trying to change Mississippi were asking themselves the real question about what is wrong with Mississippi that the summer project in effect touched every aspect of the lives of Negroes in Mississippi, and started to touch the lives of the whites as well.²⁹⁰

The next part of the project was the freedom school. The SNCC field secretary in charge of the schools was Charles Cobb, Jr. He stated that SNCC was going to, “provide an educational experience for students which make it possible for them to challenge the myths of our society, to perceive more clearly it’s realities and find alternatives and ultimately new directions for actions.”²⁹¹ The freedom schools teachers were some of the volunteers. The teachers and SNCC freedom schools had four basic curriculums. One was remedial education, two leadership development, three contemporary issues, and four non-academic curriculums.²⁹² Again, when listening to the students they saw how unequal the schooling was. Most children could not read or write. It was like starting from scratch. Some of the volunteers were touched when they saw progress in their students. They felt something was happening that was positive, while surrounding them was an evil embedded so deeply in the southern lifestyle.

COFO organized a grassroots political movement by holding precinct, county and state conventions that chose 68 integrated delegates to go to the Democratic Party convention in Atlantic City in 1964 to challenge the credentials of the regular Democrats and cast the states’ vote for the party nominees. COFO developed the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP), which had 60,000 members. This was to be a high point of Freedom Summer.

The FDP went to Atlantic City to challenge Mississippi regulars. Northern liberals tried to work out a compromise that would appease the FDP and at the same time keep the bulk of Southern delegates in the convention. President Johnson’s proposal and Johnson sent Senator Hubert Humphrey to draw a compromise. Humphrey offered to permit two FDP delegates to sit in the convention with full voting rights if he could choose the delegates. The

²⁸⁶ Len Holt, *The Summer That Didn’t End* [New York: William Morrow & Co., 1965], p. 35.

²⁸⁷ Howard Zinn, *SNCC: Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, The New Revolutionists* [Boston: Beacon Press, 1964], p. 251.

²⁸⁸ Doug McAdam, “Gender as a mediator of the Activist Experience: The Case of Freedom Summer,” *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 97, Number 5 (March 1992), p. 1,212.

²⁸⁹ *Op. Cit.* (Doug McAdam, Freedom Summer), p. 82.

²⁹⁰ Peter B. Levy, *Let Freedom Ring: A Documentary History of the Modern Civil Rights Movement* [New York: Praeger, 1992], p. 143.

²⁹¹ *Op. Cit.* (McAdam), p. 83.

²⁹² *Op. Cit.* (Holt), p. 112.

Mississippi white regulars walked out and the FDP led by Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer decided not to accept the compromise.²⁹³

The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party's failure to be seated at the Democratic Party Convention in 1964 is what led to SNCC attempting to organize an all African-American political party in 1965:

...by 1965, SNCC had made certain fundamental qualitative changes. It was just about fed up with the futile non-violent struggles. It was being wrenched apart due to a lack of structure and discipline that its projects demanded. It was becoming more aware and more influenced by revolutionary black nationalism, and, to a lesser extent, Marxism-Leninism.²⁹⁴

The volunteers were beginning to feel like Mississippi was their home. This was a life-changing experience for most. The volunteers were seeing and feeling too much. They saw poverty like they had never imagined. They were unwarned of how Mississippi poverty affected African-American families. Many problems were created because of this. There was a lot of hostility towards those housing the volunteers.²⁹⁵ The hostility was not from the African-American community but from the whites. Four project workers killed, four persons critically wounded, eighty workers beaten, one thousand arrests, thirty-seven churches bombed or burned and thirty black homes or businesses bombed or burned.²⁹⁶ For the parents of the volunteers, this was astonishing. They awaited the end of the project.

The majority of the African-Americans on the field staff in Mississippi in SNCC by the summer of 1964 began to feel while there were progressive elements in the Federal government in Washington, D.C.; basically the national government was in opposition to the movement.

The SNCC African-American field workers also felt that the place white students should be working is in their home white communities to break down white resistance.

As the project came to a close, SNCC was realizing the reality and the success of the summer. They had managed to raise a lot of national media attention but "the press emphasized the white volunteers more than the local African-Americans and SNCC."²⁹⁷

Granted, the goal was to attract media attention. The attention was to be focused on the terrible conditions faced by the residents of Mississippi. Instead, the media focused on white students risking their lives. The freedom summer got lost in the background to all the other things going on in the sixties, which were the presidential campaign, the Viet Nam war, and other national interests. For the volunteers and SNCC staff, it was not easily forgotten. The Mississippi project was a success, although it was still not enough. There wasn't much apparent change. Out of the change that did occur, it mostly appeared in the black middle class. It had little or no effect on the poor African-American community, which was the majority. SNCC then tried to get the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party a seat in the national elections. After the project, some members of SNCC went to Atlantic City for the

²⁹³ *Op. Cit.* (Bracey, Meir, Rudwick), p. 142.

²⁹⁴ *Op. Cit.* (S.E. Anderson) p. 38

²⁹⁵ *Op. Cit.* (McAdam), p. 88.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.* (McAdam), p. 89.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, (McAdam), p. 89.

Democratic National Convention.²⁹⁸ They were offered two seats that SNCC turned down. They felt they had worked hard and two seats weren't enough. After the summer project, SNCC debated about non-violence because of all the violence they had endured. No federal protection was offered and in most cases, the acts of violence were against African-Americans. SNCC had hit its peak in the summer of '64. The organization was starting to become bitter towards the whites in the project. SNCC eventually started branching off into two different factions. The "freedom high" faction led by Bob Moses stressed that the individual is the organizer. The structural faction was more organized and worked from the top down. Eventually the structural faction would take over.²⁹⁹

1965 March From Selma, Alabama to Montgomery

SNCC began working in Selma, Alabama in early 1963. SNCC worked on voter registration clinics and mobilized local people to the local courthouse to become registered to vote. Soon voting rights movements began in Marion and Selma, Alabama. African-American youth played an important role in the movement. In and around Selma, the youth would be eager participators in the voting rights marches particularly while their parents were at work. Also it was around this time that SNCC organizers Bob Mants, Willie Vaughn and Stokely Carmichael all disillusioned with the failure of the MFDP challenge decided to attempt to build an all African-American political organization in Alabama.³⁰⁰

After laboring with a fledging movement with SNCC for three years Amelia Boyton and the Dallas County Voters League appealed to SCLC and Martin Luther King, Jr., in the fall of 1964 to help in securing voting rights. On January 2, 1963, the Dallas County Voters League held an "Emancipation Day" evening service violating a city injunction against demonstrations and meetings. This was the beginning of SCLC's and Dr. King's campaign in Selma.

King moved from mass meetings to direct action in mid-January when he led four hundred marchers to the Dallas County Courthouse in Selma.³⁰¹

Selma Sheriff Jim Clark met the demonstration. There was no violence at this demonstration. On January 19th, the second day of SCLC demonstrations, Sheriff Clark began mass arrests. Demonstrations increased in numbers daily. The turning point was when the African-American teachers marched on the courthouse. Soon after the teachers marched, the undertakers marched, and the beauticians marched. On February 1, 1965, Martin Luther King, Jr., and two hundred and fifty marchers were arrested and jailed. In the next two days eight hundred school children marched and were taken into custody. A congressional delegation of fifteen from Washington, which included African-American Congressman Charles Diggs of Michigan, came to Selma to investigate. SNCC invited Malcolm X to speak in Selma on February 4th at a mass meeting held in Brown's Chapel.

²⁹⁸ Allen J. Matusaw "From Civil Rights to Black Power: The Case of SNCC, 1960-1966" in Bracey, Meier, Rudwick, Conflict and Competition: Studies in the Recent Black Protest Movement [Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1971], p. 143.

²⁹⁹ Op. Cit. (Clayborne, Carson), pp. 139-140.

³⁰⁰ Jacqueline Johnson, Stokely Carmichael: The Story of Black Power [Englecliffs, N.J.: The Silver Burdett Press, 1994], p. 61.

³⁰¹ Henry Hampton and Steve Fayer with Sarah Flynn, Voices Of Freedom: An Oral History of the Civil Rights Movement from the 1950's through the 1980's [New York: Bantam Books, 1990], p. 216.

Malcolm X in his speech supported Dr. King's efforts but warned of an alternative. Dr. Martin Luther King was released from jail in early February. Demonstrations continued. Three thousand more demonstrated and were arrested. In mid-February SCLC's C. T. Vivian, led another march to the courthouse and was viciously punched in the face by Sheriff Jim Clark.

At the beginning of February 1965, James Orange from the SCLC went to Marion County Alabama to work in the voting rights movement there. Each day blacks would go down to the courthouse to register to vote. They would be arrested. In an effort to stop Blacks, the local sheriff arrested Orange on February 17th. In response, the local blacks decided to hold a night march. They would go to jail and sing songs to Orange.³⁰²

The Mayor of Marion, Alabama called Governor George Wallace and told him African-Americans were planning to break Orange out of jail and cause a riot. Wallace sent state troopers and deputized many white men in the area. Sheriff Jim Clark sealed off all roads to Marion and no one could get in or out. African-American women were beaten at the will of the racists that night.

Voting rights demonstrators were viciously attacked. Jimmy Lee Jackson who was trying to protect his grandfather and his mother, who was bleeding after being beaten, was murdered. After the three of them fled to a building with the police in hot pursuit, Jackson died in the hospital on February 26th, five days after Malcolm X was assassinated. The movement decided to carry Jimmy Lee Jackson's dead body to Montgomery and to drop it on the steps of the Capital, but Dr. King had a better suggestion; that was to lead to a mass march from Selma to Montgomery. SCLC scheduled the march from Selma to Montgomery for Sunday, March 7.³⁰³

SNCC thought the march was too dangerous and voted as an organization not to endorse the march but said any member of the organization could take part in the march if they wanted to. As the march proceeded on March 7th to cross the Edmund Pettus Bridge, it was stopped by a posse of a 100 men under the command of Selma's Jim Clark and a 100 state troopers sent by Alabama Governor George Wallace. The state troopers on horseback began to beat and tear gas the marchers. They also rode over the marchers as they were beaten. This was called "Bloody Sunday."

The march was forced to turn back. Dr. King issued a national appeal to come to Selma. The second attempted march was scheduled for March 1965. Dr. King led the march but was told the march did not have a permit. Dr. King led 1,500 marchers to the crest of the Edmund Pettus Bridge turned around unmolested by state troopers waiting there and marched back to Selma. SNCC called this "Turnaround Tuesday." SCLC secured a permit and on March 1, 1965, the March from Selma to Montgomery proceeded. The march took five days and covered 54 miles. Few marched the whole distance. Many only marched part of the way. By the march's end in Montgomery 25,000 people had joined. Dr. King gave a very militant speech, which signaled that the movement was shifting.

1965-1966 The Lowndes County Freedom Organization: The Black Panther Party

³⁰² Op. Cit. (Jacqueline Johnson), p. 62.

³⁰³ Op. Cit. (Henry Hampton, Steve Fayer with Sarah Flynn), p. 226.

In late 1965 and early 1966, SNCC decided to go into Alabama and organize an independent black political party.

SNCC's plans were shaped in part by its experiences in the MFDP 1964 convention challenge and the 1965 seating challenge, both of which ended in failure. This new effort, SNCC decided would be a county political organization rather than a statewide organization such as MFDP. "We decided," said a SNCC field secretary, "after the Mississippi experience that it would be better for political organizations to be on the county level so they could be closer to the people."³⁰⁴

In January 1966 before launching the Lowndes County Freedom Organizations (LCFO), SNCC encouraged a group of African-American voters to sue in federal court for a special election in 1966 for all Lowndes County administrative, law enforcement, and judicial offices.

The suit contended that white officials were holding office illegally because they had been elected before the state's Negroes had acquired the right to vote. The suit stated that, although some county officials were up for election in 1966, the terms of others continued until 1968 and 1970. In essence, this challenge rested on the contention that the white minority, under sanction of the law and by threats, terror, and violence, had prevented Negroes from even attempting to exercise their suffrage rights, in violation not only of the Fourteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution, but of the 1965 Voting Rights Act as well.³⁰⁵

In March of 1965 SNCC field workers led by senior field secretary Stokely Carmichael went in Lowndes County to solicit the aid of local leaders in getting support for the idea of organizing an all African-American political party in a majority African-American southern black-belt area. Carmichael arrived in Lowndes County on March 26, 1965. The SNCC research staff found a state law that allowed for the establishment of independent county political parties, provided they had a membership equal to 20 percent of the county's eligible voters. By August 1965, Stokely Carmichael had managed to register 250 people.³⁰⁶

The Alabama Democratic Conference (ADC) and the Alabama Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) announced plans of running African-Americans in the Democratic Party May primary. SNCC proposed a statewide boycott of the primary and to run a concurrent mock primary. The Alabama SCLC felt this would hurt the chances of African-American candidates and called on Dr. Martin Luther King for help. Dr. King came to Alabama and traveled the state for SCLC urging African-Americans to vote in the Democratic primary but stayed clear of Lowndes County, SNCC's proposed project.

On March 3, 1966, African-Americans in the process of developing local leadership founded the Lowndes County Freedom Organization led by John Hulet. In Lowndes County, African-Americans, 80% of the county, agreed to boycott the regular Democratic primary and support candidates of the newly found Lowndes County Freedom Organization (LCFO) in their own primary. LCFO as an all African-American political party choose a black panther as its

³⁰⁴ Hanes Walton, Jr., *Black Political Parties: An Historical and Political Analysis* [New York: The Free Press; London Collier-McMillan Limited, 1972], p. 138.

³⁰⁵ Ibid. (Hanes Walton, Jr.), p. 139.

³⁰⁶ Charlie Cobb, "Black Power" *Emerge Magazine*, June 1997, Volume 8, Number 8, p. 43.

symbol.³⁰⁷

SNCC also attempted to help build several other African-American freedom organizations in some of the other black belt counties (near or majority African-American) in Alabama. Problems of having lack of financial resources and with its key personnel focused on Lowndes County hindered the process. Though sporadic, non-coordinated and limited, SNCC did help to register some African-Americans, organized mass meetings, helped some African-American candidates obtain information on how to run for political office and gave some assistance in campaigning. In Lowndes County tax assessor, tax collector, coroner, sheriff, and district attorney were five offices that were at stake in the November, 1966 election. Nine hundred voters showed up to vote for the Black Panther (LCFO) in the primary. By Election Day SNCC had been able to register 2,000 African-Americans.³⁰⁸

On Election Day LCFO received less than 46 percent of the votes. Between the primary and election day in November, several events occurred which impacted upon the election and nation.³⁰⁹

1965-1966: The Atlanta Project: Black Consciousness/Anti-Vietnam War

In the interview with Don Stone (Atlanta Project activist) he contradicted Julian Bond who said the Atlanta Project didn't accomplish much. According to Stone the Atlanta Project helped Bond get re-elected by doing house to house canvassing in the buttermilk bottom section of Atlanta, put out the Nitty Gritty local community newspaper, began Anti-War demonstrations and raised the question of black consciousness within SNCC and the community.³¹⁰

The Atlanta Project began in February 1966 when Julian Bond was dismissed from the Georgia State legislature for supporting SNCC's anti-Vietnam statement. In a special election Julian Bond was re-elected. Judy Richardson, office manager for Bond's campaign, in an interview October 15, 2000 felt that the Atlanta Project had not been involved in the Julian Bond campaign and did not see them in a favorable light at that point.³¹¹

The leadership of the Atlanta Project engaged in a two-line struggle. One consisted of urban organizing of maintaining door-to-door contact with grassroots people in Atlanta and two, consisted of an internal ideological struggle within SNCC over its direction. Between February and March of 1966 the Atlanta Project published two issues of their newspaper, the Nitty Gritty. The Atlanta Project also circulated their "Black Consciousness" paper. Mike Simmons in an interview said that members of the Alabama Project which eventually formed the Lowndes County Freedom Organization or the Black Panther Party, saw the ideological struggle raised by the Atlanta Project's, "black consciousness" paper in the spring of 1966 as a struggle to determine who was going to run the organization.³¹² The Atlanta Project was not trying to seize power in the organization. Their only purpose was to influence the leaders and

³⁰⁷ Jacqueline Johnson, Stokely Carmichael: The Story of Black Power [Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Silver Burdett Press, Inc.], p. 71.

³⁰⁸ Op. Cit. (Jacqueline Johnson), p. 74.

³⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 75.

³¹⁰ Interview with Don Stone, Atlanta, Georgia, 1994.

³¹¹ Telephone Interview with Judy Richardson, October 15, 2000.

³¹² Telephone conversation with Mike Simmons (Philadelphia to Cleveland), February 5, 1998.

membership of the organization (SNCC) to become a black organization and to consider black nationalism as an option. The Atlanta Project concentrated on four areas of organizing. They were:

1. Working with workers in Atlanta. The Atlanta Project worked with dry cleaners trying to form a union.
2. Using the Vine City area of Atlanta as their base, the Atlanta Project worked with tenants in Vine City and Dixie Hills area of the city in covering rent strikes.
3. Through electoral activity of getting Julian Bond re-elected to the Georgia legislature, the Atlanta Project began to see themselves as independents and began to advocate the development of a third political party through a petition for one.
4. The Atlanta Project held several rallies against police brutality. The Atlanta Project organized mass rallies in low-income housing projects having SNCC leaders speak while playing "James Brown" over loud speakers. The activity of the Atlanta Project began to polarize contradictions in and among the SNCC leadership. Mike Simmons said that Bob Moses was beginning to side with the Atlanta Project at the confrontational meeting with the SNCC steering committee. At the time of the annual staff meeting held in Kingston, Tennessee in June of 1966, members which voted Stokely Carmichael in as chairman of SNCC, members of the Atlanta Project were attending a meeting organized by Bob Moses in New Orleans on Black Nationalism which featured Dr. John Henrik Clarke as guest speaker.

Members of SNCC began to receive draft notices. Mike Simmons of Atlanta Project was one of them. Simmons went through six months of evasion not to take a physical for the draft.

On August 16, 1966, the draft date for Mike Simmons, the Atlanta Project began picketing the draft office in Atlanta. On August 17, 1966, the Atlanta Project went in the draft office and had a sit-in in the draft office. The next day, August 18, 1966, the Atlanta Project continued and Mike Simmons tried to enter the draft office and was blocked by military police. The police grabbed a sister (African-American woman) in a headlock and a mass disturbance broke out. Ten men of the Atlanta Project and two women who were students were arrested, charged and convicted for disturbing the peace. After going to jail, the tension between the Atlanta Project and the SNCC leadership eased.

After their release from jail, Larry Fox and Mike Simmons began to move around the country to form an anti-war network, which included incorporating African-American women in anti-draft counseling and ministers to ordain people.³¹³

One of the many events that may have caused SNCC to think about changing its policy of having whites work within the pre-dominantly African-American communities in the south was the murders of Reverend Jon Daniels and Father Richard Morrisroe in the town of Haynesville in Lowndes County, Alabama on August 20, 1965. Rev. Daniels was arrested with a group of about thirty SNCC demonstrators who were picketing against Jim Crow policies at three local stores in Fort Deposit, the largest town in Lowndes County. The demonstrators were taken to jail in Hayneville. As SNCC supporters were attempting to raise

³¹³ Ibid., (Interview Mike Simmons).

bail, the demonstrators were set up according to Gloria House, “we were put out of jail.” ...suddenly on Friday afternoon, without warning, and without prior notification to associates who would have picked them up, the civil rights prisoners were told they were free. No bail had been paid. The Chief Deputy ordered them out of jail and out of the county.³¹⁴

Gloria House further recalls:

We asked to go back to jail but weren’t allowed in. As people went to make phone calls, and several of us went to the store, a man came up and shot the two white priests who were with us.³¹⁵

“We were standing around outside the jail and they forced us off the property on to the blacktop, one of the country roads, again at gunpoint. Since we had been in jail and really hadn’t any food to eat or anything to drink – we had been eating pork rind and horrible biscuits and whatever, some of us thought, “Let’s walk to the little store here and get a drink, have some ice cream.” We headed to a corner store. Just as we turned onto the main street of Haynesville, gunfire broke out, and we realized the gunfire was coming in our direction. The youngsters, of course, started running everywhere, and some of us just fell on the ground. Ruby Sales and I had been walking with Jonathan Daniels, and we fell there on the ground. Jonathan was hit and we think he must have died immediately. Father Richard Morrisroe, the only other white member of the group, was also hit. He did not die, but he moaned and groaned and moaned and groaned in a horrible way that none of us who were there will ever forget. It seemed to me it was hours before anyone appeared on this road in Haynesville.”³¹⁶

Ms. House said that she felt everyone had been informed that something was going to happen and, of course, no one was around. SNCC later learned that the targets were Jonathan Daniels and Father Morrisroe, the two whites in the group, assassinated by a hired deputy marksman, who got off scot-free during a trial.

The Meredith March: Black Power

SNCC members had great expectations for the May 1966 SNCC retreat in Kingston Springs, Tennessee. There were concerns about the discussion of SNCC projects and the holding of election of SNCC officers. People had been aroused and polarized by the “black consciousness” paper circulated by the Atlanta Project and its call to turn SNCC into an all-African-American organization. There was a split in SNCC between the “old school” integrationist, SNCC members and the “new school”, militant black nationalists. The black nationalists were advocates of non-violent direct action but combined with defensive self-defense (violence). The integrationists represented by John Lewis believed in non-violence both as a tactic and some as a philosophy and favored keeping SNCC as a multi-racial organization. Stokely Carmichael represented a successful all African-American project in

³¹⁴ Jack Mendelsohn, *The Martyrs* [New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1966], p. 209.

³¹⁵ Interviews with Gloria House, Detroit, Michigan, March 2001. For a detailed account of the incident, read Jack Mendelsohn, *The Martyrs* [New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1966] pp. 196-218.

³¹⁶ Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, *A Circle of Trust: Remembering SNCC* [New Brunswick, New Jersey and London: Rutgers University Press, 1998] p. 105-106

Lowndes County, Alabama. As an organizer, Carmichael was known as one of SNCC's best. He ran against Lewis for chairman of SNCC.

Early in the emotional conference, by a vote of 60 to 22, John Lewis, the gentle advocate of non-violence, retained the chairmanship of SNCC by defeating the challenge of the militant Stokely Carmichael. But as the conference went on, the arguments of the militants began to prevail. When the staff voted to boycott the coming White House Conference on Civil Rights, Lewis announced that he would attend anyway and the question of the chairmanship was reopened. This time SNCC workers chose Carmichael as their new leader by a vote of 60 to 12.³¹⁷

The conference represented a major shift in political emphasis for SNCC. SNCC reemphasized its opposition to the Vietnam War around January 1966 and called for African-Americans to begin building independent political, economic and cultural institutions to be used as instruments for social change in the country. SNCC began to take one organizer's emphasis that SNCC should operate on three levels:

1. SNCC workers should use nationalism as a way to organize the black community;
2. They should begin to build community wide political movements; such as the LCFO; and,
3. White SNCC organizers should begin "to organize the white community around black needs, around black history, the relative importance of blackness in the world today."³¹⁸

SNCC created a new central committee with Stokely Carmichael as chairman. SNCC proposed to go in a new direction.

On June 6, 1966, James Meredith, the African-American who had integrated the University of Mississippi in 1962 with the help of the United States Army, started on a 200 mile walk from Memphis to Jackson to show the African-Americans of Mississippi they could go to voting booths without fear. Twenty-eight miles out of Memphis while walking along U. S. Highway 51, South of Hernando, Mississippi, Meredith was shot three times by a white man with a shotgun. Though he was badly wounded, he wasn't killed. Immediately, civil rights leaders rushed to Mississippi to promise Meredith that they would continue his march. Carmichael of SNCC met with Roy Wilkins of NAACP, Floyd McKissick of CORE and Martin Luther King, Jr. of SCLC. Carmichael convinced the SNCC central committee to support the march but with qualifications. SNCC wanted to de-emphasize the role of whites in the March and not issue a call for the liberal army to come to Mississippi. SNCC through its chairman Stokely Carmichael demanded that the march be protected and invited the self-defense Deacons for Defense and Justice to protect the march. Dr. King agreed only if the Deacons didn't march with guns that may lead to the march being attacked.³¹⁹

As the march entered Philadelphia, Mississippi, Dr. King conducted a memorial service for

³¹⁷ Allen J. Matuson, "From Civil Rights to Black Power: The Case of SNCC, 1960-1966" in Bracey, Meier Rudwick, Conflict and Competition: Studies in the Recent Black Protest Movement (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing, Inc., 1971), p. 148.

³¹⁸ Jacqueline Johnson, Stokely Carmichael: The Story of Black Power [Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Silver Burdett Press, 1990], p. 78.

³¹⁹ "Cleveland Sellers" in Henry Hampton and Steve Fayer with Sarah Flynn, Voices of Freedom: An Oral History of The Civil Rights Movement from the 1950s through the 1980s [New York: Bantam Books, 1995], p. 285.

Goodman, Chaney and Schwerner. When the whites attacked the march, demonstrators fought back. The SNCC central committee saw the march as a good opportunity to raise a new slogan for the movement representing its new direction. SNCC decided to raise the slogan of “Black Power” counter posed to “Freedom Now” when the march approached a SNCC stronghold in Greenwood, Mississippi. On June 17th, the march entered Greenwood, Mississippi. The marchers tried to set up tents on the grounds of a school.

The police told the marchers the school grounds couldn’t be used without the school board’s permission. Carmichael tried to settle the dispute and ended up in jail for six hours for resisting the police order. That night a rally was held. About 600 people showed up. Carmichael was the last speaker.³²⁰

Carmichael said, “This is the twenty-seventh time I have been arrested. I ain’t going to jail no more!” Carmichael began talking about the atrocities African-Americans had faced in the recent past and began to shout, “we want black power”. Willie Ricks of SNCC who had been priming the march before Greenwood with the slogan of “Black Power” jumped on the stage and shouted, “What do you want?” The crowd shouted, “Black Power!” He did this five times until the audience drowned out all sound with “Black Power.”

“We had been going against ‘Freedom Now’ for four days [before the rally]. That’s what SCLC (Southern Christian Leadership Conference) would be shouting: Freedom Now, Freedom Now. We’d say, ‘That don’t scare white folks’. The only thing that’s gonna get us freedom is power.”³²¹

The cry of black power changed the movement. As the march proceeded 4,000 African-American registered to vote.³²² Through the march not only were there fights between the marchers and white mobs, but also on several occasions, gunfire was exchanged both ways between the white mobs and the marchers. James Meredith (recovering from his wounds) joined the march on its last day by car. By June 26, 1966 as 15,000 marchers entered Jackson, Mississippi in the “March Against Fear”, the civil rights movement had died and the black power movement was born.

Alliances in the North

With the mass cry of black power SNCC became a catalyst for a black awakening of the mid-60’s to early 70’s. SNCC began to respond to this black awakening or consciousness by appealing to the nationalistic aspirations of many of the urban black under/working class.

When the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) raised the slogan of black power in 1966, it represented a transitional slogan within the civil rights movement. Black Power as articulated by the SNCC leadership still was a bourgeois democratic demand. It was a call in essence for proportional representation of African-Americans in the capitalist political arena. SNCC failed to advance a program and organize the masses around black power. SNCC at first organized the Lowndes County Freedom Organization (Black Panther Party) around black electoral power, which was correct, but as the spontaneous rebellions increased SNCC’s program was reduced to leftist rhetoric. Instead, SNCC only mobilized the masses around the slogan of Black Power and as a result the motion generated around Black Power

³²⁰ *Op. Cit.* (Jacqueline Johnson), p. 84.

³²¹ Charlie Cobb, Jr., “Black Power”, *Emerge Magazine*, Volume 8, Number 8, June 1997, p. 41.

³²² *Op. Cit.* (Henry Hampton with Steve Fayer with Sarah Flynn, *Voices of Freedom*, [New York: Bantam Books, 1990], p. 41.

subsided after a couple of years.

The Black Panther Party (“BPP”) also followed SNCC in mobilizing the masses in left adventurist actions and the motion for black political power fell to the initiative of the black middle class.

Many African-American radical groups in the 60’s organized on the basis of the revolutionary mood of the African-American masses and failed to develop correct tactics. Revolutionary tactics are not built upon revolutionary moods alone. The failure of SNCC, RAM and the BPP to organize for revolutionary African-American electoral power during the high tide (‘67-‘69 period) of the Black Liberation Movement (BLM) liquidated the left wing of the BLM from having a solid mass base.

As SNCC speakers were invited to speak in urban communities and on college campuses, SNCC also ceased to do concrete day-to-day organizing in rural local communities.

SNCC began to rely almost totally on speechmaking and its New York Office manned by professional fund-raisers and veteran staff members, to provide funds for payroll expenses.³²³

In January 1966 SNCC announced its opposition to the Vietnam War, with SCLC following that position four months later along with CORE.

SNCC concentrated on getting press attention but the more radical SNCC became publicly the less funds it received from liberal white, mainly Jewish liberals.

Although some Jews cut off their support to SNCC during 1966, most did so because they like many former non-Jewish supporters disagreed with SNCC’s anti-war stance and with Carmichael’s inflammatory rhetoric.³²⁴

As SNCC’s financial base was eroding, organizationally, it made alliances in the north that further alienated its liberal supporters. Responding to a letter from myself to Stokely Carmichael requesting permission to establish a chapter of the Black Panther Party, Carmichael came north to make the alliance with revolutionary black nationalists in New York.³²⁵ From meetings in New York, a collective decision was made to build the Black Panther Party into a national organization. The revolutionary nationalists in New York were not alone in seeking to make an alliance with SNCC.

Kwame Ture (Stokely Carmichael) recalls:

When a volunteer from Oakland, California, working in Lowndes County returned home, Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale asked for permission to use the emblem for a party they were forming.³²⁶

Stokely Carmichael would also threaten to make an alliance with the Nation of Islam and spoke often to N.O.I. mosques audiences.

³²³ Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960’s* [Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University press, 1981], p. 234.

³²⁴ Clayborne Carson, “Blacks and Jews in the Civil Rights Movement, The Case of SNCC”, in Jack Salzman, Adina Back, Gretchen Sullivan Sorin (ed.) *Bridges and Boundaries: African-Americans and American Jews* [New York: George Brazidler, Inc. 1992], p. 41.

³²⁵ Max Stanford, Participant/Observer, Bronx, New York, June 1966.

³²⁶ Charlie Cobb, “Black Power” interview with Kwame Ture, *Emerge Magazine*, June 1997, p. 43.

As SNCC made alliances with black nationalists and major street gangs in northern cities, it often came under a quasi-para-military pressure to adhere to one or another aspect of black nationalist rhetoric. According to John Bracey, Jr., this occurred on one occasion at a dance of the Blackstone Rangers in Chicago. According to another source, a similar situation occurred in Cleveland, Ohio. Often these instances made SNCC personnel leery of black nationalist forces providing an uneasy alliance. SNCC also was involved in an internal split, or strife resulting from the Atlanta Project's continual demands that whites be purged from SNCC and it break off ties from them.

At a staff meeting held in upstate New York during December 1966, SNCC's veteran leaders came under strong attack from separatists in SNCC's recently established Atlanta Project.³²⁷

Several members of the Atlanta Project were from the North, and took their ideological direction from the writings of Franz Fanon and the speeches of Malcolm X and often refuted aspects of the Marxian paradigm. They insisted the organization (SNCC) engage in an internal ideological purification movement. The Atlanta Project against the Carmichael faction waged ideological battles until Carmichael fired all members of the Atlanta Project for insubordination in the winter of 1967.

Staff members elected H. Rap Brown as Chairman, believing that he could remove SNCC from public controversy.³²⁸

Due to the Atlanta Project's demand that SNCC break its umbilical cord to white supporters, SNCC gave a scathing denouncement of Israel settler colonialism and support for the Palestinians.

Veteran staff member Cleveland Sellers later acknowledged that afterward many donations from white sources just stopped coming in.³²⁹

Kwame Ture recalls how his wife's (Miriam Makabea) concerts were cancelled overnight.³³⁰ SNCC's international positions; its alliances with black nationalist organizations and SNCC's flirtation with urban guerrilla war lead to SNCC reaching the crisis point. Combined with the struggle of women in SNCC for equality and the rapid growth of the Black Panther Party for Self Defense lead to SNCC's twilight.

Women in SNCC

Women were treated more equally in SNCC as opposed to SCLC or the NAACP probably because of their active role in the spontaneous demonstrations that led to the development of SNCC (most notably Diane Nash from Fisk University in the Nashville movement) and Ms. Ella Baker, the convener of the April 14-17, 1960 conference, which led to SNCC's development. Despite the gallant role of women in SNCC's development and continuity in its leadership (Ms. Ruby Doris Smith Robinson); women, both African-American and European-American ("white") suffered from male chauvinism. Also there was a struggle within the gender between Euro-American women and African-American women in terms of sexual

³²⁷ *Op. Cit.* (Carson, "Blacks and Jews"), pp. 41-42.

³²⁸ *Op. Cit.* (Jack Salzman, Adina Back, Gretchen Sullivan Sorin), p. 42.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

³³⁰ Interview with Kwame Ture, Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio, 1996 (Max Stanford).

relations with African-American male activists within the SNCC organization.

Following the concept of integration, white and black together early in SNCC's development (1960-1965) took on sexual (politics') connotations between the races socially. SNCC's rhetoric of equality and personal dignity and respect was not always achieved. While women were more decisive on the front lines of organizing in the sit-ins and freedom rides (1960-1961) they became relegated to administrative and education (office, freedom schools) and fund-raising as SNCC ventured off campus and into the rural south. Much of this sexual division of labor came from fear of male organizers of atrocities that may be carried out against African-American female organizers (1961-1963). There was also increased anxiety concerning European-American women being in the field in the state of Mississippi and having sexual relations with African-American men from the community.³³¹

What has not been adequately recorded was the social motif of the American left from 1919 to the late 70's. Part of the cultural motif of the left represented by the Communist Party U.S.A. (C.P.) and the Trotskyites, Socialist Workers Party (S.W.P.) dominated by a radical Jewish culture, was the recruiting of African-American male cadre through seduction by European-American females. There were some instances of radical African-American females socially connecting with radical European-American males but seldom.³³² So when the civil rights movement exploded in mass youth numbers, sexual politics practiced by most groups on the organized left became informal social etiquette. This produced a double standard regarding sexual behavior. While it was all right for an African-American male SNCC staff member to date and have sexual intercourse with European-American women in and around SNCC, sexual contact between an African-American female and a European-American male was considered taboo.³³³

African-American women in SNCC became estranged and alienated from the European-American women in SNCC because they resented willingness, eagerness of the African-American male SNCC staff members to sexually relate to the European-American women staff members and volunteers.³³⁴ At the same time, the European-American women began to feel like sexual objects of exploitation. Led by Mary King and Casey Hayden, they articulated this concern in a paper prepared for a SNCC retreat in the fall of 1964.³³⁵ At the same time, Casey Hayden had organized clandestinely a "Society for the Protection of White People's Rights Within SNCC." This was a reaction to the growing African-American nationalistic sentiment that had grown with the ranks of SNCC's African-American members in relation to its European-American SNCC workers.³³⁶

African-American SNCC women began to relate to more nationalistic minded SNCC staff members, often from the north or relate to African-American men on the outer fringes of the organizing circle of the SNCC staff.³³⁷

³³¹ Doug McAdam, "Gender as a Mediator of the Activist Experience: The Case of Freedom Summer", *American Journal of Sociology*, Volume 97, Number 5 (March 1992), p. 1220.

³³² Harold Cruse, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual* [New York: William Morrow & Company, Inc., 1967], pp. 147-171, Interview with Queen Mother Audrey Moore, Harlem, N.Y., 1980.

³³³ Interview with Ruby Doris Smith Robinson, Philadelphia, Pa., March, 1967.

³³⁴ Interview with Ruby Doris Smith Robinson, April 1964, SNCC National Office, Atlanta, Ga.

³³⁵ *Op. Cit.*, (McAdam) "Gender", p. 1232.

³³⁶ Interview with Ruby Doris Smith Robinson, March, 1967, Philadelphia, Pa.

³³⁷ Interview with four African-American female workers on the SNCC staff, May, 1964, Atlanta, Ga.

During the racial purges within SNCC, 1966-1967, SNCC consciously sought to upgrade some of its African-American female cadre who had been loyal, effective, charismatic and courageous organizers since SNCC's formation in 1960. While several African-American women had been SNCC project directors in the south, there were few African-American women on the central committee of SNCC. In May 1966, Ruby Doris Smith Robinson was elected Executive Secretary of SNCC. This represented an upgrading for Ms. Smith, since the position of Executive Secretary of SNCC had been just as powerful or more powerful than chairman of SNCC when James Forman held the position.³³⁸

Judy Richardson felt that males and females had more fluid relations in SNCC than those of SCLC, where women had rigid defined roles. Though sexism did exist in SNCC, the women would unite to fight the contradictions of sexism in SNCC. There were strong women leaders and some female project directors in SNCC. For instance, women in SNCC had a protest and decided not to continue to take the minutes at meetings in the winter of 1963 or 1964, so the men in SNCC had to begin taking the minutes.³³⁹

African-American women who had faced danger in the field, suffered beatings and imprisonment, fought a two-lined struggle within SNCC; one for gender representation within the leadership and, for a cultural "self-esteem" among the African-American males. At the same time, the feminism of the middle class European-American women in SNCC though having legitimate claims against sexual exploitation were not concentrated on the realities of the 1960's American south. African-American SNCC female workers were more inclined to unite with African-American SNCC male workers on the analysis of race and class exploitation. In an interview with Muriel Tillinghast said she loved the brothers in SNCC and had a lot of respect for those who were in the field organizing. Some of the white women felt they were being handled very sexistly. Muriel said she raised "a question with the white women in SNCC, who worked in the office that they wanted to confront. She said,

"the people you were talking with are in the field and not only are you white and young and inexperienced, but you really wanted to go up against people who had been ducking bullets, who had been organizing people, living in the rough, haven't had a bath in a week, surviving off a half of baloney sandwich and some Vienna sausages and really you want to go to jaw to jaw with some in terms of what they should be doing in their rural areas."³⁴⁰

Muriel said to the white women this is where you take notes and this is where you learn. The question of gender tended to be a complex question related to the dialectics of sexual colonial exploitation and the politics of paternal dominance by the super ordinate race over the subordinated one. The question of eliminating sexism, as it became known was more of a perplexing question for SNCC because it was originally multi-racial organization. But as SNCC became a single ethnic organization, the question of women's equality was not resolved and this question remains a central issue in the African-American liberation movement.

In the 1966-67 period SNCC decided to raise the consciousness of African-American college students.

³³⁸ Cynthia Griggs Fleming, "Black Women Activists and The Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee: The Case of Ruby Doris Smith Robinson", *Journal of Women's History*, Volume 4, Number 3 (Winter), p. 74.

³³⁹ Telephone interview with Judy Richardson, October 15, 2000.

³⁴⁰ Interview with Muriel Tillinghast, New York to Cleveland, August 24, 2000.

Organizing on Black College Campuses

George Ware, previous SNCC campus coordinator, describes his initial involvement in SNCC;

SNCC had a very strong focus in Alabama and that is when I became involved with SNCC. It was really through an organization that we had created on our campus to help the civil rights movement called the Tuskegee Institute Advancement League. We called it TIAL.³⁴¹

The students at Tuskegee Institute were aware of the conflict between SCLC and SNCC. They did not want to get involved in the competition between civil rights organizations. Rather than form a SNCC chapter, the students formed an independent organization. George Ware became co-chairman of TIAL and George Davis and others got involved in support groups giving financial and material backing to the various civil rights organizations. Members of TIAL went to all the demonstrations held in Selma in 64 and into 1965, including the march over Pettus Bridge in which demonstrators were beaten in March of 1965. TIAL also participated in the Selma to Montgomery march. TIAL also continued support of Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer in Sunflower County, Mississippi. TIAL at the suggestions of Mrs. Hamer began picketing in Tuskegee, Alabama, demanding that the local A & P hire African-Americans for the summer.

Fannie Lou Hamer came up with this idea. Let's go and ask the A&P to hire blacks for the summer. Most of the people who shop in the A&P are black and all the people that work in their stores are white. So, we went down and asked the persons if they would consider hiring college students for the summer. The guy told us that it was against policy for his own business and to get out of his store. So, we set up a picket and at first people went past it, the picket line, but very soon black people were no longer going past. There was this one white man who went past and he made the mistake of thinking that we were like Dr. King, he took a camera and a guy on the picket line took the camera and beat him up.³⁴²

The TIAL decided not to change from non-violent resistance or demonstrating for integration to black power as SNCC had done. The TIAL decided to integrate the churches in Tuskegee.

On Sunday, the men of the church, who were there every Sunday, locked us out. One Sunday, we came there and all the men were across the street in their work clothes, all the white folk. That Sunday they attacked us with baseball bats, guns. They beat us up and drove us away from the church. The following Sunday, the black middle-class population turned out with guns to escort us to the church. We wanted to demonstrate things weren't so perfect in town.³⁴³

George Ware soon joined SNCC. He became campus coordinator for SNCC. George Ware's role as campus coordinator was to encourage students on college campuses (usually southern or African-American) to organize. Ware picked Fisk University and Tennessee State as his first projects. SNCC was actively involved in the black power project and rebellions (riots)

³⁴¹ Interview with George Ware, Philadelphia, Pa. 1994, p. 18.

³⁴² Ibid., p. 18.

³⁴³ Ibid. (Interview with George Ware), p. 19.

that were occurring around the country. The SNCC project at college campuses was to challenge college students to make sure their education was relevant to the needs of the African-American people.

I would take kids from Fisk and take them to Lowndes County, Alabama during an election.³⁴⁴

From the African-American college students' participation in electoral politics in the black belt and facing armed intimidation from the KKK radicalized them. They began to take a closer look at the subject matter they were studying in school and how relevant it was to the conditions of the African-American community surrounding Fisk University. The young college students through efforts of SNCC created summer literacy programs using the Autobiography of Malcolm X to teach reading. In the north, SNCC's campus program targeted African-American students on white colleges to form black student unions and demand black studies departments in all major colleges in America. The height of the SNCC campus program came in the 1966-1967 school year at Central State College and Wilberforce University in Wilberforce, Ohio.

Michael Warren who was a student at Central State had gone to a feast that was being given by the Wilberforce president.³⁴⁵

When he got there, he attacked the president's political positions. He was expelled from school. Students of the campuses began marching in support of his reinstatement, took over a building on campus and held it until state troopers invaded the campus. The school was closed down for a couple of weeks. Ware and SNCC's campus program cadre came in the area to help the students work through the whole affair.

We took the core of the revolutionary cadre to a retreat in upper Michigan for two weeks. When school started back, we sent some people off to places to talk to parents. When school started, all the parents and students came back with a solidified position. Central State became much more responsive. We brought Farrakhan in and they set up a Muslim Mosque on campus.³⁴⁶

Many of Central State's students were from New York and Philadelphia and were Muslims. One of the demands was that a Mosque be established on an equal basis with the Christian Chapel as an alternative religious experience.

The African-American student demonstrations escalated in 1967, reaching some urban communities. They continued into 1968 and by spring, had reached a peak along with white students either in support of African-American students or demanding the U.S. end its involvement in war against Vietnam. At Orangeburg, South Carolina, African-American student demonstrations against a segregated bowling alley ended with police shooting up the campus and shooting to death three student demonstrators.

The Orangeburg Massacre

In an interview with Cleveland Sellers, October 3, 2000, he described events that led up to the Orangeburg Massacre. In the fall of 1967 Cleveland Sellers decided to re-energize himself

³⁴⁴ *Op. Cit.*, p. 19.

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

(rest and recuperate from previous organizing experiences throughout the south) and return to South Carolina. Sellers enrolled at South Carolina State University At Orangeburg, South Carolina. He said while continuing his education he wanted to share experiences and strategies he had learned in SNCC while organizing in other parts of the South. He also wanted to organize students to interact with the rich community base and indigenous leadership in and around the Beaufort, Johnson Island area, and the Penn center. Sellers said “there was just a richness in that area for African history, African-American history and culture”. Sellers wanted to share with the students certain realities and historical pieces of information about the Africans in the diaspora and their struggle, how they were successful in maintaining the faith and continuing the struggle.

At South Carolina State University and Clafin students organized the Black Awareness Coordinating Committee (BACC). Most of the students were involved in study of African and African-American history. The students had an appreciation for black power politically and the new nationalist kind of awakening that was emerging around the country. The youth chapter of the NAACP initiated demonstrations against racial discrimination at the bowling alley in Orangeburg. African-American students spent their money in Orangeburg, South Carolina but faced racial discrimination at the bowling alley.

Most of the students in BACC were not involved in the confrontational mood even though they were aware of what the youth chapter of the NAACP was doing. BACC was into the history and cultural aspects of the area during this time. BACC voted not to be part of confrontational efforts even though BACC supported the demonstrations planned by the youth chapter of the NAACP.

The first night of the demonstrations the students who went downtown were threatened with arrest but weren’t arrested. That was on Monday, the 5th of February 1968. The second night, the students went back downtown to demonstrate at the bowling alley and thirteen or fourteen students were arrested. Word got out to about 200 students at South Carolina State University who were watching a movie that the arrested students wanted their support.

Students began to assemble in the parking lot of the bowling alley around 9:00 p.m. in the evening. A number of the South Carolina State University faculty and administrators came and began negotiating with the local police where the students would be released and that they would be responsible for getting everyone back on the campus and work through the night to decide what they would do the following day. It seemed that as though an agreement had been reached so one of the students was allowed to get on top of a car and tell the students that “we are released, we are not harmed and we all need to move back to the campus.” When he was getting down from the car a fire truck mysteriously showed up.

The students confront members of the fire truck asking the firemen why they were there. Two or three of the students made an effort to get into the bowling alley not knowing there were police inside the bowling alley. There were no police in front of the bowling alley. The students pushed up against the door of the bowling alley to go in. The police were inside the bowling alley so that pushed back. The crowd saw the pushing going on and they all kind of pushed in the area the students were trying to get in the bowling alley. The bowling alley is in vertex. When the crowd shifted to the bowling alley, the pressure from all the students pushing the students against the glass door of the bowling alley, the glass door broke. When the glass door broke the South Carolina Highway Patrol issued out billy clubs to the local

police and began beating the students indiscriminately. Thirteen students were admitted to the hospital that night with lacerations to the head and scalp and many had concussions of which many were co-ed.

The students ended up going back to the campus, which was about two and a half blocks away. Along the way they broke out the windows of white businesses that the police classified as riot. Later that night the student organizations came together to work out a strategy and the acting president of South Carolina State University suggested that the students not leave the campus. Most of the students did not leave the campus. The next day the campus was completely surrounded by national guardsmen. Entrance to and exit from the campus was denied in most instances. Some of the students felt the need to go off of campus on Wednesday night February 1st. A white homeowner who said he thought the students were going to burglarize his house shot them. The students were using the path behind his house as a way to get off campus since the front of the campus was sealed.

The FBI and local police were propagandizing Orangeburg residents that Sellers was a dangerous terrorist and that the students were going to be violent and the community needed to be armed. Even though the campus was sealed a car with two white youth got access to the campus and rode down a campus street, which was a dead end. When the car approach the dead end, one of the white youth panicked and started firing indiscriminately at students. The students threw bricks and bottles at the car. The car was allowed to leave the campus. The two white youth in the car were never arrested and were never prosecuted. Because this incident implied compliance by the National Guard and local police Sellers began to talk to the press. He called for State intervention in the crisis and called upon the African-American community to come forth to assist the students in the activities they wanted to be involved in.

The adult chapters of the NAACP had stepped to the side. No intervention came. Wednesday night was spent with the students negotiating what types of activity they needed to consider, whether they wanted to march downtown or whether they wanted to march on the State capital. The students had few alternatives because they had been fairly isolated to the campus. The National Guard intensified its seizure by bringing in tanks and placing one of the tanks in front of the house Sellers was living in.

At this point, Sellers decided to stay within the interior of the campus. Sellers was trying to provide some information on experiences so they may have a better idea of what their options were. One exception was Sellers advice to the students not to have any more night demonstrations. Many faculty members of South Carolina State University were also involved in trying to work out solutions with the students. On Thursday evening students approached Sellers and said he could use a student's room who had gone home. Sellers went to the room and went to bed about 7:00 p.m. because he had been up all day and the night before. Students who said they heard some gunfire on campus awakened sellers. Sellers went to the backside of the campus but it was quiet. Sellers then walked to the front side of the campus where he saw students standing in a circle in an open field. Sellers looked down to his right and saw white helmets of what appeared to be police. He was going to tell the students to move closer to the school's buildings because their location was not a safe place to be in. Sellers believed that when he crossed the street, the silhouette of his large Afro hairstyle caught the attention of the police. As he was calling out to a student leader, "Henry", the police open fire. The police had shotguns, rifles, pistols, plus their personal weapons, and fired indiscriminately at the students. All the students turned and tried to move away from the

police gunfire. Sellers tried to drag as many wounded students as he could. He hid behind a trashcan and along with other students carried the wounded to the infirmary. Thirty-six students were wounded including Sellers and three were killed. The campus police brought some of the students to the infirmary. The students were in shock.³⁴⁷

Police used tear gas to quell crowds of demonstrations at Alcorn A&M College. In March after a year of anti-war demonstrations, Howard University students seized administration buildings demanding Black Studies. Before the month ended, students seized buildings at Bowie State College and state troopers crushed demonstrations at Cheyney State College. At Tuskegee, students demanding campus reforms took the school trustees hostage. At Boston University, students occupied administration buildings demanding increased African-American enrollment and changes in the curriculum. Trinity College officials had to deal with campus racial bias when students occupied the administration building there.

At Columbia University, students seized five buildings throwing papers out windows and creating so much chaos that the school year ended early. These acts were repeated at Ohio State University, Northwestern, University of Michigan, and many other campuses seeking action from appointed officials.³⁴⁸

In 1970 the National Guard shooting of students at Kent State and in May Jackson State eventually quelled the mass student uprisings.

While many of the campus activities had been started by SNCC and SDS (Students for a Democratic Society) SNCC was simultaneously losing ground on campus from its off shoot, the Black Panther Party and various cultural nationalist groups such as the U.S. (United Slaves) led by Maulana Ron Karenga and the RNA (Republic of New Africa).

Demise/Alliance with the BPPSD

The period 1967-1971 was a period of SNCC's eclipse as a vanguard for the black liberation movement. Coming under attack organizationally with the dynamite plot in Philadelphia on August 13, 1966 and then again in 1967 with the arrest of its' ³⁴⁹ Chairman H. Rap Brown, SNCC became a target of government oppression.³⁵⁰

James Forman ex-Executive Secretary of SNCC describes reasons for the dynamite plot.

"The frame-up took place because Philadelphia had become the first metropolitan area in which SNCC was developing the concept of a national freedom organization with the panther as its symbol. SNCC's work there was going well. Response in the ghettos had been good and relations with other organizations had been built."³⁵¹

³⁴⁷ Interview with Cleveland Sellers, Jr., September 7th, 2000 and October 3rd, 2000, Cleveland to Columbia, South Carolina. The interview is not single spaced because I paraphrase Sellers words. The essence of Cleveland Sellers' interview is there. The reader should also refer to Jack Bass and Jack Nelson, The Orangeburg Massacre [Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1984].

³⁴⁸ Dorothy Salem, Long Journey: History of the African-American Experience [Dubuque, Iowa: Kendal/Hout Publishing Company, 1997] draft for Manuscript, p. 373.

³⁴⁹ James Forman, The Making of Black Revolutionaries, [Seattle, Washington: Open Hand Publishing, Inc., 1985], p. 460.

³⁵⁰ James Forman, High Tide of Black Resistance, [Seattle, Washington: Open Hand Publishing, Inc. 1994], p. 136.

³⁵¹ Op. Cit., (Forman, The Making of Black Revolutionaries), p. 460.

Forman goes on to describe:

In 1967 spontaneous urban rebellions occurred in fifty-nine cities as African-American college students led revolts on southern campuses. African-American high school students led revolts against the lack of teaching of African-American history in the school curriculum in Philadelphia, New Haven, Trenton and Los Angeles.³⁵²

Forman estimates the number of arrests of African-American revolutionaries in 1967 reached well into the thousands.

In October 1966 Bobby Seale and Huey Newton had formed the Black Panther Party for Self Defense. Throughout 1967 the Black Panther Party for Self Defense had several confrontations with police in Oakland, California. SNCC trying to develop northern alliances periodically sent organizers to work with the young BPPSD. Eldridge Cleaver a recently released prisoner political writer had joined the BPPSD. On May 2, 1967 the BPPSD grabbed headlines when members mistakenly walked into the state senate chambers with arms. As the confrontations continued the Black Panther Party for Self Defense became the predominate black news item. SNCC organizer George Ware describes the growing dilemma that Panther organizer Huey P. Newton was having:

My position was, once the law came down and said you could not longer carry a gun and if you carried a gun, if you said you were going to continue to go on, a policeman could assume you were Panther, if you were armed. So when I went back out to California and I got with Huey out there, formalized a meeting. I sat down with him and I questioned how safe it was going to be for the Panthers to come to operate that way...the way they had in the past. Huey asked me, what did I think? I said that I thought the Panthers should completely reorganize, that they couldn't have an above ground organization, any more, that if they continued to operate above ground and continued to say they were armed, the police would target them. I felt a shoot-out would occur in which the Panthers would be killed because a policeman could assume that you were a Panther and you had a gun. Huey felt, that if he didn't continue to do what he was doing, he would be like a sell out. I thought that it was futile at that point to actually force him to go underground.³⁵³

George Ware felt Newton should work above ground in SNCC's campus program and let the rest of the Panthers who were not so well known to move in a more discrete way. Ware said, "Huey resented that." A few weeks after the discussion Newton was involved in a shootout with the police in which a police officer was killed and another wounded. Within the next few years Newton was involved in fighting for his freedom. Ware felt when Eldridge Cleaver became the dominant figure in the Panther leadership; the Panthers took a direction that he wasn't sure they would have taken if Newton had been there.

As the "Free Huey" defense movement began to mushroom SNCC first in promoting the Panthers began to be overshadowed by them in the mass media. On February 1, 1968 three figures in SNCC's leadership, James Forman, Stokely Carmichael and H. Rap Brown spoke at a mass Free Huey rally in Oakland, California. Four Thousand people were in attendance.

³⁵²

Op. Cit., (Forman, High Tide of Resistance), p. 135.

³⁵³

Interview with George Ware, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

SNCC and Panthers announced having made an alliance with Eldridge Cleaver announcing that the two groups had merged. H. Rap Brown less than a month later had further entanglements with legal authorities, as a result of his breaking travel restrictions on an earlier conviction on riot charges stemming from urban rebellions in the summer of 1967. Brown was re-incarcerated in late February 1968 and released a week after Martin Luther King's assassination, which was on April 4, 1968. SNCC faced a dilemma with its Chairman H. Rap Brown having legal entanglements with the law.

SNCC workers attending the annual staff meeting that began on June 11, 1968 recognized that they had to select new leadership to rebuild SNCC. Rap Brown, too pre-occupied with his own legal problems to attend the meeting, was not a candidate to succeed himself as chairman.

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SNCC reorganized its structure and elected nine deputy chairmen to replace Brown. Phil Hutchings was elected program secretary, as acting spokesman for SNCC.

James Forman describes SNCC's alliance with the Black Panther Party for Self Defense:

At the annual SNCC staff meeting in June, 1968, I introduced a resolution stating that SNCC would work to help build the Black Panther Party, of which Huey Newton is the minister of defense and Bobby Seale the chairman, as a national organization. The honest intent of this resolution, which passed, was to commit SNCC formally to make available whatever resources and skills that it had to help build the Black Panther Party. The references to Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale were included to eliminate any confusion if another Black Panther Party arose (there had been many in the past).³⁵⁵

By the end of July 1968 the leadership of SNCC began to question, the SNCC/Black Panther Alliance.³⁵⁶ Also in July, contradictions within the SNCC leadership occurred. Under repression, having operational problems with the BPP, differences in the SNCC leadership turned inward. The alliance between the Oakland Black Panthers and SNCC had broken down in near violent confrontation. H. Rap Brown and James Forman announced their break from the BPP; but Stokely Carmichael of SNCC remained with the BPP. SNCC in return expelled Carmichael. SNCC continued to degenerate into internal bickering and personality struggles throughout 1968.

Forman, previously the strongest leader in SNCC, was on the verge of complete nervous collapse after the breakup of the alliance with the Black Panthers, and he spent much of the fall resting and traveling in the Caribbean.³⁵⁷

After the December SNCC staff meeting, veteran staff members Cleveland Sellers and Willie Ricks were expelled for maintaining contact with the BPP.³⁵⁸

By April 1969, Forman was once again active taking control of the National Black Economic

³⁵⁴ Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960's* [Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1981], p. 290.

³⁵⁵ James Forman, *The Making of Black Revolutionaries* [Seattle, Washington: Open Hand Publishing, Inc., 1990], p. 352.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 538.

³⁵⁷ Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle*, *Op. Cit.*, p. 293.

³⁵⁸ *Op. Cit.*, Carson, *In Struggle*, p. 297.

Development Conference in Detroit, Michigan. He drafted a Black Manifesto demanding reparations from religious organizations. SNCC in its June 1969 staff meeting refused to support the reparations motions.

In a political battle for control of SNCC, H. Rap Brown's faction won control of a dying organization. James Forman resigned from SNCC and moved to Detroit to join the League of Revolutionary Black Workers (LRBW). Under Brown's leadership, SNCC became the Student National Coordinating Committee. SNCC formed a revolutionary council, which soon broke up into factional personality and ideological disputes.

H. Rap Brown was to have a trial on his previous charges stemming from his 1967 Cambridge, Maryland demonstration:

On March 9, 1970, the day before the trial was scheduled to start, two of his associates in SNCC, Ralph Featherstone and William H. (Che) Payne, were killed by an explosion that ripped apart their car as they drove away from Bel Air.³⁵⁹

Brown went into exile and underground after the incident and was wounded and captured in a shoot-out on October 16, 1971 in New York. Brown was part of an effort to eradicate drugs from the African-American community. SNCC soon afterward dissolved with remaining individual members providing support for Brown who served a five to ten year prison term for armed robbery. The pressure brought upon SNCC by the state's repressive apparatus eventually led to SNCC's demise.

Afterword

In building a mass base of support from the bottom up, it is necessary to include all in the community and to have a commitment to include indigenous and local leadership. With the understanding of sisters Ella Baker and Septima Clark, "resources, charismatic leaders, hierarchical structures (organizations, party's, etc.), mobilizations, demonstrations, and organizing and political opportunities are not sufficient to sustain or even mobilize a movement."³⁶⁰

Belinda Robnett, in How Long? How Long?: African Women in the Struggle for Civil Rights, goes on to explain:

"SNCC's philosophy and organizational shift away from the teachings of Ella Baker and the methods developed by Septima Clark destroyed the foundations of the movement. And SNCC, which had been the grassroots mobilizing force for the movement, collapsed in the early seventies."³⁶¹

While SNCC's chairman traveled throughout the U.S. and around the world stimulating, arousing, and mobilizing the Black consciousness of African-Americans, it was reduced to a mobile agit-prop committee with mass charismatic spokesmen from the period 1966 to 1971. As a result, SNCC's freedom organizations and other field organizations/projects suffered and/or deteriorated. SNCC became the opposite of what sister Ella Baker had previously

³⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 297.

³⁶⁰ Belinda Robnett, How Long? How Long?: African-American Women in the Struggle for Civil Rights [New York: Oxford University Press, 1997] pp.202-204

³⁶¹ Op. Cit., pp. 187-188

advised. SNCC's greatest error, an honest error, was its decision to leave its base, which it had built in the south. Unconsciously it fell into a media trap, when it raised the call for Black Power. Kwame Toure, in recalling the period in self-criticism:

Flying across the country speaking, meeting with community groups, meeting the press on national TV, on college campuses, in churches. It was constant motion. I could not spend the time I had expected with SNCC in the field...³⁶²

Kwame Ture, in hindsight, realized this error of SNCC's saying, "Politically it makes no sense to abandon one base before developing a new one."³⁶³ He further reiterates, stating, "you cannot conduct serious political organizing in the media. The revolution will not be televised."³⁶⁴

Robert Mants felt that SNCC went through four periods:

1. The early period, 1960-1962
2. The period of desegregation: 1963-1965
3. The Black Power Era: 1966-1968
4. After the Storm: 1969-1971³⁶⁵

The importance of SNCC cannot be underestimated and the lessons to be drawn from it. Diane Nash said, "I think history's most important function is to help us better cope with the present and the future."³⁶⁶

Who was James Boggs (1919-1993)

James Boggs was born May 28th in Marion Junction, Alabama in 1919. Boggs came to Detroit, Michigan in 1937 and was employed as a worker on the motor line at the Chrysler Corporation's Jefferson Avenue assembly plant from 1940 to 1968. He helped in the organizing of UAW Local 7.³⁶⁷ Boggs began working with C.L.R. James in (1951) writing for the Correspondence Newsletter and chairing the editorial board from 1955 to 1964.

Though Boggs regarded C.L.R. James as his mentor, he clashed with C.L.R. in 1962 on Marxism and what was happening to the American workers. James Boggs was an "organic intellectual" developing his ideas from living struggles in the plant on the production line and in the community. He recognized that the developing changes in production had weakened the unions and, the next great movement was to come from African-Americans. Boggs began to discuss the effects of cybernation and automation on the American workers.

"On the other hand, C.L.R., was in Europe living by ideas that had come out of an earlier struggle, saw Jimmy's analysis and his proposal that the organization undertake a serious study of the development of American Capitalism as a threat and a repudiation of Marxism. Those who supported JB on the issue kept Correspondence. Those who supported C.L.R. formed a group called

³⁶² Stokely Carmichael [Kwame Ture] with Ekwame Michael Thelwell, Ready for Revolution: The Life and Struggles of Stokely Carmichael [Kwame Ture] [New York: Scribner, 2003] p. 52

³⁶³ Op. Cit., p. 561

³⁶⁴ Op. Cit., p. 546

³⁶⁵ Op. Cit., (Circle of Trust) p. 216

³⁶⁶ Op. Cit., (Circle of Trust) p. 18

³⁶⁷ Leah Samuel, "A Life Lived for Justice: James Boggs worked hard for the equality he believed in, Metro Times, October 13-19, 1993, p. 14.

Facing Reality (which was led by Martin Glaberman).³⁶⁸

In 1963 Boggs wrote, The American Revolution: Pages From a Negro Workers Notebook, published by Monthly Review Press. This work was the first work published by an African-American worker in the 1960's on the past, present and future direction of the American Revolution. Boggs stated:

The struggle for black political power is a revolutionary struggle, because unlike the struggle for white power, it is the climax of a ceaseless struggle on the part of 'African-Americans' for human rights.³⁶⁹

Boggs saw that every issue, whether local or domestic, had international repercussions inherent in it. In 1963, Boggs chaired the Grass-Roots Leadership Conference in Detroit, where Malcolm X made his famous speech, "A Message to the Grassroots."³⁷⁰

Boggs with his wife Grace Lee helped in forming the Michigan Freedom Now Party. The Boggs helped in the national formation of RAM (Revolutionary Action Movement), dialogued with and advised Malcolm X along with African-American journalist William Worthy and Patricia Robinson.³⁷¹

When the Boggs felt that RAM was not pursuing a constructive path of development, they attempted to guide the civil rights movement towards independent political empowerment and self-defense. In April of 1965 on the initiative of James and Grace Boggs, a meeting was called that included Nahazz Rogers from Chicago, Julius Hobson from D.C., Jesse Gray (Harlem rent strike leader of 1960), and other activists such as Bill Davis from Philadelphia who formed the Organization for Black Power (OBP). Though short lived, OBP proposed to develop bases of black power through independent politics. OBP's development influenced SNCC's development.³⁷² SNCC (a year later, 1966) raised the cry of black power. The southern development of the Deacons for Defense in Louisiana and the 1965 Watts spontaneous rebellion in Los Angeles signaled a changing mood among African-Americans. Sensing there was ideological weakness in the emerging paradigm of the young African-American radicals, Boggs wrote a timely article titled, "*Black Revolutionary Power*" in the August 1970 issue of *Ebony* and authored another book titled, Racism and the Class Struggle: Further Pages From a Black Workers Notebook published by Monthly Review Press in 1970.³⁷³

Boggs and Malcolm saw eye-to-eye and he said,

It is impossible for blacks to free or develop themselves without turning over every institution of this society, each of which has been structured with blacks at the bottom.³⁷⁴

³⁶⁸ Grace Lee Boggs, Letter to Max Stanford, April 10, 1994.

³⁶⁹ James Boggs, The American Revolution: Pages From a Negro Worker's Notebook [Detroit, Michigan: Leftfoot Press, 2003], p. 87

³⁷⁰ Op. Cit. (Leah Samuel) p. 14.

³⁷¹ Grace Lee Boggs, Remember James Boggs (1919-1993), Third World Viewpoint, Fall, 1993, p. 12.

³⁷² Conversation with James and Grace Boggs, Detroit, Michigan, 1983.

³⁷³ Ibid.

³⁷⁴ James Boggs, Racism and the Class Struggle: Further pages from a Black Worker's Notebook [New York and London: Modern Reader/Monthly Review Press], p.169

Boggs felt the city was where most African-Americans were concentrated and it would be in those cities that African-Americans would constitute a majority of where the struggle for black power would occur. He emphasized that the struggle should be based on issues and terrain, which would enable the African-American community to create a form of liberated area out of what are occupied areas.

Boggs also wrote: Manifesto for a Black Revolutionary Party, February 21, 1969 (Pacesetters Publishing); Awesome Responsibilities of Revolutionary Leadership, Uprooting Racism and Racists in the United States; But What About the Workers?; and, Liberation or Revolution; Black Power: A Scientific Concept Whose Time Has Come; and The City is The Black Man's Land. While he was writing, he worked with Ken Cockrel and General Baker of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers until its split and demise.

In 1974, James and Grace Lee Boggs published the world acclaimed Revolution and Evolution in the Twentieth Century (*Monthly Review Press*, 1974). They also contributed to the founding of the National Organization for an American Revolution (NOAR) from 1979-1987 and were primary theorists for NOAR from 1979-1987. NOAR was an attempt to give direction to the movement as it was floundering. Boggs helped form We The People Reclaim Our Streets (WEPROS) and Detroiters Uniting. In 1984 he helped form Save Our Sons and Daughters (SOASD) and Detroit Summer, a community-rebuilding effort that brought city and suburban youth together on beautification projects. These efforts, which are still continuing, are efforts to give youth a purpose in the period of post-industrialization. Boggs passed away July 22, 1993.

Kenneth Snodgrass in writing on Boggs stated:

"Boggs use to say that since many of us probably won't see the transformation of the USA in our lifetime, it is imperative for committed people to transmit their knowledge, wisdom, and leadership skills to the next generation."³⁷⁵

There is no text that is a complete biography on James Boggs. Though James Boggs has passed, his widow Grace Lee Boggs continues his work.

Who is Grace Lee Boggs (1915-)

Grace Lee Boggs was born June 27, 1915 in Providence, Rhode Island of Chinese immigrant parents. Ms. Grace Lee Boggs earned a Doctorate in Philosophy from Bryn Mawr College in 1940.

"There weren't jobs for Chinese women in Philosophy" so she headed to Chicago to join the March on Washington led by an early organizer of the AFL-CIO, A. Philip Randolph. Ms. Lee began working, with C.L.R. James in 1941. She also worked with a young African student (Kwame Nkrumah).

I first met C.L.R. in Chicago where I had gone to live after completing my graduate studies. I had just discovered the power of the independent black struggle through my participation in the March on Washington Movement, which forced F.D.R. to issue Executive Order 8802 banning discrimination

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Kenneth Snodgrass, "James Boggs Lives," *Michigan Chronicle*, August 4-10, 1993, pp. 1-13.

in defense plant hiring.³⁷⁶

Grace Lee joined the Johnson (C.L.R. James)/Forest (Raya Dunayevskaya) Tendency, a small collective of about seventy-five people inside the Workers Party and the Socialist Workers Party. The Tendency felt their special contribution would be its method of thought and conception of social development, which would make people's lives intelligible to them in rational and international terms.³⁷⁷

In 1951, the Johnson-Forest Tendency formed Correspondence, a loose collective centered in Detroit, after leaving the Socialist Workers party. In the fall of 1952, while he was still on Ellis Island, C.L.R. spearheaded the creation of the "Third Layer School," where rank-and-file workers, women and youth did the talking and intellectuals did the listening.³⁷⁸

At the Third Layer School Grace Lee met James Boggs, whom she would later marry. In 1961, James Boggs, who was chair of Correspondence, had a political split with C.L.R. James over the role of the working class in making the American Revolution.

Grace felt the same as James Boggs that

...any kind of revolutionary organization had to be built on cadres and that radicals ten to underestimate the critical role of class in building a movement. They swear that "without revolutionary theory, there is no revolutionary practice." But for their revolutionary theory, they tend to accept ideas that have come out of other traditions rather than undertake the more difficult task of deriving our revolutionary theories from our own historical conditions and experiences.³⁷⁹

Grace Lee Boggs felt political revolutionaries should always speak a language people understand and should be able to get to the root of things. She also believed that political revolutionaries should be conscious of the need to go beyond slogans and be able to create programs of struggle that transform and empower participants. Grace Lee Boggs has always thought that at the heart of movement building is the concept of *two-sided transformation*: one of ourselves and one of our institutions.

Grace Boggs co-authored Revolution and Evolution in the Twentieth Century and Conversations in Maine. In the fall 1993 issue of Third World Viewpoint, *Remembering James Boggs*, Grace Boggs stated:

"The main weakness of the Black left has been its inability to focus on the youth, who are burdened by a very high unemployment rate and are targeted by the drug culture. Until the divorcement of the Black left from the youths is addressed, there is likely to be no real advance in Black radicalism."³⁸⁰

³⁷⁶ Grace Lee Boggs "Thinking and Acting Dialectically: C.L.R. James, The American Years" Monthly Review, October 1993, p. 88.

³⁷⁷ Grace Lee Boggs, "Thinking and Acting Dialectically: C.L.R. James, The American Years," Monthly Review, October 1993, p. 88.

³⁷⁸ Op. Cit., p. 42.

³⁷⁹ Grace Lee Boggs, "More on MLK and Movement Building," The Michigan Citizen, February 27th-March 5th, 2005, p. B8

³⁸⁰ Grace Lee Boggs, "Remembering James Boggs (1919-1993)" Third World Viewpoint, Fall, 1993, p. 3.

* Grace Lee Boggs, Living for Change: An Autobiography [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998].

Grace always taught that cadre should never be content with merely interpreting American history, but must be engaged in the practice of struggling to change it; and our ideas, which should be an “organic” ideology, must come out of practice and the new contradictions which practice uncovers.

October of 1963, the Grassroots Conference was held in Detroit, Michigan.

December of 1964:

Isiah Brownson of Brooklyn CORE announced Brooklyn CORE would engage in a “stall-In” to protest discriminatory hiring at the World’s Fair.

On February 25, 1964, Cassius Marcellus Clay defeated Sonny Liston for the heavy weight championship. A battered Liston couldn’t answer the bell for the seventh round. Clay announced his name was Muhammad Ali and he was a member of the Nation of Islam.

The Freedom Now Party (FNP) grew into a mass party in Michigan. It was an African-American third party which ran a statewide slate. Reverend Albert Cleage was a candidate for Governor on the FNP ticket. Due to internal strife it became defunct by 1965. Most of its candidates joined the Democratic party. As 1963 came to a close, expectations were high. In 1963 alone, some 15,000 people had been imprisoned for participating in demonstrations and over 1,000 civil rights protests occurred in the South in more than 100 cities.³⁸¹

During the Freedom Summer which SNCC had planned to challenge Mississippi racists politically, three SNCC workers, Cheney, Schwerner and Goodman were beaten, shot and killed. Robert (Bob) Moses, SNCC coordinator helped Fannie Lou Hamer form the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) a state-wide multi-racial party to challenge the Mississippi (racists) regulars at the Democratic National Party Convention in Atlantic City.

Who was Ms. Fannie Lou Hamer and what was the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP)?

She was the youngest child of a Mississippi sharecropping family. She quit school in the sixth grade. However, she was determined to register and vote. She became a dedicated leader and powerful speaker on behalf of the rights of African Americans. She was a founder of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) which sought to integrate the Mississippi delegation to the 1964 Democratic Convention. She led the MFDP delegation to the convention and demanded that her delegation be seated in lieu of the all white delegation. Her demands were ignored but her address appeared on television to question America’s commitment to “justice for all”. The 1964 Mississippi delegation was an integrated body.

In March 1964, Malcolm X left the Nation of Islam and began to advocate African-Americans using their voting power as a third political force and using armed self defense. Malcolm X formed an orthodox sunni Muslim Mosque, Inc. And later built the Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU). He developed a united front with

³⁸¹ Manning Marable, *Race, Reform and Rebellion* [Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1984] p.76.

Laverence Landry of Chicago, Reverend Milton Galamion of Brooklyn, Adam Clayton Powell Jr. of Harlem, and Dick Gregory of Chicago, and Gloria Richardson of Cambridge, Maryland to form ACT. Malcolm X also supported the MFDP in Mississippi, Dr. King and SNCC.

Revolutionary Internationalism and the African-American Student

The World of Reality and the World of the African American Student

The world of the African-American student has changed tremendously since World War II. Prior to that time only a few Afro-Americans ever got a chance to go to college ever got a chance to go to college. African American college youth before World War II were from the established black middle class and established black middle class and very seldom associated themselves with the black working class. After the war and during the early fifties, more and more black working-class families were able to send their children off to college. Contradictions began to polarize among black students when this happened. The crystallization of these contradiction led to the development of the sit-ins, freedom rides, etc. black working-class families with bourgeois aspirations attempted to force their offspring into a society that had no place for them.

The myth of “a college education and having made it” was finally beginning to crumble. For a generation the African American had figured that by obtaining a college education they would be integrated into the mainstream of American life. But what has happened is that the African American has produced a whole generation (war babies) that has made it to the top of capitalist society only to awaken to the hard fact of reality that there is no “pie in the sky.” Now, after all these years, the African American student is faced with the fact that he or she has to obtain a master’s or doctor’s degree before being able to survive in this society. With the rise of automation the African American student is faced with a new dilemma. The job market is shrinking, qualifications are getting higher and competition sharper. The African American student must face many contradictions when he/she leaves school and finds out that reality is subjective, since he/she is taught in the classroom that the world is objective. He/she is taught that the white world will accept him/her if he/she is qualified regardless of color, but he/she leaves school only to find a hostile, savage, white world. In many cases this has led to revolt among black youth. Most African American students, not being able to cope with the sharp contradictions openly, have created a little protest world of their own. This world is called the “hip society.”

The hip society is a result of conditioning and of the last hope that the American dream is true. The hip society transcends all class barriers among blacks and has its own social values and norms. The hip society is developed from the frustration of not being able to do anything about one’s condition and serves as a release from daily pressures. The hip society is built around the concept of manhood and womanhood, reflecting a lack of security and identity, and alienation. The man who can make the most women, dress the best and maintain his “cool” is considered a hero among his peers. The woman who gets the most “noses open” climbs the ladder with prestige men and can jilt a cat and not mean nothing to her; is supposed to be into something. The women play, but usually they are trying to “hook”, most of them go to college to find a husband. Expressions such as “into something, all that’s good, taking care of business,” express the sentiments of the hip society. Adherents of business, “express the sentiments of the hip society. Adherents of the

hip society release themselves by being “hard,” digging jams (listening to jazz records), “getting off” (releasing frustration through dancing to rock ‘n roll), smoking pot, tasting (heavy drinking), “doing the thing or taking care of business” (loose sex morals, sometimes sex orgies). The hip society is a hedonistic society... It is built on extreme pleasure seeking, in order to forget about the reality of the hard contradictions the African American student must face.

We must see that the Negro college is truly a “freak factory.” Built upon an escape from reality becomes a “professional” house that breeds prostitutes, perverts, and “freaks” (black people who think they are white). The world of the African American student is built around a complete escape from reality and tries to strengthen the concept of being able to make it in this society. It reinforces capitalism, takes an extreme patriotism and drowns itself in the internal strife for prestige. The African American student is geared to becoming more an all-American boy or girl than the white student. The African American student has to be extra good, “extra white,” neat, nice and respectable. In order to “make it.” Therefore, conformity to the social norms of the hip society becomes a protective measure. It warns the African American student that if he/she steps out of his/her armor he/she won’t be able to survive in the outside world. This is one of the reasons why stress is placed on begging hard, tough, emotionless-because of the unconscious realization of the rough road ahead.

Contradictions of the African-American Student

The African American student must face many contradictions. If his/her background is of the working class, then he/she faces the contradiction of becoming something that his/her family has oriented him/hr to both envy and hate. The concept of the black bourgeoisie not being able to “let their hair down,” be down to the nitty gritty, constantly alienates and antagonizes him/her. He/she also finds that in order to be successful in his field and be with people of his/her position, he/she must take on ways that they had previously considered “phony.” Another contradiction of African American students lies in failure to reach their aspirations. They sometimes realize that, because they are African American society has little or no place for them.

The constant living a life, completing dream level (college) education and still having to struggle for human existence is the sharpest contradiction for the African American student. The more black students learn about the outside world the more they realize that there is little chance for them to make their goal; thus they settle for some lesser choice. This contradiction hits the African American students square in the face whether they want to admit it or not.

The contradiction for the black students is beginning to polarize. This polarization has led to the sit-ins, freedom rides, mass demonstrations, black nationalist youth organizations and finally the riots in the summer of 1964. What is developing for our enslaved black nation is a generation with a completely new outlook. Out of this generation is developing the revolutionary intelligentsia capable of leading Africa America to the liberation. This has resulted from the fact that a social revolution cannot develop until all means of legal protest have been exhausted and the image of bourgeois democracy is destroyed. This is when a revolutionary intelligentsia is produced. With the rise of the ultra-right, Goldwater-

Johnson and company, we see more clearly that for “the man” bourgeois democracy means and has always meant “enslavement.”

What has happened to the “war baby” generation is that the contradictions in this system are beginning to crystallize within them. The “war baby” generation was the generation that was supposed to have “arrived” to get the “pie in the sky.” This generation is slowly but surely waking up and seeing that the pie in the sky was a trick bag. They also see that it doesn’t matter what they do, how qualified they are, they will never “arrive.” It was not until black America could develop a generation capable of being “on top” in the capitalist system, that the contradictions of the system could totally crystallize and a revolutionary intelligentsia develop. Hence the words of Dr. DuBois ring true: “A system that enslaves you cannot free you”.

The High School and Junior High School African American Student

Overt social protest for the African American student usually begins in the junior high school. By the time a African American youth reaches the age of 14, they begin to feel the contradictions of their relationship to this society. They are led to believe in school that they are white, “can make it if they try,” and after school he becomes black again and enters into the hip world. The feeling of being run smack into a brick wall” by the educational system is being felt by junior high and high school students. In the South more and more junior high and high school students are leading the movement, whereas in 1960 it was the black college youth who were the vanguard of the movement. We see in the North African American high and junior high school youth touched off the riots in Harlem and played a major role in the riots in other cities. If African American college youth are feeling that there is nowhere for them to go, then it will surely seep down to the black high and junior high school youth. The only role left for them is to rebel.

Gangs

Almost every African American community has gangs. Very few people understand the nature of these gangs and how they can be transformed into a constructive force for African American liberation. Gangs develop because African American youth have no out in this white man’s racist, capitalist system. African American youth have no room for expression in this savage society. They have no image of manhood or womanhood that they can identify with. African American youth know unconsciously that they are not a part of “the man’s” world. Thus in contrast, the hip world develops.

The gang represents organization, identity and power for African American youth. Living in a hostile world they experience none of these things. The feeling of belonging, being part of something “boss” is a big part of a gang. This sense of identity leads to organization of a gang and from the gang’s strength and influence, comes its power. For Afro-American youth, especially boys, gangs are the only thing in the African American community that can give them a sense of power. This comes from the feeling of being powerless over one’s destiny (the man has control of that) and of being less than a man. Gangs are the most dynamic force in the African American community. Instead of fighting their brothers and sisters, they should unite. They can be developed into a blood brotherhood (African American youth organization) that will serve as a liberation force.

The Outcast

The outcasts are the socially, politically aware African American students who venture into CORE's beat artist bag, freedom now, white and black together thing. One of the main reasons they become outcast is because they usually lose contact with the hip society. They take on white cultural values such as folk music, hootenannies, etc. Swinging out with "whitey" ain't to cool. "Whitey's out of it," he just can't dig what's happening and when you're with him "you're out of it too." "The square scene is where whitey's at" he just ain't got no soul. By identifying with whitey's jive cultural values they lose their own black cultural hipness.

The Outlaws and the Only Alternative for the African American Student

The outlaws are politically hip African Americans who understand that this white man's racial-monopoly-capitalist-imperialist system cannot reform itself and cannot ever grant the African American man freedom, justice and equality. They become outlaws because the average African American student is afraid to identify with them. The outlaws are called Revolutionary African American inter-nationalists. We are international revolutionary African American nationalist, not based on ideas of national superiority, but striving for justice and liberation of all the oppressed peoples of the world. We believe in the Constitution of the U.S. which was made to establish justice, but we realize that there can be no liberty as long as African American people are oppressed and the peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America are oppressed by Yankee imperialism and neo-colonialism. After four hundred years of oppression, we realize that slavery, racism and imperialism are all interrelated and that liberty and justice for all cannot exist peacefully with imperialism. The Revolutionary action Black Nationalists advocate a revolution that takes the power away from the white capitalist oligarchy and puts it into the hands of the proletariat. We say with a movement of revolutionary and the help of the peoples of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, the African American can and must win if they are to survive. Unless the African American turns to self defense he will be exterminated like Jews were in Nazi Germany

African American intellectual youth (college) must unite with African American youth in the ghetto; the message that Revolutionary African American Internationalists have for the African American students is UNITE.

What was Malcolm X's Philosophy and Program before his Assassination, February 21, 1965?

He advocated self-defense and armed resistance to oppression. He recognized the importance of economic change nationalism. He felt it important for African Americans to participate in the political process.

Before his assassination, Malcolm X declared that racism, poverty, and oppression had common roots throughout the world. He called his new perspective "global black thinking." Upon his return to the United States, he called on all blacks of all nations to unite in a revolutionary movement that would sweep away vestiges of racial oppression. He indicated his willingness to work with the civil rights movement and even with those he had formerly called "white devils." He said he could get along with white people if they could get along with him. Eight months before his death, Malcolm established the Organization

of Afro-American Unity, in which its objective was to attack international oppression on the part of African Americans.

At a meeting in Detroit, Michigan, the Revolutionary Action Movement was organized into a national organization. Starting in the summer of 1964, the long hot summers began as Harlem, N.Y., Rochester, N.Y., and Philadelphia, P.A., experienced urban rebellions.

In 1965 Dr. Martin Luther King went to Selma, Alabama to help in a voter registration drive. Malcolm X spoke in Selma in support of Dr. King's efforts. SNCC led by Stokely Carmichael began organizing in Lowndes County, Alabama.

On February 21, 1965, Malcolm X was assassinated in New York.

John Lewis, Hosea Williams and a host of demonstrators were beaten, clubbed, tear gassed, shocked with electric cattle prods and run over by state troopers on horseback at Edmund Pettus bridge in Selma, Alabama. King led a massive civil rights march from Selma to Montgomery to dramatize to a shocked nation the need to guarantee southern African-Americans voting rights.

Malcolm X and the Black Liberation Movement

El Hajj Malik El Shabbaz, Malcolm X, born Malcolm Little, May 19, 1925 in Omaha, Nebraska and assassinated February 21, 1965, was a mass African-American leader who probably had more impact on the thinking of African-Americans and progressive peoples of the world second only to the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Standing among the great giants of the African-American national liberation struggle leaders like Frederick Douglas, Dr. W.E.B. DuBois and Marcus Garvey, Malcolm dared to internationalize the African-American struggle, challenge U.S. imperialism and attempted to chart a new course for the African-American movement for human rights.

But more importantly to understand is the political philosophy of Malcolm X in his last year of being dialectical (flexible) in thinking or adhering to critical analysis of the contradictions he faced is what made Malcolm a threat to the United States government, a target of assassination, and why he was so instrumental to the African-American liberation struggle.

First we must understand what made Malcolm so dangerous just as the late Dr. King was that he was a man of principle. Malcolm did not compromise his principles. Malcolm did not compromise his principles for money, prestige, women, or power - all of which were offered to him.

The chapter will not give a detail of Malcolm's early life but will attempt to interpret his political essence. What makes Malcolm vital to African-American liberation: he was a reformed man, a disciplined man with little or no vices. I say this because there is room for improvement always in everyone's character. So I will not attempt to build Malcolm into super human. But he was a role model which every African-American youth can emulate.

Malcolm lived the life of a hustler like many of our African-American youth who are faced with the temptation of using or selling crack and other drugs every day. But Malcolm, when he was doing six years time in prison began to study and reform.

Malcolm X was a student of history, and that's what made him one of the most dynamic political philosophers and leaders African-Americans ever produced. For some 16 years or more, Malcolm X studied history, philosophy, religion and politics.

Malcolm became a minister for the Nation of Islam led by Elijah Muhammad from 1952 to 1964. During that time, as a spokesman, agitator and organizer, he stimulated, recruited for and helped build the Nation of Islam into a powerful organization of some 50,000 members.

Within all political phenomena under capitalism there is a right (conservative), center, (moderate), and left (militant) sector. So was the case within the Nation of Islam in the 1950's and early 1960's, especially as it began to grow. Malcolm was part of the left wing while he was in the Nation of Islam. This is why Malcolm's speeches, even while still in the Nation of Islam, sound so different from Elijah Muhammad's. These tendencies were also prevalent among the civil rights organization such as SCLC, CORE; NACCP, and SNCC.

What made Malcolm X so pivotal to the black liberation movement (BLM), was that he followed the anti-imperialist tradition of Paul Robeson and W. E. B DuBois, but was developing a mass following as a revolutionary democrat (not to be confused with the Democratic party).

Malcolm, before his death, had made an ideological leap, a leap which took many years to understand. Malcolm often had ways of saying things. He said "travel broadens one's horizon." By traveling (which Malcolm did most of his life), he came in contact with progressives all over the world. But he began to see something. During our last one on one meeting in 22 West Restaurant in Harlem, approximately the first of February 1965, Malcolm said, "I no longer call myself a black nationalist. The best way to describe myself is to say," I am an Internationalist."

We can identify three periods in the development of the political thought of Malcolm X. The first period from 1952 through most of 1962, was characterized by the theology of the Nation of Islam. Black nationalism's renewed popularity owed much to the Nation of Islam, which offered a scathing critique of white America. It was in the Nation of Islam that Malcolm X returned to aspects of the black nationalism of his childhood.

Sometime in 1962, Malcolm X initiated the transition to the secular black nationalism. This second period in his thinking reached its highest development with the creation of the Muslim Mosque, Inc. and the speeches of the spring of 1964. With his trip to the Middle East and Africa in late April and early May of 1964, Malcolm X ushered in the final period on the development of his thinking, the period of pan African internationalism.

It is important to know Malcolm was in rapid transition in search of the solution to the plight of African-Americans and persons of African descent the world over.

Malcolm had become, at the time of his untimely death, a revolutionary international democrat or an anti-imperialist who stood against the oppression of people regardless of nationality, class, creed, or color.³⁸²

Young Malcolm was profoundly influenced by his father's (Earl Little) tragic death and the cause, rumored to be the work of a white hate group, traumatized young Malcolm. Though not in his autobiography, Malcolm said he was awakened by a dream like vision soon after his father's death and saw himself being assassinated while speaking before a group of people similar to that of his father.

Malcolm's father's death caused great hardship on Malcolm and his family. Malcolm's next trauma came watching his mother deteriorate before she was sent to a mental institution. The Little family was broken up with the children being sent to foster homes and Malcolm was in a detention home for a short period of time. Malcolm had tentatively recovered from his traumatic experiences when, in the seventh grade, he mentioned to his English teacher that he would like to be a lawyer and the English teacher said, "You've got to be realistic about being a nigger, Malcolm.... Why don't you plan on carpentry?" This was the third trauma in Malcolm's life and shows how important school teachers are and the influence they have on children, African-American youth. Malcolm reacted to this racist rejection negatively and he dropped out of school after finishing the eighth grade and moved from Michigan to the Roxbury a section of Boston to live with his half sister, Ella.

Malcolm soon began to live a life first as a part-time hustler, working as a shoe shine boy, and then as an attendant pullman porter between Boston and New York. Malcolm was a good dancer where he met different women and eventually started going with a white woman. He began to use marijuana and used heroin and cocaine. From there Malcolm graduated into a full-time hustler, becoming known as Detroit Red in Harlem. Malcolm became a numbers runner, dope pusher and sometimes stick-up artist. Coming under pressure from hustling competition and the police, Malcolm returned to Boston and set up a small burglary ring with his white girlfriend, Sophy. Malcolm was eventually caught in February, 1946, and began serving an eight-to-ten year sentence for burglary.

The fourth trauma came for Malcolm when he was incarcerated. At first, Malcolm reacted negatively to the experience, being in a constant state of rage. He was nicknamed satan by fellow inmates until Malcolm met Bimby, an orthodox Muslim inmate who began to teach Malcolm Islam. One of Malcolm's brothers (Philbert) visited Malcolm in prison and introduced him to the Nation of Islam (N.O.I.) and Islam as taught by Elijah Muhammad. Through religion (Islam), Malcolm began his self-transformation, gaining a sense of direction and commitment to the liberation of African-Americans. Religion can either be an opium of the people or serve as an inspiration toward their liberation. Malcolm learned through self-discipline how to educate himself.

During his time in prison, Malcolm was influenced by the activities of Paul Robeson, who had addressed the Civil Rights Congress at a meeting of (10,000) in Madison Square Garden and who had called on African-Americans to resist the draft and not to fight against

³⁸² William Sales, Jr., *From Civil Rights to Black Liberation: Malcolm X and the Organization of Afro-American Unity* [Boston, Massachusetts: South End Press, 1994] pp. 60-61.

their Asian brothers in the Korean war. Malcolm embraced Robeson's efforts and wrote a letter to President Truman stating his support of Robeson's efforts. Malcolm also embraced Robeson's and William Patterson's (Chairman of the Civil Rights Congress) efforts to petition the United Nations denouncing the U.S. for genocide against African-Americans. These ideas were not new because Marcus Garvey had drafted a petition in 1928 to the League of Nations of which Malcolm's father had organized around. Marcus Garvey had based his efforts on the earlier work of Bishop Henry McNeal Turner in the 1890s and 1900s.³⁸³ Also at this time C.L.R. James was so effective as an Socialist Workers Party organizer of African-Americans that he was detained at Ellis Island and later deported as an undesirable alien. Malcolm studied intensely for six years while in prison until his release in 1952. The fifth emotional experience for Malcolm which transformed him into a religious fanatical true believer, occurred when he was released from prison. Upon meeting Elijah Muhammad, known to him and others as the last messenger of Allah (God), Malcolm became an emotional disciple of the Nation of Islam. Malcolm was a hard working zealot organizing "fishing" (recruiting) campaigns for Temple Number One in Detroit and soon rose to be assistant minister there. He was soon assigned as minister to Temple Number Seven in New York. He helped found some thirty-five temples.

In 1956, Malcolm X met Betty X Sanders a nursing student. She had just recently joined New York's Temple Seven. Malcolm found himself trying to avoid her because he liked her and found it hard to trust women. As an example of commitment, Malcolm remained celibate for five years before marrying Betty X Sanders Shabbaz in 1959. Malcolm was true to the tenants of Islam as he understood them at that time. He proposed to Betty over the phone. They married on January 14, 1958 and he fathered six children; Attallah born 1958, Quibilah, born 1960, Ilyasah, born 1962, Gamilah, born 1964, and Malaak and Lalikah, born 1965. (Malcolm X did not live to see the twin daughters.)

In 1957, Malcolm emerged as a national organizer when a Muslim was being beaten by the police in Harlem. Malcolm and the Fruit of Islam (FOI) demonstrated in silent disciplined military order, consisting only of Malcolm's command of a hand signal; Malcolm dispersed the FOI only after securing medical treatment for the injured Muslim. Watching Malcolm's dynamics with the people of Harlem, the precinct police captain said "No man should have that much power."³⁸⁴

To understand Malcolm's influence on the African-American student movement, we have to recollect where the student movement was in 1964. SNCC, the Student Non - Violent Coordinating Committee, which was formed out of sit-ins in 1960, was working on voter registration in the Delta South. In 1964, the majority of the membership of SNCC believed freedom could be achieved through non-violent, peaceful change within the capitalist system. They believed, as many African-Americans believe today, that reform of the system could be achieved by working through the Democratic party. This is why SNCC formed with Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer and other Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) members to challenge the racists at the Democratic convention held in Atlantic City.

³⁸³ Karl Evanzz, The Judas Factor: The Plot to Kill Malcolm [New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1992] pp. 15-16.

³⁸⁴ Spike Lee (Movie), also Malcolm X: New York Police Files

Malcolm said, "The Democratic party, along with the Republican party, is responsible for the racism that exists in this country."

Malcolm taught that African-Americans were oppressed because African-Americans' oppression serves the interest of the capitalist ruling class. He said liberation "freedom" could not be achieved through the capitalist system. Malcolm taught that it is foolish to limit yourself to one tactic when fighting for liberation. One should not just limit oneself to violent or non-violent tactics. You use whatever tactics are best for the situation you are in; you use any means.

Malcolm taught that the way to stop racial abuse was for the entire African-American community to arm for collective self defense. Malcolm said every African-American household should have a shotgun. But he also said that African-Americans shouldn't use these guns against one another; they should be used mainly for stopping racial abuse, defending themselves.

Malcolm said African-Americans should love one another as brothers and sisters and never do to your brother or sister what you would not want done to yourself. But if a brother or sister did harm to the community, then it was up to the community to correct them.

While Malcolm was in Africa, he met John Lewis, Chairman of SNCC, and other members of SNCC who were visiting the Republic of Guinea. John Lewis said that everywhere the young SNCC delegation went in Africa they were asked where they stood in relation to Malcolm. After the SNCC delegation met with Malcolm, they decided to re-evaluate their program and place stronger emphasis on developing alliances with African liberation organizations that were fighting colonialism, and with progressive African states.

Even while Malcolm was in the Nation of Islam, he was heavily influenced by the young students in the civil rights movement, and developing progressive forces in and around the NOI. The Nation of Islam was the center of black nationalism in the late 1950s and early 1960s. During 1962-63, several independent all African-American student formations developed in the North. All these organizations had a close association with the Nation of Islam.

In Detroit there was UHURU; in Chicago, NAO; in Oakland, California, there was the African-American Association; in Cleveland, the African-American Institute; in New York, UMBRA; and in Philadelphia, the Revolutionary Action Movement. Malcolm, being the traveling representative for the NOI, was in contact with these organizations and others. Malcolm in a sense was a man in a physical pivotal position. He would constantly talk to the young activists as he traveled from city to city.

Malcolm's break with the NOI began in 1962 when the Los Angeles police raided the Temple there, killing a Muslim and wounding others.

The Killing at the L.A. Mosque

In April 1962, Ronald X Stokes, the leader of NOI in Los Angeles, was shot and seriously wounded. Police then shot into an unarmed crowd at the Los Angeles Mosque No. 27. At

least six other Muslims suffered gunshot wounds and a dozen had other injuries. Police handcuffed Stokes, surrounded him, and beat his head with their clubs until he died.

The police lined up the men they captured in the Mosque, stripped them, jabbed their rectums with clubs and taunted them, "Run nigger, so I can kill you." State investigators later called Stokes' death 'justifiable homicide.'

Hundreds of young African-Americans gathered at Temple 27, waiting to rise up. But the top leadership of the NOI opposed this. They sent a message saying that there should be no fighting. Many youth ignored these orders. Elijah sent Malcolm to stifle the struggle. Malcolm was ordered to say that Allah alone would bring justice by causing automobile and airplane crashes. Several members of the L.A. mosque quit the NOI in disgust over this anti-struggle teaching. In his heart, Malcolm was furious too.

Within months, when New York police arrested newspaper salesmen from Mosque No. 7, Malcolm followed a different line. In February 1963, Malcolm led a march through Times Square.... The spirit in the NOI was over burning issues. It was a struggle between two roads. One road denounced the oppression of African-Americans in words but basically accepted the system and sought respectability and self-enrichment. The other road wanted to stand with the African-Americans on the front lines against the system and search for ways to lead the people's struggle to real liberation.³⁸⁵

By 1963 a group of young Muslims left the NOI and formed the National Liberation Front (NLF). The NLF group left the NOI before Malcolm left. Much of what Malcolm began to say in 1964 was the philosophy of this organization. The NLF was an armed self-defense Sunni Muslim formation that adhered to the ideology of revolutionary nationalism. When Malcolm left the Nation of Islam, the formation told Malcolm they were armed and in martial arts training and asked him if he wanted to be their leader. Malcolm agreed, and the NLF became the core of the Muslim Mosque, Inc. On March 8, 1964, Malcolm announced his independence from the NOI. On March 12, 1964, Malcolm gave a press conference, introducing the formation of the Muslim Mosque, Inc. Malcolm's basic theme was unity with Africa, Pan Africanism, taking the United States before the United Nations for violation of the human rights charter, and uniting with other civil rights organizations. Between March and April 1964, Malcolm moved to form coalitions with civil rights leaders. He met with Lawrence Laundry (leader of the student/teacher walkouts in Chicago over quality education), Jessie Gray (Harlem, N.Y. leader of mass rent strikes in N.Y. in 1960) and others who supported building a coalition of a new type.

Malcolm's advocating of armed self defense was a radical departure from traditional black nationalism. His position reflected the new mood among African-American youth. The left wing of SNCC (Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee), particularly the Mississippi field staff, had become revolutionary nationalists, had armed and united with Malcolm's strategy. Before the end of 1964 several SNCC delegations met with Malcolm.

³⁸⁵ "30 Years Since the Assassination: How the System Killed Malcolm X," Revolutionary Worker Number 794 (Volume 16, Number 41, February 19, 1995, p. 7

The movement and its activism came north in 1963 with the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM) and the NAACP's Cecil Moore confronting building trades' discrimination in Philadelphia. CORE took an activist stance also against building trades' discrimination in Cleveland and New York City. Black nationalism grew in CORE as its membership became predominately African American for the first time. Retaliatory violence had also appeared in the movement as Robert Williams, the ex N.C., NAACP head had to flee the country to avoid a racist frameup.³⁸⁶

In 1963, Elijah Muhammad named Malcolm the national representative of the Nation of Islam. Malcolm had also been representative in helping to build the Fruit of Islam (F.O.I.) into a powerful para-military wing of the N.O.I. and founded the N.O.I.'s national newspaper, Muhammad Speaks. On September 20, 1960, Malcolm met with Cuban premier, Fidel Castro, in the Hotel Theresa in Harlem. Malcolm had helped secure for the Cuban delegation the Hotel Theresa after the Cuban delegation left the midtown Shelburne Hotel refusing to accept unreasonable financial demands.³⁸⁷

The sixth trauma for Malcolm, and perhaps most devastating for Malcolm, was his learning of Elijah's extramarital affairs and his having illegitimate children by his secretaries. Malcolm, not being one to believe rumors, went to the women to get the facts. He then went to Elijah Muhammad and Elijah confessed. Malcolm said Elijah's confessing made him realize that Elijah was just a man and from that point on "I will never believe in the divinity of a man."

The seventh trauma was that he was forced at 38 years of age to start his life anew and to renounce much of what he believed to be the truth for much of his adult life (18 years) and at the same time being thrust into national and international leadership. Malcolm had to build an organization foundation from scratch. In less than a year, Malcolm laid the foundation to the Muslim Mosque, Inc. (M.M.I.) and the Organization of Afro-American Unity (O.A.A.U.).

Malcolm's important speeches in this transition period between the summer of 1963 and the spring of 1964 were given in cities like Detroit and Cleveland, which along with New York City had the most militant and nationalistic activists in the African-American community. These activists cadres pushed Malcolm into a more radical stance as he attempted to clarify his own feelings about what was to be done.

In April, 1964, Malcolm's theme became "The Ballot or the Bullet." If we listen carefully to these speeches we will be able to conclude Malcolm was responding to the political developments then occurring in the South, particularly the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, and the rebellious mood simmering in the North.

Malcolm called for a black nationalist congress or conference which was scheduled for August, 1964, to form either a party or an army. While the congress/conference didn't occur mainly because Malcolm was in Africa, his envisioning of building a black nationalist party

³⁸⁶ Op. Cit, (Sales, *From Civil Rights to Black Liberation*), p. 75

³⁸⁷ William S. Sales, Jr., *From Civil Rights to Black Liberation: Malcolm X and the Organization of Afro-American Unity* [Boston, Massachusetts: South End Press, 1994] p. 62

was later attempted in the form of the Black Panther Party (BPP) in 1966 and the National Black Independent Political Party (NBIPP) in 1980.³⁸⁸

Malcolm was particularly impressed by the Chinese Ambassador to Ghana. The Chinese Ambassador asked Malcolm if he knew a particular leader in Danville, Virginia. Malcolm was embarrassed because he had never heard of the brother. The Chinese Ambassador said the Danville struggle was one of the highest levels of struggle African-Americans had in 1963.

Malcolm was also impressed by an Algerian revolutionary who was a member of the FLN (National Liberation Front). He told Malcolm because of his press statements he thought he was a dark complexioned man and had assumed Malcolm was a racist.

These incidents and personalities, along with Muhammed Babu of Tanzania and the progressive African-American community in Ghana, helped Malcolm to see the nature of racial and class exploitation in the world. For instance, Malcolm was beginning to understand that U.S. capitalism made over 100 billion dollars due to racial determined wages of African-American workers. Taking the 200 billion which African-Americans circulate in wage power but return to the capitalists in high mortgages, rents, clothes, food and pleasure, African-Americans are the next best thing that the U.S. has except maybe trade with Canada.

Malcolm was beginning to see this. Also taken with the racial division or stratification of labor world-wide through either outright imperialism and reaping more profit through neocolonialism creates a race/class dichotomy.

In 1964 Malcolm X changed from viewing white people as devils to attacking the international capitalist system as the principle enemy of persons of African descent. Malcolm stated that the United States Federal Government was the cause and root of oppression being the government that is controlled by the U.S. monopoly capitalist class. Malcolm changed from being a racial religious nationalist to a political internationalist.

Eight points of Malcolm.

1. Malcolm said that persons of African descent couldn't get freedom under the capitalist system and had to struggle for "freedom by any means necessary".
2. He said persons of African descent should arm for self-defense.
3. While he believed that persons of African descent constituted a nation and that African-Americans would have to struggle for self-determination; he believed the majority of the African-American people hadn't developed a national consciousness yet to do this. In this regard, he advocated revolutionaries to become involved in struggles which the people were concerned about in order to raise their consciousness. Before his death he said he no longer felt African-Americans constituted "a nation within a nation".

³⁸⁸ George Brietman (ed) Malcolm X Speaks [New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1965] pp. 38-41

4. Malcolm advocated revolutionary internationalism, a internationalism that would change and overturn the system.
5. Malcolm wanted to form a revolutionary political party independent of the Democratic and Republican parties.
6. Malcolm constantly spoke out against U.S. imperialism, taking a revolutionary internationalist position. He condemned the war in Vietnam and U.S. imperialist aggression in the Congo.
7. He appealed to African leaders to break off ties with the U.S.; Nassar of Egypt supported the move.
8. His move to bring the U.S. before the UN would have isolated the U.S. in the world and would have affected billions of dollars in international trade.

Working with Malcolm X

My interaction with Malcolm was political and one which evolved in a short span of time. I first met Malcolm X on Thanksgiving Day of November in 1962 at Shabbaz No. 7 Restaurant in Harlem. I was accompanied by Sister Wanda Marshall, a close friend and co-worker.

We had called the restaurant and asked how we could reach Minister Malcolm. They told us we could meet him that afternoon/early evening in the restaurant (about 4 p.m.). Malcolm and minister 2X Goodman came into the restaurant after a speaking engagement in Buffalo, New York. One of the sisters or either an F.O.I. person (I don't know which) told Malcolm we were students and wanted to talk to him. Malcolm came over to our booth and we introduced ourselves. Malcolm was hoarse from speaking and apologized for being with a sore voice. I told Malcolm I had just dropped out of Central State College to work in the movement in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to create a black radical alternative but was uncertain as to whether I should join the Nation of Islam or organize independent of it.

Malcolm began lecturing Wanda and myself on African American history. He talked for about 45 minutes or at least it seemed that long to me. Personally, I was stunned. I had studied under PhD's, both African-American and white; but Malcolm displayed a profound knowledge of African American history. In fact, it was more history than I had ever heard any one person articulate at one time in life. When he ended his speech, I asked him should I join the Nation of Islam. To my surprise he said, "No, you can do more for the honorable Elijah Muhammad by organizing outside of the Nation.," Malcolm excused himself because he was hoarse and was losing his voice. He asked minister Benjamin 2X to teach us about mathematics. Malcolm explained that Benjamin had excelled in mathematics in grade school before dropping out and that Elijah Muhammad had motivated him to bring this talent out.

Malcolm also taught that Elijah Muhammad taught that Islam was based on math. Malcolm told us that we could always reach him at the Mosque or the restaurant.

Minister Benjamin began to expound on the science of mathematics from a black perspective for another twenty minutes. From that first meeting with Malcolm, I left and returned to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania with the determination to organize outside of the Nation of Islam; that is, to the left of the Nation. Within the next two months Wanda, along with a few friends and myself, formed the Revolutionary Action Movement collective in Philadelphia. I would meet with Malcolm periodically after he would speak at the local mosque in Philadelphia or as a guest speaker or at African bazaars held in New York. These conversations would be brief chitchat sessions on some aspect of the movement. Around this time I would travel south on weekends working closely with African-American radicals in the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC).

By the spring of 1963, RAM had become known in the Philadelphia area of being a direct action oriented black nationalist organization. Without RAM realizing it, Malcolm was closely watching our development. RAM worked in unity with Cecil B. Moore and the Philadelphia NAACP, at time.

RAM, along with the Philadelphia NAACP, organized a week long series of demonstrations against union discrimination in the building trades at a construction site in North Philadelphia in May of 1963. Thousands of African-Americans came into the streets to demonstrate. The demonstrations often became violent when demonstrators fought back when pushed, jostled, clubbed or attacked by police.

Such was the case on May 27, 1963 when Stan Daniels and I were beaten and arrested. Once inside the police station I asked the police if I could make a phone call and they said yes I could. Because we were demonstrators they weren't watching us too closely. I opened my phone book and called Mosque No. 7 in New York and asked to speak to Minister Malcolm. When Malcolm took the phone I began telling him how the police had attacked us on the picket lines. Malcolm said "Brother my hands are tied but I will do everything I can do." That evening he announced what had taken place in Philadelphia at Mosque No. 7 in New York during his weekly lecture and called for support of the demonstrators in Philadelphia. Before the week was out Malcolm came to Philadelphia and spoke on radio about the incident and also spoke at the Philadelphia Mosque. By summer of 1963, RAM had joined a national network of local groups in the north which called themselves the Black Liberation Front of the U.S.A. At the Grassroots Conference held in Detroit, Michigan in the fall of 1963, Don Freeman from Cleveland, Ohio (representing the BLF/USA) spoke on the same platform with Malcolm just before the famous Grassroots

speech.³⁸⁹ Freeman called for a black revolution; and for the first time, probably in his recent career Malcolm was considered more conservative than the previous speaker. When Malcolm declared his independence from the Nation of Islam, Don Freeman from the BLF/USA was also there and spoke at Malcolm's news conference. During this time I was traveling the northern cities attempting to raise funds for a National Afro-American Student Conference that the BLF/USA was proposing to have in the south in May of 1964.

I wrote Malcolm on several occasions telling him of our plans to have the conference. The conference was held in Nashville, Tennessee, May 1st to 4th in 1964. From Nashville, Tennessee, Rolland Snellings and myself met with John Lewis and others of the SNCC staff in Atlanta and went into Greenwood, Mississippi to build a southern black nationalist self-defense base. After traveling the state of Mississippi and experiencing the need for an independent resource fund I traveled to Detroit, Michigan to raise funds for SNCC's new projects. In Greenwood and again from Detroit I wrote Malcolm of the new developments in the southern movement. At a national meeting convened in Detroit, the Revolutionary Action Movement/Black Liberation Front U.S.A. was formally organized as a national organization. From the tentative structure that RAM had drafted, Malcolm X was proposed to be the international spokesman of RAM.

From Detroit, Michigan, See Bass, Willie Peacock (both from Mississippi) and myself traveled to New York to meet with Malcolm. Once in New York, I called Malcolm at the Hotel Theresa and went to see him in his office. There (in his office) I told him of developments of RAM, the student conference and the shift to self-defense in the southern movement. Malcolm said, "let's go somewhere else to talk." We went to 22 West Restaurant off of 135th & Lenox. Malcolm mentioned he had read the Monthly Review article May-June, 1964 article, "The Colonial War at Home." He said that he agreed with the editorial. Malcolm said, "Brother, what do you want me to do?" I gave him an organizational plan to be an international spokesman of RAM. Malcolm reviewed the plan. Then he said, "I see you have studied the Nation of Islam's structure." I said, "Yes, I have." Then he (Malcolm) said that he would become the RAM spokesman; but, that it would have to be secretive because the RAM International Chairman, Robert F. Williams, was a fugitive from "justice" and, his association organizationally with Williams could make him indictable.

I told Malcolm that RAM wanted him to study our documents, that we wanted to have one-on-one ideological sessions with him; and that RAM wanted Malcolm to articulate RAM's mass line. Malcolm agreed to do this. He also agreed that as part of this agreement Malcolm was not to attack Elijah Muhammad publicly.

For most of the month of June and I think part of July, I would meet with Malcolm in the morning either at 22nd West Restaurant or at his office at the Hotel Theresa. We would either ride or sometimes walk and talk. On one occasion, he took me to meet Louis Michaux at the black nationalist book store at 125th Street and Lenox Avenue. Malcolm told me that Louis Michaux had taught him a lot. Malcolm showed me books written by abolitionists. He said they were not considered academic because the books were too emotional about slavery (subjective); but, he said that's how a person could get a good picture of the way slavery actually was by the showing of its brutal accounts. Michaux took us in the back

³⁸⁹ Interview with Donald Freeman, Cleveland, Ohio 1994

room of the store filled with select books and a wall of pictures. Michaux and Malcolm said they had a study group together in which they analyzed certain books.

Almost each day, Malcolm would meet with a different community leader or speak with a community group (usually in the evening). I would meet him around 9 am., we would travel and we would go to lunch about 1 p.m. where Helen Latimere would wait on us. Malcolm would usually have a banana split for lunch and then we would ride around discussing politics. He would break (I would assume to go home to spend time with his family); 'and, sometimes, we would meet at a designated place later in the evening. During this time, Malcolm was forming the OAAU (Organization of African-American Unity). I would go to the pre-OAAU meetings and also to the Sunday mass meetings Malcolm was holding. Malcolm gave me his home phone number and assigned me to call sister Betty to describe to her what he had said at the Sunday meetings.

During this time, I was approached by Bill Worthy, an African-American news journalist, to see if I could get Malcolm to come to a meeting with an African leader named Dr. Gay from French West Africa. I told Malcolm about the proposed meeting and he contacted Bill Worthy. If my memory is correct, I think in attendance were Bill Worthy, Dr. Gay, a white female French interpretator from SWP, Barbara Weeks of Brooklyn CORE, Charles 67X (Kenyatta, who was Malcolm's bodyguard), Malcolm and myself. As the conversation pursued, Barbara Weeks asked Dr. Gay if she would receive asylum if she went to the Guinea Embassy. Mrs. Weeks was facing multiple charges stemming from her participation in the Stall-in Core demonstration in '64. Mrs. Weeks said she was seeking asylum because this wasn't African-American's country anyway. I interrupted her and said that America (the United States) was more of the African-American's country than Euro-American's, so called white people and ran down some African-American history in a very emotional "charged up" manner. Malcolm stood up and pointed to me and said "you...you're the one who should be speaking to black youth in America instead of me."

Either on that occasion or another, Malcolm asked if he, Charles 67X (Kenyatta) and myself could use a back room where the three of us met. Malcolm introduced me to brother Charles 67X (Kenyatta) and said that he trusted Charles more than any of his men. Malcolm ended the conversation by saying the three of us would meet again when he came back from his trip to Africa. Malcolm then instructed me to contact him the next day.

Probably the next day or sometime thereafter, Malcolm and I were riding around in his car talking. I would ask Malcolm questions like "Why do you have a 1964 Ninety-Eight Oldsmobile." He said he would have a hog (Cadillac) except for the fact that pimps and preachers had hogs and that's why he didn't get one. He said he had an Olds because African-Americans would follow those of us who they felt were successful. Malcolm said "Money breeds money and if you looked successful you were more prone to attract money to you." Malcolm said this was one of the reasons Mr. Muhammad had Muslims wear a suit and tie.

Preparing for Succession of Leadership:

One day as Malcolm pulled up to double-park outside of 22nd West Restaurant, a long period of time occurred with Malcolm not talking. With my vivid imagination in the bright of sunlight, I envisioned that I saw Malcolm being assassinated. As I turned to look at him looking at me and without saying anything else, I said "Isn't there anything you can do to stop it?" He said, "No, it is fixed." Malcolm went on to explain he had a vision as a child that he would be killed while speaking to an audience of people similar to the circumstances of his father's death.

Malcolm said he had gone as far as he could go for his generation and felt much rested on the younger generation. Malcolm said that he would do for me what he had done for Elijah Muhammad.

I asked him what he meant by that and he said he would introduce me as the next leader at his Sunday mass meetings. I told him I didn't know what to say after he finished speaking. I just couldn't imagine myself being introduced by Malcolm. I didn't think I would know what to do or say. I was not prepared to accept all that responsibility at that time. Malcolm was strongly opinionated about it; but I interjected that it was premature and he finally agreed that I was probably right. But in the forthcoming days he gave me an intense one on one training through conversation providing lessons into his life. Malcolm said he didn't know who he could trust inside both of his organizations because he was so infiltrated. I said RAM would send in brothers and sisters into the OAAU and the Muslim Mosque, Inc., to develop an internal security wing to help protect him but we both knew we were working against time. I sent in Khalid Said to form an inner security wing to protect Malcolm inside the Muslim Mosque, Inc. and Larry Neal, Helen Brans and Elaine Freeman into the OAAU while Herman Ferguson and Merle Stewart were already inside Malcolm's organization.

Walter Bowie and myself were inside some of the founding meetings of the OAAU; but we were more in the background. There was some talk of me heading up the self defense committee of the OAAU but I preferred being in the background.

One day, Malcolm took me to meet Jessie Gray, Harlem rent strike leader. (After Malcolm's assassination, I would later work with Jessie Gray.) Malcolm told Jessie Gray that I had just come up north from Mississippi. Jessie Gray and Malcolm talked about genocide and taking the U.S. government to the United Nations in violation of the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights. On another occasion I introduced Willie Peacock and See Bass of the Mississippi SNCC field staff to Malcolm. They and others made plans for Malcolm to go to Mississippi and eventually along with sister Sharon helped develop the SNCC, Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, OAAU link. When riding with Malcolm one day I mentioned that he shouldn't go to Mississippi talking the way he did in Harlem. Malcolm asked me "Why not?" I said because the brothers and sisters there will go off. Malcolm said, "That's the problem, they need to go off!"

The only time I found Malcolm irrational and totally subjective was over the question of his attacking Elijah Muhammad. One morning Malcolm had attacked Elijah Muhammad about his morals while fighting over the rights to retain his house. At lunch at 22nd West restaurant that afternoon, I asked Malcolm why he had attacked Elijah Muhammad. He said "I just had to do it, brother, I had to do it." He then went on to explain that he felt like a fool for having gone around the country teaching about the divinity of Elijah Muhammad,

having the brothers beaten and kicked out of NOI for infidelity and that he had maintained moral discipline for years turning down the natural attraction of many women only to find out that Elijah Muhammad had been having sex with quite a few women outside of his marriage. That was quite a bitter pill to swallow. Malcolm said that he had believed that Elijah Muhammad was divinely chosen by God. He also said that the NOI had gone off track. He said that a mafia had taken over the Nation of Islam. Though he felt this had happened, he said he still didn't want to see the Nation of Islam destroyed.

An example of the level of street hustler support Malcolm had, displayed itself one day while riding in his car. Malcolm was cruising around the Sugar Hill area of Harlem, pointing out landmarks of the 40s and 50s (when a hustler came across the street hollering "Red"). Malcolm pulled his car to a stop. The brother was running toward the car with two objects, holding one in each hand. I sat on guard in apprehension; but Malcolm was relaxed, so I relaxed a little. As the brother came closer to the car I could see that the two objects in his hands were bundles of dollar bills. Malcolm smiled and the brother (in his late 30s or early 40s) said "Red, you gave them hell last night!" (Malcolm had been on a radio program.) "I loved it!" He hugged Malcolm and ran back across the street. Malcolm went on to explain that he used to hustle with the brother in the 40's. He said the bar where the brother had been hanging at was a big spot in the 40's where Duke Wellington and Lena Horne would perform. Malcolm said he knew Duke and Lena but it was not like it is now. "Back in the 40s, you could easily mingle and associate with them then; but not now, they are like big shots."

Malcolm would speak at neighborhood PTA meetings, which surprised me. African-American teachers, on a couple of occasions, invited him to speak. I think the time I recall the most of witnessing Malcolm's organizational ability would have been in the pre-planning of the OAAU meetings. On one occasion, Malcolm proposed that the organization be called the NLF (National Liberation Front). When people reacted that the name National Liberation Front would be premature he quietly pocketed the proposal and asked the group to come up with suggestions of a name the following week.

On another occasion, Malcolm would throw out a discussion lead and after maybe a half-hour of debate among members of the group on it he would show each of the seemingly opposing sides how and where each one was in agreement. I later learned that that was called synthesis or summing up.

What Malcolm Taught Me?

He taught me the importance of Time. He left me the first time we were supposed to have a political strategy session. He said, "A revolution is run on time, brother, you can't be late for a revolution." I was not late for any other meeting.

I learned from Malcolm the necessity to have a multi-tiered level of organization. Everyone is not the same or have the same skills or temperament. But we must respect what each and every one of us brings to the table. I learned that a successful organization is always polite and courteous to all the people. I learned that a successful organization should not take liberties with women and above all must be an example of self-discipline. Malcolm did not smoke, drink, or have extra marital affairs for twenty years. He also

limited his diet and often fasted especially before major speaking engagements. Malcolm had a dilemma; he was a charismatic leader trying to build a collective.

What did Malcolm Teach?

Malcolm taught that African Americans lived under a form of domestic colonialism, now domestic neo-colonialism.

"In America the Black Community in which we live is not owned by us. The landlord is white. The merchant is white. In fact, the entire economy of the Black community in the States is controlled by someone who doesn't even live there. The property that we live in, is owned by someone else. The store that we trade with, is operated by someone else. And these are the people who suck the economic blood, of our community. And being in a position to suck the economic blood of our community, they control the radio programs that cater to us, they control the newspapers, the advertizing, that cater to us. They control our minds. They end up controlling our civic organizations. They end up controlling us economically, politically, socially, mentally and every other kind of way. They suck our blood like vultures." ³⁹⁰

Malcolm advocated eliminating the source of drug addiction, prostitution and other social evils that affect the African American community. Malcolm believed the reason Negroes killed themselves; (the number one killer of black men from 15-35 is other black men), is because they sub-consciously hate themselves and because they lack the knowledge of their history, past, present and future. He felt African Americans needed to be "politically re-educated" and needed a black cultural revolution that would prepare them to wage a long struggle for liberation going from one generation to the next.

"Here in America, they taught us to hate ourselves. To hate our skin, hate our hair, hate our features, hate our blood, and hate what we are. Why, Uncle Sam is a master hate teacher, so much so that he makes somebody think he's teaching love, when he's teaching hate. When you make a man hate himself, why you really got it and gone." ³⁹¹

While Malcolm built an all black movement, he saw African Americans forming coalitions and alliances with others who had the same interests as ours. But he felt the mistake, that had been made in the past, was that African Americans entered into coalitions and alliances without first being organized or united and therefore were manipulated, controlled or out maneuvered by those who were organized.

He therefore advocated all-black organization on all levels first. Form a black united front with all African American groups was his motto. He said "there can't be any labor solidarity until there is first black unity", which simply means African Americans should get their own house together first.

Having traveled to 12 African nations, the Middle East, Western Europe, Canada and

³⁹⁰ Malcolm X, February 1965: "The Final Speeches" [New York, Pathfinder Press, 1992], page 48.

³⁹¹ Ibid, page 54

Britain, Malcolm's analysis became more scientific and he began to espouse an internationalist perspective. He foresaw Globalization and a transnational capitalist class, "colonialism or imperialism, as the slave system of the West is called, is not something that's just confined to England or France or the United States. But the interests in this country are in cahoots with the interests in France and the interest in Britain. It's one huge complex or combine, and it creates what's known *as* not the American Power structure or the French power structure, but it's an international power structure. And this international power structure is used to suppress the masses of dark-skinned people all over, the world and exploit them of their natural resources;"³⁹² it's a transnational capitalist class power structure.³⁹³

Malcolm not only advocated Pan Africanism for the unity of persons of African descent for the liberation of Africa but advocated a Pan Africanism of Third World unity of person's in the Western Hemisphere, (The America's and the Caribbean.)

"When you count the number of dark-skinned people in the Western Hemisphere you can see that there are probably over 100 million. When you consider Brazil has two-thirds what we call colored, or non-white, and Venezuela, Honduras and other Central American countries, Cuba and Jamaica, and the United States and even Canada - when you total all these people up, you have probably over 100 million. And this 100 million on the inside of the power structure today is what is causing a great deal of concern for the power structure itself."³⁹⁴

So from practice and being around Malcolm what did we learn?

What Malcolm's assassination and the demise of the Black Panther Party showed is that we need a group-centered leadership. It is important we go back to the philosophy of Ella Baker and Queen Mother Audley Moore. We should develop free space within the movement once again for women leaders.

The role of elders as facilitators:

The role is to pick up pieces or put together pieces out of which is hoped organization might become.

Strong people don't need strong leaders. We need strong cadre, well trained in the ideology and practical application of how to carry the program out. How to make it into a real working material force; working with the masses. As we work together we develop a collective leadership of the organization.

But this is not enough we must within the organization build a systematic orientation educating and informing process and a committee system which both nourishes young collective cadre and which holds all accountable for consistency and reliability and members using the process of criticism and self-criticism.

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³⁹² Ibid, page 79

³⁹³ William I. Robertson, A Theory of Global Capitalism: Production, Class and State in a Transnational World, [Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press 2004]

³⁹⁴ Ibid, page 80 ("The Final speeches")

Mao-Tse Tung said that in people's struggle we should "preserve our forces and wear down the enemy". Therefore our political strategy should be thru time or protracted political struggle we should build, sustain cadres, bring in new cadres to the organization; develop them, keeping their live links with the people and extending their links.

To do this the leadership of the organization should apply "revolutionary wisdom", countering incorrect and romantic tendencies within the movement. Each day thru collective effort the organization should strive to deepen the people's revolutionary political consciousness, further rooting itself among the working class and build class-conscious cadres "from the working class".

In order to wage successful class struggles the proletariat must be healthy; spiritually consolidated and fortified. Therefore, drinking and smoking are discouraged by cadres and uses of drugs are forbidden by cadre. The proletarian Cultural Revolution begins in the process of class struggle and is continuous and ongoing through the building of the new society.

Thus the proletarian people's party constantly fights politically and culturally against the backward and counter revolutionary ways among the people and produces a new revolutionary culture in the process. This revolutionary internationalism manifests to a higher form as cadres engage in day-to-day class war and reflect what the revolutionary new man and woman should be like.

Therefore democratic socialist revolutionaries become role models for the community to emulate. Attempt to develop new cultural beliefs through dialogue rather than rhetoric and dogmatism. It is important to try to develop leadership out of the group and to spread leadership roles so, that you develop cadres; second: line, third line leadership deep; 'a collective leadership. In other words, you're organizing people to be self-sufficient rather than to be dependent upon the charismatic leader.

One leader is not best for the movement because if something happens to the leader than that setbacks the movement or party. We must learn from others we need to nurture and develop new cadre leaders so there is a smooth transition from one level of collective to the other.

We should learn to balance personalities and skills in the collective and not allow the personal or subjective from blinding us of our mission. We should realize we are in a permanent struggle with our oppressors until we win liberation and must carry ourselves with integrity, honesty and of all means be humane towards one another because we are in a serious situation.

Success of a social movement is an intermediate layer of leadership, whose task includes bridging potential constituents as well as potential leaders to the movement.

On the strategy of winning:

A cadre organization should be concerned with the strategy of winning. One should not start a battle that could not be won. The objective of any campaign needs to be specific

and achievable. It is better to win a string of small victories rather than, prepare for and be defeated or setback in a major showdown. Each fight should be seen as a training exercise.

Members of the organization acquire the skills that are necessary to win bigger fights. If you have defeat after defeat, people will be discouraged and drop out. Therefore, it's important not to impose impossible demands that simply expose the system. If you pose a demand that the system cannot grant without totally changing itself you are setting yourself up for defeat unless you have an alternate specific and practical plan; a "B Plan" and a "C Plan" when that demand is not met.

The African American revolutionary must learn humility. Humility is not a sign of weakness, but rather a sign of internal strength and love for the people. When we as a people stop brow beating one another and learn what race loyalty is ("nationalism") then we can move to socialism (internationalism).

But, if we don't love and respect ourselves first as a people and stop fighting, stealing from and killing one another how can we be instrumental in bringing forth a better social system. And as the world is today if socialism were to come about we, African Americans, would be one of the weakest nations because we have little love for ourselves.

The violence that our people display to one another must be channeled towards the oppressive (capitalist) system and those who are willing to defend the system no matter what color they are.

But we cannot talk about revolution, self-determination, national independence or socialism until we first clean up and gain control over our communities. This generation of African American youth has lost all sense of values.

They respect nothing and no one. There is a serious crisis between African American men and women in our communities. The African American family is disintegrating. Until we deal with the social crisis in the African American community, we cannot move to revolution.

Don't wait for fascism, genocide and depression because it is already here. We should continue to organize until the grave and in that process teach the youth what we hope and pray they continue the process until we win.

Malcolm was a serious disciplined student of history and the science of political change in search of the truth. He was a critical thinker; an organic intellectual mass leader dialectically evolving, dealing with contradictions as they constantly arose in this race, class and gender structured world society. Malcolm studied most of his adult life. He studied for approximately 20-21 years. Malcolm started studying while in prison for seven years and continued for the 11 to 12 years he served as organizer/spokesman for the Nation of Islam; a total of 19 years. Malcolm developed into a historian and a political scientist; that is, he was a political analyst. His political analysis was so sharp, clear in the sense they were an intense race and class discussions synthesized in popular form, where the average

person could understand how and why he drew his rational conclusions. In his last year, Malcolm gave lectures on his travels to Africa and the Middle East or Islamic countries and tried to broaden the consciousness of his audiences; trying to transform them from parochial black nationalist to become revolutionary internationalists. Malcolm was not an Islamic fundamentalist. He was an Islamic international modernist who believed in the equality of women.

In his January 24, 1965 lecture at an OAAU meeting, Malcolm talked about the great achievements of ancient Egypt, the great pyramid, Sphinx and writing of Egypt. Few at that time realized the level of mathematics achieved by the ancient Egyptians in order to determine when stars that appeared once in 50,000 years would appear. Very few if any ever thought about the level of chemistry perfected by the ancient Egyptians to make paintings that lasted and maintained their brilliance for 5,000 years. Malcolm talked of the kingdoms of Ethiopia and Kush. He taught about the great kingdom of Carthage that produced the great military general Hannibal who colonized Sicily and took elephants over the Alps Mountains when he battled the young republic of Rome in the second Punic war. Malcolm taught about the Moorish civilization of North Africa and its' conquest of southwestern Europe (Portugal, Spain and southern France) for 700 years; from the years 711 a.d. to 1492. Malcolm (Malik) discussed the historical achievements of the medieval/ancient African kingdoms of Ghana, which existed from 300 a.d. - 1076 ad. and was known for its abundance of gold, the Mali empire which existed from 1200 a.d. to 1500 ad. and the Songhai Empire which existed from 1464 a.d. to 1591 a.d. and of their great cities. The city of Timbuktu, which prospered through all three empires, was known for its great Mosques and Universities. It had 150 Islamic schools, a law school and the University of Sanokore was a prime educational center in the world at that time. The most fluent trade of Timbuktu was the selling and trading of books and it had many book dealers. The city of Jenne, 300 miles southwest of Timbuktu, just off the Niger river, was known for its medical practices at the University of Jenne, which had four hundred faculty and taught courses, law, medicine, history, astronomy, algebra and higher mathematics. At the University of Jenne, the removal of cataracts on the eye was practiced long before this was achieved in Europe and America. Malcolm taught about the black civilizations of the Darvidians of ancient India and also of the Sumerians in the Middle East (West Asia).

The year of 1964 was one of great transformation for Malcolm X. Malcolm evolved from being a black nationalist into becoming an internationalist freedom fighter; an orthodox (Sunni) Muslim. Though still fighting for equality in the United States because he was an African American, on March 9, 1964 in an interview with the New York Times he said,

"I am prepared to cooperate in local Civil Rights actions in the South and elsewhere and shall do so because every campaign for specific objectives can only heighten the political consciousness of African Americans. There is no use deceiving ourselves, good education, housing and jobs, are imperatives for power³⁹⁵

At the same time Malcolm said, that he would be against oppression of anyone regardless of race, creed or religion. He was in firm support of Palestinian liberation against the Zionist state of Israel. He wrote two articles for Abdul Gamel Nasser's, Egyptian Gazette; one called "Zionist Logic". He had transformed into a Muslim revolutionary who was in a stage

³⁹⁵ Malcolm X: On Afro-American History [New York: Pathfinder Press, 1967] pp. 64

of jihad (holy war of truth against falsehood). Malcolm X believed that the education or reeducation of African Americans was necessary for the building of a new mass movement capable of fighting effectively for human rights. Malcolm taught that the cause of racism was due to an international power structure; we say today the international capitalist class, the 500 multi-national corporations that control the world economy. Victor Perlo in the *Economics of Racism II; the Roots of Inequality, USA*, says.

"I estimate the material losses of oppressed peoples in 1992 at \$522 billion, with more than half of the total - \$275 billion sustained by African Americans".³⁹⁶

Perlo estimated in his chart on page 172 of the same book that super-profits going to the U.S. capitalist class from the racist exploitation (racism) of African. American workers in 1992, was \$107 billion and Hispanic, \$84 billion and \$6 billion for other racial minorities, making a total of \$197 billion in profit from racism in one year. So you know today the sum is much more. Today's world capitalist system, which is centered in the United States, with the U.S. capitalist class maintaining hegemony (dominance) of the world economic system by any means necessary is based on racism. The racist system creates a hierarchy where persons of African descent are constantly underdeveloped and are on the bottom of the system. It was that way in 1964 and is that way in 2007. Africans worldwide are taught to hate ourselves by the non-inclusion of African- American history, scientific achievements both past and present in the public school system. Africans are bombarded by a "whiteout" through the world system of miseducation, which we call mass communications.

Malcolm said the worst crime of genocide the capitalist system had committed was teaching Africans worldwide to hate themselves. Malcolm X taught the worst holocaust is the African holocaust. He said just think of the African slave trade alone. In his speech on April 8, 1964, he said,

"The Missing 75 million

One hundred million Africans were uprooted from the African continent - where are they today? One hundred million Africans were uprooted, 100 million Africans according to the book, *Anti-Slavery*, by the Professor Dwight Lowell Dumond - excuse me for raising my voice - were uprooted from the continent of Africa. At the end of slavery you didn't have 25 million Africans in the Western Hemisphere. What happened to those 75 million? Their bodies are at the bottom of the ocean, or their blood and their bones have fertilized the soil of this country"³⁹⁷

On Allies:

Malcolm believed in allying with other ethnic groups. He believed in allying with anyone who was opposed to oppression of others anywhere, where you may find it on the planet earth. He believed the role of whites (Caucasians) were to work in the white community to fight against racism and reaction there. Malcolm told me he was very sorry that he had told a young white woman who approached him after making a speech at a university, while in the Nation of Islam; she asked him what could she do to help and he said "nothing". Malcolm said, if he saw that young lady now (1964), he would tell her she had a role;

³⁹⁶ Victor Perlo, *Economics of Racism 2: The Roots of Inequality USA* [New York: International Publishers, 1966] p. 153

everyone has a role in the struggle.

Internationally:

Internationally Malcolm united Africans who previously would not speak to one another in Paris, France and in London, U.K and also united them with African-Americans who were living abroad in those countries. He formed OAAU chapters in Paris and London. He requested permission to make a trip to the People's Republic of China, while in London. He united much of the Muslim communities in both countries with African and African-American communities. He impressed many whites in both countries and in, countries such as Germany where those progressive communities saw Malcolm as the new international revolutionary leader.

Malcolm was a firm opponent of the U.S. war against the Vietnamese people. In Africa, he took a strong anti imperialist, anti colonialist, anti neo-colonialist stance charging that the United States was the new imperialist power; the 20th / 21st century ROME. The U.S. State department in a report stated that Malcolm X had setback U.S. foreign policy in Africa, ten years in one year (1964). He called upon African leaders at the OAU summit to not accept "blood money" from the U.S. He asked the Saudis (Saudi Arabia), if they really supported the Palestine struggle and African American struggle then they should cut off the oil to Israel, the U.S. and Europe. A Saudi prince agreed with Malcolm and he was assassinated in 1974-75.

After the OAAU (Organization of African-American Unity) was formed, Malcolm X said,

"I spent five months in the Middle East and Africa, primarily for the purpose of getting better acquainted with them better and making them better acquainted with us, giving them a first-hand account of our problems and what our problems actually consist of. When I first got there in July, I found some of them difficult to talk to. But, by the time I left, in November, I didn't find anybody difficult to talk to....

By the time I had returned last month, the Muslim Mosque, Inc., had received official recognition and support by all of the official religious, bodies in the Moslem world, and the Organization of Afro-American Unity had also received official recognition, and support from all of the African countries I visited and from most of most I didn't visit".³⁹⁸

Ahmad Ben Bellah of Algeria, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Sekou Ture of Guinea, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania and Muhammad Babu of Zanzibar were in support of Malcolm's efforts to bring a U.N. indictment of Genocide against the U.S. for it's treatment of African-Americans.

Role as a Muslim:

Malcolm felt the great jihad (Al jihad) would begin in the U.S. (America) and spread throughout the world. Malcolm said:

³⁹⁷ Malcolm X: On Afro-American History [New York: Pathfinder Press, 1967] p. 64

"It's true I'm Moslem and I believe in brotherhood. I believe in the brotherhood of all men. But my religion doesn't make me a fool. My religion makes me be against all forms of racism. It keeps me from judging any man by the color of his skin. It teaches me to judge him by deeds and his conscious behavior. And it teaches me to be for the rights of all human beings, but especially the Afro-American human being, because my religion is a natural religion, and the first law of nature is self-preservation"³⁹⁹....

Malcolm saw us in one global interconnecting struggle and often said as long as one person is oppressed we are all oppressed, no one is free until we all are free. As a true revolutionary internationalist he upheld the principle of a People united will never be defeated.

The Political Philosophy of Malcolm X

Malcolm described the political philosophy of black nationalism to mean that African-Americans should control the politics and the politicians of their community. He also felt the African-American community had to be re-educated into the science of politics so it will know what politics is suppose to bring them in return. Malcolm felt the economic philosophy of black nationalism meant that African-Americans should control the economy of the African-American community. Malcolm emphasized the social philosophy of black nationalism meant that African-Americans should come together to remove the evils, vices, alcoholism, drug addiction and other evils that were destroying the moral fiber of the African-American community.⁴⁰⁰

Conservatism and Liberalism

In describing conservatism and liberalism, Malcolm said, conservatism in America's politics means let's keep the niggers in their place and liberalism means let's keep the kneegrows' in their place but till then we'll treat them a little better; let's fool them more, with more promises.

The Role of Sincere Whites

Malcolm said where sincere white people should be working to eliminate racism is inside the white community. Malcolm said he encouraged white people to work in conjunction with African-Americans but to work among other whites.

Malcolm said

Let sincere white individuals find all other white people they can who feel as they do and let them form their own all-white groups to work trying to convert the other white people who are thinking and acting so racist. Let sincere whites go and teach non-violence to white people.⁴⁰¹

³⁹⁸ Two Speeches by Malcolm X [New York: Pathfinder Press, 1965] pp 32

³⁹⁹ *Ibid*, (Two Speeches), p. 33

⁴⁰⁰ George Beitman, Malcolm X Speaks [New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1965] p. 39

Internationalism

Malcolm said “the American capitalist system had socialized (brain-washed), African-Americans into only seeing their struggle as a domestic civil rights problem and that it would be a long period of time before African-Americans would see their struggle as part of the international struggle for human rights.”⁴⁰²

The Purpose of the Organization of Afro-American Unity

Malcolm said the purpose of the OAAU was to bring independence of people of African descent in the western hemisphere; first in the United States fighting against enemies in every means necessary. He said the motto of the OAAU was freedom, justice and equality by any means necessary. He said the purpose of the OAAU was to unite all persons of African descent into one united force and when this is done in the western hemisphere to unite with Africans on the motherland on the continent of Africa.⁴⁰³

Politics

Malcolm said he didn't want to organize African-Americans to the democrats or republicans because both had betrayed African-Americans in the past and present. He proposed to support and organize political clubs to run independent candidates for office and to support any African-American candidate who is not controlled by the white power structure. He said he would start voter registration drives but with voter education drives to help. He believed that African-Americans have to have an understanding of the science of politics so they will be able to understand when a politician is doing his/her job and when they are not. The purpose would be to remove any politician who is not serving the interests of the community regardless of his/her color.⁴⁰⁴

On Colonialism and Imperialism

Malcolm believed that colonialism or imperialism is the slave system of the West that is not confined to England or France or the United States. He felt the interests of the United States are in cohorts with the interest in France and the interest in Britain. He felt monopoly capital is one huge complex or combine and it creates not just an American or French power structure, but it is an international capitalist power structure. This international capitalist power structure is used to suppress the masses of dark-skinned people all over the world which exploits them of their natural resources.⁴⁰⁵

The Potential of Persons of African Descent in the Western Hemisphere

Malcolm felt there was great revolutionary potential in unifying persons of African descent or what he called dark-skinned people in the Western Hemisphere. He believed that the two-thirds non-white of Brazil and Venezuela, Honduras and other Central American

⁴⁰¹ Malcolm X, The Autobiography of Malcolm X [New York: Grove press, Inc. 1965] p. 377

⁴⁰² Op Cit (Autobiography) p. 364

⁴⁰³ George Brietwan, The Last Year of Malcolm X: The Evolution of a Revolutionary [New York: Shocken Books, 1965] p. 115

⁴⁰⁴ George Brietwan, (ed) By Any Means Necessary [New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970] pp. 102-104

⁴⁰⁵ Malcolm X, February 1965: The Final Speeches [New York: Pathfinder, 1992] p. 79

countries, Cuba, Jamaica, Canada and the United States when counted they numbered over 100 million people. Malcolm saw that through revolutionary Pan Africanism this force could be galvanized into revolutionary action in the western hemisphere.⁴⁰⁶

On the U.S. Bombing Africans in the Congo

Malcolm was the only African-American leader to criticize the United States for bombing the Simba's (supporters of slain Prime Minister of the Congo, Patrice Lumumba) who were in rebellion against western colonial rule. He said the American left did not make an outcry while the U.S. dropped bombs on civilian women, children, babies and men destroying entire African Villages.⁴⁰⁷

Internationalization of the Struggle

Malcolm built the Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU) to isolate U.S. imperialism.⁴⁰⁸ Through the OAAU, he appealed to the African heads of state to bring the United States government before the United Nations and charge it with the crime of genocide in violation of the U.N. Human Rights Charter.⁴⁰⁹ The State Department became alarmed over Malcolm's efforts because such an indictment would expose the true nature of U.S. imperialism.⁴¹⁰

Malcolm felt that there was a racist element within the State department that realized that if any revolutionary African-American was ever permitted to come before the United Nations to testify on behalf of 22 million African-Americans then representatives of the Third World would equate America with the colonial powers. of Europe and South Africa.⁴¹¹

This racist element within the State department realized that if any intelligent, truly militant African-American was ever permitted to come before the United Nations to testify on behalf of 22 million mistreated Afro-Americans, our dark-skinned brothers and sisters would then see America as a "brute beast," even more cruel than the colonial powers of Europe and South Africa combined.⁴¹²

In this sense, the Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU) was to serve like the Committees of Correspondence of the American Revolution of 1776; these committees won similar support for the thirteen colonies. The OAAU was to serve as the broad African-American National Liberation Front that would set up offices in every country, giving African-Americans in exile an organizational vehicle and a political purpose. The OAAU would act as a united people's front against the U.S. racism and imperialism.

Malcolm thought it would take the active support of the majority of the world's democratic forces to help African-Americans achieve self-determination for the African-American

⁴⁰⁶ Op Cit (February 1965: Malcolm X, The Final Speeches) p. 80

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid, pp. 49

⁴⁰⁸ Conversation with Malcolm, Harlem, NY, June 1964

⁴⁰⁹ George Brietman, Malcolm X Speaks [New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1965] pp. 77

⁴¹⁰ Karl Evanzz, The Judas Factor: The Plot to Kill Malcolm X [New York: Thunder Mouth Press, 1992] pp. 257

⁴¹¹ John Henrik Clarke, Malcolm X: The Man and His Times [Toronto, Canada: Collier Books, 1969] pp. 245

⁴¹² Karl Evanzz, The Messenger: The Rise and Fall of Elijah Muhammad [New York: Pantheon Books, 1999] p. 315

struggle to succeed against U.S. imperialism. Malcolm was a staunch anti-imperialist, and he made important statements against U.S. foreign policy. He condemned U.S. counter-revolutionary murder, bombing, killing and maiming of African women and children in the Congo while U.S. mercenaries crushed the people's revolution of the Congo. At his mass rallies, he would announce and encourage people to attend demonstrations concerning the Congo which were then taking place in New York City. Malcolm also denounced the initial U.S. invasion of Vietnam and was the first African-American leader to condemn the Vietnam war. Unity with Africa in particular, and the Third World in general and developing a spiritual, cultural and philosophical return to Africa was a central part of Malcolm's theme.

Human Rights Program for Political Power

Malcolm did not see this internationalization in isolation from a national and regional strategy for African-American liberation. Malcolm's main theoretical problem was how to transform the civil rights movement into a progressive, scientific movement to secure national democratic human rights through mass action, while guiding this forward motion toward a socialist revolution. While Malcolm had a rough outline for liberation, like others at the time, he had not worked a strategy out in detail by the time of his death.

Malcolm broadened the civil rights movement when he said the African-American struggle was a movement for securing human rights. In essence, Malcolm knew he was aligning the black liberation movement with broad anti-imperialistic democratic forces of the world.

Malcolm was not only a dialectical thinker, but he had a long range perspective. Part of Malcolm's thinking focused on how African-Americans could achieve political empowerment prior to a socialist revolution and this was particularly focused on the black belt south.

"There are 915,743 of our people in the state of Mississippi, they're in the majority. That's almost one million. In 125 counties of Mississippi, they're in the majority. Ninety other counties, they constitute more than 40 percent of the population. Any time you have that number of Black people who are of that numerical majority in that many counties, if they were given the vote, Eastland wouldn't be representing them. The state of Mississippi would be in the hands of the Black man, and it must be in his hands by the ballot or the bullet. It must be one or the other. This is why the campaign they have in Mississippi for voter registration is a good campaign. They're not trying to integrate, they're trying to get our people registered to vote, which is good because it puts them in a position to strike right at the base of all their misery."⁴¹³

Malcolm saw the importance of voter registration and the securing of a national democratic revolution that was set back after the overthrow of Reconstruction. Malcolm saw that through voting, African-Americans and progressive whites could secure control of the southern region of the United States through the ballot. If this process was halted, he advocated alternative means of completing the national democratic process or the battle for democracy. By raising the slogan "by any means necessary," Malcolm could not be accused

⁴¹³ Op Cit., (Brietman (ed) *Malcolm X: By Any Means Necessary*), pp. 91-92

of opposing non-violence in peaceful confrontations. Nor, logically, could he be accused of instigating violence in situations requiring self-defense.

But Malcolm did not limit this battle for democracy only to the south.

"Since our people are making such a sacrifice to become registered voters in Mississippi, it's a sin for you and me not to be registered so we can vote in New York City and in New York State, or throughout the North."⁴¹⁴

17 Point Program of the OAAU

1. A substance (drug) abuse clinic.
2. A place (halfway house) for unwed mothers.
3. A home for the aged in Harlem.
4. A guardian system for youth who get in trouble.
5. A cultural center in Harlem.
6. Non-partisan voter registration drives.
7. Independent political clubs.
8. Housing and self-improvement programs.
9. Rent strikes.
10. Ten percent of the schools not included.
11. African American principals and teachers for these schools.
12. Textbooks written by African-Americans.
13. OAAU run people for local school boards.
14. School strikes when necessary.
15. African-American primary schools.
16. African-American cultural revolution based on African-American history and pride.
17. Adult education and job retraining program.

On the question about self-determination, Malcolm left it open-ended as to how that was to happen. Malcolm felt that African-Americans were entitled to reparations and this was the main underpinning to his maneuvering. Malcolm advocated the mass mobilization of the grass roots. He felt the grass roots would develop a consensus on how to proceed to self-determination and struggle. One thing that is clear is that Malcolm felt processes had to exhaust themselves before the masses could proceed to further levels of consciousness.

Malcolm advocated the formation of independent political clubs to begin the process toward African-American political empowerment.

"...Once you get the ballot, you know what this means? You don't have to get out in the street anymore and risk your health and your life and your limb demonstrating. All you have to do is organize that political power and direct it against anyone who's against you, or behind anyone who is for you. And in this way, you and I will find that we're always taking constructive, positive action and getting some kind of result."⁴¹⁵

In the process of building the OAAU, Malcolm developed a 17-point program for New York and particularly for Harlem. Malcolm had in mind building a base in New York first

⁴¹⁴ Ibid, pp. 92

⁴¹⁵ Op. Cit. (Breitman (ed) *Malcolm X: By Any Means Necessary*) pp. 94

and then expanding the OAAU into a national organization.

On Morality and Revolution

Malcolm was clear that revolutionaries must embody a stronger spiritual (humane) morality than that of contemporary western capitalist civilization. He realized that it was the superior fiber among revolutionaries that enabled the "wretched of the earth" to overcome insurmountable obstacles. In the fight for human rights and self-determination, progressives have often underestimated the social question or moral fiber of the movement, which is often neglected or relegated to the realm of culture. This suppressed issue needs serious attention in this period as drugs threaten to overtake all sectors of American society, and may exterminate the majority of the present and forthcoming generations of African-Americans. Many need to take Malcolm's lead and focus on "scientific revolutionary morality" as an issue central to human rights and self-determination.

Malcolm said:

"Since the police can't eliminate organized prostitution and all of the evils that are destroying the moral fiber of our community, it is up to you and me to eliminate these evils ourselves. But in many circumstances, when you unite in this country or in this city to fight organized crime, you'll find yourselves fighting the police department itself because they are involved in the organized crime. Wherever you have organized crime, that type of crime cannot exist other than with the consent of the police, the knowledge of the police, the cooperation of the police.... The police are all right. I say there are some good ones and some bad ones.... I tell you brothers and sisters, it is time for you and me to organize and eliminate these evils ourselves, or we'll be out of the world backward before we even know where the world was."⁴¹⁶

These words ring more true today as African-American communities disintegrate before our eyes, and young African-Americans engage in "self-destruct" genocide using crack, and dying from AIDS transmitted through dirty needles and illicit [unsafe—eg.] sex. Malcolm also tried to address the woman question: the equality of the sexes. Malcolm felt women should be treated equally to men, and politically educated just like men, even though he was not clear on this question, just like many of us today.

Before his untimely death, Malcolm, realized that non-equality of African women in African organizations hindered the liberation movement, was practicing equality and consciously giving African- American women more responsibility and leadership in the OAAU.

Since that time, African-American women revolutionaries have fought the male chauvinist positions and actions of men in the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, Revolutionary Action Movement, Black Panther Party, Southern Christian Leadership Conference, League of Revolutionary Black Workers, African Liberation Support Committee and many other formations. Having been educated by the women's movement,

⁴¹⁶ Ibid, pp. 50

all male revolutionaries should, by this time, uphold and fight for women's social, economic and political equality and the right to reproductive choice.

Travel broadens one's horizon was Malcolm's theme to explain his new understanding of the actual or real basis of race, class and gender oppression worldwide. Through travels in the Middle East, the Hajj (Muslim spiritual pilgrimage) and conversations with Algerian revolutionaries, Malcolm changed his views on race. He said he would never again judge a person on the basis of race but rather upon what they did in practice.

Malcolm learned from his travels in Africa that in whatever country where the women were liberated, that country's liberation movement was strong. He therefore began to practice equality between men and women in the Organization of Afro-American Unity and received resistance to his equalitarian gender policies from many of the men who had previously been members of the Nation of Islam.⁴¹⁷

On the national level, Malcolm began to work with the more militant grassroots leaders of the civil rights movement like Gloria Richardson, Reverend Jamison, Dick Gregory, Reverend Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., Jessie Gray and Lawrence Laundry who constituted an organization called ACT. Probably the one person who influenced Malcolm more than anyone during this period of his life was Robert F. Williams, ex-president, Monroe, North Carolina NAACP, who had recently become international chairman in exile of the Revolutionary Action Movement who was living in Cuba in 1964.

Internationally, Malcolm spent 18 months in Africa and Middle East. Among the many dignitaries he met with, he was most impressed with Aziewkee of Nigeria, Sekou Toure of Guinea, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, Muhammad Babu, representatives of Ahmed Ben Bella of Algeria and Ahmed Gamal Nasser of Egypt. Malcolm wrote an article on "Zionist Logic" at the request of Nassar for the Egyptian Gazette, published September 17, 1964.

Dollarism

The number one weapon of 20th century imperialism is Zionist-Dollarism and one of the main basis for this weapon is Zionist Israel. The ever-scheming European imperialists wisely place Israel where she could geographically divide the Arab world, infiltrate and sow the seed of dissension among African leaders and also divide the Africans against the Asians.

Zionist Israel's occupation of Arab Palestine has forced the Arab to waste billions of precious dollars on armaments making it impossible for these newly independent Arab Nations to concentrate on strengthening the economic standards of their country and elevate the living standard of their people.

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Conversation with James Shabazz, March, 1965, New York City

And the continued low standard of living in the Arab world has been skillfully used by the Zionist propagandists to make it appear to the Africans that the Arab leaders are not qualified to lift the living standard of their people...thus, indirectly "inducing" Africans to turn away from the Arabs and toward the Israelis for teachers and technical assistance.

"They cripple the bird's wing, and then condemn it for not flying as fast as they."

The imperialists always make themselves look good, but it is only because they are competing against economic cripples newly independent countries whose economics are actually crippled by the Zionist-capitalist conspiracy. They can't stand against fair competition, thus they dread Gamal Abdul Nasser's call for African-Arab Unity under Socialism.⁴¹⁸

This article probably put Malcolm on the "hit list" for Masad, the Israeli's intelligence forces.

In France, Malcolm united Africans from all over the African continent who were previously at odds with one another along with persons of African descent from the Caribbean, and Latin America as well with those from the United States then living in France in exile. He gave them all a purpose; to serve as a propaganda unit for the African-American liberation struggle by forming a branch of the OAAU in France. He also created similar developments in England, Ghana and the UAR.

Malcolm, in less than a year, became one of black America's most progressive spokesman. Beginning to support the mass civil rights demonstrations taking place in the South, he called for taking the U.S. government before the United Nations for its violation of human rights; the crime of genocide which Dr. King supported. Malcolm re-introduced the tactics of armed self-defense, previously practiced by Robert F. Williams, by calling for African-Americans to form rifle clubs for protection against racists and "using any means necessary" as a tactical philosophy. Malcolm was in contact with Che Guevera (a leader of the Cuban Revolution) and had invited Che to speak at one of his weekly rallies. Guevera had to turn the invitation down after discovering anti-Castro Cubans planned to either disrupt the rally or murder him while in attendance.

Malcolm's philosophy was that African-Americans should control the economics and politics of the African-American community. Malcolm called for organizing independent political clubs. This was the essence of his "ballot or bullet" message. Malcolm called on all African people wherever they may be to build political "bridges," networks and organizations world-wide. Malcolm was about to introduce the OAAU program when he was assassinated.

Activities Against Malcolm X

⁴¹⁸ "Malcolm X, 'Zionist Logics', *The Egyptian Gazette-September 17, 1964, World-Wide African Anti-Zionist Front* (Reprint) [New York: A-APRP] pp. 3

Malcolm's turn toward revolutionary activism was studied and discussed at the highest levels of the ruling class.⁴¹⁹

Malcolm told me that when he attended the March on Washington in August, 1963, the FBI came and picked him up from a group of Muslims he was with and took him to a building and asked him "Mr. X. what do you want? Do you want a million dollars, we will give you whatever you want." Malcolm said he responded by saying "Give me New York." Malcolm said Mr. Pedo, the Fed agent, said "Mr. X, we can't talk with you" and took him back to where he had been standing observing the march. Malcolm's uncompromising stand probably marked him as a threat to the "invisible government" as early as that date August 27, 1963.⁴²⁰

From the recent release of FBI counter-intelligence documents and New York City Police Department Bureau of Special Services (BOSS) surveillance files, Malcolm was under daily watch by at least one intelligence agency since the early 1950s.

J. Edgar Hoover sent several letters to the Attorney General requesting legal action be taken against the Nation of Islam. Leaders of the NOI were put on the FBI Security Index.

Malcolm X's break from the Nation of Islam caused great alarm in the "invisible government" which was part of the intelligence community. Malcolm's organizations: the Muslim Mosque, Inc. and the Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU) were infiltrated by various intelligence and police agencies. The infamous, highly secretive New York Bureau of Special Services (BOSS), which was responsible for the Statue of Liberty bomb plot (1965), the Roy Wilkins/Whitney Young assassination plot (1967), and the Panther 21 plot (1969), had infiltrated Malcolm's organizations.

Malcolm had also been a victim of poison while in the Middle East; possibly at the hand of the CIA. The State Department issued a memo on Malcolm in 1965, stating that he was detrimental to U.S. foreign policy. Malcolm remembered a tall, thin, dark, olive-skinned man following him in his world travels. This man returned to the United States when Malcolm returned.

Gene Roberts, a body guard for Malcolm, later turned up in the Panther 21 case as a police agent. McKinley Welch, an African-Puerto Rican, a BOSS agent in the New York Black Panther Party, stated to Max Stanford in 1967 that he had infiltrated Mosque (NOI) Number 7 in New York and had become secretary. When Malcolm left the Nation of Islam., Welch was ordered by his superiors to infiltrate the OAAU. Welch confessed to Stanford because of his increased political awareness.⁴²¹

He said agents from every agency were in the OAAU. From recorded reports of accounts given to the Herald Tribune on February 23, several members of BOSS were present in the audience at the time of Malcolm's assassination. Also, the second man caught by the audience at the time the assassination outside of the Audubon Ballroom and turned over to police mysteriously disappeared.

⁴¹⁹ Karl Evanzz, The Messenger: The Rise and Fall of Elijah Muhammad [New York: Pantheon Books, 1999] p. 314

⁴²⁰ Malcolm X, "Conversation With Max Stanford," June 1964

⁴²¹ Confession of McKinley Welch to Max Stanford, Spring 1967, Philadelphia, PA

Malcolm's home had been fire-bombed a couple of weeks before his assassination. Since he was under constant surveillance and was on the FBI Security Index, where were the New York police and the FBI?

Why did Malcolm Feel He was Going to be Assassinated?

In June of 1964, I spent the majority of the day with Malcolm on a daily basis. As we would walk down the street, eat lunch at 22 West Restaurant, ride in his car or meet with friends and representatives from other countries or community leaders, I would repeatedly ask him questions. I wanted to learn more about the one African-American man who RAM felt could mobilize 22 million African-Americans.

One day Malcolm said, "Brother, I have to be assassinated." I asked, "Why?" Malcolm replied, "As national spokesman for the Nation of Islam, I had secrets of the Nation, and they can't afford to let me live." Not knowing anything about the situation, I just listened. Malcolm said, "Brother, you see, as national representative of the Nation, I met with H.L. Hunt (right wing Texas billionaire) and George Lincoln Rockwell of the American Nazi Party. It was just the Messenger (Elijah Muhammad) and myself. I was his national representative. We discussed helping the Nation. It was discussed that Elijah Muhammad and the Nation of Islam would be given the state of Mississippi when fascism came into power in the country. I asked the Messenger why he negotiated with them. He said, "Sometimes you have to deal with the Devil."⁴²²

Malcolm believed that Elijah Muhammad was being used and that a mafia was forming around the Nation of Islam. He felt this mafia was being set up to stop the real black revolution. This coupled with the signed statements Malcolm had concerning Elijah Muhammad having impregnated three of his personal secretaries, Malcolm felt was the reason for the NOI leadership to be after him. As time went on, the plot to eliminate Malcolm became broader.

Why Malcolm Died?

Malcolm X became a threat to the United States government when he broke from the Nation of Islam because of his statements, which expressed the sentiment of Africa-America and his attempt to organize a revolutionary black nationalist movement. He immediately put himself in danger by attempting to organize the African-American community for armed self-defense. He knew that African-American had to be exposed to the nature of their condition and attempted to mobilize them for liberation. It's significant that the only other black man who attempted to organize black America for self-defense was ran into exile. Malcolm's friendliness to young African-American revolutionaries of the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM) and SNCC frightened the power structure. It feared that this link-up would lead to a black revolution. Also, Malcolm called for the help of all sections of the African-American community to formulate a solution for the African-American liberation struggle. Out of this coalition of various elements in the African-American community came the Organization of African-American Unity. The name was

⁴²² Malcolm X, "Conversation with Max Stanford, June 1964

designed after the Organization of African Unity and proved to be very significant in Malcolm's attempt to re-establish revolutionary Pan-Africanism.

Malcolm's first trip to Africa was very significant because it took the struggle out of the confines of the continental U.S.A. and linked it with the Third (non-white) World, making the African-American struggle international—the first time since the Garvey movement. It destroyed the myth that African-Americans are citizens denied their rights, and that African-American liberation was a domestic problem. Through his slogans of "Human Rights," Malcolm raised the concept that African-Americans were an African captive nationality denied the right to self-determination. His trip exposed the U. S.1.A.'s "Uncle" Carl T. Rowan and other "Tom" leaders who have gone to Africa to whitewash the African-American struggle. During his trip, Malcolm exposed the Johnson administration in its attempt to rape Africa and showed, by example of the African-American struggle, how Pan-Africanism could not be a meaningful force for African liberation, unless it became a living example of Garvey's original thesis that "no black person is free until all black people are free." In this way he also showed that DuBois was correct in his original thesis that "the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line."

When Malcolm returned from Africa, he destroyed the myth that Africa-America was alone in its struggle against U.S. imperialism. He also destroyed the taboos of the African-Americans not uniting with any people that U.S. imperialism said wasn't "cool." He emphasized how he had received whole hearted support from the Chinese ambassadors in countries he visited.

Malcolm, through continuous efforts, attempted to relate the OAAU to the southern struggle and attempted to unify the civil rights leaders with revolutionary nationalist leaders. On March 9, 1964 in an interview with the New York Times, Malcolm announced his break with the Nation of Islam and his future plans:

I am prepared to cooperate in local civil rights actions in the South and elsewhere and shall do so because every campaign for specific objectives can only heighten the political consciousness of Blacks and to intensify their identification against white society.⁴²³

Also, Malcolm's main emphasis was to internationalize the African-American struggle; therefore he decided that a second trip to Africa was necessary to further consolidate the ties with African-African-American unity. When Malcolm returned to Africa, he was recognized at the Cairo Conference which was the second convening of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). This recognition of Malcolm, by the African nations meant, essentially, that (Malcolm) represented an African-American government in exile. In his speech at the Cairo Conference, he exposed the nature of U.S. imperialism and forced African countries to reconsider their position of nonalignment against U.S. imperialism. His speech brought out the true role of the United States in Africa and, in what he termed "U.S. dollarism," which exposed Johnson and the rest of the racist cowboys as white supremacists. This speech and the rest of Malcolm's trip destroyed, in essence, the concept of the "Peace Corps," the image of every "Uncle Tom" leader who ever visited Africa, and forced African-Americans living in Africa to take a position on the African-American struggle, or be left in an isolated atmosphere.

⁴²³ George Brietman, *The Last Year of Malcolm X: The Evolution of a Revolutionary* [New York: Schocken Books, 1967] p. 19

Malcolm created such an atmosphere in Africa that SNCC, when visiting there, had to re-evaluate itself, the struggle, and had to take stands that it had refused to take before, i.e., Cuba, Congo, China, Vietnam, etc.

Malcolm made a qualitative change in the African-American struggle when he went to Selma, Alabama. He made such a tremendous impact through his exposure to the nature of imperialism that the French government denied him the right to speak before a congress of African students in France.

The events that were stated here led to what RAM called the "set-up." The set-up was the bombing of Malcolm's house which, from reliable sources, implies that the capitalist power structure helped in the bombing of Malcolm's house, blamed it on the Nation of Islam, and set the atmosphere for their old colonial trick—divide and conquer.

Malcolm's Political Significance

Malcolm was the first African-American leader to attack the U.S. government in the 1960's as the cause of racism and the enslavement of the African captive nationality. Through his existence he formed a bridge between the 1940's, 1950's generation and the 1960's. He articulated the views of both generations and was going in the direction of developing a program that would have consolidated both generations towards African-American liberation.

It should be noted that Malcolm was really becoming a threat to the U.S. government's capitalist power structure because of his growing influence on African and Asiatic students in this country and throughout the world. Malcolm's trip to Africa had much to do with Nasser's repudiation of U.S. "dollarism" when Nasser told the U.S. to "go to hell" with regard to U.S. aid and also concerning its blatant, brutal, racist activities in the Congo. Malcolm's constant attacks on the U.S. government, particularly the CIA, threatened U.S. foreign policy; particularly in Africa, and just about finished the "Peace Corps."

His influence in Africa was so strong that African leaders were not going to let James Farmer enter Africa unless Malcolm okayed it. Due to the efforts of Malcolm in Africa, coupled with those of Robert F. Williams in Asia and Latin America, the racist U.S. government was truly pictured as the citadel of world imperialism. This alone would give the CIA reason to assassinate Malcolm.

Through his telegrams and speeches warning about the far right, he helped to expose the plan the far right had and is using to take over America. He interpreted the far right's (fascist's) plan and what it meant to African-Americans.

His efforts to organize the Organization of Afro-American Unity, was very significant, for this was the first organization officially recognized by an African government since the UNIA of Marcus Garvey. It had the potential of becoming a national African-American liberation front with a government in exile.

Events Before the Assassination

Malcolm's trip to Selma, Alabama, was the first time that an African-American nationalist leader had gone into the South to organize people and challenge the bourgeois reformists. This led to the unification of the struggle, both North and South, and made Malcolm a threat to U.S. imperialism's pacification program. In Selma, Malcolm destroyed the myth of peaceful accommodation. His theme of "ballots or bullets" led the youth to one conclusion. The police authorities, along with the CIA, FBI, and others, attempted to close in on potential African-American revolutionary forces by creating an atmosphere of an internal threat to white America's security, and presenting what was the Statue of Liberty frame-up. This was done by projecting that African-American youth attempted to sabotage America's national shrines.

Of the three men framed, Robert Collier, Walter Bowie, and Khalil Said; Walter Bowie had been in the planning meetings of the OAAU and his wife Nan Bowie was a member of the OAAU. The other man, Khalil Said, a Sunni Muslim was a member of the Muslim Mosque, Inc., OAAU, a previous member of RAM and a part of Malcolm's internal security which had been co-planned by Malcolm and Stanford.

The second reason the media ran stories (New York Daily News) that claimed that Robert Williams was in Canada and had planned the whole conspiracy.

The "Set-Up"

The "set-up" was the bombing of Malcolm's house. The white capitalist power structure estimated that if one of the black power organizations would accuse the other, then the "capitalists" would have created a motive for Malcolm's assassination. It was in this atmosphere which the "capitalists" prepared for a week, that created an atmosphere for Malcolm's assassination. Also, they set it up so that Muhammad could be assassinated and it would look like Malcolm's forces were pitched against Muhammad's. In this way, the "capitalists" figured could use age-old colonial strategy of "divide and conquer" and "nigger against nigger." With this "the capitalists" had planned to either annihilate or discredit nationalist leadership in black America, which would leave only "peaceful accommodationists," and who would know when their turn would come.

The Assassination

The assassination was well planned and was obviously (by recent revelations) a conspiracy involving government agencies, the New York Police Department and elements of the Nation of Islam.⁴²⁴ From reliable sources there are indications that there were Negro agents hired killers in the audience. The assassination meant that any African-American who attacks the capitalist power structure directly, or attempts to organize the African-American people around the "truth," is either assassinated, jailed or forced into exile, even if they receive Nobel Prizes for Peace. The assassination showed that the white capitalist American government is racist.

This brutal, unjust, evil assassination shows that the U.S. government will stop at nothing to keep dehumanized African-Americans enslaved. The assassination of Malcolm X was a

⁴²⁴ Karl Evanzz, *Judas Factor: The Plot to Kill Malcolm X* [New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1992] pp. 294-295

part of the FBI's and CIA's counter insurgency program of destruction of the militant fighting wing of the African-American liberation struggle.

What I learned From Studying Under Malcolm

I saw that Malcolm was a national leader, and that it was almost impossible for him to build a powerful organization because he was under constant surveillance, harassment and other forms of opposition from the white power structure right from the start. Every time someone would come and take a picture of Malcolm, I would step out of the picture. Some people said that I/we (RAM) were paranoid; but, from examining our COINTELPRO documents these tactics and others often worked, throwing the intelligence forces off track. At times, it was hard for the intelligence forces to identify me because they didn't have an updated picture of me. So the first thing for the young organizers need to is avoid premature exposure or publicity before starting your organizing project. Eventually, if you are doing something you are going to get exposed (publicized).

The second is that you can't mobilize and build a strong foundation for a cadre at the same time. Either the cadre is already there when you begin to mobilize or you have to take time preparing a solid well-grounded cadre with second, third and (if you can) fourth line leadership. We failed to this in the 60s and when things got thick we fell apart. Often organizations can be built from militant action but sustaining the growth process in America has been difficult.

One thing RAM learned too late from Malcolm was to concentrate on forming a strong local base before expanding nationally. Malcolm wanted to build the OAAU in New York first and then expand nationally. RAM/SNCC formed national organizations without having solid bases of prolonged mass support first. Having a solid local base of mass support is worth more than being scattered out all over the place with no support. The 1960's generation learned that mistake the hard way.

The other question that Malcolm was responding to after he left the Nation of Islam was having independent finances. Besides building organizations, economic self-reliance must be part of activists thinking, organizing plans and styles. Malcolm was clear that no one group/organization had the strength or ability to liberate the African-American people. He saw the need for operational unity; the building of united and liberation fronts.

Malcolm also saw the need to have and work with allies. Many young African-American activists didn't like Malcolm working so close with SWP (Socialist Workers Party); but they were among the few white Americans who would fairly support him. The organizational form has yet to be worked out for working with allies from all communities; but, this is a priority question in the forth coming period.

What RAM did learn from Malcolm was that the broad mass line and tactics must be in conjunction with the objective needs of the people. That is, while you may create a revolutionary organization, you need a transitional program that African-Americans can relate to in their day-by-day struggles. The other thing that was learned from Malcolm is that there should always be more than one level of organization; organize horizontally and vertically and operate on the basis of needing to know only what you need to know; to do your organizing correctly (only on a need to know basis); or as Malcolm would say "don't

let your left hand know what your right hand is doing" and "those who say don't know and those who know don't say."

Malcolm's example of attempting to build an all African-American coalition laid the basis for the direction that the African-American movement for empowerment took from his assassination until 1975 and created a pace of development for African-American radical organizations.

March 7, 1965

The **Selma to Montgomery Civil Rights March** began on this day. A group of civil rights demonstrators trekked over 50 miles from Selma to the state Capitol in Montgomery, Alabama to protest the denial of voting rights for Blacks. It was intended as a memorial march for Jimmy Lee Jackson, who was shot and later died during a voting rights march weeks earlier. En route to the Capitol, law enforcement officials confronted and violently assaulted the crowd, beating them with whips, clubs, tear gas and nightsticks as they attempted to cross the Edmund Pettus Bridge. This violent confrontation, which was seen on television, shocked the nation and became known as "Blood Sunday." Two weeks later and under the protection of the federal court, 25,000 marchers joined Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and completed the historic march.

During the summer of 1965 a massive urban rebellion occurred in the Watts area of Los Angeles.

In Louisiana the Deacons for Defense, an all-African-American self-defense organization had armed clashes with the Louisiana (KKK) police.

Bayard Rustin in his article "From Protest to Politics: Future of the Civil Rights Movement," Commentary (February 1965) and "Black Power and Coalition Politics," Commentary, (September 1966) predicted that the movement would shift from non-violent direct action to electoral politics. James and Grace Lee Boggs in their article, "The City is the Black man's Land" in the April 1966 issue of Monthly Review foresaw the next phase of the civil rights struggle would become one for political empowerment in America's mayor cities.

Carl B. Stokes, an African-American state senator ran as an independent for Mayor of Cleveland, Ohio and lost by a small questionable margin.

President Lyndon Baines Johnson proposed to Congress and signed the 1965 Voting Rights Act which ensured that a federal register would guarantee proper fair counting of votes in the South.

The year 1966 was marked by SNCC transition from non-violence and racial integration to building an all African American political party to armed self-defense and black power. After organizing in Lowndes County, Alabama, Stokely Carmichael emerges as a leader in SNCC. On March 3, 1966 the Lowndes County Freedom Organization led by John Hulet announced plans to run candidates for tax assessor, tax collector, coroner, sheriff, and district attorney as an all-African-American party. It chose as its symbol a black panther

and soon became known as the Black Panther Party. SNCC also published its opposition to the Vietnam war.

At the April SNCC staff meeting Stokely Carmichael was elected the new chairman of SNCC. Dr. King entered into Chicago in efforts to desegregate housing and obtain job opportunities for the black urban poor. On the same day that King announced plans for a march on City Hall, Daley's efforts defused King's efforts when Daley announced he had negotiated a federal loan for housing renovation. On the same day, an African-American youth was beaten to death by four white youths in the suburb of Cicero. King was called to Mississippi, when on the second day of his one-man march against fear, James Meredith was gunned down. Meredith was wounded and hospitalized. Civil Rights leaders from SCLC, SNCC, CORE and NAACP rushed to his bedside to pledge that they would carry the march forward.

As the march approached Greenwood, Mississippi, SNCC base, SNCC decided to raise the slogan of black power. At a night rally Stokely Carmichael of SNCC raised the chant of "What do We Want?" and the reply of the audience, mostly youth was "black power." From that evening black power was debated across the nation.

REVOLUTIONARY ACTION MOVEMENT (RAM)

Emergence of RAM

The Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM) evolved from the southern civil rights movement of the early 1960's and the black nationalist movement in northern cities. As a result of the sit-ins, students in northern cities organized solidarity demonstrations. Traditional civil rights organizations like the NAACP and CORE held mass rallies in northern African-American communities. African-American and white students demonstrated against Woolworth stores and along with progressive clergy led economic boycotts. Black students with more radical leanings in the north, while supporting SNCC, had a tendency to reject its non-violent philosophy. Some of these students joined CORE to participate in direct action activities.⁴²⁵

Don Freeman of Cleveland, Ohio, who was executive chairman of RAM in 1964-65,⁴²⁶ said he became involved in the civil rights movement early in 1960. Freeman first became involved in the civil rights movement while a student at Western Reserve University in February in 1960. The Cleveland Chapter of the NAACP led a mass demonstration in downtown Cleveland in support of African-American students in the south who had begun non-violent sit-in demonstrations (February 1, 1960); sitting in at segregated lunch counters (Woolworth chain stores) and other public places to desegregate them. Pickets continued at the local Cleveland branches of Woolworth stores and an economic boycott convened. Freeman and a white female companion attended a socialist conference at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, Michigan, Thursday, April 28th to Sunday, May 1st,

⁴²⁵ *Ebony Pictorial History of Black Americans*, Vol. 3 [Chicago, Illinois: Johnson Publishing Company, 1970] p. 2

⁴²⁶ Freeman voluntarily left the RAM organization after his firing in 1965 as a Cleveland School teacher. Interview with Don Freeman, Cleveland, Ohio, 4/94.

1960. Freeman said his attendance at the conference was the turning point in his life. At the conference, Freeman met many of the leaders of the democratic socialist left (socialist party) and became a dedicated life long socialist.

In the summer of 1961, at the end of the freedom rides, Robert F. Williams, president of the Monroe, North Carolina chapter of the NAACP, issued a nation-wide call for African-Americans to arm for self-defense and come to Monroe for a showdown with the KKK.⁴²⁷ Williams also called for freedom riders to go to Monroe to test non-violence.

Within the white left, the League for Industrial Democracy (LID), planned to form a student branch called Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). SDS was to hold a conference on the new left at the National Student Association (NSA) conference (summer, 1961) in Madison, Wisconsin. SNCC was also represented at the NSA conference.

During the conference, news of Williams' flight into exile reached movement circles. Discussions among African-American SNCC and CORE workers and independent African-American radicals took place as to what significance the events in Monroe, North Carolina, had for the movement. African-American cadres inside of SDS met and discussed developing an African-American radical movement that would create conditions to make it favorable to bring Williams' back into the country. This was a small meeting of four people. Freeman said he would correspond with everyone and would decide when to meet again. One of those present at the meeting was a student at Central State College in Wilberforce, Ohio.

During the fall of 1961, an off-campus chapter of SDS called Challenge was formed at Central State. Challenge was an African-American radical formation having no basic ideology. Its membership was composed of students who had been expelled from southern schools for sit-in demonstrations; students who had taken freedom rides and students from the north, and some had been members of the Nation of Islam and African nationalist organizations.

At Central State College, Wilberforce, Ohio among others were Haskell Brewton, from Philadelphia, Pa., Scott Young from New York, who later set up a CSC, CORE chapter, Wanda Marshall from White Plains, N.Y. and myself from Philadelphia, Pa. They made up the core of Challenge, a chapter of the Students for Democratic Society (SDS). Donald Worthy from Cleveland, Ohio served with me as the political ideologists for Challenge. Donald Freeman, a schoolteacher in Cleveland, Ohio who had graduated from Case Western Reserve University was mentor for the group (1961-1962). Granville Reid who chaired the CSC chapter of the NAACP was passively critical of the group. Challenge's main emphasis was struggling for more student rights on campus and bringing a black political awareness to the student body. In a yearlong battle with Central State's administration over student rights, members of Challenge became more radicalized. Challenge members attended student conferences in the south and participated in demonstrations in the north. Freeman sent letters to the Challenge cadre, discussing ideological aspects of the civil rights movement. Part of my initial activities the year before in 1960, was to subscribe to Robert F. Williams newsletter, The Crusader, which was published in Monroe, N. C. I also became a Freedom Rider recruiter for CORE. Heath

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Haywood Burns, The Voices of Negro Protest in America [New York: Oxford University Press, 1963], p. 42.

Rush was one of the white students from Central State College that I recruited to go on the Freedom Rides to Monroe, N.C. I began to recruit whites on campus at the time, because there was a shortage of whites for the rides. One of the organizers who influenced me, and the Challenge collective was John Friedman of CORE at Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio. John Eiseman, editor of the Activist magazine at Oberlin College, was also a mentor.

In the spring of 1962, Studies On The Left, a radical quarterly, published Harold Cruse's article, "Revolutionary Nationalism and the Afro-American."⁴²⁸ In the article Cruse described Afro-Americans as an oppressed nation within a nation. Freeman wrote a letter to the Challenge cadre telling them to seriously study the article. He also said African-American radicals elsewhere were studying the article and that a movement had to be created in the north similar to the Nation of Islam, using the tactics of SNCC but outside of the NAACP and CORE. The Challenge cadre studied Freeman's letter but did not know where to begin.

After much discussion and through the efforts of Kenny Adderly, a senior at CSC, the Challenge cadre decided to form a broad coalition party to take over student government. Meetings were held with representatives from each class, fraternity and sorority. A slate was drafted and a name for the party was selected. At the meeting of the coalition party, the name Revolutionary Action Movement was chosen. But it was felt by the members at the meeting that the word revolutionary would scare Central State's administration so they decided to use Reform Action Movement (RAM) for the purposes of the student election. It was called RAM, later to be known as the Revolutionary Action Movement.

The Challenge cadre met and decided to dissolve itself into RAM and become the RAM leadership. RAM won all student government offices. After the election, the inner RAM core discussed what to do next. Some said that all that could be done at Central State had already occurred, while others disagreed. Some of the inner core decided to stay at Central State and run the student government. A few decided to return to their communities and attempt to organize around Freeman's basic outline. Freeman, in his letters, outlined a general perspective of creating a mass African-American working class nationalist movement in the north. He stressed this movement had to be political and more radical than the Nation of Islam. He emphasized that the movement should use direct action tactics but would not be non-violent. Two of the students who decided to return to their communities were Wanda Marshall and I.

Freeman wrote to me in Philadelphia, saying that he was coming to Philadelphia in the summer of 1962 and that he wanted me to organize a meeting. Freeman went to Philadelphia and met with a group of my high school friends. He discussed the movement and the direction it had to take. Later in discussions with me, Freeman gave instructions that Philadelphia should become a pilot project for the outline of the type of movement he described in his letters to the RAM cadre. He said the movement once started should be called the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM). Freeman continued to travel from city to city. In September of 1962, I went to the National Student Association headquarters in Philadelphia. There I met Marion Barry from SNCC, who was in Philadelphia to help raise funds for SNCC. Wanda Marshall transferred to Temple University and began working

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Howard Zinn, SNCC [Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 1964], p. 3.

with African-American students there. I began studying with Mr. Thomas Harvey, president of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA).⁴²⁹

In the process of working with SNCC, I met most of the African-American left in Philadelphia. One acquaintance was Bill Davis, a leader of an independent African-American Marxist cadre called Organization Alert (OA). During this time, I had discussions with Marion Barry about the direction of the civil rights movement. One night while listening to the discussion in the NSA office, Miss Ella Baker encouraged me to continue to develop my ideas.

After Marion Barry left Philadelphia, Bill Davis asked me to join Organization Alert. I wrote Freeman about OA and Freeman decided to meet with Davis. Freeman came to Philadelphia in October of 1962 and after long discussions with Davis told me that OA was too bourgeois/intellectual and not sufficiently action-oriented. Freeman had organized the African-American Institute in Cleveland in 1962. He was also a schoolteacher in the Cleveland school system. He told me that I had to start something independent of OA. I was still not convinced. Freeman left and returned to Cleveland.

During a meeting of OA, Davis harshly criticized SNCC and said that SNCC would never change. I opposed that position, saying that SNCC was at the center of the movement and events would force SNCC to change. The discussion ended in a heated debate. I discussed the debate with Wanda Marshall of the original Central State campus RAM cadre.

During the Thanksgiving break, Marshall and I decided to visit Malcolm X. I wanted to seek Malcolm's advice about joining the Nation of Islam. Wanda and I met with Minister Malcolm at the NOI restaurant in New York. After a lengthy black history lesson by Minister Malcolm, I asked Malcolm if I should join the Nation of Islam. Malcolm to my surprise, said no. He said, "you can do more for the honorable Elijah Muhammad by organizing outside of the Nation."⁴³⁰

Minister Malcolm's statements convinced Wanda and me to do independent organizing. I soon afterward drafted a position paper titled "Orientation to a Black Mass Movement, Part One" and circulated it among much of the African-American left in Philadelphia. The paper stated that:

Organizers must be people who can help masses win victories around their immediate problems. Organizing should be centered on black youth with the objective of building a permanent organized structure...

...The organizing of the black working class youth should be the primary concern for the black revolutionist because the black working class has the sustained resentment, wrath and frustration toward the present social order, that if properly channeled can revolutionize black America and make black America the vanguard of the world's black revolution. Within the black working class, the youth constitute the most militant and radical element. Therefore, effective mobilization and channeling of their energies will

⁴²⁹ Muhammad Ahmad, "A Brief History of the Black Liberation Movement in the 1960's: Focus on RAM," [unpublished speech: Chicago, Illinois: Northeastern University, 7/78], p. 4.

⁴³⁰ Interview with Malcolm X, Shabazz Restaurant, Temple No. 7, 11/62, New York, N.Y.

function as the catalyst for greater militancy among African-Americans.⁴³¹

Through the NSA coordinator on civil rights, I secured Ethel Johnson's phone number and immediately after going home called her. Mrs. Johnson was receptive to talking to me and invited me to visit her.

I went to visit Mrs. Ethel Johnson, who had been a co-worker with Robert Williams in Monroe, North Carolina and who was now residing in Philadelphia. Little is publicly written of Azelle (Ethel Johnson). All that I know is that Ethel Johnson was married and that she and her husband had agreed that she would do political work (civil rights) while he would maintain income for the family in Monroe, North Carolina, and that they had one son, Raymond Johnson. Johnson lived within the same block or next door to the Williams (Robert F. and Mable Williams). They recruited Johnson as a co-worker in the Monroe, North Carolina branch of the NAACP. Johnson helped Williams with his newsletter, The Crusader, and also participated along with Mable Williams in the community self defense efforts of the African-American community against racist attacks from 1957 to 1961. Johnson had visited the Williams' in Cuba in 1962 and served as a barometer for the Williams of what the masses of African-Americans were thinking in the early 1960's. Raymond Johnson, Ethel Johnson's son, died of mysterious circumstances and Johnson was advised by her family and friends to relocate for a while at her sister's house in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Ethel Johnson was also a student of Marxism-Leninism, sympathized with the Trotskyist tendency, was a member of Workers' World Party, maintained correspondence with James and Grace Boggs of Detroit, who were then publishing Correspondence, a monthly newsletter.

Johnson (Azelle), as she was affectionately called, was a good friend of Septima Clark; had worked with her on citizenship schools in the South and also knew Ella Baker and Queen Mother Audley Moore.

Mrs. Johnson read my position paper and later told me she would help me organize in Philadelphia. I continued to circulate my position paper getting various activists' opinion of it. But as time passed, I was still reluctant to start a group of my own.

Freeman returned to Philadelphia for the Christmas holidays. At a meeting with Marshall, he harangued me for not having organized. It was decided at that meeting to organize a study group in January of 1963. Towards the end of 1962, Wanda and I called together a group of African-American activists to develop a study/action group.

Within a month's time, key African-American activists came into the study/action group. Two central figures were Stan Daniel's and I. After a series of ideological discussions, the Philadelphia study/action group decided to call itself the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM). It decided it would be a black nationalist direct action organization. Its purpose would be to start a mass revolutionary black nationalist movement. By using mass direct action combined with the tactics of self-defense, it hoped to change the civil rights movement into a black revolution. RAM decided to work with the established civil rights leadership in Philadelphia and eventually build a base for mass support.

⁴³¹

Max Stanford, "Orientation of a Black Mass Movement" [Philadelphia, PA., Unpublished RAM documents, 10/62] p. 4

RAM contacted Rev. Leon Sullivan who had organized selective boycotts in the early 60's and volunteered to help with the selective boycotts, which the Philadelphia ministers were conducting against industries that discriminated in their hiring practices.

RAM distributed leaflets in the tens of thousands door to door throughout the community. With about 15 people, we distributed about 35,000 leaflets in 3 days. Brother Stan Daniels and I covered almost all of West Philadelphia, block by block; going in bars, candy stores, slipping leaflets under people's doors, working into the early hours of the morning.⁴³²

In the early months of 1963, a new Philadelphia NAACP president was elected named Cecil B. Moore, an attorney who was prone to direct action.⁴³³

Temple University initiated a pilot project called Philadelphia Community Action (PCA) composed of white liberals who had been given a grant of one million dollars to study African-American people in North Philadelphia. No African-American person from the community was included on the commission. The NAACP decided to hold a mass rally to protest the commission. Moore asked all community groups to help in organizing the project.

The RAM study/action group immediately became involved. RAM members circulated through North Philadelphia streets with homemade loud speakers, holding street meetings and handing out leaflets. RAM members went into the bars and poolrooms holding rap sessions.

The rally was a total success. But all that the petty bourgeois community leadership did was give flowery speeches. The week following, the NAACP and RAM picketed the PCA offices. For some reason the NAACP called off the picketing and not too much came of the protest.

RAM members felt the movement needed a voice that was independent of the existing civil rights groups. RAM assessed all the civil rights groups except SNCC as bourgeois and also analyzed the Nation of Islam as having a bourgeois orientation. It was thought that an African-American radical publication should be created. RAM began publishing a bi-monthly titled Black America. To begin to agitate the masses, RAM circulated a free one-page newsletter called RAM Speaks. RAM Speaks addressed itself to local issues that were constantly arising in the movement. Black America was more theoretical dealing with the ideology of RAM. Members of RAM went on radio and publicized their study group and programs.

As more community people joined the RAM study group, the class and age composition of the study group changed from basically students in their early 20's to members of the African-American working class who were in their early 30's. RAM decided to begin mass recruitment. The organization began to hold mass street meetings in North Philadelphia. Free weekly African and African-American history classes were held, taught by Playthell Benjamin, a young self-educated historian. Cadre meetings would discuss building RAM

⁴³² Max Stanford (Muhammad Ahmad), Formative Years: Fall, 1962-63 [Unpublished paper, Amherst, Mass., 10/74], p. 1.

⁴³³ A Cadre Discussion on RAM [Unpublished paper], p. 3.

into a mass movement.⁴³⁴

In an interview with Barbara “Overton” Montague May 15, 2002, who was 15 in 1963, she said she did not remember the incident that won RAM support in the Strawberry mansion area of North Philadelphia.

Her aunt Ethel Johnson, along with Barbara, had recruited Mrs. Montague’s mother, Ruth Overton, a registered nurse, to join RAM. All were lifetime members of the neighborhood. RAM had decided to conduct door-to-door canvassing in the neighborhood to find out what were the central problems on people’s minds so RAM would build its program around the most pertinent needs of the community. Teams of two RAM members would canvas the community, one female member and one male member. The idea of the female/male teams were that two females would be vulnerable to harassment from neighborhood toughs and two male members would be “too strong” and would frighten many of the residents who were single heads of households. The female would approach the door and ask the resident questions, while the male would provide protection for the female. If invited into the house both members of the organization would enter the house.

Because Mrs. Overton’s work schedule would sometimes occur in the evening, she was paired off to canvas the area immediately surrounding the RAM office at 2811 Diamond Street, not far from where she lived, with RAM member, Bill White. One day while canvassing on Diamond Street she was asked by a frantic resident, “Does anyone know how to deliver a baby?” Ruth responded that she was a registered nurse. A young lady in the house was in labor and her water had broken. Ruth delivered the baby on the front porch. The baby was well and healthy; so was the mother. The family and the community were in gratitude. RAM had provided a service. The Philadelphia North Philadelphia community became receptive to RAM.

Queen Mother Audley Moore, a former CP organizer, sponsored monthly black nationalist ideological training sessions at her house that RAM members would attend. Through its publication, *Black America*, RAM began to communicate with other new nationalist formations. Don Freeman of Cleveland had initially traveled city to city on holidays and vacations establishing links among socialist minded African-American activists. From the very beginning of RAM’s efforts, the organization was aware of organizing in other cities.⁴³⁵ In San Francisco, Donald Warden had started the Afro-American Association. In Detroit, Luke Tripp, John Williams, Charles (Mao) Johnson, General Baker and Gwen Kemp were the leadership of UHURU, a revolutionary nationalist student collective and in Cleveland, Freeman had organized the African-American Institute. Sterling Stuckey, Thomas Higginbotham and John Bracey, Jr., had formed National Afro-American Organization (NAO) in Chicago, and there was a black literary group in New York called UMBRA.

While John Bracey, Jr., was a student at Roosevelt University in Chicago, he associated with a group of anarchists.

We got banned from campus when we invited Sajopie Stewart who as a black anarchist to give a speech on anarchism. We had it in a class lecture

⁴³⁴ Editorial, “The Panthers: Communist Guerrillas in the Street,” *American Opinion*, Vol. XIII, No. 4, p. 7.

⁴³⁵ Interview with Barbara Montague, 5/02.

hall and Sajopie burned the U.N. flag, the American flag, the State of Illinois flag, the city of Chicago flag and the Roosevelt University flag.

In the spring of 1963, we developed Negro history clubs. We had a Negro history club in Roosevelt University and the Amistad Society, which was a Chicago-wide black history club. We were doing a kind of educational kind of work. Then we began to get involved in demonstrations around the schools. The Amistad Society was also supporters of the Monroe Defense Committee and the self-defense efforts of Robert F. Williams.⁴³⁶

I would travel on weekends in the south and across the north to keep in touch with new developments.

The year 1963 produced the second phase of the protest era. By spring, through the efforts of SNCC and SCLC organizers, various southern cities were seething with protest revolt. SNCC began mobilizing African-Americans in mass voter registration marches in Greenwood, Mississippi. Mississippi state troopers attacked the demonstrators and masses of people were being jailed.

The turning point of mass black consciousness and for the protest movement came during the spring non-violent offensive in Birmingham, Alabama. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who had become the symbol of the direct action non-violent struggle through the efforts of SCLC and SNCC, pushed Birmingham to the brink.

The racist tactics of using dogs, tanks, and water hoses on women and children, was too much for African-Americans to stomach. Within months mass demonstrations had occurred all over the south. The movement seriously began to gel as the mood of African-American people in the north became angry.

In Philadelphia the NAACP called a mass demonstration in front of City Hall in which RAM participated, carrying signs calling for armed self-defense. NAACP president Cecil Moore decided to test mass direct action in Philadelphia by protesting against union discrimination on a construction site at 30th and Dauphin Streets in the heart of the African-American community in North Philadelphia. He asked RAM to help in the mobilization. The construction site was in RAM territory, three blocks from its office.

By the time Cecil made the decision to go into mass action, we sat down with him and told him that Philadelphia would be another Birmingham, Alabama. Cecil, seeing that we were young, not knowing we were organizers, just didn't believe it. He said, "Okay, go ahead."⁴³⁷

Moore made NAACP's equipment available to RAM. RAM immediately took a survey of the community, asking residents if they would support demonstrations in Philadelphia similar to the ones being held in the South.

We found key contact people in doing the survey. Like we would drop leaflets on who was with us. People would tell you, if you are doing this, don't go somewhere because so and so works for so and so. That is what the

⁴³⁶ Interview with John Brace, Jr., Amherst, Mass., 10/94.

⁴³⁷ *Op. Cit.* (A Cadre Discussion on RAM), p. 3.

survey provided us with. Then, we would just walk up and down North Philadelphia preparing the people. At the time, demonstrations were occurring in Jackson and Greenwood, Mississippi. We asked people, if we had this kind of demonstration up here, would you come.”⁴³⁸

The overwhelming response was “Yes.” RAM members circulated throughout the community with leaflets and bullhorns, going door to door, talking to street gangs.

The demonstration was scheduled to start at 6 a.m., May 27th, 1963. RAM leaders Stan Daniels and I joined the picket line, which blocked the workers, all whites, from entering the construction site. Within minutes the Philadelphia police formed a flying wedge and attacked the picket line. Singling out Daniels and myself, twenty police jumped us and we fought until unconscious.⁴³⁹

As word spread throughout the community, thousands of people went to the construction site. Daniels and I were arrested for inciting to riot. In the police station, I asked to make a phone call. I called Minister Malcolm X and told him what had happened. Malcolm promised to publicize what was happening in Philadelphia. Malcolm went on the radio that night in New York and traveled to Philadelphia two days later, speaking on radio again. Word spread about what was happening in Philadelphia not only throughout Philadelphia, but the entire east coast. Within a week, 50,000 to 100,000 people participated in demonstrations that often turned into violent clashes between the masses and the police. The pressure became too much for the NAACP and they called off the protests.

CORE took an activist stance also against building trades’ discrimination in Cleveland and New York City. Black nationalism grew in CORE as its membership became predominantly African-American for the first time.⁴⁴⁰

The name RAM became known among African-American radical circles in the North. The May demonstrations were the first breakthrough in the north that had mass involvement. Grassroots organizations in various communities in the north began to use direct action tactics. Brooklyn CORE used the mass confrontation methods RAM had used, at the Down State Medical Center demonstrations in New York.⁴⁴¹

We went to block club meetings that Ethel Johnson set up through her sister, who was a long time community resident of the Strawberry Mansion area. “Have direct daily contact with the masses; the ordinary brother and sister on the street” was Ethel Johnson’s continuous message. RAM members walked the North Philadelphia community either communicating with homemade loud speakers or through ordinary discussions with people sitting on their steps. Queen Mother Audley Moore trained the RAM cadre in the philosophy of black nationalism and Marxism-Leninism. Queen Mother emphasized the importance of understanding the national question and the demand for reparations. She organized the African-American Party of National Liberation in 1963, which formed a provisional government

⁴³⁸ *Op. Cit.* (A Cadre Discussion on RAM), p. 4.

⁴³⁹ “Six Injured on School Picket Line Blocks Most Workers,” *The Evening Bulletin*, May 27, 1963, Vol. , 117th Year, No. 46, p. 1.

⁴⁴⁰ William Sales, Jr., *From Civil Rights to Black Liberations: Malcolm X and the Organization of Afro-American Unity* (Boston, Massachusetts: South End Press, 1994), p. 75.

⁴⁴¹ *New York Times* Tuesday, July 16, 1963, pp. 1:2 cont. On pp. 15:1, also see *New York Times*, Tuesday, August 13, 1963, p. 21:1.

with Robert F. Williams elected premier in exile. RAM cadres were members of the party.⁴⁴²

The national NAACP convention was being held in Chicago during the summer of 1963. Cecil B. Moore decided to take Stan Daniels and me “to keep them out of trouble while I’m gone.”⁴⁴³ Daniels and I stopped through Cleveland on the way to Chicago. There we conferred with Freeman, who decided to drive into Chicago and introduce the two of us to the cadre there.

RAM organizers (Stan Daniels and myself) while attending the national NAACP convention in Chicago as Philadelphia youth delegates, sponsored by Philadelphia NAACP president Cecil B. Moore met with some of the Amistad Society group made up of John Bracey, Jr., Don Sykes and Tom Higginbotham. After discussions about the contradictions of the convention and its featured speakers, the Amistad Society participated with the RAM organizers in demonstrations against Chicago Mayor Daley and Reverend Jackson of the National Baptist Convention.

In Chicago there was general discussion of what had been started in Philadelphia and then the discussion centered on what could be done in Chicago. Someone mentioned that Mayor Daley and Reverend Jackson the head of the Baptist convention, who had publicly denounced Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the civil rights demonstrations, were going to speak at the NAACP rally that Saturday.⁴⁴⁴

It was decided that the cadre would organize community support to protest against Daley. Daniels and I would organize the youth inside the NAACP convention. We stopped a NAACP youth dance. We called for support of the upcoming demonstration. NAACP officials became alarmed and stopped us from speaking. The Chicago cadre, in the meantime, contacted activists and others in the community about the demonstration scheduled for July 4th. Leaflets were handed out on the streets, subways and buses.

The NAACP rally proceeded as planned, with top NAACP people in attendance. To keep the NAACP youth from participating in the demonstrations, the top brass had all the youth delegates sit on stage with them. Mayor Daley was introduced. Demonstrators marching from the back of the park began booing Daley. The booing was so loud that Daley could not finish speaking; he became angry and left. Then Reverend Jackson was announced as the next speaker. As Jackson approached the podium, the demonstrators began to chant, “Uncle Toms Must Go.”⁴⁴⁵ The audience picked up the chant. Demonstrators charged the stage. Twenty-five thousand people became enraged and a full-scale riot broke out as the masses chased Jackson off the stage into a waiting car that sped him off to safety.

It was decided by the cadre to get Daniels and me out of town immediately because the city might bring inciting to riot charges against us. Daniels was sent back to Philadelphia and I to check on UHURU in Detroit to help them get things going. I met with UHURU and told them what had happened in Chicago.

⁴⁴² *Op. Cit.* (Ahmad), p. 6.

⁴⁴³ Cecil B. Moore, *Conversation in the Philadelphia NAACP Office*, 5/63.

⁴⁴⁴ Interview with John Bracey, Jr., Amherst, Mass., 1994, p. 23.

⁴⁴⁵ “Hecklers Cut Daley Talk to NAACP,” *Chicago Sun-Times*, Vol. 16, No. 132, Friday, July 5, 1963, p. 1.

A black prostitute named Cynthia Scott had been shot in the back and killed by a white policeman the previous weekend. UHURU decided to hold a rally and protest demonstration in front of the precinct of the guilty cop. UHURU approached the Group On Advanced Leadership (GOAL), a black nationalist civil rights group, for help in the demonstration. Within two weeks, marches were organized against the precinct with thousands in the community participating. I returned to Cleveland and reported what was developing in Detroit. From Cleveland I returned to Philadelphia.

The Black Vanguard Conference: Cleveland, Ohio, Summer, 1963

By mid-July, 1963, local grass roots activists groups were talking about marching on Washington and bringing the capital to a standstill. Freeman decided the time had come to call the various revolutionary nationalist cadres together in what was called a black vanguard conference. The black vanguard conference was to be a secret, all-black, all-male conference to draft strategy for the proposed march on Washington and the direction of the movement. The conference was held in early August in Cleveland, Ohio. Activists attended from Chicago, New York, Philadelphia and Cleveland. Detroit was barred because of a security leak in the cadre there.

Freeman presided over the conference. Discussion centered on changing the existing rights movement into a revolutionary nationalist movement. It was discussed that the cadre could achieve this by infiltrating the existing civil rights groups (CORE, SNCC, NAACP, SCLC). The march on Washington was also discussed. It was decided that an organizer would be sent into Washington prior to the march to decide what kind of strategy the cadre should take during the march.

During the discussion of what form the coalition of activists should take, the beginnings of an ideological split emerged. Chicago and New York favored using the name RAM since RAM had established a mass breakthrough of developing community support. Those advocating this position wanted a tight-knit structure based on disciplined cells, with rules and organization based on democratic centralism. Freeman argued against this position and advocated a loose coalition called the black liberation front. Philadelphia voted with Freeman, because Freeman had more experience than most of the activists there. The rest voted on calling the gathering the Black Liberation Front (BLF). Chicago also raised the question of whether the BLF should be a Marxist-Leninist formation, but there was no consensus or agreement, so it was decided that the BLF would be revolutionary nationalist.

March on Washington: August 27, 1963

At the march on Washington, the cadre met again. The BLF organizer who had been sent to Washington reported that the march did not have support from the majority of the local African-American community there. From his conversations with people on the street, many did not know a march was being planned for D.C. It was also observed that the army was posted at strategic places in the city and was on alert to move in case of trouble. On the basis of the report, it was decided just to participate in the march and observe.

By chance, while cadres were handing out leaflets in the community, they ran into Donald Warden, who was then chairman of the Afro-American Association (AAA), a nationalist organization based in Oakland, California. A meeting was set up with Warden, who explained what the AAA was about for about 2 hours. After the meeting, it was decided that the cadre would stay in touch with Warden, but Freeman concluded that Warden was a bourgeois nationalist. It was decided that the cadre would go back to their respective locales and build bases.

After the march on Washington, several events occurred which shaped the civil rights movement and later the black liberation movement. One was the bombing of four African-American girls in a church in Birmingham, Alabama. The news of this both angered the African-American community and sent waves of demoralization inside the civil rights movement. It was like a mortal blow after the march on Washington. Then came the assassination of John F. Kennedy, President of the United States. Many African-Americans across the country felt they had lost a friend. To the RAM cadre the ultra-right had made a move.

Malcolm X, speaking the Sunday after the assassination, made reference to the Kennedy assassination as “chickens coming home to roost.” Elijah Muhammad, head of the Nation of Islam, suspended Malcolm from speaking for 90 days and later extended the suspension indefinitely.

In Philadelphia, a coalition of African-American radical groups held mass rallies to protest police brutality. After one of the rallies, African-American teenagers began small-scale rioting. Members of RAM, observing the riot, began to theorize about the potential of this kind of activity:

RAM began to think about these questions as far back as November 1963. In November of that year a brother named Willie Philaw, who was a black epileptic, got in an argument with a White store owner in North Philadelphia and was shot in the back of the head by a White cop and killed. We started a coalition, a black united front, which lead some demonstrations and rallies against police brutality. One night when Playthell Benjamin was speaking at a street rally, the young brothers and sisters broke-out in one of the first, at least to our knowledge, spontaneous rebellions in the north. A month earlier, October, in a civil rights demonstration in Jacksonville, Florida when the police entered the black community the youth attacked them with rocks and bottles. When Playthell spoke and the youth started breaking out windows in stores we realized that a mini-rebellion had jumped off. We recognized that black youth constituted a potential revolutionary force that was not being galvanized. We began to theorize about the concept of the street force as the leadership of the black liberation movement.⁴⁴⁶

The coalition led mass marches on the cop’s police station (17th and Montgomery Street) only to be met by machine guns staring them in the face. The coalition decided it had gone as far as it could go without getting innocent people hurt. Freeman traveled to Philadelphia to talk to the RAM cadre. He told the cadre to cease all public activity and said that the ultra-right was preparing to crush the movement. The word was “go underground.”

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Op. Cit. (Muhammad Ahmad, A Cadre Discussion), p. 7.

RAM's Impact on the Civil Rights Movement

The year 1964 was a year of transition for the civil rights movement and a year of ideological development for black radicals. In January, Brooklyn CORE, led by Isaiah Bronson, planned the Stall-in at the World's Fair to protest discrimination being practiced there. The purpose of the Stall-in was to stop or slow down traffic in the streets and subways, to bring New York City to a standstill.

Isaiah Bronson from Brooklyn CORE, who was also a member of RAM, organized a "stall-in." This tactic raised an ideological question in the civil rights movement. Brooklyn CORE decided to disrupt the World's Fair because African-Americans were not being hired in even the most menial positions at the Fair. CORE decided to disrupt the city of New York in January 1964. The leadership of CORE came out against Brooklyn CORE. James Farmer and Roy Wilkins of the NAACP came out against Brooklyn CORE. But SNCC came out in support of Brooklyn CORE. For the first time the question of African-Americans disrupting the system was advanced in the civil rights movement. This tactic of African-Americans disrupting the economy, or a city or the government was a different kind of tool. The stall-in was not successful because it had been publicized in advance and the police were waiting. But it raised a critical fact—African-Americans were in a strategic position to disrupt this system. To disrupt the function of a city was a new tactical use of civil disobedience.⁴⁴⁷ While the Stall-in was not successful, it raised the questions of the possibility of the movement disrupting the functioning of the system.⁴⁴⁸

Two events occurred in March 1964 that changed the direction⁴⁴⁹ of the black liberation movement. Malcolm X announced his independence from the Nation of Islam and Robert F. Williams' article "Revolution Without Violence?" in the February 1964 issue of Crusader reached the United States. Williams's article raised many eyebrows. In it he described how many African-Americans could bring the U.S. to a standstill through urban rebellions and urban guerrilla warfare. This went beyond the concept of armed self-defense.

Almost every activist was watching Malcolm's development to see in what direction he was heading. Freeman from the BLF was at Malcolm's press conference and encouraged him to proceed in a more radical direction. Freeman decided it was time to challenge SNCC concerning the concepts of armed self-defense and black nationalism on its own home grounds, the south. He called me to Cleveland and gave me instructions to organize an all-African-American student conference in the south. The BLF had connections with nationalists who were inside local SNCC groups. One particular group was the African-American Student Movement (ASM) at Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee.

I was sent to Detroit to raise money for the conference. While fund-raising I went to see James and Grace Boggs, then two leading theoreticians of the black liberation struggle. In discussions with Grace Boggs and me, she described the problems that had emerged in the Michigan Freedom Now Party, as lessons to avoid in organizing. Robert Williams'

⁴⁴⁷ "CORE Suspends Chapter for Urging Tie-up at Fair," New York Times, April 11, 1964, p.1

⁴⁴⁸ Stall-in Leaders Defy Plea to Bar Tie-up Tomorrow" New York Times, Tuesday, April 21, 1964, p. 1.

⁴⁴⁹ Don Freeman: Black Youth and the Afro-American Liberation," Black America, Fall, 1964, pp. 15-16.

February, 1964 Crusader article was discussed and I described RAM. Boggs asked me to write an article on RAM, which she later printed in Correspondence, a bi-monthly periodical that was published in Michigan. I also wrote Malcolm telling him of the upcoming student conference he had discussed with Freeman. From there I went south to the annual spring SNCC conference to recruit SNCC field workers, especially from Mississippi, who were responsive to an all-African-American student conference. In the south, RAM built a small but significant following at Fisk University, the training ground for many leading SNCC activists.⁴⁵⁰

From May 1st, to the 4th, 1964, the first Afro-American Student Conference on Black Nationalism was held at Fisk University. It was the first time since 1960 that African-American activists from the north and south sat down to discuss black nationalism. The conference was the ideological catalyst that eventually shifted the civil rights movement into the black power movement. Don Freeman in his article in the fall 1964 issue of Black America described that the first session of the conference evaluated the efforts of civil rights organizations, such as CORE, SNCC and NAACP as being bourgeois reformism. The conference went on record of substantiating Dr. W. E. B. Dubois' conviction that "capitalism cannot reform itself; a system that enslaves you cannot free you." The Conference went on to examine the impotence of traditional or "bourgeois" nationalism. Conference delegates agreed that the traditional nationalist approach of rhetoric rather than action was ineffectual because it posed no pragmatic alternative to bourgeois reformist civil rights activities. The young revolutionary nationalists said that bourgeois nationalist's demands for an autonomous African-American economy were termed bourgeois due to failure to differentiate such an economy from capitalism and was unfeasible because it was the intention of white and Jewish capitalists to continue their "suburban colonialism" form of exploitation of the African-American community. The consensus of the conferees was that African-Americans needed to control their own neighborhoods; similar to what Malcolm X was teaching at the time but they also stated they realized that the contemporary reality necessitated the use of a strategy of chaos that was advocated by Reverend Albert Cleage which would involve a more devastating civil disobedience than the kind undertaken by the established civil rights reformist groups.

The young revolutionary nationalists asserted that they were the vanguard of a black revolution in America but they had to create:

"1) An organizational apparatus to 'translate' Nationalist ideology into effective action; this requires Black financing to insure Black control; 2) dedicated, disciplined, and decisive youth cadres willing to make the supreme sacrifices to build and sustain a dynamic Nationalist Movement."⁴⁵¹

The conference stated that African-American radicals were the vanguard of revolution in this country, supported Minister Malcolm's efforts to take the case of Afro-Americans to the U.N., called for a black cultural revolution, and discussed Pan-Africanism. The conference drafted 13 points of implementation. The 13 points were:

1. Development of a permanent secretariat to carry out plans.

⁴⁵⁰ Robin D. G. Kelly and Betty Esch, "Black Like Mao: Notes on Red China and Black Revolution," p. 8., unpublished paper.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid., pp. 15-16.

2. To push the bourgeois reformists as far “up temp” as fast as possible, while at the same time laying a base for an underground movement.
3. The Conference united with the African, Asian and Latin American Revolution (Attempt to get financial help from friendly forces).
4. Adopt Robert F. Williams as leader in exile.
5. The achievement of Afro-American solidarity with Africa (to push the Restoration of the Revolutionary Spirit to Pan-Africanism).
6. Conference philosophy – Pan-African Socialism.
7. The establishment of Internal Bulletin for the Conference.
8. Construction of a Pan-African Student Conference.
9. Secretariat contact all student liberation organizations around the world to develop rapport and coordination.
10. National public organ name: Black America.
11. Charge genocide against U.S. Imperialism before the United Nations.
12. Secretariat develop program for Revolutionary Black Nationalists.
13. Develop two Revolutionary Centers.⁴⁵²

From the conference, BLF-RAM organizers went into the south to work with SNCC. With the permission of SNCC chairman John Lewis, an experimental black nationalist self-defense project was started in Greenwood, Mississippi.

In discussion with the Mississippi field staff of SNCC, BLF-RAM organizers found the staff was prepared to establish a statewide-armed self-defense system. They were also prepared to move in an all-black nationalist direction. All that was needed was money to finance the project. In the meantime, *Monthly Review* published an article titled “The Colonial War at Home,” which included most of [Max] Stanford’s *Correspondence* article, “Toward a Revolutionary Action Movement,” edited with some of Malcolm’s remarks, and excerpts from Robert Williams’ “Revolution Without Violence.”⁴⁵³

The majority of the SNCC field staff discussed the article. SNCC split between left and right and between African-American and white organizers; between taking a pro integrationist, reformist or a revolutionary nationalist direction. Most of the African-Americans of the Mississippi SNCC field staff thought that the majority of the African-American people in Mississippi were beyond concentration on the voter registration stage. In the ensuing battle between the forces, the integrationist reformist faction eventually won in the organizational split because they controlled the economic resources of the field staff and had connections with the foundations.

SNCC began to involve large numbers of white students in the movement in the summer of 1964. Their involvement led to their radicalization, which later they developed, into the anti-war student movement. The crucial milestone of SNCC’s road to radicalism was the Freedom Summer of 1964. Freedom Summer grew out of a remarkable mock election sponsored by SNCC in the autumn of 1963. Because the mass of Mississippi’s African-American population could not legally participate in choosing the state’s governor that

⁴⁵² *Revolutionary Nationalist, Volume 1, November 1, Summer, 1965*, p. 1.

⁴⁵³ William Sales, Jr., *From Civil Rights to Black Liberation: Malcolm X and the Organization of Afro-American Unity* [Boston, Massachusetts: South End Press, 1994], p. 130.

year, Robert Moses conceived of a freedom election to protest mass disenfranchisement and to educate Mississippi's African-Americans to the mechanics of the political process. The Council of Federated Organizations (COFO), organized a new party called the Mississippi Freedom Democrats, printed its own ballots, and in October conducted its own poll. Overwhelming the regular party candidates, Aaron Henry, head of the state NAACP and the Freedom Democratic nominee for governor, received 70,000 votes, a tremendous protest against the denial of equal political rights. One reason for the success of the project was the presence in the state of 100 Yale and Stanford University students, who worked for two weeks with SNCC on the election. SNCC was sufficiently impressed by the student contribution to consider inviting hundreds more to spend an entire summer in Mississippi. Sponsors of this plan hoped not only for workers but also for publicity that might at last focus national attention on Mississippi. By the winter of 1963-64, however, rising militancy in SNCC had begun to take on overtones, of black nationalism, and some of the membership resisted the summer project on the grounds that most of the volunteers would be white.⁴⁵⁴

During the Freedom Summer sponsored by COFO in Mississippi, six people were killed, eighty beaten, thirty-five churches burned and thirty other buildings bombed.⁴⁵⁵

The MFDP went to Atlantic City to challenge the Mississippi regulars. Northern liberals tried to work out a compromise that would appease the MFDP and at the same time keep the bulk of the Southern delegations in the convention. President Johnson's proposal was to seat all the Mississippi regulars who pledged loyalty to the party and not to grant the MFDP voting rights but to let them sit on the floor of the convention.⁴⁵⁶

The MFDP refused this proposal and Johnson sent Senator Hubert Humphrey to draw a compromise. Humphrey offered to permit two MFDP delegates to sit in the convention with full voting rights if he could choose the delegates. The Mississippi white regulars walked out and the MFDP, led by Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer, decided not to accept the compromise.

Development of RAM into a National Organization

The failure of the MFDP to be seated led SNCC to attempt organizing an all African-American independent political party a year later.

I called an emergency organizational meeting in Detroit in the summer of 1964 of BLF cadres, James and Grace Boggs, and other supporters. I gave a report on the conditions within the Mississippi field staff that was ready to move into armed self-defense. It was discussed that a national centralized organization was needed to coordinate the new movement. The Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM) was the name chosen for the new movement. After much discussion, it was decided that the movement should be structured on three levels: the first would be of tight-knit cells in cities that would build political bases and financial support for roving field organizers, who would work full-time like SNCC field organizers in the community and at the same time act as a national liberation front

⁴⁵⁴ Bracey, Meier, Rudwick, etc., *Conflict and Competition: Studies in the Recent Black Protest Movement* (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1971), p. 142.

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

⁴⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

coordinating a broad coalition of black nationalist groups. The second level was made up of local chapters and the third of secret members who would financially support the organization's work.

Ideological contradictions were present from the start. Political debate centered on the status of people and strategy for liberation. The nationalists stated that African-American people were an internal colony, a nation within a nation whose national territory was the African-American black belt south. They said that in the process of liberation through an African-American socialist revolution the African-American nation could separate from the United States.

The socialists, on the other hand, represented by James and Grace Boggs, asked the question, what would happen to the rest of the country? Could the white left be given the responsibility to govern? What would guarantee that they would be any less racist than those presently in power? After much discussion a compromise was drafted. The position was that African-American revolutionaries would have to seize power in a socialist revolution in the United States, maintaining a black dictatorship over the U.S., with the south being an autonomous region. The Boggs presented the argument that African-American migration was moving towards cities and that by 1970 African-Americans would constitute the majority of inner cities in the ten major urban areas. Their position was that the organization should place emphasis on building African-American political power in the cities.⁴⁵⁷

A committee read and discussed a twelve-point program drafted by the conference. The program included:

1. Development of a national black student organization/movement.
2. Development of ideology (Freedom) schools.
3. Development of Rifle Clubs.
4. Development of Liberation Army (Guerrilla Youth Force).
5. Development of Propaganda, training centers and a national organization.
6. Development of Underground Vanguard.
7. Development of black workers "liberation unions."
8. Development of block organizations (cells). Development of the nation within nation concept, government in exile.
9. Development of War Fund (Political Economy).
10. Development of black farmer coops.
11. Development of Army of black unemployed.

Officers of the movement were elected.

International Spokesman	Malcolm X ⁴⁵⁸
International Chairman	Robert F. Williams
National Field Chairman	Max Stanford

⁴⁵⁷ James Boggs, Racism and the Class Struggle [New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970], p. 39.

⁴⁵⁸ It was suggested that Malcolm X would be the spokesman for the movement. I was to go the New York to talk to Malcolm about it. RAM members went back to their communities to organize cells, while others traveled around spreading the movement.

Executive Chairman	Don Freeman
Ideological Chairman	James Boggs
Executive Secretary	Grace Boggs
Treasurer	Milton Henry/Paul Brooks ⁴⁵⁹

RAM's activities during this period helped radicalize both Malcolm and SNCC. RAM organizers in New York would consult with Malcolm daily and wherever Malcolm went in the country, his strongest supporters and also his harshest critics were members of RAM.

As opposed to those tendencies that built upon Malcolm's statements on revolution as a struggle for land-based self-determination or focused on black revolution and African liberation, there appeared in the latter '60's revolutionary African-American nationalism rooted in industrial workers and street people. This new group thought that black liberation required a fundamental and basic change in U.S. society. Publicly, organizationally, the Black Panther Party, and the League of Revolutionary Black Workers best represented this revolutionary nationalism. These organizations had direct links to the speeches and organizing efforts of Malcolm X in the spring of 1964, when he said to activists:

You and I in America are not faced with a segregationist conspiracy, we're faced with a government conspiracy...it is the government itself, the government of America, that is responsible for the oppression and exploitation and degradation of Black people in this country...This government has failed the Negro.⁴⁶⁰

Malcolm's awareness of developments in the movement moved him in a more activist direction. After breaking from the Nation of Islam, Malcolm successively progressed from revolutionary Pan Africanism to one of Third World internationalism. At the time of his death, he was moving to a position of revolutionary socialism.⁴⁶¹

Malcolm agreed to become the spokesman of RAM but felt his role should remain secret because the United States intelligence apparatus would become alarmed about his connection with Robert Williams, who was in exile in Cuba.

Malcolm was preparing to develop a public mass organization, which he intended would be instrumental in leading the broad mass movement and would serve as a united front. He asked that RAM organizers help in forming that organization and also infiltrate it to develop a security section. He knew the Muslim Mosque, Inc. was infiltrated by police agents and did not know whom he could trust. Malcolm had just returned from his first trip to Africa. He was in the process of attempting to get African nations to endorse his proposal to take the U.S. to the United Nations for its violations of the Human Rights charter in its crimes against African-Americans.

⁴⁵⁹ Twelve Point Program of the Revolutionary Action Movement, 1964.

⁴⁶⁰ Malcolm X, "The Ballot or the Bullet," Malcolm X Speaks [New York: Grove Press, 1965], pp. 28-31.

⁴⁶¹ George Breitman, The Last Year of Malcolm X: The Evolution of a Revolutionary [New York: Schocken Books], p. 35.

Both Malcolm and RAM saw that the internationalization of the African-American struggle was necessary to win allies and to isolate the U.S. government. In the organizational discussions that were held daily for a month, various aspects of the struggle were analyzed.

While many writers discussed Malcolm's change in philosophy and outlook, few trace Malcolm's evolutionary development. Malcolm's celebrated statement concerning some white people not being racists after he made the Hajj did not represent the end of his development on the question. While Malcolm was embracing socialism and ideologically evolving outside of the confines of Islamic thought before the time of his death, he still maintained a position of organizing the African-American community independently for national liberation.

His Hajj statement was released in April of 1964 after he made his first trip to Africa and the Middle East. While Malcolm saw an eventual alliance between the African-American movement and revolutionary whites, he constantly said, "There can't be any workers solidarity until there is first black unity."⁴⁶²

I asked Malcolm about his statements on white people being in Mecca and his feeling that some could be worked with. I stated that I felt Malcolm would lose his black nationalist following which was his base of support. Malcolm stated that while in Algeria, an Algerian revolutionary showed him a picture of himself that looked as dark as Marcus Garvey, and the statements under the picture made it appear that Malcolm was advocating the superiority of people based on skin pigmentation, i.e., that darker-skinned Africans were superior to lighter-skinned Africans. The United States Information Agency (USIA) had circulated the publication. The Algerian revolutionary convinced Malcolm that if this kind of propaganda had confused him and was isolating Malcolm on the continent of Africa, then, the racists must have been successful in isolating Malcolm from the broad masses of African-Americans. The Algerian revolutionary discussed the concept of the mass line with Malcolm. Malcolm felt that there would always be black nationalists in America but that he had to reach the masses of African-American people who had not become black nationalists yet. He had also been under pressure of the Arabs to practice "true Islam." So he felt it was best that he tone down his line.

It was decided that Malcolm would infiltrate the civil rights movement and later transform it into a revolution. In order to do this, RAM and others would make preparations for Malcolm to go south. Malcolm would eventually join demonstrations utilizing the right of self-defense. He would be the mass spokesman for armed defense units that would be centered on him and a black united front.

Malcolm then set about creating the mass organizational form. Malcolm's hard core wanted to call the organization the National Liberation Front (NLF) but it was decided that a public NLF was premature and would frighten most people. Malcolm asked the organizers to come up with a name for the organization. The next week the Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU) was chosen. A program for the OAAU was drafted and presented at Malcolm's Sunday mass rallies at the Audubon Ballroom in New York City.

⁴⁶²

Interview with Malcolm X, 6/64, Hotel Theresa, New York, New York.

Malcolm and I, as the field chairman of RAM, during the month of June, worked out plans for developing an international black nationalist movement. From daily discussions on the political perspective of RAM, Malcolm would incorporate the ideas in his Sunday speeches. The OAAU was to be the broad front organization and RAM the underground Black Liberation Front of the U.S.A.

During his second trip to Africa, Malcolm was to try to find places for eventual political asylum and political/military training for cadres. While Malcolm was in Africa, I was to go to Cuba to report the level of progress to Robert F. Williams. As Malcolm prepared Africa to support the African-American struggle, "Rob" (Robert F. Williams) would prepare Latin America and Asia. During this period, Malcolm began to emphasize that African-Americans could not achieve freedom under the capitalist system. He also described guerrilla warfare as a possible tactic to be used in the black liberation struggle in the United States. His slogan, "Freedom by any means necessary," has remained in the movement to this day.

Malcolm left for Africa in July and I, the RAM field chairman, left for Cuba at the end of July. While Malcolm was in Africa, Harlem exploded. The para-military in Malcolm's organization decided to join the rebellion and participated in armed self-defense actions against racist oppressive forces. Masses of African-Americans exploded in Rochester, New York. The revolutionary Muslims (Malcolmites) engaged in armed struggle against the repressive forces there. Brooklyn CORE held a demonstration to protest police brutality in New York. The demonstration precipitated a mass rebellion. The Brooklyn RAM cadre went into revolutionary action.

While in Africa, Malcolm was poisoned. He also received news of a split within his organization created by police agents.⁴⁶³ In Cuba, Robert Williams told me that the movement was too out in the open, that it was being set up to be destroyed. He felt Malcolm's press statements exposed too much prematurely, that he was functioning as if he had a force, which he had not developed yet. In retrospect, Malcolm felt a sense of urgency because he knew he was a marked man and would be killed soon.

Also, while in Africa, Malcolm met with John Lewis and others of SNCC. Malcolm had a tremendous impact on African leaders and had an explosive effect on masses of Africans. One incident occurred while he was in Nigeria speaking at a university. During the question and answer period, a Negro from America working with an U.S. government program there, made some remarks defending the U.S. government. After Malcolm answered him, the Nigerian students were so angry that they chased the Negro out of the auditorium to a field and were going to hang him on a flagpole. The Negro would have been hung if Professor Essien Udom had not intervened and saved the Negro's life. This incident gives some indication of the impact that Malcolm had on Africa.⁴⁶⁴

Malcolm's importance as an international spokesman has been recorded but not fully understood by African-Americans. From the program of the OAAU we get an understanding of some of his basic objectives.

⁴⁶³ Interview with Malcolm X, 1/65, 22 West Restaurant, New York, N.Y.

⁴⁶⁴ Interview with Malcolm X, 7/64, New York, N.Y.

The Organization of Afro-American Unity will develop in the Afro-American people a keen awareness of our relationship with the world at large and clarify our roles, rights and responsibilities as human beings. We can accomplish this goal by becoming well-informed concerning world affairs and understanding that our struggle is part of a larger world struggle of oppressed peoples against all forms of oppression.⁴⁶⁵

In Africa and the Middle East, Malcolm met with heads of state in an attempt to solicit support for his proposed indictment of the U.S. at the United Nations. Among his avid supporters was Ahmed Ben Bella, President of Algeria, and Kwame Nkrumah, President of Ghana.

From government documents published in 1964 on Malcolm, the U.S. government estimated that Malcolm had set U.S. foreign policy in Africa back ten years. Malcolm became a prime target of the U.S. government's intelligence apparatus – FBI, Army Intelligence and CIA. Other cities also exploded during the summer of 1964 and the repressive forces were blaming it on Malcolm rather than on the conditions that caused the rebellions.

In a domestic context, Washington saw Malcolm as a long-range threat: He was widely popular with the black masses, but plagued by organizational and recruiting problems that reduced his political effectiveness. But in foreign affairs Malcolm was an imminent and serious danger; more than any other single factor he was responsible for the growing suspicion and fear with which many African countries viewed Washington's intentions. Washington did not accept this threat to its Third World relations with equanimity. Malcolm X had become a marked man.⁴⁶⁶

When Malcolm returned from Africa in November 1964, he described his experiences in Africa and the Middle East and began to talk more about socialism in the Third World.

Almost every one of the countries that has gotten independence has devised some kind of socialist system...None of them are adopting the capitalist system because they realize they can't operate a capitalistic system unless you are vulturistic: you have to have someone else's blood to suck to be a capitalist.⁴⁶⁷

But Malcolm's organization and his personal life were in shambles. The pressure from the repressive forces was taking its toll on him. Malcolm tried to regroup. He set up a liberation school within the OAAU. He returned to Africa to consolidate support for his petition to the U.N. Malcolm had opened up avenues for African-Americans who were Muslims to go to the University of AL-Azhar in Cairo, Egypt, and other places in the world for guerrilla training. RAM published its periodical Black America. Malcolm in his speeches in Africa would say, "This is my publication."⁴⁶⁸

⁴⁶⁵ Op. Cit. (George Breitman), p. 116.

⁴⁶⁶ Eric Norden, "The Assassination of Malcolm X," Hustler, December, 1978, p. 98.

⁴⁶⁷ Op. Cit., (George Breitman), p. 116.

⁴⁶⁸ Max Stanford, participant-observer observation, Auditorium, Harlem, New York, 12/64.

Malcolm returned from Africa and began to have mass meetings in January 1965. At the same time he began to lay out a perspective for the black revolution. But before he could lay out and develop his perspective, the CIA, FBI, New York police noose began to tighten around him.

Malcolm had achieved part one of his objectives, the internationalizing of the African-American struggle. Branches of the OAAU had been established in England, France, and Ghana, now was time to expand the OAAU nationally. Right before his death, Malcolm had entered into phase two of his program of direct action. He went to Mississippi and Selma, Alabama to speak and was preparing to begin to lead the civil rights movement to the proposed transition to human rights.

Malcolm's military wing was to have eventually moved into the south to provide security for demonstrations and develop community self-defense groups.

Early in February, Kalief Said, a member of RAM who had been sent into Malcolm's organization to develop a security wing, was arrested on the Statue of Liberty bomb plot. Inside the Muslim Mosque, Inc. and OAAU, Kalief's arrest upset Malcolm's internal security. It also set the public climate the intelligence forces wanted for conspiracy.

At this point, the U.S. government plot went into action. Malcolm was expelled from France, his house was fire bombed and he was assassinated on February 21, 1965.

At the end of 1964, SNCC extended invitations to Malcolm X to come to speak and visit their operations in Greenwood, Mississippi and Selma, Alabama. According to Ahmed, this was the beginning of the implementation of the strategy in which Malcolm X was to be the "mass spokesman for armed defense units that would be centered around him and a Black united front." The assassination of Malcolm X disrupted the meshing of Malcolm's own efforts with students and those related efforts of the RAM cadre.⁴⁶⁹

The first mass spokesman for revolutionary black nationalism had been shot down just as the movement was developing. The revolutionary nationalist movement was under attack.⁴⁷⁰

The RAM Organization

During the summer of 1963, RAM concentrated on building secret political cells in different parts of the country. These cells were to remain underground and to develop an underground movement. They were to be the support apparatus for field organizers who were openly trying to transform the civil rights movement into a revolutionary black nationalist movement. These cells were to finance the activities of the field organizers and the liberation army, once developed, to hide the organizers when forced underground, to provide the liberation forces with supplies and intelligence information on the activities of the racist governmental apparatus.

⁴⁶⁹ William Sales, Jr. *From Civil Rights to Black Liberation: Malcolm X and the Organization of Afro-American Unity* [Boston, Massachusetts: South End Press, 1994], pp. 130-131.

⁴⁷⁰ RAM was accused, in New York's newspapers of being responsible for Malcolm's assassination. During this period, RAM published a newspaper, *Afro-World*, with the headlines: "Malcolm Lives."

RAM received repression and investigation from the U.S. government and the local Cleveland police intelligence units soon after Malcolm X's assassination. In Cleveland, Don Freeman on February 27, 1965 was fired from his job as a social studies teacher at Kennard Jr. High School. In New York, several RAM members from San Francisco, Detroit, and New York who had traveled to Cuba in the summer of 1964, were subpoenaed by the Federal Grand Jury investigating the so-called Statue of Liberty bomb plot.⁴⁷¹

Interviews with ex-RAM members disclosed that the class composition of RAM varied. For the most part in the early beginnings in early 1963 and 1964 the organization consisted of students and intellectuals. According to Brother A., a former RAM member, the class composition of the RAM membership in New York during the 1963-64 period consisted mainly of intellectuals, writers, poets, and artists, some of whom came out of the UMBRA (black literary collective), others were recruited from the Brooklyn chapter of CORE. In Philadelphia, the class composition changed also. Stan Daniels, Wanda Marshall and myself, who were students, constituted the local RAM leadership. By fall of 1963, Jomo L. M. X. (ex-Korean war veteran), Mable Holloway and William Woodley, grass roots community worker/activists, had emerged in the Philadelphia RAM leadership. As the RAM leadership began to change in class composition, the membership of the organization began to grow. In an interview with Sister Y., recruited from the Communist Party in Chicago, she describes the method of organizational growth in her area.

Field organizers traveled in and out of the city to organize local chapters, teach ideology and help train cadre. Local chapters were responsible for developing local membership, had to raise its own funds. Some funds went to national.⁴⁷²

RAM would organize demonstrations around local issues but never used the name RAM. In Chicago, RAM worked through a coalition demanding quality education for African-American students. Eric Perkins describes his recruitment into RAM and the radical political socialization process of the 1960's;

As we entered high school, we became more and more interested in some kind of organizational affiliation. In 1964 at the local black book store is where I first met John Brace. All the kids found him a charismatic sort of figure and we all wanted to be just like John at the time. At this time, John had just finished at Howard and had come to Chicago to go to graduate school and was very active as a member of local Chicago organizations. He took a number of us, me, John Higginson and a few others under his wing. We sort of became his youth cadre and he became our mentor.⁴⁷³

RAM would have educational and ideological study groups under its name. RAM was a secret cell type of organization. Sister Y. was asked the question, what type of organization was RAM? She responded: If you were part of the study group or part of the cell, that's all you would know.⁴⁷⁴ All recruitment into the organization was made by personal contact. There were no RAM offices after 1964 and one could not join the organization by mail.

⁴⁷¹ Interview with Donald Freeman; Cleveland, Ohio, 5/94.

⁴⁷² Taped interview with Sister Y., Chicago, Illinois, October 30, 1978.

⁴⁷³ Interview with Eric Perkins, Philadelphia, Pa., 10/94.

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid.

The recruiter was responsible for new recruits. All new recruits had to first be involved in a RAM front and were evaluated on their work within the front activities. If they were approved, they had to submit a written and verbal report and pass orientation one before being considered a RAM member. There were three levels of membership in the organization: those who were professional, 'full-time' field organizers; members having completed orientation two, paid dues, met the standards for the "main criteria of cadre" and were considered active members; and secret members who gave the organization financial support. The RAM organization had three different types of cells or units. Area units were established in a community with members living in the same area where the unit was established. The area unit tried to gain as much influence as possible in its community by organizing around local community issues. Work units were set up in factories, job sites or industries. They organized the League of Black Workers. Political units were organized to actively infiltrate the civil rights movement and lead the black liberation movement.

There was a strict code for RAM cadres.

Code of Cadres

1. Absolute loyalty to the movement and its leadership.
2. High revolutionary spirit.
3. Constant advanced training in Revolutionary Black Internationalism.
4. Strict observation of movement discipline.
5. Direct connection with the masses.
6. Strict observance of the rules of the safekeeping of secrets.
7. Ability to work independently (very important in time of revolution).
8. Willingness to work. Unselfishness.

Rules for the Safekeeping of Secrets

1. Making absolutely no mention of secrets, which should not be mentioned.
2. Making no attempt to find out secrets that should not be known.
3. Taking definitely no look at the secrets, which should not be looked at.
4. Mentioning absolutely no secrets in private correspondence.
5. Recording no secret matters in private notebooks.
6. Discussing no secrets in places not advantageous to security.
7. Keeping a careful custody of classified documents carried on a tour and making sure that they will not be lost.
8. Waging a resolute struggle when discovering violations of security system and acts of losing and disclosing secrets and reporting immediately to the superior.⁴⁷⁵

Punishment for violation of the code of cadres took different forms depending on the seriousness of the violations. A RAM member always had the right to appeal any charges brought against him/her and had a right to a trial. If the charges were of a treasonous nature, the military affairs committee or the defense minister was instructed to handle the matter.

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RAM Organizational Document, 1965, p. 4.

RAM was governed by a secret central committee, which was called the soul circle. Few officers of RAM were ever known. The RAM organization was based on collective leadership and democratic centralism was its internal organizational principle. The RAM organization had a youth section called the Black Guards. The role of the Black Guards was to protect RAM leadership and to purge the African-American community of counter-revolutionaries. The Black Guards were to be the forerunner of the Black Liberation Army.

RAM also established rifle clubs in various northern communities. Many times followers of Malcolm X were part of an alliance inside these rifle clubs.

RAM infiltrated the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) in several cities: Chicago, Cleveland, Brooklyn, and Philadelphia. RAM members also were members of northern SNCC chapters and Deacons for Defense members. RAM's strategy was "to push the bourgeois reformers as far up tempo as fast as possible," while at the same time laying a foundation for an underground movement.

RAM organized black nationalist-oriented student groups on campuses in the south and predominately white universities in the north. These groups had various names at different times. One such student group was the Afro-American Student Movement based in Nashville, Tennessee.

The Afro-American Student Movement sponsored a National Afro-American Student Conference on Afro youth in Nashville, Tennessee, October 30-November 1, 1964. Gang members attended this conference from Chicago and students from other areas of the country. The conference was entitled, "The Black Revolution's Relationship to the Banding World."

RAM also established contact with gangs on the west side of Chicago. "Doug" Andrews of the West Side organization was a leading RAM ex-gang leader.

Chicago, Illinois

Eric Perkins was asked the questions, how old were you when you were recruited and did you join any particular organization? He answered:

I was fourteen or fifteen if I remember correctly...John as a member of SNCC (Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee) and they had a youth wing and I immediately joined that becoming very active. All of us fashioned ourselves as black nationalists all on the order of Malcolm X. But when King came to Chicago for the open-housing campaign we wanted to establish a paramilitary group to neutralize the violence that came down. This was called the Gage Park incident. This was a major turn in King's Northern campaign. It is what drove him back to the south to reconsolidate and utilize all his energies in the south.⁴⁷⁶

Then Eric Perkins was asked what was the most important event that led to your development as a youth? He stated:

⁴⁷⁶

Interview with Eric Perkins, Philadelphia, Pa., 5/94.

What catapulted all the urban youth in the Northeast, Midwest and the West was the Watts, LA rebellion of 1965. There's no question that the summer of 1965 was critical in all of our political evolution. We took leaps and bounds in the growth of our political consciousness. This is what we finally could see the relationship of state power to everyday people and the way this unfolded and the mechanisms that everyday people utilized to respond to it. We decided then that we had to put together a more serious political apparatus to support the response that the masses wanted to take.⁴⁷⁷

Cleveland, Ohio

In Cleveland, a youth group of ex-gang members was formed.⁴⁷⁸ Cleveland developed early around united front efforts that were all inclusive. The United Freedom Movement (UFM), a coalition of civil rights organizations, ministers and nationalists formed in May 1963. The UFM began picketing a school construction site over school segregation and busing in the Italian neighborhood of Murray Hill in January of 1964. Violence was threatened and implemented against activists and by-standers:

In February of 1964, CORE along with the Hazeldell Parents Association and the United Freedom Movement planned a school boycott to demand that black children bused to white schools be integrated with the white students. These groups, along with the NAACP, also picketed an elementary school construction site in Glenville, charging that the site would promote segregation and demanding a moratorium on school construction.⁴⁷⁹

As a result of threats to demonstrators, Louis Robinson of the Freedom Fighters convened the Medgar Evers Rifle Club April 7, 1964.

Tension mounted at a school in Lakeview, where construction work had been undertaken by the Board of Education. UFM wanted construction stopped, and in the heat of emotions, several members from the UFM picket line laid down in front of the cement trucks. Bruce Klunder laid down behind a bulldozer. The driver of the bulldozer was not aware of this and backed up the bulldozer. Reverend Klunder was killed immediately.⁴⁸⁰

A mini rebellion occurred after news of Reverend Klunder's death spread.

Dr. Katrina Hazzard recalls that many youth were recruited through parties and socials held at the JFK (Jomo Freedom Kenyatta) house from 1963 to 1965. "The JFK house would have meetings where they recruited some women and the brothers would show up."⁴⁸¹

Harrell Jones recalls how prominent African-Americans verbally attacked the JFK house and how he recruited Fred Ahmed Evans. Leo Jackson was a councilman in the Glenville area who attacked the JFK house. The youth of the JFK house picketed his house. On the way back,

⁴⁷⁷ Interview with Eric Perkins, Philadelphia, Pa., 5/94.

⁴⁷⁸ Louis G. Robinson, *The Making of a Man*, [Cleveland, Ohio: Green & Sons, 1970], p. 126.

⁴⁷⁹ Pramb Chatterjee, *Local Leadership in Black Communities* [Cleveland, Ohio: School of Applied Social Sciences, Case Western Reserve University, 1975], p. 74.

⁴⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

⁴⁸¹ Interview with Katrina Hazzard, Philadelphia, Pa., 8/93, p. 8.

“I was carrying the kids from the JFK House and the police just pulled up and said this is not a demonstration, this is a riot. They maced all of our little kids of the JFK House and that’s when this tall astrologer Ahmed Evans who didn’t understand why this was happening and why the police were attacking us came up to me. I talked to him and brought him into the movement at that time.”⁴⁸²

The JFK house was part of or sponsored by the United Black Brotherhood (a local black nationalist united front) that rented a hall where they had periodic meetings, guest speakers and discussions.

After the murder of Reverend Bruce Klunder, the UFM (United Freedom Movement) called a boycott of schools on April 20, 1964. The UFM held alternative freedom schools and awarded diplomas.

In May 1964, the rifle club was given the use of a large farm owned by Walter Wills, Sr., a wealthy black undertaker. By November of that year the rifle club had expanded into a youth center called Jomo “Freedom” Kenyatta House. The purpose of JFK House was to prevent delinquency and foster constructive experiences for black youth in the eastern end of Hough. The trustees named were Harrell Jones, also known as Harrell X, and later leader of the Afro Set, Albert Ware, a disabled war veteran; and Robinson himself. Robinson also served a director. The program included table tennis, dancing, games and other such activities for young people.⁴⁸³

In July of 1966 a spontaneous rebellion broke out in the Hough area. Police later searched for and hunted community activists. In the period of 1966-1967 with the absence of the indigenous hard-core leadership, the united front between street force community activists began to disintegrate. Two factions began to develop. One around Harrell Jones, prime minister of the Afro-Set who temporarily became influenced by Maulana Ron Karanga of the US organization of Los Angeles, and the other formed around Fred “Ahmed” Evans, prime minister of the Federation of New Libya. Evans who was originally recruited into RAM by Harrell Jones when Evans wondered why the black nationalists were demonstrating; in return he recruited Ali Khan and a hard core street organization called “six tray” (61 to 63 and Quincy Streets) and other youth gangs into the Federation of New Libya. Katrina Hazzard estimates there was approximately a core of a hundred young black nationalists in Ahmed Evans’ faction of New Libya.⁴⁸⁴

Though the division among the Cleveland revolutionary black nationalists remained throughout the remainder of the era, they all united in an all class effort to register people to vote and to elect Carl B. Stokes, the first African-American mayor of a major city in 1967. Tensions between the police and Fred Ahmed Evans forced him to close his Afro Culture Shop and continued until they cumulated into a shoot out, July 23, 1968. On July 23, 1968, the racists in Cleveland’s police force fired on the apartment house where Ahmed was

⁴⁸² Interview with Harrell Jones, Cleveland, 5/95, p. 5.

⁴⁸³ *Op. Cit.*, (Pramb Chatterjee, *Local Leadership in Black Communities*), p. 81.

⁴⁸⁴ Interview with Katrina Hazzard, Philadelphia, Pa., 9/93.

staying. A gun battle occurred, killing seven African-American freedom fighters and wounding fifteen police.⁴⁸⁵

RAM propagated its anti-imperialist ideology to the African-American community through a quarterly magazine it published called Black America. RAM also popularized its writings through feature writers Roland Snellings and me in the popular nationalist monthly Liberator magazine edited by Daniel Watts in New York. RAM on the west coast published a quarterly called Soulbook. RAM was the first black organization in the 1960's to oppose the United States government imperialist aggression in Vietnam. In the fall 1964 issue of Black America, RAM stated,

On this Fourth of July, 1964 when white America celebrates its Declaration of Independence from foreign domination one hundred and eighty-eight years ago, we of the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM) congratulate the Vietnamese Front of National Liberation for their inspiring victories against U.S. imperialism in South Vietnam and thereby declare our independence from the policies of the U.S. government abroad and at home.⁴⁸⁶

In 1964, Grace Boggs and Rev. Albert Cleage were instrumental in developing a strong statewide Freedom Now Party. Some members of UHURU were organizers for FNP.

Also, in 1964, UHURU members went to Cuba where they met Robert F. Williams, Fidel Castro, Che Guevara and Muhammad Babu. Some joined RAM. In 1965, they regrouped and formed a chapter of the Afro-American Student Movement in Detroit, which put out a theoretical journal called Black Vanguard, edited by John Watson. Black Vanguard was distributed to African-American workers in the plants but was too theoretical and thick for a positive response from workers.

In January of 1965, RAM experienced its first organizational crisis. James and Grace Boggs resigned from their positions in the movement. This left only two public officers, Freeman and Stanford. Through correspondence, both decided to resign their positions in the organization. An emergency meeting was convened in Cleveland, where it was decided that new leadership should be elected. Discussing the analysis of Robert F. Williams, who emphasized the movement should be underground, the new leadership decided it was best to remain secret. From that point on in January 1965 all leadership in RAM was secret, and all materials written for RAM publications would be anonymous. The political perspective of RAM changed. The concept of a black dictatorship of the U.S., while still being maintained, began to take a secondary position to the African-American nation in the South.

In response to the U.S. increasing involvement in the Vietnam War and U.S. troops invading Panama, RAM issued an appeal to U.S. troops to turn on their imperialist enemies.⁴⁸⁷

Northern California

⁴⁸⁵ Louis H. Masott, Jerome R. Corsi, Shootout in Cleveland: Black Militants and the Police: July 23, 1968 [New York: Bantam Books, 1969], p. 23.

⁴⁸⁶ "Greetings to Our Militant Vietnamese Brothers," Black America, Fall, 1964, p. 21.

⁴⁸⁷ Appeal to Afro-Americans in the United States Imperialist Armed Forces, July 4, 1965. See Appendix A.

In Northern California, RAM grew primarily out of the Afro-American Association. Founded by Donald Warden in 1962, the Afro-American Association consisted of students from the University of California at Berkeley and Merritt College—many of whom, such as Leslie and Jim Lacy, Cedric Robinson, Ernie Allen and Huey Newton, would go on to play important roles as radical activists/intellectuals. In Los Angeles, the president of the Afro-American Association was a young man named Ron Everett, who later changed his name to Ron Karenga and went on to found the US Organization. The Afro-American Association quickly developed a reputation as a group of militant intellectuals willing to debate anyone. By challenging professors, debating groups such as the Young Socialist Alliance, and giving public lectures on black history and culture, these young men left a deep impression on fellow students as well as the African-American community. In the East Bay, where the tradition of soapbox speakers died in the 1930's, save individual campaigns led by the communist-led Civil Rights Congress during the early 1950's, the Afro-American Association was walking and talking proof that a vibrant, highly visible militant intellectual culture could exist.

In theory, the Afro-American Association was open to people representing a variety of ideological positions, but in reality Warden did not get along with the black left nationalists. By 1963, Warden quietly purged the Association of its left presence, leaving a dynamic group of African-American radicals in search of an organizational alternative. Meanwhile, the Progressive Labor Movement (PL) had begun sponsoring trips to Cuba and recruited several radical African-American students in the East Bay to go along. Among them was Ernie Allen, a U. C. Berkeley transfer student from Merritt College who had been forced out of the Afro-American Association. A working class youth from Oakland, Allen was part of a generation of African-American radicals whose dissatisfaction with the civil rights movement's strategy of non-violent passive resistance drew them closer to Malcolm X and Third World liberation movements. Not surprisingly, through his trip to Cuba in 1964 he found the Revolutionary Action Movement.

The trip was historic: Allen's travel companions included a contingent of African-American militants from Detroit: Luke Tripp, Charles ("Mao") Johnson, Charles Simmons, and General Baker. All were members of the student group UHURU, and all went on to play key roles in the formation of the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement and the League of Revolutionary Black Workers. Incredibly, I was already on the island visiting Robert Williams. When it was time to go back to the states, Allen and the Detroit group were committed to building RAM. Allen stopped in Cleveland to meet with RAM members on his cross-country bus trip back to Oakland. Armed with copies of Robert Williams' Crusader magazine and related RAM material, Allen returned to Oakland intent on establishing RAM's presence in the East Bay. Never more than a handful of people, folks such as Isaac Moore, Kenneth Freeman (Mamadou Lumumba), Zolli Ndele, Bobby Seale (future founder of the Black Panther Party) and Doug Allen (Ernie's brother) established a base at Merritt College through the Soul Students Advisory Council. The group's intellectual and cultural presence, however, was broadly felt. Allen, Freeman, and others founded a journal called Soulbook that published prose and poetry that is best described as left black nationalist in orientation. Freeman, in particular, was highly respected among RAM activists and widely read. He constantly pushed his members to think about black struggle in a global context. The editors of Soulbook also developed ties

with old left African-American radicals; the most famous was former communist Harry Haywood whose work they published in an early issue.

Although RAM as a movement never received the glory or publicity bestowed on groups like the Black Panther Party, its influence far exceeded its numbers—not unlike the African Blood Brotherhood (ABB) four decades earlier. Indeed, like the ABB, RAM remained largely an underground organization.⁴⁸⁸

In 1965, after Dr. King got out of jail, he announced that he would lead a march from Selma to Montgomery. His assistants convinced him not to lead the march in the beginning. Instead, Hosea Williams of SCLC and John Lewis of SNCC led the march of about 525 people. After the marchers crossed Pettus Bridge going to U.S. Highway 80 a battalion of state troopers confronted them. After an exchange of words the troopers attacked. After the attack, Dr. King announced he would continue the march. Suffering setbacks at the beginning, the march was finally successful.

The civil rights movement was entering a crisis though. For many civil rights activists, segregation was crumbling too slowly. The impact of revolutionary black nationalism began to penetrate the ranks of SNCC and it began to re-evaluate its integrationist outlook in 1965.

During 1965, SNCC began discussing how to form an African-American student movement. The Northern Student Movement (NSM) began to organize Afro-American student groups of African-American students on white campuses in the North while SNCC focused on African-American students in the South.

RAM and the Deacons for Defense

Several events took place in 1965 that affected the civil rights movement. The Deacons for Defense, an all African-American community self-defense organization, developed in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. The Deacons provided civil rights marches in Louisiana with armed protection. They also had shootouts with the KKK and on several occasions, with Louisiana policemen. RAM and other black nationalists formed northern Deacons for Defense support groups. RAM and the Deacons developed an alliance. Both groups helped one another organizationally.

In 1965 in meetings in New York, Louisiana and Detroit, an alliance was established between RAM (Revolutionary Action Movement) and the Deacons for Defense. Earnest Thomas (“Chui”) of the Deacons met with myself and stated that Deacons would take care of the armed self-defense aspect of the movement while RAM could concentrate on the political guidance and development of the movement.⁴⁸⁹

⁴⁸⁸ Robin Kelly, D. G. Kelley and Betsy Esch, “Black Like Mao: Notes on Red China and Black Revolution,” (unpublished paper), pp. 19-22.

⁴⁸⁹ Interviews with Earnest (Chui) Thomas, organizer of the Deacons for Defense, Louisiana, New York and Detroit, Michigan, 8/65.

In August 1965, the Los Angeles African-American community exploded. Revolutionary nationalists engaged in armed struggle against the racist repressive forces. RAM organizers from New Jersey went to Watts, L.A. where they found strong revolutionary black nationalist cells.⁴⁹⁰ In New York, RAM members began meeting with African-American youth discussing the formation of a black liberation army.

Revolutionary nationalists around the country studied the August mass rebellion in Watts. They saw that spontaneous mass rebellions would be the next phase of the protest movement and began discussing how they could give these rebellions political direction.

RAM was also active in helping LeRoi Jones develop the Black Arts Movement. The Black Arts Movement was originally to be the cultural wing of RAM.⁴⁹¹ RAM, through a secret movement was gaining popularity and influence in northern African-American communities.

On the international level, Robert Williams, RAM's chairman in exile, issued an appeal for world support and spoke at international conferences in Asia and Cuba. The Communist Party of Cuba disagreed with his black nationalist analysis and began to sabotage the movement's influence in international circles. This produced a crisis for the movement as avenues of potential support were cut off.⁴⁹²

In the United States, the American Communist Party disagreed with RAM's race and class analysis, and its conclusion that the African-American people were a colonized nation in the U.S. The CP consequently organized against RAM.

RAM and Opposition to U.S. Intervention in Vietnam

In 1965, several movement activists were drafted into the army. Some decided to go, while others decided to start a black anti-draft movement. Those who went into the army were immediately isolated from other soldiers by army intelligence.

Detroit: In Detroit, General G. Baker, Jr. received his draft notice. He wrote a political letter to the draft board denouncing U.S. imperialism. Detroit ASM decided to protest Baker's induction. They put out leaflets and press announcements stating that 50,000 African-Americans would show up at the Wayne County Induction Center when Baker had to report. Only eight demonstrators were there but the threat of mass action had convinced the U.S. Army to find Baker unsuitable for service.

Different members of the Detroit cadre began to go in different occupational directions. Watson and Williams became students at Wayne State and General Baker, Jr. worked in the auto factories. In 1965, Glanton Dowdell came into the cadre. Glanton's street experience added valuable skills to the cadre.

A dropout from the 5th grade, he was put into a home for mentally retarded at the age of 13. In prison on and off since he was 16, he was finally

⁴⁹⁰ Interview with ex-field organizer of RAM, Ozzie (Bill White), Atlanta, Ga., 8/78.

⁴⁹¹ Meetings with LeRoi Jones and Max Stanford, Brooklyn, N.Y. 3/65 (Larry Neal was to be the liaison between Jones and Stanford).

⁴⁹² Robert Carl Cohen, *Black Crusader: A Biography of Robert Franklin Williams* [Seacacus, New Jersey: Lyle Stuart, Inc., 1972, pp. 291-292. Also see Ruth C. Reitan, *The Rise and Decline of an Alliance: Cuba and African-American Leaders in the 1960's* [unpublished Ph.D. dissertation], p.173.

incarcerated on a murder and robbery charge in Jackson. There he organized a strike of black prisoners against discrimination by forming a selected cadre. In prison he read voraciously, learned to paint and after 17 years was released through the intervention of a black probation officer who recognized his genius.⁴⁹³

On the West Coast, Ernie Allen held a news conference announcing his refusal to participate in the U.S. Army because of its racist practices.

I had a press conference and announced that I was not going into the Army and I forgot what I said but I remember being scared to death.⁴⁹⁴

Allen's younger brother recalls his impression:

By the spring of 1966, I had enrolled at a local community college and was working as a reporter for the college newspaper. One morning I covered a press conference on campus. It was conducted by my older brother, with whom I worked in the area's Black-militant political movement. In front of a crowd of students, reporters and television cameras, he spoke against U.S. involvement in Vietnam. "These are my induction papers," my brother said. It was then that I learned he had been drafted. "I am a Black man," he continued. "I am not the white man's tool. I will not fight his racist war. There is no power on earth great enough to make me fight for something I don't believe in," he said. "And I don't intend to go to jail." I wanted to stop being a reporter and just be a proud younger brother. I didn't see my brother again for a year.⁴⁹⁵

Douglas Allen decided to follow his older brothers' example:

By 1968 I was working full-time in the struggle and had almost forgotten about the threat of being drafted—when my own papers arrived in the mail. My parents promised their support for whatever I decided to do. (Although they never tried to influence my brother or me one way or other. I later learned that they were deeply opposed to the war. My father and mother had simply raised all their children to think for themselves. It was the greatest of all their gifts to us). I decided not to go.⁴⁹⁶

SNCC began to undergo a policy change. Its staff decided to organize an all-black party in Lowndes County, Alabama. When RAM leadership received news of this, it decided to closely study these developments.

Various activists were called together in the spring of 1965 in Detroit, Michigan. The meeting included James and Grace Boggs, Nahouse Rodgers from Chicago, Julius Hobson from D.C., Bill Strickland of the Northern Student Movement, Don Freeman from Cleveland and Jesse Gray, a Harlem rent strike leader, and other activists from around the country. The conference formed the Organization for Black Power (OBP). The purpose was to raise the position that the struggle for black power was a struggle for black state

⁴⁹³ Grace and James Boggs, Detroit: Birth of a Nation, Pamphlet, October, 1967, p. 7.

⁴⁹⁴ Interview with Ernest Allen, Amherst, Mass., 5/74.

⁴⁹⁵ Jesse Douglas Allen-Taylor, "On Men and War," "Say, Brother," Essence, February, 1988, p. 9.

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid.

power and not just for black independent political power. The conference stated that if the black liberation movement was going to be successful the African-American people would have to think about seizing control, one way or another, over the state and other forms of government. OBP was conceived as a coalition of organizations that would organize the African-American people to politically take over large metropolitan areas in the 1970's. The Organization for Black Power was a short-lived group because of ideological splits.

During the winter months of 1965, the RAM leadership developed an ideological perspective into a political document entitled, "The Struggle for Black State Power in the U.S." The document described the difference between a riot and a revolution and outlined what RAM felt was the future direction of the black revolution in the U.S. This document was widely circulated among movement activists. It called for raising the question of black power within the movement. In Detroit, the RAM cadre published a periodical in the automobile plants titled Black Vanguard. In New York: RAM began working with a youth gang called the Five Per Centers. After having been radicalized through political education classes, some ex-members of the Five Per Centers formed themselves into the Black Panther Athletic and Social Club.⁴⁹⁷

The radicalizing year for SNCC was 1965. The Atlanta project based in Vine City led by a collective of Bill Ware, Mike Simmons, Don Stone, Roland Snellings and Dwight Williams started a black consciousness movement inside of SNCC. The movement also addressed itself to purging whites out of SNCC. The Atlanta project was also instrumental in changing SNCC policy in foreign affairs. It started the first anti-draft demonstrations in the country, which consequently led to SNCC publicly denouncing the war in Vietnam. At one point there was near gunplay between James Forman and his supporters and the Atlanta project over the question of black nationalism.⁴⁹⁸

In the early part of 1966, RAM decided that many of the African-American revolutionaries across the country who were engaging in armed struggle were isolated and needed a public organization from which to operate legally.

When the shift towards black power occurred in SNCC, RAM decided to develop a public mass black political party. RAM began having a series of meetings with local nationalist organizers in Harlem, along with Harlem representatives of SNCC.⁴⁹⁹ These meetings, which were a coalition of activists, decided to set up an independent black political party which would be a northern support apparatus of the Lowndes County Freedom Organization, whose symbol was the Black Panther. It was decided to call the party the Black Panther Party.⁵⁰⁰ I wrote Carmichael asking if it was all right to use the name Black Panther. Through the New York SNCC office the word came back, "OK, go ahead." Queen Mother Audley Moore on July 13, 1966, began organizing weekly Black Nationalist Action Forums at the YMCA in Harlem. These meetings were recruiting sessions for the Black Panther Party.⁵⁰¹

New York: N.Y. Black Panther Party

⁴⁹⁷ Max Stanford, Participant-Observer interview, 4/65, New York, N.Y.

⁴⁹⁸ Interview with Hakim Rahman, Philadelphia, Pa. 8/02.

⁴⁹⁹ Interview with Sam Anderson, New York, 4/94, p. 5.

⁵⁰⁰ Interview with Eddie Ellis, New York, N.Y., 4/94, p. 4.

⁵⁰¹ Riots, Civil and Criminal Disorders (Washington, D.C., U.S., Government Printing Office, 1969), p. 4237.

The Black Panther Party was established in New York in August 1966. Stokely Carmichael went to New York and met with the Black Panther Party. Discussions centered on ideology, direction and national expansion of the Party. It was decided that the Party would be a coalition of SNCC, RAM and other organizations.⁵⁰²

Through the organizational structure, a directive was sent to RAM cadres to form public coalitions with community activists to develop the Black Panther Party.

We saw that the purpose of the Black Panther Party was to offer black people a radical political alternative to the political structure of this country. We did not see the Black Panther Party as waging armed struggle but of moving the masses of our people to that political position and thereby to another stage of struggle. Even though armed struggle was being waged at this time we needed a political and ideological forum that moved our people through struggle against the system, to that point. The purpose of the Black Panther Party was to exhaust the legal avenues of struggle within the system.⁵⁰³

According to Alkamal Ahmed Muhammad (Shelton Duncan), an ex-member of the New York Black Panther Party, the Black Panther Party was part of a city-wide network. The Black Panther Party had reached a broad stratum of people. Approximately 300 people attended weekly Black Panther Party meetings from July to October 1966. The BPP, with community groups, called a boycott of two elementary schools in Harlem on September 12, 1966, to protest the absence of black history reading materials in the New York school system. This was the beginning of the community control of schools movement.⁵⁰⁴

Black Panther Parties were established in Detroit, Cleveland, Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles and eventually Oakland, California. Within the Black Panther Party there was discussion of organizing African-American workers.

For Black Panthers to be meaningful it must deal with the question of economic power as related to the political system. This means Black Panthers must develop an overall program. The question of economics presents the development of black union organizations as part of the party to seize economic power in both the urban and rural south. In the urban north it would pose the fight against job discrimination...and white union discrimination especially on federal supported projects and in the rural south it would deal with "people's" ownership of the land.⁵⁰⁵

In New York, Black Women Enraged (a revolutionary black nationalist women's group) began picketing against U.S. army recruiting offices. They were protesting the U.S. government drafting African-American men (particularly SNCC activists in Atlanta) into the racist U.S. army to fight in a racist and imperialist war. In early 1966, the Atlanta project held demonstrations at the local draft office in Atlanta, trying to stop the drafting of Mike Simmons.

⁵⁰² "Black Panthers Open Harlem Drive," *Amsterdam News*, September 31, 1966.

⁵⁰³ Akbar Muhammad Ahmad, "A Brief History of the Black Liberation Movement in the 1960's: Focus on RAM," unpublished, p. 10.

⁵⁰⁴ Alkamal Ahmed Muhammad, Taped Interview (New York: December 20, 1978).

⁵⁰⁵ *Op. Cit.*, (Ahmad), p. 12.

Mass spontaneous rebellions occurred in more northern inner cities in the summer of 1966. House-to-house fighting occurred between the liberation forces and the racist repressive forces in Cleveland, Ohio. During the early months of 1967, the RAM leadership's analysis was that because of the vast amounts of poverty, unemployment and police brutality in the African-American community, the summer of 1967 was going to be one of mass rebellions. RAM decided to give the forthcoming mass rebellions a political direction and arm the community for defense against racist attacks. It proposed to develop African-American militias and organize African-American youth into a youth army called Black Guards, the forerunner of a Black Liberation Army. The Black Guards were to be a defense army and also the political cadre that would aid the vanguard, RAM, in leading the world black revolution.

RAM saw African-American youth as being the most revolutionary sector of black America. RAM also analyzed that African-Americans needed to engage in a black cultural revolution to prepare them for a black political revolution. Within the black cultural revolution would also be a black anti-draft movement. The slogans of "America is the Black Man's Battleground," "Unite or Perish" and "Black Power" were raised. RAM described the cultural revolution:

The purpose of a black cultural revolution would be to destroy the conditioned white oppressive mores, attitudes, ways, customs, philosophies, habits, etc., which the oppressor has taught and trained us to have. This means on a mass scale creating a new revolutionary culture.⁵⁰⁶

RAM called for unity of revolutionary nationalists:

The first step is for revolutionary nationalists and those who agree on basic principles to unite and form a black liberation front. This does not mean that any group dissolves its autonomy, but rather works in common agreement.⁵⁰⁷

RAM issued its critical analysis of the Communist Manifesto and the world Marxist perspective. It published its interpretation of persons of African descent relationship to the world socialist revolution in a document entitled, World Black Revolution. RAM decided to issue a nation-wide call for armed self-defense and to be active in the mass rebellions.

Along with the mass uprisings in the inner cities, RAM planned student revolts in African-American colleges and among high school students. The Black Guards, RAM youth leagues, were to organize African-American history clubs to teach black history. These clubs would lead protests demanding the right to wear "natural" hairdo, African dress, and the right to fly the Red, Black and Green flag in rallies. The college students would demonstrate for more student power with the purpose of turning the Negro colleges into black universities.

Early in 1967, a group of African-American students in Orangeburg, South Carolina began protesting about the firing of a white professor. At Howard University an all African-American student group began discussing its opposition to U.S. involvement in the

⁵⁰⁶ Revolutionary Action Movement, Internal Document, Some Questions Concerning the Present Period, 1967, p. 2.

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 2.

Vietnam War. They rallied around sociology professor, Dr. Nathan Hare at Howard University, Washington, D.C.

In March 1967, students of the Black Power committee at Howard University demonstrated against General Lewis B. Hershey, Director of the Selective Service system. As he attempted to deliver a speech, they jumped onto the stage shouting, "America is the black man's battleground."⁵⁰⁸

March 22, 1967, they held a press conference announcing the formation of the Black Power Committee. SNCC organizers and student activists from around the country met with the RAM leadership in the spring of 1967. They were told to pick up on developments at Howard. Their activities spread to different African-American universities and eventually to white campuses where they demanded black studies programs. The 1967 Howard protest was the first major African-American student rebellion of the decade directed specifically against a university administration. It inaugurated a series of black student protests against the administrations of both African-American and white institutions of higher education; protests which gathered increasing momentum in 1968-69 and were generally built around the demand for "black studies" programs.⁵⁰⁹

As part of the black cultural revolution, RAM attempted to organize a revolutionary African-American woman's movement and worked with other groups to set up African-American cultural committees. RAM felt:

The key in this period of the revolutionary nationalist is to develop a popular movement inside Black America. The purpose of creating this popular movement will be an attempt to develop a national united front or Black Liberation Front. This would mean attempting to unite all sectors of Black America under a common slogan led by revolutionary nationalists.⁵¹⁰

RAM was very active during the year 1967. It was attempting to organize street gangs, students, women's groups, politicize the urban rebellions and develop anti-Vietnam war resistance in the African-American community.

Philadelphia, PA.

In Philadelphia starting in October 1966, the RAM organization went through a restructuring. After a couple months of discussion and recruitment from ex-SNCC and ex-Nation of Islam members a new central committee was established. The new central committee consisted of George Anderson (Hakim Rahman), Booker T. Washington X (Salahadine Muhammad), Ibn Yusef Muhammad and Akbar Muhammad. A plan was drafted for recruiting youth gangs from each area of the city into RAM's youth league, the Black Guards. This recruitment was to run concurrent with anti-Vietnam activities, armed and unarmed self-defense classes, a black cultural revolution and the study of and demand for African, African-American history in the public schools. In February 1967, after RAM organizers had circulated among youth, a meeting was convened in west Philadelphia of ten gang leaders. Because of the bitter cold the meeting had to be canceled. The RAM central committee decided to reconvene the initial recruitment in two months in north Philadelphia.

⁵⁰⁸ Michael W. Miles, The Radical Probe: The Logic of Student Rebellion, (New Jersey: Antheneum Publishers, 1971), pp. 192-193.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 193.

⁵¹⁰ Revolutionary Action Movement, Internal Document, "Some Questions Concerning the Present Period," 1967, p. 4.

In March RAM held a meeting with thirty gang members explaining the Black Guards' program. Recruits to the organization would endure a three-month basic orientation five days a week basic training. Upon graduation the recruits would receive a green star, the equivalent of a green belt in martial arts. After graduation they would continue their training for a red star then a black star and ultimately a RAM star. They would in this process recruit others for the B.G. From the initial recruitment of thirty the processes of attrition narrowed the first recruitment to ten or two units in three months.

Young recruits of the Black Guards had to memorize Lesson Number One; a five page document of questions and answers about the Black Guards. As part of the political education, the B.G.'s recruits would have to take a pamphlet (usually) a Chinese Marxist party article and RAM or historical materials and write a report on it. Their interpretation of the document would have to be written in their own words and the recruit would give an oral presentation of it to other B.G. recruits in a weekly political education meeting.⁵¹¹

May 1967 started the second recruitment of the B.G.'s and July 1967 started the third recruitment. In each recruitment phase the Black Guards organization grew. B.G.'s participated in local demonstrations of the times, organized inside the high schools in the day in the form of African-American history clubs/cultural groups and in bars, pool rooms, on street corners, at dances and at cultural affairs in the evening and weekends. Training included basic calisthenics, jogging 2-3 miles three times a week, martial arts training twice a week, armed practice once a week and political education, once internal and the other external twice a week. The events of mass imprisonment, mass organizing against the board of education and repression, cultural fund raising for those imprisoned and the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on April 4, 1968 led to the rapid mass growth of the Black Guards in the area in 1968.⁵¹²

Washington, D.C.

RAM organizers went into Washington, D.C., working with the New School of Afro-American Thought, organized the Black Guards at Howard University. An African-American sociology professor supported the efforts. Dr. Nathan Hare recalls:

They fired me on the same day they had arrested RAM...They kept trying to come and get me after I got back to Washington because I stayed gone for a while. After I got back, like I was telling the police they would try to get me to do some violence and then would say plan some violence and I'd let them do the talking and then they would try to say well, well they'd call me. So I'd give them the number and I'd call them first and there wouldn't even be such a number. Then out of different things I just saw that they were police and they kept on and finally left me alone. They tried for a long time to get me involved in something. They were trying to get militants off the street, that's all.⁵¹³

The state responded by imprisoning RAM organizers "en masse" in the summer of 1967. On the east coast, in Philadelphia and New York, police intelligence units fabricated plots

⁵¹¹ Max Stanford/participant observer report, 3/67.

⁵¹² Interview with Hakim Rahman (George Anderson), 5/94, Philadelphia, PA.

⁵¹³ Interview with Dr. Nathan Hare, 9/00. Also RAM Leader, "Five Teenagers are Held in Jail for Conspiracy to Incite to Riot", The Evening Bulletin, Monday, July 31, 1967, (Philadelphia) p. 4.

against the RAM organization. There was the Queens, New York 17, Roy Wilkins and Whitney Young assassination case. Herman Ferguson felt that RAM underestimated the state. RAM's lack of sophistication didn't allow RAM to be aware of the counter-insurgency program that the U.S. government had put in place to make sure that a liberation struggle or any kind of movement that threatened the system would not materialize. The counter-insurgency program concentrated on black people. It was called COINTELPRO (Counter Intelligence Program). Through COINTELPRO the government introduced undercover agents into RAM and arrested seventeen of the core leadership of RAM in New York; and charged them with conspiracy to overthrow the government and attempting to assassinate mainstream conservative Negro leaders Roy Wilkins of the NAACP and Whitney Young of the Urban League.⁵¹⁴

In an interview with Herman Ferguson:

Ferguson was not religious minded and felt that out of all the black nationalists at the time, Malcolm X and the Nation of Islam was the most practical with its program of self-reliance. He did not feel the religious aspect would help towards liberation but felt that if Malcolm X were to ever leave the N.O.I. he would become a part of anything he would set up because Malcolm was a brilliant thinker and felt anything he would set up would be very political and would be based on some kind of revolutionary struggle. So when Malcolm left the N.O.I., Ferguson joined Malcolm's organization, the Muslim Mosque, Inc. Ferguson was the only non-Muslim member of the Muslim Mosque, Inc. When Malcolm came back from Africa and established the Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU) Ferguson joined and was chairman of the education committee. Ferguson felt Malcolm X was the sole individual that had the most important impact of his development. Malcolm crystallized his consciousness to evolve from traditional black nationalism to revolutionary black nationalism. But the organization that brought Ferguson to a higher stage of development was his experience with the Revolutionary Action Movement. Ferguson felt RAM's call for guerrilla warfare and a liberation struggle is what he had been moving towards and looking for all the time.

The concept of self defense, gun clubs, and preparing African-Americans for protracted struggle against the oppressive capitalist, imperialist system was the direction Ferguson felt African-Americans needed to go.

In Detroit, RAM organizers were arrested on riot charges. In Cleveland, there was a manhunt for RAM organizers.⁵¹⁵

Some of those remaining in the streets were killed in the process of fighting racist police, the National Guard and the U.S. Army. Others continued to organize the street force, students and mobilized the community for legal defense of incarcerated members.

RAM organizers used direct agitation, leafleting and talking with the street force in bars, schoolyards, pool halls and street corners. Revolutionary nationalist classes were set up, teaching African and African-American history and the organization's line. The national RAM organization that eventually emerged was based on clandestine local cells, with the

⁵¹⁴ Interview with Herman Ferguson, New York, New York, 5/02, "The Strange Plot to Kill Roy Wilkins," Sepia, September 1967, pp. 58-63 and "Police Pick Up First of Three In Bomb Plot" Evening Bulletin, September 29, 1967.

⁵¹⁵ Interview with Albert Forrest, Cleveland, Ohio, 3/71. Also see Arthur C. Willis, Cecil's City: A History of Blacks in Philadelphia 1638-1979 [New York: A Heatherstone Book: Carlton Press, Inc., p. 141.

central leadership forming coalitions with existing African-American organizations to prepare for a national liberation front.

RAM worked with and through many different mass organizations in trying to develop revolutionary consciousness. There is certainly much evidence that their work found a ready response at the grassroots. RAM guided the Afro-American Student Associations that led the fight for African-American history in the public schools of Philadelphia, Cleveland, Chicago, New York and other cities. In Chicago, for example, RAM cadre, working behind-the-scenes at their 39th St. UMOJA Black Student Center, coordinated the October 1968 high school strike that brought out half of the city's African-American high school students out in mass demonstrations. There, the city Afro-American Student Association united recognized student leaders from over twenty African-American high schools. RAM classes discussed guerrilla warfare and socialism with young activists.⁵¹⁶

From taped interviews with twenty-five ex-RAM and Black Guards (BG) members, it was discovered that there was a great influx or growth in RAM membership between 1966 and 1968. A mass recruitment drive between January 1967 and May 1968 in the organization of the Black Guards was seen as a major reason for United States Government repression against RAM in those years.⁵¹⁷ Most of those interviewed had been recruited through the Black Guards. They felt the BG's was a mass youth movement with revolutionary potential.

Of the twenty-five ex-RAM/Black Guards members interviewed, twenty-three were from Working-class families and felt their backgrounds had contributed to their becoming involved with the RAM organization.

Growth of the RAM Organization

The RAM organization grew rapidly during the 1967-68 period.⁵¹⁸ In Philadelphia in 1967, there were approximately thirty-five RAM members. By 1968, estimates by ex-Black Guards members figure Black Guard's membership to be from 350-500 Black Guards members.⁵¹⁹

In Cleveland, by 1968, there were 800 to 1,000 members in units of the black nationalist army.⁵²⁰ The RAM organization and its affiliates were estimated to be 200 in Chicago, 200 in Detroit and 100 in New York. At its highest point of membership, the RAM organization was said to be about 4,000 with 3,000 supporters. The age range of the organization though varied was primarily young. Twenty of the twenty-five ex-RAM/Black Guards members interviewed joined the organization when they were between the ages of 17 and 19.⁵²¹

On November 17, 1967, 4,000 African-American students in Philadelphia marched on the board of education demanding black history classes, a revamping of the curriculum, the wearing of African dress (national dress) to school, and natural hair, and the right to salute

⁵¹⁶ Etani Kae Sera, *False Internationalism: Class Contradictions in the Armed Struggle* [Chicago, Illinois: A Seeds Beneath the Snow Publication, 1985] pp. 173-175.

⁵¹⁷ Interview with Khalid Muhammad, and Salahdin Muhammad (Booker T. Washington X), Camden, N.J., 7/73.

⁵¹⁸ Interviews with activists (ex-Black Guards) in Philadelphia, Pa., 6/78. Interview with Phil White, New York, N.Y. 5/78, p. 2.

⁵¹⁹ Ibid., p. 4.

⁵²⁰ Interview with Albert Forrest "Breeze", Cleveland, Ohio, 3/71.

⁵²¹ Taped interviews with ex-RAM/Black Guards members, 5/77.

the black nation's flag – the red, black and green. The students were attacked by the white racist police force, which framed more than 30 black nationalists in a so-called "riot conspiracy" in the summer of '67.⁵²²

Frank Rizzo, Philadelphia's police commissioner, had the demonstration attacked. Black Guards, unarmed in the demonstration, engaged in hand-to-hand combat with police.

RAM and the African-American Student Movement

Nathan Hare said in an interview:

We worked together and did things at Howard to protest an administrative policy to make Howard University into a predominantly white institution. In fact, we put together one night a Black University Manifesto designed to overturn the Negro college and convert it into a black university that would be relevant to the African-American community and its needs. Then with that we began to launch protests.⁵²³

The movement at Howard University ranged from anti-war protests with inviting the People's Champion, Muhammad Ali to campus to calling for a black cultural revolution. The movement spread to other campuses. In a telephone interview, Veda Harris described the events leading up to the November 17, 1967 demonstration in which 3,500 – 4,000 African-American high school students marched on the Philadelphia Board of Education to demand the inclusion of African-American history classes.

A young brother who was very popular with the girls was expelled from school for wearing his hair in an Afro hairstyle. Some of us felt it was in his God-given rights to wear his hair the way he wanted to. So we organized a mass march on the board of education. Word spread and it picked up momentum.⁵²⁴

On February 8, 1968, African-American students, who were demonstrating against the exclusion of African-Americans at a local bowling alley in Orangeburg, South Carolina were confronted by police on their campus of South Carolina State College. As the tense police exploded; shooting into the crowd, killing three and wounding thirty-three more; they began beating the terrorized tear-gassed students. The event became known as the Orangeburg Massacre. Cleveland Sellers of SNCC was put under house arrest with an U.S. Army tank lowering its turret in his direction while he was talking on the telephone.⁵²⁵

But the African-American student movement began to grow by leaps and bounds. In interviews with Askia Muhammad Ture, the history of black studies begins to emerge: Ture was an activist in the Atlanta project when he received a call from sister Sonia Sanchez in San Francisco in spring 1967 asking Ture would he come out to San Francisco; that Amiri Baraka had been out there early 1967 and would he come out there to help develop a black studies program at San Francisco State. James "Jimmy" Garrett, who was a student at San Francisco State and other activist students coordinated their efforts with Sonia Sanchez in

⁵²² "Police Rout 3,500 Unruly Pupils at Black Power Protest," *The Philadelphia Inquirer, Saturday Morning, November 18, 1967*, p.1.

⁵²³ Interview with Nathan Hare, 9/00.

⁵²⁴ Interview with Veda Harris, telephone, Cleveland to Philadelphia, PA, 10/97.

⁵²⁵ Jack Bass and Jack Nelson, *The Orangeburg Massacre*, [Mercer University Press, 1984], pp. 60-71. Also telephone conversation with Cleveland Sellers and Max Stanford, from Philadelphia, Pa. And Orangeburg, South Carolina, Spring, 6/68.

creating black history classes in churches and community centers in the bay area. The Africana studies movement had evolved from the SNCC freedom schools idea in the south.

When the students found out that Ture had been operating freedom schools in Atlanta they asked him to join them. At the time there was an alliance between SNCC and the Panthers. Ture came to San Francisco and began teaching black history classes along with Garrett and Sanchez in churches and community centers there.

Black studies were introduced at San Francisco State when the African-American students from the Black Student League at SFS erupted in a black history class stating, "They were not going to have European teachers teaching them the history of their people." The students took over the building where the classes were being held and would not let anyone go anywhere.

The administration said there were no qualified black teachers to teach black history. Sonia Sanchez was already teaching black literature at SFS. The students called Ture and requested that he teach black history at SFS. Some of the students had been in Ture's classes in the community. Ture met with the administration and a white professor volunteered to sponsor his course.⁵²⁶

The requirement of African-American teachers teaching black studies courses was that they needed a white sponsor. Seven African-Americans started their black studies classes at San Francisco State in January 1968. Nathan Hare came out in the spring semester of 1968 and chaired the black studies program.

In an interview, Nathan Hare said:

After Max Stanford and the RAM students were among those arrested in Philadelphia and I escaped the police dragnet, I decided to go back into boxing and I went into training before I was accepted at San Francisco State to run the Black Studies program. The first Black Studies Program in the United States was being started at San Francisco State College.⁵²⁷

By 1968 African-American students in places never heard of were seizing school buildings, boycotting classes en masse, up to 30,000 in Chicago. African-American students battled police in New York and Brooklyn over African-American community control of schools. By 1968, the movement had spread to many cities, with African-American students organizing massive boycotts and walkouts demanding African-American history classes.

Eric Perkins, a student activist in the Chicago area in the 1960's recalled:

Black student unions became one of the leading student unions in the country, in 1966, and we linked up with student unions in Northwestern and Columbia. These were the two biggest black student demonstrations, which occurred in May of 1968 when the two campuses were closed at Northwestern and Columbia. The reason for that is, that the Columbia black student union was run by Ralph Metcalf, Jr., who was Ralph Metcalf's (the athlete) son. He was a good friend. We had grown up together and we had

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Interview with Askia Muhammad Ture, 10/5/00, 5/02, Cleveland to Boston.

⁵²⁷

Interview with Nathan Hare, tape, 9/00.

been in touch and did an example in 1967. Victor Goode and I went to a number of campuses here on the East Coast. We went to Cambridge, we went to Columbia, and this is where we cemented ties with other black student organizations. Such that the May event, as it was called, when the most campuses all over the country were closed down that that's how it all came about. We had begun planning for that as early as 1967. It was May 1968. It was altogether thirty-four or thirty-five major white campuses closed down at that time. The true history of this episode by the way is only now coming out right at this moment. It is how we all came together and had prepared for this much earlier.⁵²⁸

Perkins goes on to explain the impact of revolt among African-American high school students in Chicago:

The same organization worked with a number of high school students starting first at Evanston Township High where they had a tracking program for the black students all the way down to all black high schools. Dunbar, Dusable, Cabral. We worked with a number of student leaders down there and again with John Bracey and others to push these kinds of strikes so that we had the whole base covered. We even wanted to get down to the grammar schools to put black consciousness and black awareness and basic black nationalism all the way down to the sixth grade level. But yes, in 1968, there were a series of major strikes at the black high schools all over the greater Chicago land that caused quite a stir to the authorities. The October 1968 African-American student boycott in Chicago, Illinois, led by UMOJA Black Student Center and the Afro-American Student Association led 30-50,000 students in demonstration.⁵²⁹

The revolutionary black nationalist movement became a mass movement in 1968. Thousands of angry African-Americans rose in revolt, burning over one hundred cities protesting the April 4th assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Dissolution of RAM

By the summer of 1968, some RAM organizers were back on the streets. RAM and the Black Guards especially had grown into a mass organization. The issue that arose within the ranks was how to survive the pending repression against the movement. Internal contradictions began to become prevalent as arguments over direction occurred and some secondary cadres began striving for personal leadership. Some made themselves generals or regional commanders of the black nationalist army that emerged. How to maintain discipline within an undeveloped mass political force became a preoccupation of the RAM leadership.

In Philadelphia, the RAM and the Black Guard leadership split over the partitioning of 2 million dollars offered by the Black Coalition established secretly through agreement between Frank Rizzo and Jeremiah Shabbaz of the Nation of Islam; and financed by

⁵²⁸ Eric Perkins, Interview, Philadelphia, Pa., 1994.

⁵²⁹ Ibid.

Philadelphia banks.⁵³⁰ Internal shoot-outs occurred and adventurous confrontations led to the dissolution of the Philadelphia RAM organization.⁵³¹

New forces were simultaneously beginning to emerge and were beginning to eclipse RAM which was having internal organizational discipline problems, legal entanglement of several of its leaders, financial crisis, ideological dis-unity and government repression. The Black Panther Party was expanding into a national organization from its base in Oakland, California. Maulana Ron Karenga, leader of the US (United Slaves) organization was clashing with several revolutionary nationalist forces. The Republic of New Africa, then based in Detroit, Michigan was competing with the BPP and US for political dominance.

RAM's leadership felt that the forces the FBI wanted to crush were those who had fought the state and had been advocating urban guerrilla warfare. With many RAM members in jail or just being released from jail and key members under legal indictments or facing long prison terms, notably Glanton Dowdell in Detroit, Michigan, Fred Ahmed Evans in Cleveland, Ohio, Arthur Harris and Herman Ferguson in New York and myself in New York and Philadelphia, the RAM leadership decided to convene a conference to reorganize. RAM called for the formation of a National Black United Front to combat what the organization felt would be the escalation of an FBI conspiracy (later known as COINTELPRO) against the black liberation movement.

RAM reviewed its accomplishments in a six year period; confrontations to increase job opportunities in the construction and auto industry, and corresponding unions; the awakening of a mass revolutionary nationalist consciousness; the organization of African-American student and youth organizations and the increasing mass mobilization of them to demand black and relevant studies in high schools, colleges and universities catalyzing opposition of U.S. imperialism's war against the people of Vietnam; a support of African and other Third World liberation movements. The RAM leadership decided it had exhausted both its human and material resources and had lost the element of surprise. More importantly, the leadership had learned from actual practice, "that the struggles for liberation was protracted and would take many years to achieve."⁵³²

In October of 1968, the RAM central committee met and decided that they needed to cease to use the name of RAM because right wing journalists and the U.S. intelligence community was using the name RAM as an excuse to attack the movement. It was decided due to the lack of self-discipline of many of its mass troops and growing ideological dis-unity in the ranks over the direction in which the movement should proceed; the organization's best option was to retreat, go underground developing an ideologically developed self-disciplined cadre party that would be based on a scientific day-by-day style of work.

RAM was a serious attempt that failed to build a national revolutionary organization, an African-American version of the Algerian FLN or the July 26th Movement of Cuba that did not sustain itself or survive. It never was "legal." It never was a civil rights organization. It was the result of the new message of Robert F. Williams and Malcolm X, trying to put their

⁵³⁰ Conversation with Attorney Cecil B. Moore and Max Stanford, Jr., Philadelphia, Pa., 6/68.

⁵³¹ Participant-Observer reflections (Muhammad Ahmad), Cleveland, Ohio, 8/97.

⁵³² Max Stanford, Participant-observer, The 3rd National Black Power Conference, Philadelphia, PA, 8/68.

insights into practice. From the start RAM aimed at socialist revolution. RAM developed into a broad network of revolutionary nationalists, a semi-public organization with clandestine cells and full-time traveling organizers.⁵³³ Probably ninety years premature, RAM was a prototype for future development.

In 1966 the Hough rebellion occurred in Cleveland, Ohio. It raised fears among white residents of Cleveland that Cleveland needed someone as mayor who would be able to ease the racial tension in the city.

On October 16, 1966 in Oakland, California, Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale after a series of discussions formed the Black Panther Party for Self Defense. Lil Bobby Hutton, a young African-American teenager became the first member of the BPPSD.

Starting in February of 1967, RAM began to organize its mass youth, anti-war, self defense wing called the Black Guard.

On April 4, 1967 at Riverside Church in New York, Dr. King gave his famous Riverside Speech in which he denounced U.S. involvement in the Vietnam civil war.

BLACK PANTHER PARTY

The Lowndes County Freedom Organization (LCFO) was founded in late 1965 under the leadership of Stokely Carmichael of SNCC. The LCFO was a black independent electoral party in Alabama using the tactics of armed self-defense. The LCFO chose the Black Panther as its symbol and it became known as the Black Panther Party. The strategy of the BPP was to elect independent candidates in an attempt to control the community in which African-Americans were the majority legally. This was the first development of the BPP.

The second development of the Black Panther Party occurred on the East Coast as SNCC developed an alliance with revolutionary black nationalists in New York.

When the shift toward black power occurred in SNCC, RAM decided to develop a public mass black political party. Meetings were convened in Harlem, New York, with independent nationalists forces to bring together a coalition, which they wanted to call the Black Panther Party. RAM wrote SNCC a letter asking if the party could be called the Black Panther Party.

I wrote Stokely Carmichael asking if it was alright to use the name Black Panther in forming another support branch of the BPP. Through the New York SNCC office the word came back, "Ok, go ahead." Queen Mother Audley Moore on July 13, 1966, began organizing weekly Black Nationalist Action Forums at the YMCA in Harlem. These meetings were recruiting sessions for the Black Panther Party of New York. The object of the BPP was to create an independent multi-class front organization led by revolutionary nationalists and black Marxist-Leninists to increase black political empowerment.

I came to New York and met with the New York Black Panther Party. Discussions centered on ideology, direction and national expansion of the

⁵³³

Op. Cit. (E. Tani & Kae Sera, False Nationalism, False Internationalism), p. 173.

Party. It was decided that the Party would be a coalition of SNCC, RAM and other organizations.⁵³⁴

The New York Black Panther Party was established in June of 1966 and had approximately 250 members from July 1966 to October of 1966. Its purpose was to implement an independent black electoral strategy in order to break African-Americans allegiance with the Democratic and Republican Party and eventually the capitalist system. It worked in unity with the BPP in Lowndes County, Alabama. It also had the support of Congressman Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. Its tactic was one of armed self-defense, but it did not stress it publicly and kept defense units separate or underground from its public organizations.

The Black Panther Party not only concerned itself with electoral politics but also was an activist community organization. One of the first activities the Party engaged itself in was the struggle for quality education of children in Harlem.⁵³⁵ It participated in demonstrations of school boycotts of two schools and raised the slogan of “community control of schools.”

According to Alkamal Ahmed Muhammad (Shelton Duncan), an ex-member of the New York Black Panther party it was part of a citywide network.

The Black Panther Party had reached a broad stratum of people. Approximately 300 people attended weekly Black Panther Party meetings from July to October 1966. The BPP, with community groups, called a boycott of two elementary schools in Harlem on September 12, 1966, to protest the absence of black history reading materials in the New York school system. This was the beginning of the community control of schools movement.⁵³⁶

Reported in an article in the Amsterdam News, September 3, 1966 “Black Panthers Open Harlem Drive,” described an event which William Epton head of the Harlem branch of the Progressive Labor Party, Stokely Carmichael, chairman of SNCC and Max Stanford, a member of the Black Panther Party spoke at a meeting of two hundred fifty people. The New York Black Panther Party along with other community groups called for a boycott of two schools in Harlem on September 12, 1966.⁵³⁷

Through the RAM organizational structure, a directive was sent to RAM cadres to develop a public coalition with community activists to develop the Black Panther Party.⁵³⁸

RAM’s rationale for entering into an alliance with SNCC to form the Black Panther Party is described in a RAM internal document titled “Steps Towards Organizing a National Movement in the African-American struggle for National Liberation part II,”:

The concept of the Black Panther Party and Mississippi Freedom Labor Union has opened up new awareness for the development of a national movement. Organize, deepen and expand the Black Panther Party “nationally north and south.” Revolutionary black nationalists must do this in order to keep from being isolated from the masses of our people and also

⁵³⁴ Interview with Kwame Ture (Stokely Carmichael), Oberlin, Ohio, 5/96.

⁵³⁵ Interview with Eddie Ellis, New York, N.Y., 8/14/93.

⁵³⁶ Alkamal Ahmed Muhammad (Shelton Duncan), taped interview, New York: 12/78.

⁵³⁷ Amsterdam News, September 3, 1966.

⁵³⁸ Interview with Kenneth Freeman, Washington, D.C., 8/68.

to seize the initiative in our struggle; to develop a broad mass community organizational base (north and south)...For a Black Panther to be meaningful it must deal with the question of economic power as related to the political system...by developing a national Black Panther Party we can develop our struggle to an even level of consciousness in every black community. We can educate our people to the fact the existing political system is anti-black and break their allegiance with both the democratic and republican parties and also from the capitalist system...⁵³⁹

The purpose of the BPP was to provide a political alternative for black people to the capitalist, racist Democratic and Republican parties and also exhaust the legal political means of protest.

We saw that the purpose of the Black Panther Party was to offer black people a radical political alternative to the political structure of this country. We did not see the Party as waging armed struggle but of moving the masses of our people to that political and ideological form of struggle that moved our people through struggle against the system. The purpose of the Black Panther Party was to exhaust the legal avenues of struggle within the system.⁵⁴⁰

The New York Black Panther Party had a youth and political ideological section called the Black Guards that were supposed to be the political defense of the leadership of the local central committee. According to activist Sam Anderson self-defense efforts began on the East Coast before on the West Coast. Anderson was active in self-defense efforts of African-American and African students at Lincoln University in Lincoln, PA against the KKK in early 1966. He also said that the New York Black Panther Party had a ten-point program, planned to run candidates for local and state political offices in New York and was planning a city-wide party congress.⁵⁴¹

Major divisions occurred in the New York BPP when Larry Neal, Eddie Ellis, and Donald Washington (Hassan) led a coup against Lloyd Weaver then chairman of the New York BPP. The Neal faction wanted to pressure the Harlem gangsters into contributing to fund the party while the Weaver-Haynes faction wanted to concentrate on community organizing. The party was organizing a citywide party congress when the split occurred.

At one mass party meeting the Neal-Washington faction pulled guns on Weaver voting him out of office at gunpoint. Somehow a call was made from the meeting and Black Guards led by Alkamal Ahmed Muhammad (Shelton Duncan) entered the meeting, threatened showdown, surrounded Weaver and took him from the meeting. Such antics discouraged community support. The Harlem community was just recovering from the assassination of Malcolm X and shootouts of the Harlem Black Arts Theater in the year prior. By November of 1966 the N.Y. Black Panther Party had lost much of its dynamism and became defunct by early 1967.⁵⁴²

⁵³⁹ "Steps Toward Organizing a National Movement in the African-American Struggle for National Liberation Part 2," (N.Y. BPP position paper), pp. 1 (8/66).

⁵⁴⁰ Akbar Muhammad Ahmad "A Brief History of the Black Liberation Movement in the 1960's: Focus on RAM," unpublished, p. 10.

⁵⁴¹ Interview with Sam Anderson, Harlem, N.Y., 9/93.

⁵⁴² *Op. Cit.*, Interview with Alkamal Ahmed Muhammad (Shelton Duncan). Also, see *Amsterdam News*, September 3, 1966 and *The New York Times*, September 13, 1966.

SNCC and RAM sent directives to organize the Black Panther Party across the country. Black Panther Parties with the same strategies formed in Cleveland, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Detroit and San Francisco. This was the second development of the Black Panther Party.

Responding to RAM directives the Black Panther Party of Northern California was established in San Francisco in August of 1966. The class composition of the first two BPP developments was made up of black workers and revolutionary intellectuals. Within the BPP there was discussion of organizing black workers.

For Black Panthers to be meaningful it must deal with the question of economic power as related to the political system. This means Black Panthers must develop an overall program. The question of economics presents the development of Black Union organizations as part of the party to seize economic power in both the urban and rural south. In the urban south it would pose the fight against job discrimination...and white union discrimination especially on federal supported projects and in the rural south it would deal with "peoples" ownership of the land.⁵⁴³

The third and most famous development of the Black Panther Party occurred on October 15, 1966 when Huey Newton and Bobby Seale drafted the ten-point program of the Black Panther Party for Self Defense in Oakland, California.

Ula T. Taylor and J. Tarika Lewis in describing the history of the Black Panther Party talked about the evolution of Huey P. Newton's activism and his convergence with Bobby Seale. Huey Newton and Bobby Seale attended Merritt College along with a host of other young revolutionary African-American intellectuals. The two met when they became involved in Donald Warden's Afro-American Association that had a storefront across the street from Merritt College in North Oakland. Though Huey was six years Seale's junior, he became Seale's mentor. Newton soon left the Afro-American Association in ideological conflict with Donald Warden's glorification of the African past but refusal to deal with the present. Newton soon attended Marxist groups and attended Progressive Labor Party meetings. Newton read four volumes of writings by the Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party, Mao Zedong. Newton heard Malcolm X speak at a conference sponsored by the Afro-American Association at McClymonds High School in Oakland. He attended the Nation of Islam's mosques in Oakland and San Francisco and became familiar with the Nation of Islam's ten-point program. Bobby Seale joined RAM in the bay area and invited Newton to attend a meeting but Newton became impatient with the group's cautiousness and left. Seale also soon left the organization, because he did not think they were going to do anything. He said, "I became very discouraged about being able to work with them."⁵⁴⁴

¹⁰ Op. Cit., Steps Toward Organizing a National Movement in the African-American Struggle for National Liberation Part I, p. 3.
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⁵⁴⁴ Bobby Seale, Seize the Time: The Story of the Black Panther Party and Huey P. Newton, [New York: Random House, 1970], p. 23.

After graduating from Merritt College, Newton enrolled in San Francisco Law School. Newton spent six months in jail after an altercation at a party. When Newton got out of jail in 1965 he looked up Bobby Seale.

Former RAM members organized the Soul Student Advisory Council (SSAC) at Merritt College and the Black Panther Party of Northern California. Huey joined the SSAC central committee, which also included Doug Allen, Bobby Seale, Isaac Moore, Virgull Murrell and Alex Papillion. The SSAC organized a major rally against the draft of black men into the Vietnam War and also led a successful protest to have a black history course added to the curriculum at Merritt College.⁵⁴⁵

Their activities led to the group demanding the creation of an African-American Studies program. Newton and Seale wanted the students to wear guns in front of the school to protest police brutality.

Newton explained later “we did not intend to break any laws but were concerned that the organization start dealing with reality rather than sit around intellectualizing and writing essays about the white man.”⁵⁴⁶

But the students rejected their proposal. Newton and Seale were radicalized about the citizen alert patrols that emerged after the Watts 1965 rebellion. The citizen alert patrols were repressed by the Los Angeles Police Department. After an altercation with police over the right of Bobby Seale to read a poem and after a series of cases of police brutality in the bay area, Newton and Seale began a series of discussions.

Most of these conversations took place at Seale’s apartment, close to the campus. Others participated in the discussions that became heated because there were so many issues and so few solutions. They read Frantz Fanon, Mao Zedong, and Che Guevara and studied Malcolm X’s writings and speeches. Robert Williams’s Negroes with Guns and literature on the Deacons of Defense had a profound affect on the Party’s development.⁵⁴⁷

In the spring of 1966 Seale and Newton circulated throughout the black neighborhoods of Oakland, Berkeley, Richmond, and San Francisco talking with community people about their constitutional right to bear arms. Bobby Seale worked for the Antipoverty Center where Huey Newton would study law in the law library. After the summer of 1966 Bobby Seale organized a Negro history fact group, which had a profound influence on some black student unions in some of the local high schools. One afternoon, October 15, 1966, both Seale and Newton went to the government Anti-Poverty Center to review their initial work. Huey Newton began to dictate to

Bobby Seale a ten-point program patterned after the Nation of Islam’s platforms. As a result the ten-point program was formed for their organization that they called the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense.⁵⁴⁸

Newton, a pre-law student, had carefully researched California’s legal code as it related to guns and the police. At that time the state law allowed people

⁵⁴⁵ Mario Van Peebles, Ula Y. Taylor, J. Tarika Lewis, PANTHER, A Pictorial History of the Black Panthers and The Story Behind the Film, [New York: New Market Press, 1995], p. 23.

⁵⁴⁶ Huey P. Newton, Revolutionary Suicide, [New York: Writers and Readers Publishing, Inc., 1973], pp. 108-109.

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 24.

⁵⁴⁸ Bobby Seale, Seize the Time, [New York: Random House, 1990], p. 60.

to carry loaded pistols, rifles and shotguns so long as they were not concealed. Newton and some others decided that this loophole in the law could be exploited. The first task was getting weapons. One day they were reading the newspaper about how the famous “little red book,” Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung, had just been published in English. Huey got an idea. They went across the Bay to China Books, where the “little red book” had just gone on sale, bought a bunch, and drove back to Berkeley. Within an hour, hawking the “little red book” at the gate to the University of California campus, they sold all the books they had. With that money they drove back to China Books, bought the store’s whole stock of “little red books,” and sold them all to curious Berkeley students. They made enough money to buy two shotguns.⁵⁴⁹

Conflicts over tactics between the San Francisco Black Panther Party and the Oakland Black Panther Party for Self-Defense began to occur. Major differences over strategy and tactics occurred between the two factions of the Black Panther Party in the Bay area.⁵⁵⁰

The basic contradictions that led to the demise of the BPP lay in the ideological arguments in its formation. The Black Panther Party in Northern California (San Francisco) led by Ken Freeman was the original BPP formed in the Bay area. The main dispute that the BPP of Northern California had with the BPP of Self-Defense (Oakland) was Huey Newton’s, Bobby Seale’s insistence of testing bourgeois legality of armed self-defense.

Bobby and Huey first tried to take over a student group formed by RAM called the Soul Students Advisory Council at Merritt College. In the midst of the power struggle, it was learned that Bobby and Huey had taken fifty dollars from the student group’s treasury without authorization. According to Bobby’s account of the situation, after he and Huey were arrested for an altercation with a police officer, Virgual Murrell, a leader of SSAC, gave them \$25.00 to get a lawyer.⁵⁵¹ When most of the students did not support them, Bobby and Huey resigned from the student group.

Ernie Allen an ex-member of the San Francisco Black Panther Party described Huey P. Newton’s personality:

Huey at that time had a dual personality. A lot of people who were saying that you know he changed in his later life, but Huey didn’t change. What happened was that, in other words that dual aspect was always in Huey’s life. We were all going to Merritt College for example and Huey would take a few classes and then he’d drop out and he didn’t have any kind of sustained stay in Merritt College from my knowledge. But what he did do for example, he would break into cars and steal books and then sell them back to the bookstore. You know he would be talking about this, and naturally it’s in his autobiography as well. He would go to banks and do quick change on the tellers and he’d make money that way.⁵⁵²

⁵⁴⁹ E. Tani and Kae Sera, *False Nationalism, False Internationalism: Class Contradictions in the Armed Struggle*, [Chicago, Illinois: A Seeds Beneath the Snow Publication, 1985] p. 187.

⁵⁵⁰ Earl Anthony, *Picking Up the Gun*, [New York: Dial Press, 1971], pp. 37-39.

⁵⁵¹ Bobby Seale, *Seize the Time*, [New York: Random House, 1970], pp. 28-29.

⁵⁵² Interview with Ernie Allen, Amherst, Mass., 1994.

According to Brother D., an ex-member of the Black Panther Party of Northern California, one of the discussions centered on the role of armed struggle. Bobby Seale and Huey P. Newton's position was that the armed vanguard went out and brought down repression on the community. The BPP of Northern California did not have the answer to how to successfully pull off a revolution but knew from the lessons of Nazi Germany that premature repression could also crush a people's movement. Bobby Seale saw a revolution as one gigantic shootout:

A revolution is when the police is on one side of the street and the revolutionaries line up on the other side of the street. Whoever pulls their pieces first and gets off the rounds and survives wins the revolution.⁵⁵³

On January 1, 1967, the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense opened its office at 5624 Grove Street in North Oakland, California and started an armed patrol monitoring police. The Oakland Panthers wore uniforms and openly displayed guns. Huey P. Newton, Minister of Defense challenged police over the right of armed self-defense on several occasions.

By that fall of 1966, the BPP had recruited its first members, mostly from Huey's neighborhood in Oakland, and had set up a storefront office. It says something about the popular mood that folks could be recruited to join a tiny political group whose members had to publicly face off with the police, while carrying guns. In public face-offs, Panthers refused to hand over their guns to the pigs, insisted loudly that "If you shoot at me, or if you try to take this gun, I'm going to shoot back," and all the while lecturing the gathering New Afrikan crowd about their rights. The first time that happened, in front of the BPP's Grove Street storefront office, a dozen men who had been watching immediately joined up.⁵⁵⁴

The BPP of Northern California felt it was adventurous to be openly carrying guns. They felt it led to premature confrontations with the police and unnecessary repression. But the Oakland Panthers continued to grow. They began to get public attention.

While this appeared revolutionary, the BPP of Northern California felt it was romantic and would bring a pre-mature repression of the military-police complex against the party before it would be able to build a cadre from the masses.

The question of "underground" was the question of whether use of "public military confrontation" – which RAM felt the movement was not prepared for vs. the discrete "behind the scenes, armed self-defense" counter-attacks which the movement had used for years in the south as well as in the north would be successful.

In his essay, *The Correct Handling of a Revolution: July 20, 1967*, Huey responded to RAM's criticism that the BPP should not use armed self-defense openly.

A vanguard party is never underground in the beginning of its existence; that would limit its effectiveness and educational goals. How can you teach people if the people do not know and respect you. The party must exist aboveground as long as the dog power structure will allow and hopefully,

⁵⁵³ Interview with Brother D., ex-member of the BPP of Northern California, Amherst, Mass., 1978.

⁵⁵⁴ *Op. Cit.*, (*False Nationalism, False Internationalism*), p. 187.

when the party is forced to go underground, the party's message will already have been put across to the people.⁵⁵⁵

Sundiata Acoli, a previous member of the BPP, also a political prisoner and member of the New York 21, in an historical reflection assesses mistakes of the BPP.

“Combined Above and Underground: This was the most serious structural flaw in the BPP Party members who functioned openly in BPP offices, or organized openly in the community, by day they might very well have been the same people who carried out armed operations at night. This provided the police with a convenient excuse to make raids on any and all BPP offices, or members homes, under the pretext that they were looking for suspects, fugitives, weapons, and or explosives. It also sucked the BPP into taking the un-winnable position of making stationary defenses of BPP offices. There should have been a clear separation between the aboveground Party and the underground apparatus. Also small military forces should never adopt, as a general tactic, the position of making stationary defenses of offices, homes, buildings, etc.”⁵⁵⁶

The Revolutionary Action Movement had a military alliance with the Deacons for Defense, which had been in existence since 1965. Because of the nature of the U. S. government's plan to destroy the movement, the practical aspects of this alliance remained “secret” within the movement, “known to those who were involved in it.” Due to Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale being younger politically than the Deacons for Defense, SNCC, OAAU and RAM forces disregarded this “successful military experience” that was passed on from real military confrontations with the Southern police and the KKK. So, the question of building an underground military wing came from east-coast, mid-west and southern RAM organizers working with Malcolm X in his formation of the OAAU; with Robert F. Williams, who organized armed black self-defense groups to fight against the KKK in Monroe, N.C. in 1959-60 and confrontations in South Carolina, Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi with the Deacons for Self Defense. Much of the public open display of arms position was at the time being purported by the bay area section of the Socialist Workers Party who politically influenced Huey's thinking at the time.⁵⁵⁷

In February 1967, armed Panthers marched into the airport and escorted Mrs. Betty Shabbazz (Malcolm X's widow) to an awaiting car.

Cleaver conceived of a three-day program for February 1967 that would memorialize Malcolm's assassination and serve also as a forum for the resurrection of the OAAU. Malcolm's widow, Betty Shabbazz, would give her blessing to the idea in a keynote speech on the final day of the program. Thus late in January, Cleaver sent out a call to black organizations in the Bay Area asking them to assist in setting up a steering committee to plan for

⁵⁵⁵ Huey P. Newton, Toni Morrison (ed.) *To Die For The People: Selected Writings and Speeches*, [New York: Writers and Readers Publishing, Inc., 1973], p. 16. Also see Huey P. Newton *Revolutionary Suicide*, p. 117. Also see John T. McCartney, *Black Power Ideologies: An Essay in African-American Political Thought*, [Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992], p. 146

⁵⁵⁶ Sundiata Acoli, “A Brief History of the Black Panther Party and It's Place In The Black Liberation Movement”, p. 3.

⁵⁵⁷ Interview with Kenneth Freeman (telephone), May 3, 1967, Philadelphia, PA/San Francisco, California
*Historical Note: RAM was organized as an on-campus organization in 1962 and expanded or reorganized as a community organization in Philadelphia, PA in 1963 by founder mentor/senior central committee member, Mrs. Ethel “Azelle” Johnson who had been a co-worker of Robert Williams in Monroe, N.C. since 1957. RAM organizers met with Williams in Havana, Cuba in 1964, where he accepted the position of international chairman of RAM. Some RAM members had worked with Williams as individuals as members of other formations such as the Fair Play for Cuba Committee and the Monroe Defense Committee.

the memorial. Responding to Cleaver's invitation, several organizations came together to form a temporary coalition known as the Bay Area Grassroots Organizations Planning Committee.⁵⁵⁸

Cleaver's planning committee called for a change of the proposed program for the memorial from a three-day event to an entire week. Mrs. Betty Shabazz was to give the keynote address on the opening night. The Black Panther Party for Self-Defense was asked to be the honor guard for Mrs. Shabazz.⁵⁵⁹ But, what made the Oakland Panthers famous was their march on the state capital to protest California's gun laws.

The Black Panther Party for Self-Defense in Oakland was in constant conflict with the Black Panther Party in San Francisco and Los Angeles. The conflict escalated when Eldridge Cleaver began to rise in the Oakland hierarchy. Gun battles almost occurred between the branches. The Oakland branch began publishing a paper called the Black Panther with Cleaver as editor.

The Oakland Black Panther Party for Self-Defense was different from the other BPP's. It was a public para-military party with no separation of military from political strategy.

Huey agreed with Mao Tse Tung that political power grows out of the barrel of a gun but also believed that according to revolutionary principles the gun was a tool to be used in the strategy of teaching African-Americans their right to armed self defense and it was not an end in itself.

With the BPPSD patrolling police, reading people their constitutional rights agitated the police and politically educated the people. The BPPSD had become an armed agiti-propaganda team especially after publishing the Black Panther newspaper.⁵⁶⁰

This was in fact not armed defense but a step further without perhaps its participants realizing it. It was a form of legal armed agiti-prop. When we say legal the fact that having armed guns in open display were based on the fact that at the time you could do this in California. In most Northern areas of the United States of North America you could not do this. So the BPP for Self Defense was in it's founding a legal armed agitational-propaganda unit. Cleaver secretly joined the BPPSD because it would violate his parole to carry guns. The Black Panther Party for Self Defense achieved national notoriety when on May 2, 1967 the BPP led an "armed" delegation of Panthers on the California capital building to oppose the Mulford Act, a bill then being passed taking away the right to carry guns in public.

The New York Times Wednesday, May 3, 1967 issue reported an article titled "Armed Negroes Enter California Assembly in Gun Bill Protest,"

Sacramento, California, May 2 (AP) – A group of young Negroes armed with loaded rifles, pistols and shotguns entered the Capitol today and barged into the Assembly chamber during a debate. Members of the group said they represented the Black Panther Party of the Oakland Area and had come

⁵⁵⁸ Robert H. Brisbane, Black Activism: Racial Revolution in the United States 1954-1970, [Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1974], p. 202.

⁵⁵⁹ Earl Anthony, Picking Up the Gun, [New York: Pyramid Books, 1971], p. 16. Also see, Spitting in the Wind [Malibu, California: Roundtable Publishing Company], p. 23.

⁵⁶⁰ Op. Cit., (False Nationalism, False Internationalism), p. 188.

to protest a bill restricting the carrying of loaded weapons within city limits. One shouted that the bill had been introduced for the “racist” Oakland Police force.⁵⁶¹

Cleaver accompanied the Panthers to the state capitol on May 2, 1967, but without a gun in order not to violate his parole. He had with him a signed letter stating he was covering the event as a journalist for RAMPARTS magazine.

The Revolutionary Action Movement viewed this as “left wing adventurism” which would bring a military response from the state. The RAM organization began to dissolve its chapters of the BPP and its cadres remained underground or operated through other public organizations.

Huey P. Newton was probably the first organizer since Robert Williams developed a defense guard in Monroe, North Carolina, in 1957; to recruit the black street force or lumpen into a public para-military organization.

What made Huey’s para-military agit-prop team different was that Huey developed it into a radical organization with a ten-point program and created uniforms for the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense. The famous black leather jacket and black beret came to symbolize membership in or support of the BPP. The social composition of the third Black Panther Party was different than the first two developments. The social composition of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense was made up of the “Lumpen” ex-pimps, stick-up men, dope pushers and students. Huey picked up the gun publicly again.⁵⁶² The differences between armed self-defense in the south and armed defense in the north need to be investigated.

By placing the primary focus on fighting police, the essence of class struggle against the capitalist system was lost to the concept of vanguard vs. the police (pigs) developed. But Huey Newton developed revolutionary nationalism to a higher level with the BPP ten-point program. The ten-point program raises the question of power and self-determination of the African-American national community. The Black Panther program advanced the line the African-Americans were a kind of colony, which are oppressed for racist and economic reasons by the U.S. government.

Although black Americans were widely dispersed rather than compressed into a compact territory, the Panther leaders declared that they were, nevertheless, a “subjugated nation” because of bonds due to their psychological makeup, ghetto language, concentrations in congested inner cities or in rural areas, and in economic status similar to colonial peoples.⁵⁶³

The year 1967 was a year of rapid growth for the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense (BPPSD). Its public aggressive armed stance in confronting police concerning police brutality electrified the surrounding African-American community particularly the youth.

⁵⁶¹ New York Times, Wednesday, May 3, 1967, p. 3.

⁵⁶² Historical Note: The classical definition of lumpen proletariat and the intentions or definitions of Huey P. Newton, Bobby Seale and Eldridge Cleaver are a matter of ideological dispute. It is suggested to read The Black Panther Party: Reconsidered, [Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 1998], especially pages 43-47.

⁵⁶³ G. Louis Heath, Off The Pigs: The History and Literature of the Black Panther Party, [Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, Inc. 1976], p. 21.

In April 1967 the BPP was asked by the family of Denzil Dowell, a 22 year-old youth who although not armed had been shot six times in cold blood by Richmond police, to help them investigate the killing. Panthers interviewed witnesses and proved that the official police account was a fabrication. Guarded by twenty armed Panthers, Newton and Seale spoke to a street rally of 150 persons in the Dowell family's Richmond neighborhood. Panthers accompanied the family and other New Afrikan residents to meet with the County Sheriff and District Attorney. Three hundred New Afrikans, some as young as twelve years old, applied to join the BPP that month in Richmond.⁵⁶⁴

SNCC was still the center of the movement in 1967. Over the Labor Day weekend, 1967 in Chicago, the National Conference on New Politics convened. The conference was supposed to create a broad coalition to defeat Lyndon Johnson in 1968 elections. The Chicago meeting brought 2,000 delegates from 300 different groups across the nation. There were 600 black delegates who formed a black caucus. James Forman ideologist for SNCC called on black revolutionaries to become black Marxist-Leninists. This was the first time in the movement in the sixties that a major figure had raised the question of Marxism-Leninism as the movement's ideology.

Over the summer months of 1967, the BPPSD drafted Carmichael to serve as Black Panther field marshal for the eastern half of the United States. The BPPSD began to grow in the bay area and northern California and began to expand as other chapters were established in New Jersey. As the Black Panther Party for Self-defense began to grow in numbers of recruits now limited in its ability to carry guns publicly because of the passing of the "Mulford" gun law, it began to draw the resentment of Oakland police because of its monitoring their activity. Bobby Seale was jailed from August until December 1967 as a result of the May 2nd Sacramento incident.

The Police Attack on Huey Newton

On October 27, 1967 at approximately 4 p.m., Huey P. Newton was wounded in a shoot-out with the police. Newton while driving home with a friend after a night of celebrating his release of parole was pulled over by police. Officer Frey, known for his racial attitude towards African-Americans ordered Newton out of his car and to follow him to the back of the police cruiser. Newton was beaten and in the scuffle shots were discharged and officer Frey was killed, the other officer Herbert Heanes wounded, and Newton wounded.⁵⁶⁵

With its two top officers in jail, the Minister of Information, Eldridge Cleaver, led the Black Panther Party for Self Defense. Cleaver steered the party on a new course. He initially built supportive alliances with black nationalists, on the one hand, and white radical organizations on the other, despite a strained relationship between the two camps in this period.⁵⁶⁶

⁵⁶⁴ E. Tani and Kae Sera, False Nationalism, False Internationalism, [Chicago, Illinois: A Seed's Beneath The Snow Publication, 1985], pp. 187, 188

⁵⁶⁵ Op. Cit., [E. Tani and Kae Sera], p. 190.

⁵⁶⁶ Op. Cit., John T. McCartney, Black Power Ideologies, p. 147.

The party now had a dilemma of defending its Minister of Defense who was charged with the murder of a police officer. Building Huey's defense:

Early in January 1968, Cleaver and Seale, who was now out of prison, flew to Washington, D.C., to talk with Carmichael and to invite him to speak at an upcoming rally for Newton in Oakland. The talks with Carmichael were expanded to include other members in the SNCC hierarchy. The upshot was the establishment of an alliance with SNCC. Carmichael was made Honorary Prime Minister of the Panthers, James Forman, Minister of Foreign Affairs and H. Rap Brown, Minister of Justice.⁵⁶⁷

It so happened that the date secured was February 17, which was Huey P. Newton's birthday, so the rally became a planned birthday celebration for Newton at the Oakland auditorium that was in downtown Oakland across the street from the County Jail where Newton was being held. Seale recalls:

We brought Stokely out a little early to visit Huey. There was a lot of press coverage, and a lot of people realized that it was time to come out for Huey P. Newton.⁵⁶⁸

The February 17, 1968 Free Huey rally was a success. Four thousand people crowded the auditorium. Stokely Carmichael, James Forman and H. Rap Brown of SNCC spoke.

...we decided that if they (SNCC leadership) all accepted the ten-point platform and program, we'd make Stokely Carmichael the Honorary Prime Minister, James Forman the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and brother Rap Brown the Minister of Justice of the Black Panther Party. We thought that would give us a good group of black revolutionary leaders to unify the black liberation struggle across the country.⁵⁶⁹

At the rally the SNCC-Panther alliance was announced. Cleaver for whatever reason called the alliance a merger, which was the beginning of tedious relations.

The SNCC-Panther alliance did not last long. SNCC was restructured at a June 1968 conference at which time the proposal for accepting the BPPSD ten-point program was voted down. By mid-July, H. Rap Brown and James Forman resigned their posts in the party. Stokely Carmichael continued his post in the party and was eventually expelled from SNCC. The Panther Party leadership feared Forman as a tactician.

The New York Times, Monday, October 7, 1968 reported that in a rift between members of the Black Panther Party and SNCC, Black Panther members walked into James Forman's office on Fifth Avenue in New York in July. The report, which cites its source coming from Federal authorities, stated one of the Panthers pulled out a pistol and put it into Forman's mouth squeezing the trigger several times. Forman in his book The Making of Black Revolutionaries states this report was a complete fabrication. He says while relations between the organizations sometimes came to near gun play this incident never occurred. He called Cleaver describing the need to deny the story but the issue was never resolved.

⁵⁶⁷ Robert H. Brisbane, Black Activism: Racial Revolution in the United States, [Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1974], p. 209.

⁵⁶⁸ Bobby Seale, Op. Cit., p. 219.³⁶

⁵⁶⁹ Bobby Seale, Ibid, p. 221.

What is important to record is that the mis-information campaign of the F.B.I.'s COINTELPRO program helped dissolve the SNCC-BPP alliance.⁵⁷⁰

The SNCC central committee voted to terminate their alliance with the Panthers a few weeks after the incident. In an interview with Don Stone of SNCC, he said that after the incident with Forman he traveled to Oakland, armed and went to Cleaver's apartment. In a meeting with Cleaver, he told Cleaver that he and others in SNCC had not been intimidated by the KKK and were not intimidated by the Panthers. He indicated that if Forman and other SNCC members were harmed by the BPPSD that SNCC would retaliate. Stone feels that Cleaver realized the implications of the meeting and violence between the two groups was alleviated.⁵⁷¹

RAM in 1968 criticized the emerging Black Panther Party, for left wing adventurism. RAM stated that the open display of guns was violating the basic principles of people's secrecy. In order for the people's forces to be successful they must have the element of surprise. Huey disagreed with RAM's analysis. In response to the criticism raised against the BPPSD by the west coast branch of the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM), Newton wrote an essay titled "The Correct Handling of the Revolution." The west coast branch of RAM had criticized the BPPSD for their above ground action – openly displaying weapons and talking about the necessity for the community to arm itself for its own defense. RAM said that they were underground, and saw this was not the correct way to handle a revolution.⁵⁷²

The BPPSD hastened to transform the organization for the defense of Newton. It adopted an increasingly contentious position regarding governmental and law enforcement authorities.⁵⁷³

For an extended period of time the party would utilize its coalition with white leftists, valued for their administrative machinery and know how for generating publicity and funds.

According to JoNina Abron in a letter to Muhammad Ahmad, the BPP was a revolutionary nationalist organization, dedicated to fighting racism and capitalism. Consequently, Black Panthers worked with individuals and groups of all races and nationalities that shared the party's objectives.⁵⁷⁴ To secure masses of demonstrators for Newton's court appearances and to publicize the case in the black community, Panthers conceived the idea that a sound truck would be most helpful. In November of 1967 the organizers of the predominately white Peace and Freedom Party (PFP) appealed to the BPP. According to a former Panther, the eventual coalition with the PFP was the most successful coalition to be established after the imprisonment of Newton. To assist in publicizing the Newton case and the Panther program nationally and abroad, the BPP used a number of available young militants, both black and white. They were used to print, write, and distribute thousands of leaflets, posters, buttons, and other materials, combined with the use of printing equipment and

⁵⁷⁰ James Forman, The Making of Black Revolutionaries, [Seattle, WA: Opened Hand Publishing, Inc., 1985], pp. 522-523.

⁵⁷¹ Interview with Don Stone, Atlanta, Georgia, 1994.

⁵⁷² Huey P. Newton, To Die for the People: The Writings of Huey P. Newton (Toni Morrison (ed.)), [New York: Writers and Readers Publishing, Inc., 1995], pp. 14-19.

⁵⁷³ Op. Cit., G. Louis Heath, p. 49.

⁵⁷⁴ Letter from Jonia Abron to Muhammad Ahmad 6/17/99. Historical Note: RAM considered itself a revolutionary nationalist organization. RAM cooperated and worked with various white left groups since 1963 but was critical of them.

sound trucks. Rallies and speaking tours were tactics used by the BPP in the Free Huey campaign. The scope of this strategy extended for about one year, due to the fact that the prosecution had only reached its first stage, when a jury sent Newton to prison for a non-capital offense or “voluntary manslaughter,” on September 8, 1968. Dissension erupted in the Oakland headquarters, after the verdict and subsequent appeal that resulted in a Seale-Hillard union that commenced a purging of the ranks and at the same time attempted to establish a new course and programs.

From the time of his indictment on murder and other charges, on November 13, 1967, a white lawyer named Charles Garry was hired by the Panthers to represent Newton. A white, anarchist-oriented youth headed one of the first local groups organized to solicit legal defense funds for Newton.⁵⁷⁵

According to Earl Anthony, it was Eldridge’s idea to use the Peace and Freedom Party sound truck that first brought about contact between the two groups on December 22, 1967.⁵⁷⁶

After getting out of jail Bobby Seale joined Eldridge Cleaver in forming a coalition with the Peace and Freedom Party in an effort to utilize their resources and to work in their communities in an effort to build a massive defense for Huey Newton, the imprisoned Minister of Defense of the Black Panther Party. Remembering that Newton had always taught that the role of white people should be to work to end racism in their own community; Seale along with Cleaver secured \$3,000 for the Free Huey Movement encouraging African-Americans to register to vote as Peace and Freedom Party members. Seale and Cleaver after agreeing to the coalition went to the jail where Newton was being held and got his approval.

Seale recalled:

We had a number of rallies in the black community, in Hunter’s Point, the Fillmore and West Oakland, with the Peace and Freedom Party supplying sound and technical equipment which the Black Panther Party did not, at that time, have at all. With the \$3,000, we were able to pay a fair retainer to Charles R. Garry for Huey’s defense. In the white community as well as the black, we initiated a broad campaign for increased concern about, the problems of the black community, centered around our leader and Minister of Defense, brother Huey P. Newton.⁵⁷⁷

An editorial in The Black Panther of March 16, 1968, explained the party leaders’ motives in working with whites, especially the “white radicals” who created the Peace and Freedom Party. With Newton’s life at stake, the party saw no excuse for indulging egos, the paper declared, and from the moment of Newton’s arrest, the leaders “began a frantic search for building a broad base of support to set him free.” In the elections held in November 1968,

⁵⁷⁵ Jim Haskins, Power To The People: The Rise and Fall of the Black Panther Party, [New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 1997], p. 61.

⁵⁷⁶ Earl Anthony, Picking Up the Gun [New York: Dial press, 1971], p. 81. Also, The Black Panther Party: Reconsidered, [Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 1998], p. 31.

⁵⁷⁷ Bobby Seale, Seize The Time: The Story of the Black Panther Party and Huey P. Newton, [New York: Random House, 1968], p. 208.

the PFP had a shortage of signatures to get on the California ballot to propagate its opposition to American military intervention in Vietnam. In exchange for the additional signatures that were essential by a January 1968 deadline that the Panthers could and did procure, the PFP agreed to permit the BPP use of its organization facilities in the Newton defense campaign. However, it was when Cleaver became the PFP candidate for President of the United States on the ballot in California and other states, that the Newton case received nationwide publicity. The party presented Newton, who was imprisoned at the time, as a contender for the U. S. Congress from the Seventeenth District (Oakland), and Bobby Seale for the California Assembly from the Seventeenth Assembly District (Berkeley); Kathleen Cleaver ran for U. S. Congress in San Francisco. Militant African-Americans challenged the Panthers that they were relying on the “ballot more than the bullet.” Panther leaders assured them that the strategy was to help Newton and the organization, and not to win political office in a society that consistently alienated African-Americans.⁵⁷⁸ Party efforts in the 1968 local primaries drew Newton and Seale over 25,000 votes a piece, qualifying them for the general election.

Police raided Cleaver’s apartment in January. The Seale’s were arrested in their apartment early one morning in February, with the police using the excuse that they were looking for weapons. The police seemed like they were attempting to exhaust the funds raised by the Black Panther Party. It was in this period; on February 28, 1968 after the Newton birthday rally that Cleaver’s Soul On Ice was published. As events were developing, these leaders were becoming national celebrities.

Following the raid in the Cleaver and Seale apartment, Newton issued “Executive Mandate 3” on March 1st, ordering all members “to acquire guns” to be able to defend their homes or face expulsion if they failed. Seale recommended that each home have “a shotgun, a .357 magnum, and a .38 pistol.”⁵⁷⁹

Differences over strategy, tactics and primary activity began to emerge within the Black Panther Party leadership in early 1968. Eldridge Cleaver “Papa Rage,” had a militarist approach to building the party and encouraged, armed adventurism activity among the BPP membership while Bobby Seale, Huey Newton and David Hillard thought the party should place emphasis on what became known as survival programs.

On April 4, 1968, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee. African-Americans vented their anger spontaneously erupting in urban rebellions in over 100 cities north as well as south. The Black Panther Party for Self Defense working in conjunction with the Oakland police circulated throughout the Oakland African-American community pleading with African-Americans to remain calm. The Oakland community did not explode.

David Hillard in This Side of Glory describes how enraged and agitated Eldridge Cleaver became over Dr. King’s assassination. Feeling that he and the BPP had to prove they were the vanguard, he proposed an ambush of the police on April 6, 1968.

⁵⁷⁸ G. Lewis Heath, Off the Pig! The History and Literature of the Black Panther Party, [Meuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1976], p. 50.

⁵⁷⁹ Kathleen Rout, Eldridge Cleaver, [Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1991], p. 63.

We got to do something...we got to prove we're the vanguard. Everybody's doing something around the country..."The brothers and sisters are moving and the party's not with them; we must sign our name to what's going on...It's time to intensify the struggle...Now's the time to show people the correct way to do this.⁵⁸⁰

After internal discussion and debate a vote was taken by most Panthers to put Cleaver's plan into action.

On the night of April 6, 1968, Eldridge Cleaver, David Hillard, John Scott of San Francisco, Wendell Wade and Bobby Hutton were cruising around with two other Panthers cars carrying ten more Panthers following in a caravan. Cleaver halted his car and got out to relieve himself in the street. An approaching police car noticed a ducking figure behind the parked Panther car crouched. The police fired shots at the Panthers but the stories vary. The police opened a barrage of gunshots at the Panthers, and Eldridge Cleaver and Bobby Hutton were held up in a walk in basement under a frame house at 1218 E. 28th Street. The shootout began at 9:07 p.m. and lasted until 10:30 p.m. The other Panthers were quickly rounded up as they scattered; Hillard made it as far as a bedroom of the house next door, but the residents turned him in.⁵⁸¹

Caught by surprise the Panthers were scattered. A shootout occurred for 90 minutes between Cleaver, Hutton and the police. Essentially the house began to catch fire as a result of the police volleys.

Cleaver was struck in the chest by a tear gas canister. Cleaver stripped naked to see where he was wounded.⁵⁸² Cleaver advised Bobby Hutton to also strip naked and when the two of them walked out of the house naked the police would be shocked and might not kill them. Bobby Hutton is said to have been too shy or had too much pride to strip fully naked. He stripped down bare chest to his waist still wearing his pants. The police tear-gassing of the house forced Cleaver and "Lil" Bobby Hutton out of the house. The police told Bobby Hutton who was stripped down to his waist to run and shot him in the back as he ran. Cleaver was arrested and charged with violation of parole. The April 6th incident further propelled the Black Panther Party into the news media. Many celebrities came in the open to support the BPP. The BPP gained mass support in Northern California and its influence soon spread throughout the state of California and across the country. Eldridge Cleaver was released from prison on \$50,000 bail on June 12, 1968, six days after the assassination of Robert Kennedy (John Kennedy's brother was a leading Presidential candidate in the Democratic Party primary). Cleaver being the presidential candidate of the PFP became a cause.⁵⁸³

Growth into a National Organization

⁵⁸⁰ David Hilliard and Lewis Cole, This Side of Glory: The Autobiography of David Hillard and the Story of the Black Panther Party, [Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1993], p. 183.

⁵⁸¹ Jim Haskins, Power to the People: The Rise and Fall of the Black Panther Party, [New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 1997], pp. 44-48.

⁵⁸² Op. Cit., (Kathleen Rout, Eldridge Cleaver), pp. 70-71.

⁵⁸³ Ibid. p. 72.

The Black Panther Party for Self-Defense (Oakland) grew rapidly. Huey P. Newton said “it grew much too rapidly”.⁵⁸⁴ It grew from approximately 31 members as of May 2, 1967 to approximately 5,000 members by December 1968. By the end of 1969 dropping the title for Self-Defense, the Black Panther Party had approximately 10,000 members. By the summer of 1969, the BPP was a national organization with over 32 chapters and branches throughout the United States.⁵⁸⁵

According to Huey P. Newton, the Black Panther Party in the 1967-1968 period had a membership of 10,000 with 50,000 supporters and at the time of his trial for the murder of a prostitute, estimated membership of the BPP was 200.⁵⁸⁶

The Black Panther Party emerged in the latter 60’s as clearly the largest public African-American revolutionary organization. By estimates of previous members it was estimated that 30,000 African-Americans had joined the BPP between 1966 and 1978 when it closed it’s doors.⁵⁸⁷

The Black Panther Party began to expand into a national organization in April 1968, when the national headquarters in Oakland began granting official recognition to local Black Panther Party chapters around the country. During the spring of 1968, Bobby Seale and David Hillard, representing the central committee of the BPP, began granting charters to groups calling themselves Black Panthers in various cities. The groups certified as Black Panther Party chapters had to agree to meet qualifications established by the national office. Members who wanted to lead new chapters were required to come to Panther national headquarters in Oakland for six weeks training.

Potential Panther leaders came to Oakland, sold The Black Panther (the Black Panther Party newspaper), memorized the rules and platform of the Party and attended political education classes. From January to June 1968, a dozen new Panther chapters were established throughout the nation. By April 1968, the Black Panther Party had chapters in Los Angeles, New York, Chicago and Seattle. In the month of June, alone a thousand new members were recruited in the party.

According to U. S. government accounts the Black Panther Party grew from October 15, 1966 as a local organization to a national organization of from 1,500 to 2,000 members scattered in 25 chapters across the country in 1968. It (the U. S. Government) estimates the BPP reached its peak in membership by December of 1968.⁵⁸⁸

Most of the BPP chapters were established after January 1, 1968. The Black Panther Party at one time or another since its founding, October 15, 1966 until early 1971, had official chapters in at least 61 cities in 26 states and in the District of Columbia.

⁵⁸⁴ Interview with Huey Newton in “Eyes on the Prize” video.

⁵⁸⁵ Kirt Kim Holder, The History of the Black Panther Party 1966-1972: A Curriculum Tool for African-American Studies: unpublished dissertation, p. 122.

⁵⁸⁶ Video Power to the People.

⁵⁸⁷ Interview with Bila Sunni Ali, Amherst, Mass., 1975.

⁵⁸⁸ House of Representatives, Ninety-Second Congress, Report by the Committee on Internal Security, Gun-Barrel Politics: The Black Panther Party, 1966-1971. Washington, D. C., U. S. Government Printing Office, 1971, p. 69.

Police reports indicate fifteen BPP chapters were organized in 1968, thirteen more in 1969; giving twenty more chapters in 1969 and ten chapters in 1970. Eight chapters became defunct in 1969 and six in 1970. According to local law enforcement agencies there were 77 cities in 32 states where the Black Panther Party was reported to have been active.⁵⁸⁹ Most of the chapters functioned in large urban centers outside of the South. By winter of 1970, there was Black Panther activity in 35 cities in 19 states and the District of Columbia. This activity was conducted under the supervision of 13 Black Panther chapters and five branches, 20 National Committees to Combat Fascism and two community information centers.⁵⁹⁰

Party members were not encouraged to work but to live in Panther collectives, working full-time for the Party (BPP), receiving revenue from sales of the party newspapers. As the party expanded so did their efforts to transform the party from an organization protesting police brutality into a political organization.

Throughout its development the Black Panther Party attempted to further politically develop its membership, sophisticate its organization and refine its program.

The Black Panther Party was based on collective leadership. By April of 1968 it had established a national central committee of eleven, 10 men and 1 woman, which later expanded to 13, 12 men and 1 woman. The method of making policy in the BPP prior to April of 1968 was democratically decided by a vote of Panther Party membership in the Oakland area, not exceeding 50.

The majority of Panthers were male and between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five.⁵⁹¹ There was a six-week political education for party members divided into three parts: community, leadership, and cadre.

The National Headquarters (Oakland) created a standard format, under the direction of George Murray, minister of education and sent weekly lessons to chapters. Party members read books such as Franz Fanon's Wretched of the Earth, Mao Tse Tung's The Little Red Book (Quotations of Chairman Mao Tse Tung), The Autobiography of Malcolm X and Kwame Nkrumah's I Speak of Freedom.⁵⁹²

At times in political education classes' members of the BPP would have to read a paragraph of a document and explain it.

In the initiation process Party members had to read and discuss material in local newspapers and in the Black Panther newspaper. They also had to memorize the Ten-point program and party rules. Members were encouraged to write essays, reports and poetry and to contribute to the Party's newspaper. New members also learned the duties of the Panther positions.

⁵⁸⁹ Black Panther Party Part 4 National Office Operations and Investigation of Activities in Des Moines, Iowa and Omaha, Nebr./Hearings before the Committee on Internal Security House of Representatives Ninety-First Congress Second Session Appendix A, p. 4977.

⁵⁹⁰ Op. Cit., Gun Barrel Politics, p. 69.

⁵⁹¹ Mario Van Peebles, Ula Y. Taylor and J. Tarika Lewis, Panther: A Pictorial History of the Black Panthers and the Story Behind the Film, [New York: New Market Press, 1995], p. 67.

⁵⁹² Ibid., Panther, p. 70.

Captains were the highest-ranking officers of rank-and-file membership. They linked the ministries and foot soldiers; then negotiated on behalf of both groups. New recruits had to take a pass/fail test. The new recruits were then sectioned into cadres (five to six members), which in many ways functioned like extended families. Cadres studied and worked together and watched each other's backs. Many cadres would eventually live together in the same apartment or house. Some of the volunteer duties that Panthers performed included cleaning up, security, officer of the day, secretarial, distribution and sale of newspapers, cooking, answering phones, enlisting donations, distributing, announcing community activities, passing out leaflets and posters, transportation, sales of buttons and posters.⁵⁹³

In the final stage of the initiation process Panthers were taught respect for weapons, how to clean and assemble artillery, technical and military training. In some cases, Panthers were secret members in order to safeguard their personal employment.

In the initial period, the BPP operated as a three-tiered structure to accommodate its rapid expansion.

At the highest level, the party's governing body, the Central Committee, comprised BPP founders Huey P. Newton as Minister of Defense and Bobby Seale as Chairman along with Minister of Information Eldridge Cleaver, Deputy Minister of Information Frank Jones, and Chief of Staff David Hillard. The Central Committee was always based at national headquarters in the Bay area. The intermediate level was formed by the state regional chapters, such as Illinois, Maryland, and New York. The leaders of these chapters were chosen or if self-selected, confirmed by Chairman Seale or a representative of national headquarters. Local franchises represented the BPP at the ground level.⁵⁹⁴

The rank-and-file members would report to branch or chapter leaders depending on Party organization development in a specific geographic area.

Assata Shakur describes the strength and weakness of the BPP political education program. There were three different political education classes: Community classes, classes for BPP cadre and PE classes for Panther leadership.⁵⁹⁵ Shakur says that the BPP had no systematic approach to political education and she feels this was the main reason many Party members underestimated the need to unite with other black organizations and to struggle around various community issues. Assata felt the party had some of the most politically conscious sisters and brothers but failed to spread that consciousness to the general cadre and failed to teach them organizing and mobilizing techniques.

Shakur analyzed two major points that hindered this. She, Newton and others said that the Party grew too fast and almost from its inception, the BPP was under attack from the U. S. government. These two factors did not allow the BPP enough time to develop a step-by-step approach to Party building and consolidation of mass support.

⁵⁹³ Ibid, *Panther*, p. 71.

⁵⁹⁴ Ollie A. Johnson III, "Explaining the Demise of the Black Panther Party: The Role of Internal Factors" in Charles E. Jones (ed.) *The Black Panther Party: Reconsidered* (Baltimore Black Classic Press, 1998), p. 398.

⁵⁹⁵ Assata Shakur, *Assata: An Autobiography*, (Chicago, Illinois, Lawrence Hill, 1987), p. 221.

Assata says, “I am convinced that a systematic program for political education, ranging from the simplest to the highest level, is imperative for any successful organization or movement for Black Liberation in this country.”⁵⁹⁶

The party grew tremendously in 1968. First with its initial alliance with SNCC, chapters were established and a national framework for a national organization was created. Then through the network and grapevine of various left or Marxist groups who saw the BPP as a positive development; the influence of the BPP grew significantly among African-American College students particularly on white college campuses.

The Los Angeles chapter of the BPP:

The Los Angeles chapter of the Black Panther Party was established by early march, 1968 under the initial leadership of Bunchy Apprentice Carter. Starting with an initial cadre of 20 the L. A. Chapter grew to approximately 200 and during the summer of 1968 its’ membership grew to over four hundred. Bunchy Carter was appointed Deputy Minister of Defense for Southern California of the BPP.⁵⁹⁷

As early as mid-March or early April 1968 antagonisms between the L. A. Chapter of the Black Panther Party and Ron Karanga’s U. S. (United Slaves) organization had emerged including minor shootouts. Since the release of F.B.I. COINTELPRO documents it has been revealed that the F.B.I. and/or police agents who served as agent provocateurs infiltrated both groups. Earl Anthony an F.B.I. informant and agent provocateur in the BPP has documented some of his treacherous activity in his book Spitting In The Wind. At the height of its development the L. A. Chapter of the Black Panther Party using James Forman’s 10 by 10 by 10 plan, could sell 6,000 Black Panther newspapers in three days.⁵⁹⁸

Though 1968 was the year of national expansion of the BPP, by 1969 the BPP was receiving repression from police seemingly across the country. According to Abdul Qahhar, the BPP sold 30,000 copies of the Black Panther newspaper on a weekly basis in Chicago and 35,000 copies a week in New York.⁵⁹⁹

According to Rashad Byrdsong, many Panthers were committing offenses to secure means of survival because revenues from the newspaper were not enough for an income.⁶⁰⁰

The Founding of the New York Chapter

According to Sundiata Acoli, the Black Panther Party was organized in New York in the summer of 1968:

In the summer of ’68, David Brothers established a BPP branch in Brooklyn, New York and a few months later Lumumba Shakur set up a branch in Harlem, New York.⁶⁰¹

⁵⁹⁶ Ibid, (A. Shakur), p. 222.

⁵⁹⁷ Earl Anthony, Picking Up the Gun, [New York: Pyramid Books, 1971], p. 100.

⁵⁹⁸ Op. Cit., Picking Up The Gun, p. 107.

⁵⁹⁹ Interview with Abdul Quhar (Ben Simmons), Cleveland, Ohio 1997.

⁶⁰⁰ Interview with Rashad Byrdsong, Cleveland, Ohio, 1998.

⁶⁰¹ Sundiata Acoli, “A Brief History of the Black Panther Party and Its Place in the Black Liberation Movement,” April 2, 1985, p. 1.

Cleaver arrived first in the New York City area on October 11, 1968, and he gave two speeches on the same day.

In the afternoon, he was driven with a Panther escort to a little Christian Brothers men's liberal arts school in New Rochelle called Iona College. While he was there local police, a state police investigator, and an FBI agent James Gorgan, all of who later described the events to the Internal Security Subcommittee for the Senate Judiciary Committee, headed by conservative James O. Eastland of Mississippi, attended his speech.⁶⁰² Several cadre of the New York Chapter of the second Black Panther Party (Oakland) came out of high school struggles waged by African-American students. Students like Lumumba Shakur, Zayd Malik Shakur, Matula Shakur and Bila Sunni Ali were members of the African-American Student Association that had close contact with the African-American Teachers Association. The African-American Teachers Association had been organized around the defense of Herman Ferguson (RAM) Revolutionary Action Movement member framed in the infamous 1967 Queens "17" Assassination plot. Lummuba Shakur had experienced gang fighting in Philly, New York City, and Atlantic City. In all the cities, he felt the phenomenon was the same, that is, the animosity (alienation) and hostility of African-Americans, created by hundreds of years of white repression were directed against each other instead of against the system that created the repression and hostilities.⁶⁰³ He also felt:

If the street gang brothers and sisters were ever politicized to the point where they knew who their real enemy was, the American system would be in danger of collapse.⁶⁰⁴

The young students had waged a yearlong battle in the New York public school system for the incorporation of African-American history in the curriculum. As RAM ceased agitational activity, the young students either joined the Republic of New Africa or the efforts to rebuild the Black Panther Party in the New York area. The New York chapter of the BPP became one of the largest if not the largest chapter of the Black Panther Party.

Though the membership of the New York City chapter of the Black Panther Party fluctuated at times, its membership could be as high as five hundred members.⁶⁰⁵

There were ideological differences between the Oakland BPP and the New York BPP from the beginning. The New York BPP tended not to see the contradictions between them and cultural nationalists as contradictory and felt the two positions could be synthesized. Also there were various ideological positions held by members of the New York BPP that did not surface until 1971.

In Cleo Silver's interview, she states that she was recruited out of the health workers and hospital workers movement in New York. When Eldridge Cleaver initiated the line that the lumpen proletariat was the vanguard of the black revolution, Cleo held an internal meeting with Zaid Shakur and Lumumba Shakur of the New York BPP and said she disagreed that the lumpen proletariat was the vanguard. She raised the question inside the BPP in 1968 that the black working class was the vanguard of the black revolution. They were

⁶⁰² *Op. Cit.*, Kathleen Rout, *Eldridge Cleaver* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1991), p. 83.

⁶⁰³ *Look for Me in the Whirlwind: The Collective Autobiography of the New York 21*, [New York: Random House, 1971]

p. 148

⁶⁰⁴ *Ibid*, p. 150

⁶⁰⁵ Interview with Safiya Bukhari 6/6/98. Cleveland to New York, Telephone Interview.

sympathetic to her position, but felt that impending repression was going to occur and did not feel it was timely that they engage in internal ideological debate. They took her to the eastside of Harlem for her to work with the Young Lords Party who at the time was doing work with workers. She joined the Young Lords Party and eventually helped organize the Revolutionary Health Workers Union Movement, eventually going to Detroit and joining the League of Revolutionary Black Workers working in the plants as an industrial worker.⁶⁰⁶

Many demonstrations were held across the country as the “Free Huey” movement grew. On July 1968 more than 6,000 protestors came out in support of Huey Newton on the steps of the Alameda County Courthouse in Oakland. The Brown Berets (Mexican-American) organization patterning itself after the BPP made their first public appearance. Later an Asian American organization called the Red Guards, a Puerto Rican organization called the Young Lords party and a poor white American group called the Young Patriots and the White Panther Party would appear. A mass movement built momentum to free Huey Newton in 1968. Panthers particularly on the West Coast were sporadically arrested or assassinated by police in a variety of circumstances. In its rapid growth process the BPP exhausted its alliance with SNCC, between June-July, 1968, developed hostile relations with Ron Karanga’s US (United Slaves) organization and because of its alliance with the mainly all-white Peace and Freedom Party and Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) alienated a good portion of the African-American community. Eldridge Cleaver was nominated presidential candidate for the PFP on August 3, 1968. Cleaver received 36,000 votes for president as the Peace and Freedom Party candidate in 1968.⁶⁰⁷ Bobby Seale, chairman of the BPP and Captain David Hillard spoke to 5,000 anti-war anti-establishment demonstrators at the National Democratic Convention. The demonstrators were eventually attacked by the Chicago police in what is on record as a “police riot,” Bobby Seale was eventually indicted for conspiracy to riot along with seven others who were known as the Chicago Eight. On August 28, 1968 Stokely Carmichael, prime minister of the BPP was expelled from SNCC (the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee). In September of 1968, George Murray who was Minister of Culture of the BPP was expelled as a teacher at San Francisco State College. The Black Students Union of SFSC called a campus wide strike.

On September 8-12, 1968, Newton was convicted of voluntary manslaughter. This was considered a compromise for the BPP because it was felt that Huey would have gotten the electric chair had he been found guilty of murder. The BPP felt the verdict was a tactical temporary victory and that the mass mobilization techniques had been effective. The University of California (Berkeley) offered Eldridge Cleaver a non-credit lectureship. Governor Ronald Reagan opposed his hiring and sought to cut off UC (Berkeley’s) funds if Cleaver was not fired. UC students responded by staging a sit-in at the administration building. On September 28, 1968, Huey P. Newton was sentenced to 2 to 15 years in state prison. Drunken Oakland police shot up the Panther office. Cleaver was ordered to return to jail and his parole revoked in 60 days.⁶⁰⁸

⁶⁰⁶ Video Interview with Cleo Silver (1999) New York to Cleveland, Ohio.

⁶⁰⁷ Kathleen Rout, Eldridge Cleaver, [Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1991], p. 136.

⁶⁰⁸ Ibid, (Kathleen Rout), p.71.

David Hillard, Chief of Staff, took command of the BPP with Newton's absence. On October 9, 1968, Eldridge Cleaver began his first lecture on the UC Berkeley campus. He led approximately 5,000 students in a chorus of "Fuck Ronald Reagan" on the steps of Sproul Hall. On November 6th students and some staff at San Francisco State College began a major strike.

On November 24th Eldridge Cleaver disappeared three days before he was scheduled to turn himself in to serve the remainder of the thirteen-year sentence for a 1958 rape conviction. Having fled the United States in 1968 to avoid prosecution for the April 26 shootout he secretly traveled by way of Canada to Cuba where he came into conflict with Cuban authorities about his supposedly sexual behavior. At the bequest of the Cubans, the Algerians gave Cleaver exile status, where he established the international section of the BPP. Cleaver described its main tasks as: internationally publicizing the Panther "struggle"; making alliances with other movements; receiving assistance from other groups; and laying proposals before the U.N. in the future.⁶⁰⁹ Carmichael and his faction within the Panthers were purged from the party in 1969.

Panthers on the East Coast (New York) were involved in the Ocean-Hill Brownsville alternative quality education movement to establish a community-controlled school. They provided some of the foot soldiers, demonstrators and security for the parents and students.⁶¹⁰

On the West Coast, on December 4, 1968, more than five hundred members of the community went to San Francisco State campus to support the strikers. Confrontation between strikers and police resulted in a number of arrests. Throughout 1968 Panther offices were raided and Panthers arrested.

From a very anarchistic and adventurous beginning the national leadership led by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale and David Hillard in 1969 began to develop a disciplined organization.

In 1969, 348 Black Panther Party members were arrested for a series of offenses. This phenomenon escalated to such a degree that chairman Bobby Seale began reorganizing the party. There was a general reorganization of the BPP, both nationally and locally in 1968 and 1969. In the January 4, 1969 issue of the Black Panther, 26 rules of the Black Panther Party drafted by Bobby Seale appeared along with a press conference statement by the central committee of the BPP stating that the BPP was going to purge provocateur agents, kooks and avaricious fools who had joined the party.

In this period the BPP engaged in an organizational and ideological purge.⁶¹¹ Not only did the BPP undergo a purge of agent provocateurs but also underwent an ideological purge. There were standing differences between Carmichael, who advocated an all class united front of African-Americans and Pan Africanism and Cleaver who advocated a multi-cultural unity of various allies, red, black, brown, yellow and white emphasizing class struggle against the capitalist class and the black petty bourgeoisie and cultural nationalist.

⁶⁰⁹ Op. Cit., Rout, p. 72.

⁶¹⁰ Eyes on the Prize Power! Video (1966-1968).

⁶¹¹ Bobby Seale, *Seize The Time* [New York: Random House, 1970] p. 370.

The debate came out into the open at a Pan African Festival held in Algeria in 1969. Cleaver, the Panther Minister of Information at that time still held considerable weight on the BPP national central committee. The Panther 26 rules of discipline were published in the Black Panther newspaper, January 4, 1969.

The Party's decision to close ranks further contributed to the increased opportunities for women to fill nontraditional female roles. Party leaders in January 1969 prohibited infiltration by police informants. Consequently, a greater reliance was placed upon the current membership rather than new recruits to implement Party programs. Concurrently, the national leadership initiated the expulsion of suspected police informers and insubordinate Party members.

During this date of organization flux, women in the party emerged as national and local party members.⁶¹²

Beginning in late 1968 and early 1969, community services programs, such as the free breakfast for children and free health clinic projects as well as liberation schools and community political education classes, were implemented nationally (with varying degrees of success). Prior to initiating the official "survival" programs, Panther chapters had already been involved in local community struggles for decent housing, welfare rights, citizens' police review panels, black history classes, and traffic lights on dangerous intersections in African-American neighborhoods.

The development of an overt and public dialogue within the Party about male chauvinism also intensified in late 1968 and continued throughout 1969. Each of these events influenced the ideological and practical development of the BPP.

In January of 1969, the BPP started its most successful survival program, the Free Breakfast for Children Program. The FBCP was designed for poor children to give them breakfast before attending school. It was first initiated at St. Augustine's Church in Oakland. Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale said the program followed the BPP's principles that were to "serve the people." While the Panthers on the East Coast worked with political and cultural nationalists, on the West Coast tensions between them then developed into assassinations. On January 17, 1969 in a conflict over who was going to be chosen as Black Studies Director at UCLA, two Panthers were ambushed and shot to death by two members of Ron Karenga's US (United Slaves) organization. John Huggins and Alprentice "Bunchy" Carter, key figures in the Los Angeles BPP were gunned down.⁶¹³

On February 13, 1969, in Berkeley, 37 student strikers were arrested in the UCLA Berkeley third world strike. On March 14, 1969 in Los Angeles following a student strike meeting at Victory Baptist Church, an altercation ensued in the parking lot between Panthers and members of the US organization. Ronald Freeman, a Panther was wounded in the chest and groin. BPP members, Bobby Seale and Massi Hewitt toured Scandinavian countries, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland. They established BPP support committees. On April 1, 1969, twenty-one key members of the New York BPP were arrested for conspiring to blow up New York subways and other supposedly targets. On April 10, 1969, New York

⁶¹² Charles Jones, (ed.) The Black Panther Party Reconsidered, [Black Classic Press, 1998], p. 130.

⁶¹³ Elaine Brown, A Taste of Power [New York: Pantheon Books, 1992], pp. 156-160.

high school students held a demonstration at Long Island City High School to demand freedom for the Panther Twenty-One.

Carmichael and wife, South African singer, Miriam Makeba moved to Conakry Guinea. Carmichael announced that this move to Guinea was to study with Kwame Nkrumah (deposed president of Ghana) and Sekou Toure, President of Guinea.

Difference in leadership style and ideology, which had been suppressed in efforts to build support for Huey Newton's defense, began to surface after Newton was convicted of manslaughter in September of 1968 for the October 1967 shoot out. The first major difference was Eldridge Cleaver's insistence of creating armed confrontations with the police that resulted in the April 6, 1968 killing of Bobby Hutton.

In 1969, the exiled Cleaver called Panthers to hold and defend their offices. Cleaver resurfaced in April 1969 in Algiers, Algeria. Numerous shootouts occurred with many Panthers going to jail. This strategy also targeted the Party for destruction because the police and F.B.I. through informants, agents, and electronic surveillance were aware of most of the planning of these extra legal activities before they occurred. Huey Newton from prison was stressing more emphasis on service programs which he called survival programs. Cleaver also alienated the African-American nationalist community because he was seeking monetary resources from the white left needed for Newton's defense. Newton seemed to have temporarily tolerated this. Differences between Carmichael and Cleaver surfaced by 1969 but the two had been battling inside the BPP since Carmichael was drafted as Prime Minister of the BPP in 1968. Carmichael saw the need for an all-class African-American united front before concentrating on efforts to solidify alliances with the Euro-American left.

Carmichael and his faction had been under attack for having a Pan-African cultural nationalist line in the Party. His faction was being purged within the Party. Carmichael and Cleaver met at the Pan African Cultural Arts Festival held in Algeria with Cleaver favoring an Alliance of various ethnic groups inside the U.S., which Fred Hampton Chairman of the Illinois BPP called the "Rainbow Coalition."

Carmichael denounced the BPP for its concentration of building alliances with the white left. Thirteen members of the New York Black Panther Party were purged with their names published in The Black Panther on April 27, 1969. The Free Breakfast program proved to be a success with thousands of children being fed throughout the Bay area.

On May 1, 1969, more than 1,000 people participated in a mass "Free Huey" rally at San Francisco Federal Court. On May 4, 1969, the New Jersey Black Panther Party chapter expelled nineteen members. "Free Huey" rallies were held in twenty major cities at U. S. Federal District courts.⁶¹⁴ On May 21st in New Haven, Connecticut, Panther Alex Rackley was viscously tortured and murdered by Panthers who suspected him of being an agent. Agent jacketing spreading rumors that key Panther members of the party were police agents was one of the tactics that police agents used to destroy the party. This was an effective tool of the F.B.I.'s C.O.I.N.T.E.L.P.R.O. program. Panther George Sams eventually pleaded guilty to a second-degree murder charge. The New Haven, Connecticut, Panther office was

⁶¹⁴ Mario Van Peebles, Ula Y. Taylor and J. Tarika Lewis, Panther, [New York: New Market Press, 1995], p. 182.

raided by police and Panthers were arrested on conspiracy to commit murder on May 22nd.⁶¹⁵ On May 23, 1969, in San Diego, California, US organization members murdered Panther, John Savage.⁶¹⁶ On June 4th Detroit police raided the BPP office, looking for suspects in the New Haven murder of Alex Rackley. Twenty thousand dollars worth of damage was done to the office and bail was set at \$4,000 each. Charges on all Panthers arrested were dropped.⁶¹⁷ On June 5, 1969 in Denver, Colorado, Roy Hithe and Landon Williams were arrested with no bail and charged with conspiracy in connection with the New York 21 and Connecticut 8 as well as unlawful flight to avoid prosecution.⁶¹⁸ On June 6, 1969, in Salt Lake City, Missouri, Lonnie McLucas was arrested in connection with the New Haven murder.⁶¹⁹ On June 7th the Chicago, Illinois BPP office was raided in search of Panther member George Sams. Eight Panthers were arrested and charged with harboring a fugitive. Bail was set at \$1,000 each member and eventually all charges were dropped.⁶²⁰ On June 15, 1969 a Panther “Free Health Clinic” in Berkeley, California opened. On June 21st Panther William Brent hijacked a plane to Cuba.⁶²¹ Fred Hampton, a young Chicago Black Panther leader had signed a unity pact with the Blackstone Rangers (Chicago’s largest street gang), poor whites and SDS chapters in the summer of 1969. This coalition was called the Rainbow Coalition.⁶²²

On July 2, 1969 a Panther liberation school opened in San Francisco. In New Haven, Connecticut on July 17th, the BPP initiated lead poisoning testing because the state had the worst lead poisoning record in the country. The BPP convened a “United Front Against Fascism” conference in Oakland, California July 18, 1969 to galvanize supporters from all communities to work for community control of police. A Panther liberation school with ninety children opened in Queens, New York. On July 22nd Eldridge Cleaver officially opened the Afro-American Information Center in Algiers, Algeria. A delegation of Panthers joined him in attending the twelve-day Pan-African Cultural Festival. The international section of the Black Panther Party was established.⁶²³ The BPP office in Chicago was raided on July 31, 1969. Police destroyed food and took five hundred dollars in cash. Pete Hayman, a Panther was charged with attempted murder and was beaten so severely that he had to be hospitalized.⁶²⁴ On August 2nd, the police raided the BPP office in Richmond, California.⁶²⁵ In San Diego, Panther Sylvester Bell was shot and killed by US members on August 15, 1969.⁶²⁶ On August 16th, Kansas City, Indiana, Staten Island and Philadelphia BPP chapters expelled members.⁶²⁷ On August 19th Bobby Seale was arrested in Berkeley after leaving the wedding of Masi Hewitt and Shirley Neely. He was taken to San Francisco and charged with initiating the riots at the 1968 Democratic Party National

⁶¹⁵ Gun Barrel Politics: The Black Panther Party, 1966-1971, [Washington, D.C.: U.S. House of Representatives, 197], p. 54.

⁶¹⁶ Mario Van Peebles, Ula Y. Taylor and J. Tarika Lewis, Panther: A Pictorial History of the Black Panthers and the Story Behind the Film, [New York: New Market Press, 1995], p. 182.

⁶¹⁷ Ibid, p. 182.

⁶¹⁸ Op. Cit., p. 182.

⁶¹⁹ Ibid, p. 182.

⁶²⁰ Op. Cit., p. 182.

⁶²¹ William Lee Brent, Long Time Gone, [New York: Times Books, 1996], pp. 133-142.

⁶²² Charles E. Jones (ed.), The Black Panther Party [Reconsidered], [Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 1998], pp. 370-372.

⁶²³ Ibid. pp. 220-224.

⁶²⁴ Mario Van Peebles, Ula Y. Taylor and Jitarika Lewis, Panther, [New York: New Market Press, 1995], p. 183.

⁶²⁵ Ibid., p. 183.

⁶²⁶ Jim Fletcher, Tanaquil Jones and Sylvere Latringer, Still Black, Still Strong, [New York: Semiotext (e), 1993], p. 232.

⁶²⁷ Op. Cit., p. 183.

Convention in Chicago and the New Haven murder of Alex Rackley.⁶²⁸ On August 20th Bobby Seale was released on twenty-five thousand dollar bond, rearrested and secretly extradited to stand trial in Chicago.⁶²⁹ In Los Angeles Panther Nathaniel Clark was murdered on September 12, 1969.

In a speech on September 22, 1969, during a trip to North Korea, Cleaver acknowledged that his comrades at home did not necessarily share his view on the need for immediate assumption of armed hostilities in the United States.⁶³⁰

Police and F.B.I. raided the Philadelphia BPP office on September 24th. The FBI took files, records and petitions for community control of police. On October 4, 1969, the Chicago BPP office was raided and seven Panthers were charged with attempted murder. Bail ranged from \$10,000 to \$20,000 each.⁶³¹

In October, Bobby Seale went to trial on the Chicago Eight case. The Los Angeles metro squad in broad daylight murdered Panther Walter "toute" Pope on October 18th as he dropped off BPP newspapers at a store. On November 6th, the Seattle, Washington BPP chapter opened a free medical clinic.⁶³² In November 1969, at a Vietnam Mobilization Day rally in San Francisco Golden Gate Park, David Hillard Chief of Staff of the BPP spoke and in his remarks attacked President Richard Nixon. He was arrested two weeks later for threatening the life of the President.

On November 12th in Los Angeles, police raided the BPP office while the BPP was holding a community meeting with leaders and doctors and nurses to establish a Bunchy Carter Free Medical Clinic. Police were forced to retreat because of the broad representation of the community present at the office. On November 22, 1969, 5,000 demonstrators marched and converged at the state courthouse in New Haven Connecticut in support of BPP members charged with the murder of Alex Rackley. In Chicago on November 25, 1969, 13 Panthers were held in "preventive detention" on \$100,000 bail for conspiracy charges to blow up various locations. On November 28th while in custody, Bobby Seale was beaten by prison guards and subjected to inhumane treatment.⁶³³ On December 4, 1969 in Chicago, police raided Fred Hampton's apartment at 4:00 a.m. in the morning murdering Hampton and Mark Clark in their sleep, shooting eighty-two bullets into the apartment during the raid.⁶³⁴ According to John Bracey, Jr. and Louis Randall (Randy) both members of RAM, talked to Fred Hampton of the Illinois Black Panther Party before his assassination warning him of the location of his building; how he was vulnerable to attack from the police, military logistics wise. They also tried to persuade him to tighten up his own security because they had "community" or "grape vine" information that the Illinois chapter of the Black Panther Party was deeply infiltrated.⁶³⁵

⁶²⁸ Bobby Seale, Seize the Time, [New York: Random House, 1970], pp. 289-296.

⁶²⁹ Ibid., pp. 296-314.

⁶³⁰ Ibid., Gun Barrel Politics, p. 100.

⁶³¹ Op. Cit., (Fletcher, Jones, Tatringer), p. 232.

⁶³² Op. Cit., (Van Peebles), p. 184.

⁶³³ Ibid., p. 184.

⁶³⁴ Ward Churchill and Jim Vander Wall, Agents of Repression [Boston, MA: South End Press, 1990], pp. 64-77.

⁶³⁵ Interview with John Bracey, Jr., Amherst, Mass., 1993, Interview with Louis Randall, Amherst, Mass., 1975.

There were 29 raids and other confrontations by police against the Black Panther Party between July 28, 1968 and December 4, 1969. On December 8, 1969 in Los Angeles, the police attacked the Southern California BPP.⁶³⁶ In a pre-dawn raid at two separate locations, 400 officers had a four-hour shootout and arrested Party members and children. The Los Angeles community responded with massive support and the establishment of a Friends of Panthers coalition.⁶³⁷ The year 1969 was one of great repression against the Black Panther Party, one in which there was a coordinated effort to arrest the expansion and development of the BPP. In 1969, 348 Black Panther Party members were arrested for a series of offenses.⁶³⁸ In 1970, while violent physical repression continued at a slower rate there was an increase in psychological counter-insurgency (genocide) against the BPP.

On January 9, 1970, Lee Berry, one of the New York Panther 21 was beaten severely in a Chicago jail and he had an epileptic seizure. After emergency surgery, he was listed in critical condition.⁶³⁹ On January 19th Philadelphia police set fire to the BPP office but it was put out in time.⁶⁴⁰ In February 1970, the Panther warehouse in San Francisco was set on fire burning all past issues of the Black Panther newspaper. On February 15, 1970, Huey Newton birthday benefits were held in Berkeley, New York City, New Haven, Connecticut and Seattle, Washington.⁶⁴¹ On March 10th in Algeria, six Panthers were expelled from the international section. On April 4, 1970 in New Haven, Connecticut, David Hillard and Emory Douglas were jailed for contempt of court, both received six-month sentences and bail was denied them.⁶⁴² On April 12th in New York, the Panther 21 defense office was burned destroying legal papers.⁶⁴³

On April 17, 1970, in Oakland, Panther Randy Williams and three other Panthers were arrested on assault with intent to commit murder and a deadly weapon charge. Williams was severely beaten while in custody.⁶⁴⁴ On April 18th in Frankfurt, West Germany, the solidarity committees of France, Britain, Denmark, Netherlands, West Germany and Sweden meet to discuss the repression against the Black Panther Party in the U.S.⁶⁴⁵ On May 1, 1970, in New Haven, more than 25,000 people gathered in support of Panthers Lonnie McClucas, Bobby Seale, and Erica Huggins. At Yale University on May 16th a black student revolutionary conference was held.⁶⁴⁶ On May 4th at Kent State University, Kent, Ohio, National Guardsman killed four unarmed white students and wounded nine at an anti-Vietnam war demonstration.⁶⁴⁷ In Detroit and Philadelphia BPP chapters expelled members. On May 29th the California Court of Appeals reversed Huey P. Newton's

⁶³⁶ Op. Cit. (Mario Van Peebles, Panther), p. 184.

⁶³⁷ Ibid., p. 184.

⁶³⁸ Kenneth O'Reilly, Racial Matters: The F.B.I.'s Secret File on Black America, 1960-1972, [New York: The Free Press, 1989], p. 297.

⁶³⁹ Op. Cit., (Mario Van Peebles), p. 184.

⁶⁴⁰ Op. Cit. (Mario Van Peebles, Panther), p. 184.

⁶⁴¹ Ibid., p. 105.

⁶⁴² David Hilliard and Lewis Cole, This Side of Glory, [Boston, MA: Little, Brown & Company, 1993], pp. 290-294.

⁶⁴³ Op. Cit., (Fletcher, Jones, Latringer), pp. 234-235.

⁶⁴⁴ Op. Cit. (Mario Van Peebles), p. 185.

⁶⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 185.

⁶⁴⁶ Yohuru Williams, Black Politics/White Power, [New York: Brandywine Press, 2000], pp. 152-154.

⁶⁴⁷ Scott L. Bills, Kent State/May 4, [Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press, 1988], pp. 16-18.

manslaughter conviction. The court though denied Newton bail pending, the prosecutions appeal.⁶⁴⁸ On May 31st the BPP in Boston opened a Free Health Clinic.⁶⁴⁹

On June 19th in Cleveland, Ohio, Winston Salem, North Carolina and Seattle, Washington, the BPP expelled members. One hundred police carried out a military assault on the BPP office in Cleveland, Ohio on July 1, 1970⁶⁵⁰; Los Angeles police raided the BPP office. In New Bedford, Massachusetts on July 31, 1970, police raided the Panther office and arrested 21 Panther members on charges of conspiracy to commit anarchy, inciting to riot and unlawful assembly. Bail totaled two million, three hundred and fifty thousand dollars. July 1970 Cleaver visited North Vietnam.

On August 3, 1970 in Philadelphia police and FBI go on a search and destroy mission to destroy three information centers. They stole money, destroyed clothes, and force Panthers to strip naked in the streets. Fifteen Panthers were arrested and their initial bail set at \$100,000 each. Later bail was reduced to \$1,500.

As legal difficulties of national and chapter leaders increased in late 1968 and 1969, supporters staffed fundraising committees with such names as the Los Angeles Friends of the Panthers, Legal Defense Committee of the New York Panther Party, and later the New York Committee to defend the Panthers. An appeal for legal defense and local funds was also the purpose of an Emergency Conference to Defend the Right of the Black Panther Party to Exist, held March 7 and 8, 1970, in Chicago. Officials of the CPUSA, despite their theoretical differences, with the Panthers, were among the participants in the affair that led to the creation of a continuations committee to carry on the cause.⁶⁵¹

Many small contributions as well as some substantial gifts from individual donors proved to be vital sources of funds that were applied toward the \$50,000 bail needed for Newton's release from prison.

The turning point in the national organization of the BPP occurred in August of 1970. On August 5, 1970, Huey P. Newton was set free on bail.⁶⁵² According to Safiya Bukhari many of the rank and file across the country were dissatisfied with the national leadership and favoritism seemingly parted to a chosen few. Huey Newton was expected to rectify these grievances upon his release. The release of Newton seemed to be the hopes of all those in dispute. Particularly, venom had been directed against chief of staff David Hillard. Madalynn Rucker said the accusations against David Hillard were unjust because he lived in a commune and did work like everyone else, receiving no special privileges.⁶⁵³

In hindsight, the sixty-seven agents the F.B.I. had infiltrated into the Party may have fostered much of this discord. Whether the rank and file had written Newton is not commonly known at this point but the F.B.I. did. By the time Newton was released he did

⁶⁴⁸ Huey P. Newton, Revolutionary Suicide, [New York: Writers and Readers Publishing, Inc., 1973], pp. 265-267.

⁶⁴⁹ Charles E. Jones, The Black Panther Party Reconsidered, [Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 1998], p. 184.

⁶⁵⁰ Op. Cit. (Mario Van Peebles), p. 186.

⁶⁵¹ G. Louis Heath, Off the Pigs!: The History and Literature of the Black Panther Party, [Methuchen, J.J.: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1976], p. 139.

⁶⁵² Huey P. Newton, Revolutionary Suicide, [New York: Writers and Readers Publishing, Inc., 1973], pp. 267-292.

⁶⁵³ Interview with Madalynn Rucker, 1998. 8/23/98.

not trust hardly anyone particularly Hillard, a life long friend, or Cleaver whom he had strategic differences with.

What most Panther members and the general public did not know was that the F.B.I. for years had been initiating plans of disruption of the Black Panther Party.

On August 13, 1970, the Philadelphia Field Office had an informant distribute a fictitious BPP directive to Philadelphia Panthers, questioning Newton's leadership ability. The Philadelphia Office informed FBI headquarters that the directive stresses the leadership and strength of David Hillard and Eldridge Cleaver while Huey Newton is only useful as a drawing card. It is recommended this directive...be mailed personally to Huey Newton with a short anonymous note. The note would indicate the writer, a community worker in Philadelphia for the BPP, was incensed over the suggestion Huey was only being used by the Party after founding it, and wanted no part of the Chapter if it was slandering its leaders in private. Headquarters approved this plan...⁶⁵⁴

Ten thousand supporters greeted Huey Newton upon his release on bail. Hillard was there for guidance, comradery, and protection.⁶⁵⁵

On August 7, 1970, in a Marin County courthouse in San Rafael, California, Jonathan Jackson, the younger brother of George Jackson, a Soladad brother, entered the courthouse in San Rafael, California kidnapping a judge, the prosecutor and three women jurors in an attempt to secure the release of his brother and other Soladad brothers.⁶⁵⁶ The attempted escape was part of young Jackson's plan to be coordinated with backup from Panther security in the area. The head of Panther security for the area was Melvin "Cotton" Smith, a police informant.⁶⁵⁷ According to Louis Tackwood in The Glasshouse Tapes, California police intelligence authorities knew about the plan beforehand and allowed for it to occur. For whatever reason, "Cotton" Smith decided not to provide reinforcements but Jonathan decided to act anyway. Whether Newton knew of the plan beforehand is speculation but police informants spread the rumor after the incident that Newton had vetoed the action. This caused dissension within the ranks of the BPP and the greater social movement particularly in California as well as across the country. During the incident James McClain, William Christmas and Ruchell McGee convicted felons in the courtroom-assisted young Jackson and all but McGee were killed in the shootout that resulted. The judge was also killed.⁶⁵⁸

Newton while in prison had studied and had time to think or strategize. Realizing that the BPP was under siege from all forces of the state, Newton planned a strategic retreat from his original position of confrontation with guns. When released he was planning his protracted emphasis on survival programs. This caused a division between him and those emphasizing immediate confrontation.

⁶⁵⁴ David Hilliard & Lewis Cole, This Side of Glory: The Autobiography of David Hilliard and the Story of the Black Panther Party, [Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1993], p. 307.

⁶⁵⁵ Jim Haskins, Power To The People, [New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 1997], pp. 75-76.

⁶⁵⁶ Op. Cit. (Ward Churchill and Jim Vander Wall), pp. 95-96.

⁶⁵⁷ Op. Cit. (Ward Churchill), p. 86.

⁶⁵⁸ Jim Haskins, Power to the People: The Rise and Fall of the Black Panther Party, [New York: Simon and Schuster Books for Young Readers, 1997], p. 79. Also see, Louis E. Tackwood, The Glass House Tapes, [New York: Avon Books, 1973].

Because Newton was arrested for the murder of a police officer in Oakland, California in October 1967, and was subsequently convicted of manslaughter in September 1968 and released from prison August 1970 he had in three years become an international symbol of African-American resistance in America for equality.

The F.B.I. through its infiltration of the BPP knew there were differences in the Panther leadership since 1968. Using its illegal tactics the F.B.I. focused on creating a split in the BPP when Newton was released. When Newton was released he worked to get Bobby Seale, Chairman of the BPP who was imprisoned, released.

According to Madalynn Rucker, Newton began to place more emphasis on community programs than verbal self-defense because many African-Americans in the community were also repressed, harassed for supporting the party and were becoming afraid to support it.⁶⁵⁹

At this time Eldridge Cleaver was in exile in Algeria heading the International Section of the BPP. Newton and Cleaver, two of the Party's most prominent members and leaders of the central committee, increasingly differed on strategy and tactics. Newton downplayed self-defense and police confrontation. Cleaver, however, advocated violent revolution and urban guerrilla warfare. Cleaver failed to recognize that the emphasis on military action isolated the BPP from the community thereby reinforcing its image as a gang of (super) revolutionaries. On the other hand, Newton was unprepared and overwhelmed by a national organization, built largely in his name. In the late 1970s, he toured the country speaking at major political events and visiting Panther chapters.

Bobby Seale was released from prison on bail and he and Newton attended the funeral of Jonathan Jackson. Huey Newton gave the eulogy. On August 19, 1970 in San Francisco, a national demonstration and mass rally to free all political prisoners took place. On August 27th, Philadelphia police raided the Panther Information Center.

Though he felt that Eldridge Cleaver's idea of convening a Revolutionary People's Plenary Session was grandiose and impractical, Newton gave a major address at its plenary session in Philadelphia at Temple University on September 5, 1970.⁶⁶⁰ More than 10,000 were in attendance. Many were disappointed at Newton's academic abstract philosophical method of presentation. Unlike Bobby Seale, Eldridge Cleaver, Fred Hampton, Michael Tabor or a Richard "Dhruba" Moore, Newton was not a fiery speaker.

Newton was not appealing to audiences and this greatly disappointed his followers. He proved to be a philosophical lecturer rather than a charismatic speaker. This helped to be a real let down to the rising expectations "by the New York chapter that Newton would solve many of the BPP's contradictions." Not known to many at the time Newton had contracted a cocaine habit from his increasing socializing with Hollywood celebrities. Later David Hillard, Chief of Staff of the BPP, would introduce them to "crack" "freebasing" cocaine. From studies of COINTELPRO, the F.B.I. and other intelligence agencies knew of

⁶⁵⁹ Interview with Madalynn Rucker, 8/23/98, Cleveland, Ohio to Sacramento, California, Telephone Interview.

⁶⁶⁰ David Hilliard and Lewis Cole, *This Side of Glory! The Autobiography of David Hilliard and the Story of the Black Panther Party*, [Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1998], pp. 312-313.

Newton's cocaine habit and allowed it if not fostered it to increase Newton's developing paranoia. There were other issues at hand that were the cause of the eventual split in the BPP in 1971.

Newton felt the Party was too militaristic and should have de-emphasized armed struggle that he felt Eldridge Cleaver had a fixation with.⁶⁶¹

...the Minister of Defense had several traits that first exploded in his conflict with Eldridge and later with other, mostly eastern, Panthers. In his earliest years of adolescence, Huey fought hard, mostly against his fellows in the neighborhood, and suspected anyone who he didn't know was friend to be his enemy. Can we say that this formative experience and youthful inclination simply disappeared when he created the party as a young, angry man? It appears that this deep, instinctual way of knowing, or of fearing the unknown, may have been a powerful factor in Huey's relationships with other Panthers.⁶⁶²

Newton like Robert Williams realized in this period of time that a successful revolution had to have the support of the majority of the people and therefore a "minority revolution" was impossible; even a minority led revolution was impossible unless it had the overwhelming support of the majority, in the case of the United States, white Americans. In his new political insight of this theoretical proposition in November 1970 and the fact that the state was bent on destroying the party, the BPP shifted its goal of achieving self-determination to obtaining self-determination through socialist revolution. Newton therefore began to place more emphasis on survival programs.

The decision by Huey P. Newton to concentrate on survival programs and electoral politics was a retreat from confrontation with the police; out of necessity and a return to the original posture of earlier Black Panther Party development.

In Algiers, Algeria, in September 1970, Eldridge Cleaver presided at the opening of a new international section of the Black Panther Party. The Algerian government gave the BPP official recognition as a liberation organization, a Villa and, 30,000 a year stipend.

On October 3, 1970, a Panther delegation including Elaine Brown and Eldridge and Kathleen Cleaver visited North Korea, North Vietnam and Peking, China. Eldridge Cleaver announced while in Moscow that there were differences within the Black Panther Party. He said he represented the militant wing of the party.

On October 13, 1970, Angela Davis who was accused of buying guns and helping Jonathan Jackson in the August 5th San Rafael shootout in California was captured in New York by law enforcement agencies.

On October 16, 1970 Julio Rolden, a Young Lord's Party leader, was found murdered in his cell at Riker's Island Prison in New York. In Detroit, six hundred police with two tanks and automatic weapons raided the Panther office.

⁶⁶¹ *Op. Cit.*, (Hilliard, *This Side of Glory*), p. 306.

⁶⁶² Mumia Abu-Jamal, *We Want Freedom: A Life in the Black Panther Party* [Cambridge, Massachusetts: South End Press 2004] p. 220

On November 13, 1970, in Algeria, the international section of the BPP hosted visitors from South Africa's African National Congress and Ambassadors from China, North Korea, and Ethiopia. As Cleaver traveled and established sub-chapters of the BPP, his view of revolutionary African politics waned.

In November 1970 the BPP planned to convene the People's Revolutionary Constitutional Convention that was scheduled for Howard University.

Two months later we hold the second meeting of the convention in D.C. The weekend is a disaster. After promising Kathleen will come, Eldridge keeps her in Algeria; meanwhile Howard University backs out and refuses to give us space, and the only people who show up are already converted white movement types. In six months the massive popular appeal of the antiwar and radical movement has vanished. Kent State has scared away the thousands who last spring seemed ready to be revolutionaries.⁶⁶³

On January 23, 1971, Huey Newton expelled Los Angeles Panthers Elmer "Geronimo" and Sandra Pratt. Newton had become paranoid as a result of the F.B.I.'s COINTELPRO program and his use of cocaine. The rank and file of the BPP responded to Geronimo's expulsion. The New York 21 wrote a public open letter criticizing the leadership of the BPP demanding the expulsion of David Hillard, chief of staff of the BPP.

Huey Newton centralized BPP money and personnel and closed most chapters around the nation.

Newton formed Stronghold, a legal entity that would allow the Black Panther Party to receive revenues from sales of his first, soon to be published book, *To Die for the People*, as well as from other artistic and business activities. He announced the formation of an Ideological Institute and summoned representatives from Panther chapters across the country to attend bi-monthly, two-day learning sessions that he taught on esoteric philosophical questions like free will and determination.⁶⁶⁴

Newton went to New Haven to support Bobby Seale and Ericka Huggins in the trial concerning the death of Alex Rackley. Michael Tabor and Richard "Dhruba" Moore, two of the New York 21, which had been accused in spring of 1969 of conspiring to blow up department stores, police stations, and commuter railways violated the conditions of their bail, (not to leave New York state) in order to discuss the ideological differences in the rank and file and also the leadership of the Black Panther Party.

The meeting of Tabor and Moore with Newton did not go well. The two immediately resigned from the party, as did Newton's secretary, Connie Matthews, who had married Tabor.⁶⁶⁵

Tabor and Moore jumped bail and immediately disappeared. Tabor's wife, Connie Matthews, who was Newton's secretary, also disappeared taking with her a number of Newton's important papers. When Judge John Murtaugh learned Tabor and Moore had

⁶⁶³ Ibid., (Hilliard, *This Side of Glory!*), p. 314.

⁶⁶⁴ Jim Haskins, *The Rise and the Fall of the Black Panther Party*, [New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 1997], p. 80.

⁶⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 81.

violated their bail arrangements he revoked their bail. The Weathermen, a white radical underground faction whom had split off from (SDS) Students for a Democratic Society in show of support of the BPP bombed Murtaugh's house. Members of the New York 21 issued a public statement praising the Weathermen saying they were the vanguard, criticized Newton and demanded David Hillard's BPP chief of staff's expulsion.

Safiya Bukhari said the conflict was not one of east and west coast but one of a rank and file undercurrent, which wanted more representation and equality in terms of life styles for the Party.⁶⁶⁶

New York Panthers noted that the lack of chapter representation on the central committee hampered their local organizing efforts. Moreover, African-American nationalism was very strong among New York Panthers exemplified by adoption of African names, the display of the red, black, and green flag, symbolizing the black nation, and frequent participation in black cultural events.

Newton responded by expelling all of the New York 21 from the Black Panther Party. Also as part of the ideological split, the Cleavers, living in Africa, had become more nationalistic while national headquarters was emphasizing class over race, the New York Panthers were saying that you had to synthesize race with class.

Michael Tabor and Connie Matthews surfaced later in Algiers with Eldridge Cleaver.

To publicize an upcoming Intercommunal Day of Solidarity on March 5, 1971, in Oakland, which was also to serve as a celebration of Newton's birthday, Newton agreed to appear on a local radio program. He then suggested that Cleaver also appear on the program via international telephone hookup.⁶⁶⁷

While on the San Francisco talk show via international telephone hookup, Cleaver began to criticize Newton for his policies. He questioned Newton's housing in a penthouse apartment and attacked his position of the co-existence of both a Palestinian and Israeli state. Cleaver also questioned Newton on expelling of Geronimo Pratt and the New York 21. He put the demands of the open letter in his own words and demanded the demotion of David Hillard as chief of staff. After the program Newton expelled Cleaver and the entire international section of the Black Panther Party from the BPP. Cleaver in turn, expelled Newton and the Oakland leadership and said that the Black Panther Party would be run from Algiers and New York. On March 5, 1971, in a nationally televised broadcast from Algiers, Eldridge Cleaver announced there was a split in the Black Panther Party. The FBI's COINTELPRO program which had been successful since the early 1960's from the Nation of Islam to the BPP was finally successful in destroying the national organization of the BPP. The Black Panther Party continued to exist but from the public announcements of its leaders it was never again a viable national force. It mainly became a regional and local political party whose character was transformed. We will investigate that transformation in the next section.

⁶⁶⁶ Interview with Safiya Bukhari, 6/6/98: Cleveland, Ohio to New York, Telephone Interview.

⁶⁶⁷ Op. Cit., (Haskins), p. 82.

With announcements of the mutual expulsions the black radical movement known as the black liberation movement was grossly affected. Panthers George Jackson, Ericka Huggins and Bobby Seale sided with Huey Newton with Huggins and Seale moving to Oakland once freed of charges against them in the New Haven case.

While the majority of the chapters remained loyal to Newton, the majority of members in all the East Coast chapters, the San Francisco and half of the Los Angeles chapter pledged loyalty to Cleaver. What followed was part of a design that was created by the FBI and police departments through their covert involvement in implementing internal warfare between the factions of the BPP.

Newton supporters shot a Cleaver supporter, Robert Webb to death in Harlem, New York. Newton supporter Sam Napier who was in charge of distribution of the Black Panther Party newspaper in Queens, New York, was murdered in the BPP newspaper office and the office set on fire by Cleaver supporters in retaliation for the Webb assassination. As murders from internal warfare continued, approximately thirty percent of the members of the BPP left the party or went into hiding.⁶⁶⁸ Of those remaining above ground still in the BPP went with Newton.

On May 19, 1971, the New York Panther 21 were acquitted of conspiracy charges. On May 24th, Bobby Seale and Ericka Huggins were acquitted on all charges in the Alex Rackley murder case. Both returned to Oakland with Huggins becoming editor of the Black Panther newspaper. In July, David Hillard was convicted for his participation in the April 6, 1968 shootout. Newton who was paranoid by this time expelled Hillard from the Party, while he was serving his prison term. Newton appointed Elaine Brown of the Los Angeles chapter the new Minister of Information. Brown lived in a collective with other Panthers and her daughter Ericka was cared for in one of the Party collectives.

On August 21, 1971, George Jackson one of the Soladad brothers; older brother of Jonathan Jackson was assassinated. He was shot in the back by prison guards during a prison disturbance, which was said to be an attempted prison break.

George Jackson was leader of most African-American prisoners in the state of California. He had built a statewide prison organization that eventually became known as the Black Guerrilla Family. Jackson had issued a call for all his men to protect Huey Newton when Newton was imprisoned.

Jackson through the grapevine requested to join the Black Panther Party and his request was granted. Jackson was made a member of the People's Revolutionary Army and given the rank of General and Field Marshal. For three years Jackson and Newton were in constant communication through various carriers, transmitting messages on paper and tape. Jackson became a Panther theoretician writing for The Black Panther newspaper.⁶⁶⁹

When Jackson planned his escape Panthers imprisoned at the same prison, San Quentin were supposed to create minor disturbances to throw off the prison security. For whatever reason, Newton supposedly told Panthers to "freeze" on the idea.

⁶⁶⁸ Bobby Seale interview (video), All Power to The People: The Black Panther Party and Beyond.

⁶⁶⁹ Huey P. Newton, Revolutionary Suicide, [New York: Writers and Readers Publication, Inc., 1995], pp. 306-307.

Bobby Seale was released from prison on bail of the New Haven murder conspiracy. He and Newton attended the funeral of George Jackson. Huey Newton gave the eulogy. But the Black Guerrilla Family never forgave Newton for Jackson's death. This would haunt Newton years later.

In October of 1971, the Oakland Community Learning Center, which had originally started as a school for Panther children opened its doors as an independent alternative school in a former church facility in East Oakland.

On December 15, 1971, Huey Newton was freed after the third mistrial stemming from the October 27, 1967 incident in which officer John Frey died. One central weakness of the Black Panther Party was around Huey Newton. Power within the organization had been centralized within one individual who had supreme power within the central committee. As Newton increased his cocaine addiction his actions became more irrational which led to the destruction of the BPP from within. The collective leadership failed to give constructive criticism and discipline its leadership. Bobby Seale was put in charge of the party's survival programs by Newton after a dispute on the Panther newspaper with Elaine Brown. Under Seale's supervision in Oakland, the BPP organized extensive food giveaways. In this period, the BPP survival programs included testing for sickle-cell anemia in its clinics. The BPP bought a shoe factory and gave away shoes. Both Rashad Brydsong and Kalid Muhammad stated that the BPP should have charged a minimum price for the shoes and other items so the BPP could have become independent, "self-reliant."⁶⁷⁰

Huey Newton decided to build a model base for the BPP in Oakland. Newton called all the Panthers to relocate to Oakland. Bobby Seale disagreed with Newton. While Seale agreed to build a base in Oakland, he did not believe that all of the other chapters should be shut down. Newton began to withdraw from Panther activities but still made rational political decisions. But his social behavior became more bizarre.

Before Nixon was invited to China, the Chinese invited Huey Newton and a delegation of Black Panthers to visit. Newton, his bodyguard Robert Bay and Elaine Brown went to China. While in China, Newton met with representatives of FRELIMO, an African liberation organization, who were at that time fighting to liberate Mozambique from the Portuguese. Part of FRELIMO's program was to create alternative institutions in the liberated territories inside of Mozambique. These provided for an institutional basis for the economically self-reliant communities. Feeling this was the successful way to go and witnessing both FRELIMO's and the Chinese full equality of women in their societies, convinced Newton to institute a two-prong program. He was more assured that survival programs were the correct paths instead of immediate armed resistance. Newton decided to recognize the status of women as equal to that of men in all levels of the party. After the China trip Newton elected Elaine Brown to the central committee of the BPP and officially recognized the full equality of female members.⁶⁷¹

The Electoral Political and Activities of the Black Panther Party 1971-1974

⁶⁷⁰ Interview with Rashad Byrdsong, Cleveland, Ohio, 1997, and Interview with Kalied Abdul Raheem Muhammad, Chicago, Illinois, 3/20/98.

⁶⁷¹ Interview with Austin Allen, Cleveland, Ohio, 11/19/93.

The 1972-73 centralization of the party in Oakland had another impact that was, perhaps, unforeseen by the Central Committee: it communicated to many common people that the Party was in decline. Why else, people wondered, would the Panthers close down their community programs? Therefore, the centralization contributed to the Party's own demise.⁶⁷²

In his decision to develop a political base in Oakland, Newton decided the BPP chairman, Bobby Seale, should run for Mayor of Oakland and Elaine Brown for City Council in the April 1973 election. Bobby Seale and Elaine Brown announced their candidacies for local political office in the city on May 13, 1972.

To mobilize resources for the campaign Seale issued a directive that ordered its members to cease operations in their local chapters and report to Oakland, while all of the Party affiliates did not close immediately, the transfer of members to Oakland enhanced female participation in the BPP.⁶⁷³

Much of the BPP's political strategy was the thinking of one man – Huey P. Newton. The BPP's critical error was the allowing of the centralizing of all organizational power in the hands of one individual. A strategic mistake that Newton made in an attempt to build a base for the party in Oakland was to attack an organization of the African-American middle class that was well established and had a good track record of positive achievements. From earlier accounts in this chapter Huey had always had a pathological violent streak and walked on the edge from his days as a student at Merritt College. Now after release from prison Newton exercised or abused his authoritarian power through political intimidation. Later it would erupt to “insane” political murders with the covert plan to control the drug traffic in the bay area.

An African-American coalition of African-American liquor store and club owners in California, called Cal-Pak which by 1971 had been responsible for the creation of nearly 500 jobs for African-Americans in the beverage industry; became the target of political pressure by the BPP. In May 1971, Huey went to the president of Cal-Pak in Oakland, Bill Boyette asking for cash donations.

...Boyette stated that Newton approached him during the last week of May and requested that each of the twenty-two local members of Cal-Pak pay the Black Panthers \$5 per member per week. Later that same week, Newton visited Boyette again, raising the requested amount to \$10 per member per week. Acting on behalf of the entire association, Boyette refused both requests.⁶⁷⁴

On July 21, 1971 Bobby Seale attended a Cal-Pak meeting representing the Black Panther Party. He reiterated Newton's demands and said if it was not forthcoming that the BPP would close each business of every member of the association in Oakland. Cal-Pak responded by sending a letter on July 29th to Huey Newton offering to donate 75 gallons of

⁶⁷² Mumia Abu-Jamal, *We Want Freedom: A Life in the Black Panther Party*, [Cambridge, Massachusetts: South End Press] p. 224

⁶⁷³ Ibid. (Byrdsong) 5/30/98.

⁶⁷⁴ Hugh Pearson, *The Shadow of the Panther: Huey Newton and the Price of Black Power*, [Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1994], p. 241.

milk, 500 loaves of bread, 60 pounds of meat, 30 dozen eggs and two cases of cereal to the Black Panther free breakfast program for children. On July 30th, Newton answered saying the cash demand stood and that if Boyette didn't comply the BPP would attempt to close Boyette's businesses. Cal-Pak was an organization that had a consistent record of contributing to community causes. It had a scholarship program as well as helped to secure 230 jobs for African-Americans in the area in the previous six months.

On July 31, 1971, approximately fifty Panthers began picketing Boyette convenience/liquor store at 5350 Grove Street. The demonstrators carried signs stating that he should contribute to people's survival programs. Ex-Panther, Austin Allen, felt this was a huge error because it polarized the African-American community when the Party needed the support of a united black community.⁶⁷⁵

The party announced in its newspaper it was rejecting CAL-PAK's offer for food because it was a one-time deal. To make matters more complicated the BPP stated that CAL-PAK had sought the support of the BPP in boycotting Mayfair's, a supermarket in North Oakland. CAL-PAK said it had launched the boycott at Mayfairs market but that the BPP had joined in without an invitation from the association.

As the boycott dragged on against Boyette's business, his sales dropped off 98 percent basically because patrons were scared to cross BPP picket lines. Some two hundred African-American business people in the Oakland area, owners of small retail establishments, real estate sales offices, law practices, funeral homes, beauty shops and medical services organized to support Boyette by forming the ad hoc committee to preserve black business in Oakland. The committee held a meeting with the BPP. At the meeting, Boyette again made his offer to donate food rather than cash to the Panthers. Huey Newton pounded a desk three times saying the offer was unacceptable threatening to make Boyette a poor man. Needless to say, this erratic behavior left a bad taste in the mouths of many of the local black establishment.

The boycott dragged on until January 1971, when newly elected Congressman Ron Dellums, nephew of C. L. Dellums, stepped in to negotiate a settlement. The compromise agreement called for the formation of an umbrella organization of black businessmen called the United Fund of the Bay Area, which would donate food or money to a wide variety of black charitable causes at their own discretion. Among those programs were to be those to the Black Panthers. Donations to the Panthers were to be made through Saint Augustine's Episcopal, the church of the party's spiritual advisor, Father Earl Neil.

Huey said:

During the latter part of June 1971, the Black Panther Party held a series of meetings with CAL-PAK package Store and Tavern Owners Association and asked their continuing voluntary, self-determined (in terms of amount) support of survival programs. After a series of meetings CAL-PAK was steadfast in a single offer of bread, milk, meat and eggs for the free breakfast

⁶⁷⁵ Interview with Austin Allen, Cleveland, Ohio 11/19/93. Historical Note: This in no way implies that Dr. Austin Allen felt the boycott was an act of extortion. He basically felt it was ill timed or planned.

program. They said they would not contribute on a continuing basis. They wanted to make a pay-off, which was rejected. We are not extortionists.⁶⁷⁶

Newton stated that a continuing trickle of support is more important to the community than a large, once-only hush-mouth gift. He said as long as there was one hungry child, one barefoot person, one medically neglected individual, or one brother or sister without a winter coat, the Black Panther Party would not be paid off and would not be quiet. In essence, by time of the compromise there was a “win to win” situation for both the African-American businesses concerned and the Black Panther Party.

On December 15, 1971, Huey went to court for the third time for the shooting of officer John Frey and it ended in mistrial. This freed Huey Newton of any criminal proceedings. On March 29, 1972, Huey Newton redrafted the Black Panther Party 10-point program. In June 1972 in Los Angeles, Elmer “Geronimo” Pratt was convicted of murder and sentenced to life in prison. Newton refused to offer him any support.

Nineteen seventy-three was a decisive year for the BPP. This was the year that members of the Black Panther Party who had migrated from other areas in the country put out an all out effort to win community support for the BPP candidates, Bobby Seale and Elaine Brown. At the same time, Huey Newton’s behavior at the Lamp Post (a night club run by the BPP) and other places was becoming more erratic due to substance abuse.

Austin Allen, previous member of the Newton faction of the BPP, estimates that there were approximately 500 members of the BPP in Oakland from 1971-1975. Allen said that Seale and other members of the central committee would give political education classes for Black Panther Party members on a bi-monthly basis but Newton was seldom seen.⁶⁷⁷

The BPP advanced a very practical platform,

Among the planks in their platform were calls for an International Trade Center, a program to safely escort senior citizens living in dangerous neighborhoods, and a preventative medicine screening program for the citizens of the city. Seale also called for two hours paid leave from jobs so Oakland citizens could vote.⁶⁷⁸

While the Panthers registered some 30,000 residents, violent anti-social behavior by Newton and his squad (a tight knit group of bodyguards) seemed to run in contradiction. Though Seale and Brown lost their election bids both made a good showing.

In October 1973, Oakland’s BPP youth institute moved into a larger building and was renamed the Oakland Community Learning Center. It grew as an educational institution and became a role model for alternative schools, enrolling approximately 150 children. Newton due to cocaine use and increasingly drinking cognac became more paranoid. He expelled David Hillard while Hillard was serving his sentence for the shootout that led to Bobby Hutton’s murder. Newton also expelled June Hillard and Pat Hillard, David’s wife. Also Masai Hewitt was beaten and expelled. As beatings of party members increased and knowledge of Newton’s cocaine use and abuses against the people by him and the squad

⁶⁷⁶ Huey P. Newton, To Die For The People: Selected Writings and Speeches, [New York: Writers and Readers Publishing, Inc., 1995], p. 111.

⁶⁷⁷ Interview with Austin Allen, Cleveland, Ohio, 11/19/93.

⁶⁷⁸ Op. Cit., (Pearson, The Shadow of the Panther), p. 259.

increased, party members started leaving the party. The year 1974 marked the beginning of the end of the party. The existence of the party was prolonged by the stability of the women in Huey's absence. The average age of a Panther was about 25 in 1974 and its' membership had dropped to approximately 150.

Madalynn Rucker remembers,

A lot of good work was going on, establishing links with labor, registering people and political campaigns led by Bobby and his section. But there was the parallel more sort of underground drug stuff with Huey and the goon squad and with these folks on the other side. There was a lot of negative stuff that began to happen then around the life style of Huey and the penthouse. There were a lot of things happening in terms of Huey's relationship to the community. A lot of the drug pushers and pimps he was going up against were black, so there was a lot of black on black violence going on in the community.⁶⁷⁹

It became common knowledge the drug use and prostitution were occurring at the Lamp Post. Probably the most devastating occurrence to party members was the brutalization of Bobby Seale co-founder of the BPP by Huey Newton who also expelled him from the party. The event was precipitated during a political argument. Huey then appointed Elaine Brown, chairman of the Black Panther Party, who was there when it occurred in the penthouse.⁶⁸⁰

Bobby Seale in A Lonely Rage said he had begun to develop the desire to own his own house and raise a family like everyday African-American workers. He said this desire that began to come to his conscious mind; he realized was the main reason he decided not to run for mayor of Oakland again. Seale felt that a mistake had been made in breaking down the national structure of the BPP to having only about a hundred members in the Oakland headquarters and a North Carolina chapter. He also felt that the maintaining of bodyguards was distorting reality.⁶⁸¹ He was also critical of Huey Newton's attempt to take over the drug traffic in the Bay Area. He mentions this on the video "All Power to the People." Whatever is historical accuracy or combination Seale left Oakland abruptly with his lady friend to reside in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Newton continued to get involved in a series of events that would be attributed to irrational or modified behavior. During the summer of 1974 Newton was arrested after ordering his bodyguard to shoot a plains clothes police officer. After making bail in less than a week later, Newton was accused of the August 5, 1974 shooting of 17 year old prostitute Kathleen Smith who had yelled out "Hey, baby" as Newton's car was cruising down a street in Oakland. Within days Newton was reported to have beaten a staff member, a woman with a pistol at the Lamp Post (the Party's bar) and beat two women customers at the Lamp Post. To make things worst, Newton pistol-whipped Preston Collins, a tailor who he had invited to his penthouse to make him a custom tailor made suit. In the process of

⁶⁷⁹ Interview with Madalynn Rucker, 8/23/98.

⁶⁸⁰ Op. Cit., (Elaine Brown, A Taste of Power: A Black Woman's Story), pp. 348-353.

⁶⁸¹ Bobby Seale, A Lonely Rage: The Autobiography of Bobby Seale, [New York: New York Times Books, 1978], pp. 228-238.

negotiations and conversation with Newton, the tailor made the reference to Newton “Oh, don’t feel that way, baby.”⁶⁸²

For whatever reason, either from abuse while in prison, a hated street name of “Baby Huey”, police harassment, behavior modification and or a combination of all, the word “baby” in reference to Newton triggered a violent reaction. That and a combination of paranoia to strong African-American male figures within this own organization and a display of arrogance, uncontrollable violence towards people and an abuse of power all signaled the beginning of the end of one of the most dynamic organizations built in the late 1960’s.

After posting bail for the pistol-whipping of Collins and shooting Kathleen Smith, Newton on the advice of family and friends jumped bail and went with his girlfriend Gwen into exile in Cuba. A brief period of stabilization came to the party (three years) with Newton’s absence. Under the leadership of Elaine Brown as chairperson of the party, the women of the party concentrated on building survival programs and alternative institutions. The Black Panther Party in December of 1975 filed a \$100 million dollar lawsuit against the FBI.

Women in the BPP:

While often barely noted or in fact invisible in the history of participation in community based political movements, African-American women have long played significant roles. This was the case for women in the BPP from February 1967 to its dissolution in the 1980’s. The primary focus of media coverage was on the principal male leadership but Panther women held positions in leadership at the local and national levels. Panther women participated in the community survival programs that provided free clothing, food, health services, and other essentials.⁶⁸³

Contrary to popular belief the organization was not just composed of politically active black men: two-thirds of the Black Panther Party consisted of women. Panther women held positions in the party’s leadership at both local and national levels, in addition to giving speeches at Panther rallies and participating in the community survival programs.⁶⁸⁴

According to Seale in February 1967, Tarika Lewis (also known as Joan Lewis or Matilaba) is recognized as the first women to officially join the Black Panther Party. After graduating from Oakland Tech High School, Lewis joined the BPP. As a Panther, Lewis recalled that her “duty was to open the eyes of people to give them hope, courage, understanding; to teach, guide, and pull the cover off what was going on and what should be done about it.”⁶⁸⁵ In 1967 many women followed Lewis’ lead, and joined the BPP. No women received special treatment because they were females. Everyone, male and female had to participate in physical training, and political education classes.

⁶⁸² *Op. Cit.* (Pearson, *The Shadow of the Panther*), p. 267.

⁶⁸³ Karl Krappner, “Women and the Black Panther Party, Introduction,” *Socialist Review*, Vol. 26, No. 1 & 2, 1996, p. 27.

⁶⁸⁴ Interview with Angela Brown”, *Socialist Review*, Vol. 26, No. 1 & 2, 1996, p. 27.

⁶⁸⁵ Angela D. LaBlanc-Ernst, “The Most Qualified Person to handle the Job, Black Panther Party Women 1966-1982”, in Charles E. Jones (ed.) *The Black Panther Party: Reconsidered*, [Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 1998], p. 307.

Both male and female Panthers said that “...women were always there doing the work,” which is what was the foundation for maintaining the organization so well during the span of the program.⁶⁸⁶

In October 1967, when Huey Newton was shot, arrested and charged with the murder of a white Oakland cop, the BPP was converted into a national political movement. The party expanded from a small Oakland based organization to a national organization as black youth in 48 states formed chapters of the party. In addition, Black Panther coalition and support groups began to spring up internationally, in Japan, China, France, England, Germany, Sweden, Mozambique, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Uruguay, and also Israel.

Kathleen Cleaver was the most prominent and influential woman during the formative stages of the BPP. She joined the party in November 1967, shortly after moving to California to live with her new fiancée, BPP minister of information Eldridge Cleaver. She was instrumental in the free Huey campaign and served as assistant editor of the party's newspaper. Cleaver would become the first woman to sit on the organization's central committee.⁶⁸⁷

Sexism Eliminated at the Barrel of a Gun

According to Rashad Byrdsong, African-American women had equal responsibility in the administration of the BPP. Returning home from Vietnam, he decided to join the BPP. He went to his hometown office of the BPP (Seattle, WA). He said that when he walked into the Panther Party office in 1969, a young African-American woman was the officer of the day, commanding the office. He asked her how he could join the BPP and questioned her about the program of the party and fronted her off on her ability to defend herself. She had a revolver on the desk and in the confrontation which was motivated by his then sexism toward women, she put the nozzle of the revolver in his face and said that if he came closer to her she would kill him. This convinced Byrdsong of the female Panther's ability; it ended his sexism toward women, and he joined the party.⁶⁸⁸

Angela Brown's research indicated that the experience of the women in the party differed according to where they were located. Ms. Brown states that she thinks many people preferred to work away from the national headquarters after 1972. According to her interviews, numerous women felt less confined when they were at chapters other than the national office in Oakland where things were more rigid, prior to this period. This attitude can be attributed to the leadership at the time and the fact that there was a notable favorite group in Oakland. Since everyone was no longer necessarily working with the people they were used to working with, the previously established rapport along with issues that had been resolved in one place in some cases had to be reworked.⁶⁸⁹

The incarceration of so many of the party's members, especially the men helped to create the opportunity for Panther women to achieve positions of power. In chapters like New York and Chicago, police targeted the men because they thought the men were the only

⁶⁸⁶ *Op. Cit.* (Angela Brown), p. 35.

⁶⁸⁷ *Op. Cit.* (Angela D. LeBlanc-Ernest-Black Panther Party [Reconsidered]), p. 308.

⁶⁸⁸ Interview with Rashad Byrdsong, Cleveland State University, Cleveland, Ohio, 5/30/98.

⁶⁸⁹ Karl Krapper, “Women and the Black Panther Party: An Interview with Angela Brown”, *Socialist Review*, Vol. 26, Nos. 1 & 2, 1996, p. 40.

leaders and if they (the men) were eliminated the organization would crumble. This chauvinistic perspective by the police was the fallacy that enabled the women and the few remaining men to keep the party functioning.

Women who were involved in revolutionary activities in countries like, China, Cuba, Vietnam, and Africa influenced Panther women. This aided them in addressing and assessing what they were experiencing internally and helped to define their roles as revolutionary black women.

From 1967 until the dissolution of the party, Panther women faced male chauvinism within the Panther community. Although gender-based discrimination was not a condoned policy through its gender blind doctrine, Panther women experienced the assignment of gender-specific tasks and sexism.⁶⁹⁰

But Jonia Abron dispels this general conclusion. She said in an interview that the BPP tried to put into practice the position of equality for female members. When Ms. Abron and other African-American female members arrived in Oakland in 1974, they were told by a central committee member that the women did not have to sleep with anyone they did not want to and if they were sexually harassed to report it and it would be dealt with.

The party's Minister of Information, Eldridge Cleaver expressed reproach about this subject when women in the party began to voice their dissatisfaction of the BPP at party meetings and in The Black Panther, yet at the same time, their procurement of leadership positions increased and their involvement in community activities expanded.

Besides the many different survival programs the BPP had created; another positive contribution of the BPP was its avocation and practice of equality for women throughout all levels of the organization and in society itself. This occurred at a time when most black nationalist organizations were demanding that the woman's role be in the home and/or one step behind the black man, and at a time when the whole country was going through a great debate on the woman's liberation issue. This is not to say that there were not sexual inequalities within the party, or that some of the men did not have male chauvinistic attitudes. According to female members of the party, the level of sexism was much less than any other organization at that time. Location also played a key role in regards to sexism, gender discrimination, and internal problems. It seemed to have been worse in Oakland at the central committee.

According to Angela Brown's interview with Kathleen Cleaver, Cleaver said she did not experience any sexism. The reason for that was because:

She came into the party when the party was on the verge of collapse, which was November 1967. There were only about six or seven panthers at that time. It was just she and Eldridge Cleaver, they had their San Francisco apartment, and she did her press contact jobs out of her apartment. So she admits that part of the reason that she didn't experience it was because she was isolated and wasn't living in the same kinds of situations that other

⁶⁹⁰ Telephone interview with Jonia Abron, Cleveland, Ohio, Kalamazoo, Michigan, January 17, 1999.

women were. She also joined Eldridge Cleaver when he went into exile in late '68. So she was physically removed.⁶⁹¹

According to Ericka Huggins, "There were some men who could (not) have cared less about what women thought about anything and there were some who were on the right page."⁶⁹²

Cleo Silver joined the BPP in New York, 1968. She was mostly attracted to the ten-point program. Silver admits that joining the BPP was one of the finest things that ever happened to her in her life. Shortly after being in the party, the New York 21 was arrested. Two women, Joan Bird and Afeni Shakur, were among the Panther New York 21 arrested in April, 1969, on conspiracy charges to bomb police stations, the Bronx Botanical Gardens, a city commuter train and five department stores.

Silver stated in a videotaped interview that the BPP was the most revolutionary, dedicated, courageous, and most principled organization that ever existed. She never experienced any direct sexism or sexual abuse. To Silver, BPP men were very polite and never hit on her. The women were also extremely kind, encouraging, and there was a lot of unity, caring, and mutual concern especially for women who had children. Silver was analogous to everyone else in the party, dedicated all of her time to the movement. Auspiciously that did not interfere with Panther women on the East Coast parenting their children. According to Silver, their children accompanied them to work; they were with them all the time. BPP members were like aunts and uncles. Members would have them at the office or at a Panther house or with them doing their activities. Men as well as women participated in baby-sitting the children.

Cleo Silver left the party in 1969, because she disagreed with Eldridge Cleaver that the lumpen proletariat was the vanguard of the black revolution. She had ideological discussions with Zaid and Lumumba Shakur in the New York BPP who agreed with her.⁶⁹³

Women like Elaine Brown who was appointed Chairman of the BPP in 1974 still rose to power despite negative attitudes by many members that brandished the idea that it was a violation of some black power principle of a black woman assuming a role of leadership. She was said to be eroding black manhood, to be hindering the progress of the black race. She was an enemy of black people.⁶⁹⁴

Brown and other women in positions of accountability in the BPP did not shrink from the challenge of the sexist attitudes that existed. They believed in the party's objectives and felt that they could help the party realize its goals because they believed in them.⁶⁹⁵

Some of the other women that Elaine Brown named to key positions of accountability were: Joan Kelly, administrator of Survival Program and legal matters, Norma Armour, coordinated finances, and Erika Huggins began administering over the school and its

⁶⁹¹ Op. Cit., (an interview with Angela Brown), p. 43.

⁶⁹² Ibid., pp. 41-42.

⁶⁹³ Cleo Silver, videotaped interview in New York, 1998.

⁶⁹⁴ Karl Knapper, "Women and the Black Panther Party: an Interview with Angela Brown," Socialist Review, Vol 26, Nos. 1 & 2, 1996, p. 46.

⁶⁹⁵ Cleo Silver, taped interview, 1998.

related programs. The assignment of these women and others cause ample discontent among the men of the party, however, men remained in control of the newspaper and military affairs.⁶⁹⁶

With Brown at the head of the BPP, more of its activities were legitimate. Although there was still underground activity, Ms. Brown and the BPP were proving to be highly effective community leaders and organizers.⁶⁹⁷

Becoming affiliated with the party generated questions of female sexuality and motherhood plagued some women, who complained of being pressured into engaging in sexual activity. Reproduction and birth control were also issues. There were difficulties of rearing a child and being a full-time political activist.

Male party members except when they wanted sexual favors considered women sexless. According to Elaine Brown “there was a clear signal that the words “Panther” and “comrade” had taken on gender connotations, devoting an inferiority in the female half of us...driving a wedge between Sisters and Brothers...attacking the very foundation of the party.”⁶⁹⁸

While the opportunity to develop political organizing skills was one of the many reasons that women joined the BPP, other reasons include backing the party’s goals, and to support a spouse or significant other already involved in the party.

Panther women had to confront the issue of police surveillance and harassment, which were equally problematic for women and men; so female members were forced to face both internal and external pressures.⁶⁹⁹

Panther women administered and staffed many of the community programs despite the incessant lack of finances. These programs thrived and included: Seniors Against a Fearful Environment (SAFE), free breakfasts for schoolchildren, child care centers, child development centers, legal aid and advice services, teen peer counseling, free music classes, dance and martial arts classes, free transportation to and from prison (for people wanting to visit incarcerated loved ones), GED classes, political education classes, voter registration, free food giveaways, petition campaigns for community oversight of the police, and free medical care (testing for sickle cell anemia), and many others.⁷⁰⁰

Madalynn Rucker joined the BPP in San Francisco, transferred to San Jose, then back to San Francisco, then finally to Oakland where she stayed for 3 years. In 1968 at eighteen years of age Rucker worked in the party, but did not officially join until 1969 at the age of nineteen. Rucker first heard of the BPP in 1967 when Huey was arrested. She joined the party because she agreed with the right to defend herself. She did not think that the M.L.K., non-violence approach was working. Rucker admits that sexist behavior went on, but it

⁶⁹⁶ Jim Haskins, Power to the People: The Rise and Fall of the Black Panther Party, [New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 1997], pp. 97-98.

⁶⁹⁷ The African-American Almanac, [Detroit, Michigan, 1997], p. 346.

⁶⁹⁸ Elaine Brown, Taste of Power: A Black Woman's Story, [New York: Pantheon Books], p. 445.

⁶⁹⁹ Regina Jennings, “Why I Joined the Party: An African Womanist Reflection” in Charles E. Jones, The Black Panther Party Reconsidered, [Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 1998], pp. 262-264.

⁷⁰⁰ The Black Panther Party Reconsidered, [Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 1998], p. 263.

occurred a lot less than in the general public. Due to the fact that the party was under continuous attack from police, FBI and COINTELPRO, it didn't allow much contemplation for sexism. The FBI denounced the party itself as a group of communist outlaws bent on over-throwing the U.S. government.⁷⁰¹ There had been every kind of assault imaginable on the party's social programs and destruction of party property; from police raiders who smashed breakfast program food on the floors of churches, and crushed party free clinic supplies, to those who caused the destruction of batches of the party's newspapers. In addition, intimidation and other such tactics were being employed to undermine the party's support, and to break the spirit and commitment of party members, party supporters, and family members. Focus went from protecting themselves from police, to protecting themselves from each other.

Nevertheless, the party survived and continued to build its survival programs, which came to include not only the free breakfast program and free clinics, but also grocery giveaways, the manufacture and distribution of free shoes, school and education programs, senior transport and service programs, free busing to prisons and prisoner support and legal aid programs.

In 1971 the last couple of years as a member of the BPP, Rucker worked at the Lamp Post located in Oakland, California. The Lamp Post was the bar and restaurant Newton bought taking it over from a distant cousin. Rucker worked with Huey personally at the Lamp Post. She described him as having a volatile personality. Rucker conceived a child that year which was placed in BPP child development center for two years, along with other BPP children. They were raised in a collective. BPP mothers on the West Coast were not as fortunate as the mothers on the East Coast in regards to being with their children on a day-to-day basis. Madalynn Rucker left the party in 1974, because she was asked to do illegal activities while working at the Lamp Post.

The Black Panther Party continued to build its programs and move its agenda, as it began to consolidate its efforts in its home base of Oakland, California:

The party decision to close ranks contributed to the increase opportunities for women to fill nontraditional female roles. During the state of organizational flux, women in the party emerged as national and local party leaders. Both Kathleen Cleaver and Patricia Hillard held influential positions at the national levels. In Panther affiliates throughout the nation, Elaine Brown, Erica Huggins, Barbara Shankey, Ann Campbell, Afeni Shakur, Yvonne King and Audrea Jones were among many women who became influential leaders in their respective chapters during the Revolutionary phase of the BPP.⁷⁰²

In 1971, Elaine Brown was appointed Chairman of the Los Angeles BPP branch. Despite the negative attitude, sexism, and gender discrimination she endured from the men in the party. A woman attempting the role of leadership was said to be making an alliance with "counter-revolutionary, man hating, lesbian, feminist white bitches."⁷⁰³

⁷⁰¹ Madalynn Rucker, audio taped interview, 1998. 8/23/98.

⁷⁰² Charles E. Jones (ed.), *The Black Panther Party Reconsidered*, [Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 1998], p. 310.

⁷⁰³ Elaine Brown, *A Taste of Power: A Black Woman's Story*, [New York: Doubleday, 1992], p. 357.

Brown as well as her sisters in the struggle Joan, Ericka, Evon Carter, and Gwen Goodloe refused to play an inferior role to the brothers in the revolution. Because of their strong beliefs in gender equality they were labeled as “the clique.” The men believed they all had bad attitudes. The reputation of the clique “smart bitches” was known throughout the party.

Elaine Brown states that she would not reward any brother with her body, in the bedroom or in the kitchen, but not everyone in the party shared Brown’s and her clique beliefs. Some women encouraged the use of their bodies as a reward to the BPP men. Up north a 15-year-old girl named Marsha told Elaine at Bobby’s request:

“First of all, a brother’s got to be righteous. He’s got to be a Panther. He’s got to be able to recite the 10-point program, and be ready to off the pigs and die for the people...” “Can’t no motherfucker get no pussy from me unless he can get down with the party...” A sister has to learn to shoot as well as cook and be ready to back up the brothers. “A sister has to give up the pussy when the brother is on his job and hold back when he’s not. “Cause sisters got pussy power.”⁷⁰⁴

In March 1970, Elaine Brown gave birth to a baby girl Ericka Brown. Due to her overwhelming responsibility to the party, she found it difficult to be a real mother. Ericka was with other women in the party or with Elaine’s mother, while she took care of the party responsibilities.

In 1974 Elaine Brown took over the national chairmanship of the party during those three years that Newton was in exile in Cuba. The more women became coordinators of programs, the longer those programs lasted, and the more efficient and effective they were. The party gained much more respect from the local Oakland community after it had centralized under Elaine Brown’s leadership, when they were developing all of the programs. The school received a commendation from the California state legislature for being one of the most effective alternative educational institutions. Initially the school was just for the Black Panther Party members’ children. But around 1973 it opened up to the larger Oakland community.⁷⁰⁵

Elaine Brown recalls; only months after Huey returned from exile in Cuba, “I felt something very damaging was occurring inside the party ranks.”⁷⁰⁶

Women stayed dedicated to the party until the very end. Jonia Abron in an interview said one of the issues for many of the women in the party over a period of time; those who had children wanted to spend more time with their children and their work would not allow it.⁷⁰⁷

Women were responsible for a few remaining community programs. According to Angela Brown women stayed loyal mainly for two reasons: one, because of their love and devotion to the children, the other reason was because too many women felt as though the party was their entire life. Ericka Huggins, and Jonia Abron were among the few remaining women.

⁷⁰⁴ Elaine Brown, *A Taste of Power: A Black Woman’s Story*, [New York: Doubleday, 1992], p. 189.

⁷⁰⁵ *Op. Cit.*, (Karl Knapper, “Women and the Black Panther Party: An Interview with Angela Brown, *Socialist Review*, Vol. 26, Nos. 1 & 2, 1996), p. 38.

⁷⁰⁶ Elaine Brown, *A Taste of Power: A Black Woman’s Story*, [New York: Doubleday, 1992], p. 445.

⁷⁰⁷ Interview with Jonia Abron, January 17, 1999.

Ericka Huggins, the most prominent female member remaining in the party after Elaine Brown's resignation, served as the Oakland Community School director until 1981. She was a thirteen-year member, (1968-1981) of the organization. Huggins attributed her decision to remain a Panther, in spite of Newton's erratic and criminal behavior, to her commitment of the OCS students. Huggins attributes her eventual resignation from the party to Newton's increasing drug problems. Another Panther still active during the final phase of the BPP was Jonia Abron. A nine-year BPP veteran, she originally joined the Detroit Branch in 1972, after earning a Master of Arts degree in communication from Purdue University.⁷⁰⁸ The most momentous thing about the Black Panther Party was that the Panthers put their lives on the line for creating change. They sacrificed themselves for the cause. The Black Panther Party's members were loyal and remarkably dedicated to the struggle. They demanded equal rights regardless of race, gender, and class.

Corruption and Decline

Newton from exile continued to run the party. He would call Elaine Brown and issue directions through courier and Brown and other Panthers would visit him. Under Elaine Brown's administration, led by the squad, the Black Panther Party continued its clandestine operations of extortion of the pimps and drug pushers in the Oakland area. Brown had maneuvered through good management and public relations her way within the Democratic Party machine in Northern California. Through the Oakland Community Learning Center run by Ericka Huggins, the party received respectability of creating a model alternative school. In 1975, Brown ran again for City Council losing her election bid but receiving 44 percent of the vote.⁷⁰⁹ Brown became a broker in democratic politics. She attended the 1976 Democratic Party National Convention as a delegate for California Governor Jerry Brown. Under Elaine Brown's influence, sixty Panthers actively campaigned to help elect John George Alameda County supervisor from the fifth supervisory district. As a result, several Panthers were placed in key administrative positions and Brown herself was appointed to the powerful Oakland Council for Economic Development (OCED) at the insistence of Governor Jerry Brown. Entering into alliance with Representative Ron Dellums and key establishment personalities, Brown endorsed Superior Court Judge Lionel Wilson in becoming the first African-American mayor of Oakland. Organizing the approximately one hundred remaining but well disciplined Panthers left; the party registered thousands of new voters and mobilizing many poor Oakland residents to vote for Wilson. After Wilson's election victory, Newton decided to return to the United States from Cuba on July 3, 1977.

With Newton's return, tensions began to resurface in the party and the community. Citing all his legal troubles were the cause of the FBI and the CIA, Newton won temporary community support. A two-story house was purchased for him. Newton was reported to have been seen in after-hour clubs, high on coke, intimidating people with his elite squad members for backup, while he beat up on men, taking their women. The final beginning of loss of community support came in October of 1977 when an aborted assassination attempt of Crystal Gray, witness for the prosecuting attorney of the Kathleen Smith case went foul. Nelson Malloy, (a member of the squad), who had been shot in a shootout with Crystal

⁷⁰⁸ Charles E. Jones, *The Black Panther Party (Reconsidered)*, [Baltimore: Black Press, 1998], p. 324.

⁷⁰⁹ *Op. Cit.*, (Brown, *A Taste of Power: A Black Woman's Story*), p. 375.

Gray's landlady and then taken to the Nevada desert and shot and left for dead turned state's evidence. Elaine Brown is rumored to have confronted Newton on the party's negative publicity and to have been beaten badly by Newton.⁷¹⁰ Whether beaten or rumor of such, Brown immediately disappeared and left the party.⁷¹¹

After news reports of Brown's beating appeared in the press along with a series of negative articles on the party, public officials began to distance themselves from the Panthers. An investigation began of the Panther Oakland Community Learning Center. The investigation exposed the fact of misappropriation of funds with funds being used for Newton's squad. Funds began to slow down and wither away coming into the party. By 1978, the party had dwindled to a couple of dozen of dedicated cadre. Newton was arrested on charges of assault and parole violation of illegal gun possession. Newton beat his charges of having murdered a prostitute resulting in two trials, which resulted in a hung jury with the majority voting for acquittal. Out of bail, Newton received a Ph.D. degree from the University of California at Santa Cruz in the history consciousness for his writing of "War Against the Panther: A Study of Repression in America." On June 15, 1980 he became Dr. Huey P. Newton.

But Newton was thoroughly addicted to cocaine, alcohol, and cigarettes by this time and his behavior was so erratic that he was unemployable except in criminal life.

Between 1980 and 1982 Newton continuously used the Panthers resources for his and the squad's personal use. In 1981, Ericka Huggins resigned as principal of the Oakland Learning Center over the issue. In 1982, the Oakland Learning Center and the Youth Institute being the Panther's last survival programs closed its door's due to lack of funds.

Between 1982 and 1989 was one of rapid deterioration of Huey Newton, co-founder of the Black Panther Party. The Lamp Post closed. The Black Panther newspaper shut down for lack of funds and other party members left. In and out of jail for minor offenses; now a thoroughly addicted crack cocaine addict, Newton spent a large part of his time demanding free crack cocaine or sticking up dope pushers for their crack. In 1987, Newton was convicted of illegal gun possession and served several months in prison. In 1987, Newton was ordered to prison for the 1978 pistol-whipping of Preston Collins; having lost his case after appeals of having illegal weapons. After serving six weeks for parole violation, Newton demanded the release of Elmer "Geronimo" Pratt, an imprisoned ex-Panther. After Newton was released he continued to degenerate pressuring crack dealers to supply him with free crack. Newton did not pay much attention to the rumors of a contract for a hit on him ordered by the Black Guerilla family (BGF), previously organized by George Jackson and now a full-time black mafia unit as well as disgruntled ex-Black Panthers, many who were still in prison. On August 22, 1989, Huey Newton was shot and killed by a drug pusher, member of the BGF.

Jonia M. Abron, former editor of the Black Panther Intercommunal News Service in a letter to Muhammad Ahmad dated June 17, 1999 stated,

Ultimately, Huey Newton was a casualty of war – the relentless war waged by the U. S. government to crush the Black Liberation movement. The

⁷¹⁰ Op. Cit., (Pearson, The Shadow of the Panther), p. 281.

⁷¹¹ Op. Cit., (Brown, A Taste of Power), p. 448.

Black Panther Party, arguably, was the most influential group of the movement, and therefore, bore the brunt of the government's war.⁷¹²

David Hillard, former BPP chief of staff delivered an insightful assessment of Huey's problems at the funeral of his life long friend,

I want to say that Huey's problem with chemical dependency represents all our weaknesses here in America. To focus on his chemical dependency really doesn't allow us to see him in proper context. We get blinded to the programs and ideals that he was about. So our correct focus is to deal with the solution – not only Huey's problem, but to America's problem: drugs and alcohol. Because Huey's problem was not a problem unique to Huey. It's a societal ill.⁷¹³

In May 1967, Black Guards at Howard University chased Selective Services director, Hershey off the stage in Howard's auditorium. SNCC in other places led demonstrations against the draft.

On May 2, 1967, the Black Panther Party for Self Defense led a contingent of armed members to demonstrate at California State capitol in Sacramento, California to protest the passing of a bill limiting the carrying of firearms. On June 21, 1967, The Queens 17 (Assassination of Negro leaders) RAM case occurred.

After a speech on July 25, 1967 in Cambridge, Maryland, given by H. Rap Brown, chairman of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) an urban rebellion (riot) broke out. Brown was shot in the head while he was walking a woman home. Surviving the assassination attempt, Brown received medical attention for his injury and left Cambridge early in the morning. Brown was later arrested for "inciting a riot."⁷¹⁴

The Newark, N.J. rebellion occurred and Le Roi Jones (Amiri Baraka) playwright and poet was beaten and arrested. The first Black Power Conference was held in Newark which Baraka attended after being released from jail.

In late July 1967 the Detroit Rebellion occurred being the largest rebellion up until that time along with two hundred rebellions occurring during the same summer of 1967.

The National Welfare Rights Organization was founded in 1967.

Women in Cleveland, New York, DC and several other cities had formed similar organizations. By 1967 the elements had come together for the founding of the National Welfare Rights Organization - a dynamic, combustible, fighting formation. George Wiley was its inspired, driven, passionate executive director.⁷¹⁵

⁷¹² Jonia M. Abron, Letter to Muhammad Ahmad, June 17, 1999, p. 11. Also see Kenneth O'Reilly "Racial Matters: The FBI's Secret File on Black America, 1960-1972, [New York: The Free Press, 1989], pp. 293-324.

⁷¹³ David Hilliard and Lewis Cole, This Side of Glory: The Autobiography of David Hilliard and the Story of the Black Panther Party, [Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1993], p. 436.

⁷¹⁴ Clayborne Carson, In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960's [Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1981] pp. 255-256.

⁷¹⁵ Linda Burnham, "The Tillmon Legacy", Crossroads, February 1966, pp.14.

On November 17, 1967, 4,000 African-American students marched on the Philadelphia Board of Education demanding the inclusion of African-American history in the public school curriculum. The demonstrators (high school students, including girls) were attacked and beaten by Frank Rizzo's racist faction of the Philadelphia police department.

What happened in Cleveland in 1967 that impacted on the condition of the entire national African American Community?

The election of Carl Stokes, the first African American mayor of a major city in the United States occurred. Cleveland became the first city in American history to elect a black mayor when Democrat Carl Stokes beat his white republican opponent by 1,679 votes. He won 95% of the black vote and almost 20% of the white vote. This was a political victory for African Americans.

Richard Hatcher was elected mayor of Gary, Indiana later the same month, November 1967. The National Democratic Party of Alabama (NDPA) formed on January 12, 1968.

On February 8, 1968, a throng of angry frustrated black-American students faced heavily armed police on the grounds of their own college campus in Orangeburg, South Carolina. The focus of their demonstration also involved elementary justice, for it was against the exclusion of blacks from a local bowling alley. Yet the tense police began firing wildly into the unarmed crowd. In a matter of seconds, there was an American bloodbath.⁷¹⁶

The Republican Party supported conservative Richard M. Nixon for President on a coded racist white backlash vote of Law and Order. Republicans were not receptive to inclusion of the African-American vote. In Detroit at a conference of 500 nationalists, the Republic of New Africa was formed. In New Orleans under Jesse Gray and Maxine Green, the National Tenants Organization was formed.

LEAGUE OF BLACK REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS

The League of Revolutionary Black Workers was the only African-American radical organization to emerge in the period 1960-1975 whose primary concentration was organizing black workers at their work places (at the point of production). Any study of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers would not be comprehensive if it did not include an interview with General Gordon Baker, Jr.; it's central founder and organizer. But to include an interview with Baker in full text would be too long for this study. The chapter is based much on an extensive interview with Baker, but also includes excerpts of other primary interviews from LRBW members. It is hopeful that the data collected corresponds and verifies research that as of yet has been neglected by social scientists on the subject.

Introduction

To approach a study of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers (LRBW), an

⁷¹⁶ Jack Bass and Jack Nelson, *The Orangeburg Massacre* [Newark: Mercer University Press, 1984] pp. vii

independent black radical workers' formation in Detroit, as a consequence of the black liberation movement, several questions should be answered in the research. We should ask ourselves what is the history of black workers' relations in white unions? Also, is there any particular phenomenon that contributed to the League emerging in Detroit rather than in any other city? While the scope of this chapter is too short to address itself directly to these questions, it is hoped that some underlying factors tracing the development of the League are answered. The purpose here is to present an objective analysis of the historical factors leading to the development and demise of the League.

In order to adequately address the LRBW as an organizational development within the broader context of the black liberation movement, it is necessary to make a few preliminary remarks concerning black workers in unions, particularly the United Auto Workers (UAW) and the automobile industry.

African-American workers' involvement in large numbers began during the first imperialist war, when there was a shortage of laborers and Detroit was becoming the center of the auto industry. In 1910, there were only 569 African-Americans out of 105,759 autoworkers.

The southern whites who migrated to Detroit brought with them racist attitudes. The large Polish minority who were immigrants from Europe made up a large portion of the work force in the auto plants began to display the same prejudice against African-American workers after the southerners came. The auto industry was one of the last major industries in the United States to hire large numbers of African-American workers. African-Americans were excluded from regular jobs in most auto plants. Until 1935 only the Ford River Rouge plant hired African-American workers in large numbers. African-American workers who did work in auto plants were confined to janitorial work or to the unpleasant, backbreaking foundry jobs that white men did not want. Except in the Rouge plant, they were barred from the skilled work.

Approximately one-half of the Negroes in the industry were employed by the Ford Motor Company and 99 percent of these in the huge River Rouge plant. The Negro employees of General Motors and Chrysler were also concentrated in a few plants: Buick No. 70 in Flint, Pontiac Foundry in Pontiac, Chevrolet Forge in Detroit, and Chevrolet Grey-Iron Foundry in Saginaw – all of General Motors; and Main Dodge of Chrysler in a Detroit suburb. Few Negroes were employed in automobile plants outside of Michigan.⁷¹⁷

Of the auto manufacturers, Ford developed a policy of hiring ten percent African-Americans in his work force at the River Rouge plant. The story goes that at the beginning of the 1921 depression, African-American workers employed at River Rouge and African-American middle-class leaders from Detroit approached Ford and talked about his racist bias in layoffs. Ford is then said to have changed his hiring policy at River Rouge. He placed African-American workers in all departments and occupations in the plant. But he did not extend this policy beyond River Rouge. Ford assembly plants in the South only employed African-American workers as janitors and porters. However, Ford's employment policy won

⁷¹⁷ John Bracey, Jr., August Meir, Elliott Rudwick, eds., *Black Workers and Organized Labor* [California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1971] p. 56.

him loyalty of the African-American community, particularly the African-American church. Ford made financial contributions to selected African-American churches; he would then use the ministers as employment agents. African-American workers were hired when they presented a written recommendation from their minister to company officials. African-American ministers loved Ford's assistance because it increased church attendance, helped the church financially and strengthened their community leadership position. Thus once receiving Ford's approval, a minister would willingly follow Ford's anti-labor position.

When A. Philip Randolph, head of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, was invited in 1938 to speak at a Negro church, those of its members who were employed at Ford were threatened with firing. After Randolph spoke, some were actually dismissed and frankly told that Randolph's speech was the reason.⁷¹⁸

Mordecai Johnson, president of Howard University, made a pro-union speech at an African-American church and three months later he was denied a second appearance.

Prior to 1929 the American Federation of Labor (AFL) was primarily made up of craft unions. The AFL discriminated against African-American workers. African-American membership in the AFL in 1930 was estimated to be about 50,000, but thousands of African-American craftsmen were ignored by the AFL while others were in segregated unions. One exception can be noted for lack of racial discrimination was the United Mine Workers (UMW) under the leadership of John L. Lewis. With the depression, the militant rank and file of the AFL began to push for unionization of unskilled (industrial) workers. A Committee for Industrial Organization was established. In 1937 the committee was expelled from the AFL and became the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). The CIO recognized that if it was going to be successful it had to have the support of African-American workers. African-Americans and the Communist Party were instrumental in helping to build the CIO. The National Negro Congress, formed in 1936 with 500 African-American organizations in its membership, was a left-wing worker-oriented organization. It supported the CIO vigorously. Led by A. Philip Randolph until African-American cadres of the Communist Party began to direct its line according to Russia's foreign policy; it helped radicalize the African-American community. An African-American/CIO alliance began to develop.⁷¹⁹

But African-American workers were not too receptive at first to the idea of becoming involved in labor activism. This probably stemmed from years of racial discrimination by labor and their precarious position at the point of production. When large sit-down strikes broke out in 1936 and 1937, few African-American workers participated.⁷²⁰ Most stayed at home, but they did not serve as scabs either. In some plants there had been racial clashes in the plants prior to the strikes. The last plant to be organized in Detroit by the CIO was the River Rouge plant, where African-American workers resisted efforts at unionization until convinced by the CIO that it was on their side. By 1942 the Ford River Rouge plant was unionized after the majority of African-American workers had walked out on strike.⁷²¹

⁷¹⁸ Irving Howe and B. J. Widick, "The U.A.W.: Fights Race Prejudice", *Commentary*, Volume 8, Number 3, September 1949, p. 263.

⁷¹⁹ African-American "On Wheels: Special History Report: The Pivotal Role of Blacks in the UAW Union," *Detroit, February/March, 2000*, pg. 32.

⁷²⁰ Fraser M. Ohanelli, *The Communist Part of the United States: From Depression to World War II*, [New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997], p. 144.

⁷²¹ *Op. Cit.*, (On Wheels), p. 32.

As progressive as the CIO was, African-American trade unionists still had to fight against racial discrimination within it. During the World War II, the Communists emerged as the extreme right wing in the labor movement. They advocated sacrificing the rights of African-Americans to the interests of the war. So when A. Philip Randolph proposed an African-American March on Washington to protest job discrimination, he was opposed and openly attacked by the Communist Party. Roosevelt established the Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC) as a result of the proposed march. During the war, African-American workers were in constant struggles to get skilled jobs in the war industry. The auto plants were converted to war production. When an African-American worker was upgraded, many times white workers would walk off the job. The federal government and the UAW had to apply constant pressure to stop racist work stoppages by white workers. When the war ended, old discrimination patterns in hiring reappeared. Thousands of African-American workers lost their jobs. In the 1950's the labor movement purged the Communists. McCarthyism was the mad rage of the country. Even in a period of political hysteria, A. Philip Randolph constantly attacked racism within the CIO. In 1955, the AFL and CIO reunited. Right before the merger, African-American unionists met to secure the election of African-Americans to the AFL-CIO Executive Council and to get the federation to adopt a strong civil rights position. After the merger, African-American labor organized in major cities to fight for the interests of African-American workers.

One of these organizations was the Trade Union Leadership Conference (TULC), formed by a group of Detroit Negro unionists in 1957. Most of the founders were from the UAW but in 1960 there were about as many Negroes from the other unions in the TULC as from the UAW.⁷²²

Many African-American trade unionists attacked the TULC for racism in reverse. They feared the TULC and similar organizations would divide the labor movement. The TULC attacked these critics as labor uncle toms of the AFL-CIO convention. George Meany verbally attacked A. Philip Randolph. The TULC wrote a letter to Meany denouncing Meany's outburst and told Meany they objected to attacks on the NAACP by Charles Zimmerman. The TULC endorsed the NAACP's memorandum of December 4, 1958, charging racial discrimination and segregation by unions affiliated with the AFL-CIO.

The TULC's 2500 members (in 1961) in the Detroit area had engaged in political action; contributed financially to various civil rights activities and to political candidates; worked to improve Detroit public schools; established contacts in the Polish, Jewish, and Spanish-speaking communities; helped Negroes in the Hod Carriers and Common Laborers local union replace "unfriendly" white officers with Negroes and more sympathetic whites; and served as a model for the Negro-American Labor Council and similar organizations in other Northern cities.⁷²³

So while the TULC was no longer considered militant as it was surpassed by the impact of the civil rights activity in Detroit, it had set the precedent for the emergence of the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement (DRUM).

Background to the Building of the Detroit Cadre:

⁷²² *Op. Cit.* (Bracey, et. al.), p. 212.

⁷²³ *Ibid.*, p. 214.

To properly evaluate the history of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, a social scientist would have to investigate the overall development of the black movement in Detroit. Another factor that should be taken into consideration is the concentration of industry in Detroit. Most of the key organizers of the LRBW were from Detroit (born) and raised in Detroit and were second-generation children of autoworkers. Many were students or ex-students at Wayne State University, an urban university where they became exposed to a radical tradition. Detroit was also unique in having an active post World War II, African-American organized radical leadership, which nurtured these young progressives.

More African-American workers were hired in the auto plants between the end of World War II and 1960. The African-American community for a large part relied on the liberal-labor coalition. There was adult African-American labor leadership as well as prominent African-American radicals in the community. Detroit's inner city was also the midwestern center of African-American nationalism. It is probably important to mention that the Socialist Workers Party had a strong base in Detroit. Their influence was felt in the African-American community in the early sixties.

Of the various groups in Detroit, GOAL (Group On Advanced Leadership) led by Richard and Milton Henry was representative of adult involvement in the movement. GOAL was a black nationalist, civil rights group. Reverend Albert Cleage was considered GOAL's ideological leader. James and Grace Boggs, who split with the "Facing Reality" group of C.L.R. James, played an instrumental role in providing a synthesis between Black Nationalism and socialism. The loose linkage of the Henrys, Cleage, and the Boggs' provided young African-American radicals with an adult black radical leadership, which could be their resource base.

General Baker, later a founder of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, entered Detroit's Black Left through participation in the Detroit Robert F. Williams Defense Committee in 1962. He recalls reading *The Crusader* and hearing "Radio Free Dixie" while attending Wayne State University, where he helped to form UHURU, one of Detroit's first Black Nationalist collectives.⁷²⁴

The Boggs' were important to young African-American radicals because they had a wealth of information, constantly wrote and published a newsletter called *Correspondence*, helped organize the Grassroots Leadership Conference in 1963 and the Freedom Now Party in 1964. Discussion sessions were held at the Boggs' home which provided young African-American radicals with insight on concepts, goals, strategy and tactics of socialism and revolution.

Whether one disagrees either partially or substantially with the politics of these organizations or individuals is quite beside the point; what should not be overlooked is that collectively they functioned as ongoing radical institutions which preserved and transmitted historical information and revolutionary values to a fresh generation of Detroit activists.⁷²⁵

⁷²⁴ Bill V. Mullen, *Afro-Orientalism* [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press] p. 8 {Also, see Robert F. Mast, *Detroit Lives*, Philadelphia: Temple University (ed.) Press, p. 306}

⁷²⁵ Ernest Mkalimots Allen, "Detroit: I Do Mind Dying, A Review," *Radical America*, Volume II, Number 1, January-February, 1977, p. 70.

Early in 1963, African-American students at Wayne State University formed a revolutionary black nationalist/socialist action cadre called UHURU. UHURU was more militant than GOAL, Rev. Cleage and the Boggs' but maintained close relations with them.

Luke Tripp, John Williams, John Watson, Charles Johnson, General G. Baker, Jr., and Gwen Kemp led UHURU. UHURU members studied Marx, Lenin, Mao, Fanon, Malcolm X, Robert F. Williams, Che Guerara and many others. They attended Socialist Workers Party weekly forums, listened to members of the Communist Party and followers of C.L.R. James. The UHURU cadre considered themselves black Marxist-Leninists and was inspired by the Cuban and Chinese revolutions.

Several of the UHURU cadre and many of those who later joined DRUM were among the first generation of African-American workers hired in the plants in the 1960's who were raised in the north.⁷²⁶

In 1965, at this time, I am at the Dodge Main Plant and I am working with the African-American Student Movement. We had published a couple of publications. We started printing a publication called Razor, which was a publication for the African-American Student Movement in Detroit, and we circulated it at Wayne State Campus and Highland Park Community College campus. We also printed this thing called Black Vanguard that was a publication for black workers in the various shops around the city.⁷²⁷

In 1964, when Grace Boggs and Rev. Albert Cleage were instrumental in developing a strong statewide Freedom Now Party, some members of UHURU were organizers for it. Also in 1964, UHURU members went to Cuba, where they met Robert F. Williams, Fidel Castro, Che Guevara and Muhammad Babu. Some joined the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM). In 1965 they regrouped and formed the Afro-American Student Movement (ASM), which put out a theoretical journal called Black Vanguard, edited by John Watson. Black Vanguard was distributed to African-American workers in the plants but was too theoretical and thick for a positive workers' response.

The Afro-American Student Movement (ASM) was an attempt by RAM to build an all African-American student movement in urban areas. Watson felt V. I. Lenin's "Where to Begin?" was a model theoretical treatise towards building a state-wide black Marxist-Leninist party around a newspaper expanding across the state of Michigan and eventually into a national party building process state by state.⁷²⁸

September 10th Movement

General G. Baker, Jr. received his draft notice in June 1965. He wrote a political letter to the draft board denouncing U.S. imperialism. ASM decided to protest Baker's induction. At this point we should discuss some aspects of Baker's background.

⁷²⁶ Interviews and discussions with General Gordon Baker, Jr. and Darryl Mitchell, 1994 (Detroit, Michigan).

⁷²⁷ Interview with General Gordon Baker, Jr., Cleveland, Ohio, 1994.

⁷²⁸ Meeting, interview and conversation with John Watson, Detroit, Michigan, 1965.

General Gordon Baker, Jr. was born in Detroit, Michigan on September 6, 1941 to Clara Dixon Baker and General Gordon Baker, Sr. Baker, Jr. was raised in a family of three sisters and one nephew who was raised like a brother. The Baker family was sharecroppers from Georgia, who migrated to Detroit in the early forties seeking work in the auto factories. Baker's father worked as a welder in the Midland Ross steel mill plant in Detroit and was a member of the UAW. The plant had a militant local and Baker, Sr. was an active member of the local. Baker, Sr. was a supporter of the Democrats and hated the Republicans.

Baker, Jr. first began to develop a political consciousness when as a child he would hear of union (UAW) politics while attending family picnics or Labor Day parades.

Baker, Jr. attended Southwestern High School and graduated in June 1958. Baker played football and basketball in high school. In 1959, General Baker, Jr. enrolled in Highland Park Junior College. Baker was outraged because he had not been taught black history and knew nothing of the black Muslims, Malcolm X or Elijah Muhammad though they were being highlighted in the media at the time. ASM put out leaflets and press announcements stating that 50,000 African-Americans would show up at the Wayne County Induction Center when Baker had to report. Only eight demonstrators were there, but the threat of mass action had convinced the U.S. Army to find Baker "unsuitable" for service.

What we did was organize what we called a September 10th Movement. The September 10th Movement was a movement that was, basically, an attempt to try to destroy the draft. We leafleted all the plants in the city of Detroit, most of the campuses and some of the high schools in terms of building resistance against the draft with the general agitation around the slogan of "no Vietnamese ever called me a Nigger," and that "we need to fight the discrimination here at home."⁷²⁹

Different members of the group began to go in different occupational directions. Watson and Williams became students at Wayne State and Baker worked in the auto factories. In 1965 Glanton Dowdell came into the cadre. Dowdell's street experience added valuable skills to the organization.

A dropout from the 5th grade, he was put into a home for mentally retarded at the age of 13. In prison on and off since he was 16, he was finally incarcerated on a murder and robbery charge in Jackson. There he organized a strike of black prisoners against discrimination by forming a selected cadre. In prison he read voraciously, learned to paint and after 17 years was released through the intervention of a black probation officer who recognized his genius.⁷³⁰

In 1966, Dowdell, Baker and Rufus Griffin helped form the Black Panther Party in Detroit. A mini-rebellion broke out on the east side and the police picked up the three and charged with carrying concealed weapons. Baker and Dowdell were convicted and placed on five years' probation. Early in 1967, Dowdell was given a suspended sentence. During the winter months of that year, RAM organized the Black Guards and self-defense community

⁷²⁹ Interview with General Gordon Baker, Jr., Cleveland, Ohio, 1994.

⁷³⁰ Grace and James Boggs, *Detroit: Birth of a Nation*, Pamphlet, October 1967, p. 7.

militias in Detroit. “Join the Black Guards” slogans were on walls all over Detroit. On July 23, 1967 the largest insurrection in the history of the United States raged as African-Americans in the thousands took to the streets and fought the police, National Guard and the U.S. Army for five days.

Dowdell and Baker were picked up on July 24th. They were later released on \$50,000 bond. The Detroit Rebellion raised the national consciousness of African-American workers. It started an air of militancy for most African-Americans.

While being detained (preventive detention), arrested and incarcerated during the Detroit rebellion, Baker observed that many of the participants arrested for suspected activity in the rebellion were fellow co-workers who worked in the auto plants. “There in the same cell block was half of the assembly line of my job.”⁷³¹ From his participant-observer studies Baker summarized that many young African-American workers in Detroit had a developing revolutionary consciousness.⁷³²

Dowdell was elected the vice chairman of the City-wide Citizens Action Committee (CCAC), a coalition which attempted to organize the African-American community after the rebellion. At times over 2,000 African-Americans would attend the CCAC meetings. Baker returned to work in the plants. There he began to see that the consciousness of African-American workers was much higher than before the rebellion.

Other forces were able to take advantage of rebellions in other cities, but our critical position was that we had the RAM connection, local connections with the black liberation movement and Black Panther Party. We talked about building a network of people that would be put up in the best position to take tactical advantage of the rebellion.⁷³³

In September 1967, John Watson, Mike Hamlin, Luke Tripp, Ken Cockrel, General Baker and others organized an African-American radical newspaper called The Inner City Voice (ICV), which addressed itself particularly to the oppressive conditions of African-American workers and called them to organize.

Mike Hamlin, John Watson, and Ken Cockrel began discussing What Is To Be Done? by V. I. Lenin on their job at the Detroit News. They all agreed with Lenin’s proposition of how a newspaper could initiate, generate or serve as a center for working class activity and organization. Hamlin and Watson decided to start a monthly radical African-American newspaper. Mike Hamlin borrowed money on his credit card. He and Watson created a monthly African-American newspaper named The Inner City Voice and opened an office.

They brought Ken Cockrel onto the staff of the newspaper. The Inner City Voice staff represented a coalition of African-American Marxist Leninists and cultural nationalists. The cultural nationalists, a group of twelve writer supporters, objected to The Inner City Voice printing articles or works by Ho Chi Minh and “Che” Guevara because they were not “black”.

⁷³¹ Interview with General Gordon Baker, Jr., Detroit, Michigan, 1968.

⁷³² Interview with General Gordon Baker, Jr., Cleveland, Ohio, 1994.

⁷³³ Interview with General Gordon Baker, Jr., Cleveland, Ohio, 1994.

To mediate the dispute Watson and Hamlin brought General Baker in the Inner City Voice group. Baker, large in physical size and known for not negotiating with vacillating political positions, was originally brought in because the cultural nationalist community respected him and also his presence would have an intimidating effect.

Baker recalls,

“Within one month of the Detroit rebellion, The Inner City Voice newspaper sponsored Rap Brown’s visit to Detroit at the old theater on Dexter Avenue that was packed. So many people came that we had standing room only and had to put loud speakers on the street. It was there these kinds of activities that opened up and allowed for us to take real advantage of.”⁷³⁴

In an interview with Chuck Wooten, July 14, 2002, he gives a description of “worker’s self-organization” and the role of cadre in relation to that becomes crystal clear.

Charles “Chuck” Wooten began working at Dodge Main–Hamtramick assembly plant August 13, 1964. This was his first industrial plant job. Wooten experienced racial discrimination in the plant. Wooten worked in the 9110 department, which was at the time the body assembly plant that puts the car together. The plant had hundreds of African-Americans working the assembly line who were scheduled for the hardest work while whites received light work.

Wooten’s consciousness began to sharpen as he realized there were no avenues for advancement in the skill trades and better jobs. The turning point in Wooten’s life was the Detroit rebellion of July 23, 1967. Wooten became a black nationalist as he began to realize African-Americans’ struggle for equality was also a struggle for power. In late 1967, after the Detroit rebellion, Wooten started meeting with Ron March and other workers from the plant at a bar and outside the back of the bar, and began discussing about the conditions inside the plant and what needed to be done about them.

Around February 1968 General G. Baker, Jr., known affectionately by his friends as “Gen”, started holding discussions first with one of the African-American worker leaders in the plant at the Inner City Voice office. Baker stressed the idea of organizing African-American workers at the plant to fight for better working conditions and more representation in the union.

In April 1968, Ron March who knew Baker from the afternoon shift brought Baker to the workers discussions.

Baker suggested to the informal workers discussion group of starting a black workers weekly newsletter inside the plant. The group decided to call itself the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement (DRUM). The newsletter was named after the plant to give workers identification of where they worked.⁷³⁵

⁷³⁴ Interview with General Gordon Baker, Jr., Cleveland, Ohio, 1994.

⁷³⁵ Interview with Charles “Chuck” Wooten, July 14, 2002 (Telephone Cleveland, Ohio to Detroit, Michigan). Also, interview with Mike Hamlin, September 27, 1999, Cleveland, Ohio to Detroit, Michigan, telephone interview.

In its formation in May 1968, DRUM consisted of eight Chrysler workers who constituted an editorial board that met formally every Sunday in the Inner City Voice offices.⁷³⁶ Baker recalls,

We had a little formation called the black people's liberation party, which included myself, John Watson, John Williams, Kenny Cockrel, Marian Kramer, Orion Hatch, Kyle Gregory and a few other people. They were coming together to form a black people's liberation party. The combination of us represented, Marian Kramer, the community people or the West Central Organization. Cockrel and most of the rest of them still represented students. Kyle Gregory represented some level of professors and I represented some workers input from the shops. So we had a little network that we were working with and developed. We all supported the development of the Inner City Voice newspaper that began to play a real critical role after the rebellion.⁷³⁷

The Founding of DRUM

On May 2, 1968, a walkout of 4,000 workers occurred at the Hamtramick Assembly Plant that stemmed from a gradual speed-up of the production line. The facts show production soared from 49 units to 58 units an hour within the short period of a week. The mobility of the worker was retarded to the extent that it was difficult to keep pace. As a result of the walkout, picket lines were set up around the gates and individual workers began to mass. This situation occurred on the afternoon shift of which General Baker worked and carried over into the first shift. During the initial picketing, the company sent out photographers who photographed some of the pickets. The pictures were used as evidence against some of the pickets and were instrumental in the discharge and disciplining of certain workers who took part in the walkout and picketing.

Most of the overall administration of punishment, including discharges and disciplinary action taken against the pickets, was overwhelmingly applied to the African-American workers. They were held responsible for the walkout, which was directly caused by company indifference towards working conditions. Three African-American workers were fired; ten were given from one to five days off. Seven persons (five African-American and two white) were fired, but all except two – General Baker and Bennie Tate, both African-American and DRUM leaders – were eventually rehired.

Chuck Wooten, one of nine workers who founded DRUM, describes how DRUM came into being.

During the wildcat strike of May 1968, upon coming to work...there were picket lines established...manned by all white workers at the time and as a result of this the black workers received the harshest disciplinary actions. A few workers and I went across the street and sat in a bar...It was here that we decided we would do something about organizing black workers to fight the

⁷³⁶ Luke Tripp, "Black Working Class Radicalism, Detroit 1960-1970", Tuesday, October 4, 1994, p. 17 (unpublished paper).

⁷³⁷ Interview with General Gordon Baker, Jr., Cleveland, Ohio 1994.

racial discrimination inside the plants and the overall oppression of black workers...And this was the beginning of DRUM.⁷³⁸

Prior to the wildcat strike at Dodge Main, General Baker began to pull together a group of eight African-American workers. They would meet in the offices of the Inner City Voice.

Black workers who were either dismissed or penalized moved to organize the workers at Dodge Main by using a weekly Newsletter (DRUM) as an organizing tool. The contents of the Newsletter dealt with very specific cases of racism and tomism on the job and stressed the necessity of united action on part of black workers to abolish the racial aspects of exploitation and degradation at the plant.⁷³⁹

The first issues of the DRUM newsletter dealt with the May 2nd wildcat strike. The African-American workers enthusiastically accepted the first issue of the weekly DRUM newsletter. They were somewhat astounded to see accurate reporting of conditions they were experiencing inside the plant.⁷⁴⁰

The second issue carried an “expose” on several African-Americans in the plant whom DRUM considered to be “uncle toms.” The issue also outlined the DRUM program.

DRUM is an organization of oppressed and exploited black workers. It realizes that black workers are the victims of inhumane slavery at the expense of white racist plant managers. It also realizes that black workers comprise 60% and upwards of the entire work force at the Hamtramck Assembly Plant, and therefore hold exclusive power. We members of DRUM had no other alternative but to form an organization and to present a platform. The Union has consistently and systematically failed us time and time again. We have attempted to address our grievances to the U.A.W.’s procedures, but to no avail; its hands are just as bloody as the white racist management of this corporation. We black workers feel that if skilled trades can negotiate directly with the company and hold a separate contract, then black workers have more justification for moving independently of the U.A.W.⁷⁴¹

The third issue of DRUM dealt with charges and documentation of racist conditions in the plant and also attacked the UAW for endorsing the annual Detroit Police field day. It also listed a number of deaths attributed to the police department. After the third week, African-American workers in the plant began to ask how to go about joining DRUM. Members of DRUM working in the plant proselytized and recruited African-American workers on the job. The strength and influence of DRUM grew tremendously.

Around the sixth week the more militant workers wanted to go for some concrete action against Chrysler and the UAW. At this point the editors of DRUM decided to test their strength. They called for a one-week boycott of

⁷³⁸ James A. Geschwender, “The League of Revolutionary Black Workers”, The Journal of Ethnic Studies, Volume 2, Number 5, Fall, 1974, p. 4.

⁷³⁹ Luke Tripp, “DRUM-Vanguard of the Black Revolution”, The South End (Wayne State University Student Newspaper) Volume 22, Number 62, Thursday, January 23, 1969, p. 9.

⁷⁴⁰ Luke Tripp, Op. Cit., p. 9.

⁷⁴¹ DRUM (Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement) Newsletter, Volume 1, Number 2, p. 3.

two bars outside the gate that were patronized by a large number of brothers. The bars didn't hire blacks and practiced racism in other subtle ways. DRUM received about 95% cooperation. This was achieved without the use of pickets or picket signs. As a further test of strength DRUM called for an extension of the boycott. Again DRUM received solid support so they decided to get down.⁷⁴²

Seeing that the boycott was a success, DRUM decided to test its strength by showing Chrysler and the UAW it could shut down the plant. The ninth issue of the DRUM newsletter carried a list of 14 demands. The newsletter prepared the workers for the proposed strike.

DRUM demands:

1. DRUM demands 50 black foremen.
2. DRUM demands 10 black general foremen immediately.
3. DRUM demands 3 black superintendents.
4. DRUM demands a black plant manager.
5. DRUM demands that the majority of the employment office personnel be black.
6. DRUM demands all black doctors and 50% black nurses in the medical centers at this plant.
7. DRUM demands that the medical policy at this plant be changed entirely.
8. DRUM demands that 50% of all plant protection guards be black, and that every time a black worker is removed from plant premises that he be led by a black brother.
9. DRUM demands that all black workers immediately stop paying union dues.
10. DRUM demands that the two hours pay that goes into union dues be levied to the black community to aid in self-determination for black people.
11. DRUM demands that the double standard be eliminated and that a committee of the black rank and file be set up to investigate all grievances against the corp., to find out what type of discipline is to be taken against the corporation and also to find out what type of discipline is to be taken against Chrysler Corporation employees.
12. DRUM demands that all black workers who have been fired on trumped up racist charges be brought back with all lost pay.
13. DRUM demands that our fellow black brothers in South Africa working for Chrysler Corporation, and its subsidiaries be paid at an equal scale as white racist co-workers.
14. DRUM also demands that a black brother be appointed as head of the board of directors of Chrysler Corporation.

The power base for these demands will be as follows:

1. Legal demonstration at Local 3 and Solidarity House.
2. Legal demonstration at Highland Park (Chrysler Corp. headquarters).

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Op. Cit. (Tripp), p. 9.

3. Legal shut down of Hamtramick Assembly.⁷⁴³

In the ninth week of its existence, DRUM moved. On Thursday, July 7, 1968, DRUM held a rally in the parking lot across from the factory, which attracted over 300 workers. After speeches from DRUM leaders, African-American workers, along with a number of African-American community groups and a Congo band, formed a line and marched to the UAW Local 3 headquarters two blocks away. DRUM had carefully planned the picketing to coincide with the union executive board meeting. When the workers arrived at the local, they proceeded into the building.

The panic-stricken executive board immediately canceled their meeting and opened the union auditorium to listen to criticisms aimed at the company and the union. DRUM leaders described how the union worked hand-in-glove with the corporation, the union's failure to address itself to the workers' grievances, and DRUM's demands. Unsatisfied with the defense of the union's pro-capitalist line by Ed Liska, president of UAW Local 3, and Vice President Charles Brooks, DRUM stated it would close Dodge Main in defiance of the union contract.

On Friday, July 8, 1968, DRUM and supporting groups arrived at the plant gates at 5 A.M. in order to be there when workers began arriving for the 6 A.M. shift.

Picket lines were set up and manned entirely by students, intellectuals, and community people. Workers were excluded. White workers were allowed to enter the factory without interference but all Blacks were stopped. No force was applied but verbal persuasion was sufficient to keep an estimated 70 percent of the Black workers out of the plant.⁷⁴⁴

While the majority of white workers entered the factory, many honored the picket line and went home. Some 3,000 African-American workers stood outside the factory gates as production came almost to a halt.

DRUM leaders talked to workers one hundred yards from the picketers because the Chrysler Corporation had obtained a court injunction hindering DRUM members from being in any struggle in the plant in violation of the union contract or face arrest. About noon, six DRUM members went to Local 3 and met with Liska and other union officials. DRUM presented their grievances again.

About this time the police arrived, massing across the street from the workers. They began putting on tear gas masks and got into riot formation. A detective then came forward and ordered the workers to disperse. DRUM dispersed most of the strikers after organizing at least 250 workers into car pools. The car pool drove five miles to Chrysler headquarters. The Highland Park police arrived with gas warfare gear. Many of the demonstrators had gas masks. A group of DRUM representatives went into the Chrysler building and demanded to see the policy makers. They refused to meet with DRUM. The DRUM representatives returned to the demonstration and said the company had refused to meet. Satisfied with having achieved its immediate objectives, DRUM transported the demonstrators back to their homes.

⁷⁴³ DRUM (Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement) Newsletter, Volume 1, Number 9, p. 1.

⁷⁴⁴ Op. Cit. (Geschwender) p. 6.

On Sunday twelve DRUM members were invited to the regular citywide meeting of African-American UAW representatives. The African-American UAW officials said they would support specific DRUM demands but DRUM felt the officials did not represent the African-American rank and file of the union, had not stepped forward before DRUM began demonstrations and the meeting ended with no real consensus.⁷⁴⁵

On Monday, the following day, DRUM again demonstrated at the plant. The Hamtramick police served John Doe injunctions on the demonstrators. The police proceeded to break up the demonstration. DRUM activists, feeling they had been successful, tore up their injunctions and either went to work or went home. The wildcat lasted for three days with Chrysler losing the production of approximately 1900 cars and no one was fired as a result of the action.

The wildcat strike forced the leaders of Local 3 to act on the cases of the workers who had been fired in May. The Local 3 leaders however accepted a package deal offered by Chrysler in which five of the seven were to be rehired except General Baker and Bennie Tate who remained fired. DRUM still viewed the July wildcat walkout an overwhelming success because it was a test of what an African-American radical workers organization could do.⁷⁴⁶

In August an African-American organization made an attempt to usurp DRUM. The group was made up of African-American trade union men and a Chrysler professional employee who was pretending he had been fired from the company. The group filed incorporation papers in the name of DRUM – the Detroit Revolutionary Union Movement. They called a meeting between the original DRUM – Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement – and themselves. The Detroit DRUM said they thought the original DRUM leadership was incompetent and needed direction. The meeting didn't lead to positive results because the original DRUM criticized them for not having a base and also incorrect style of work.

But DRUM learned that in order not to be co-opted or misrepresented, it had to move immediately to formalize its structure and tighten up the organization.

Originally in May, DRUM consisted of eight Chrysler workers who constituted an editorial board which met formally every Sunday. In September, DRUM had developed into a fairly large organization whose form was for the most part amorphous. In the middle of September DRUM submitted its constitution and theoretical structure for acceptance at a general meeting. Both the constitution and structure were accepted unanimously.⁷⁴⁷

A trustee in the UAW Local 3 died and a special election was scheduled for September 3, 1968 to choose his successor.

DRUM leadership was divided as to whether they should run a candidate. Those opposed believed that participation in union electoral politics would: (1) appear to be compromising with a "corrupt" UAW; (2) might create the

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Dan Georgakas and Marvin Surkin, *Detroit: I Do Mind Dying* [New York: St. Martin's Press, 1975], p. 47

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Phillip S. Foner, *Organized Labor and the Black Worker 1619-1973* [New York: International Publishers, 1974], p. 414.

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Op. Cit., p. 2.

potential for opportunism in some DRUM members; and (3) the election might be lost. Those in favor argued that the election could: (1) demonstrate Black solidarity; (2) demonstrate DRUM's leadership; (3) serve as a vehicle for political education; and (4) aid DRUM's membership drive.⁷⁴⁸

DRUM chose Ron March, a DRUM member, to run for the post of union steward, and presented a platform for the upcoming election:

1. The complete accountability to the black majority of the entire membership.
2. All union decisions will coincide directly with the wishes of that majority.
3. Advocating a revolutionary change in the UAW (including a referendum vote and revive the grievance procedure).
4. Public denouncement of the racial practices within the UAW.
5. A refusal to be dictated to by the international staff of the UAW.
6. Total involvement in policy by the workers as opposed to dictatorship by the executive board.⁷⁴⁹

The election campaign was organized primarily as a tool for political education while also attempting to elect Ron March. March led the balloting in the election with 563 votes to 521 for his nearest competitor.

The Hamtramick police attacked some African-American workers near some bars the same night that the election returns were announced. Chuck Wooten, a member of DRUM, described forms of harassment:

The Hamtramick police department began to move in a much more open way. They gave us tickets on our cars and just generally harassed us. One day about fifty of us were in the union hall, which is right across from the police station. The mayor of the city and the chief of police came in with guns in their hands. They told us to stop making trouble, and we said all we wanted was to win the election. We asked them why they weren't harassing the others. While we were talking, a squad of police came through the door swinging axe handles and throwing Mace around.⁷⁵⁰

Between the time of the first election and the runoff, the union sent letters to retired workers appealing to them to participate in the election. While African-Americans made up 63 percent of the active work force in UAW Local 3, white (primarily Polish-Americans) made up the overwhelming majority of the retired workers.

On October 3, 1968, Ron March was defeated in the runoff by a vote of 2,091 to 1,386. With negative publicity from the established and union press and repression from police forces, DRUM felt that Ron's pulling forty percent of the vote under those conditions was a good showing. After running in two additional elections and receiving similar results, DRUM decided to terminate its direct participation in union electoral politics. Instead it

⁷⁴⁸ Op. Cit. (Greschwender), p. 7.

⁷⁴⁹ DRUM Newsletter, Volume 1, Number 13, p. 1.

⁷⁵⁰ Op. Cit. (Georgakas and Surkin), p. 49.

supported African-American candidates who were not identified as DRUM members but who were progressive.

As DRUM expanded its operations, it had to address itself to how it was going to raise funds to carry out operations. The two main sources of finances were dues from DRUM members and contributions from workers. But these weren't enough to sustain the organization.

DRUM organized parties, demonstrations, and rallies that were attended by workers, students and people from church and neighborhood groups. DRUM also organized a picket line outside of Solidarity House to publicize its demands. DRUM decided to engage in fund-raising activity that would at the same time raise the consciousness of the workers and also informed the African-American community of DRUM's existence. With the help of the African-American clergy, DRUM was able to secure a church to hold a mass rally. DRUM sold raffle tickets prior to the rally, which served as both a fund-raiser and a publicity drive. First prize was a M-1 rifle, second prize a shotgun, and third prize a bag of groceries. The rally, which was held on November 17, 1968, had a large community turnout.

Marion Kramer, who worked as an organizer for the City-Wide Welfare Rights Organization typed and justified the DRUM newsletter; when in 1967 she was asked to come to a meeting to form a black people's liberation party.

At the meeting it was discussed, what direction to take. Kramer and her husband at the time (Dave Kramer) were frustrated with the rate of social change in the United States and were going to tour Europe. She said she was convinced "to get that out of your mind", by General Baker, Mike Hamlin, John Watson, John Williams and others. They said the purpose of the session was to plan and pull together an organization to serve the interests of African-Americans.

Kramer said the meeting was a turning point in her life because she decided to go deeper in her understanding of what was happening in the United States. Edna Watson and Dorothy Duberry had been invited to the meeting along with Kramer but Kramer was the only woman who showed up of the women invited to attend.

One of the struggles that even started to develop then was the whole question of the relationship between the struggle taking place in the community and the struggle at the point of production.⁷⁵¹

Kramer said she was beginning to understand how important workers were to the government.

Revolutionary Union Movements Formed in Other Factories

The example set by DRUM inspired African-American workers in other plants to establish DRUM-type organizations at other factories. Workers from other plants began calling the DRUM office at Oakland and Owens. Brothers and sisters would attend DRUM meetings to learn the techniques of organizing and to discuss the situation at the plants all across the

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Interview with Marion Kramer, Telephone Detroit, Michigan to Cleveland, Ohio, July 6, 2002.

state, from which African-American workers would come to help in launching chapters of DRUM. The strike at the Hamtramick plant called by DRUM stimulated the creation of ELRUM (Eldon Avenue Revolutionary Union Movement) and FRUM (Ford Revolutionary Union Movement). Both of these RUM's had their own newsletters. ELRUM was organized on November 10, 1968.

The development of ELRUM was especially significant because the Eldon Avenue plant was Chrysler's only gear and axle plant. ELRUM led a demonstration in front of the UAW Local 961 in its eight-week of its existence. A meeting resulted between the UAW local representatives and members of ELRUM. It lasted so long that 300 workers missed their afternoon shift starting time at work. When they returned to work the next day, 66 of the 300 were immediately punished and more were later on. Punishments ranged from five days to a month off without pay. To protest this punishment ELRUM called for a wildcat strike on January 21, 1969. At the same time RUM's (Revolutionary Union Movements) were growing everywhere in the city, so on the eve of the ELRUM strike we called for the formation of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers (LRBW).⁷⁵²

In the Eldon Avenue strike, a higher proportion of African-American workers participated and production was completely halted because African-Americans comprised a larger portion of the total labor force than had been the case at Hamtramick Assembly plant. Later the ELRUM cadres analyzed that the strike had been premature, because 22 strikers were fired despite the fact that picket lines were manned by support cadres.*

On May 27, 1970, the Eldon Safety Committee and the League of Revolutionary Black Workers set up picket lines to protest the death of Gary Thompson who had been buried under five tons of steel when his faulty jiney tipped over on May 26, 1970 at the Eldon Gear and Axle plant. While the second wildcat strike called by ELRUM was not as successful as the first, it did cost Chrysler 2,174 axles over a two-day period.

ELRUM in its early development had to deal with the fact that most of its cadres were thrown out of the plant and had to address itself to the sustenance of the families of the brothers who were fired.

Soon after the Eldon Avenue Revolutionary Union Movement (ELRUM) was established (FRUM) Ford, Jefferson Avenue (JARUM), Mack Avenue (MARUM) and General Motors (GRUM) soon followed it. Each Revolutionary Union Movement had a nucleus of from ten to fifteen workers in each plant that produced their plant weekly newsletters and would give them to other cadre who would distribute them throughout the plant.

As RUM's sprang up in factories across Detroit and in other cities, DRUM and its support cadres felt the need for a centralizing organization.

According to Marion Kramer in an interview July 5, 2002:

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Interview with General Gordon Baker, Cleveland, Ohio [1994].

The League of Revolutionary Black Workers came together from the RUM's movement as a result of the women rebelling and calling for a more systematic approach to organization.⁷⁵³

The women, Marion Kramer, Gracie Wooten, Arlene Baker, Mary Baker, Cas Smith, Jeanette Baker, Helen Jones and others were doing the typing, participating in demonstrations, handing out leaflets, organizing in the community; doing just about everything but they were not represented in the leadership of the collective. So the women who were involved in the revolutionary union movement effort in Detroit developed a strong sense of unity; that is "they stuck together."

During the period of multiple RUM's, 68-69, the Detroit RUM collective had organized the Black Student United Front, various RUM's in the plants and hospitals; in the social workers community and the international black appeal. The collective had gone through the New Bethel incident and was the main force getting people set free. It had been a force behind the organizing drive to save Judge Crockett who had come to the defense of the New Bethel detainees.

General Baker had gone underground at this time because Chrysler had made moves to arrest him. Even with Baker off the scene the RUM collective's roots were so embedded among the Detroit African-American working class that when the UAW held its national convention in Detroit; cadre from the RUM's and community people held massive demonstrations in front of the UAW convention. The RUM collective had mobilized thousands of people including an effort to stop the taking of attorney Ken Cockrel's license. The RUM collective had also been involved in defending an African-American worker; James Johnson who had killed his foreman and two others at the plant and the collective had successfully defended him with Johnson winning his case. The women were "sick and tired" of doing all of the work for the sections (RUMs) and not being part of the decision making process while there was no organizational process that had any plans. The women had formed the black women's committee and knew of ensuing internal struggles. Young sisters from the Black Students United Front now joined them. So as the black women's committee they decided to take some stands.

The women worked around the Inner City Voice as well as helping to develop various newsletters of the RUMs plus help train the workers of the RUM to edit and print their own RUM newsletters. The women got tired of being "dumped upon" and started to say, "we need an organization".⁷⁵⁴ Through the women spearheading and leading the motion to call an organizational meeting, a group of over a hundred people involved convened on January 21, 1969 and formed the League of Revolutionary Black Workers.⁷⁵⁵

The League of Revolutionary Black Workers Organized

⁷⁵³ Interview with Marion Kramer, July 5, 2002 (Telephone: Cleveland, Ohio to Detroit, Michigan).

*Eventually all but two of the twenty-two were reinstated. Chrysler refused to reinstate Fred Holsey and another worker whom it accused of having been leaders of the strike. On December 1, 1971, the Michigan Civil Rights Commission upheld a finding by a hearing referee that the Chrysler Corporation was guilty of unlawful discrimination in discharging Fred Holsey. The commission voted to issue a cease and desist order against Chrysler.

⁷⁵⁴ Interview with Marion Kramer, July 5, 2002, (Telephone: Cleveland, Ohio to Detroit, Michigan).

⁷⁵⁵ Interview with General Gordon Baker, Cleveland, Ohio, 1994.

An important factor in the League's development is the fact that it came into existence as a reaction to the spontaneous self-organizing of African-American workers. The national (race) consciousness of African-American workers was at the high point as a result of the July 1967 rebellion. This carried into the plants, where young African-American workers were more determined than ever to do something about the inhumane working conditions.

Though DRUM was in its formative stages as an in-plant study and action group, the May 3, 1968 wildcat strike at Hamtramick Assembly plant was the catalyst that made DRUM into a viable in-plant African-American workers' organization. Organization and structure did not come into existence until two months after DRUM's development. Reacting to the spontaneous actions of the workers proved to be a contradiction that was never fully solved within the League. Sustaining activity and the interest of the workers became major problems for the in-plant organizers of the League. The concept of a League of Revolutionary Black Workers had been in the minds of activists General Baker, John Watson, John Williams and Luke Tripp for years. In 1964 and 1965 they had put out a theoretical journal called Black Vanguard which called for a League of Black Workers. Between December 1968 and spring 1969, meetings were held with the cadre collective (a loose coalition of activists who had worked together since the days of UHURU) to discuss the formation of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers.

The contradictions that later emerged within the League were prevalent from its inception. A major aspect of these contradictions occurred between in-plant organizers (workers), community activists and revolutionary intellectuals. General Baker and Chuck Wooten (in-plant DRUM organizers) were the guiding force as far as the rest of the African-American workers were concerned inside the LRBW.

J. W. Freeman remembers:

I remember the meeting where the "League of Revolutionary Black Workers" was officially formed, and vividly recalled Luke Tripp's assertion that "if you want to know our political position read the "Peking Review". Kenneth Cockrel chaired the meeting, which took place in a building located on the corner of Elmhurst and Linwood in Detroit. At the time the building was owned by "Mama and Papa Oden" and is currently used as a drug rehabilitation center, "the Elmhurst House". "Mama Oden" was a profoundly religious woman, whose spiritual depth was boundless and responsible for hundreds of young black men being deterred from the path of evil. She literally took me by the hand and several times presented me to the revolutionaries at 179 Cortland. "Papa Oden" was a businessman whose wealth meant nothing if it was not used to up lift the black masses. "Mama and Papa Oden", on more than one occasion helped save my life...and spirit.⁷⁵⁶

Glanton Dowdell, organized most of the community support for DRUM and the League until his forced exile to Sweden in August 1969. Baker and Dowdell had both been members and leading cadre in Detroit RAM and had worked together for years. The incorporation of Ken Cockrel, Mike Hamlin, John Watson and John Williams into the leadership of the League was due to the fact that they had administrative and other technical

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J. W. Freeman, The Revolutionary Way Out, Introduction Revelation, p. 5 (unpublished manuscript).

skills needed to coordinate an expanding semi-spontaneous African-American workers' movement. The League published position papers and a public document titled "Here's Where We're Coming From." In order to develop internal democracy within the League, it was structured into compartments, which had a semi-autonomous character. The compartments were broken down into a membership and circulation committee, an editorial committee, a financial committee, an education committee, a public relations committee, and an intelligence/security committee. All committees were directly responsible to the central committee known as the executive committee. The central staff was a body of League consistent cadres under the executive committee and was responsible for the day-to-day activities of the League.⁷⁵⁷ From the beginning, a major contradiction within the League was that the executive committee only included two African-American workers, General Baker and Chuck Wooten. The executive committee was made up of Baker, Ken Cockrel, Mike Hamlin, Luke Tripp, John Watson, John Williams and Wooten.⁷⁵⁸ Glanton Dowdell was in charge of intelligence and security. Also, Baker and Dowdell were members of the black people's liberation party (then an underground party) that was a vestige of RAM.⁷⁵⁹ While Dowdell was in Detroit, strict discipline was maintained within the League, and the out-of-plant intellectuals – Mike Hamlin, John Watson and Ken Cockrel – didn't dare to buck Baker and Wooten.⁷⁶⁰

The LRBW was legally incorporated in June 1969 and opened its headquarters at 179 Cortland Street in October. The League began public projection in July 1969 with the Inner City Voice as its official organ. For the most part, a citywide African-American student movement developed in the high schools and colleges and affiliated themselves with the League. The high school groups, led by the students at Northern High School, put out a newsletter called Black Student Voice. While in Detroit, Dowdell was the students' mentor.

Within a few months after the formation of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers the UAW leadership suddenly stopped the practice of mobilizing opposition to African-American candidates to local elections of unions. African-American workers were elected as presidents of Local 900 (Ford's Wayne plant), Local 47 (Chrysler Detroit Forge), Local 901 (Chrysler Eldon Gear), Local 7 (Chrysler), Local 51 (Plymouth) and Local 1248 (Chrysler Mopar). An African-American was elected vice president of Briggs Local 21 for the first time and in several plants African-American committeemen and shop stewards were chosen.⁷⁶¹

The Black Economic Development Conference

The National Black Economic Development Conference (BEDC) met in Detroit, April 25-27, 1969. Called by African-American clergy and lay people who planned this conference, has been noted as the turning point for the League.

At the conference, James Forman (formerly of SNCC and the Black Panthers) had drafted a black manifesto dealing with demands for reparations. The black manifesto demanded

⁷⁵⁷ Interview with General Gordon Baker, Jr., Cleveland, Ohio, 1994.

⁷⁵⁸ Interview with Chuck Wooten, July 14, 2002 (Telephone: Cleveland, Ohio to Detroit, Michigan).

⁷⁵⁹ Interview with Marion Kramer, July 5, 2002 (Telephone: Cleveland, Ohio to Detroit, Michigan).

⁷⁶⁰ Conversation with Glanton Dowdell, November 1969, Windsor, Canada.

⁷⁶¹ Phillip S. Forner, Organized Labor and the Black Worker, 1619-1973 [New York: International Publishers, 1974], p. 917.

money from white churches to support things like a black publishing company, a black workers' strike fund and a land bank. Forman did not have much support, and the Republic of New Africa (RNA) saw the manifesto as a watered-down version of reparations. Forman approached John Watson of the LRBW and asked him to support the manifesto. In return he promised to get money for the League. Watson called on the League cadres at the conference to support the manifesto. After much bitter debate with the RNA, the manifesto was passed.

Some members of the League joined the executive committee of BEDC and demonstrated at white churches with Forman. Forman then requested to become a member of the League and was eventually put on its central staff. Forman's entrance into the League was the beginning of real problems for the League. Through money provided from BEDC, the League was able to establish a print shop (Black Star Press) and a bookstore (Black Star Book Store) and to make a movie, *Finally Got the News*.

But none of this was without strings attached. The agreement on funding Black Star Press was that one of its first projects would be printing Forman's book, *The Political Thought of James Forman*. During this time a debate took place between General Baker and Muhammad Ahmad over letting Forman into the League. The two would consult on a bi-monthly basis on internal development and problems within the League. Ahmad's position was that Forman was a control or destroy organizer (one who either controls an organization or divides it) and that while the money would help the League, it would boost Forman's influence in the League and the League would be split within a year.

The League drafted a manifesto and called for a black worker's congress. According to General Baker and Norman Otis Richmond in-plant leadership felt the League was over extended and had become a professional liberation organization but had lost its focus; a base among African-American workers in the plants. They felt that the priority should be on building strong RUM's (Revolutionary Union Movements) in the factories in Detroit first before expanding to other cities. The RUM's in existence had become weakened by strikes and repression against them. So the question for the in-plant leadership, how do you maintain and develop what you already have and consolidate it, not expand on thin air.⁷⁶²

The first beginnings of an ideological split within the executive committee of the League occurred over the question of BEDC. General Baker voiced reservations about BEDC and refused to be on its steering committee. Cockrel, Hamlin and Watson, out-of-plant intellectuals and administrators, dismissed Baker's objections and joined BEDC. Baker also alluded to Forman as being questionable. All agreed to support the idea of establishing an International Black Appeal (IBA) as a tax-exempt charity which would be a self-sustaining fund-raising apparatus. John Williams was named IBA director.

The South End Newspaper

The *Inner City Voice* began to run out of funds in September 1968. In October John Watson, who was an irregular student at Wayne State University, ran for editor of Wayne

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Interview with General Gordon Baker, Jr. and interview with Norman "Otis" Richmond, 4/21/99, Telephone conversation.

State's student newspaper and was elected editor for the 1968-69 academic year. The coalition of white and black students who supported him were firm supporters of DRUM.

Watson immediately turned the South End into a voice for the League. As the South End began to feature stories on various revolutions, particularly Palestine, it came under attack from the University administration and the white power structure in Detroit. On February 10, 1969, Joe Weaver, newscaster for conservative WJBK-TV, went to the South End offices to get a taped interview with Watson. Watson refused to be interviewed and closed the door to his office. Weaver forced his way into Watson's office. Watson ordered him to leave. Weaver continued to ask Watson questions with TV cameras filming. Other members of the South End staff came into the office to block the camera. A rumble (fight) ensued, leaving Weaver with a black eye. Weaver left the office and went to police headquarters, where he filed charges against Watson for assault and battery. Ken Cockrel, the League's lawyer, defended Watson at his jury trial and he was acquitted. While Watson was the South End editor he helped build student support for the League.

While the South End was an excellent vehicle for the LRBW it could not relate to African-American workers in the same way as the Inner City Voice, which had ceased publication for lack of funds. The Inner City Voice was written specially for African-American workers while the South End was written for students. In retrospect, at this point the LRBW should have taken assessment, withdrew and concentrated on continuing the Inner City Voice.⁷⁶³

A dispute within the South End staff over collective decision-making resulted in Watson and DRUM losing control of the South End the following school year.

Activities of the League in the Community and Relations with Other Groups

The primary focus of the League's activity up to 1970 was concentrated on organizing African-American workers at the point of production. All other activities were viewed as secondary with the intent of stimulating support for the RUM's. But as soon as the League received publicity, particularly exposure by parts of the American and European left, the out-of-plant intellectuals – Cockrel, Hamlin and Watson – began to project themselves as the leaders or spokesmen for the League and eventually lost all touch with the workers in the organization.

...the primary concern of General Baker and Chuck Wooten was...that of plant organizing; that of Watson/Cockrel/Hamlin was more visionary, in the sense of advocating a greater political involvement of the LRBW in the larger Detroit community as well as beyond; and that of Luke Tripp and John Williams as steering a cautious middle course between these two positions.⁷⁶⁴

From the League's conception, it had a fraternal organization relationship with the RNA. On March 29th, 1969 the Detroit police attacked the RNA during its meeting at New Bethel Baptist Church after a shootout between RNA security guards and police. One policeman was killed and another other wounded. Police surrounded the church as they laid an armed

⁷⁶³ Interview with Norman "Otis" Richmond 9/21/99, Toronto, Ontario, Canada to Cleveland, Ohio Telephone Conversation.

⁷⁶⁴ Op. Cit. (Allen), p. 71.

siege. The police raided the church, arrested one hundred fifty people, and held them incommunicado.

African-American State Representative James Del Rio contacted Judge George Crockett, an African-American judge. Judge Crockett came to the police station where RNA citizens were being held and found that no charges had been brought against anyone. He set up court in the station and released about fifty. Wayne County Prosecutor William L. Cahalan stopped him, but his actions had caused concern over violation of civil rights and the police released most of the RNA citizens the next day.

Judge Crockett immediately came under attack from the white establishment and white press. A Black United Front was formed to support Judge Crockett. Some sixty organizations were in the Front, ranging from the NAACP and the Guardians (an African-American policemen's organization) to the RNA and DRUM.

On April 3, 1969, the Black United Front called for demonstrations in support of Crockett, and some three thousand people responded.⁷⁶⁵

The formation of the Black United Front and the demonstration threatened to polarize Detroit. Within a matter of weeks, the Detroit Commission on Community Relations issued a report favorable to Crockett. The *Detroit Free Press* published an editorial apologizing for previously publishing racist articles against Crockett. The Michigan Bar Association and spokesmen for the UAW and New Detroit defended Judge Crockett's legal positions.

John Watson of the LRBW was appointed director of the West Central Organization (WCO) after it had received a \$30,000 grant from BEDC. During this period the Detroit Board for Education announced a plan to decentralize control. WCO called a conference attended by 300 representatives from seventy organizations to deal with the decentralization plan. The conference formed a coalition called Parents and Students for Community Control (PASCC). PASCC addressed itself to community control of schools and a number of community issues. The League had influence on African-American high school students in particular and some African-American college students. A high school cadre began to form in Northern High. Their first advisor was Glanton Dowdell and later Mike Hamlin. Their newsletter, *Black Student Voice*, called for student control of the schools:

The summer is over and we are back in the same old bag; white teachers, books, and heroes are still hanging on the walls of our schools. It is about time that the students and non-students stand up and be black men and women, and tell the teachers, principals, and administration, and uncle tom students that you are sick and tired of this white bullshit that is going on in our black schools. What about our Black Heroes; Malcolm X, Stokely Carmichael, Rap Brown, Nat Turner, Robert Williams, Huey Newton, and many others which your racist uncle tom teachers refuse to tell you about. All black students should join or support any black student organization working towards an effective change, and making the school more relevant to black students. These racist ass honkeys must stop controlling our black schools. The students should be making the decisions on who is going to

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Op. Cit. (Georgakas and Surkin), p. 69.

teach and govern the schools period, not some racist white honkey from the suburbs.⁷⁶⁶

While the LRBW was generally sympathetic to the revolutionary stand of the Oakland-based Black Panther Party (BPP) uniting with them on many issues, particularly with those who identified themselves as Marxist-Leninists, they believed the Black Panther Party was moving in the wrong direction by concentrating on organizing lumpen elements of the African-American community. The LRBW believed the BPP was engaging in self-defeating adventurist activities based on their romantic orientation toward the lumpen rather than a more realistic one toward workers. The LRBW did not believe that a successful movement could be based upon the lumpen as they lack a potential source of power. The LRBW believed that African-American workers had the most promising base for a successful African-American liberation movement because of the potential power derived from their ability to disrupt industrial production.

The LRBW emphasized that the working class is the vanguard of the major force within the revolutionary struggle, and that the lumpen proletariat is in and of itself a class that generally splits. The LRBW believed that whole sections of the lumpen proletariat are totally undisciplined and have a “Go for yourself” mentality regardless of the political situation. The LRBW believed though there are some sections of the lumpen proletariat, which can become revolutionary.⁷⁶⁷

The relationship between the League and the Panthers soon broke down, as the national office in Oakland purged Luke Tripp and others in 1969. There were serious ideological differences.

The DRUM forces felt that it was wise to keep their membership in low profile as much as possible. DRUM felt those involved in military operations should be underground having little identity with public political activity. DRUM felt it was an unrealistic approach presenting oneself as a super revolutionary to the community exposing it to unnecessary excessive repression; one that the community would be afraid to engage itself in. DRUM felt that the key to mobilizing the community was organizing a “realistic” day-to-day style of organizing that recruits, trains cadre and preserves them through the protracted class war of liberation.⁷⁶⁸

While the League was getting more involved in the community and becoming recognized across the country as an African-American revolutionary workers’ organization, it was beginning to lose its base among African-American workers within the plants. The operations the League continued to be set up that began to draw its personnel further and further away from its focus of organizing the plants. Also, a bureaucratic structure began to replace its once-flexible modus operandi. The ideological division, which burst into the open, was centered on tactical concerns.

⁷⁶⁶ Black Student Voice, Volume 1, Number 2, October 1968, p. 1.

⁷⁶⁷ Melvin M. Lieman, The Political Economy of Racism: A History [London Pluto Press, 1993], p. 229.

⁷⁶⁸ Op. Cit., Interview with Norman “Otis” Richmond, 9/21/99.

The Ideological Split in the League: The A Group and the B Group

As the League expanded its base in Detroit, questions over direction became more prominent within the leadership. RUM's spread among hospital and newspaper workers. Also, RUM's developed in steel and other industries in other cities. The League had become the inspiration of African-American workers' caucuses around the country.

To address itself to questions of a national African-American workers' organization, the League leadership decided to form a Black Workers Congress which would coordinate the various RUM's and African-American workers' caucuses in the nation. The BWC would be an American version of a soviet workers congress making decisions concerning their own liberation. But at this point of development, the League began to split into two factions which were divided between the in-plant revolutionary black nationalist workers and the out-of-plant, Marxist-Leninist intellectuals.

The split in the League raged for a year, starting openly in 1970 and culminating on June 12, 1971 with John Watson, Ken Cockrel and Mike Hamlin resigning to go with the Black Workers Congress. The ideological differences were over different conceptual frameworks, issues, where priority of the organization should be, national consciousness, cooperation with white radicals, social relations, scope and the direction of the struggle. The League had become a bureaucratic structure with people working full-time in various projects. The RUMs, which came into existence because of the rise of national consciousness that the Detroit rebellion developed in African-American workers, was becoming more difficult to sustain. The in-plant organizers addressed themselves to the problem of maintaining high morale among the workers. Most of the RUMs developed from semi-spontaneous actions (wildcats) over grievances. But how to maintain an ongoing organization in the plants was becoming an increasing problem. Cultural affairs were organized by the League to provide members with social activities. These affairs were to allow League members to get to know one another and develop further cohesion among members. At one point there was a discussion of establishing a workers' supermarket to develop economic self-reliance.

In an interview with Ernie Mkalimoto Allen he said the LRBW (referred to as the League) leadership in the plants had become isolated.

Question:

For what reason?

Answer:

They had with the Wildcats strikes and that sort of thing, had out-skirted both the union and management. The retaliation came in the form of firings of the organizers, economic reprisals. In terms of the intelligence of these operations of these various plants, they passed the word on. So the co-called troublemakers, in other words the leadership was isolated and fired and of course the union wasn't paying them any benefits or supporting them and so the League had to do that. So basically that movement never was able to revive itself in that particular period. The League was going to have tremendous reverberations elsewhere I think mostly in the South like Atlanta, Georgia and of course down in Newark with the Mahwah Group and the plant and so forth. But they were never able to recoup. Basically

what happened was that when the League came together it was formed from a coalition of people. They had different kinds of purposes, different kinds of directions. Some had worked together before and they had fallen out with one another and they came back together because they needed each other and each others skills, and for the summer rebellion in Detroit in '67. There were actually three different groups in there. The first group was formed with Mike Hamlin, Ken Cockrel, John Watson. They considered themselves I think to be Marxist-Leninists. That was true of the second group which was formed of Luke Tripp and John Williams who considered themselves to be Marxist -Leninists as well. But the third group which in terms of leadership there was probably was General Baker and Chuck Wooten were more nationalist oriented, well versed in terms of having read as much literature as everybody else, in terms of Marxist literature and so forth. There were some who advocated a kind of a slow policy. In terms of General Baker and Chuck Wooten, they wanted to concentrate on the plants, it said energy and resources have to be put into the plants. Hamlin, Cockrel and Watson on the other hand were more towards branching out, what they wanted to do was to expand the League organization outside of Detroit.⁷⁶⁹

The out of plant intellectuals wanted to form the League of Revolutionary Black Workers in other cities as well, to start expanding the organization immediately. Luke Tripp and John Williams, Allen remembers, were a little bit more cautious and were for expansion but not as fast as the Hamlin, Cockrel, Watson group.

There were various issues and they split in various ways. One of the most important points Allen thought in terms of the liabilities of the organization were that the support aspects of the organization, the whole infrastructure that had been built to support the plant takeovers and plant organizations began to become entities in themselves. That's what happens when an organization sometimes grows too fast. Initially, the League needed money to put out the newspaper; when there were strikes or people lost their jobs they lost the ability to support people economically. To that end, the League's printing plant began to develop the film, "Finally Got The News". These sorts of ventures started to become entities in themselves. There was a Control, Conflict and Change book club, which was for basically liberal and left leaning whites where it was supposed to raise money. There would be members of the League who sold books, and give lectures to whites. Allen felt that, while that was an amenable sort of thing, it was hard to see how this figured politically in terms of the schemes of things; it did not have anything to do with plant organizing. Middle class whites basically were being organized in this. It did not make money, in other words, from a political standpoint it did not make too much sense. The film making measure got kind of crazy. After finishing "Finally Got The News", John Watson who was really the main person behind the film venture was talking about making a film about Rosa Luxenberg and getting Jane Fonda to star in it, and a film about Lenin. The League started moving away from its roots. The kind of central focus that the League had for a short period of time was no longer there, and when the film was finished, "Finally Got The News", the League as it was portrayed in the film was no longer. A lot of people got fired up watching it, but that

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Interview with Ernie Mkalimoto Allen, Amherst, Mass., 1993.

was not the situation in Detroit anymore. The League effectively had been blocked in the plants.⁷⁷⁰

While the League had a community-wide apparatus, it could no longer mobilize large numbers of African-American workers. Watson, Cockrel, Hamlin, and Forman began to travel more and more outside of Detroit, making press statements and giving interviews for white radical newspapers. Ernie Mkalimoto Allen describes the situation:

...there was the “Cortland office,” main center for worker organizing; the “Linwood office,” whose Parents and Students for Community Control as well as International Black Appeal were housed; the “Dequindre office,” where the Black Star Bookstore and an abortive community organizing project were launched; the “Fenkell office,” headquarters for the Black Star Printing operation. There were also geographically separate offices for Black Star Film Productions, the Labor Defense Coalition, and UNICOM, a community-organizing center. To outsiders the operation appeared quite impressive; rank-and-file insiders often saw it as an organizational and bureaucratic nightmare.⁷⁷¹

Another major contradiction was the inability of the out-of-plant leaders to relate their theory to African-American workers’ reality; failure on their part to listen to and learn from the workers and to treat them as equals. One weekend while General Baker was in New York, he convinced Ernie Mkalimoto Allen (an anti-war activist and organizer of the Black Panther Party of Northern California) to move to Detroit and work with the League. Mkalimoto left New York. His involvement in the League helped polarize the contradictions within the leadership. He developed good rapport with the workers and was viewed as a threat by the out-of-plant leadership – Cockrel, Watson, Hamlin.

The League was racked with a serious problem of uneven political development among its members. Political education (P.E.) classes were set up for all League members. There were on the average anywhere from forty-five to fifty workers in the political education class.

Luke Tripp first taught the classes on the basics of Marxism-Leninism. Tripp, not knowing how to break theory down into everyday language, would bore the workers, who often went to sleep in class. Mkalimoto was asked to teach class.

In an interview with Ernie Mklaimoto Allen he reflected on the problems of political education.

Question: You became a member of the executive board?

Answer:

Allen: No, I was part of the second line of leadership. It was called the central staff. As I look back on it now, I don’t think anybody really knew how to put together an organizational structure. It was not well thought out. It was very, very strange. I was brought in to teach the political education courses. The problem with political education courses in the past had been they had been taught too much from the perspective of using materials

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Ibid.

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Op. Cit. (Allen), pp. 71-72.

developed by the Chinese. You know we had Chinese and Vietnamese materials, and so forth and so on. That became the staples of political education in the League. The problem was that what you needed and what we didn't have at the time in which we still don't really have adequately, was a literature that reflected the experience of black workers. That would bring the theory in but at the same time the historical examples would be that of black workers themselves so they could see themselves in it as well as learn about their own historical experiences.⁷⁷²

Allen broke it down plain and the workers enjoyed going to political education. It should be noted that most of the workers were revolutionary nationalists. They were not anti-Marxist. Marxism-Leninism was something new to them and if it had been presented to them gradually and in terms they understood, they would have eventually accepted it. But the relations the workers had with those purported Marxist-Leninists and their life styles alienated the workers.

John Watson thought that the League should become a black Marxist-Leninist political party. Watson called his faction, representing himself, Cockrel, Hamlin and Forman, the "B group," meaning Bolsheviks, and a faction represented by General Baker, Chuck Wooten, Ernie Mkalimoto Allen, Dedan, Waistline, Mitch, Jalali and little AK as the "A group," meaning Akbar or nationalist faction. Before dealing with differences in the conceptual frameworks of both factions, we should deal with social contradictions.

Male chauvinism was rampant in the League. Though women's equality was the official position of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, sexism like that in the Black Panther Party was often practiced. Sisters would be asked to "give it up" sometimes when coming to the Cortland office. Discipline began to break down in the ranks after Dowdell left. Some workers had serious drinking problems.

While attempting to address themselves with the deterioration of self-discipline among the members of the LRBW and supporters around the A group; including aggressive sexual harassment toward African-American women members and supporters of the LRBW, the B faction had its own internal weaknesses. The two political models; revolutionary nationalist; of seeing African-Americans in a national democratic colonial revolution seeking self-determination and the other seeing African-American workers the vanguard of socialist revolution of the U.S. in which African-Americans would be integrated into a socialist society, were often seen as opposing paradigms, rather than consciously attempting to creatively apply social science and develop a synthesis of the paradigms. The arguments were often reflected in contradictory life styles. Both A and B group males were womanizers. Some of the B group were smoking marijuana and some secretly snorting cocaine. The A group had for the most part become an undisciplined group and some had become alcoholics. The B group was organizing broad support among the white left while some African-American males sexually abused the white women on the left.

The B group tried to address some of these problems but their internationalist (inter-racial) socializing caused cultural problems or contradictions within the League, which often were used as an excuse to cloud the real underlying contradictions.

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Op. Cit. (Allen interview).

Hamlin spent a lot of time organizing League input in the “Control, Conflict and Change” book club organized by the Motor City Labor League. Less than two percent of the approximately 700 members were African-American.

Hamlin in an interview September 27, 1999 said one of his main reasons for organizing white supporters in the form of the Motor City Labor League and other formations was because of his fear that the LRBW would soon be isolated and attacked by the power structure; i.e., the police and the FBI. He said, he and Baker had been confronted and stopped in the streets by the FBI. Hamlin also felt there needed to be a vehicle to harness the support of white workers and intellectuals.⁷⁷³

Forman was attacked by the A group for having left an African-American wife for a white wife. He denied ever having been married to an African-American woman. Hamlin and Cockrel lived in the same house with their white female friends. Watson, though he was married, would “jam” white women at League parties and would openly admit he had a “Jones” for white women. African-American female members of the League would watch the B group in disgust.⁷⁷⁴ The B group in fact was acting out revolutionary integrationism, something that many Panthers were doing in the same period. Things began to get out of hand, but General Baker refused to fight for his principles against his old friends.

In an interview with Ernie Mkalimoto Allen, he was asked what was the turning point in the LRBW? Ernie Mkalimoto Allen was put on the central staff (second line leadership). Allen was working with General Baker to get the League back on tract; that is organizing African-American workers in the plants. Allen was trying to promote change inside the League along with others but without splitting the organization. The purpose for the formation of the central staff was to give more people inside the organization more responsibilities for day-to-day operations. The purpose for the organization would function without having to wait for the executive board to meet. In the latter part of 1970 there was a meeting between the central staff and executive board; confrontation and confusion occurred. It was then realized that the leadership had underestimated the organizational problems. Many felt the executive board was almost an organization of itself. The executive board had the information, made the decisions and basically the organization as a whole; the rank and file may or may not have been informed by what decision was made. With that type of situation there was no opportunity for the second line leadership to develop. Because the executive board felt there was political backwardness in the organization it called for an organizational retreat of the executive board and central staff. At the retreat a proposal was put forward, that the executive board disband and reconstitute itself with everyone on it having a specific function and a specific responsibility. The majority of the executive board became paranoid. The central staff pushed for a second meeting of the central staff seeking clarity on the organizational structure of how it really ran. The executive board said the central staff could not have a second meeting. The central staff decided and went on and had a second meeting anyway. At that point, the executive board started a purge of the organization in April of 1971.

⁷⁷³ Interview with Mike Hamlin, Cleveland, Ohio to Detroit, Michigan (telephone) September 27, 1999.

⁷⁷⁴ Interview with Michele Jones, Detroit, Michigan, 1973.

Among those purged were Ernie Allen, Shola Akentalia, Akai, Ballerene Hiamen and Sunny Hiamen. They and then their spouses were put out of the organization because they were considered to be a security risk. Allen felt this was the incident that started the LRBW on its decline because most of the LRBW leadership on the executive board rarely came into contact with the rank and file. To make matters worse, the leadership of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers began having meetings once a week and started de-rating people. The executive board would use Marxist political-theoretical concepts to brow beat the supporters of those expelled. The executive board appeared arrogant to them.

The political disagreements between the League leaders began to feed personal antagonisms. The in-plant people charged that the BWC wing liked to be with “bourgeois” people and with white folks more than they liked to be with Black workers. Cockrel was cited for having what was termed an arrogant and authoritarian attitude toward comrades. Watson was charged with having become a dreamer who let transoceanic trips and film-making fantasies replace his former vision of a worker-led American revolution. Hamlin was said to be so enamored of the idea of a national organization that he had lost his common sense. As for James Forman, who had entered the League through BEDC, he was the wrecker and splitter Baker had suspected him of being all along.⁷⁷⁵

General dissatisfaction emerged in the central staff. Ernie Mkalimoto and some of his supporters were purged from the League in April 1971 for purportedly attempting a coup d-etat under the guise of ultra-democracy. The battle continued to rage until June, when the central staff demanded more voice in decisions of the League, resulting in Watson, Hamlin, Cockrel and Forman resigning. The ideological differences between the A group and the B group were over what James A. Gerschwender calls the capitalist exploitation model and the colonial model.

The B Group (Cockrel, Hamlin, Watson and Forman) felt the League should be turned into a black Marxist-Leninist party. Essentially they viewed African-American people as an oppressed minority exploited on both a race and a class basis. Their essential worldview was that the African-American worker was the most significant element in bringing about a revolution in this country. They felt that national oppression (race) would be eliminated through a socialist revolution. They believed in an integrated society after a socialist revolution.

The A group also believed that African-American people are oppressed on a race and a class basis. They believed that 200 years of slavery had developed Africans in America into a nation. The national culture and institutions of the African-American nation became entrenched during the hundred years of racial prejudice after the reconstruction period. The A group felt that the African-American nation’s national historical territory was the black belt South. They envisaged an African-American-led socialist revolution in which there would be several independent socialist states cooperating with one another but maintaining political independence. The A group published two pamphlets which explained their position. *Revolutionary Nationalism and Class Struggle* by Ernie Mkalimoto and *World Black Revolution*.

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Op. Cit. (Georgakas and Surkin), p. 162.

J. W. Freeman (synonym for a cadre of the LRBW) wrote in an unpublished manuscript, The Revolutionary Way Out:

The break up of the “League of Revolutionary Black Workers” has been called a split between the industrial workers and students, and the “small capitalistic minded” revolutionaries. General Baker, Chuck Wooten and John Williams emerged as leaders on one wing; with Kenneth Cockrel, Mike Hamlin and John Watson representing the other. (Actually, there were originally three centers of power). “Workers versus small capitalist minded revolutionaries” was never my point of view. Nor did I subscribe to the definition that workers and students were backward and reactionary black nationalist in opposition to the “Revolutionary Internationalist”. Rather, in retrospect, it is my contention that the “League” split based on questions facing the black masses in Detroit in the early 1970’s: questions of what direction to transform Detroit’s political structure; where to invest the organizations resources and which individuals would merge as the primary leaders. Ethnic and cultural specific organizations are of course here to stay. The League of Revolutionary Black Workers was, in fact, an association of black revolutionaries that did not perceive a necessity to justify its existence.⁷⁷⁶

The third position which has not received much publicity was that of Luke Tripp and John Williams who agreed partially with the in-plant leadership that the LRBW had to maintain or rebuild it’s base in the plants; but to be a viable force it must be involved also in the community as well as being a part of a national organization.

So a principled question was, where do we put our emphasis, struggling against national or class oppression? But these were not the real issues. According to Mike Hamlin the primary issue which cause the split in the executive board of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers was not necessarily the issue of wanting to expand into a national organization: Black Workers Congress (BWC) versus wanting to consolidate the organization locally. That was the official story given to the general public including the membership of the LRBW.

The central issue was with the Baker faction over lack of discipline, liberalism, internal corruption and disintegration within the ranks and crimes against the people committed by workers associated with the Baker faction. One incident involved an African-American worker who identified himself with the LRBW, cornered an African-American female (LRBW) volunteer and raped her inside the Highland Park office. For lack of information we do not know if anything happened to the worker or charges were ever brought against him. It is presumed that nothing was done about the incident since it was a real cause for the split. Another incident involved a 41-year-old African-American man from Chicago who was married to a 27-year-old African-American woman in the League of Revolutionary Black Workers. They attended a youth dance sponsored by the Black Student Union which was closely affiliated the LRBW. A serious physical altercation resulted involving the husband and no known reprimand occurred.⁷⁷⁷

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J. W. Freeman, The Revolutionary Way Out (unpublished manuscript), p. 5.

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Op. Cit. (Interview with Mike Hamlin).

With nothing resolved within the leadership of the organization, those who tended to be more theoretical, intellectual and more amenable to mass media went into the Black Workers Congress and most of the workers recruited through organizing the Revolutionary Union Movements (RUMS), stayed with the LRBW until General Baker went into the Communist League.

Some of the problems of rapid development, uneven levels of political (understanding) consciousness, ideological direction which occurred in the League of Revolutionary Black Workers (LRBW) have resurfaced within various African-American organizations since 1971 (i.e., Black Workers Congress (BWC), African Liberation Support Committee (ALSC), Black Political Assembly (BPA), Congress of African People (CAP), National Black Independent Political Party (N.B.I.P.P.) and the African People's Party (APP).

The question of lack of strong moral (humanist) ethics has not been a well-discussed issue but is one to have been at the cutting edge of both the success and failure of the LRBW. It seems as though some of the issues which African-American radical organizers such as those who organized the LRBW needed to address are:

1. Choosing the correct method of relating to, advancing forward and sustaining the progressive spontaneous development of the masses towards expanding the parameters of democracy. This would include lull (slow), periods as well as high tides (intense, rapid), periods of mass activity.
2. What is the role of an organized cadre in relation to that development?
3. Should primary finances come from self-reliance or from external sources?
4. What is the role and relationship of radical intellectuals to the rank and file members of the organization and visa versa?
5. How to synthesize a comprehensive conceptual framework that is relevant to the daily living reality of the African-American working class?
6. Having a life style and moral or spiritual cultural way of life that the masses respect and learn to emulate in building a new society. The process of selflessness, transformation of oneself to becoming the humanistic new socialist man or woman. Every successful revolution has had this humanist code of ethics at its core.

In the period between the end of reconstruction to the present two eras stand out in contrast to others in terms of mass activity related to African-Americans. The two eras -- the 1920's and the 1960's -- were ones of huge spontaneous self-organization of the African-American working class. On a local level the role of an initial group of political revolutionaries who tried a series of organizational attempts to harness mass activity of African-Americans, is what this study is about. The organizational development of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers was from 1963-1971, an eight-year period of time.

The study is too short to discuss in particular the role of Ken Cockrel. Cockrel left the LRBW with John Watson and Mike Hamlin to continue in the Black Workers Congress. But Cockrel continued after leaving BWC to run for city council and to work with another local formation, the Detroit Alliance for a Rational Economy (DARE).

Cockrel's role as a revolutionary lawyer with the LRBW is also important to look at. His successful defense of defendants in the New Bethel incident, and of James Johnson, the

distraught African-American autoworker who killed three people after being dismissed from his job, are case studies within themselves.⁷⁷⁸

It is the writer's estimate that Cockrel's knowledge of the law and his review of the legal infractions within the ranks of the LRBW and the implications for the leadership of the LRBW is what may have prompted Cockrel's faction to seek a serious resolve of the issues.

As the concluding chapter will show, in the case of the LRBW as in all the major African-American radical organizations (1960-1975), the initial grouping consisted of African-American college/university students, full-time or part-time, and elements of the intellectual proletariat (musicians, artists, writers, poets, teachers, etc.).

The League of Revolutionary Black Workers was a logical outgrowth in the north of intensified efforts to desegregate the south led by the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). SNCC's efforts emerged from self-organizing of African-American students to resolve aspects of national oppression in the south which had culminated from the successful effort initiated by an African-American worker years before in Montgomery, Alabama; Mrs. Rosa Parks in 1955. SNCC like the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) emerged from these self-organizing efforts of African-American working class.

But it should not be forgotten that in all instances as was the case of DRUM-LRBW that an initial cadre of intellectual proletariat existed within the area. So it might be stated that without the presence of or emergence from mass activity of a cadre; depending how one judges the historical circumstances, to lead and further accentuate mass activity, the mass movement of the 1960's in Detroit wouldn't have progressed as far as it did. This study attempted to show how a local young political collective developed. Also important in this study was pointing out the over extension of the collective (cadre) in terms of growth and unpreparedness of the cadre to the system giving in to it's demands. It is my estimation that reliance on external funding in the case of the LRBW was counter productive.

The contradictions that surfaced within the LRBW are related to the questions of social responsibility, sexism and humanism; questions which have not adequately been addressed in the African-American community yet.

It should be noted that the political cadre that was generating around ICV (Inner City Voice) which DRUM spun off from was trying to relate to and advance the spontaneous character of the African-American struggle for parity and democracy in Detroit. But the League of Revolutionary Black Workers would not have come into existence if the urban rebellion of July 1967 had not occurred. Also very important was the fact that Detroit was traditionally a single industry city and most of the participants of the LRBW were second-generation autoworkers who were raised in the North.

The urban rebellion heightened the "national consciousness" or race awareness of African-American workers in the auto plants, making them more receptive to organizing outside of the UAW. The centrality of industry around the auto industry in Detroit with a large entry

⁷⁷⁸ Dan Georgakas and Mavin Surkin, *Detroit: I Do Mind Dying: A Study in Urban Revolution Updated Edition* [Cambridge, Massachusetts: South End Press, 1998], pp. 9-11.

of young African-American workers from 1964 to 1967 was unique. In his interview, General Baker noted that a worker could look down the assembly line and see someone he had grown up with or gone to school with as a youth. Congregated in large numbers in similar oppressive conditions that one could witness with naked vision, was a potent sociological phenomenon. This combined with national, international events but most important of all with a local African-American radical tradition that spanned two generations, made Detroit unique. The fact that there was an embryonic cadre to give the wildcat strikes at the auto plants organizational form is an essential factor that led to the development of DRUM, other RUMS and the LRBW. The importance of a cadre in advancing a mass movement and transforming it into a social revolution cannot be underestimated. In social revolutions, a cadre's role in the development of a mass movement has usually been the determining factor in that movement's success or failure. Students, worker intellectuals, street people, professionals who develop a political orientation, can all be part of a proletarian intelligentsia. During the 1960's many of these elements in Detroit united around the ideological premise of Mao Tse-Tung's theory of how correct ideas are processed. The concept of actual testing one's theoretical premise was held paramount. A very broad loose collective of twenty of more young African-American activists in Detroit united around the concept of practice, theory and practice.

That is that political theory is learned and refined through actual social practice; the act of organizing the people. So the methodology which can be learned from the LRBW experience is practice, theory, practice=praxis.

One decisive factor we can learn from the League experience is the role of finances. In this case, I have attempted to show how finances coming from external sources re-directed the League from its focus of purpose: organizing at the point of production. The question of building independent economic resources based on self-reliance, which may take many years to do, or receiving funds from foundations, etc., was and is a problem for the black liberation movement. Financial resources from forces outside of the African-American community thwarted development of SCLC, SNCC, the Black Panther Party as well as the LRBW.

Again, one comes to the question of the role of the intellectuals who are not in the center of activity and their role with the masses. In the League there arose an arrogant, self-righteous unconscious commandism on the part of the intellectuals in directing the mass organization. There seems to be a crucial problem in America of the inability of intellectuals to be willing to listen to the masses, take their suggestions, learn from the masses, and share in leadership with the masses. The ego-centrism created in intellectuals in the American educational system seems to make most so self-centered that they refuse to be flexible when working with people. Many of these intellectuals – who many times use Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tse-Tung thought, as a dogma rather than a method of achieving empirical truth – unconsciously become the “scientific” saviors of the “heathen” masses.

The problem of university-trained intellectuals is often they harbor an elitist petty bourgeoisie superiority mentality when interacting with working class people. Workers and university intellectuals have different life experiences, which often lead them to view the world differently. While all African-Americans share racial and class oppression on a dual basis, African-American workers reality is more intense. African-American workers usually view abstract ideas as irrelevant and tend to be more subjective. Therefore,

African-American workers are usually more like to have different conceptual and theoretical frames of reference than intellectuals. This was the case for the LRBW.

What the intellectuals or B group failed to do was to relate to the subjectivity of the in-plant workers in order to broaden their subjective paradigm and reform their behavior.

Queen Mother Audley Moore's famous saying is appropriate at this point:

If you are subjective about the subjective, you will be subjective about the objective. But if you are objective about the subjective, you will be objective about the objective.⁷⁷⁹

Having dual conceptual frameworks and not realizing it, led organizers of the LRBW to build the organization into a mass organization and as a result of this ideological and intra-class stratification led the League to split. The lack of a comprehensive conceptual framework based on empirical data of what "actually exists" within the African-American working class community is still lacking today.

In summation, while I am not condoning or advocating spontaneous activity, the self-organization of the masses plays an important role in the development of a revolutionary mass organization.⁷⁸⁰

Taking the six points raised into consideration, it is important for social scientists to seriously study the League of Revolutionary Black Workers. It was the most advanced African-American workers organization to emerge in the period of 1960-1975.

Afterword: Notes From a Reunion of LRBW's Members

The LRBW's not only produced worker organizers and agitators, but also produced worker leaders. The LRBW's developed a pedagogy of organic worker leaders (cadres); many LRBW leaders are leaders of their unions today.

Wayne State Community College, as a concept, was born at the DRUM office when a worker read a book by Basil Davidson, who interviewed Amiclar Cabral, in which he said that in 500 years, the Portuguese had only trained two workers. Realizing the significance of this, the idea of a community college for the Detroit area began to ferment. But even with this effort, one of the weaknesses of the LRBW's cadres and other black radical organizations of the time was the failure to continue to organize youth cadres.

Through the Black Student United Front (BSUF), 1969-1971, the LRBW's influenced the lives of hundreds and thousands of Detroit inner city youth. Through the BSUF newsletter, which eventually expanded into a city-wide student newsletter with slogans such as, "Black Youth, the World is Yours, Take it!" and emulating the thinking of Robert F. Williams, who was a local, national, and international hero, the BSUF had a profound influence among the youth in the period 1969-1971 in Detroit. The BSUF called a boycott of the schools calling for a relevant education and went on to establish "Freedom Schools."

⁷⁷⁹ Conversation with Queen Mother Audley Moore, Atlanta, GA., 1979.

⁷⁸⁰ Central premise of C.L.R. James as taught in a series of discussion by James and Grace Lee Boggs in Detroit, Michigan, 1964.

One of the weaknesses of the LRBW's was that very few had the insight of giving the BSUF concrete advice on what to do in the future. As a result, the BSUF cadre split following the LRBW's split. Some went into the factories and others went into the colleges and universities in the area taking up the fight for black studies. Of those who went into the factories, many of the women took up the fight inside the plants against sexual harassment, holding collective discussions to get members to run for office in the unions, which was successful.

During the reunion, a cadre stated: "What we are missing today is the wide discussions between young and old people. We don't have a process of a wide collective discussion; without it, we tend to become petty. The question remains of how does one fight for control."

Another cadre said: "We need an intellectual framework, a center, because people don't understand the issues. Revolutionaries must have more than a concept of the destruction of capitalist society and have to have a vision of an alternative new society. People have to know there is another way out."

The question that is asked is, 'what are the steps to empowerment in terms of mobilizing the people?' It was stated by one cadre that one must put forth a new view of society and create as many forms as possible from which indigenous leadership may develop and emerge. Creating a revolutionary culture that nurtures cadre through stages of development, developing an intellectual enter, the concern of the dialectical relation between spontaneity and organization, the building of a youth movement, and having "literacy campaigns" are some of the ideas elder leaders of the LRBW have today. Their primary objective is to give the youth whatever guidance they can give them.

The central question and lesson to be learned from the LRBW's, coming from hindsight of the elder leaders of the LRBW's is this: once the LRBW's won the demands for which they were protesting, what further direction to take; "where do we go from here?" It was also stated that LRBW's cadre had to be void of anger, have a calm and deliberate thinking in order to change society as well as have a sense of responsibility to their personal families and to the community. All in all, the LRBW's elders felt the LRBW's provided organizers with valuable experiences and a new praxis for making a new socialist world. In the words of Wilbur Haddock of the United Black Brothers:

"If you really want to get the bothers and sisters; the workers to follow you and to stand to be there, then you got to consider their feelings."⁷⁸¹

In May 1968, DRUM (Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement) led a wildcat strike of 4,000 workers (mostly African-American) at Dodge Main, in Hamtramck, Michigan (Detroit). Anti-war demonstrations occurred at the National Democratic Convention in Chicago. The SDS (Weatherman faction) fought back as the police created a riot. Eight leaders of the demonstrations were indicted for conspiracy, called the Chicago 8, including Bobby Seale, chairman of the BPP who is bound and gagged in court. Inside the national democratic convention, the multi-racial Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, now called the Mississippi loyalists are seated and replaced the Mississippi racist regulars who had a

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Wilbur Haddock interview, *Souls*, Volume 2, Number 1, Spring 2000 p. 31

choice to join the loyalists or leave the convention. This starts the process of inclusion of African-Americans in the Democratic Party in the South. Those white racist Democrats who can't stand this leave the Democratic Party in the South and build the Republican Party in the South.⁷⁸²

Under the leadership of Bob Moses and Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer of SNCC and many others the multi-racial Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) was formed in 1964. The MFDP challenged the regular racist Democratic Party in seating at the National Democratic Party Convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey in 1964.⁷⁸³ The MFDP failed at first, but as Comrade Mao Tse Tung used to say, "Try, Fail, Try, Fail, Try again until you succeed". The MFDP did that. They challenged the racist Mississippi regulars again in 1966 and lost again. A year later inside the Democratic party in the North, Carl B. Stokes won the mayoral election in Cleveland and Richard Hatcher won as mayor in Gary, Indiana.⁷⁸⁴

Facing mounting opposition to his aggressive imperialist policy against the people of Vietnam, Lyndon Johnson decided not to run for President in 1968. Popularized by RAM, SNCC, CORE, BPP, SCLC, Deacons for Defense, Muhammad Ali and others, hundreds of thousand of white progressives joined the anti-war movement. The Democratic Party was in crisis: The MFDP now worked with liberal white Mississippi loyalists who were seated inside the Democratic Convention in 1968, replacing the racist regular Mississippian democrats. The Mississippi Loyalists believed in including African-Americans into the Democratic Party in Mississippi⁷⁸⁵. Thus started the process of deracializing the democratic party in the South.

So from 1968 to 2006 the racist (KKK) in the South changed their party allegiance and that's how you have a solid white racist right wing Republican party in the South. It is the party of the KKK, Nazis', Nixon's, Reagan's, and the Bushes'.

In Lowndes County, Alabama, the original Black Panthers; the Lowndes County Freedom Organization decided because of the negative publicity the BPP on the west coast was getting they must change their name. In spring of 1968 they joined others in calling for and creating a state-wide bi-racial political party called the National Democratic Party of Alabama. The NDPA challenged George Wallace and the racist Alabama Democratic Party in elections and forced Wallace to develop a more progressive platform. The NDPA won elections on the county and city levels in Alabama until 1972.

In South Carolina a similar attempt was made to build a state-wide, bi-racial party. The party was called the Citizens Party. The Citizens Party felt that the creation of bi-racial coalitions outside of the regular political process would democratize the South. The Citizens Party believed that independent parties offered whites a way to stand up and defy the racist political majority in the South.

⁷⁸² Hanes Walton, Black Political Parties [New York: The Free Press, 1972] pp 80-130

⁷⁸³ Len Holt, The Summer that Didn't End [New York: William Morrow & Co., 1965], Doug McAdam, Freedom Summer [New York: Oxford University Press, 1988], Mildred Pitts Walter, Mississippi Challenge [New York: Aladdin Paperbacks, 1996].

⁷⁸⁴ William E. Nelson, Jr, and Phillip J. Meranto, Electing Black Mayors [Columbus: Ohio State University, 1977] pp. 67-332

⁷⁸⁵ Op. Cit., (Hanes Walton, Jr, Black Political Parties), pp 80-130

In spring of 1968 there were mass walkouts of African American high school students demanding the inclusions of African American history in the high schools in Chicago (50,000) and in New York. The movement grew and reached mass proportions in Detroit in 1969 with boycotts and the establishment of freedom schools. Queen Mother Audley Moore petitioned the United Nations for reparations for persons of African descent in America. At the 1968 Olympics, gold medalist Tommie Smith and bronze medalist John Carlos of the 200 meters race mounted the victory stand and gave the Black Power salute to dramatize racial injustice in the United States.

SNCC and the Black Panther Party formed alliance but the alliance soon broke down. Stokely Carmichael was expelled from SNCC and he joined the Black Panther Party.

The Roots of the African American Revolution

While many historians negate the influence of African American nationalism within the African American community, African American nationalism has been the underlying ideology within black America since 1800's emerging in different periods, the main period being the 1920's creating the only mass movement of black people in America involving millions in the Garvey movement.

When the nationalist tide rises, the theory of the charismatic leader is produced and becomes the philosophy of the masses of our people during that time. But after the destruction of the movement, the nationalist philosophy becomes just a memory because the ideology of the nationalist leader is not theorized in a historical setting. The failure of African American people in America to form a dynamic and continuous nationalist movement has been because nationalist discontinuity occurs as a result of the state's oppression of any mass nationalist movement. This nationalist discontinuity exists also because Negro intellectuals in the past shied away from revolutionary, nationalist ideology and movements. Thus, once a particular nationalist movement is crushed, discontinuity occurs in the African American community's ranks, creating a nationalist vacuum waiting to be fulfilled by the next charismatic leader that comes along.

African American nationalist circles remained dormant after the destruction of the Garvey movement. It resurged for a brief period in the 1940's. While the petty black bourgeoisie adopted the philosophy of integration, the masses had the ideology of African American nationalism. Even the black bourgeoisie would admit that the philosophy of African American nationalism had remained latent among our people. In the 1950's African American nationalism began to recover under the leadership of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad and the Nation of Islam. Mr. Muhammad introduced Islam into African American nationalism and developed a religious consciousness for the ideology. This religious consciousness had a lot to do with future development because it provided the African American community with a clear historical and religious sense of destiny. It gave rise to the expectations of a mass nationalist consciousness and movement. The Nation of Islam kept the continuity of African American nationalism going in the African American community for a forty-year period. It soon was the best organized of African American nationalist groups, being unique in its religious approach. Revolutionary African American nationalism is not a new ideology for it has developed from the historical roots of Henry Highland Garnet, David Walker, Denmark Vesey, Martin Delaney, and the Garvey movement, DuBois' Pan African congresses and the Nation of Islam. Revolutionary

African American nationalism is a root ideology using the historical experiences and philosophies of African American nationalist leaders of the past and present and combining them with the tactics and revolutionary ideology of other revolutionary movements. Malcolm X is the transitional figure in the development of revolutionary African American inter-nationalism. From his speeches and writings come the foundation of the ideology.

While this essay does not deal with much of Malcolm's content, it does try to provide insight into some of Malcolm's organizational plans. Though Malcolm's organization, the OAAU (Organization of Afro-American Unity), never became an action center for the African American revolution, part of its program was adopted by younger revolutionaries who are now making today's headlines. Revolutionary African American Internationalism still very much stands undefined. It is the philosophy that is being produced by the African American revolution in America. It becomes internationalism – or Pan-African – when reflecting on the international aspects of the process of decolonization.

Today, African peoples in every country are witnessing a new racial awakening. African consciousness is rising each day. African American nationalism, the ideology of Black Power and Pan Africanism and the international expression of African American nationalism are developing mass followings.

The Black Power Movement in America is still relatively young. The white power structure, realizing what the Black Power philosophy would mean once our people digested it moved to crush the movement. Revolutionary African American Internationalist, were soon hit with mass conspiracy cases. 1967 found it. Rap Brown, Huey Newton, Imamu Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones), myself and a number of other brothers in jail. These jailings were part of a white power conspiracy to crush the emerging Black Power Movement. The power structure could not have assassinated Dr. Martin Luther King when they did it these brothers and others had been on the streets during '67 and '68, because the brothers would have had sizable followings and could have mobilized the millions of our people.

King's Assassination and Aftermath

After King's assassination, the power structure moved through its fifth column – the Ford Foundation and the white American left. The Ford, other foundations, and local banks attempted to buy off the Black Power leaderships. C.O.R.E. was almost completely usurped. In Philadelphia, the African American nationalist leadership split into factions, fighting over a measly million dollars during the black coalition conspiracy. It was at that time that the movement suffered serious setbacks. Bourgeois "Black power" spokesmen, all of a sudden, began to crop up with powerful white financial backings. They traveled under the garb of cultural nationalism. These new house compadors were sanctioned by the capitalist class to keep the masses confused through black cultural rhetoric.

Mysticism became a way of life for many young brothers and sisters. This new form of escapism was propagated to keep African American youth from becoming revolutionary African American internationalists and forming a African American cadre organization. On the other hand brothers who romanticized African American revolution on the West coast, made some serious mistakes. We must realize the revolutions are not made over television, radio, or through the capitalist's press. A revolutionary never warms the enemy of what he is going to do.

The year 1970 opened up a new decade for the universal African. The question for the African captive in America is: How should we proceed to nation building? In order to answer that question we must first analyze the alternatives that are being presented to us.

The Drive for Legal African American Political Power

The movement toward running African American candidates for public office, utilizing the black vote, represents the last legal stage of the black middle-class interest in the capitalist political system. It is a continuation from post civil war days; when the black middle class obtained a degree of political power in the South. The attempt to achieve political equality has been the main emphasis of our national democratic revolution. While this drive doesn't totally serve the interests of the African American working class – the vast majority of our people – it will help to exhaust the legal means of protest and eliminate the illusions that African American people can achieve freedom in the capitalist system. At the same time, this drive helps weaken the racist political system by polarizing its inherent contradictions.

Full African American political representation will throw America into political chaos. But it should be remembered that the monopoly capitalist class has plans of just changing faces with the game remaining the same. The monopoly capitalist class will let African American people control the political machinery of the cities. While they still control the industry. The monopoly capitalist class plans to establish neo-colonialism in America as it has done in many other places in Africa and Asia. Because we are in a national democratic revolution, African American progressives must support the drive of the black middle-class to get legal black political power. We must do this because the drive heightens the political and nationalist consciousness of the African American working class, organizes them in political organization and polarizes contradictions within the neo-colonializer's monopoly capitalist system. At the same time that we organize to get black political representation within the system, we must teach the people, that this will not get them liberation.

The Drive for Legal African American Economic Power

While most African American progressives criticize black capitalism as being a hoax – that it will not benefit most of our people – we must still support the black middle-class drive to become a capitalist class. We do this not because we feel African American people can gain freedom under the capitalist system, or that black capitalists are any better than white capitalists. We are in a national democratic revolution of a colonialized nation in which all classes must surge forth to obtain their national class interests as one class. Being suppressed, the black middle-class was not allowed to develop into a bourgeois class. Black capitalism is the last legalist drive by the black middle-class to obtain economic power within the system. It is important that we understand the dynamics of class, class structure, colonialism neo-colonialism and national liberation movements. Our revolution is a national liberation revolution, it is one of a colonialized nation seeking self-determination from the monopoly capitalist system. .

We must realize that there are antagonistic contradictions between all classes of Africa America and the monopoly capitalist system. The black bourgeoisie, because it lacks political and economic power, is more of a petty bourgeoisie than bourgeoisie and will have more of a tendency to support the revolution than a classical bourgeoisie. If we understand

these contradictions, then we will understand why African American middle class responds the way that it does. African American progressives must criticize the black middle-class drive toward black capitalism, but, at the same time, support it because we must realize that it is a necessary historical stage before our nationality can move to open mass class struggle.

In other words, we must support the existence and expansion of African American businesses and at the same time we must point out that profits from black businesses should go back to the community. African American economic development must be a collective effort. Our colonized nationality needs an independent economic system. We need to be self-reliant, Black cooperatives must be encouraged. African American communalism, the joint ownership of the means of production and commerce by the community, must become a way of life. This is African American economic self determination economic development that benefits the majority of our people. We must constantly teach our people that this is not totally possible without a complete social revolution. To develop a collective spirit and prepare our community for economic survival, we must develop economic cooperatives whenever we can.

Cultural Revolution and Revolutionary African American Internationalism

Since 1966, African people have been undergoing a cultural revolution. The cultural revolution has produced a pride in being of African stock. "Say it loud, I'm Black and I'm proud" represented the present mood of thought in the 60's and 70's. The honorable Elijah Muhammad, leader of the Nation of Islam was the spiritual father of the black cultural revolution in America. For some thirty years, the messenger had taught and propagandized our people with the importance of being self-reliant. The "Lamb" taught us why we should separate and form an independent nation of our own. From the last Messenger of Allah came a mass spokesman who had given this generation of youth a new direction. Malcolm X and Muhammad Ali are two brothers who were personally groomed by the Messenger.

Many groups have cropped up to bring about a "re-Africanization" of our people. As a result, some of these groups have formed the position that all things come from culture. While revolutionary African American Internationalists see African American culture as a stage of development in the national consciousness of our people; they do not see it as an end in itself. We see that we are at present a cultural nation (a colonized nation whose culture is suppressed and exploited) seeking to become an independent nation state. This means that we African people held in captivity inside the United States, have a common culture, way of life and history, heritage and destiny. We also have a common economic existence, political posture, and up until recently (the last 20 years) occupied a common territory. Revolutionary African American internationalists believe cultural nationalism is only beneficial when it leads to helping revolutionary political inter-nationalism.

The two major supporters of cultural nationalism were Maulana Ron Karenga and Amiri Baraka. While both Maulana and Imamu worked together, there are major differences in their approach. Maulana who believed strongly in one man leadership, had a dangerous tendency toward being very egotistical. Egotistical leadership is counter-revolutionary, anti-people and only serves to further divide the community. The African American nationality needs selfless collective leadership devoid of ego that is dedicated to serving our people. Egotistical leadership will only lead to endless internal war over who is greater

than “me.” It will lead to nationalist gang war. Egotistical, self-centered, self-styled leaders, who usually work secretly with the enemy, must be isolated and if necessary, driven out of the African American community.

If African American internationalists are going to build a new value system, it must be built on new values that are beneficial to the unification and liberation of the African American nation. A new African American value system cannot be based on messianic (one man) egotistical leadership and fascist authority. It must be based on collective leadership, communalism and democratic socialism. Brother Amiri Baraka seems to be building a collective leadership that is necessary to build a African American cadre organization.

The Southern Struggle for a Regional Independent Nation

As the African American middle-class drives for political representation within the system, it will begin to realize that its class interests cannot be satisfied by the political system of the United States. This, in return, will force the African American middle-class and the African American working class to become more nationalistic. The next logical historical step may be to raise the demand for an independent black republic. Our people have been mentally oppressed and do not as yet understand their power, so we must constantly move them to objectives which they understand they are capable of achieving.

The Republic of New Africa, which is demanding the states of Mississippi, Georgia, Alabama, South Carolina and Louisiana call this “limited objective.” The southern region is where 50% of our people live. There are approximately 18 million African American people living in the South. Many are becoming the majority of the major southern cites. Some southern states have a African American majority population-wise. If the African American population in the South is mobilized to demanding an independent nation, it will polarize the contradictions of the whole nation.

The historical contradiction of African American nationalism lies in the fact that in the past it was a northern urban based movement, while the majority of our people were southern rural based. But the socials Stratification of African American has changed with many of our people in the South being displaced from the land. The majority of our people in the South are becoming urban black proletariat. African American inter-nationalists must develop tactics of moving our people step by step to self determination. If African American internationalists organize our people in the South in the plants, then they will have a base among the people.

While the struggle for an independent republic may not be the ultimate phase of the African American national democratic revolution, it is a necessary historical stage.

The African American and Pan-Africanism

The African captive in America (overseas African) has always been active in the liberation of our motherland, Africa. Dr. W. E. B. DuBois as early as 1919 organized the first Pan-African Congress. From 1919 to 1945 the Pan-African Congresses served as a forum for African intellectuals at home and abroad. The Pan-African Congress in 1945, developed the tactics of direct action for the liberation of the mainland. The Pan-African movement

advanced in gradual steps. Marcus Garvey, the father of nationalism, also had us an objective the liberation of a unified central African government; United States of Africa.

Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Ture), the mass spokesman for Black Power, returned from Africa in 1970 saying that Pan-Africanism must become the mass philosophy of the African-American. Stokely studied for some time under Nkrumah in Guinea. At that time, Brother Carmichael's new strategy called for the African American to concentrate his efforts on possibly bringing Nkrumah back into power in Ghana. The land base that would be liberated would become a Pan-African state on which the Pan-African revolution would be based. Brothers and sisters in the states were told that struggling for revolution in the United States would be a protracted affair and not possible at this time. Many called his position a "cop-out." We must realize that all people must make their own indigenous revolution led by people from their own country. This doesn't mean we shouldn't help the brothers and sisters on the mainland. We should help where we can, but we must concentrate our efforts where we are. And if we understand the nature of imperialism and neo-colonialism; we will realize that if we did create a Pan-African socialist state, it would be faced with encirclement and intervention from the United States government. Africans in America and the Caribbean are actually Africa's rear.

In order for Africa to be truly liberated, a world struggle of liberation must be fought between Africa, Europe and America. We are engaged in a global struggle. It is then necessary to develop tactics for all African worldwide. We are up against an international crisis in the capitalist-imperialist system. This means we must organize national Pan-African movements that can move to seize state power in their region.

At the same, we must develop an international African consciousness among our people so that when the monopoly capitalist class moves to encircle and crush a national African revolution, we can come to its aid by creating a crisis somewhere else, forcing the monopoly capitalist class to overextend itself. We must encourage Africans in America and the Caribbean with skills to go to progressive African states and build those states into strong Pan-African bases with the objective to help towards a United States of Africa.

Repression and African American Struggle

As the African American national democratic struggle intensifies, it will become more threatening to the white monopoly capitalist power structure. The urban insurrections of the 1960's showed the revolutionary potential of the African American national liberation movement. The federal government, through its intelligence apparatus, has analyzed the African American liberation movement to be a potential national democratic. In order to prevent the African American struggle from reaching its objectives, certain forces within the power structure moved to crush our struggle before it reached the stage where it could not be stopped. As a result, a conspiracy had been brewing and widening over the last 40 years. Groups, such as the John Birch Society, Minutemen, Ku Klux Klan, American Independent Party, White Peoples Party, Rangers, and White Christian Movement, have consolidated as the "radical right." These groups are intertwined and connected with big business, Pentagon government Intelligence (CIA, DIA), IRS Secret Service, Army Intelligence, FBI, House Internal Security Committee. National Defense, and southern racist and northern conservatives who constitute the "legalistic right."

These forces are moving as fast as they can to create a political atmosphere of hysteria; in order to make conditions such that the President would appear justified in declaring a national emergency. The “right” is preparing to make America an open fascist state. Under the provisions of the McCarran Act, the President of the U. S. can declare a national emergency on grounds of insurrection or attack from a foreign enemy. At present, through the files and dossiers of the government intelligence agencies, all African American groups and leftist political groups are under 24 hour surveillance. Approximately one million people can be picked up and put in concentration camps within 24 hours.

Much of the intelligence information gets to government intelligence sources by way of local police who have a system of surveillance on all known African American and leftist groups, who constantly send in agent provocateurs to destroy these groups. This is the climate. In reality, that black people must face. As white police become more politically racist, repression will become more intense for Africa America. As a result, all African American people will soon be lumped together to be referred to as Black Panthers or Black Panther sympathizers. African American people must understand the historical condition that we are in. We must either unite or perish under a fascist racist America. There are several forms of struggle and organization that we must move to if we are to achieve self-determination.

Within our community, we must build a disciplined African American organization that is capable of destroying the monopoly capitalist class means of oppression. This African American organization must be highly sophisticated. It must form an infra-structure within the African American community. This must constantly move in uniting sectors of African America.

Muhammad Ahmad’s Study of COINTELPRO

The Federal government through its intelligence agency, particularly the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) used various methods to destroy activists. Among the various tactics included:

1. Reprint mailings: The FBI mailed anonymous articles and newspaper clippings to targeted group members.
2. Friendly media: The FBI gave information or articles to friendly media sources who could be relied on to write pro-Bureau stories and not to reveal Bureau's interests.
3. Bureau-authored pamphlets and fliers: The FBI occasionally drafted, printed and distributed its own propaganda to ridicule their targets.
4. Encouraging violence between rival groups: The FBI attempted to capitalize on hostility between target groups even when such programs resulted in murder.
5. Anonymous mailings: The FBI used anonymous mailings to promote factionalism ranging from the relatively bland mailing of reprints or fliers criticizing a group's leader for living ostentatiously or being ineffective speaker, to reporting a chapter's infractions to the group's headquarters intended to cause censure or disciplinary action.

6. Interviews: When the FBI interviewed target group members or supporters, the technique was sometimes used for the covert purpose of disruption.
7. Using informants to raise controversial issues: The FBI made extensive flagrant use of informants to take advantage of ideological splits, widen rifts and spread rumors inside of organizations.
8. Fictitious organizations: The FBI created three types of fictitious organizations. One type was an organization of which all the members were FBI informants. The other type was a fictitious organization with some unsuspecting (noninformant) members. The third type was a totally fictitious organization with no actual members which was used as a pseudonym for mailing letters or pamphlets.
9. Labeling targets as informants: The FBI used the "snitch jacket" technique often when neutralizing a target by labeling him a "snitch" (informant) so that he would not longer be trusted in the organization.
10. Using hostile third parties against target groups: The FBI's factionalism techniques were intended to separate individuals or groups which might otherwise be allies. The FBI often used or manipulated organizations already opposed to the target groups to attack them.
11. Disseminating derogatory information to family, friends and associates: The FBI disseminated personal life information, some of which was gathered expressly for use in its programs to the target's family through an anonymous letter, telephone call or indirectly by giving information to the media.
12. Contact with employers: The FBI often tried to get targets fired. This technique was often used against educators. In other instances, the purpose was to either eliminate a source of funds for the target or to have the employer of the target to apply pressure on the target to stop his activities.
13. Use and abuse of government processes: The FBI used selective law enforcement (federal, state or local authorities) to arrest, audit, raid, inspect or deport targets. The FBI interfered with judicial proceedings, including lawyers who represented "subversives," interfered with candidates and/or political appointees; used politicians and investigating committees, sometimes without their knowledge, to take action against targets.
14. Interference with the judicial process: The FBI often tampered and manipulated the judicial process to serve its interests. Often the FBI approached a judge, jury or a probation board who a target was to appear before.
15. Candidates and political appointees: candidates, it felt, should not be elected. The FBI targeted candidates, it felt, should not be elected.

16. Investigating committees: The FBI often used state and federal legislative investigating committees to attack a target.
17. Red baiting of "communist infiltration" anonymously of groups: The FBI often informed groups (civil rights organizations, PTA, Boy Scouts and others) that one or more of its members was a "communist." In cases when the group itself was a COINTELPRO target the information was sent to the media with the intent of linking the group to the communist PAY.
18. Organizing, plotting and executing murder: The FBI conspired with local and state law enforcement agencies and/or informants to assassinate targets. Though little validation can be made in the many suspected murders alleged to have been executed by the FBI, documented evidence cropped up in the investigations of the assassinations of Fred Hampton and Mark Clark on December 4, 1969 in Chicago as a conspiracy organized by the FBI.⁷⁸⁶
19. Breaking and entering and burglary: In many COINTELPRO documents there is recorded evidence, that the FBI on many cases without a search warrant broke into a target's residence illegally, searched the premises and often stole documents and other paraphernalia.

The American state has evolved through basic stages of development. These stages of development transform the character of the state by the economic hegemonic group which controls the economy and whose interests the state serves. The three stages of development of the American state are, slaveocracy (slave owning class, hegemonic group) 1776-1860; capitalist (industrial capitalist, hegemonic group) 1865-1914; monopoly capitalist-imperialist (monopoly capitalist, '50 families' hegemonic group) 1914-present. While the study is not extensive enough to include a thorough history, one can say that the relation of the American state has not changed qualitatively, but rather quantitatively and perhaps more extensively in the recent period of the 1960's and 1970's.

The dual origins of what later developed into the military-industrial-police-intelligence complex are to be found in the police intelligence systems established in southern states to alert the state and crush slave revolts and Army intelligence's role in exterminating Native Americans.

The transformation between the first and second phase consisted of the American state's continued colonial and imperialist expansion within the geographical boundaries of North America; subjugation of the Mexican American peoples (Chicanos) and further extermination of Native American nations.

In the second state of development, the capitalist class defeats the slave-owning class in its war to determine who was to control the economy of the state. The military-police-intelligence apparatus, which in the American concept of the state was supposed to serve the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government, takes on a more independent role as the American state becomes imperialistic outside the boundaries of

⁷⁸⁶ Supplementary Detailed Staff Reports on Intelligence Activities and the Rights of Americans: United States Senate Book 3, Washington, D. C. G.P.O., pp. 33-62

North America. 'Yankee gunboat policy,' became the foreign policy of the American state serving the interests of U.S. capitalists.

Domestically the war of genocide becomes complete against the Native-American nations with them being put into concentration camps (reservations). Black people are re-colonialized as vigilante night riders wage a war of genocide against the Black nations systematically assassinating leaders and indiscriminately lynching Black people. This is sanctioned by the American state by its benign neglect and through its legal justification of its judicial system of segregation (apartheid).

It is not the scope of this study to analyze Army intelligence, but from investigative study, it has become clear that the Army has had the American populace under surveillance for some time. Military intelligence has watched labor disputes since 1877. The first general strike in American history which involved at least 100,000 workers fighting wage cutbacks started among railroad workers. The use of the Army in crushing the developing workers movement, combined with its war of genocide against Native Americans, Mexicans and Blacks was the beginning for the development of the military-industrial complex.

Prelude to establishment of the domestic intelligence structure: 1908-1936

Attorney General Charles Bonaparte under President Theodore D. Roosevelt appealed to Congress for funds for a permanent detective force for the Justice Department in 1907 and 1908. Bonaparte received stiff opposition for the development of a government police force. Congress gave its authorization for funding of a fed police force in 1910. Under the next Attorney General Wickersham, the Bureau of Investigation was born. Between 1905 and 1915 the IWW-Industrial Workers of the World began to grow and so did labor militancy. Many IWW organizers were foreign born immigrants. In 1916, Attorney General A. Bruce Bielaski expanded the Bureau personnel to primarily investigate violations of the neutrality laws.⁷⁸⁷ The Bureau began to concentrate investigations on potential enemy aliens. When the United States went into World War I, Congress strengthened the legal basis for federal investigations by passing the Espionage Act of 1917. The federal intelligence community, particularly military intelligence and the Bureau of Investigation recruited volunteer citizens to form the American Protective League, to aid them in detecting spies and saboteurs. But the activities of the League were much more than that. The League was tied to the interests of big businesses and served as right wing shock troops. The League and other right wing groups were used against the IWW. But the most blatant abuse of civil liberties was the use of the U.S. Army against the IWW.⁷⁸⁸

"During July and August of 1917, businessmen and public officials of the West called in troops to eliminate the radical threat. At the very moment when the Wobblies seemed to be winning the lumber strike of 1917, the timber interests employed the federal troops in local strikes was unusual, unconstitutional, and linked to the war emergency. Not since the violent labor disturbances of 1877 and 1894 had federal troops guaranteed labor peace".⁷⁸⁹

⁷⁸⁷ Ibid

⁷⁸⁸ Ibid

⁷⁸⁹ William Preston, Jr., Aliens and Dissenters, [New York: Harper Torch Books, 1963, p. 103]

The intelligence community turned its attention to blacks in 1918. Joel E. Springarn reported for duty to the Military Intelligence Bureau on May 27, 1918. He was assigned to work on (1) Bolsheviki, IWW and Negro subversion. He wanted the bureau to adopt "constructive measures" in dealing with blacks. Part of Springarn's assignment was to organize a counterespionage system among blacks. On June 19-21, 1918, Springarn planned a conference of 30-40 black editors in Washington, D.C. The purpose of the conference was to have the editors play down lynching stories. They were to promote war patriotism in exchange for a statement by Woodrow Wilson against lynching. Springarn sought anti-lynching legislation in Congress to offset black disaffection.⁷⁹⁰

With the end of World War I, the Bureau of Investigation zeroed in on radicals. In Spring of 1919, there were a series of terrorist bombings. Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer established a General Intelligence Division in the Justice Department which was headed by J. Edgar Hoover and appointed William J. Flynn, as Director of the Bureau of Investigation. In November, 1919, the Bureau and the Immigration Service raided the Federation of the Union of Russian Workers in eleven cities deporting 249 immigrant workers. The young J. Edgar Hoover, fresh out of law school played a major role in the raids. In January, 1920, the Bureau and the Immigration Service staged simultaneous nighttime raids in 33 cities against the Communist Party and the Communist Labor Party. Over 3,000 people were rounded up and some 760 deported. These raids known as the Palmer raids were coordinated by J. Edgar Hoover.⁷⁹¹

Also, in the 1920's, the G.I.D. under J. Edgar Hoover, worked day and night crushing the Garvey Movement which had mobilized five million blacks in the United States, the Caribbean, Latin America and in Africa. FBI files on its war against the Garvey Movement have just been recently de-classified, therefore, the study cannot investigate the intelligence community crimes against the U.N.I.A. From sources that are presently available, we know that Army Intelligence had the Garvey Movement under daily surveillance.⁷⁹² The FBI infiltrated the U.N.I.A., the African Blood Brotherhood and other black radical organizations of the 1920's. Black government agents stole documents and created general havoc inside several of these organizations and Marcus Garvey who was constantly harassed by the government was illegally imprisoned on a frame-up mail fraud charge and later exiled from the country.

In August 1936, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued a series of memorandums establishing the basic domestic intelligence structure of the Federal Government. All domestic intelligence was centralized under the FBI with J. Edgar Hoover as its head. In 1939, Roosevelt's decisions were made known to Congress and were officially passed by Congress.

In 1940, the Smith Act was passed making it law for detention of anyone working for a foreign government advocating the violent overthrow of the U.S. Government. Between 1936 and 1945 the permanent domestic intelligence structure is established which represent the third stage of development of the American state; it's consolidation into a military

⁷⁹⁰ Joyce Ross, J. E. Springarn and the Rise of the NAACP [New York, Athenaeum, 1972], Maj. Joel E. Springarn to Churchill, June 18, 1918, Military Intelligence Bureau 10218-154-7 (National Archives).

⁷⁹¹ Spat Watters and Stephen Gillers edited, Investigating the FBI, [New York: Ballantine Books, 1973], p. 57.

⁷⁹² Robert A. Hill, (ed) The Pan African Movement 1917-1957. A Documentary Record of the black Struggle: Unpublished Manuscript.

industrial-police-intelligence complex to serve the interests of the monopoly capitalist class.

J. Edgar Hoover was made the American Hitler of being in charge of domestic security for the next thirty-six years. Thus emerges the extensive, semi-autonomous 'invisible' government. Its purpose is to crush domestic movements and national liberation movements abroad; in essence counter-insurgency became its goal. The U.S. Government's intelligence community grew into a monster encompassing billions of dollars of taxpayers money. The following is a breakdown of:

America's Intelligence Community

Size: 153,000 people in at least ten agencies

Cost: \$6.2 Billion⁷⁹³

Direction: Mr. William Colby, Director of Central Intelligence (also head of CIA) is theoretically in charge of the entire U.S. intelligence community.⁷⁹⁴

Budget Policy: Supervised by an inter-agency committee known as the Intelligence Resources Advisory Committee - representatives from State, Defense, Office of Management and Budget, and the CIA.⁷⁹⁵

Official Intelligence Estimates:

Certified by the United States Intelligence Board, the membership of which is appointed by the President.⁷⁹⁶

Secret Operations:

Approved by the "40 Committee" representatives from State Defense, Joint Chiefs of Staff, the White House and the CIA.⁷⁹⁷

The U.S. Intelligence Community:

The Congress, State Department (Bureau of Intelligence & Research), Justice Department FBI, Treasury Department, Atomic Energy Commission, The President, Assistant for National Security Affairs, Defense Department, Assistant Secretary for Intelligence, Joint Chiefs of Staff, National Security Agency, Central Security Services, Army Intelligence, Naval Intelligence, Air Force, Intelligence National Office, Office of Defense Investigation, Office of Management and Budget, National Security Council, Forty Committee, Defense Intelligence Agency, Defense Map Agency, Intelligence Committee, U.S. Intelligence Board, Inter-agency subcommittees, Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, Verification Panel, Director of Central Intelligence, Intelligence Resource

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Agency Breakdown:

⁷⁹³ Victor Marchetti & John D. Marks, The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence [New York: Alfred A. Knopf Co., 1974], p. 95

⁷⁹⁴ Allen Dulles, The Craft of Intelligence [New York: Harper & Row, 1963], pp. 258-259, National Security Act of 1947, 50 U.S. C. 403.

⁷⁹⁵ Nelson Rockefeller, et al, Report to the President by the Commission on CIA Activities within the U.S. (Washington: G.P.O., 1975), p. 73; Marchetti & Marks, op cit. pp. 96-101

⁷⁹⁶ Rockefeller, op cit. p. 74; Marchetti and Marks, op cit. pp. 96097; Dulles, op cit. p. 158

⁷⁹⁷ Rockefeller, op cit. p. 72; Marchetti and Marks, op cit. p. 38.

Central Intelligence Agency:

16,500 employees; \$750 million annual budget.

Function: Coordinates U.S. Government Intelligence activities; analysis and production of reports to the President; collection of Foreign Intelligence; and covert action abroad.⁷⁹⁸

National Security Agency:

24-25,000 employees; \$1-1.2 billion estimated annual budget.

Functions: Maintenance of secure code systems for all U.S. Government communications systems; breaking codes of foreign countries.⁷⁹⁹

Defense Intelligence Agency:

5,000 employees, \$130-200 million estimated annual budget.

Functions: Provision of intelligence to the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff; maintenance of defense attaches in embassies abroad.⁸⁰⁰

Army Intelligence

35-38,000 employees; 700-750 million estimated annual budget

Functions: Collection of tactical intelligence for Army Forces in the field.⁸⁰¹

Navy Intelligence:

10-15,000 employees, \$600-775 million estimated annual budget.

Functions: Collection of information about opposition Naval Forces, tactical Naval Intelligence, maintenance of some "spy ships" at sea.⁸⁰²

Air Force Intelligence:

56-60,000 people; \$2.8 million estimated annual budget.

Functions: Collection of intelligence on opposition Air Forces; tactical intelligence; National Reconnaissance Office manages the "spy satellite" programs for the entire intelligence community.⁸⁰³

State Department (Bureau of Intelligence and Research):

350 people; \$8 million estimated annual budget

Functions: Intelligence analysis of information collected; represents State on Interagency Intelligence Committees.⁸⁰⁴

Federal Bureau of Investigation (Int. Security Division):

800 people; \$40 million estimated annual budget.

Functions: Internal security in the United States.⁸⁰⁵

⁷⁹⁸ Marchetti and Marks, op cit. pp. 98 and 99

⁷⁹⁹ Good Overview of Intelligence Community: John Hammer, "The U.S. Intelligence Community", Skentic Magazine, No. 7, 1975; Marchetti and Marks, op cit. pp. 95 f.; all budget figures below are from these two sources'

⁸⁰⁰ David Kahn, The Code Breakers (New York: 1967, MacMillian), pp. 378-400.

⁸⁰¹ David Wise & Thomas Ross, The Invisible Government [New York: 1964, Random house], p. 226-231; Lyman Kirkpatrick, The U. S. Intelligence Community [New York: Hill & Wang, 1973], p. 35; Charles H. Andregg, Managmeent of Defense Intelligence [Washington: Industrial College of the Armed Forces, 1968].

⁸⁰² Department of the Army, Combat Intelligence (FM-30-5) [Washington: 1971, G.P. O.]; Wise & Ross, op cit. pp. 212

⁸⁰³ Kirkpatrick, Op cit. p. 35-36; Wise & Ross, Op Cit. pp 212 & 213

⁸⁰⁴ Department of the Air Force, Handbook for Air Intelligence Officers (Washington: 1954, G.P.O.); Wise Ross, op cit pp. 212 & 213

⁸⁰⁵ Wise & Ross, op cit p. 217

Atomic Energy Commission:

300 people; \$20 million estimated annual budget

Functions: Monitors nuclear developments in foreign countries and maintenance of listening posts for atomic tests.⁸⁰⁶

Treasury Department:

150-300 people; \$10 million estimated annual budget.

Functions: Economic Intelligence, some international narcotics work.⁸⁰⁷

Congressional Oversight:

Regular

- Senate Armed Services (Intelligence Oversight Subcommittee), Chairman: Stennis (D-Miss)
- Senate Appropriations (Defense Subcommittee), Chairman: McClelland (D-Ark)
- House Armed Services (Intelligence Subcommittee), Chairman: Nedzi (D-Mich)
- House Appropriations Subcommittee, Chairman: Mahon (D-Texas)

Special:

- Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Activities, Chairman: Frank Church (D-Idaho); Min. Leader: John Tower (A-Texas)
- House Select Committee on Intelligence, Chairman: Nedzi (D-Mich); Min. Leader: McClory (R-Ill).
- House Judiciary Committee (Subcommittee on Constitutional Rights), Chairman: Edwards (D-Cal).

The Historical Context: Analysis of Historical Patterns of Regression 1945-1965

The history of the American state is one of continuous repression against Third World peoples and progressive movements. But of particular concern in this study is the transformation of the American state apparatus and the expansions of its repressive practices since 1945.

During WWII, basic structural changes began to occur within the American state. Due to the nature of war, involving foreign espionage, 'national security' became the catch word in the intelligence community, whose role was to preserve the interest of the American government. 'National security' included Domestic Intelligence as well as foreign intrigue. Control of internal dissent as well as overseas operations became a major preoccupation of the American government in wartime.

Because of the interlocking that developed with government contracts to big business for war production, the military industrial complex began to take on new dimensions.

⁸⁰⁶ Wise & Ross, op cit. p. 214; Congressional Research Service, Internal Security Manual (Washington: 1974, G.P.O.), Summary of Internal Security Statutes, Executive Orders, and Congressional Resolutions.

⁸⁰⁷ Wise & Ross, op cit. p. 214

Employment of most of the labor force and subsidy of corporations were tied to a wartime economy.

As a result of the centralization of the economy to the wartime production, two separate networks began to develop. One was the military research network; a network of scientist and social researchers in universities under contract of the military industrial complex. The other was the industrial-police intelligence complex; a network of police intelligence coordinated by the FBI to investigate domestic and foreign Intelligence and internal dissent. The specter of a 'third front or fifth column within U.S. borders were the concerns of the American Government.

The proposed march on Washington originally scheduled for July 1, 1941 by A. Philip Randolph and supported by the NAACP to protest discrimination in hiring at defense plants brought immediate concessions from the Federal Government. President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8802 outlawing discrimination in government and defense industries. During the war the American Government instituted concentration camps, rounding up American s of Japanese descendant detaining them in camps for the duration of the war. Elijah Muhammad was indicted in 1942 and imprisoned for Japanese sympathies and supposedly evasion of the draft. The 1943 Detroit race riot was cause for alarm of the government as Roosevelt dispatched 6,000 federal troops to maintain law and order.

After the end of WWII, the United States became the leader of the western capitalist world. The major priority of the foreign policy planners was to maintain the existing world capitalist empire. This took the form of the American state's becoming the policeman of the world. The OSS was reorganized into the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Congress passed the CIA Act in 1947. The military was reorganized under the Military Unification Plan drafted by Clark Clifford in 1947, which established three military departments, Army, Navy and Air Force, which were made subordinate to the centralized command of The Department of Defense. The state centralized its military intelligence community for its next role as head of the capitalist system. By 1949, a large section of the American economy had been Decentralized into a permanent war economy; a state of readiness against the new enemy of extended communism. The Pentagon developed a 'domino theory' of containing communism in Europe and the Third World.

Provisions hindering communist or a member of any organization advocating the overthrow of the U.S. Government from working for the Federal Government had been passed during the late 1930's. By the late 1940's the American state was openly opposing the spread of communism (an economic and political system in opposition to the capitalist system) in various parts of the world. This warfare became known as the Cold War.

In 1949 the late infamous Senator Joseph McCarthy went on his mad, anti-communist tirade. The rise of McCarthyism served the interest of the monopoly capitalist and re-trenched the military industrial-police-intelligence research network.

Much of Eastern Europe was in the socialist camp. Being taken out of the capitalist sphere, national liberation movements were rising in Africa and socialist revolution had just been victorious in China and North Vietnam and was threatening to sweep all of Korea.

The American capitalist state consolidated its entire intelligence community to serve the interest to the military industrial complex. Under the pretext 'to fight for democracy, to stop communism', the war of imperialist aggression against the Korean people was started.

The political atmosphere created McCarthyism the largest massive 'red scare' and witch hunt the U.S. had witnessed against all Americans, including whites.

Tied to the rise of McCarthyism was the defeat of the liberal left labor coalition which formed the Progressive party in late 1948 with Henry Wallace running for president. This coalition, which often took the form of peace movements, of keeping America out of an imperialist plunder of aggression, was attacked after the Progressive Party challenge was defeated.

As the American State obtained hegemony of the capitalist world and prepared to play policeman of the world; an outright aggressive imperialist power, the intelligence communities was turned loose to crush the domestic movement for social change. The Communist Party is outlawed by the Smith Act. In 1951 the McCarran Act was passed allowing for mass detention of a million people if classified as communists in case of a national emergency.

During this time, black progressives came under attack. Dr. DuBois was purged from the NAACP in 1948 for his openly anti-imperialistic position and his support for the Progressive party. Due to pressure from the 'intelligence community and from an internal battle the NAACP voted in its 1950 convention to purge its communist members. Dr. DuBois was falsely accused and imprisoned for being an agent of a foreign power. Both DuBois and Paul Robeson of the Council of African Affairs were brought before the House Un-American Activities Committee. The black liberation movement was under attack for being communist or communist inspired.

In December of 1955, the Montgomery bus boycott started and the Civil Rights Movement was born.

Immediately the black community in Montgomery came under surveillance by the U.S. Army and FBI.

Hoover began his mad search for communist influence of Dr. King and began its content analysis of the new stage of the struggle.

“In March, 1956, with racial tensions intensifying throughout the South in the wake of the school desegregation decision, Attorney General Herbert Brownell proposed to President Eisenhower's Cabinet, a civil rights legislative program designed to protect voting rights and remedy other violations of constitutional rights”.⁸⁰⁸

Hoover was part of the briefing in which he presented a paper on racial tensions and civil rights. Much of Hoover's report was centered around how the Communist Party was trying to infiltrate the NAACP.

⁸⁰⁸ Pat Watters and Stephen Gillers, *Investigating the FBI*, pg 275

It is important to note somewhat how the military-policeintelligence apparatus works and began to be centralized. The intelligence community though it has semi-autonomous units designed for specific functions had been centralized on a national level, through the FBI controlled by Hoover since 1936.

Through Hoover's memos to the National Security Agency and various military intelligence agencies, the general directive, or strategy of what to concentrate on domestically would be given.

For instance the Internal Security Section of the FBI intelligence division would at times concentrate on a group's political position; whether it closely coincided with the communist line and whether the group was influenced by communists. Through FBI informants in the group, persons advocating a progressive political position would be identified. Eventually, the person's dossier would find its way to the radical index or internal security index.

While the FBI COINTELPRO Program concentrated on destroying the black liberation and the new left movement; the FBI's broadest intelligence collecting program was carried out under COMINFIL, for Communist infiltration.

“An example of one such investigation was the FBI's COMINFIL case on the NAACP. In 1957, the New York Field Office prepared a 137 page report covering the intelligence gathered during the previous year. Copies were disseminated to the three military intelligence agencies. The report described the national section of the NAACP, its growth and membership, its officers and directors, its national conventions, its stand on communism and the role in its state and local chapters of alleged Communists, members of Communist front groups, and the Socialist Workers Party”.⁸⁰⁹

Through its COINFIL program the FBI watched the civil rights movement and particularly Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The FBI had informants in Civil Rights organizations and at demonstrations.

An aspect of the military-police-intelligence apparatus that has received little attention is the cooperation of local and state police agencies and the FBI.

For instance the State of Alabama has its own Bureau of Investigation, the ABI, which is patterned after the FBI.

In the late 1950's and early 1960's local and state police agencies placed more emphasis on intelligence and counterintelligence. Traditionally called "red squad". The intelligence units began taking pictures of people in demonstrations, at public rallies/meetings, leaving meetings and at all gatherings identified with political protest. Sometimes photographers for newspapers were approached and asked for copies of photographs taken at various events.

Consistent activists if not all participants, were indexed in local and state "radical" dossiers and information was shared nationally through the L.E.I.U. (Law Enforcement Intelligence

⁸⁰⁹ Supplementary Detailed Staff Reports on Intelligence Activities and the Rights of Americans, [U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C., 1976], p. 450

Unit) which consisted of 150 police departments. The FBI had close communication and liaison with the L.E.I.U. Files from the L.E.I.U. often ended up in the radical index of the FBI.

In this sense, a national intelligence system was established by the mid-1960's from major local urban areas to the national government.

In 1956, the FBI started its secret COINTELPRO program. Much of the COINTELPRO program was concentrated on disrupting the Communist Party. As the Civil Rights Movement began to increase in tempo the FBI became more engaged in subversive activities to crush it.

For instance in 1961, the FBI passed information to the Klan through Sgt. Thomas Cook, an officer in the Birmingham Police Department's intelligence branch a complete itinerary of two bus loads of Freedom Riders. Cook, who was a member of the KKK had been instructed by Klan leader Robert Shelton to keep him informed of the Freedom Riders plans. The FBI knew that the KKK planned to attack the Freedom Riders and that the Birmingham Police were not going to attempt to halt the attack.⁸¹⁰ From 1963 until 1968, the FBI targeted Dr. Martin Luther King⁸¹¹ to "neutralize" him as an effective civil rights leader. The FBI had Dr. King under extensive surveillance since the late 1950's through its program called "Racial Matters". In October of 1962, the FBI opened its investigation of SCLC (Southern Christian Leadership Conference) and Dr. King. By May, 1962, the FBI had put Dr. King in Section A of its "Reserve Index", as a person to be rounded up and detained in the event of a "national emergency".

The FBI tapped Dr. King's home telephone, SCLC telephones and the home and office phones of Dr. King's close advisors. The FBI wired and taped recorded Dr. King's hotel and motel rooms on at least 16 occasions in an attempt to obtain information about him and his advisors' private activities to use discredit" them.⁸¹²

The FBI mailed Dr. King's wife, to "completely King a tape recording made from its microphone coverage. According to the Chief of the FBI's Domestic Intelligence Division, the tape was intended to precipitate a separation between Dr. King and his wife in the belief that the separation would reduce Dr. King's stature. The tape recording was accompanied by a note which Dr. King and his advisers interpreted as a threat to release the tape recording unless Dr. King committed suicide. The FBI also made preparations to promote someone "to assume the role of leadership of the Negro people when King has been completely discredited".⁸¹³

The FBI also attempted to destroy SCLC by cutting off its sources of funds. The FBI's plot to destroy Dr. King's code name was Operation Zorro which included the spending of \$7.5 million of government funds.⁸¹⁴

⁸¹⁰ "FBI Harassed Civil Rights Movements", *Guardian* – Vol. 30, No. 45, August 30, 1978, p. 3.

⁸¹¹ "FBI Harassed Civil Rights Movements", *Guardian* – Vol. 30, No. 45, August 30, 1978, p. 3.

⁸¹² *Supplementary Detailed Staff Reports on Intelligence Activities and Rights of Americans*, U.S. Senate Book III, Washington, 1976, pp. 81, 86-88

⁸¹³ *Ibid*, p. 82.

⁸¹⁴ "More Revealed on Plot to Murder Dr. King", *Workers World*, Vol. 20, No. 32, August 11, 1978, p. 3.

The urban rebellions (riots) in the north, in 1964 led to a substantial change in FBI intelligence dealing with black "extremists" and civil disorders. President Johnson instructed the FBI to investigate origins of the rebellions. The FBI surveyed nine cities and published a report. In the report the FBI referred to Progressive Labor a Marxist Leninist group with offices based in Harlem and without mentioning his name described the activities of Malcolm X as a leader urging blacks to abandon the doctrine of non-violence.

FBI Director, J. Edgar Hoover, testified before the House Appropriations Committee that the FBI was following the racial situation.

"The Justice Department reported that this intelligence had already made it possible for the Civil Rights Division to keep 'a close and continuing watch' on civil rights demonstrations which totaled 2,422 in almost all states during the year ending April, 1964".⁸¹⁵

In 1966, the FBI instituted a program of preparing semi monthly summaries of possible racial violence in major urban areas. Field offices were instructed to conduct "a continuing survey to develop advance information concerning racial developments..."

The Gestapo (FBI) concentrated its investigations on black nationalists organizations described as "hate type organizations," with a propensity for violence and civil disorder.

"Leaders and members of 'Black Nationalist' groups were investigated under the Emergency Detention Program for placement on the FBI's Security Index".⁸¹⁶

Dr. King and SCLC were included because Dr. King might 'abandon his supposed obedience to white, liberal doctrines' (nonviolence) and embrace black nationalism.

By the mid-1960's much of America's entire intelligence community had zeroed in on the black liberation and anti-war movements. America's Intelligence community employs approximately 153,000 people in at least ten agencies. It's annual budget runs about 6.2 billion. Some of the important agencies are the CIA, National Security Agency (NSA), Defense Intelligence Agency, Army Intelligence, Navy Intelligence, Air Force Intelligence, State Department (Bureau of Intelligence and Research), Federal Bureau of Investigation (Internal Security Division), Commission and Treasury Department.⁸¹⁷

While the present release of public information concerning COINTELPRO, The FBI Secret War Against the black liberation movement, mentions very little concerning Malcolm X, though he was under surveillance since the early 1950's. J. Edgar Hoover sent several letters to the Attorney General requesting legal action be taken against the Nation of Islam. Leaders of the N.O.I. were put in the FBI Security Index.

Malcolm X's break from the Nation of Islam caused great alarm in the "invisible government", (Intelligence Community). Malcolm's organization's; the Muslim Mosque, Inc. and the OAAU (Organization of Afro-American Unity) were infiltrated by various intelligence and police agencies. The infamous highly secretive NY Bureau of Special

⁸¹⁵ Supplementary Detailed Staff Reports On Intelligence Activities and Rights of Americans, U. S. Senate, Book III, Washington, 1976, p. 476

⁸¹⁶ Ibid, p. 447.

⁸¹⁷ Lyman Kirkpatrick, The U.S. Intelligence Community, [New York: Hill & Wang, 1973], p. 35.

Services (BOSS), which was responsible for the Statue of Liberty bomb plot (1965), the Roy Wilkins/Whitney Young Assassination plot (1967) and the Panther 21 plot (1969) had infiltrated Malcolm's organizations.

Malcolm had also been a victim of poisoning while in the Middle East, possibly at the hand of the CIA. The State Department issued a memo on Malcolm in 1965 stating that he was detrimental to U.S. foreign policy. Malcolm remarked about a tall thin dark, olive skin man followed him in his world travels and returned to the United States when he returned.⁸¹⁸

Gene Roberts, a bodyguard for Malcolm later turned up in the Panther 21 case as a police agent. McKinley Welch an Afro-Puerto Rican, a BOSS agent in the New York Black Panther Party, confessed to Max Stanford in 1967 that he had infiltrated, Mosque (NOI) Number Seven in New York and had become secretary. When Malcolm left the Nation of Islam, Welch was ordered by his superiors to infiltrate the OAAU. He said agents from every agency were in the OAAU. From recorded reports of accounts given to the Herald Tribune, February 23rd, stated that several members of (BOSS) were present in the audience at the time of Malcolm's assassination.

Also, the second man caught by the audience at the time of the assassination outside of the Audubon Ballroom and turned over to police, mysteriously disappeared.⁸¹⁹

Malcolm X's home had been firebombed a couple of weeks before his assassination. Since he was under constant surveillance and was on the FBI Security Index where were the New York Police and FBI?

James Forman in the Making of Black Revolutionaries states numerous accounts of how the FBI did nothing to stop attacks against civil rights workers in the South. He also shows how through economic intelligence, using the Bureau of Internal Revenue, the racists attempted to break the back of SNCC.

"The American Government has many ways to fight those opposed to its policies, and one of the most powerful is the Bureau of Internal Revenue. The bureau zeroed in on SNCC in September, 1966 - shortly after we began calling for Black Power - and plagued us steadily for two years. Its excuse was that SNCC had not filed an income tax return as an organization, although it had always paid personal income tax on the subsistence pay of staff members. The bureau also demanded that SNCC produce its complete financial records - including the names of people who had made donations to the organization. SNCC's battle against the Bureau of Internal Revenue became time - consuming, expensive and harassing-which was clearly the intention of the bureau, or powers behind it."⁸²⁰

SNCC soon began to have financial problems as supporters withdrew support because of unfavorable publicity.

"At the 1964 Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey, the FBI also planted a microphone in the joint headquarters of the Student

⁸¹⁸ Malcolm X, Autobiography of Malcolm X [New York, Grove Press, 1965].

⁸¹⁹ George Brietman, Herman Porter & Baxter Smith, The Assassination of Malcolm X, [New York: Pathfinder Press, 1976], pp. 52-54.

⁸²⁰ James Foreman, The Making of Black Revolutionaries New York: The Macmillian Company, 1972], pp. 471 & 472.

Non-Violent Coordinating Committee and the Congress on Racial Equality".⁸²¹

The FBI targeted "key figures" and "top functionaries" for special attention but the scope of its security intelligence investigations was much wider.

"Individuals were investigated if they were members in basic revolutionary organizations or were 'espousing the line of revolutionary movements'".⁸²²

If any individual planned to travel abroad, the FBI had "subversive" information or information concerning the person's proposed travel plans, including information concerning their activities would be forwarded by the FBI to the Central Intelligence Agency. In late semimonthly summaries of racial motivated activity in urban areas the reports included: the name of the community; general racial conditions; current evaluation of violence; potential identities of organizations involved in local racial situations; identities of leaders and individuals involved; the identify of leaders and individuals in the civil rights movement, including personal background data. Information on the existence of channels of communication between minority leaders and local officials, objectives sought by the minority community, the number, character and intensity of demonstrations, and reactions of leaders and members of the white community to the minority demands. These reports concentrated on black nationalist groups.

"The urban riots of the summer of 1967 greatly intensified FBI domestic intelligence operations. Equally important, the Detroit and Newark riots brought other agencies of the Federal government into the picture. A Presidential Commission was established to study civil disorders, the Attorney General re-examined the intelligence capabilities of the Justice Department and the use of Federal troops in riot torn cities led to widespread military intelligence surveillance of civilians."⁸²³

The Army instituted a massive intelligence operation against the movement for social change in the 1960's. Army Intelligence Agents penetrated major protest demonstrations. All forms of political dissent were routinely investigated in virtually every city within the United States. Army Intelligence reports were circulated to law enforcement agencies at all levels of Government and other intelligence agencies. Army agents posed as newsmen, students and freelance photographers. Army agents posing as newspaper reporters interviewed Stokely Carmichael and H. Rap Brown in New York in 1967, and the staff of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in 1968.

"In Chicago, during the 1960's military organizations to the Chicago police, were invited to participate in police raids, and routinely exchanged intelligence reports with the police. In Washington, D.C., Army Intelligence participated in an FBI raid on a civilian rooming house and provided funds for the police department's intelligence division."⁸²⁴

⁸²¹ Supplemental Detailed Staff Reports on Intelligence Activities and the Rights of Americans, Washington, D.C., 1976, p. 335, Ibid., p. 448.

⁸²² Ibid., p. 448.

⁸²³ Supplemental Detailed Staff Reports on Intelligence Activities and the Rights of Americans, Book III, (Washington, D.C., 1976, p. 491).

⁸²⁴ Ibid., p. 791.

The Army gathered intelligence information through liaison with local police and the public media. They sent 1500 investigators into communities to report on different types of political activity.

"All of the information collected by Army agents on civilian political activity was stored in 'scores' of data banks throughout the United States, -some of which the Army had computerized. The reports were routinely fed to the FBI, the Navy, and the Air Force, and were occasionally circulated to the Central Intelligence Agency and the Defense Intelligence Agency. In all, the Army probably maintained files on at least 100,000 Americans from 1967 until 1970."⁸²⁵

Army agents penetrated the Poor Peoples' March to Washington in April 1968, as well as "Resurrection City," Army agents infiltrated into groups coming from Seattle, Washington to the Poor People's campaign. The Army monitored protests of welfare mother's organization in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Army agents posed as students monitor classes in 'Black Studies' at New York University, where James Farmer, former head of C.O.R.E., was teaching. About 58 Army agents infiltrated demonstrations in Chicago during the Democratic National Convention in 1968. Army agents attended meetings of a Sanitation Workers' Union in Atlanta, Georgia in 1968. An Army agent infiltrated the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in 1968. This is just a small review of Army intelligence activities against the black liberation movement.

During the mid-1960's urban rebellions that took place in America's major cities alarmed Army Intelligence. The Army drew up formal contingency plans. Army Intelligence began collecting information on individuals and organizations, without authorization, as part of its overall mission to support military commanders with information regarding possible deployments in civil disturbances. In 1965, there were four major urban rebellions: in 1966, 21 and in 1967, 83. The National Guard was deployed 36 times during this period and the Army once in Detroit for 8 days in 1967. The Army developed a Civil Disturbance Plan on February 1, 1968.

"The plan identified as 'dissident elements' the 'civil rights movement' and the 'antiVietnam/anti-draft movements', and stated that they were 'supporting the stated objectives of foreign elements which are detrimental to the USA.'⁸²⁶

On March 31, 1968, the Army circulated a classified message to all domestic commands of the Army. The message authorized the Army Security Agency, which intercepts communications for both national and tactical purposes to participate in the Army's Civil Disturbance Collection Plan. The communique stated the ASA could be used to monitor domestic communications, conduct jamming and deception in support of Army forces committed in civil disorders and disturbances. ASA personnel were to be "disguised" either in civilian clothes or as members of other military units. The authorization of the use of ASA units in civil disturbances was issued 4 days before Dr. Martin Luther King's assassination on April 4, 1968 in Memphis, Tennessee. On April 5, 1968 ASA units were

⁸²⁵ Ibid., p. 803.

⁸²⁶ Ibid., p. 798.

directed by the Army to begin monitoring civilian radio transmissions as part of riot control operations.⁸²⁷

Investigations are still in process to determine the scope and nature of the plot to assassinate Dr. King.

From the late Congressman Adam Clayton Powell's autobiography we got some idea of the nature of the plot.

"King later visited me several times at Bimini. One night we were with a crowd of Biminians and went into a restaurant for something to eat. After we were settled -all of us Black; one of the younger fellows with us said, 'Do you think Dr. King would preach us a little sermon? We've never heard him'. I said, 'How about it Martin? These young people have never heard you preach. So he leaned back and preached an old-fashioned Baptist sermon. While he was preaching, a stranger, whose identity we were never able to discover, came up to one of the men in our group and said to him, 'Please tell Dr. King not to go to Memphis because if he does, he will be killed'.⁸²⁸

During the time Black Panther Party leader, Huey P. Newton, was brought to trial in Alameda, California, ASA (Army Security Agency) ordered its fixed stations near Warrenton, Virginia and Monterrey, California, to monitor domestic radio communications to determine if there were any groups around the country planning demonstrations in support of Huey. ASA conducted a general search of all amateur radio bands from September 6 through September 10, 1968.

In August 1967, the FBI initiated its secret COINTELPRO program - to disrupt and "neutralize" so called "Black Nationalist Hate Groups."

The FBI memorandum expanding the program described its goals as:

1. Prevent a coalition of nationalist groups.
2. Prevent the rise of a "Messiah" who could unify, and electrify, the militant Black Nationalist Movement.
3. Prevent violence on the part of Black Nationalist groups...Through counterintelligence it should be possible to pinpoint potential troublemakers and neutralize them before they exercise their potential for violence.
4. Prevent militant Black Nationalist groups and leaders from gaining respectability, by discrediting them to three separate segments of the community.
5. A final goal should be to prevent the long-range growth of militant Black Nationalist organizations, especially among youth.⁸²⁹

⁸²⁷ Ibid., pp. 798-801

⁸²⁸ Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., Adam by Adam: The Autobiography of Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., [New York: The Dial Press, 1971], p. 243.

⁸²⁹ FBI Letter to Field Offices, (August 25, 1967)

The FBI instructed 41 Field Divisions to implement COINTELPRO against black organizations in major cities in the United States.

"Over 2,300 known proposals for disruptive activities were approved by the Bureau and implemented from the time of the program's inception to 1971 when FBI files were stolen from the Media, P.A., office and exposed to the Press."⁸³⁰

In the fall of 1967, the FBI intensified its Black Nationalist Groups PINPOINT Informant-Program.

Local police were encouraged by the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders to establish intelligence programs both for their use and to feed into a federal intelligence gathering process.

The FBI Ghetto Informant Program begun in 1967 had some 7,402 informants by September 1972.

The ghetto informant originally conceived was to act as a 'listening post', "an individual who lives or works in a ghetto area and has access to information regarding the racial situation and racial activities in his area which he furnishes to the Bureau on a confidential basis".

The role of the ghetto informant was expanded to attend public meetings held by so-called extremists, to identify so-called extremists passing through or locating them into the ghetto area, to identify who were the distributors of extremist literature, etc.

A Philadelphia FBI Field Office Director instructed ghetto informants to:

"Visit Afro-American type bookstores for the purpose of determining if militant extremist literature is available therein and, if so to identify the owners, operators and clientele of such stores."⁸³¹

The FBI's COINTELPRO campaign against black nationalist groups went into full swing in 1967.⁸³²

The Revolutionary Action Movement was active in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in the summer of 1967.

"The SA contacting the Intelligence Unit secured spot check coverage of Stanford by Negro officers as a personal favor after explaining RAM and Stanford's position in it to police officials.

"When activity started with the appearance of known Negro extremists native to Philadelphia at the Stanford residence, a full-time surveillance by police went into effect. Police disruptive action was also initiated."

⁸³⁰ "The FBI Plot Against Black Leaders" by Iris L. Washington, (*Essence Magazine*, October, 1978, Volume 9, Number 6, p. 70).

⁸³¹ *Supplemental Detailed Staff Reports on Intelligence Activities and the Rights of Americans*, op. cit., p. 253.

⁸³² *Ibid.*, p. 254.

"Cars stopping at the Stanford residence were checked as to license numbers. When they left the residence area they were subject to car stops by uniformed police. The occupants were identified. They then became target for harassment..."

"Any...excuse for arrest was promptly implemented by arrest. Any possibility of neutralizing a RAM activist was exercised...When surveillance reflected the arrival of a new group in town, they were brought in for investigation and their residence searched."

"Certain addresses used by Stanford as mail drops in Philadelphia had been determined to be addresses of known extremists. When a young Negro was arrested for passing out RAM printed flyers and was charged with inciting to riot these addresses appeared in his statements to the police."

"While the search of the first four only eliminated their use as mail drops, the fifth contained RAM and Communist literature and a duplicating machine with a RAM leaflet on the plate. Three persons were arrested at the last address."

"RAM people were arrested and released on bail, but were re-arrested several times until they could no longer make bail."⁸³³

In 1968, the FBI COINTELPRO campaign stepped up against the black liberation movement and more drastic measures began to be implemented.

"During the Winter of 1967-1968, the Justice Department and the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders reiterated the message that local police should set up 'intelligence units' to gather and disseminate information on 'potential' civil disorders. These units would use 'undercover police personnel and informants' and draw on 'community leaders, agencies, and organizations in the ghetto.'"

The Commission also urged that these local units be linked to 'a national center and clearing-house' in the Justice Department. The unstated consequence of these recommendations was that the FBI, having regular liaison with local police, served as the Channel (and supplementary repository) for this intelligence data.⁸³⁴

The FBI's most extensive war was the counter-insurgency plan waged against the Black Panther Party. In September 1968, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover described the Black Panther Party as:

"the greatest threat to the internal security of the country. Schooled in the Marxist-Leninist ideology and the teaching of Chinese Communist Leader Mao Tse-Tung, its members have perpetrated numerous assaults on police

⁸³³ Counter-Intelligence, Volume One, National Lawyers Guild Task Force on Counter Intelligence and the Secret Police, (Chicago, Illinois, 1978, pp. 53 & 54).

⁸³⁴ Supplemental Detailed Staff Reports on Intelligence Activities and the Rights of Americans, Book III, Washington, D. C. 1976, p. 494

officers and have engaged in violent confrontations with police throughout the country. Leaders and representatives of the Black Panther Party travel extensively all over the United States preaching their gospel of hate and violence not only to ghetto residents but to students in colleges, universities and high schools as well".

By July 1969, the Black Panther Party was under constant attack by police and FBI actions coordinated from Washington, D.C.

The BPP was the target of 233 of the total 295 black nationalist COINTELPRO actions.

The conspiracy against the Black Panther Party took on mammoth proportions bordering on outright fascist terror tactics. The FBI fostered rivalries between the Black Panthers and Ron Karenga's US organization sending derogatory cartoons and death threats to both groups. The FBI sent an anonymous letter to the leader of the Black Stone Rangers informing him that the Chicago Panthers had a hit on him. In 1969, there were 113 arrests of BPP members in Chicago with only a handful resulting in convictions.

"In the year 1969 alone, 348 Black Panther Party members across the country were arrested for serious crimes including murder, armed robbery, rape, bank robbery, and burglary, the FBI Director informed Congress."⁸³⁵

Contrary to Hoover's statement to Congress, recent evidence has given light to the FBI's involvement in murders against Black Panthers.

"A Black former agent-provocateur, admittedly employed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation from 1968 through 1975 to 'inform on and observe the activities of the Black Panther Party', has stated in a sworn affidavit that the FBI plotted 'to eliminate local and national leadership of the BPP during the month of December, 1969'".

The fact the FBI planned murders of Black Panther leaders is a clear case of genocide fascism. Roy Wilkins and Ramsey Clark in their book *Search and Destroy: A Report by the Commission of Inquiry Into The Black Panthers and the Police*, (Metropolitan Applied Research Center, Inc., 1973), provide a detailed account of a police raid that was pre-meditated murder on December 4, 1969; police under the pretense of a weapons search raided the Panther's apartment in Chicago at 4:45 a.m. pumping over 80 rounds into the bodies of Fred Hampton and Mark Clark, killing them and wounding 4 others. A detailed inventory of weapons and a floor plan of the apartment had been supplied to the FBI by an informant before the raid. The FBI gave this information to the local police conducting the raid.

According to a black former agent provocateur who was employed for the FBI:

"The chief of the Los Angeles FBI Office, Brandon Cleary, told him that a Black agent-provocateur in Chicago put seco-barbital sleeping power in some kool-aid he knew Fred Hampton was going to drink the night the 21-year old BPP leader was slain on December 4, 1969. The seco-barbital had been given to him by his supervising agent of the FBI."⁸³⁶

⁸³⁵ Louis Heath, Ed., *Off the Pigs*, [Metuchen, New Jersey: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1976].

⁸³⁶ "FBI Plotted to Eliminate BPP Leadership" (*The Black Panther*, Volume XVIII, Number 8, Saturday, March 11, 1978, p. 1)

Party members had tried to wake Hampton repeatedly in the opening rounds of the raid.

"Hampton's personal bodyguard; Tom O'Neal, turned out to be an FBI infiltrator who made more than \$10,000 on the deal, having fed information to the FBI on the Panthers from January, 1969 through July, 1970."⁸³⁷

The ex-FBI informant who confessed to the Black Panther Party in affidavit asserted he provided the FBI with a layout of the Southern California Chapter's BPP Office in Los Angeles, prior to a police raid on December 8, 1969.

"It was my work and the work of known informant Melvin 'Cotton' Smith which caused the raids to happen," the affidavit asserts."⁸³⁸

On December 8, 1969, 500 cops from the L.A. Police Department, led by SWAT, laid siege on the Southern California Black Panther Party Chapter's headquarters for over eight hours (while simultaneously 18 party members were arrested throughout Los Angeles).

In Los Angeles, both the L.A. Police and the FBI committed murder. Steve Bartholomew, Tommy Lewis and Robert Lawrence, of the Black Panthers were sitting in a parked car at a gas station on August 25, 1968, when members of the LAPD's metro squad opened fire, killing them almost instantly. The L.A. FBI was constantly at work to destroy the Panthers by promoting the war between the Panthers and the US organization.

"The Los Angeles Division is aware of the mutually hostile feelings harbored between the organizations and the first opportunity to capitalize on the situation will be maximized. It is intended that US Inc. will be appropriately and discreetly advised of the time and location of BPP activities in order that the two organizations might be brought together and thus grant nature the opportunity to take her due course."⁸³⁹

In January 1969, the FBI plan went into action.

". . . Black ex-agent has turned over to Attorney Garry several 3" x 5" file cards, each with a set of instructions on them, which he says is the way the FBI contacted him. All the file cards are signed with the name "Will Heaton", once the No. 2 man in the Los Angeles FBI hierarchy. One of these cards, dated January 15, 1969 reads: "(name) make sure on the 17th that you are on UCLA campus to observe a meeting between Panthers and U.S. Organization. Make sure to call US. Southern California BPP Leaders Apprentice "Bunchy" Carter and John Jerome Huggins were slain by three members of the Ron Karenga-led US Organization at the meeting referred to. The ex-agent has previously declared that he saw L.A. FBI Chief Brandon Cleary drove the three away from UCLA in the getaway car."⁸⁴⁰

The assassins were eventually arrested and convicted but later mysteriously escaped from prison and haven't been seen since. Bobby Seale, former Chairman of the BPP, recalls the COINTELPRO tactics:

⁸³⁷ "The FBI Plot Against Black Leaders", (op cit., p. 98).

⁸³⁸ "The FBI Plot Against Black Leaders", (op. cit., p. 98).

⁸³⁹ Supplemental Detailed Staff Reports on Intelligence Activities and the Rights of Americans, (op. cit., p. 189).

⁸⁴⁰ "FBI Plotted to Eliminate BPP Leadership", (op. cit. pg. 6).

"I remember the times following John Huggins' and Bunchy Carter's deaths. They would post a couple of cars at this corner, a couple of cars at that one, the Black Panther office in the middle of the block. US, in a carload, would come by, throw a Molotov cocktail right at the door, hoping to get the Black Panthers to run out of the office, blasting at them while the police were there waiting, ambulances around the corner, everything."⁸⁴¹

The intelligence community resorted to all kinds of tactics to destroy the Black Panther Party. Financial supporters of the Party were harassed. The FBI contacted newspapers having negative articles written about the party and supporters. The IRS constantly harassed the Party.

"The Black Panther paper on February 21, 1970 listing some of the arrests of Panthers on charges ranging from petty theft to criminal conspiracy to commit murder, insisted: "The total amount of money we have paid on bails and fines since the beginning of the Black Panther Party until 1969 is approximately: \$5,240,568.00!"⁸⁴²

Hoover ordered FBI agents to use discreet counterintelligence action against the BPP Free Breakfast Program.

Financial Donators to the program were harassed, ministers and churches hounded. The FBI worked day and night to create internal dissension in the party. One tactic was agent baiting.

"The FBI also resorted to anonymous phone calls. The San Diego Field Office placed anonymous calls to local BPP members as "police agents". According to a report from the field office, these calls, reinforced by rumors spread by FBI informants within the BPP, induced a group of Panthers to accuse three Party members of working for the police.⁸⁴³ Repression took many forms against the Panthers. Repression of the Panthers by local police reached its peak shortly after the Nixon Administration took office. From April to December, 1969, police raided Panther headquarters in San Francisco, Chicago, Salt Lake City, Indianapolis, Denver, San Diego, Sacramento and Los Angeles, including four separate raids in Chicago, two in San Diego, and two in Los Angeles."⁸⁴⁴

In New York, in 1969, the "Panther Twenty-One" were arrested on charges of having conspired to bomb department stores, blowup police stations and murder policemen. The Panthers were held under \$100,000 ransom each and a number of them were held in jail for over two years, when in May 1971 they were acquitted.

"In August, 1969, three Black Panthers were arrested while riding in a car with a New York City undercover agent, Wilbert Thomas, and charged with a variety of offenses including conspiracy to rob a hotel, attempted murder of a policeman and illegal possession of weapons. During the trial, it developed that Thomas had supplied the car, had drawn a map of the hotel

⁸⁴¹ "The FBI Plot Against Black Leaders", (op. cit., p. 100).

⁸⁴² Louis Heath, ed., Off the Pigs, (op cit., p. 137).

⁸⁴³ Supplemental Detailed Staff Reports on Intelligence Activities and the Rights of Americans, (op cit. p. 199).

⁸⁴⁴ Robert Justin Goldstein, Political Repression in Modern America, [Cambridge, Massachusetts: Schensman Publishing Company, 1978], p. 52).

-the only tangible evidence tying the Panthers to the alleged robbery scheme
- and had offered to supply guns. The Panthers were eventually convicted only on a technical weapon charge, based on the fact that a shotgun, which the Panthers said had been planted by Thomas, was found in the car."⁸⁴⁵

The FBI in 1970 started a program to create a permanent division between Black Panther Party leader Eldridge Cleaver who was in Algeria and BPP headquarters in the United States. The FBI sent an anonymous letter to Cleaver stating that BPP leaders in California were undermining his influence. Cleaver thought the letter was from Connie Matthews who was a Panther representative in Scandinavia and expelled three members from BPP international staff. As a result of the success of the tactic Bureau personnel received incentive awards from J. Edgar Hoover.⁸⁴⁶

By February 1971, the FBI had directed each of its 29 field offices to submit proposals of how to disrupt local BPP chapters and cause dissension between local BPP chapters and BPP national headquarters. As a result of the confusion caused by the FBI, on February 26, 1971, Eldridge Cleaver called Huey Newton from Algiers, while Newton was on a T.V. program being interviewed. Cleaver criticized the expulsion of BPP members and suggested that Chief of Staff David Hilliard be removed from his post. Huey responded by expelling Cleaver and the international section of the party in Algiers.

The FBI also attempted to "neutralize" the Black Panther Party by putting pressure on its financial supports. Actress Jane Fonda was targeted for character assassination. Various actors and/or their wives were victims of the same types of tactics. The FBI considered the BPP's free "Breakfast for Children" Program a threat because it was winning support for the Party in various communities. The FBI zeroed in on anyone or companies, even supporting the BPP Breakfast Program.

"Churches that permitted the Panthers to use their facilities in the free breakfast program were also targeted. When the FBI's San Diego office discovered that a Catholic Priest, Father Frank Curran, was permitting his church in San Diego to be used as a serving place for the BPP Breakfast Program, it sent an anonymous letter to the Bishop of the San Diego Diocese informing him of the Priest's activities. In August, 1969, the San Diego Field Office requested permission from headquarters to place three telephone calls protesting Father Curran's support of the BPP Program to the Auxiliary Bishop of the San Diego Diocese."⁸⁴⁷

The FBI called the Bishop, pretending to be "parishioners" of the church. As a result of the efforts of the COINTELPRO activities, the San Diego office reported a month later that Father Curran had been transferred from the San Diego Diocese to somewhere in the State of New Mexico for "permanent assignment".

The FBI also sent anonymous mailings to public officials and people who might sway public opinion against the BPP. The FBI destroyed community support for individual BPP members by spreading rumors that they were immoral. The San Diego field office reported

⁸⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 529

⁸⁴⁶ Counter-Intelligence, (op, cit., p. 50).

⁸⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 210

it had been successful in this aspect of COINTELPRO by anonymously informing the parents of a teenage girl that she was pregnant by a local BPP leader. The parents of the girl forced her to resign from the BPP and return home to live. As a result, it became general knowledge throughout the African American community that the BPP leader was responsible for the difficulty experienced by the girl.

"The field office also considered the operation successful because the mother of another girl questioned the activities of her own daughter after talking with the parent the agents had been anonymously contacted. She learned that her daughter, a BPP member, was also pregnant, and had her committed to a reformatory as a wayward juvenile."⁸⁴⁸

The FBI also on several occasions developed schemes to create friction between the Black Panthers and the Nation of Islam. The FBI war against the black liberation movement was very extensive. In a July 10, 1968, FBI memorandum, it was suggested that consideration be given to convey the impression Stokely Carmichael is a CIA agent. The report suggested that the FBI inform a certain percentage of criminal and racial informants that, "we heard from reliable sources that Carmichael is a CIA agent." It was proposed that the informants would spread the rumor throughout the African American community nationwide.⁸⁴⁹ A FBI memorandum stated in mid-September, 1970, the FBI upon finding out Brother Imari of the RNA was going to purchase land in Hinds County, Mississippi, went to the owner of the land harassing him for one and one-half hours. As a result, the memorandum said the owner said he would not sell the RNA land.⁸⁵⁰

The FBI in Milwaukee infiltrated the RNA consulate there with a paid informer, named Thomas Spells. Spells became a close friend of a brother named Sylee who had committed a filling station robbery-murder in Michigan. Spells informed the FBI of Sylee's fugitive status in 1971. Instead of arresting Sylee, the FBI waited until Sylee went to an RNA convention in Jackson, Mississippi on July 16, 1971 with informer Spells, instructing Spells to contact the Jackson FBI when he got there to tell him Sylee had arrived. Sylee stayed in Jackson after the conference but was asked to leave the RNA Headquarters because of erratic behavior. The FBI raided RNA Headquarters in August, 1971.

By 1971, the FBI had an estimated two thousand agents assigned to political intelligence operations, and they in turn supervised about seven thousand "ghetto informants" and seventeen hundred "regular" domestic intelligence informants, and received information from another fourteen hundred "confidential sources" such as bankers, telephone company employees and landlords not on the FBI payroll.⁸⁵¹

Probably one of the most blatant forms of repression has been the increase of African American prisoners in prison and their treatment while in prison. Most notably were the assassination of Black Panther Party Field Marshall George Jackson on August 21, 1971 and the mass murder of 49 brothers at Attica the same year.

⁸⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 213.

⁸⁴⁹ Counter-Intelligence, op. cit., p. 58.

⁸⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 28.

⁸⁵¹ Goldstein, *Political Repression in Modern America*, op. cit., p. 465.

From some studies the prison population seems to grow and subside according to the war economy and recessions in the economy. For instance, the prison population between 1941 and 1945, declined by 4,659, enough people to fill ten prisons dropping some 23 percent.

But, by 1946, when unemployment rates again rose and the country no longer needed "patriotic" soldiers, the prison population again increased by more than 20 percent in the year and a half following the war.

During the Korean War, the population declined by more than 1,000 prisoners, only to rise again after the troops came home. Between the end of the Korean War and 1963, federal prisoners increased by 33 percent, but beginning in 1964, with the massive escalation in Vietnam the prison population again declined. By 1968, it had shrunk by 4,800. The Tet offensive in 1968-signalled not only our eventual defeat in Vietnam, but the beginning of the biggest boom in prison construction in our history. Reduced to 19,815 prisoners in 1968, the Federal Bureau of Prisons is today responsible for 33,029 people, an increase of 67 percent in 10 years.⁸⁵²

Prisons are profit-making ventures. In Pennsylvania alone prison shops sales net 13 million dollars. Per COR the name under which products produced by inmates are marketed puts out over 700 different items, in 47 shops at eight state prisons.⁸⁵³ As a result in the growth in prison population and repression of the black liberation movement a mechanized computerized intelligence system has grown.

The largest computerized intelligence system is the FBI's National Crime Information Center (NCIC). NCIC was established in 1967 as a national index of wanted persons, stolen autos, and stolen property, consisting of less than 500,000 entries that could be retrieved by only 15 computer terminals throughout the country. By 1974 there were links to 94 law enforcement agencies plus all 55 FBI field offices. The system contains 400,000 computerized criminal histories, 4.9 total entries, and handles about 130,000 transactions daily. In many cases, NCIC is linked to state and regional terminals, which are entire systems in themselves. For example, in Michigan, NCIC links with the Law Enforcement Intelligence Network (LEIN), which holds 150,000 entries and links to 225 terminals, and include the Michigan Secretary of State's files.

Federal agencies, which contribute and receive information with NCIC include the Secret Service, the Internal Revenue Service, Alcohol and Tax Division of the Treasury Department, Customs Service, Immigration and Naturalization Service, U.S. Courts, Attorneys and Marshals, and the Bureau of Prisons.

The NCIC system is an outgrowth of an earlier LEAA computer information project SEARCH (System for Electronic Analysis and Retrieval of Criminal Histories), initiated in 1969 out of Sacramento, California.⁸⁵⁴

Recent events and recent exposures of governmental violations of human rights raised fears of the ominous spectre of COINTELPRO lingering on.

⁸⁵² Michael A. Knoll, "The Prison Experiment," *Southern Exposure* 1979, p. 11.

⁸⁵³ Prison Shops Sales Net \$13 million, *The Sunday Bulletin*, March 26, 1978, p. 3.

⁸⁵⁴ *The Iron Fist and the Velvet Glove*, [California: Center for Research on Criminal Justice], pp. 40 & 41

Proof has continued to accumulate that the notorious COINTELPRO operations, has still functioned beyond April of 1971, when it was supposedly officially discontinued. Whether or not COINTELPRO continues to exist under its original code name, there is always the strong possibility that a similar program with a different name, or no name at all, has surfaced in place.⁸⁵⁵

The magazine, Seven Days reported last-year that incomplete research indicates that there are a least 200 American political prisoners in American prisons. A generally accepted term for political prisoner is an activist who has been involved in political work in the community and who is framed by various law enforcement agencies. Besides political prisoners there are a growing number of prisoners of war. Prisoners of war are usually defined as one captured while fighting a war of national liberation against United States imperialism or committing a crime for political reasons. America leads the western world in the number of persons in prison. There are approximately 600,000 people in jail in America.

What happened in Cleveland in 1967 that impacted on the condition of the entire national African American Community?

Carl Stokes was elected as the first African American mayor of a major city in the United States. Cleveland became the first city in American history to elect a black mayor when Democrat Carl Stokes beat his white Republican opponent by 1,679 votes. He won 95% of the black vote and almost 20% of the white vote. This was a political victory for African Americans. Richard Hatcher was elected mayor of Gary, Indiana later the same month, November 1967.

What occurred in 1968 besides the assassinations that had a tremendous impact on African American electoral politics?

Under the leadership of Bob Moses and Fannie Lou Hamer of SNCC, and many others, the multiracial Mississippi Democratic Party (MFDP) was formed in 1964. The MFDP challenged the regular racist Democratic Party in seating at the National Democratic Party Convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey.⁸⁵⁶ The MFDP failed at first, but as Comrade Mao Tse Tung used to say, "Try, Fail, Try, Fail, Try again until you succeed." The MFDP did just that. They challenged the racist Mississippi regulars again in 1966, and lost again. A year later, inside the Democratic Party in the north, Carl Stokes won the mayoral election in Cleveland and Richard Hatcher won as mayor in Gary, Indiana.⁸⁵⁷

So from 1968 to 2006 the racists (KKK) in the south changed their party allegiance and that's how you have a solid white racist right wing Republican Party in the South. It is the party of the KKK, Nazis, the Nixon's, Reagan's, and the Bushes.

What did the northern civil rights, revolutionary black nationalist, black power and black liberation movement accomplish in the 1960's/70's?

⁸⁵⁵ Marv Glass, "COINTELPRO Disruption Continues," Black News, February, 1979, Volume 4, Number 5, p. 10.

⁸⁵⁶ Len Holt, The Summer That Didn't End [New York: William Morrow & Co., 1965], Doug McAdam, Freedom Summer [New York: Oxford University Press, 1988], Mildred Pitts Walter, Mississippi Challenge [New York: Aladdin Paperbacks, 1996]

⁸⁵⁷ William E. Nelson and Phillip J. Meranto, Electing Black Mayors [Columbus: Ohio State University, 1977] pp. 67-332

1. The legal opening of jobs in the construction industry and other industries subsidized by federal contract (establishment of Affirmative Action in construction industry by JFK).
2. Establishment of African-American representation in union leadership in the UAW and the unions
3. Starting of a mass Anti-War movement (Vietnam)
4. Paving the way for African-American electoral empowerment
5. Establishment of Black Studies
6. Opening up of McDonald's and other food franchises for African-Americans
7. Establishment of unarmed and armed self-defense as a mass policy
8. Head Start Program.

This Event marked the end of the First Phase as well as the beginning of the Second Phase of the Black Student Movement.

The Orangeburg Massacre (South Carolina)

On February 8, 1968, a throng of angry, frustrated African American students faced off heavily armed police on the grounds of their own college campus in Orangeburg, South Carolina. The focus of their demonstration also involved elementary Justice, for it was aimed against the exclusion of African Americans from a local bowling alley, yet the tense police began firing wildly into the unarmed crowd.⁸⁵⁸

A Brief Chronological Overview of the Movement of the 1970's

The 1970s was a critical historical period because when it came in the movement was on the defensive, with many activists in prison, others in exile. It was a period of dissolution and an attempt to regroup.

The main regrouping process took two forms as the movement was widely split into two factions; cultural nationalists vs. revolutionary nationalist/Marxist-Leninists. In 1969 shootouts had occurred between the two on the west coast between the Panthers and the U.S. organization. In Detroit the League of Revolutionary Black Workers formed. In 1970, the leadership of the Black Panther Party called a National Constitutional Convention to draft a new American constitution in Washington, D. C. Some 10,000 came to the convention representing a cross section of the multi-racial left. Howard University denied the BPP permission to hold the conference. The conference was eventually held in Philadelphia. The black nationalists led by Imamu Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones) in August

⁸⁵⁸ Jack Bassrd, Jack Nelson, The Orangeburg Massacre [Newark: Mercer University Press, 1984] p. vii

1970, formed and convened the Congress of African People held in Atlanta, Georgia; 10,000 African-Americans attended the Congress of African people convention and formed (CAP) into an organization. CAP was dominated by cultural nationalist philosophy of Kawaïda formulated by Maulana Ron Karanga but given a new interpretation by Imanu Amiri Baraka who split with Karanga. In Newark, New Jersey, Baraka had successfully pulled together a coalition that had elected Kenneth Gibson mayor.

With the Black Panther Party under military attack by the state, a section of it began to form units of the Black Liberation Army. The BLA policy was to defend itself against reactionary police.

Robert F. Williams resigned from the RNA (Republic of New Africa). RNA split and elections were held where Imari Obadele was elected president of the RNA.

In Detroit, the League of Revolutionary Black Workers had grown to become an organization of 500 hundred African American workers who could initiate wildcat strikes of thousands (6,000) in the auto plants.

What were the two major events in 1970 that killed student protest in America?

In May 1970 the National Guard kills white anti-war students at Kent University and African-American Students at Jackson State College in Jackson, Mississippi. Students declare a “national Strike” and go home. Huey P. Newton, Minister of Defense was released from prison.

Kenneth B. Gibson (African-American) elected Mayor of Newark, New Jersey.

- Chosen by the Newark Black Political Convention as a candidate for mayor in Newark.
- He ran in 1968 and lost.
- Ran in 1970 and won.
- He was elected with the help of Imamu Baraka and the Committee for the United Newark.
- Newark has had 25 years of Black mayors since.
- Newark was 90% African Americans.

Ron Dellums was elected to congress representing the Bay area.

Several developments in 1971 occurred which altered the state of the Black Liberation Movement. In the South, the North Carolina a African American studies rebellion emerged which led to the formation of Malcolm X University under the leadership of Howard Fuller (Owasu Sadakei) Fuller was a graduate student and a well articulate spokesman.

Among the undergraduate students at the various schools was a young student organizer by the name of Nelson Johnson. The various African American student organizations who had a Pan Africanist outlook, but who had split with Stokely Carmichael formed a student organization called Student Organization for Black Unity (SOBU). SOBU soon picked up where SNCC left off. SOBU began to publish a newspaper entitled the African World and began demonstrations and boycotts against U.S. corporations which were based at the time in Portuguese controlled Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique. The League of

Revolutionary Black Workers in Detroit split into two factions. One faction led by James Forman, Ken Crockel, and John Watson met in Cincinnati, Ohio.

The Black Workers Congress (BWC) was the first organization of the 1970's to attempt to direct the nationalism of Black workers and street youth in a Marxist direction. Formed by former SNCC activists like James Forman (who intellectual debt to Malcolm has been previously cited) and members of the League of Revolutionary Black workers, the BWC argued that the Black Liberation movement could emancipate African American people only through a revolutionary union "with the entire U.S. working class... through proletarian revolution." This union was to be a part of an international anti-imperialist union of the world's people. BWC's impact was largely ideological rather than organizational, as it split into several formations and implemented no significant organizational program. Its adherents, however, were to be found later in all of the important African American progressive organization of the 1970's.⁸⁵⁹

The RNA moved into Mississippi and the police and FBI attacked the RNA headquarters in Jackson, Mississippi supposedly looking for a fugitive. A shootout resulted and eleven of the leadership of the RNA were incarcerated, known as the RNA Eleven.

Why was the year 1971 such a devastating year for the revolutionary black nationalist movement?

- The League of Revolutionary Black Workers split into the factions.
- The Black Panther party split into two major groups.
- The imprisonment of the RNA Eleven
- Johnathan Jackson was killed at a courthouse breakout attempt.
- Angela Davis hunted and eventually captured.
- SNCC dissolved
- George Jackson field marshal for the BPP assassinated August 21, 1971 in San Quinton prison
- On September 9-13, 1971, prisoners in Attica prison, in New York rebel and take over sections of the prison. After a five-day occupation, 45 people were killed, 150 were shot and hundreds tortured.
- H. Rap Brown was shot and captured in New York in November 1971.

1972 was the year Stokely Carmichael returned briefly to the United States to form a U.S.A. branch of the repatriationist African People's Revolutionary Party. Malcolm X University and SOBU called a broad coalition together to convene ALD (African Liberation Day); an all African demonstration in Washington, D.C. to demand that the U.S. government stop supporting Portugal and the union of South Africa and to raise funds for African liberation groups. In Florida J.O.M.O. (the Junta of Militant Organizations) formed APSPA The African People's Socialist Party) led by Joe Waller; a Pan Africanist party which believed that Africans must struggle against American colonialism here, now before repatriating back to Africa.

⁸⁵⁹ William S. Sales, Jr., *From Civil Rights to Black Liberation: Malcolm X and the Organization of Afro-American Unity* [Boston, Massachusetts: South End Press, 1994] p. 182.

Imanu Amiri Baraka who had become a political tactician emphasizing the electing of African American political officials joined with Richard Hatcher to put together a broad coalition that convened the National Black Political Convention in Gary, Indiana in 1972. The National Black Political Convention had 3,000 delegates, over 12,000 participants that drafted a National Black Agenda. The year represented a regrouping with 50,000 African demonstrators at African Liberation Day and the ALD coalition taking on permanent ad hoc committee form, Maynard Jackson being elected the first African-American mayor of a major city in the south (Atlanta, Georgia) and the BWC organizing African American workers strikes in Atlanta, Georgia and around the South. Muhammad Ahmad of the APP was captured at the CAP conference.

African Liberation Support Committee

The African Liberation Support Committee (ALSC) was established in 1972 after an *ad hoc* grouping of Pan-Africanists and grassroots organizations had successfully engineered a massive African Liberation Day (ALD) march of 50,000 in Washington, DC. This was truly a united front effort, including representation from the newly emergent Black Congressional Caucus. In 1973, the committee was able to commemorate ALD in over twenty cities, on both coasts and in Canada and the Caribbean. In 1974, ALSC again called for and executed a large march in Washington, D.C. It augmented its ALD celebration with several days of conferencing at Howard University devoted to debate and resolution on the question, which way forward in building the Pan-African united front?⁸⁶⁰

Barbara Jordan was elected to Congress from Texas. January 25, 1972, Shirley Chisholm became the first woman and African American to run for president in the Democratic Party primary.

Harrell Jones of the Afro Set (Cleveland) was framed and served 7 years in prison before being found innocent.

Brother Abdul Quhhar (Ben Simmons), Black Panther of Kentucky, and others were framed. Authorities claimed they had planned to rob the Kentucky Derby. They were called the Louisville Seven.

The National Democratic Party of Alabama (a Bi-racial party dissolved and was incorporated into the regular Democratic Party in Alabama.

The national Black Political Convention in 1972 in Gary, Indiana marked the transition from agitation and protest to electoral politics. The event forged a national consensus about future directions and goals. It marked a political coming of age for the African American community as it began sensing its electoral strength at the local, state and national levels.

Why was the year 1973 so significant in terms of African American electoral politics?

-Tom Bradley elected Mayor of Los Angeles. Coleman Young was elected Mayor of Detroit, Michigan.

⁸⁶⁰ Op. Cit., (Sales) pp. 200-201

- Maynard Jackson elected mayor of Atlanta, GA.
- Andrew Young elected the first African American to the House of Representatives from the South since Reconstruction.

Why was the election of Maynard Jackson of Atlanta, GA, in 1973 such an important event?

It was the first time that an African American had been elected mayor of a major Southern City.

Maynard Jackson was the first African American to be elected mayor of Atlanta, Georgia and the first to serve as chief executive of any major southern city. This was a history-making event.

Maynard Jackson

- Ran an optimistic campaign for Atlanta mayor.
- Ran the first successful mayoral campaign in the urban South.
- Controversy arose immediately following his election. This was due to the fact that he fired the police chief, who was an antagonist in the African American community. Jackson brought in an African American from Massachusetts as the replacement. This caused a great deal of tension and a change in the power structure.

Who is Andrew Young and why has he been such an important leader since the 1970's?

He succeeded Maynard Jackson as mayor of Atlanta. In 1973, he became the first African American elected to Congress from Georgia since Reconstruction from the South. He also co-chaired the Atlanta Committee for the 1996 Olympic Games.

Zaid Shakur was assassinated, Assata Shakur wounded and imprisoned and Sundiata Acoli imprisoned in a shootout on the New Jersey Turnpike in 1973. Bobby Seale of the BPP in Oakland, California ran for mayor.

From the National Black Political Convention came the Black Political Agenda and the National Black Political Assembly.

- There was concern for the accountability of African American politicians to the African American community.
- Black elected officials were supposed to ally with the Black Political Agenda. (10,000 attend).
- The Black Caucus strayed from the National Black Political Assembly.

SOBU Becomes YOBU (Youth Organization of Black Unity)
National Committee to Defend Black Political Prisoners formed.

1974

- Demise of ALSC/Split in movement between nationalist, and Marxists.

-Split in National Black Political Assembly

1975

- Circulation of Message of the Movement (BLA) local struggles pick up.
- National Black Political Assembly convened
- Demise of Black Workers Congress.

Elijah Muhammad died, Nation of Islam transformed to Sunni (Orthodox) muslim under the leadership of Wallace Muhammad, son of Elijah Muhammad. The Black Panther Party closed its doors.

1976 National Black Students Association (NBSA) formed

The African National Reparation Organization was founded under the leadership of Omah Yeshitela in St. Petersburg, Florida. African People's Party supported the right of protestors of the National Bicentennial to have an Anti-Bicentennial march, July 4th to protest the founding of the racist republic.

July 4:

- National Anti-Bicentennial – Philadelphia, PA
- APP Organized community support
- Formation of the United League in Mississippi
- Shootouts between United league and KKK.
- Shirley Chisolm ran for President of the United States.

1977

- National Dessie X. Woods Mass Demonstration in Atlanta, Georgia led by the African People's Socialist Party.

1978

- Shootouts between United League and KKK and mass support demonstration in Tupelo, Mississippi. Wilmington Ten – NBSA – Washington, D. C

1979

In 1979, Frank Rizzo, racist mayor of Philadelphia attempted to propose a change of the City Charter which would allow him to run for another term as an incumbent. The human rights and progressive sectors were both alarmed and outraged. Philadelphia chapter of the African People's Party (APP) played a leading role in the citizens coalition to say NO! to the charter change. Cadres went door to door, project to project and set up tables on street corners getting signatures against the charter change. Rizzo's racist faction of the police would turn over tables and generally intimidate cadres particularly if they were women.

A march was organized to come down Broad Street to protest in front of City Hall. The coalition mobilized 4,000 to march to stop the charter change. The proposal for the charter change was defeated on the ballot and Rizzo had to step down. He attempted to run again after Green's administration but ran again in the primary against Wilson Goode.

- National Black Human Rights Coalition (NBHRC) formed a demonstration at the United Nations (5,000 strong).
- Assata Shakur liberated from prison

The Situation in Greensboro, North Carolina

On November 3, 1979, the Ku Klux Klan attacked a peaceful demonstration of some 350 people in Greensboro, North Carolina killing five members of the Communist Workers Party. The shooting of Jim Waller, Ceasar Cause, Sandy Smith, Mike Bathans and Bill Sampson, all members of CWP, was one of the most blatant assaults by racists since the 1960's. The KKK, Nazi Party and other right wing groups were re-emerging in a period of economic depression. The 1970's have witnessed numerous racist attacks by these groups: New Orleans, Birmingham, Boston, Tupelo, Mississippi and New York City are only a few examples. White racist terror was carrying out a planned and organized offensive and boldly challenging African American, Third World and progressive people. They only do so because African American people are divided and as of present, have not expressed their willingness to mass to fight for national liberation.

The U. S. imperialist state through its covert secret police apparatus, the CIA, FBI and Army Intelligence, help train and recruit for the right wing racist groups. As late as 1974, U. S. government reports estimated that 1/5 of the entire membership of the KKK in the 1960's were FBI informants but yet the FBI has seemed to be impotent when it comes to stopping racist attacks by the KKK; when it has been more than vigilant in destroying African American, third world and progressive organizations.

What do the blatant murders in Greensboro, North Carolina represent? The right wing racist group (KKK, NAZI PARTY, MINUTEMEN, etc.) are the illegal arm of the U.S. capitalist state and function as a counter revolutionary vanguard. In times of economic crisis, the U. S. imperialist monopoly capitalist state uses the right wing, racist groups to intimidate, terrorize and crush the Black Liberation, Third World and Progressive movements in this country. This is done in order to keep revolution and national liberation from occurring within the borders of the U. S.

This is the political and economic basis for the resurgence of the right wing groups in the present period. These groups serve to stir up the racist tendency within the white working class in order to weaken it and divide it from African American and other Third World workers. So we must view the assassinations, which occurred in Greensboro in a very broad context. But at the same time, we must analyze the weakness and incorrectness of the organizing by the CWP in order to avoid future events such as this and not repeat the same mistakes of the past.

Tacitly speaking, one of the main weaknesses of the organizing efforts by the organizers of the Greensboro demonstration was the lack of armed security for the demonstration and the lack of intelligence on the activities of the enemy.

We must remember that anytime we organize against the enemy; the enemy sees us as a threat, which means we must be prepared for the most vicious attack conceivable. In this sense, the CWP was guilty of bourgeois-romanticism and left wing adventurism.

When doing anti-Klan work, particularly in the National Territory (The South) any group must take into consideration that the KKK is a para-military organization that has a history of violence against the Black Liberation Movement and Third World people in particular, and Progressive forces. While the KKK may not represent the majority of white workers they have a traditionally rooted base among a segment of white workers. Instead of repeating the same mistakes of the 1960's of bringing in white petty bourgeois intellectuals and non-scientific, romantic African American activists into the African American community selling "wolf tickets" to the state, white radicals must go into the white community to organize against the Klan and Black radicals must fuse themselves with the masses of Black people. The CWP was romantic for declaring themselves as the Vanguard (military) while not having a base of support among the masses, and not making adequate preparations, and for also expecting the state apparatus, (i.e., local, state, federal police) to protect them from the Klan and in doing so endangered the lives of the Black community. At a time when the state is in decline (crisis) it fosters fascism as an emerging social movement among the white masses while it's preparing to create a legal fascist regime. The CWP's challenge of the Klan to a showdown and daring the Klan to appear at an anti-klan rally was definitely an adventurist act in all terms of the word – UNSCIENTIFIC.

The racist attack on the Greensboro demonstration while it militarily was an attack against anti-imperialist forces politically it was an attack against the Black Liberation Movement and Black people in general. The only way that the racist forces can be defeated is by building a base among the masses, building a unified and vigilant scientific movement.

The Miami Rebellion occurred in November of 1979. On November 5, 1979, there was a national march at the United Nations; Black Solidarity Day of 6,000 demonstrators led by the National Black Human Rights Coalition

-Assata Shakur (Jo Anne Chesimard) was liberated from prison and escaped to Cuba and received political asylum.

-Expulsion of Andrew Young as U. N. Ambassador because he met with the P.L.O.

1980

National Black United Front (NBUF) formed

Formation of National Black Independent Political Party (NBIPP)

Delegates of the National Black Political Assembly's August 21-24 convention called for the immediate formation of an independent political party.

Convention held in Philadelphia

Foreground for running African American Presidential candidates

During the year 1980 there had been an upsurge in the Southern struggle. This upsurge was breaking in 1978 when the United League fought the KKK in Tougaloo, Mississippi.

The struggle in Wrightsville, Georgia reached an initial high point in the April 1980 when the Johnson County Justice League began demonstrations against racist Sheriff Ahway.

SCLC led these demonstrations with the same slogans used in the 1960's. Activists from various organizations particularly the Coalition for Black Unity, which was an Atlanta, Georgia affiliate of the National Black United Front, joined the Wrightsville demonstrations and introduced new slogans from late the 70's which seemed to change the character of the demonstrations when the masses adopted the slogans as their own.

During this period, the African American community was attacked by racists firing shots in the African American neighborhood and blinding a 9 year old child while she was having breakfast in her home. The African American community responded by firing back at the racists and setting up barricades in the streets. SCLC came in and told the people to take the barricades down. The people at first had faith in SCLC and took them down.

The League of Revolutionary Struggle became very active in the Wrightsville struggle and began to lead a struggle against the SCLC leadership.

Through the Coalition for Black Unity in Atlanta and the National Black United Front, a national mass mobilization of five hundred marched to protest the racism of the KKK in Wrightsville.

1981

- The African People's Party became defunct
- Andrew Young was elected the second African American Mayor of Atlanta, Georgia
- Black Workers for Justice (BWJ) formed in Rocky Mount, North Carolina.
- Mumia Abu Jamal was shot and charged with the murder of a policeman in Philadelphia

The FBI-Government Plan to Destroy the Black Nation

The African American liberation movement was under attack. On Friday, October 16, 1981 in the San Francisco Bay Area members of the Special Services Unit (SSU) a police and intelligence unit of the California Department of corrections along with the Berkeley and Oakland police, carried out SWAT-style raids against four homes of members of a group called the Black August Organizing Committee.

The next day in the early morning of October 17th, 150 Los Angeles police raided over 20 separate residences (all except one were African American). Later that day the local press quoted police saying those arrested were connected with the Black Guerrilla Family or the Black Liberation Army or were "followers of George Jackson".

Three days later (October 20th) an alleged attempted armed robbery of a Brinks truck in Manuet, N.Y. a small town 20 miles north of New York City took place. A Brinks armored-car guard was killed.

At a roadblock in Nyack two policemen were shot and killed, said the police.

Four people were arrested on October 20th: Samuel Brown, a Black man with no radical connection whatever. Judith Clarke, Kathy Boudin and David Gilbert.

Kathy Boudin and David Gilbert were identified by police, as having been members of the Weather Underground. All four were beaten, held without bail and placed in solitary confinement. Sam Brown was beaten so badly he suffered amnesia and didn't remember who he was; he was denied medical care.

Whatever happened at Nyack was used to unleash an unprecedented reign of terror against the Black Liberation Movement and the entire progressive movement in the U. S. from analyzing the news media one would conclude that the FBI had some of the individuals involved under surveillance for some time before unleashing their reign of terror.

Their press coordinated this terror with headline hysteria. Their front pages screamed: Weather Underground, Black Panther, Black Liberation army hook up.

The hunt was on.

"Assata Shakur had been there, very, "bad nigger" in the country had been there. The FBI was in the saddle.

This was the FBI that harassed Dr. King and probably assassinated him in Memphis, Tenn. in 1968. The FBI which teamed with police departments to murder over 30 members of the Black Panther Party which colluded with KKK and the Nazi Party to attack African Americans.

On Friday, October 23rd, N.Y. police allegedly recognizing a license plate that had been on another car Wednesday outside a suspected hideout of an allegedly robbery gang in Mount Vernon, N.Y., gave chase to that car and reportedly shot it out with two brothers.

What went down was that detective Irwin Jacobson of the New York Police Department shot African American, Mtayari Shabaka Sundiata (slave name: Sam Smith) in the head while he lay defenseless on the street.

African American freedom fighter Sekou Odinga (slave name: Nathaniel Burns) was taken prisoner. He was tortured so badly that he was admitted to Kings County Hospital in New York. He had been beaten and burned and a gun had been held to his head. The trigger was pulled when he would not give answers to their questions and his head was held in a flushing toilet.

America was fast becoming more and more a police state for 40 million New Africans. The United States government is guilty of the crimes of genocide against our oppressed African American community. Sekou, a long time Black liberation fighter in 1969; the U.S. government framed him and 20 others (Panther 21) on phony charges. Now they tried to kill him.

On the same night ex-Weather Underground people, Jeffrey C. Jones and Eleanor Stein Raskin were arrested in their apartment in the Bronx. Though the couple had previously tried to arrange a plea bargaining settlement with the FBI behind previous 1979 so called bomb-making charges. The FBI vamped on them painting a media picture of a Weather Underground/Black Panther/Black Liberation Army conspiracy.

On October 27, 1981 at 6:00 a.m. approximately 200 agents of the United States (political police) FBI armed with four tanks three helicopters automatic weapons, rifles, pistols, SWAT teams surrounded the residence of the Provisional Government of the Republic of New Africa (RNA) in Gorman, Mississippi terrorizing two women, twelve children and a fifty-eight year old grandfather of five children involved. Even the children were handcuffed. All but the younger children were arrested. All were later released except Fulani Sunni Ali (slave name: Cynthia Priscilla Boston), chairwoman of the People's Center Council (PCC) of the Provisional Government of the Republic of New Africa (RNA). Fulani is a mother of five children, a medical technician and an internationally known vocalist. Fulani Sunni Ali was kept in FBI captivity pending a half million dollars in ransom and charged with conspiracy to robbery and accessory to murder. The key in all this is the FBI admitted they had Sister Fulani's house under surveillance for six months.

Immediately, the political police (FBI) released to the press that the RNA was a terrorist organization. The RNA is a public provisional government that is seeking through a United Nations supervised plebiscite to secure the territory in the Southeast Black belt of what is presently America to become an independent New African Nation.

So we have to conclude any such remarks by any agency of the United States Government that has not granted New Africans justice in 206 years of its existence, is both terroristic, illegal and blatantly racist.

Eva Rosahn, who had been active in the struggle to get the U.S. government to stop supporting and sponsoring the apartheid government of the Union of South Africa was picked up on the same day for allegedly lending her car in the so-called Brinks robbery. In New Jersey, FBI and police terrorized a African American cleaning lady, surrounding her and her family mistaking her for sister Asata Shakur.

The yellow journalism reporting created hysteria to include the Weather Underground, Black Panther Party, Black Liberation Army, and the RNA. All of these groups and possibly more had united to finance a new alliance. "The Feds had traced fingerprints (which can also be painted) on contacts for rented vans in empty apartments. Others were named that were fugitives of the police state. One was Blia Sunni Ali. (slave name: William Johnson) the husband of Fulani Sunni Ali and Donald Weer. Both accused of being BLA members.

Kenneth Walton assistant director of the New York office of the FBI and director of a joint Federal- New York city Terrorist Task Force promised that the investigation would be a major inquiry (witch hunt) of radical groups. The FBI tried to cover up its obvious fascist frame-up is trying to disrupt and de-legitimize the African liberation movement in indicating liberation fighters (under the Racketeering influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act of 1970 RICO).

Under the act if any of 32 different types of crimes such as robbery murder or extortion is committed by an organization twice within a 10 year period the organization could be considered a criminal conspiracy and all its members subject to prison terms of up to 20 years even if they themselves had done nothing.

On November 5, 1981 after the prosecuting attorney had tried to deny Attorney Chokkwe

Lummumba Midwest Vice-President of the RNA from representing and visiting Fulani Sunni Ali then held in N.Y. jail, the conspiracy charge was dismissed against Fulani because a “reliable witness” which she had always said had placed her in New Orleans when she was supposedly seen in Mount Vernon, N.Y. Fulani had brought her van into an auto shop in New Orleans for repairs on October 21st the day she was supposed to be in Mount Vernon, N.Y. On the same day Fulani was let out of jail, 17 members of the New World of Islam were found guilty of conspiracy and robbery in Newark, N.J. under the same RICO act. The basis of the 17 convictions was based on the government informants who claimed they were former members of the new world of Islam.

At The Beginning Of A Decade

Rethinking African American Politics

As we enter a new and very crucial decade people-oriented social scientists must reexamine the meaning of the term “Black Politics”. Is African American Politics limited to the conventional political strategies, such as, the running of candidates for political offices within the superstructure of the state? Or does African American politics imply non-conventional political strategies, tactics and objectives, such as protests against the superstructure of the state, including revolutionary struggle? We will examine in this paper the possibility of incorporating the possibility of incorporating both into a paradigm for African American political struggle in the 1980s.

African American Middle Class Sell-Out

The last fifteen years of African American political history have been characterized, in large part, by the domination of the agenda by the accommodationist and integrationist African American petty bourgeoisie. Their overall goal has been to assimilate themselves into the present Democratic and Republican political parties and to beg for a few privileges from the white ruling elite. Has this been successful? Have the basic life conditions of the vast majority of the African American masses been favorably affected by this policy of non-confrontation and accommodation? The answer is a clear and definite "No". The newspapers daily carry articles describing the ravages of inflation, unemployment and underemployment on our communities across America. The closing down of plants; the movement of business to suburban or rural locations; the cutbacks in welfare, food stamps, social security, health and unemployment benefits, all bear testimony to the fact that the majority of Africa America people are in the same place we have always been. The accommodationists cannot argue that if they had not been actively working with those who control our lives, conditions for African American might be worse. This is an academic question. What the accommodationists can not do now and will not be able to do the future is beg the state for the means for making African American people's life conditions equal to those of the white ruling class. African American people can never achieve equality under a capitalist, colonial, neo-colonial and imperialist system. The accommodationists will not attack or even call for an altering of the state policies and the economy that daily robs us of our human rights.

African American politics, if it is to be representative of the interests of the majority of African American people, must change the basic relationship of African American people to the state (superstructure) and the economy (base). It must initiate fundamental, sweeping

and revolutionary institutional changes that serve the needs of 30 million African American people. The African American middle class gained political offices as a result of the sacrifices of millions of people who struggled against the racist system through the civil rights and Black Power movements, and the urban rebellions. Their political ascendancy did not guarantee that the gains of the movement would be maintained and strengthened. Rather, the individual and fleeting "success" of a handful of African American candidates has meant little to the "business as usual policies of the state and the corporations that rule.

The African American politicians overwhelmingly have a middle class orientation that differs little from that of white politicians. In essence, conventional African American politics has been capitalist politics in Black face. Given the present non-confrontationist approach towards this racist political system we must ask ourselves: "What would African American politics mean if we had full representation in the political system?"

According to VEP (Voter Education Project), 730 African American candidates ran for public office in the South in 1976. With the 420 victories, African American candidates were successful in over half of their attempts to win federal, state, county and municipal elections throughout the eleven Southern states.

The Joint Center for Political Studies in Washington, D.C., reported 1,860 African Americans holding public office in the United States in 1971; in 1972, 2,264; in 1973, 2,621; in 1974, 2,991; in 1975, 3,503; and 1976, 3,979. This national figure represents seven tenths of one per cent of the total number of elected officials. For instance, 160 Southern cities, which are majority African American, still had white mayors.

If African American people achieved 10% of electoral political power in the U.S., there would be an estimated 50, 576 African American elected officials in America. But we must ask ourselves in rethinking African American politics in the 1980's, "Would 50,576 African American elected officials, having the same capitalist, imperialist politics as the U.S. imperialist system or belonging to either the Democratic or Republican Parties, structurally alter the conditions of African American people in the United States?"

In the same context, we must address ourselves to the African American electorate.

Brother Malcolm X in 1964 said in his "Ballot or Bullet" speech, that African American people would not advance far until they became politically reeducated and politically mature. He stressed how the Democratic Party was, in actuality, a Dixiecratic party. But in 1976, 40% of African American voters cast their ballot for a Democratic candidate, Jimmy Carter.

Serious Alternatives Necessary

VEP research estimates that only half of the over seven million African Americans of voting age are registered and of that number, approximately 60 to 65% actually voted in the national election in 1976. This means that only 36 per cent, or one of very three African Americans of voting age in the South actually voted.

African American political scientists must address the question "Why are African American people not using the vote?" as things are presently constituted.

Strategy, Tactics, Tasks

What is our task for the coming decade? The next stage of our protracted (long) national democratic revolution will be a struggle for human rights (national democratic rights) and struggles for people's representation within the capitalist state. There are 102 counties in the South in which African Americans are 70% to 80% in the majority. If the United States were a real democracy, and not a bourgeois political system, African American people would govern and control the goods and services of these 102 counties. There are also 12 million African American people in the South who represent 20% of the total Southern population.

Though we know democracy (people's power) can't work under the capitalist system, African American progressives should form people's coalitions in an attempt to build "independent political third parties" in the process of struggling for regional Black power.

"Do African American people have a real political alternative?" and, "what is necessary to create a real alternative?"

For African American politics to serve the political interests of African American people, and African American liberation, it cannot also serve the cause of neo-colonialism. The African American electorate and politicians must break from the racist capitalist system. In the 1980's, we must encourage the politics of independence, that is, a politics that is anti-racist, anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist. To be meaningful to the 12 million African American workers and the 1.5 million African American unemployed, African American politics must become the total antithesis of the present American political system.

To become institutionally viable African American politics must be about organizing an anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist oriented African American political organization, which challenges the system.

African American people must develop a strategy to get as much "power" (clout) within the system prior to a full socialist revolution. This means we struggle for power where there is a greater chance for success and develop a power base from which a greater upsurge for liberation can be launched. Thousands and millions of African Americans should be encouraged to migrate south, to struggle for African American state power and the creation of the third Reconstruction.

The struggle in the 1980's must return to the tactics of Dr. Martin Luther King and Malcolm X: mass action that moves back to the streets. Along with this action, we must take the struggle into the factories using African American Worker's Power, stopping production when the demands of the movement aren't met. Coupled with this we must form people's parties or coalitions to break the backs of the racist capitalist democratic and republican parties in the South.

Role of the Party, United Front

If African American progressive organizers are successful in forming an African American people's political parties, will the state yield power? History teaches us that the US imperialist state does not "give up" power and will not "grant" us freedom. An oppressor cannot be a liberator. We must understand that our struggle will be long and protracted, it will go through many stages, have setbacks and victories, before we ultimately win. The period of electoral politics that lies ahead of us in the 1980s, is a stage in our revolutionary struggle. It is an illusion of the state that bourgeois electoral politics truly represents the interests of the people. The propaganda of the state is consistent and powerful. Many of our people, although skeptical about the monopoly capitalist political system, see it as the only vehicle they have to get a few crumbs from its bountiful table. The lie within the propaganda of the "democracy" of the US state must finally be exposed and repudiated. The struggle of the 1980's for people's representation within the capitalist state is a necessary part of the destruction of the mythology of the state, and ultimately of the state.

1983, the second commemorative March on Washington occurred.

November 2, 1983, a Federal Holiday to honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was signed into Law.

Why was 1983 an advancement for African American electoral politics?

Because African American mayors were elected in both Chicago and Philadelphia, Harold Washington in Chicago and Wilson Goode in Philadelphia.

Why were the years of the Harold Washington campaigns and mayoral-ship of Chicago so important?

Harold Washington's election as mayor of Chicago heralded the end of a longstanding, well-oiled political machine in Chicago. He opened up the purchasing process in goods and services to women and minorities and increased diversity in hiring practices and ended city patronage. These were all important steps for the inclusion of African Americans in the Chicago political process.

With the successful mayoral campaigns of Harold Washington, African American voters came out to support the candidate. This success led to the increase voter registration and voter turn out for other African American political candidates, such as Jesse Jackson.

The New Federalism of Ronald Reagan and George Bush

The election of Ronald Reagan in 1980 signified the end of an era in economic policy that had begun almost fifty years earlier. The old order, the Rooseveltian order, did not die in its prime. It had, in fact been losing ground, for almost fifteen years. But the coming of Ronald Reagan meant a decisive and total change.

In 1980, most white Americans had become weary of experimenting with the social politics

of the 1960's.

The failure of the Carter years to make a social statement firmly in favor of African Americans opened the way for the ultra right to attack affirmative action, which was done with the Bakke vs. US Supreme Court case in 1978. The ultra right blamed Affirmative Action as the reason for the loss of much of "white skinned privilege" jobs among white Americans. The overseas flight of multi national corporations and runaway shops to the sun-belt region of the south, were reasons why many of the white working class were losing their jobs. Many became disillusioned and turned their anger the wrong way blaming African-Americans.

Watergate, the Vietnam disaster, and six years of presidential politics by a man (Nixon) Hunter Thompson once said "was so crooked he had to screw his pants on in the morning," were followed by the innocuous and dry Gerald Ford. Jimmy Carter, a genuinely brilliant humanitarian, followed Ford. These developments, along with the obvious failure of Lyndon Johnson's Great Society programs, led to voter apathy; causing one of the farthest "swings right" in American political history. Political, religious, and fiscal conservatives looked for a leader that would place their ideologies in the oval office, and their icon was the former California governor, Ronald Reagan. Reagan was a disciple of "New Federalism," or a move to remove most power away from the federal government and place it back in the hands of the states. He also believed in draconian budget cuts for most federal programs, except defense, and made it clear no one would be spared from the ax, except business. Reagan saw capitalism as an opportunity to restore economic health back to a stagnated U.S. economy. By lowering incentives to invest, Reagan proposed corporate wealth would "trickle down" in the form of new jobs and increased spending.

The New Federalism represented a disbursement of government functions away from federal levels to smaller state and local levels. This was a part of Reaganomics in the mid 1980's. The administrations of Presidents Ronald Reagan and George Bush covered twelve years from 1980 to 1992. It was during the Reagan administration which the New Federalism/Reaganomics began. Reagan and Bush's political pasts had great effects on their policies during their Presidential administration.

Starting in 1969 to 1973 the reign of Richard Nixon will be remembered as one of benign neglect. The reorganization of practices created racist changes whose purposes was to reverse the gains won under the Johnson Administration.

During the administration of President Jimmy Carter, an attempt was made to restore and provide programs that assisted the African American family. Double-digit inflation and increasing numbers of unemployed people, of all races, characterized the 1970s. While the atmosphere in congress continued to move toward the right there was an increasing awareness of those left behind. Many programs that began with the Kennedy-Johnson years continued. In the 1970's, the government at this time had a role that primarily involved the redistribution of income. Some people were being taxed so that others could receive benefits.

As the 70's continued, the slowing of productivity in the country was evident. President

Reagan was elected in 1980 due to the concern of the public at large.⁸⁶¹ People feared that the current domestic spending was beyond control. Many felt the large number of social programs for the poor would continue to drain the country.

Dissatisfaction with the performance of the economy led to a turn of economic policy in a conservative, negative direction. At the same time dissatisfaction with other aspects of the American condition was rising and this pointed to a conservative turn in other non-economic aspects of policy. There was dissatisfaction by the growing military power of the Soviet Union, by the futility of the American response to the invasion of Afghanistan, and most of all, by the humiliation of the year long holding of American hostages in Iran. The resulting rise of nationalist support for a large military buildup and demand for a more assertive posture in world affairs were the acceptance of a position that had, in the previous decade but not always, been a conservative position.

A different strand of conservatism was raised to prominence, if not dominance, by the Reagan victory related to social or private life in America.⁸⁶²

Ronald Reagan's political convictions began in 1946, at the end of World War II. Reagan took a staunch position during a strike of the Conference of Studio Unions (CSU). Mr. Reagan was a very popular movie actor at this time. He felt very strongly that the unions were trying to gain economic control of the motion picture business to support Communist activities as well as the films themselves for propaganda. Movies were the main entertainment of the days before television. This anti-communistic attitude followed him through his political career.

Reagan's political life began with his involvement with active roles in the Hollywood Independent Citizens Committee of Arts, Science & Professions (HICCASP). He served as an FBI informant. He hardened his views and weighed further into the anti-Communist drive. Reagan told the FBI he was on a secret committee of producers and actors "the purpose of which allegedly is to 'purge' the motion-picture industry of Communist Party members."⁸⁶³

Reagan became a conservative candidate in 1966. Millionaire Republicans urged him to run for governor of California because they felt he was a conservative racist leader, that had credibility and a real influence over people. Although he never held any public office, Reagan won with a landslide victory of nearly a million votes. Governor Brown's administration left the State of California nearly broke. Vowing not to raise taxes, Governor Reagan cut taxes 10%- across the board. This action impacted the hardest on the most needy programs.

When Governor Reagan put William Clark and Edwin Meese in post-positions, a more conservative team was created. Reagan and his team managed to win the biggest tax increase in California's history. Reagan relied heavily on the political team, especially Clark & Meese, who later followed him to the White House.

⁸⁶¹ Maurice A. St. Pierre, "Reagonomics and Its Implications for African American Family Life", Journal of Black Studies, Volume 21, Number 3/March 1991 p. 325

⁸⁶² Ibid., p. 328

⁸⁶³ Op. Cit. (St Pierre) p. 330

In 1970, Reagan charged that welfare was causing the government to cut back on other things that people needed "to feed this welfare monster". A reform bill his staff worked out with the legislature limited the eligibility for public assistance, but increased the amount of money paid to welfare recipients.⁸⁶⁴ These policy changes made it harder for African American minorities to get 'improved' welfare system by raising requirements for eligibility beyond their means, in short, more money for less people. By the time Reagan left office, he was spending more on education by cutting extracurricular activities.

Prior to his campaign, there were many factors that assisted Reagan to emerge as the winner. During the face-to-face television debates, Reagan was able to seal his image with the public. Throughout the late 70's, he remained in view of the public by giving radio broadcasts, writing in the newspapers and public appearances.⁸⁶⁵

The public often saw President Carter in less than memorable situations. People only saw Reagan in scenes that inspired only. The use of television was very much a factor in the campaign and Reagan presidency. As a trained and polished actor and politician, Reagan and his staff utilized television to minimize low points and highlight the higher points in his presidency.

Jimmy Carter was hurt most during the campaign as Reagan repeatedly pointed out to the voters how situations could be bettered by his plan. Under the Carter administration they were no better off than they were four years earlier, Reagan said. Reagan received 50.7 percent of the vote and was elected the 40th president of the U.S. in 1980.

Reagan immediately started with a national renewal program. To diminish the dependence on government programs and increase confidence using personal incentives addressing the nation, Reagan promised to reduce the current deficits and balance the budget by 1984. He wanted to accomplish this by reducing the size of government spending. The President promised an "ERA of national renewal".

Arranged by the outgoing Jimmy Carter, Iran freed the hostages after 444 days of captivity. This became a new Reagan symbol. Iran was afraid of Reagan and what he said he would do as president. Reagan was widely accepted as a extreme racist conservative with a plan for fiscal cutbacks. These plans would later be referred to as "Reaganomics".

The new order had many terms to describe their insidious ways of managing economic affairs. This was part of the set-up that fed into the division of the American people. The new order also caused chaos in the American government, which in turn separated the people by economical status, by religion, and by race.

Plant closings, though they affected everyone, affected African Americans critically. Major plants, those hiring more than a 100 employees, foreclosed in the North many shifting to the Southwest, oversees or relocating in suburban areas where African Americans found employment difficult because of their inaccessibility to transportation.⁸⁶⁶

⁸⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 14

⁸⁶⁵ Op. Cit. (Matthews & Kymlicka) p. 16

⁸⁶⁶ Barry Bluestone, Bennett Harrison The Deindustrialization of America: Plant Closings, Community Abandonment and the Dismantling of Basic Industry [New York: Basic Books, New Publications, 1982] pp. 14 & 192

Plant closings and relocations were an issue when the shift is from one region of the country to another. They also affect African American youth when there were local shifts from urban to suburban areas. If we take the Chicago greater metropolitan area as a case to point, between 1966 and 1976, the city proper had a net 16 percent decrease of manufacturing firms, while the suburbs experienced a 41 percent growth. This translates directly into African American unemployment. In one study of the effects of a firm's relocation in Illinois, African American unemployment increased by 25 percent.⁸⁶⁷

The Reagan package of conservative economic ideas, that he came into office with did not solve the problems of the American people. The Reagan package was an approach with a negative or racist attitude to policies associated with earlier economic programs.

Reagan's policy, less taxes for the rich and big business, stimulated a false boom in the economy by giving incentives to big corporate enterprises at the expense of the public. Reagan's economics was the control of the capitalist state to extort maximum profit from the working class through state regulation.

The "Reagan counter-Revolution" continued. A nationwide strike by 11,800 air traffic controllers was crushed and the strikers were fired from their jobs, by the President. This action was historically significant due to the fact that in the past the government had always been on the side of the labor unions. Also during this time, some of the largest loss of life in peacetime, due to numerous aircraft disasters which was connected to the air-controllers strike and non-union controllers was taking place. The Reagan government stayed in alliance with big businesses.

President Reagan followed with more cuts across the board. Despite the financial cuts, the deficit continued to grow. The role of the federal government is to manage the capitalist economy to the advantage of the U. S. capitalist ruling class.

Under Reagan government revenues increased, but private income after taxes decreased because of inflation. Government regulations proliferated.

How did Reaganomics effect the African American family life?

Since President Reagan was elected for the first time in 1980, his policies were disadvantageous to the dispossessed, in general, and to African Americans in particular.

Five months into President Reagan's administration, the economy went into a full recession that continued through most of 1982. Through the judicial branch of government, the President made appointments of conservative Justices that would continue during his term of decentralization, and for a while after his term was over. The significance of this action was directed toward the areas of affirmative action. From this point on addressing areas of past discrimination and sexism became extremely difficult, in not only the African-American communities, but other communities as well.⁸⁶⁸

⁸⁶⁷ Tory Duster, "Social Implications of the 'New' Black Underclass", *The Black Scholar* May/June 1988, p. 4

⁸⁶⁸ Thomas Byrne Edsall, *The New Politics of Inequality* [New York: W. W. Norton, 1985] p. 141

Also, under the Reagan administration, “The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) labored over schemes to evacuate the urban population of the United States. Lieutenant Colonel North, as the NSC liaison with FEMA, worked diligently on one portion of the plan: the suspension of the constitution and the imposition of martial law. This might also come about in conditions short of nuclear war, for it could be imposed during conditions of violent opposition to a foreign military operation”.⁸⁶⁹

Reaganomics was a program for weakening and subjugating the working class as a whole, but it impacted the working class unevenly affecting African Americans intensely. Under Reagan there was a deliberate plan to dismantle the gains won by the civil rights movement and to turn the clock back to the days of total white male supremacy. Strategists for the Reagan administration were fully aware of the effect the plan would be felt by minorities ...the administration calculated that if significant numbers of white workers could be relatively cushioned from the recession's immediate effects, they might be induced to support the very policies and programs designed to weaken the class as a whole.⁸⁷⁰

While trying to ruin the African American community the Reagan strategy to protect whites to a certain degree worked. Falling for their white skin privilege whites supported Reagan throughout his presidency.

The Reagan administration revived the Nixon-Thurmond southern strategy and brought into office an anti-civil rights attitude that was commonplace in the old South.⁸⁷¹

It stands to follow that Reagan very reluctantly signed civil rights statutes.

The climate in America continued to change. A gradual hardening of America toward the poor was taking place. As more of the social service programs were cut or eliminated, the African American community took the brunt of it in unemployment. As the quota system dissolved, job programs and hiring policy of big business were not as monitored by the federal government. Particularly during the 1980's, large companies found it more profitable to relocate outside of the United States. Again the jobless rates increased as industry moved away.⁸⁷²

For minorities and the poor, industry (the safety net) left poor and struggling communities in ruin. African Americans in particular, being the last to enter the labor force comprised many of the so-called unskilled/some skilled workers. The safety net in many communities was replaced by the "drug industry". Heavy drug use was now introduced by the Reagan administration.⁸⁷³ With this introduction came an increase in gang activity due to the big profits of the drug industry. A steady growth in the drug subculture continued as well as a growth in the permanent under class.

⁸⁶⁹ Leslie Cockburn, *Out of Control* [New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1987] p. 113.

⁸⁷⁰ The Line of March Editorial Board “Reaganism and the Post-Reagan Era”, *Line of March*, Number 20, Winter 87-88, p. 33

⁸⁷¹ Calvin C. Smith, “The Civil Rights Legacy of Ronald Reagan” *The Western Journal of Black Studies*, Volume 14, Number 2, Summer 1990 p. 104

⁸⁷² Robert Lekachman, *Greed Is Not Enough: Reaganomics* [New York: Pantheon Books, 1982] p. 15

⁸⁷³ Op. Cit (Cockborn) pp. 152-188

Another, more troubling perception was created by the media. African-American males were seen as dangerous. This perception continues even today. From this point on, a higher incidence of racist acts were perpetuated against African American people.

The music of the 1980's "rap", made a transition to a more counter-revolutionary flavor known as "gangsta rap". The music, the rhythm and the words were anti-social and anti African-American women which is very disturbing.

Reagan's Anti-Civil Rights Policy

Reagan's federalist views created many government policies that harmed the ability of the central government to assist in states' matters. Reagan saw all federal economic, judicial, and regulatory statutes as intervention; he ignored many of the reasons these policies were put into place. There has never been debate that the constitution was written to favor the states' ability to govern themselves. As Americans, however, there have always been human rights issues that required federal action.

President Reagan saw much of the legislation in place for civil rights protection unnecessary. Like many federalists, he viewed legislation for continued support of government codes aimed at racial equality as "intrusive." Many of Reagan's actions undertaken during his presidency set back many of the gains made during the 1950's and 1960's.

Reagan's actions on civil rights were usually negative. He disapproved of the Voting Rights act of 1981; he only signed it because Congress made it quite clear that any veto would be defeated. The law was important because it prohibited redistricting of voting districts approved in the original law. The President disapproved of federal busing law enforcement, prosecution of certain fair housing violations, and protection of abortion clinics after a rash of bombings. Reagan also had substantial cuts made in HUD's budget; this made the agency unable to create programs and enforce statutes that were designed to raise housing standards for minorities. Equal opportunity for employment suffered many serious blows during the Reagan presidency. Clarence Thomas, the EEO director, shared the Presidential viewpoint that corporations should not be forced to accept federal standards that forced compliance to hire minority and female workers. All of these standards were lumped together under "quota"; Reagan publicly denounced any system like this as unfair. Even though the Supreme Court, complete with Reagan appointees, disagreed in United States

vs. Paradise.⁸⁷⁴

Federalism never considers that some people, without regulation, take advantage of personal liberty to inhibit the freedom of the less fortunate. Ronald Reagan's "hands off" civil rights policies created a civil rights vacuum, where some genuine progress towards including everyone in the benefits of the U.S. unique system was damaged. Sometimes Reagan used the newly strengthened executive branch to weaken the power of the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court must never be overshadowed in efforts to bring justice to citizens. The Court is the most powerful tool people have for equality, and they must always be able to exercise the powers they possess for the system to work properly. The weakening of the Supreme Court was Ronald Reagan's greatest civil rights failure, and his action affects us still.⁸⁷⁵

Effect on Minorities and Women

The Reagan economic policies, originally seen by white middle class as the savior from liberalism, were soon exposed as disastrous. The damage was done. A rapidly shrinking job market where white men "took care of each other" quickly dissolved the gains in economic freedom, by minorities and women. This was partially done by making sure the first cuts were minority and female workers. Minority workers were further displaced, by the continued closing of the American heavy industrial tradition. Workers returned to inner city neighborhoods to find their safety nets cut by the Reagan budget ax. Towns like Gary, Indiana became genuinely dangerous when the realities of long-term unemployment made people desperate. Many of Reagan's economic policies in the long run created much of the racial polarization that we see in today's cities.

It was in 1984 that the Reagan white house began its legal blundering. Many of these second term actions set back the cause of civil rights in America. Unbelievably, Edwin Meese was appointed Attorney General in 1984.

A poor constitutional scholar, a punishment oriented law enforcement agent, an opponent of civil rights programs, and an avid supporter of unconstitutional conservative causes; Meese saw nothing wrong with Christian prayer in school, jailing mass demonstrators, banning abortion, and limiting the freedom of the press.⁸⁷⁶

Civil rights activists were livid when they saw Reagan's judiciary advisors appoint people like Jefferson to Federal court seats. They were even angrier when, in 1987, Reagan tried to get Judges Robert Bork and Douglas Ginsberg appointed to the Supreme Court. Bork was a genuine conservative punishment freak with a mean anti-civil rights stance; he opposed the Voting Rights act, abortion, and other issues. Ginsberg could not answer for some early decisions, and decided against continuing his nomination.⁸⁷⁷ It is an interesting footnote to all of this that Ed Meese turned out to be engaged in all sorts of shady and criminal financial dealings.⁸⁷⁸

⁸⁷⁴ Ibid, (Edel) pp. 94-95

⁸⁷⁵ Ibid., (Shull) pp. 197-198

⁸⁷⁶ Op. Cit (Edel) p. 109

⁸⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 113

⁸⁷⁸ Op. Cit. (Shull) p. 197

Another Education President

Ronald Reagan's federalist ideology continued with his efforts to trim the federal education budget. He considered any form of federal funding federal control, and he insisted that local and state school boards start finding solutions to the "education deficit".

Budget cuts in the education system punished the poorest schools. Private and parochial schools became the option wealthier parents used to avoid the declining quality. Many minority and single parent households were not able to send their children to private schools. This created an inequality between wealthier systems and systems without private or parent support. The quality of education for children that needed the most attention was damaged by these policies. Bias resulted from a policy designed to return independence to local educators.

George Bush from Texas became Ronald Reagan's Vice-Presidential running mate in the 1980 Presidential election.

George Bush was a Naval officer and a decorated hero in World War II. After the war he worked in his family's oil business in Texas. He later became president of Zapata Oil Company and ran it.

In 1967, he became a U.S. Congressman from Texas. During the 1960's, Bush "never became an active or enthusiastic supporter of African American and minority causes. Bush did come out in favor of equal rights. He voted for a law called the Fair Housing Act of 1968, which made it illegal for banks or individuals who were selling or renting housing to discriminate against minorities."⁸⁷⁹ There was much opposition in Texas to the Fair Housing Act.

In 1970 President Richard Nixon appointed Bush as a representative of the United States to the United Nations. In 1974, President Gerald Ford appointed Bush as ambassador to China. In 1975, President Ford appointed Bush to be the director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). In 1976, President Jimmy Carter replaced him and he was without a job.

In 1979, Bush declared his candidacy as a Presidential candidate. He had a tough competition, namely Ronald Reagan. Later Bush withdrew. In 1980, Reagan asked him to be his Vice-Presidential running mate. George Bush was the Vice-President under Ronald Reagan from 1980 to 1988. In 1988, George Bush ran for and was elected President.

Bush formed a drug task force to curb the drug traffic in the U.S. Bush put William Bennett in charge of his new drug policy plan. Bennett was also responsible for helping the President decide on new anti-drug measures, such as bills to be introduced in Congress or confrontations with countries when illegal rugs are produced."⁸⁸⁰ With Reaganomics many of the African American males who turned to the drug trade, were of focus now again

The targets of these new policies enhanced the prison-industrial complex.

⁸⁷⁹ Rebecca Stefoff, The 41st President of the United States: George H. W. Bush [Ada, Oklahoma: Garrett Educational Corp., 1990] p. 52

President George Bush wanted to be remembered as "the education President". "The poor quality of the American school system and the falling test scores of American students, meant that education is one of the country's biggest problems." Bush also pushed for more support for the Head Start Program for underprivileged pre-schoolers to get a head start on a good education. His education programs also helped low/no income adults to get into training programs and financial aid to finish or continue their educations.

The Next Education President

George Bush viewed education as one of the issues overlooked by Ronald Reagan. Bush increased support to traditionally colleges and by emphasizing the need for quality fundamental, not fundamentalist, education. Bush did not restore funds cut by the previous administration.

Minorities and women had just started, in the 1980's, to gain the networks and inroads needed to open up the doors of corporate management. Corporate profit harmed these groups significantly by giving them good reason to reduce operating staffs.

Bush's Anti Civil-Rights Legacy

President Bush did not implement economic or judicial changes that directly helped minorities or women. His civil rights record, however, shows somewhat of a lack of concern. The most demonstrative of this is his veto of the 1990 civil rights legislation. Bush called this a "quota bill" and refused to sign this or any other piece of legislation that contained percentage figures for minority and female hiring wages. Even though women's groups tried to make it a major issue, Bush never signed this legislation. After much opposition, he did sign the Civil Rights Act of 1991. There was also a battle with Congress in 1991 over the appointment of Clarence Thomas, he was chosen to take Thurgood Marshall's seat on the Supreme Court. After lengthy hearings and investigations into his personal conduct, Thomas was seated on the court. There has been a great deal of controversy surrounding Thomas, with many seeing him as an African-American comprador sell out.

President Bush ran for re-election in 1992, but lost to Bill Clinton from Arkansas.

Reagan throughout his political administrations both in California and the Nation, let his administrative team run the politics. It was his administrators who told him what to say and do as well as to make sure he always looked good. Reagan himself was a long time anti-Communist. He felt that spending for welfare programs where able-bodied people used the system to become unproductive citizens; in other words, he refused to recognize racism and class aggression in creating the poor. His ant-Communism also accounts for the major military build up, which eventually broke down the communistic state of the U.S.S.R.

President Bush carried on the policies of the Reagan administration.

The foundation was set for dismantling progressive American social policy, which still affects African Americans to the present time. A growing dissatisfaction among the

⁸⁸⁰ Op. Cit. (Steffoff) p. 104

American public continued. In particular, the communities, which are still being ignored are not being addressed by the government in relation to needs and concerns. The feeling of isolation is almost complete in the African American community.

Reagan-Bush politics and their impact

One must always look at the policies of political leaders as influences on the mood of a nation. Ronald Reagan and George Bush neo-racists began a new trend in treating domestic civil rights issues. They are the first Presidents since the turn of the century that viewed civil rights as the responsibility of local and state government. Their ideology ignored that many state political systems are still supported by large groups of racist voters. Reagan and Bush also made efforts at strengthening the power of the presidency; both Congress and the Supreme Court felt a shift in political influence towards the executive branch. Unfortunately, this branch did not see rights for minorities and women as an issue that had been solved with the original major civil rights legislation. Unfortunately, a long history of inequality in dealing with minority and female citizens has left us in a situation where someone must often compensate for earlier policies. Reagan and Bush not only had policies of government noninvolvement, they often passed policy that was biased towards already established economic, political, and societal groups. If groups that wanted the status quo maintained, Reagan and Bush mandated this agenda. Their influence caused a major negative neo-covert racist shift in the advances the U. S. had made previously. Their dilution of the power of the Supreme Court assured that racist federalist ideology be enforced. Obviously, the meaner attitude, America adopted to the underprivileged, minorities and women is their legacy.

Frank Rizzo: The Politics of Repression and Conspiracy

When any election occurs every candidate prepares the best public relations packages to present a “clean” image to the public. This is especially true for the corrupt politicians. They know the “dirty tricks” they have played to get to a position of power. Now they must say, “Hey I have reformed”; I am an okay guy now. These type of politicians have played “dirty tricks” for years. They represent the interests of a certain conservative sector of the business community.

The Mayoral democratic primary between Frank Rizzo and Wilson Goode represented one of the last classical battles between the forces of democracy and good and the forces of racism and repression.

Your evaluation and vote for either candidate whatever your race, religion or creed may be well determine the fate of America on the local level and also on a much broader level.

Philadelphia has economic, political, and symbolic significance of the mood of the U. S. being it is here that the United States of America was founded. Philadelphia in the last 17 or more years has become known for being the most politically conservative and racist city in the country. Much of Philadelphia’s negative reputation has been associated with the rise of one Frank Rizzo, an aggressive son of a policeman from South Philadelphia.

Rizzo or the “Cisco Kid” as we use to call him back in the 1950’s was noted for beating up gang members in South Philadelphia, though the real gangs, the Italian Mob, was never beaten. While one or two police held the youth, “Cisco” would work the youth over, cursing them out with racist slurs. “Cisco” also had the reputation for having two pearl handle guns that he would threaten to use anytime telling youth to run. This was to keep young African Americans ever fearful. The “Cisco Kid” was more feared than the “Shotgun patrol” (Pennsylvania State Police), who wore black Jack boots and had shotguns in the back of their cars.

Terrorism paid off for “Cisco.” “Cisco” who later became internationally known as “Bozzo,” organized a gang of his own within the Philadelphia Police department. “Cisco” became the notorious powerful Rizzo who rose in reputation in the Philadelphia Police Department as the “tough guy” who cracked heads at a moment’s notice.

From terrorizing teen age youth, Rizzo moved to using excessive terror on any element of the population. Rizzo supporters became known for attacking civil rights demonstrations of the NAACP, CORE, SNCC or any organization that was dedicated to bringing social and economic equality to American Society. By the mid-60’s, Rizzo was the rising mark of the “beast” in Philadelphia. The Philadelphia Police Department with Rizzo as police commissioner became one of the most racist police department and was involved with the SNCC (Student Coordinating Committee) “black power: “dynamite plot” conspiracy in 1966 and the RAM (Revolutionary Action Movement) – Black Guard” assassination plot-riot conspiracies in 1967 which jailed at least 30 African American youth. These conspiracies like those later of the Panthers and MOVE involved pre-dawn and mid-night house raids and mass jailings of the memberships of the human rights organization.

On November 17, 1967 when 4,000 African American high school students demonstrated in front of the board of education demanding the right to be taught African American history, given a quality education and the right to fly the black nation’s flag, the red black and green, Frank Rizzo ordered the police to break up the demonstration. Police charged the demonstrators using the “flying wedge” beating youth with billy clubs. The police used no judgment between boys or girls, and a young 16-year-old African American teenage girl was beaten unmercifully to the ground with blood streaming down her face. Youth ran through the streets of Philadelphia in thousands screaming for mercy many bleeding, in absolute terror. This is the character of the dud who is running for mayor of Philadelphia again. Lord help all of us if he wins.

But my friends, the story does not end here; it only begins. Rizzo called together a certain so-called house negro crew and proposed the formation of the Black Coalition in whom many thought was the idea of the Negro leaders was actually part of Rizzo and company plan to co-opt, neutralize and destroy the human rights movement in Philadelphia. From the inside of the Black (“Negro”) coalition came many of the community’s problems today; which are tied indirectly to big business, Mafia, KKK, CIA and the FBI.

The plan which the FBI COINTELPRO documents show is part of the racist conspiracy to divide the African American community, mis-direct and control African American youth and destroy the fiber which enabled the African American community to launch an attack on racism in the 1960’s.

So Rizzo was/is in the same camp of the fascist bureau of investigation (FBI), whose infamous director, Dictator J. Edgar Hoover, (may his soul forever burn in hell), who constantly harassed, and possibly was responsible of the assassination of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. In fact, J. Edgar Hoover felt Frank Rizzo was a model to follow and gave him an award as Policeman-Mayor of the year. Funny, isn't it, that in 1983 you would have Negroes support Rizzo or is it a very sad affair indeed? But, hold on, it is more to come.

In 1968, Rizzo created more RAM-Black Guard house raids rounding up and imprisoning Philadelphia's young potential local African American leaders. After this, a constant reign of terror was unleashed on the African American community. Police indiscriminately beat innocent citizens, who often overreacted in most cases because they were latent with fear of reprisals (retaliation). A politically backward genocidal "black mafia" began to assume power in the African American community. This black mafia seemed to have "diplomatic immunity" (like the South Philadelphia gang) from harassment as Rizzo "bo-guarded" his way into becoming Mayor of Philadelphia.

Then came the growth of the Black Panther Party. Like the phoenix rising from the burning ashes of the previously crushed human rights groups, the Panthers dared to struggle and dared to win.

The Philadelphia police department in compliance with Rizzo's policies and with the racist forces in America raided the Black Panther party headquarters ordering them to strip buck naked on the street while neighbors watched. How inhuman can one get? This was a fascist attempt to humiliate true community servants. What resulted was an unsung war between the Philadelphia Police department and the African American community. Something that could have been avoided if they had "sounder" minds running in the department and the city, the state and the country.

Many African American men are upstate in Pennsylvania's prisons today because they gallantly attempted to "fight back" against a fascist reign of terror. Many are behind the concrete walls of the penitentiary because their only "crime" was to have a political consciousness (soul) to serve the best interest of the community. They were framed in an atmosphere of total Injustice.

Half a generation of African American men in Philadelphia were "wiped out" by "od's" and "internal" drug wars that were sanctioned by politics and repression. Under the Rizzo administration, Philadelphia came to the brink of disaster.

In the mid-seventies, African People's Party members were arrested, their houses were raided and associates were harassed. MOVE members were arrested, beaten, and imprisoned. MOVE's house was bulldozed to the ground. Delbra Afrika was dragged through rain and mud and viciously beaten and stomped for all the public to see what could happen to anyone who opposed the man posing as God the arch "anti- Christ"-Frank.

Who would dare challenge "the rabid beast?" But hasn't Rizzo shown he was a nice guy? He ate chicken at Negro churches and listened to Negroes sing. He said he likes Negro spirituals. Rizzo likes to show his Negro male supporters that he likes them by slapping them in the face sometimes even in front of their wives in their own home at their own dinner table. Now that's a guy who understands human respect and decency. Isn't it?

Rizzo like any “greedy pig,” took it to the max when he attempted to change the City Charter in 1979 so he could be proclaimed “dictator (de Feuher) of Philadelphia. The African American community said, wait a minute, this is the saw that breaks the camel’s back. Thousands upon thousands of African American people took to the street chanting, “we’re fired up, can’t take it no more.” The people of Philadelphia rose up and defeated Rizzo.

Many thought, “hoped,” or prayed Rizzo was dead but “the beast” raised its ugly head again. Like Reagan, the politics of repression and conspiracy can only lead Philadelphia and the rest of the nation to the road of an updated version of Nazi Germany.⁸⁸¹

How has Jesse Jackson contributed as a leader since 1984?

His Rainbow Coalition continued to be the banner for addressing the needs of the poor immigrants, etc. He had also become a roving ambassador and had successfully defused several sensitive hostage situations around the globe. Today’s news advised that he had gone to Africa to try to mediate hostage situation in Sierra Leon and in the Congo. He is considered of the most influential men in the country.

Jesse Jackson had contributed as a leader since 1984 by making two strong runs for the democratic nomination for president of the United States in 1984 and 1988. This was a great history making achievement for an African American.

1985

Philadelphia Police bomb Move house in West Philly.

1987

The formation of N’CORBRA (National of Blacks for Reparations in America, Inc.)

1988

Network of African American Organizers formed.

Jesse Jackson, the People's Candidate: A Reply to Obafemi Senghor

Jesse's Legacy

Twenty years ago, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was supporting a strike for better wages/working conditions by garbage workers who were predominantly African American in Memphis, Tenn. This was to be a prelude for his intended Poor People's Campaign; a campaign that intended to unite all oppressed minorities of all races with poor whites, scheduled for the spring of 1968 in Washington, D.C.

From sources who were close to Dr. King, it has been passed on that Dr. King was beginning to recognize the importance of class struggle and had to intended to ask the AFL-

⁸⁸¹ Max Stanford’s and Media, Pa., FBI Cointelpro documents, Conversation with Cecil B. Moore, President of the Philadelphia NAACP in 1968, describing the role of Jeremiah Shabazz, and Media (FBI COINTELPRO) documents for Stanley Branche’s role as an FBI informant in the City of Philadelphia ‘67-‘69.

CIO to call a general strike in support of the Memphis workers. Of course, if this had happened, all sectors of American society would have been polarized. Not since the 1960's has an African-American leader become the focal point of American politics. Jesse Jackson, who marched, organized and struggled with Dr. King, now inherits that legacy. Some call Jesse an opportunist but when we criticize we must first start with ourselves; what have we done to contribute to the liberation of African-Americans, not just in words but also in deeds? Many of us who were revolutionaries in the 1960's criticized Dr. King because we were out on the "firing line" the most, suffering the most casualties and saw weakness in his strategy but still supported him because we knew he was progressive and was moving people towards a revolutionary transformation.

Much has transpired in the past twenty years during which time the conservative right wing of the capitalist ruling class waged a war of genocide against Black America.

One of the reforms won by the civil rights movement was the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965. In 10 years following its (VRA) passage, voter registration among African-Americans doubled. The movement for African American political empowerment began to grow with the electing of African American mayors in major cities numbering approximately 303; 34 of them in cities with 50,000 plus population today. Between 1974 and 1980 the number of African-Americans holding public office doubled in six southern states. In Louisiana the number of African American elected officials increased by 143%; in North Carolina by 55%.

The idea of an African American presidential candidate seemed to have started as a symbolic protest to racial and political inequalities in the U.S. economic and political systems. The growth of the idea of an African American presidential candidate evolved along with the growth and maturation of the African American electorate and democratization of the political process in America. In 1960, Reverend Clennon King and Reginald Carter announced their candidacies for president and vice president on the Afro-American party ticket but the idea did not catch on. In 1964 Clifton DeBerry ran for president on the Socialist Workers Party ticket and in 1968 Charlene Mitchell ran for president for the Communist Party becoming the first African American woman to run for president. Eldridge Cleaver in '68, then Minister of Information of the Black Panther Party was candidate for president of the Peace and Freedom Party. Cleaver got on the ballot in over 19 states and won nearly 200,000 votes. Dick Gregory also ran for president and received almost 150,000 votes.⁸⁸²

The motion toward electing African American political officials took various organizational forms. In various communities African American political conventions were held endorsing candidates. In 1970 the Congress of African People (CAP) convened to harness the motion.⁸⁸³ As CAP degenerated more into cultural nationalism, the National Black Political Convention was held in Gary, Indiana. While many nationalist activists were calling for an independent black political party many veteran civil rights activists including Jesse Jackson were calling for building an anti-racist, progressive wing inside of the Democratic Party. The progressive resistance forces inside the Democratic Party have

⁸⁸² Manning Marable, Black American Politics [London: Verso, 1985] pp. 248-249

⁸⁸³ "Unity and Struggle" – History of the Revolutionary Communist League (MLM)," Forward, No. 3., January 1980, pp. 120-135.

continuously challenged the racism internal to the Democratic Party and have strove to implement "Peace and Justice" issues into the Democratic Party platform.

The National Black Political Assembly (NBPA) grew out of the National Black Political Convention and raised a progressive program for African American candidates to address. An idea does not take root among the masses until it corresponds with the objective experience of the masses and is grasped by them consciously seizing upon the historical time.

Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm paved the way for the forward motion of running a black presidential candidate when she ran for president in 1972 in ten of the Democratic Party primaries.⁸⁸⁴

In 1976 NBPA developed a Campaign 76 strategy designed to run an independent black presidential campaign. The campaign called on Rep. Ron Dellums (D-Calif.) to run for president. Dellums declined and not much came of the campaign. In 1980 several hundred activists met to form the National Black Independent Party (NBIP). As a new black political movement began to take shape in the early 1980's, many African-American political activists began to see coalition building and cross ethnic alliances as the key to winning political victories.

The coalition built in Chicago around the election of Harold Washington for mayor and bucking the racist Democratic Party was used as a model for the progressive electoral strategy.⁸⁸⁵ The new political upsurge represents a new juncture in the black liberation movement.

The efforts to strengthen the resistance camp among African American elected officials and to forge broader alliances in the electoral process are promising developments for the progressive and working class movements more generally. They reveal the potential for the emergence of a serious left opposition within the Democratic Party, anchored firmly among African American elected officials. Such an opposition bloc is a crucial element in the long-term consolidation of a progressive coalition in the U.S. with the capacity to impact national policy.⁸⁸⁶

The democratization of the political process is pertinent to restructuring America because while African-Americans constitute 25% of the population in Alabama, only 5.7 of the elected officials are African-Americans. One third of Mississippians are African-Americans but only 7.3% of the elected officials are. In Georgia, three quarters of the counties with an African-American population of 20% or more have no African-American elected officials at all.

Between the 1980 and '84 elections, more than two million African Americans were added to voter rolls; an increase of 24 percent. African-Americans', between ages 18 and 24, registration rates caught up to Anglo-Americans of the same age in 1984 and passed Anglo-

⁸⁸⁴ Walter Hanes, Jr., *Invisible Politics* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1985] p. 93

⁸⁸⁵ Abdul Alkalimat and Doug Gills, "Black Power vs. Racism: Harold Washington Becomes Mayor" in Rod Bud (ed), *The New Black Vote* [San Francisco: Synthesis Publications, 1984] pp. 55-179.

⁸⁸⁶ Black Liberation Commission: *The Line of March*, Jesse Jackson's Challenge, *June 1984*, p. 7

Americans in 1986 (46% for blacks and 42% for whites). In 11 southern states African-Americans added 695,000 voters to the rolls between '84 and '86, while Anglo-Americans lost 227,000. Even so there are only 12 million registered African-Americans out of a potential of 19 million voters.

Historically the stage was set for the emergence of a black progressive challenge within the Democratic Party. On November 3, 1983, Jesse Jackson announced he would seek the Democratic nomination for President of the United States. The Jackson campaign came at a time when the black movement for national democratic rights was undergoing a transition. For 15 years the movement had retreated into accommodationist politics aligning itself with the liberal wing of the Democratic Party. But beginning with the August 27th March on Washington in 1983 and culminating with the election of Harold Washington in Chicago and Wilson Goode in Philadelphia, a new motion of African American politics began to take shape.

Building on his base built in Operation. Push and African American churches, Reverend Jesse Jackson entered into an alliance with Minister Louis Farrakhan, leader of the Nation of Islam. With the charismatic speakers of the NOI and the eloquent Minister Farrakhan, the Jackson campaign was able to mobilize "the masses" of African-Americans even to overcome the neo-colonist opposition; "the toms of a new type," Andy Young of Atlanta, Coleman Young of Detroit, Wilson Goode of Philadelphia, and most of the traditional African American democratic office holders who were tied to the white liberal democratic machine. This remains exemplary, in fact, that in the 1984 presidential campaign 80-65% of all African Americans voted for Jesse in the primary; he received 17% of the Asian and Latin vote in California, and 33% in New York and 20% of the overall Democratic primary vote. Even with the Farrakhan factor, which we will discuss later, Jesse won some impressive victories in '84, winning over 3.5 million popular votes and over 60 Congressional districts, 30 of them in the South, winning most of the major urban centers, North and South, taking the popular vote in the states of Louisiana, South Carolina, Mississippi, Virginia and the District of Columbia. Jesse Jackson came in fourth out of eight in New Hampshire which is 98% white, won almost 15% of the caucus votes in Vermont where less than 1,000 African-Americans live. Jesse won such places as Homestead, Pennsylvania, was endorsed by farmers in Columbia, Missouri, where farmers had to put sacks over their heads for fear of reprisal from the government. The Apache Nation in Arizona endorsed the Jackson campaign, and Jesse won every Hispanic district in New York City, even though all of the elected Hispanic leadership went with Mondale.

Jesse Jackson developed a new foreign policy of unity towards the Third World. He went to Syria and met with President Asaad and secured the release of American flyer Lt. Goodman. He went to Cuba, met with Fidel Castro and negotiated the release of political prisoners.

In February 1984 Milton Coleman, a Negro reporter released to his white colleagues that Jesse Jackson had made a racial remark about Jews referring to them as "Hymies" and New York as "Hymietown." This story broke in the Washington Post and was carried nationwide. The majority of the Jewish community made an all out attack on Jesse and Minister Louis Farrakhan of the Nation of Islam. But the white establishment press did not talk about the basis of the attack. The majority of the Jewish community (6 million) who have risen to become the richest and most powerful minority, who once were liberal and

left being Zionist, supporting the state of Israel, have become conservative. This political transition of the Jewish community has occurred in the last 40 years, Jews who once were Black America's allies have in the last 20 years aligned themselves with the forces of reaction to become enemies on many occasions. Jesse, having a progressive position for the establishment of a Palestine state, is the reason for the attack. Minister Farrakhan recognized that the state of Israel is a racist white colonial settler state occupying the land of the Palestinian people, the same way the white racist colonial settler state of South Africa is occupying the national territory of Africans. Both states have no right to exist and should be destroyed. The existence of both states help maintain racism worldwide.

Minister Farrakhan's defense of Jesse and his further attacks on Zionism brought a barrage of white reaction to such a point that Jesse had to sever his ties with Minister Farrakhan in order to maintain the Rainbow Coalition. During the last four years Jesse Jackson has become a people's advocate going to so many picket lines, protest marches and strikes that its too many to account for. Beginning in 1983 Jesse led the get-out-the-vote for increasing voter registration that led to 2 million new voters which in 1986 provided the margin of victory for eight Southern Democratic Senators, not one of whom received the majority of the white vote in their state. This returned the Senate to a Democratic majority. And, when the African American electorate opposed the nomination of conservative Robert Bork to the U.S. Supreme Court, their political clout was felt with his defeat.

Between 1984 and 1987 Jesse helped build the Rainbow Coalition into an embryo political organization with a membership of 20,000. Jesse Jackson has become the most articulate spokesperson for a coherent alternative to Reaganism or conservative reaction. The success of Jesse's populist message has helped slow the rightward drift of the Democratic Party. Jesse entered the 1988 primary season as the "progressive" candidate who speaks for an ever-widening sector of the American population who by virtue of their class and social status, have become victims of the Reagan counter-revolution. The Rainbow Coalition, being a progressive political organization, which is attempting to unite the entire American working class to struggle on an 'economic common ground' poses to be an open challenge to the conservative right.

The polarization of political forces and the general political drift to the right in the United States makes it necessary to intensify the struggle against racism and imperialism.

The Republican Party has become the political voice of the reactionary sector of financial capital. The Republicans though they have suffered a temporary setback in the November (1986) election have set the country (the majority of white workers) to the right by espousing a conservative philosophy that has been viewed as the only alternative to maintain the American standard of living (labor benefits of imperialism); have forced the liberal-democrats on the political defensive.

The traditional east coast/mid-west liberal democrats who have been previously the left center forces are capitulating to the rising racism in sectors of the white working class and are moving the political center towards the right [the support for fiscal cuts (social services, military support of the contra's support for the imperialist attack on Nicaragua, Libya, Grenada, etc.)], and the Democratic leadership council led by Nunn, Gephardt, Babbitt and Robb, also want to take the Democratic party to the right.

The United States capitalist ruling class seems to be opting to align its forces (influences, capital and power) with the ultra right (open fascistic) political groups, are fanning racism in the white working class during the present structural crisis in order to keep it from uniting, reaching class consciousness and carrying out class warfare. The white United Front represented by its extreme nationalist wing, the KKK, Aryan Nations, Contra De Posse and other paramilitary ultra-right groups represented a million plus Americans who are prepared to fight to bring in fascism and to be military counter-revolutionaries to stop socialism. These groups are in alliance with the legal religious ultra-right front groups, such as Moral Majority, Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson and others who use Christianity as a cover to support the political motion (arena) towards fascism and aggressive military support of U.S. imperialism.

The social populist democrats now appear on the political stage as the new popular center forces in opposition to fascism/conservatism. The Rainbow Coalition as the progressive wing inside the Democratic Party represents the most explosive political force to challenge the traditional democratic leadership at the next Democratic convention.

With Jesse's message of "economic violence," he has either been the front-runner or the No. 2 contender in the 1988 Democratic primaries. Going against a negative image projected by a racist/conservative news media and having little money to spend for TV advertisements, Jesse Jackson's campaign in 1988 has been a historical phenomenon. Having the strongest message and less 'money, Jesse has won the minds and hearts of millions of Americans of all races, creeds, and strata, using the Charles Bibbs, Sr., formula of MMO--Message, Money, Organization., Jackson took 20% in the Minnesota caucus, which is about 96% white, 23% in the Maine caucus, and 27% in the Vermont primary. Jesse edged out Paul Simon and Dick Gephardt early as Albert Gore hung in until New York. To show the impact of the Jackson campaign, Jesse received 10% of the vote in Iowa (a predominantly white state). In 1984 Jesse got only 1.5% of the vote in Iowa. On Super Tuesday, Jesse Jackson won five states and finished a strong 'second place in 11 states. Jesse took Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia and Virginia. In the final count, Jesse captured 97% of the African American vote and 10% of the white. Jesse placed second in most of the rest of the states including Texas, Hawaii, and other contenders' home states.

It should be noted that African-Americans comprise almost one-fourth of the Democratic vote across the South, and they make up nearly half the electorate in such Deep South states as Alabama and Mississippi..

Super Tuesday: How They Voted

With the momentum from Super Tuesday, Jesse grabbed a first place in South Carolina and Alaska and then captured second place to Paul Simon in Illinois. But the turning point in the campaign showing its potential to transforming America was Jesse Jackson's stunning victory over Michael Dukakis in the Michigan caucuses. Jesse's resounding upset gaining 55% of the vote worried the U.S. capitalist class ruling circles, its political representatives, and the Democratic Party establishment. They now felt they had to do something to stop a people's democratic revolt. The Democratic Party establishment began to show its racist teeth and lined into a Stop-Jackson campaign. While Gov. Michael Dukakis is the liberal bourgeoisie's candidate, Mayor Ed Koch endorsed Gore and used him as a shield to launch

his racist attack on Jesse in New York. Though Dukakis won in Wisconsin, New York, Pennsylvania, Indiana, and Ohio, while Jackson won in D.C., and California is up for grabs, the race is not over. In fact, the real politicking on a historical basis had just begun. Jesse will go to Atlanta to the National Democratic Convention in July with more political clout than any African American man or progressive has ever had in history inside of the Democratic Party. Already the Jesse Jackson campaign has altered the issues Dukakis relates to. Jackson Action is setting the agenda for the entire Democratic Party. Even many whites who did not vote for Jesse, admit he is the best man for the job. For many of them they know they are voting against their class interests but cannot seem to help themselves because of the old racial blind-spot. The Jesse Jackson campaign has pushed the entire Democratic Party to the left.

Jesse will go into Atlanta with a well-organized voter base with a minimum of 1,000 delegates and more than twice the number he had in 1984. More than anything else, the Jesse Jackson campaign has set the stage for a new politics and reflects the present state of political consciousness of Black and progressive America.

Understanding the present state of political consciousness of Black America

In attempting to understand the underpinnings of the present political consciousness of the majority of African-Americans, one must take a sober look at the state of Black America.

Though there were gains won in voting rights and equal access to accommodations from the civil rights movement, the general overall economic condition of African-Americans has qualitatively depreciated in relation to Anglo (white) Americans. The response of the African American electorate to the new African American politics represented on a national scale by the Jesse Jackson campaign and the Rainbow Coalition is an attempt to affect state (government) policy domestically and internationally to basically alter that condition.

While the percentage of African-Americans earning more than \$35,000 a year rose in constant dollars, from 15.7% in 1970 to 21.2% in 1986 and 8.8% African-Americans now earn more than \$50,000 a year, a two-prong gap is widening between African American America and white America and also between the African American middle class, the African American working class, and the African American underclass.

Three times as many African-Americans live in poverty than whites. On the average, the African-American medium income is 57% that of Anglo-Americans, a decline of about four percent since the early 70's. In 1980, 23.7% of all African American families headed by persons with at least four years of college earned less than \$15,000 annually, while 26.1% of householders in white families who only had four years of high school received a comparable annual salary. In 1981, 54.8% of African American families had annual incomes of less than \$15,000, while only 27.9 percent of white families were similarly situated. The income distribution overall of African American families whose heads have completed four years of college parallels the income distribution for white families headed by high school graduates more closely than it

does white families headed by college students. Add the cost of sending children to college, educational capital and the black white gap totals where middle-income whites make ten times as much as the majority of black America. While there was an increase in African-Americans obtaining professional, technical and craft positions, simultaneously unskilled labor jobs in industry have been exported to the Third World Newly Industrialized Countries (NIC).

In 1960, eleven percent of African American workers were employed in professional and technical and craft positions; by 1980 their proportion had almost doubled to 21 percent. Between 1972 and 1982 the percentage of employed African Americans working in professional and technical positions increased from 8.2 to 11.8 percent. African American women professionals increased from 11 percent of all employed African American women in 1972 to nearly 14 percent of the total in 1980. Approximately one-fourth of African American workers employed in the public sector have federal government jobs, half work for city and county governments, and the remaining one-fourth are employed in state government. Between 1975 and 1984 African-Americans employed full-time by city government expanded from 260,254 to 302,726; and their median annual income rose from \$9,342 in 1975 to \$17,144 in 1984. The total number of full-time African American county employees was 95,727 in 1975 and 131,793 by 1984. During that period the median annual income of African American county workers grew from \$8,260 to \$15,004. One third (34 percent) of African American male managers and half (51 percent) of African American male, professionals work for the government. Similarly, two-fifths (41 percent) of African American female managers and two-thirds (69 percent) of African American female professionals have jobs in the public sector. which has gone along with a big increase generally in African American public sector employment for all classes, which rose from 1.6 million in 1970 to 2.5 million in 1980. African American women clerical employment expanded from 7.5 percent of employed African Americans in 1950 to 30.8 percent in 1970. The employment gains of African American women are not as impressive when one considers that clerical jobs are the lowest paid of the "white collar" positions, with annual income in 1980 of only \$11,717 for full-time workers.

Though the African American middle class has experienced gradual progress, the African American working class which was expanding, gathering strength with 3.3 million in unions have been seriously setback with the de-industrialization of America. There are approximately 9 million African-American workers not organized (non-union). Most of these non-unionized African American workers are in the south where there is still domestic industrial growth because of low wages.

Between 1975 and 1984 alone, the Southeast gained 5.2 million jobs--a 32% rise--and it is projected that over the next thirty years, there will be another jump of 50%.⁸⁸⁷

Of the 12 million African American workers, 6.6 million are African American female workers. The de-industrialization of America is swelling the ranks of the hard-core unemployed strata of the African American working class nominally called the African American underclass. In 1983, 9.9 million African-Americans--approximately 36 percent of the African American population--lived in poverty, the highest African American poverty rate since the government began reporting data on African American poverty in 1968. Of all African American families headed by women, 56.7% are below the poverty level, as compared with 29.8% of similarly situated white families. Over the past couple of decades, between 1960 and 1982, the proportion of African American men not participating in the labor force rose from 7.0 percent to 28.1 percent, compared to an increase from 15.8 percent to 22.2 percent for white men.

As the civil rights movement began to falter due to the U.S. government's conspiracy (COINTELPRO-counter-intelligence program) against the black liberation movement and internal dissent over direction and who was going to lead; direct action (mass civil disobedience) as a strategy began to be replaced by the drive of African American electoral politics. In the 1980's African-American activity in the electoral arena has increased. The black liberation movement being a product of history does not skip stages; though its ultimate cumulative development will be towards an revolutionary program, this has not and will not occur without the black liberation movement exhausting the bourgeois democratic process.

. . . the current attempt to bring the political weight of Black America to bear in the electoral arena--and on the terrain of the Democratic Party--represents a significant maturation of the spontaneous Black liberation movement and signals a new stage in its development. And second, because the Black liberation movement starts at the intersection of the class and racial contradictions under U.S. capitalism, this new stage of development promises to have a profound impact in the decades ahead on the shape and direction of working class politics overall and in fact offers the best hope of leading a working class breakaway from the Democratic Party.⁸⁸⁸

This new development of political consciousness of Black America has several features; first, its base rests on the active mobilization of the African-American masses who have previously had a passive if not apathetic relation to the electoral process; second, it is evident with the Harold Washington and Jesse Jackson campaigns that an embryonic "people's" political program is beginning to formulate, one which clearly stands to the left of the bourgeois political spectrum, in opposition to institutionalized racism and encompassing social/political questions affecting the entire multi-national working class. Third, this new tendency in political consciousness is becoming a African American insurgency inside the Democratic Party that is challenging its conservative leadership,

⁸⁸⁷ Gordon Dillahun, "Key to Social Change, A Southern Strategy," *Forward Motion*, January-February 1988, Vol. 7, No. 1, p. 11

⁸⁸⁸ Line of March, "The New Motion in Black Politics and the Electoral Arena," *Line of March*, #15, Spring 1984, p. 11

stimulating the labor movement and pressuring the accommodationist African American political uncle tom leaders.

There are now 6,625 African American elected officials in the United States, representing 1.5 percent of all elective offices. There is a potential for 55,000 African American elected officials. The South has 53 percent of the nation's African-American population and 63.8 percent of all African American elected officials. There are 4200-4500 African American elected officials in the South; 521 African American elected officials in the state of Mississippi. African American elected officials increased more than 300 percent between 1970 and 1982, and their numbers have continued to grow. African American mayors have increased from 48 in 1973 to 223 in 1983; ten of eighteen largest cities in the U.S., now have African American mayors--such cities as Detroit, Atlanta, Oakland, Philadelphia, Chicago, and Washington, D.C.

The institution that is the base of the drive for African American elective empowerment is the African American Christian Church. The church has approximately 10 million voters. As of 1984 there were 6 million African American registered Democrats. There are generally 8.5 million African American baptists, 3.7 million in the Pentecostal Church of God in Christ, 2 million in the ASE, 1.3 million African American Catholics, most of whom live in Louisiana, and others in different denominations. So to understand to a very large extent the state of political consciousness of the organized majority of black Americans; 10 million out of 19 million potential African American votes and 30 million people, one has to take a serious look at the political consciousness of African American ministers, the theology of liberation and how that is manifesting as political clout in the Democratic party in order to determine how it can be transformed into a politics of liberation:

Jesse's message and the new politics

"The workers of the world must unite because slave labor anywhere is a threat to organized labor everywhere."

One thing is clear in 1988 only one candidate, Jesse Jackson, is discussing the class, race, gender and political aspects of oppression affecting all sectors of American society. Since 1984 when Jesse Jackson's program for the Democratic party was abolition of runoff primaries, the end of the U.S. first strike option, normalization of relations with Cuba, a major cut in arms spending and support for affirmative action, Jesse has broadened his message and increased his activities as a people's advocate. In the last four years Jesse has been on almost every picket line in support of union struggles against concessions. Jesse has not only opposed the government's imperialist intervention in Grenada, the bombing of Libya, U.S. South African policy, U.S. support of the right wing in El Salvador and support of military aggression (contras) against Nicaragua but also U.S. policies in the Middle East. Jesse Jackson has called for support of the right to self determination everywhere. He says he wants to raise the minimum wage, institute comparable-worth wages for women, build

affordable housing financed from pension funds and "stop drugs from coming in, stop jobs from going out." This message now hits millions of people of all races that are known as the "working poor." Fifteen percent of America is in poverty--34 million people. Of the 34 million, 23 million are white, 11 million African American, Hispanic, Asian and youth. There are 9 million poor adults who work. Between 1978 and 1986, the number of poor adults age 22 to 64 who averaged 30 weeks or more of work a year rose 52 percent to include almost 7 million Americans. As of 1986, 2 million Americans worked full time throughout the year and were still poor which was an increase of more than 50 percent since 1978.

The working poor include members of households in which the wage earners who work part time or full time during the year but still have incomes below the poverty line--set now at \$11,203 in annual cash income for a family of four. Most poor families in which one or more members who are white, and the majority are two-parent families.⁸⁸⁹

From 1981 to 1986 approximately 5 million Americans who had held their jobs for three years or more lost them through plant closings or layoffs. The increase in the working poor and the growing gap between the rich and poor is largely due to the overseas expansion of U.S. capital and the scientific and technological revolution which has undermined the status of the U.S. working class and its privileged position in the basic industries.

This new so-called industrial revolution which has been pushed by U.S. industrialists has leveled downward the living standards of the more privileged sectors of the workers to the status of the lower-paid workers, who have become more numerous with each new technological advance.

Accompanying this are plant office closings, runaway factories, out sourcing and the growth of a service sector composed of African-American, Latino, Asian and Native peoples together with women and the ever growing displaced workers resulting from the introduction of high technology.

This displacement has led to the deterioration in the position of men who did not graduate from college. In the early 1970's, a 30-year-old male college graduate earned only about 15 to 20 percent more than a 30-year-old male high school graduate. This 15 to 20 percent earnings gap held steady throughout the end of 1970. But the overseas flight of U.S. companies hurt non-college men badly. The gap between college and non-college graduates grew until it now stands at 40 percent--\$26,250 for college graduates versus \$17,250 for high school graduates.

High tech has reduced wages and has been used by the U.S. capitalist class to bust unions. This fact is beginning to breakout in the political arena with the Jackson candidacy.

Politics has a special place in social life, notably in economic life. Its special place is determined first, by the fact that in contrast to the other elements of the superstructure (law, art, ethics, etc.) politics most directly reflects the economics, the economic interests of classes. Second, politics reflects the

⁸⁸⁹ U.S. News and World Report, Jan. 11, 1988, p. 19.

main aspects of economic relations in a society, their class nature, and the character of property in the means of production. This makes it possible to regard politics not just as a reflection of economics, but as its concentrated expression.⁸⁹⁰

Jesse goes on to describe U.S. multi-national corporations' expansion into the Third World. Jesse says in the last seven years, 11 million new jobs were created under Reagan but six million pay 57,000 a year or less. The capitalists drove down the standard of living for workers and drove down prices for farmers. Jesse teaches Americans that "Your jobs didn't go from white to black, from male to female, from New York to South Carolina. Your jobs went to South Korea and Taiwan and South Africa and Haiti and Chile." At the same time Jesse Jackson says it is not the fault of workers in these countries that jobs went there but the U.S. multi-national corporations' and that workers in these countries should be paid equal pay of American workers and have the right to organize unions. While Jesse's program of workers' rights describe the situation, he does not call for a remedy to the problem; that is the nationalization of basic industries; the U.S. multi-national corporation with the resources going to the benefit of the working people. Though this may be an eventual program of a social democratic party, Jesse has given the outline for a Workers' Bill of Rights.

A Rainbow Worker's Bill of Rights

Workers Have a Right to a Job: People need jobs and there are jobs which need to be done. We can build the housing, roads, bridges that we need as well as providing care for this nation's people. We can end plant closings without notice and unemployment without hope.

Workers Have a Right to a Union: All workers, including public employees, should be able to organize themselves into unions, have those unions recognized and work under a collective bargaining agreement.

Workers Have a Right to a Living Wage: People who work full-time should be able to rise out of poverty on their pay. American families need family wages. Young workers (youth) need opportunity.

Workers Have a Right to Fair Competition: International trade needs a level playing field. Recognition of the basic democratic rights of workers at home and abroad to organize, bargain collectively and to have enforced work place standards. Free labor cannot "compete" with slave labor.

Workers Have a Right to Freedom from Discrimination: Affirmative action for those locked out of better jobs. Pay

⁸⁹⁰ Yuri Popov, Essays in Political Economy: Imperialism and the Developing Countries. [Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1984] p. 52

equity for those locked into low wages.

Workers Have a Right to Education that Works: Basic education for basic skills: Vocational education for current jobs: Life long education for a changing economy.

(Excerpted from a presentation by Rev. Jesse Jackson, Labor Day 1987.)

Workers Have a Right to Respect: The contributions of workers, past and present, deserve a prominent place in the education of future workers. Those who give a life of labor deserve to have the companies for whom they work reinvest in their industry, in their community and in their country.

Redefine Our Relationship to the Third World

Real Security requires a new direction in policy towards the Third World based on the three principles of the Jackson doctrine.

Support and strengthen the rule of international law. The Ayatollah is wrong when he mines the waters of the Persian Gulf and threatens world trade by preventing the free navigation of international waters. But President Reagan is wrong--and loses the moral authority to challenge him--when he illegally mines the harbors in Nicaragua. Because our interests are so broad the U.S. has the most to gain in a world that respects the rule of law in international relations.

Promote self-determination and human rights. The 130 countries of the Third World have different histories, cultures and economic conditions. They necessarily will have different social and political experiments. They have the right to choose their own destiny--to find their own ways to cope with poverty, illiteracy, and political representation. We must respect that right, confident that democracy and freedom are spreading in the world. We should condition our own aid and trade benefits on their respect for democratic rights, including the protection of the right of workers to organize.

Support international economic justice and development. Growth and prosperity in the U.S. requires raising the standard of living in the Third World, not lowering our own. We must work with Japan, West Germany, and other trade surplus countries to fund a new 'International. Marshall Plan for Third World development. By our providing capital and debt

relief Third World economies will grow, their standard of living will increase, and trade with the U.S. will be revitalized creating millions of jobs for Americans.

When we seek to determine the outcome of upheaval or revolution, we expend our resources and our reputation on an impossible task. Thus we should sharply reduce our military forces designed for intervention abroad. We should cancel all new aircraft carrier task forces--saving \$40 billion. We should immediately halt U.S. aid to the contras in Central America and to UNITA in Angola. We should implement full economic sanctions against South Africa while promoting the economic development of the Frontline states. We must support a comprehensive political settlement in the Middle East which benefits both Arabs and Israelis and thus ensures the long-run prosperity of all countries in the region.

Our military should not be used to prop up undemocratic governments abroad which provide a 'better' environment for multinational corporations to operate in. We should condition our foreign aid and trade benefits on other countries' respect for democratic rights, including the protection of the right of workers to organize. Slave labor anywhere is a threat to organized labor everywhere.

(Jesse Jackson campaign literature, 1988).

Issue Highlights from the Jackson Program

Workers' Bill of Rights

The right to a job, to organize unions, to a living wage.
Affirmative action and pay equity
Vocational education

Civil Rights

Affirmative action in education and employment
Equal opportunity in access to jobs, job training and job mobility
Enforce the Voting Rights Act
Pass the ERA
Pass the Lesbian/Gay Rights Bill
Ban anti-gay discrimination in the federal government, in the military, in immigration policy

Social Welfare

Double the federal education budget

Fund bilingual education
Adult literacy and education campaigns
Restore college grants and loans
Teen parenting services
Eliminate hunger by increased funding and more effective programs.
Meet the nutritional needs of Native Americans and immigrants
National health care program

Drugs

Trade sanctions against drug-producing nations
Block narcotic entry points
Expand drug education and treatment programs

AIDS

Increase funding for AIDS research and education.
Special AIDS outreach for drug users, prostitutes, prisoners and the homeless. Increase funding for medical and social support for people with AIDS and their families. End AIDS-related discrimination

Family Benefits

Comprehensive national child care policy
Minimum poverty-line benefit for needy families
Increase funding for family planning, prenatal and maternal health care
Restore Medicaid funding for abortion

Family Farm

Moratoriums on family farm foreclosures
Fair price to farmers to meet production costs
Debt restructuring, soil conservation and affirmative action for minority farmers
Make foreclosed acreage available at long-term, low-interest rates

Foreign Policy

Respect international law and strengthen the U.N. and the World Court
Respect the right of nations to determine their social systems

Reduce U.S. forces in Europe/reduce the defense budget at least \$100 billion
Moratorium on the testing and deployment of nuclear weapons
Adhere to the ABM treaty
Stop the development and deployment of Star Wars
Halt U.S. aid to Central America, contras and UNITA in Angola
Full economic sanctions against South Africa
Support the economic development of the Frontline states
Respect the right of the Palestinians to self-determination, including an independent state. Respect the right of Israel to secure borders
End the U.S. military build-up in the Persian Gulf
Restructure the international debt
Halt the IMF austerity programs

Jesse Jackson's populist message is setting the stage for a new "Peace and Justice" politics. Rather than concentrating on anti-communism which is reactionary "conservative" politics, the new politics centers around the real causes of the forms of oppression affecting the American people; drugs which are controlled by right wing "conservative" gangsters and politicians that prop up the capitalist system with its billions in illegal profit with laundered money, run-away corporations who set up subsidiary operations in Third World countries to control their economies through technological neo-colonialism (controlling the economy through technology produced by U.S. corporations), producing goods at phenomenally cheap wages, reducing the wages of workers in the U.S. by busting unions and selling the products back to American workers, rendering the American economy into a high tech service economy. What is happening through the scientific and technological revolution, is the capitalist class has developed a new social re-division of labor worldwide. By making the Third World the industrial base, they get profits from labor which has yet to become organized into unions and at the same time weaken organized labor (unions) in the western capitalist nations, super-exploiting the entire world. The only answer in the immediate future is to politically struggle to gain "people's" control of the corporations by writing a clause in the U.S. Constitution that every American worker has the right to a guaranteed job and adequate housing.

The political maturation of the mass of African-Americans will come through political/class struggle in the electoral arena, community and at the point of production. Much of this political maturation will develop around the struggle to advance reforms in the political system. The political radicalization of the majority of 6.6 million African-Americans who are registered Democrats will develop from political ruptures or

polarizations over issues and principles that affect the historical relationship of African-Americans to the capitalist system.

Jesse Jackson and the Rainbow Coalition with its alliance with farmers, labor unions and oppressed nationalities, and the poor, poses to be the cataclysmic agent to raise advance democratic demands inside the Democratic party which may cause the rupture or polarization that will set the motion forward towards the development of a third labor/people's party. While many progressives have remained outside of the ranks of the capitalist party, many need to take the struggle inside the Democratic party to galvanize a progressive people's bloc to force the KKK and conservative racist imperialist politicians either out of the Democratic party or to a political showdown thereby impacting on the local, regional and national political arena. The progressive "Rainbow" movement inside the Democratic party (more so than in the trade union movement as it currently exists) promises to give rise to concrete programs, forms of organization, institutions, trained cadres, leading political figures, etc., that will sooner or later split the Democratic party and propel not only the black liberation struggle but the working class and people's movement more generally toward a political expression which is truly independent of the bourgeois political parties. The potential for the development of an independent working class party will require a protracted process of consolidation of a progressive wing in the Democratic Party and a series of polarizations with the forces of reaction over the forthcoming years.

The Jackson campaign represents a new trend in politics with a comprehensive progressive agenda:

Though Jackson's campaign is not organizationally independent of the Democratic Party, his politics do represent a serious challenge to the traditional alliances that have been at its core. In this sense Jackson's program serves as the basis for the development of a self-conscious

progressive bloc, independent of the old liberal-labor power brokers, within the organizational context of the Democratic Party.⁸⁹¹

Much of this new trend in politics will be acted out at the forthcoming Democratic convention and beyond.

The Challenge: Self Determination at Home: After '88 Which Road Forward?

Jesse has defined three basic political schools of thought in mainstream America:

There are three such schools: conservatives who want things to stay as they are; liberals, who want to reform what is; and progressives who want to change things. Our Rainbow represents the progressive school of thought.⁸⁹²

Jesse Jackson goes on to explain that everyone who went to jail in the South during the Civil Rights Movement and who marched with Dr. King was not progressive.

Not in 40 years, since 1948 when Henry Wallace ran on the anti-racist, anti-imperialist Progressive Party ticket for President has progressive politics played a major role in the electoral arena. At the turn of the century the Socialist party became a force to be recognized electing 1,200 local officials and fielding a presidential candidate five times.⁸⁹³

With Jesse going into the Democratic convention as the No. 2 contender, historical precedence has been set. Whatever the options, if Jesse becomes a vice presidential nominee or whether he brokers for various demands and serves as a people's advocate, the struggle will be advanced.

The Jackson campaign presents the possibility for the movement for people's empowerment of combining electoral work with other forms of organizing and of electing representatives who can articulate and fight for the concerns of the poorest sectors of the African American and working class community. The Jesse Jackson campaign has given rise to an embryonic political program which stands clearly on the left of the bourgeois political spectrum; one which causes a sharp polarization with institutionalized racism, but raises other political questions as well. This motion puts the neo-colonialist, uncle-tom-of-a-new-type, Negro accommodationalist politicians on the defensive and isolates them from the masses. The motion represented by the Jackson campaign represents a new stage of political maturation for the African American community. Though led by African-Americans, this new stage of development promises to have a profound impact in the decades ahead on the shape and direction of working class politics overall and in fact offers the best hope of leading a working class breakaway from the Democratic Party. It is important in this sense to see electoral politics as a crucial arena of the class struggle and a place where the political maturation of the working class movement also takes place. To have an ultra-left sectarian position of not taking up the struggle inside the bourgeois political arena is to isolate the progressive forces and become right-wing opportunists. With the absence of a genuine mass based-revolutionary party to represent their interests,

⁸⁹¹ Gerald Lenoir; "The Democrats Dilemma," *Frontline/Special Supplement*, Vol. 5, No. 20, April 11, 1988

⁸⁹² Jessie Jackson, "The Rainbow Coalition is Here to Stay," *The Black Scholar*, September/October 1984, p. 73

⁸⁹³ Sheila Collins, *The Rainbow Challenge*. [New York: Monthly Review Press, 1986] p. 303

revolutionaries need to utilize the electoral process, i.e., the Democratic party to attempt to stretch its apparatus as far as possible until there is a mass break (conscious) with the one-party capitalist system and create a working class people's party, representing the interests of the working class and other progressive strata. So the next stage of struggle legally will be to struggle through the electoral process to form a coalition government prior to socialist revolution.

The concerns of Obafemi Senghor and the 200-250 African American political prisoners now incarcerated in America's prisons to demand their immediate release due to the U.S. Government's unjust war against Black America can best be addressed if it is raised in the context of the legal political super-structure along with the question of African-Americans' right to self determination and reparations first.

The challenge after '88 for Jesse Jackson and the Rainbow Coalition is to organize the momentum of the '88 campaign whether a Democratic or Republican administration is elected. It is a protracted struggle of electing a Rainbow (progressive) government by the year 2000. Jesse and the Rainbow must also educate the hundreds of millions of Americans to the questions that will lead to a revolutionary transformation of America. Dr. King said, "White America must recognize that justice for African American people cannot be changed without radical changes in the structure of our society."

Political proportional representation will be meaningless if it is not matched with economic equity. Reparations for Native Americans, Asian-Americans, who were put in concentration camps during World War II, Mexican-Americans and African-Americans are key to rectifying economic and political injustices which are the basis to political and economic inequality today.

A decade ago James Foreman raised the question of reparations for us in light of the African American experience in America. Many people reacted negatively and tried to dismiss the thought; but he was correct. We need to repair for the damage done to us because of slavery, segregation and discrimination. We need not apologize for seeking reparations. Creative justice demands reparations. If reparations are still being given to Israel by Germany for damage imposed on Jews under Hitler, and if because of an uneasy conscience America is giving \$5 million a day to Israel in reparations, then reparations are justified for us. Court cases clearly show

the government can be sued for reparations when it is found to be abusive.⁸⁹⁴

In order to make Reparations real for the masses of African-American people, tactics must go from defensive political action "fight-back" to the offensive, political revolutionary action. Mass revolutionary action means taking the political offensive. It means agitating both within and outside of the capitalist political structure to isolate and politically overthrow, vote out of office the racist-conservative politicians and to cause a political polarization/realignment of political forces inside the U.S. Though this may occur on a limited scale at first, it would serve tremendous educational value in raising the class-consciousness of African-Americans and all workers. This can be done on the local levels by supporting the insurgent political parties, tickets, blocs, caucuses, which are anti-establishment and anti-macho. Also by uniting with the Rainbow Coalition, pushing the Rainbow to polarize the Democratic Party, progressives should organize people's referendums and build a constitutional recall movement of conservative/racist politicians around their "anti-people" voting records. This could entail convening a "democratic" people's convention, people's courts, political tribunals and civil lawsuits for genocide. From below; that is outside of the electoral capitalist political structure, political "reparations" demonstrations by the "army of the unemployed" who demand full employment and workers who call for a general strike could convene teachings concerning racist-conservative-imperialist politicians' "voting records"/deals/conspiracies to crush the people's movement.

Part of this broad coalition effort would be the Reparations and Self Determination Bill through petition drives demanding land and capital as partial repayment for years of genocide. This petition should be presented to the Congressional Black Caucus to be initiated in Congress as a bill. Also, on the local level each black progressive Congressperson should be petitioned to present Reparations in the form of a bill. This would be to get the question before the board masses and the world as a mass issue. Also important, with continuous offensive political agitation would be political re-education and building the independent political party to candidates who will raise the demands of self-determination, Reparations for African-Americans and economic democracy. It is within this context of mass revolutionary action, which African-Americans can take their demand of Reparations and Self-Determination with a mass march on the United Nations and send representatives around the world calling for international support for the African-American National liberation movement.

Recent estimates state that in the next 20 years, by the year 2000, blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans, Asian-Americans, and other Third World people will make up 50 to 60 percent of the total population of the United States. African-Americans and Hispanics alone will make up to 30% of the U.S. population. With the appeal to an economic common ground, the new progressive politics is paving the way towards a

⁸⁹⁴ Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, Straight from the Heart [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987] pp. 300-301

people's America; as Jesse says, "A people united will never be defeated.

1989

In 1989 of the many instances to occur the following eight seem to stick out:

1. Congressman John Conyers of Michigan proposed HR 40, a bill to study whether the institution of slavery in the US from 1619 to 1865 and de jure and the de facto segregation and economic discrimination has an impact on living African Americans and to investigate whether African Americans should receive reparations. This is otherwise known as the Reparations Bill.
2. Temple University located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, became the first university in the country and the world to offer a doctorate degree in African-American Studies; thirty-five students enrolled in the first class.
3. On February 10, 1989, Ronald H. Brown, attorney and political leader was elected chairman of the Democratic National Committee becoming the first African American to be elected head of a major national political party.
4. Between March and April, African-American students occupied and barricaded the administration buildings at Howard University, Washington, D. C., Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan and Morris Brown College in Atlanta, Georgia. Some of their demands included "a more delinquent fees policy, a Pan African Studies program, and better campus services.
5. On August 7th, an airplane carrying African-American Congressman Mickey Leland crashed on route to the Fugnado refugee camp in Ethiopia, killing all aboard. In Oakland, California on August 22nd, Huey P. Newton, a co-founder of the Black Panther Party was shot to death. On August 23 in the Bensonhurst section of Brooklyn, New York, sixteen year old, Yusef Hawkins, was shot to death while looking to purchase a used car. Thirty whites attacked him and three friends, wielding baseball bats, golf clubs and at least one pistol thinking Hawkins and his friends had come in the area to visit a white girl.
6. Following the incident, the Reverend Al Sharpton and other local civil rights activists led by Sonny Carson, led two days of confrontational demonstrations through the largely Italian-American neighborhood.⁸⁹⁵
7. On August 1st, more than 7,000 people chanting "No More!" and "Whose Street? Our Street!" marched through the downtown section of Brooklyn, New York in further protests of the killing of Yusef Hawkings. As the march approached the Brooklyn Bridge where police had set up barricades the marchers ran through the barricade shouting "take the bridge, take the bride!" Hand to hand battles erupted between police and the demonstrators.

⁸⁹⁵ Alton Hornsby, Jr., Chronology of African-American History [Detroit, Michigan: Gale Research, Inc., 1991] pp. 388-399

8. In the fall, on November 7th, David Dinkins, the president of the Borough of Manhattan was elected mayor of New York City becoming New York City's first African-American mayor. Also on the same day, Douglas Wiler was elected governor of Virginia becoming Virginia's first African American governor and the first African American governor elected by popular vote.

1990

On January 18, 1990 Marion S. Barry, Jr., Mayor of Washington, D.C. was set up in a "drug sting" at a local hotel by the FBI.⁸⁹⁶

On February 11, Nelson Mandela, the major leader of the struggle for democracy and human rights in the Republic of South Africa was released from prison after serving 27 years. Many in the African American community applauded Mandela's release because since the late 70's various coalitions led boycotts and divestment campaigns against the Union of South Africa because of its policy of apartheid segregation. In particular under the leadership of Randall Robinson, the head Trans-Africa starting in 1984, African-Americans had demonstrations at the South African Embassy in Washington D. C. and held demonstrations at South African consulates in Chicago, Boston, Houston, Salt Lake City and put pressure on the Democratic Party to demand the release of Nelson Mandela.⁸⁹⁷

In the Spring-Summer of 1990, African-American students at Cleveland State University in Cleveland, Ohio held rallies, demonstrations and one month long sit-ins to protest the firing of Dr. Raymond Wimbush, head of the Office of Minority Affairs.

Malcolm X Speaks In The 1990's In Cuba

Report on The Malcolm X Speaks in The 1990's symposium held in Havana, Cuba, May 22-24 1990 sponsored by Casa de las Americas and Centro de Estudios Sobre America. I was honored to be one of twenty-four African-Americans invited to Havana, Cuba for The Malcolm X Speaks in The 1990's Symposium sponsored by the Centro DE Estudios Sobre America (Center for the Study of the Americas) and Casa De Las Americas (House of The Americas).

Most of our delegation left Miami, Florida, 11:00 P.M., Friday, May 18, and arrived in Havana, Cuba at 1:00 A.M., Saturday, May 19th (Malcolm X's sixty-fifth birthday). There was a warm welcoming of our delegation. Our itinerary began 11:00 A.M. Saturday, May 19, morning with a visit to Casa de Las Americas. The procedures of the research institute were described to us. We were shown some of the pamphlets and books published by Casa de Las Americas and were welcomed to take several copies for ourselves. The publications are in Spanish. Also at this time, our delegation met with the staff of Casa de Las Americas, some of whom are historians of the African roots of Cuban culture.

Saturday afternoon, we were given the treat to participate in an African Day with the National Folkloric Ensemble. The performances consisted of dancing, music, speeches,

⁸⁹⁶ Op. Cit. (Alton Horneby, Jr.) pp. 432-435

⁸⁹⁷ Op. Cit. (Joe Trotter, Jr.) pp. 622

drama and drumming. The masses of Cuban people were in attendance and one could see the integral importance of the African Cuban experience to Cuban culture.

Saturday evening our delegation visited the Casa de Africa (House of Africa); a three-story museum established by Fidel Castro. Casa de Africa contains African sculpture, carvings, paintings, all types of artifacts given to Fidel by African leaders, organizations and individuals as a token of their appreciation for his and Cuba's support of African liberation. Sister Assata Shakur (Jo Anne Chesimard who is living in exile in Cuba) attended our stay at the Casa de Africa.

On Sunday, May 20, our delegation visited the La Guinera (a community housing project). The La Guinera is named after the African nation of Guinea. It is a housing project building presently consisting of three three-story buildings that were constructed by the residents of the community. The housing brigade told us of how the project came about and the process and theory behind their work. After the presentation, we visited a three-story modern apartment complex that the people themselves built. Our delegation visited a worker's two-bedroom apartment with kitchen and shower. It was a very clean and well-constructed apartment. It would be considered lower middle class living in The United States. If a person volunteers to work on the construction of the housing project, they get an apartment in the complex when construction is completed. The entire housing project is being built from volunteer labor of the people in the community. We next visited an old apartment of someone who was waiting for a new apartment. Needless to say, the project is a marked improvement over the previous condition.

Saturday evening the delegation visited the Hyos de San Lazaro Association where a religious celebration was held in the delegation's honor and a goat was sacrificed for the success of the conference.

On Monday, May 21, the delegation flew to the Isle of the Youth. On the Isle of the Youth are schools of students from Angola (MPLA), Namibia (SWAPO), South Africa (ANC) and Mozambique (FRELIMO). The African-American delegation visited students studying science and other subjects. We were welcomed with presentations and cultural performances. The Isle of Youth, an island of education, is an example of Cuba's commitment to Africa's self-determination. From the schools, we went by bus to the old Isle of Pine's (Isle of Youth, now) prison where the Moncada prison resides. The Moncada prison has been turned into a museum and we were given a history lesson about the early developments of the Cuban revolution. Monday evening our delegation went to Garcia Larca Theatre to see a documentary on Malcolm X.

Tuesday, May 22, in the morning, our delegation attended the inauguration of a book exhibition at the Jose Antonio Echeverria Library of the Casa de las Americas. There were books on Malcolm X and the black liberation struggle.

About 10:00 A.M. on Tuesday, the Malcolm X Speaks in The 1990's Symposium was opened at the auditorium in the Casa de las Americas. The first section dealt with perspective of Malcolm X and featured Bill Sales of the Malcolm X work Study Group who spoke on, "Malcolm X: World Context in the 60's", Osvald Cardenas who presented, "The Interaction Between Malcolm X and The Postwar Revolutionary Movement" and Akinyeli Umoja from the New African People's Organization (NAPO) who spoke on "From

Malcolm X to Omowale Malik Shabazz, the Transformation and Impact of The African Struggle in The United States." Abdul Alkalimat from 21st Century Books and the Malcolm X work Study Group discussed, "Malcolm X and Some Contemporary Ideological considerations. After the presentations, there was discussion and the conference adjourned for lunch.

The theme for the afternoon session was the Legacy of Malcolm X. The afternoon session started at 2:30 P.M. The first presentation was given by Kwame Toure (Stokely Carmichael) of The African People's Revolutionary Party (APRP) on "The Influence of Malcolm X on SNCC." The next presentation was given by Muhammad Ahmad (Max Stanford) of The Institute of 'African-American Studies on "The Legacy of Malcolm X: Building a National Democratic Movement of a New Type." Omowale Clay, of the December 12th Movement, who presented "Malcolm's Legacy and the Black Nation", followed this. David Gonzalez on "Cuban-African Relations" gave the last presentation of the day. In the debate, Kwame Toure expounded on some of the missing links of history of the 1960's not written about.

The Symposium reconvened promptly at 9:00 A.M. Wednesday, May 23rd. This section was called Afro-Centrism, Euro-Centrism and Communism. Tony Monterio gave a presentation on "The Role of the American Communist Party in the Black Liberation Movement," Rafael Hernandez discussed "Cuba and the United States Political Culture," Elombe Brath of the Patrice Lumumba Coalition gave a presentation on Malcolm in relation to the Black Nationalist Movement titled, "Comparative Predecessor and His Cognitives." Fernando Martinez Heredia discussed, "The Third World and Socialism" and Sister Assata Shakur read part of her thesis on Malcolm X. Because this session went overtime, it was continued in the afternoon session. In the afternoon session there was lively debate concerning the role of the American C. P. in the BLM and also questions about the Black Panther Party. Pro and con arguments exhausted the time allowance.

The late afternoon session was titled, "Democracy for Whom? Black Liberation and United States Electoral Politics in the Last Twenty-five Years." Odette Taverna from the National Executive Committee of The Rainbow Coalition discussed, "Malcolm's Legacy on The Empowerment of The Black Community" and Bill Strickland, also of the Rainbow Coalition, talked about "Malcolm X and Jesse Jackson."

Wednesday evening the symposium was honored to have two Cuban comrades who were with Fidel when he met with Malcolm X in 1960. They discussed aspects of this meeting.

Thursday, May 24, was the last day of The Symposium. This section was titled "Religion in The Politics of Liberation: Liberation Theology in The Americas. The morning session included a panel which included Padre Lawrence Lucas from the December 12th Movement who discussed, "Malcolm X in The Tradition of Liberation Theology"; Raul Gomez Treto who presented "Catholic Thinking, Church and Revolution in Cuba"; Rafael Topez Valdes who dealt with, "Past, Present and Future of Religions of African Origins in Cuba"; and Carlos Piedra who talked about, "Protestants in the Cuban Revolution." There was a discussion period after the panel and a break for lunch.

The afternoon session was the final meeting of The Symposium. It was entitled "Black Art and Culture: Time for Twenty-five Year Retrospective Evaluation." Vicky Akuwami

discussed the "Role of Malcolm X as a Cultural Ikon for Contemporary Youth; Rogelio Martinez Fure discussed the "African Roots in Cuban Culture," Nancy Morejon discussed, "The Presence of African Myth in Cuban and Caribbean Culture" and Natasha Russell of the Black Consciousness Movement wrapped up The symposium with a rousing presentation on "The Role of Youth in The Movement." There was a question and answer period. After the afternoon session, the director of the-Casa de las Americas presented concluding remarks and declared the symposium closed.

Our delegation returned to our hotel where we were told we had been invited to dine at the Presidential Palace as guests of the First Secretary of The Central Committee of The Cuban Communist Party and President of Cuba, Fidel Castro Ruz. Needless to say, this was an honor that everyone on the delegation cherished. Fidel greeted our delegation after its arrival at the Presidential Palace. He invited us to come in the Central Committee Meeting Room. There we were seated and after mutual greetings, we proceeded to ask the President questions. Seated with Fidel was Juan Almeida Elombe Brath of the Patrice Lumumba Coalition congratulated Fidel and the Cuban people for their recent victory over the South Africans in Angola with the support of the Angolan, SWAPO and ANC forces. President Fidel brought out a map in which he described the battle of Cuito Cuanavale and how the Cubans defeated the South Africans. He vividly described the chances taken by the Cubans and of the sacrifices of the Cuban Internationalists. After the discussion, Fidel issued a statement to the American people and we proceeded to go downstairs where a buffet was prepared and awaiting us. Fidel answered questions for another hour and one-half and we all enjoyed a historic evening.

The next morning on Friday, May 25, our delegation was taken to the camp of FMLN (Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front) where we met, FMLN combatants, Salvadorean war victims. We gave greetings of solidarity and vice versa. During our lunch break, our delegation met and decided to network and issue a statement. In the afternoon, we met with the Cuban Communist Youth Union and Cuban Internationalists who had fought in Angola. Our delegation had an extensive exchange with the comrades. We ended our stay with a statement of unity and solidarity. This ended our visit and we went back to our hotel where we prepared to pack for our flight to return to the U.S.A.

The Comrades from the Casa de las Americas accompanied us to the airport where we toasted solidarity and thanked our host over Cuban coffee. Thus ended a life changing experience which all of us on the delegation thank the Cuban people for providing.

Toward the end of the year a major conference on Malcolm X was held in New York at Manhattan Borough Community College where over 1,500 attended. Reverend Ralph Abernathy, Co-worker with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. since the 1955-56 Montgomery Alabama bus boycott died. Maxine Waters was elected to the U. S. Congress from California.

1991-1992

King Beaten by Los Angeles Police Officers

National outrage erupted when Los Angeles police officers kicked and beat Rodney King, An African-American motorist whom they had stopped for a traffic violation. A white

citizen happened to capture the incident on videotape. Chief Daryl Gates of the Los Angeles Police Department was asked to resign by the police commission and Mayor Thomas Bradley. Gates refused because of civil service rules, he could not be forced to resign.

Thomas Nominated to Supreme Court

On July 1, President George Bush, Sr. nominated Clarence Thomas, former chairperson of the Equal Employment Opportunity commission (EEOC) and judge of the U. S. Court of Appeals as associate justice U. S. Supreme Court. Thomas would replace Justice Thurgood Marshall, the first African-American to sit on the U. S. Supreme Court. Thomas's confirmation hearings by the U. S. Senate ended in a drama that both enthralled and divided the nation, when he was accused by a former employee law professor, Anita Hill, of sexual harassment during his term at the EEOC. Thomas, a conservative, was nevertheless confirmed by the U. S. Senate 54-48. He replaced one of the most liberal justices on the U. S. Supreme Court and one who dedicated a most distinguished legal career to putting in place many of the processes and institution that Thomas himself did not support – affirmative action, for example. It is ironic that that Thomas has himself benefited from affirmative action programs.⁸⁹⁸

1992

African-American Workers in Hamlet, North Carolina in a sweatshop perished when a fire broke out and they could not get out of the factory. About 200 die in the fire. Black Workers for Justice (BWFJ) from Rocky Mount, North Carolina mobilized a national mobilization to get justice for the workers.

Los Angeles Police Officers acquitted in Beating of King

On April 19, the four police officers charged with beating Rodney King in 1991 were acquitted by an all-white jury. By nightfall, rioting and looting began in South Central Los Angeles, a largely African American and Hispanic neighborhood. On May 1, President Bush ordered Marines and army troops into Los Angeles to try to restore order. When the federal troops left on May 10, fifty-two people had been killed and six hundred buildings set on fire.⁸⁹⁹

November 3, 1992

Carol Moseley-Braun, politician, U. S. Ambassador, became the first African American woman to win a U. S. Senate seat (Illinois). She held the post until 1998. Moseley-Braun, a former Cook County Recorder of Deeds, won support from a broad-based political coalition to defeat Republican Richard Williamson. A Chicago native, Moseley-Braun was elected to her deeds post which she held until her election to the U. S. Senate. She later served as U. S. ambassador to New Zealand and Samoa. Moseley-Braun is currently the founder and pastor of Good Food Organics in Chicago. African-Americans surpassed gains during Reconstruction in terms of elected officials.

⁸⁹⁸ Charles M. Christian, *Black Saga: The African-American Experience: A Chronology* [Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1995] p. 540

⁸⁹⁹ Op. Cit. p. 546

On April 9, 1993, Benjamin Chavis of the Wilmington Ten was selected to head the NAACP by its board of directors. Chavis began to galvanize inner city youth and came into alliance with Louis Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam.

In August of 1993, the 30th Anniversary of the March on Washington was organized mainly by the NAACP.

1994 survivors of Rosewood: Scheduled to receive reparations:

On April 8, the Florida legislature agreed to pay up to \$150,000 to each survivor of a weeklong rampage of white mob that wiped out the African American town of Rosewood seventy-one years ago.

On New Year's Day in 1923, a white mob formed and went on a rampage after hearing about a white woman's claim that she had been assaulted by a African American man. The white mob marched into the small Gulf Coast community of Rosewood in search of the African American man. Failing to find him, they burned nearly every house at least 200 people died, and many others fled the violence.

The 1994 bill, approved earlier by the House, established a fund of \$1.5 million to pay anyone up to \$150,000 who could prove he or she had lived in Rosewood and was evacuated during the violence. It also created a \$500,000 fund for reimbursement of lost property and provided \$100,000 a year for college scholarships for Rosewood family descendants and other minorities. As many as 25 students could receive up to \$4,000 annually.

1995

The Great Million Man March

Basically, there are two kinds of power that count in America: economic power and political power, with social power being derived from these two. In order for the Afro-Americans to control their destiny, they must be able to control and affect the decisions that control their destiny: economic, political, and social. This can only be done through organization...*Malcolm X, by Any Means Necessary, pp. 45-46.*

On October 16, 1995, one million men marched in Washington, D.C., for a historical day of atonement. Minister Louis Farrakhan, leader of the Nation of Islam, issued the call for a day-of-atonement and absence of a million African American men. Many felt this was needed for African American men to repent for allowing themselves to fall victims of the capitalist system's institutionalization of self-destructive genocide, the selling and using of drugs, the fratricidal killing of African Americans by African Americans, the verbal, physical abuse of African American women and children.

Though much of this activity stems from the lack of jobs due to the overseas expansion of U.S. industry, the day-of-atonement was needed to call African American men to accept the

awesome responsibility to bring about a fundamental social change in creating a "New America." The great Million Man March created a day of African American unity in which two million African American men and women who were there displayed love and respect for one another. Millions of other African Americans across the nation took the day off of work, held local support unity demonstrations, and watched the march on TV. Traveling on over 12,000 buses, mostly organized by local organizing committees (LOC), of which thirty left from Cleveland, traveling by caravans of cars, overflowing airports and bus stations, the Million Man March, which had been organized through the African American Leadership Summit and mobilized by its national coordinator, the Reverend Ben Chavis, was a resounding success.⁹⁰⁰

The great Million Man March offers an alternative to the rightward drift of American politics. Many African American leaders realize that conservative Republicans like Newt Gingrich and Robert Dole, who were reversing the gains won over the last thirty years, would not be in office if African Americans used their voting power.

Along with atonement was the call by Reverend Ben Chavis, Minister Louis Farrakhan, and Reverend Jesse Jackson to register 8 million unregistered African Americans of voting age. The use of the power of an "educated" African American vote could definitely move us toward "a more perfect union."

History of Earlier Marches on Washington

A. Philip Randolph, an African American labor leader, who proposed the first March on Washington in 1941, proposed a march of 100,000 African American men. The purpose of the march was to shut Washington down if President Franklin D. Roosevelt did not end segregated practices in hiring in defense industries. The proposed march had local affiliates called the March on Washington Movement (MOWM). Hours before the march was to be held, Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8802 ending racial segregation in the defense industry.⁹⁰¹

The second effort at a March on Washington by African Americans and their allies occurred August 27, 1963. As thousands upon thousands of African Americans took to the streets facing water hoses, dogs being leashed on them, and mass arrests to end racial discrimination, a grassroots call went out to march on Washington. The masses were talking about shutting Washington down. Activists were planning to lie across highways and airport runways and sitting in the halls of Congress.

After much effort at negotiation, funding, and compromise, President John F. Kennedy met with the leaders of the major civil rights organizations, NAACP, SCLC, CORE, and SNCC [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Congress on Racial Equality, and Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee]. Kennedy promised a civil rights bill and endorsed the march. Though the march was successful, with a participation of 250,000, it was not critical of the Kennedy administration. In 1983 a 20-year Commemorative March, including a broad

⁹⁰⁰ See "Black Men Triumph!" *Call and Post (Cleveland)*, Thursday, October 19, 1995, Volume 80, No. 42, p. 1

⁹⁰¹ Mari Jo Buhle, Paul Buhle, Dan Georgakas (eds.), *Encyclopedia of the American Left* [Chicago and London: St. James Press, 1990] pp. 642, 643

spectrum of leadership, was held. While the march gave a recommitment to the drive for racial parity, it failed to advance a program beyond supporting the liberal wing of the Democratic Party. The 1993 march restated a similar program, with the reactionary sector of the Jewish community demanding that Minister Louis Farrakhan not speak. He was excluded.

Meaning of the March for the African American Community

Many people have asked, Why a day of atonement? One is accepting the responsibility of doing wrong. In order to move "toward a more perfect union," not only must the U.S. government atone for its crimes of genocide against African Americans, but so must African American men who have strayed from the path of black liberation.

With the statistics of 800,000 African Americans in jail and prisons and only 500,000 in college, someone, somewhere in the African American community has been misdirected and mis-educated. Jesse Jackson said in the last ten years the jail economy has risen from \$4 billion to \$72 billion. Companies such as American Express, who divested from South Africa, have now reinvested in prison construction and privatization. African American offenders, arrested for having five grams of crack cocaine, receive 5 years mandatory time, while white offenders, arrested for 500 grams of cocaine powder, receive a mandatory sentence of a year.

True, the cause is the capitalist system — no jobs and a drug economy. But African Americans must accept the individual and collective responsibility for submitting to the degenerating effects of monopoly capitalism's plan to destroy the African American community. African American men in particular have fallen for the "me first" as opposed to the "we" mentality. Too many African Americans have succumbed to drug and alcohol abuse, abusing ourselves, our women and our children. Minister Farrakhan asked that African Americans stop using the "B" word against women. Jesse Jackson asked the question, "What can a million men do?" They can change the self-destructive behavior of the African American community.

Day of Absence

One of the purposes of the Million Man March was the call for all African Americans to take the day off from work and not to purchase goods on the day of the march. If it could be done on one day, there is always a possibility of doing it longer. There is the potential of a national African American general strike (work stoppage and economic boycott). This would be an effort at total unity and power of social activism of the African American community.

The Million Man March showed African Americans and the world the significance of the "power of numbers," the African American masses united. It showed that at least a million of the 15 million African American youth of America were willing to commit themselves to participating in the black liberation movement if provided the opportunity to do so, from cradle to grave, from generation to generation.

Pan-African/International Implications

Like the mass struggles in South Africa, the Million Man March showed us the potential of African American mass struggle and its impact on the nation and the world.

With the support of 90 percent of the world, there is no power structure on earth that can stop the mass revolutionary action of 40 million African Americans. The African American and African struggles are one and the same.

While Africa is the world's richest landmass, providing the raw materials critical to the maintenance of the developed world's industries and economies, it is the world's poorest continent. The only way Africa can gain true liberation is by a fundamental change of the world economic order. The potential power of the world's oppressed remains dormant. The African American struggle for national liberation, self-determination, and economic equality can awaken this force. In this sense, what affects one affects all.

African Americans are "taxed without proportional representation." African Americans, as 10 to 15 percent of the U.S. population, should have 47,115 African American elected officials out of the more than 497,155 elected officials in America. There are about 8,000 African American elected officials in the U.S. in the year 1995. Living in the heart of the world capitalist economy, African Americans have an un-estimated power to liberate Africa and the world. A mass self-defense civil disobedience movement for reparations could lead to a second Reconstruction and a new socialist America.

The Goals of the March: Registration and a Third Political Force

One of the major goals of the Million Man March is to register 8 million unregistered African Americans of voting age. One hundred and fifty thousand were registered on the day of the march. Another important goal is to create a "third political force." Minister Farrakhan said, "We will no longer vote for a African American man because he is African American; candidates will gain support of the community if they are in accord with our agenda.

We intend to never again let our vote be taken for granted. We'll never again vote personality or color. We'll vote for those who hold our agenda sacred...the day of party loyalty of African American people is over and that "rather than a third party," a third political power will be formed "that will encourage black Democrats, Republicans, and Independents to vote for agendas rather than parties."⁹⁰²

Several speakers proposed the convening of local and statewide black political conventions to do this.

African American Economic Fund

⁹⁰² "New Political Force Unleashed," The Final Call, Volume 15, No. 1, November 8, 1995, p. 12

Minister Farrakhan recommended that a black economic development fund be developed, to be supervised by a board made up from the National African American Leadership Summit. It was suggested that each African American contribute \$20 a month to this fund for two or three years or on a personal basis. It was calculated that in two or three years, \$20 billion could be generated.

True democracy exists only through the participation of the people, not through the activity of their representatives....⁹⁰³

Minister Farrakhan stressed the process of developing a process of building a holistic community. This would be the establishment of self-reliant economic institutions that survive from one generation to the next. These institutions (cooperative economic businesses) would provide the community with an internal safety net that would employ a network of self-employed semi-autonomous people. The political economy and education for self-reliance would be based on the theory that the African American community could not be totally economically independent as long as capitalism exists. But with a self-reliant culture that harnesses the economic resources of the community centered around central institutions, that community can flourish to the extent that the circulation of dollars turns over two or three times (supporting African American businesses) before leaving the community (\$200 billion).

Once the recirculation of the dollar within the community is established according to the African American working class through the African American Leadership Summit, a collective investment plan can be instituted for community manufacture development ventures, which would hire a number of people from the community. This "internal" self-sufficient political economy and Afro-centric education can be centered around the African American Christian churches, Islamic masjids, or local African American educational centers. To illustrate the potential, Minister Farrakhan took up a collection of \$1 per person at the march to pay for the expenses of covering the march. The collection netted four million dollars.

Join an Organization

Minister Farrakhan said:

So my beloved brothers, here's what we would like you to do. We must belong to some organization that is working for and in the interest of the uplift and the liberation of our people. We must become a totally organized people, and the only way we can do that is to become a part of some organization that is working for the uplift of our people. We must keep the Local Organizing Committees that made this event possible; we must keep them together. Go back and join the Local Organizing Committee. And then all of us as leaders must stay together and make the National African American Leadership Summit inclusive of all of us.⁹⁰⁴

Pledging Ourselves to the Struggle

⁹⁰³ Muammar al-Qaddafi, *The Green Book*, (Tripoli, Libya, Africa: Libyan Government), p. 7

⁹⁰⁴ "Towards a Perfect Union," *The Final Call*, November 8, 1995, p. 30

Reverend Jesse Jackson in his speech said, "When you go back home today let's go back with power in unity and coalition. We are against racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, anti-Arabism, and black face politics. Black and white must find common ground."

Minister Farrakhan concluded his remarks by asking all participants to the march to commit to the Million Man March Pledge:

I pledge that from this day forward, I will strive to love my brother as I love myself. I, from this day forward, will strive to improve myself spiritually, morally, mentally, socially, politically, and economically for the benefit of myself, my family, and my people. I pledge that I will strive to build business, build houses, build hospitals, build factories, and enter into international trade, for the good of myself, my family, and my people.

I pledge that from this day forward I will never raise my hand with a knife or a gun to beat, cut, or shoot any member of my family or any human being except in self-defense.

I pledge from this day forward I will never abuse my wife by striking her, disrespecting her, for she is the mother of my children and the producer of my future. I pledge from this day forward I will never engage in the abuse of children, little boys or little girls, for sexual gratification. For I will let them grow in peace and be strong men and women for the future of our people.

I will never again use the "B" word to describe any female, but particularly my own black sister. I pledge from this day forward that I will not poison my body with drugs or that which is destructive to my health and my wellbeing. I pledge from this day forward I will support black newspapers, black radio, black television. I will support black artists who clean up their acts to show respect for themselves and respect for their people and respect for the ears of the human family. I will do all of this so help me God.

The Million Man March was a new beginning. Long live the spirit of the Million Man March! We will win!

1997

The Million Man March inspired women to organize their own March. Initiated by two Philadelphia women, Phile Chionseu, a small business owner and Asia Coney, a public housing activist, on October 25, 1997. An estimated one million African-American women participated in the March to listen to speeches by congresswoman Maxine Waters, rapper, Sister Souljah and Sister Winnie Mandela from South Africa. The march addressed issues such as domestic violence, inadequate access to quality health care, education and the need for unity.⁹⁰⁵

⁹⁰⁵ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine and Stanley Harrold, *The African-American Odyssey* [Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2006] p. 660

1998

The Black Radical Congress was convened in Chicago. It was a coalition of African American progressive groups and individuals. Over 2,000 activists came together to discuss the rebuilding of the black liberation movement.

The Present Global Economic Crisis and the Coming U.S. Recession

The United States and Western Europe are employing fewer workers due to their use of non-productive labor (service) and the use of automation and cybernation in industries. But they are producing more and more commodities at a faster rate, which is causing a global glut of overproduction. Because of lower wages in a service economy, the consumer power in western capitalist societies cannot absorb the over-abundance of commodities. The countries of the Third World where these commodities are produced can't absorb them either, because their workers are paid extremely low wages. What has resulted is stagnation and a global financial crisis.

The full impact on the United States has been delayed, partly because the world's capitalists pour their wealth into our country, which they see as the last safe haven of capitalism. In 1997, there was a record inflow of a trillion dollars. The fallout has only been delayed. The first cold winds of crisis are chilling American workers as the June unemployment rate edged up to 4.5% with the weakness led by the third straight decline in factory payrolls.⁹⁰⁶

While there is a financial crisis in Asia, Europe, Latin America, and the latest, Brazil, the United States is still the main engine of the world (global) capitalist economy. Consumerism, the domestic (U.S.) demand for commodities has kept much of the rest of the world from falling into a global depression, with U.S. imports rising by \$40 billion in 1998 to \$817 billion in the first nine months of 1999, while the trade deficit climbed by \$45 billion. Essentially, the capitalists worldwide are flooding their products on the U.S. market and Americans are spending, buying, spending and buying, (Commodity Cropping). But for how long?

In terms of manufacturing, the United States is hard hit. So much that Congress and Clinton are forced to put higher tariffs on Japanese imported steel. The manufacturing sector, about one sixth of the economy, is clearly in recession. Factory output has dropped in three of the last six months. Manufacturing employment bucked the overall trend of lengthening payrolls and has fallen by 100,000. The trading sector, mostly manufacturing, is likely to stay depressed for most of 1999 as international markets remain weak.⁹⁰⁷

In the domestic consumption of commodities, much of the consumption is due to the expansion of credit to consumers by credit unions, including the purchase of houses. Domestic demand grew by almost 6% in the first nine months of 1998. This was an increase, up from below 4% in 1997. This consumer spending is due for an abrupt slowdown, because many Americans are spending a greater portion of their earnings.

In the first nine months of 1998, consumer spending grew by 5.7% compared with a year earlier. Nonresidential fixed investment rose by 13%.... Consumers increased their spending in the last year, largely by

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Victor Perlo, "World Economic Crisis" *People's Weekly World*, July 11, 1998, p.8

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Gerard Baker, "Economy Grows While the World is in Crisis", *The Plain Dealer*, Sunday, December 13, 1998, p. 44

drawing down on savings. Americans saved 2.1% of their incomes in 1997 and by October 1998, which had fallen to -.2%⁹⁰⁸

The booming stock market and talk of a balanced budget, which is actually in a deficit of \$44 billion because the government borrowed money from Social Security to balance the budget, is creating a false sense of security for many Americans. Even with the expanded consumerism, more and more Americans cannot afford to buy, buy, buy, particularly at the rate capitalists, with the assistance of technology, can produce. Therefore, as goods remain in the stock and immovable, the capitalists feel a “falling rate of profit”. They are forced to sell their goods at a lesser price. Look at all the sales! The capitalists will still make a profit, but less than was speculated. When speculation on profits decrease, investors invest less money, and the stock market becomes sluggish. With a threatening, sluggish stock market on verge of collapse, spending will have to slow down. With eight hundred million people unemployed worldwide, it seems as if, in 1999 and 2000, the American economy is approaching a severe and prolonged recession.

Is the Republican Strategy a Racist Strategy?

There is a political realignment in American politics. The Republican Party has now become a party solidly controlled by conservatives (those who would prefer things the way they were in the racist good ‘ole days), the reactionary fascist from the moral minority to the Nazi militias. These forces tend to isolate moderate Republicans who are still committed to the Republican Party strategy.

What is the Republican Party strategy about? It is about maintaining a dictatorship of white skin privilege of white males over the majority of Americans in the 21st century. This is why the Republican Party has targeted 26 states to eliminate Affirmative Action. They have been successful in two states, California and Washington.

The majority of white Americans need to see the majority of Republicans for what they are: “coded” racists. African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, Native Americans and progressive white Americans need to form a broad coalition to stop and reverse the motion of the racist-conservative Republican Party and the ultra-right.

How serious is the political motion to the right in America? The motion to eliminate Affirmative Action, which is being led by uncle tom Ward Connelly, is just the beginning of what the racists have in mind. The racist plan is that their children will be privileged to have the skills in the 21st century to maintain a dictatorship of white minority control over a Third World majority in the United States (Technological apartheid). The battle for America is on. The counter-revolution temporarily has the upper hand.

While there is talk about how the Democrats won some elections, which slowed the Republican offensive, on the state level Republicans suffered only one loss in governorships. The Republican Party retained control of 31 states. Republicans wrested governorships from Democrats in four races, and returned incumbents in 15 others. The victory of Taft (Republican) for governor in Ohio will probably mean that the Republican state senator, Michael Wise, from Chagrin Falls, and an enemy of the people, will try again

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Ibid, p. 44

to initiate the process to eliminate Affirmative Action in 1999 and 2000 in Ohio. We call on our allies, the 175,000 trade unionists in Cuyahoga County, the Labor Party and others to prepare to smash this anti-Affirmative Action motion when the right raises it. We also ask progressive whites to vote representatives such as Michael Wise and Co. out of office.

Across the country, Democrats control 21 state legislatures, to the Republicans' 16; but the Republicans still maintain dominance in the Senate and the House of Representatives. Reagan appointees, needless to say, dominate the judicial system. The political battle for the fate of America is taking place. Your destiny, and the destiny of your children, is at stake. If the oppressed, downtrodden, left or shut out unite, we can vote these racists out of office. But we must become politically sophisticated; know our true friends and enemies know our weaknesses and strengths, as well as the strength of our representatives and ourselves. If we do this, we will be prepared to wage and win a thousand battles in the 21st century. Calling on the multi-racial, multinational, ethnic, diverse majority to rise up to overthrow (vote out of office), the racist dictatorship of the racist, fascist minority. **We will win, because we are the majority of the people, and in the long run, the people will win!**

1999

The Million Youth March was convened in New York under the adult leadership of Khalid Muhammad who had developed the New Black Panther Party.

Causes of the Million Man March, and Where We Go From Here

First I want to give a descriptive analysis of what stage of development we are in that brought forth the Million Man March. Then I want to talk about a two-pronged flexible strategy for dealing with the situation.

Manning Marable states that capitalism as an economic system is based on unequal exchange between the owners of capital and those who work for a wage. Capitalism as a system fosters class stratification, extreme concentration of wealth and poverty, and promotes racial hatred as a means to divide workers. This statement can sum up the condition that we find ourselves in today.

I'll try to illustrate in a simple way what this means for African American people. The capitalists try to get maximum profit by any means necessary. So when we study the capitalists system – each day, each second, the capitalist system or the capitalist class is trying to obtain more and more profit. Capitalism does not just try to get profit, it tries to get maximum profit from everyone.

One way capitalism does this is to maintain a “reserve army of the unemployed” – as a pressure to keep wages down (if you don't like the low wages I'm paying, says the employer, the owner of capital, there are other people waiting for your job.) A great many of the unemployed are African Americans. This is the result of deliberate racist policies by the capitalist employers, the ruling class.

The Present Period and Social Context

Revolutionary strategy requires that a correct estimate be made of the historical period and the social context of the struggle, both nationally and worldwide. On October 16, 1995, close to 2.1 million African American men demonstrated, responding to Minister Louis Farrakhan's call for a day of atonement and a day of absence.

Why did they atone? Many people feel that a day of atonement is placing the blame on the victim rather than the perpetrator. But even the victim must realize that he or she has some responsibility in his or her oppression. The day of atonement was for African American men who had fallen victim to the lack of employment and the illegal economy that the crack cocaine for the most part had become criminalized. This is why the day of atonement was called – for those of us who had fallen victim to this planned genocide, to atone, or to try to rectify our behavior our part in the situation.

There has been a mass criminalization of African American males in the last ten years – with 500,000 African American males presently incarcerated in prisons. Some 300,000 more are caught up in the legal system. One in every seven African American males is entangled in the prison system in one way or another. One in four African American males age 24 or younger is entangled in the legal system.

So with this situation, no matter what else African American men may have felt they felt the need to unite and to make a statement. Whether or not that statement has been followed up on, I'll leave to your judgment and we can enter into a discussion about that.

Three Tendencies in the African American Community

Miss Ella Baker, a key activist in the 1960s, says that there are three major political tendencies in the African American community. (1) Those who want to be included in the system as it is. Many have defined that as “integration” – having some political empowerment within the existing political system. (2) Those who are discouraged with the system as it is and who want to separate and form their own nation or go back to Africa or whatever (3) Those who want to change the system.

Manning Marable calls those in the third group transformationists. Those who want to make a fundamental change of the economic and political system. I'll come back to these three tendencies, but the crisis that the African American community faces great that possibly we will be able to get over the contradictions between these three tendencies. These three major tendencies have kept African Americans from uniting – and they go back to pre-Civil War Colored Peoples' Conventions, where they argued over what direction or what path African Americans should take.

Technological Apartheid

Essentially, African Americans are facing a new situation in less than ten years we may be faced with technological apartheid, an institutionalized overt and covert form of genocide. It all depends on how you want to describe it. This is something new. African Americans have faced apartheid before, but not in the form of a technological apartheid.

Now what do I mean by technological apartheid? I'm going to try to explain in the simplest way that I can what has taken place. There are certain sociological changes that have taken place in America that are not being talked about – technological changes. Industry did not just relocate to suburbia for no reason. So we need to analyze this.

There's a structural crisis in the system. Things are getting worse. Each generation has less of a chance of achieving what the generation previously has achieved, even though the new generation usually has more education. There's a structural crisis in capitalism with the development of automation and cybernation and robotics. Robots are replacing much unskilled labor. Automation is at the level where the capitalists can produce more with less people. So this affects those people who are on the bottom rung. Essentially, this structural crisis eliminates the need for excess manual or mechanical labor.

African Americans in the Work Force

Twelve million African Americans presently are in the labor force 3.3 million of them are trade unionists. Most of those trade unionists came into the labor movement from the 1930s to the 1970s and joined unions and became some of the most militant of the trade union organizers and fought for better wages for labor. Of those 3.5 million many are 50 or older. Now with unskilled labor leaving what is called the inner city. The quality jobs or the unionized jobs in many inner cities will be gone in another generation.

These are presently 7 million African American in unorganized labor, many in the service industry. There are approximately 2 million unemployed African American workers since 1944 when the mechanical cotton picker was introduced on farms and plantations in the South, which permanently displaced many African American workers, African Americans had to search for ways to be reincorporated into the productive labor force. From 1944 to 1964 American business and industry was experiencing a boom, which was able to incorporate many of these displaced African American workers. The United States was economically the number one country in the world.

Changes in Industry Affect African American Workers

Now what we want to look at is why did industry moved overseas and why did it move to the suburbs?

You have three major revolutions occurring in the world at the same time. One is the revolution in nature – the unusual increase in rainstorms, hailstorms, blizzards, and so on signals a revolution in nature. Two, you have revolutions in society, which happen seldom, but sometimes they do happen. Three, you have a scientific and technological revolution. And that's the revolution in science. Like we have lights now. Two centuries ago, your forefather George Washington, not my forefather, but your forefather, studied under candlelight. Now you have steam ships and maps. But your discoverer, Christopher Columbus, not my discoverer, had to learn how to sail, right? Nobody wants to talk about the Moorish navigation school he went to. So these are the myths that we deal with.

But what I'm trying to get at is that things take place, often major things, but we get hardly any idea of when they take place or how they take place or how they are affecting us.

Some major changes have come and mainly through the space program – technological innovations resulting from the space program. People say, “The man on the moon, what does that have to do with anything?” One, you have new clothing, now made of new synthetic materials. You have new alloys and other such things.

One invention that we came through testing in the space program is hard plastic. Could anybody tell me something that you may use on a daily basis that’s made out of hard plastic? Your automobile, what was once made of steel is now made of hard plastic.

Now, what took place was a major innovation or revolution in transportation. You now have large tractor-trailers that can move products where rail lines don’t go. To make a long story short, the introduction of plastics and other light alloys in the automobile industry made the inner city almost obsolete. Before, steel and other heavy alloys had to be transported by railroad lines – this is why you had industry develop in the inner cities in the first place. Many African American communities and other working class communities grew up right near those railroad lines.

It became cheaper from 1970 to 1980 for the capitalists to transport these alloys by interstate highway and to relocate factories at interstate highway intersections. What this did was allow for the growth of suburban villages for people who could afford to move out of the city. It also helped with the de-politicization of the working class. Which simply meant or means that African American workers were raising hell in the work place in the 1960s and unions were demanding higher wages and benefits, and the capitalists were in a constant war with the working class, so they relocated and went through a complete restructuring.

Now, this restructuring affected us, because where we could take a bus or a trolley to get to work, we couldn’t get to work anymore. That same factory had moved out. Look where Ford is located now.

So this created a crisis for African American males in particular. African Americans are becoming lumpenized – in the Black Panther movement in the 60s we called it lumpenization – permanently unemployed African American youth becoming criminalized. And this is because legal employment is not physically available for most African American youth. But illegal employment is easily within their physical means. So they are engaged in the illegal economy, and that’s why those 500,000 are in prison close to 500,000 felons.

And by the way, this will effect the voting power of the African American community. We’re not going to see this immediately, but we will in the next few years. In most states if you are a convicted felon, you cannot vote. And this is going to affect the voting power of African American males.

Program Needed

So we need a program to advance the motion of the Million Man March and we need a prescriptive program to deal with technological apartheid. African Americans must now fight to remain a viable part of the working class and develop a long range flexible strategy to be a social and economic force in the 21st century.

So that means that while we enter into coalitions and others, African Americans must have a particular strategy to survive a systematic genocide, an institutional genocide where the system has restructured itself where viable jobs will not be in the immediate future for African Americans. We have to develop a crash program for young people. We have to develop a program for saving those who are in crisis now, or are at risk, and develop a strategy for those who are secure to lay a safety net for the future.

We Need Adequate Information

Where do we go from here? One of the first things we have to do is to have sessions where we talk to one another. We have to begin to pass on information to one another. I think our main weakness is the lack of adequate information.

I have a few articles here. This is an article by a sister named Barbara Ramsey. It's called "The U.S: The African American Poor and the Politics of Expendability" It's published in a journal called Race and Class. But to whom does that journal go? Unless you know about publications like this or unless you search them out, they are not going to get to the brothers and sisters in the African American community. But it's one of the best analyses there is. I mean she breaks it down to the contemporary situations. She's saying that as far as national growth the largest industries that are being built in the United States are prison-related.

There's another article here by William I. Robinson, a brother in Tennessee, on globalization talking about essentially that the capitalist system has more expendable, unskilled labor than it can absorb. It can't even absorb white unskilled labor at this point. There's an international glut on the market now. There's overproduction and under-consumption.

Here's another article. This was in Black Scholar magazine a few years ago, and the author predicted what is now taking place. It's called: "The Social Implications on the New Black Underclass" – by Troy Duster.

Here's another, given to me by a white professor. This was published in 1986, it's called "How Business is Reshaping America."

These are things that the average person doesn't see. This is what's affecting us. We need to know what's affecting us.

Here's another one from a magazine called Dollars and Sense, "The Racial Divide Widens Why African American Workers Have Lost Ground" All right? So I'm not making this up folks.

Recognizing the Crisis

We're in a crisis and that's one of the first things that has to be stated. We need to know that we're in a crisis. If you don't know you're in a crisis, then you can't respond. So that's the first thing. We have to develop a consensus that we're in a crisis. If you don't realize you're in a crisis, you can't do what you did before you entered that crisis.

The cultural traits that have been transmitted inter-generationally since slavery in the African American community are inadequate for empowerment in the 21st century. Our habits, our way of life, our way of socializing that we are used to is not going to prepare us to survive in the 21st century. We are going to have to develop something new.

African American life style must become a scientific, holistic, spiritual, materialistic one. When I talk about spiritual, I'm not talking about where or not you believe in God. I'm talking about having human values and maintaining accountability to those human values, and aspects of a dialectical and historical materialism – understanding the capitalist system. Synchronized with the latest in capitalist technology.

I have a friend in another city, an organizer who works with young people. We were talking about computers and he said, "That's somethin' for the white boy." No, that's something that we have to prepare our young people to master.

End Substance Abuse

This new culture must fuse a new people, a new generation free of all forms of substance abuse. All forms. We cannot afford it. We're not going to be around. We can engage in it if we want, you can play if you want. The system is changing over. The more weaknesses you have, the less chance you have of being around. We must reach our young people on this.

We have the tendency to support our enemies and isolate our friends. It's done out of ignorance, but we need to go through whole political reeducation process. And that's what a movement does and that's what we're talking about – creating a movement, a regenerating movement.

Transformational Program Needed

We need to form a transitional, transformational program. We need to look at what that transformational program will be about. We need to be about self-organization. This is what I'm saying about self-organization. If you have to depend on me to tell you what to do, what happens if I'm not here? So you have to be about developing yourselves through struggles and organizing yourselves in developing a collective leadership.; so that all of you can get up here and advance the struggle, a mass struggle.

So that's what we're talking about the self-organization of our people to develop a collective leadership based around issues that demand a fundamental change of this society.

We have to develop a mass accountability system. I have to be accountable to you, you have to be accountable to me, we have to be accountable to ourselves. And our leaders who step forward, who we elect have to be accountable to us. If we don't hold them accountable when they go astray, when they betray us, the movement will be derailed and set back. So we must have a mass accountability process.

We must begin to build economic and social institutions that will carry us forward through the period of deluge that we re going through.

We must work up a scientific developmental plan for raising the next generation concentrating on from birth to age 15. We need massive “rights to passage” programs, “mentoring” programs concentrating on reading, writing, math, language, science, African American history and labor history.

We have to educate the oppressed to constantly demand their rights, promote massive electoral participation and maintain pressure on the elected to carry out progressive programs.

We need to have a division of labor. We need to have roles for everyone in the community. Everyone can be useful. We have to have a combination of young, middle-aged – what I call young elders – and mature elders. Each has a role. For African American children from birth to 15 we need to set up liberation schools and rights of passage programs to develop scientific and technological skills for the 21st century. We don’t need to teach Ebonics; we need to teach standard English in the home. That’s the responsibility of parents. Now there are libraries all over. Cleveland/Philadelphia has a good library system. So there really isn’t any excuse for a parent to say they cannot get the information because it is there.

We need to teach our children to read. My mother used to sit up reading to me before I could walk. I didn’t know this. She told me this years’ later. I always wondered why I liked to read. She would read me to sleep. She said she hoped that by osmosis some of it would rub off. Teach your children to read, learn standard English. If you can, get them used to computers. Begin at an early age.

Also, begin to learn languages. We need to learn languages. As a community, one language we need to learn is Spanish. There are or will be in 3 or more years, 30 million Spanish speaking people in the U.S. They have many cultural experiences similar to ours, and we need to enter into progressive coalitions with them to maximize the political power of our community with theirs. And I would say, learn Chinese. Malcolm X said to learn Chinese. Because China will be a force in the 21st century, and the Asian American community will be much larger than it is now.

Then there are ages 15 to 25. Those of us who are older, those of us who are trade unionists, those of us who have skills need to establish apprenticeship programs with those who are between the ages of 15 and 25 who are not college bound. Not everybody is going to go college. There are skills – car mechanics, electricians’ work – many skills that need to be passed on and we need to develop this kind of apprenticeship.

Those aged 25 to 46 should be the most politically active engaging in mass civil obedience along with the 15 to 25 year olds. We need to develop a safety net. We need to engage in mass civil disobedience for the implementation of a transitional program that calls for a third Reconstruction of American society.

As I end, I will talk about 13 points, very simple points and I think that these points will relate to most Americans. Fundamentally you’re talking about a Reconstruction of American society as it is today.

We need to “start by forming” or creating African American workers’ congresses or a grass roots congress from which we can network. We have people from many different religions, many different directions, and many different organizations.

When I talk about workers I’m talking about most of us. I don’t think there are too many African American multi-millionaires. There are some millionaires, but in our community most of us work for a living, or would like to work for a living. Just like to work for a living. We need to have African American workers or grass roots congresses, whatever they will be called.

From age 45 to 80, in that group, there are many who are still in our community who have no way to relay their skills to another generation. This is why we have to set up networks so that skills can be passed on. These can also be the teachers for our liberation schools.

African American Congress Needed

One of the objectives that Minister Farrakhan laid out at the Million Man March was to join an organization or work with a coalition of organization or if you don’t like the existing organizations, form an organization. We need a forum and this what we had hoped for that the Million Man March could have been that forum. Be we need to a forum, a grass roots of African American workers congress, a united front from which we can deal with this crisis.

Also, we need to form African American economic funds within collectives. We don’t have to wait for a national economic fund to be created, but we need to get out of the concept of everything for me, or a get-rich-quick scheme. We need to begin to have ventures in partnerships or work with collectives of folks; and there may be people who may not like this, this may not sound worthwhile to many people, but it takes millions of dollars to make a movement for social change. This is what Dr. King understood and what we didn’t understand until it was too late. Dr. King was generating the money with which to mobilize.

In American society – which is a very bourgeois society, not a backward or rural society – it’s going to take millions to bring forth any kind of major resolution of our situation.

We need to pledge ourselves to continue this protracted struggle from cradle to grave and never forget where we come from.

Voting Power

We have voting power, although it’s going to deplete. But we have to set up a safety network. If we establish a safety network properly, we can pressure the politicians. There are politicians who are calling for a reinstatement of voting rights after one has completed their legal time as a felon. This should be one of our demands.

We should evaluate political candidates from a standpoint of community self-interest and develop a powerful political force that would evaluate them. We would evaluate al political forces and invite all political forces to come in front of us to be evaluated. We should know what left, right, and center mean. Know what it means politically and know what it means

to you. So that when you have a Reagan or a Bush or whoever, you know what they represent.

Labor Problems

We need to develop a worker-student alliance where students work in the community, so that students in college can develop a relationship with youth in the community. Sometimes there are artificial barriers. When I was a counselor, a student got a “D” and wanted an “F” because he felt that having a “D” made him white, and having an “F” made him Black. This is a negative kind of thinking. So many in the community don’t view youth who are in college as progressive or as doing something for the community. They consider it going white. We need to reverse this.

We need a two-pronged strategy, which would link those in the communities with workers in unions and on the job. We need to develop and help lead unions wherever we can and support unions. Don’t let the establishment newspapers turn you against unions. You buy that paper, but that’s not your paper, folks, so we need to read between the lines. And support those who are in unions. We need to build African American labor caucuses wherever possible and develop consumer cooperatives.

The CIA Crack Cocaine Scandal

Above all we should be diligent. In fact, we should be enraged. Representative Maxine Walters has revealed that the CIA had been instrumental in initiating and flooding the Los Angeles African American community (and whatever other African American communities we don’t know about) with crack cocaine. I don’t know why we’re not down in Washington, D. C. now raising hell and demanding that the CIA and the FBI have to go. Thus shows you how asleep we are.

I hear my colleagues talk about me giving my ear to conspiracy theories, but when you have a revelation that a government agency has flooded crack cocaine into the African American community, you’re not dealing with a “conspiracy theory” That conspiracy is a reality! You’re dealing with institutional racism, on the one hand and there’s technological apartheid going on, plus you’re dealing with a conspiracy of racists who have political power. So we should be outraged.

We should be outraged not only at the Oliver North and the Ronald Reagans and George Bushes but at the Uncle Clarence Thomases. We should be outraged. And if we were outraged enough, then we would understand that that brother or sister that you pass everyday, and they say, “You straight?” – they are the CIA’s secret weapon right inside the African American community. We should be outraged.

Drug pushers have to be reeducated, if possible, or neutralized, isolated or destroyed, whatever it takes, but we should be outraged, and teach our children to be outraged.

We have to have a flexible, holistic strategy. We have to use an inside-outside approach instead of pitting people against one another. This crisis is so great that it doesn’t matter that organization you are in, what political philosophy. If we are doing something

progressive, then I'm with you. We have to get out of that "either or" kind of thing. We have to have a flexible, holistic strategy, something that's inclusive.

This program suggests rebuilding the African American liberation movement on a new basis, a strategy that combines current struggles, reform struggles, electoral struggles.

Some people say they are so revolutionary that they won't vote. Well, the rest of the people are voting. So if you're so revolutionary, who are you going to revolutionize but you and a few people like you? So we have to get out of that super-revolutionary ego thing. We need to combine these struggles with a broader, long-term revolutionary strategy.

Please don't get upset when I use the word revolution. I'm saying that we're in a crisis. Now, we're going to evolve to a further crisis so we're going to have to make an abrupt change in order to come out of this crisis. So that's what I'm talking about in terms of revolution combining a movement for reforms with the perspective of long-term revolutionary change. That is one of the central concepts of the theory of social transformation.

So what would a transitional program look like? Even if I knew what a transitional program would look like, I would not present the entire transitional program, because we have to come up with the entire transitional program together. I have just put forward some ideas. But we have to create that process by coming together and raising demand to deal with the issues that are affecting us in our community.

Right to a Decent Job

The demand may include something as fundamental as free health care for all Americans. Or free education, up to and including graduate levels, for all Americans. With adequate, decent, and affordable low-income housing for all Americans. And this is key; a guaranteed human right to a decent job at a livable wage, and free job training or retraining if unemployed.

I'm in favor of a non-racist, universalistic education, based on an all-people's perspective. I mean, I may be Afro-centric because I'm an African American, but I'm not centric at all. Because if you have Chinese in poor housing and Indians, if I'm just Afro-centric, that would really be leaving out part of the world.

So when we talk about a universalistic perspective that means we need to know about Asian and European history, too. As well as real European history, such as the workers who tried to take France and how Napoleon stabbed them in the back. We don't get real European history, or real American history. We need a non-racist, universal education for all children. Not just for African American children, for all children.

Proportional Representation for all Americans

Now do you want to talk about a political revolution in American society? Today we have 8,000 African American elected officials and 400 African American mayors. But being 12 percent of the population, we should have 55,000 elected officials in America today out of

500,000 at least \$55,00. So – in case you thought things were done with – we still have a long way to go.

Reparations for Slavery

I don't understand why people don't understand that African Americans deserve reparations. If you study world history you will see that African Americans have been through more trauma than most people in the world. And that's part of our problem. We're still in shock. So reparations for African Americans, administered by African Americans is an important demand.

Also Reparations for Native Americans

Nobody talks about reparations for the Native Americans. These people have been almost completely wiped out.

Preferential Promotional Job Training on Jobs for African Americans

Restitution, which means repayment, for all African American soldiers who were forced to fight in U. S. imperialist, racist wars, and for their families. Restitution provided for all victims and families of victims of the Cointelpro ("counterintelligence program"). You want to see a revolution? You can't even count the number of people who have fallen victim of the counterintelligence program alone, let alone other programs. You talk about conspiracy theory. What they did to Marcus Garvey, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, and the Black Panther Party. How far do we have to go before we become enraged?

Immediate Release of All Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War

There are at least 100 brothers and sisters who have been in prison since the 1960s.

An end to the covert economic, political military and chemical war certain agencies of the U. S. government have conducted against the African American community.

These are just some ideas of the general direction that we should be thinking in order to develop a transitional program for African American liberation in this period of time.

Strategy and Tactics for the Reparations Movement

Should African Americans demand reparations from the Republican Party as well?

Since 1968 with the election of Richard Milhous Nixon, either prospective Republican presidential candidates, Republican Presidents, associates or Republican Party members have violated the U.S. Constitution and have instituted procedures that have amounted to genocide against African Americans.

The infamous Watergate conspiracy, which amounted to a war against the Black Panther Party, of the Black Liberation Movement and anti-war resisters, was a campaign to

incarcerate, assassinate, exile or defame members of civil rights organizations targeted by the Nixon administration.

When Nixon assigned the counter-intelligence program of the FBI to J. Edgar Hoover, which he sanctioned under his administration; he effectively eliminated or retarded the development of progressive African American leadership. This was followed up by the Reagan administration in the Iran-Contra scandal, the effects which have yet to be fully disclosed. Under the Iran-Contra plot the U.S. (CIA) agencies were used to sell crack cocaine in the African American communities to finance Nicaraguan Contras (counter-revolutionaries), which Congress had voted not to support. The impact of the Iran-Contra plot of which George Bush senior, and Vice President in the Reagan administration; led to the criminalization of a generation. It also has led to the disintegration of the African American community or genocide. The net result has been the incarceration of 1 ½ to 2 million predominantly African American males. From 1980 to 1993, the female prison population increased 313%. The male prison population increased 182%.

To make matters worse, the conspiracy has continued with George W. and Jeb Bush's involvement, harshly violating the voting rights of African Americans in the 2000 presidential election; where African Americans were intimidated and harassed by state officials, including local and state police using barricades to keep them from voting. Trickery, forgery and the use of the legal system were implemented to stop the counting of votes. In essence, this was the illegal use of the legal system to violate the constitutional rights of African Americans. By not counting every vote, and by using intimidation and outright fraud, the Bushes should be indicted for violation of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. African Americans should hold all of the stated Republican administrations and the Republican Party itself accountable for its illegal war against the African American community. The demand for reparations must become more political and African Americans should hold all public officeholders responsible for the decisions and policies they institute. A constitutional recall of all political criminals who violate the constitutional rights of African Americans, and the American people in general, should be held.

What are Reparations?

Reparations are a non-compromising, unconditional democratic demand by the African American people in the struggle, to extend democracy to all in the United States and throughout the world. Reparations means repayments for crimes committed against a people by a government or a society. The United States government has been guilty of committing genocide, the systematic destruction of the African American people over a two hundred-plus year period.

Reparations is a process of repairing, healing and restoring a people, injured by governments or corporations, because of their group identity and in violation of their fundamental human rights. Those groups so injured have the right to obtain from the government or corporation responsible for the injuries that which they need to repair and heal themselves. In addition to being a demand for justice, it is a principle of human rights law. As a remedy, it is similar to the remedy for damages in national law that holds a person responsible for injuries suffered by another when the infliction of the injury violates domestic law.

From the N'COBRA (National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations In America)

Is an apology necessary?

A necessary requirement of all forms of reparations is an acknowledgement by the government or corporation that it committed acts that violated the human rights of those making the claim for reparations. Some groups may want an explicit apology; however, neither the acknowledgement nor apology is sufficient. There must be a material form of reparations that accompany the acknowledgment or apology.

What forms should reparations take?

Reparations can be in as many forms as necessary to equitably (fairly) address the many forms of injury sustained from chattel slavery, and its continuing vestiges. The material forms of reparations include cash payments, land, and economic development and repatriation resources, particularly those who are descendants of enslaved Africans. Other forms of reparations for black people of African descent include funds for scholarships and community development; creation of multimedia depictions of the history of black people of African descent, and textbooks for educational institutions that tell the story from the African descendants' perspective; development of historical monuments and museums; the return of artifacts and art to appropriate people or institutions; exoneration of political prisoners; and the elimination of laws and practices that maintain dual systems in the major areas of life, including the punishment, health, education and the financial/economic systems. The forms of reparations received should improve the lives of African descendants in the United States for future generations to come; foster complete economic, social and political parity; and allow for full rights of self-determination.

N'COBRA seeks reparations at this time from two groups: government and corporations. There are individuals, families, and religious institutions that directly benefited from slavery in the United States, and who, if acting in good faith would contribute to reparation funds for use in assisting in the reparation process. However, we choose to focus on government and corporations because of their particular role in the horrific tragedies of chattel slavery and the continuing vestiges of slavery that we live with today. In addition, we recognize that all white people have, to some extent, benefited from slavery and the underlying lie of white supremacy that allow it to exist for 2 ½ centuries in the United States. This lie has led to what is commonly called "white-skin privilege" and results in unspoken benefits to white people. The process of reparations would include ways to change the culture or "white-skin privilege" that was created to sustain chattel slavery and its continuing vestiges.⁹⁰⁹

Class Action Suits against Corporations (Businesses) That Invested in Slavery

By suing businesses and corporations who invested in slavery, the cadre shows the masses of the working class, particularly African Americans, how the capitalist ruling class obtained its initial wealth from the profit reaped from the free labor of African Americans. In this sense, it is the foundation of educators showing the working class the true inter-workings of the capitalist system; one that is based on perpetual profit coming from race, class and gender oppression.

⁹⁰⁹

Reparations and the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America (N'COBRA): An Information Sheet, p. 2

What seems to be the Dialectical Process of Advancing towards Reparations and Democracy in the U.S.?

From the perspective in Ohio, it is essential that Reparations Coalitions and Friends of AA's demanding reparations, draft petition-drives in their communities asking their Congressional Representatives and Senators to support H.R. 40, the "John Conyers Bill". Along with this petition drive should be conferences in each community to discuss what a "Peoples Transitional Program" should be, on the local, state and national levels. This way the people (the masses) become involved in an evolving agenda. The transitional program would change as the situation changes.

At the same time that the local transitional agenda is presented (different in each locale), asking for all city councils to go on record supporting reparations, a drive across the state should unfold to ask the state representatives and state senators to raise the questions of reparations in the state assembly, so there would be a statewide agenda eventually unfolding.

The reparations movement should be part of the Anti-Racist, Anti-Imperialist, Anti-Sexist, and Pro-Environment Movements. People are the makers of history, and as servants we should say no to war for oil, and yes to reparations. Central to the development of the Reparations Movement is a cognitive change in the consciousness of African Americans who must be given the basic historical political information necessary to transform their individual politics based on personal experience; to an understanding of their human and constitutional rights and the strategic politics of the movement. Therefore, the primary task of the Reparations Movement is to provide cadre with the information necessary to help them advance the movement. A key aspect of a successful cadre is his/her ability to connect the politics of the Reparations Movement to the needs and issues of the people on the local level.

The Need for a Dialectical Approach to Developing a Transitional Program for African American Reparations

A revolutionary movement among African Americans for reparations and self-determination, which has the long-range goals of uniting with and advancing the movement towards socialism in America must have a revolutionary transitional program (programs that demand the mass inclusion of African Americans in a democratic process in all facets of the society), that is not a set of dogmas, but rather acts as a guide to action.

As the U.S. becomes the high tech service sector, economy for the entire reorganized international division of labor, unskilled, or semi-skilled work (which is becoming more and more automated by the day) will become a thing of the past.⁹¹⁰ This is rapidly being replaced with computer technology, usually data processing. This process is displacing African American men with African American women, who are more underpaid, while the system extracts greater surplus value for less wages as it continues along its (U.S. Imperialism) descending line of development.

⁹¹⁰ Daniel R. Fusfield and Timothy Bates, The Political Economy of the Urban Ghetto [Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984] p. 87

Therefore, a transitional program must address arresting the sociological development towards the mass criminalization of African American men who won't have any alternative but to participate in the drug trade if not radicalized to carry forth a transitional program for a second reconstruction or social revolution of American society. In other words, there is the economic trend afoot that will lead to political fascism for African Americans starting with eventually legal reversals of democratic rights, along with stepped-up right-wing (KKK) racist attacks (terrorism).

Revolutionary Strategy Requires that a Correct Estimate be made of the Historical Period and Social Context of the Struggle, both Nationally and Worldwide

This thesis concludes that there is no revolutionary crisis, either nationally or internationally, that U.S. imperialism cannot bounce back from. Some may occur, but they have not appeared as yet. Instead of a continuous cyclical crisis, U.S. capitalism/imperialism has reached a stage of maturity through the innovations of the scientific-technological revolution. It has prolonged its crisis when it out-spent the Soviet experiment (70 years) and now has Russia/Eastern Europe/China as a potential market. The other aspect, which prolongs its crisis, but also speeds its social deterioration, is Narco-Imperialism. Narco Imperialism (the international drug trade, which launders hundreds of billions of dollars yearly, world-wide) further consolidates the most reactionary sectors of the society at the same time.⁹¹¹

The impetus of world permanent socialist revolution resides for a large part on the internal contradictions within the U.S. At this point, it looks like there will be a gradual and continuous deterioration in the living standards for the working class, and rapid movement towards fascism to further suppress the African American community; to further divide and terrorize the working class.

What is the Combined Character of the African American Liberation Struggle?

The African American liberation struggle in the United States has a two-sided character; duality as the drive of an oppressed racial nationality whose overall organizational thrust is human dignity (human rights), political empowerment and the right to reparations as its first objective. The African American Liberation Movement is both a national democratic revolution seeking reparations and self-determination, looking to secure democratic rights and to achieve political and economic empowerment for African Americans. It is in this sense that the African American Liberation Movement advances the parameters of democracy for all Americans, but in order to achieve its proletarian class demand for reparations and the right to reparations, the African American Liberation Movement comes into direct conflict with the interests of the capitalist government.

The African American Liberation Movement, constituting the most historically significant, combative and advanced section of the anti-capitalist forces within the center (heartland) of world imperialism, is the vanguard of a revolution-seeking socialism in the United States. Because the U.S. plays a central role as the center of capitalist reaction, regression of the socialist world revolutionary forces, makes the revolutionary sector of African Americans in the U.S. are the central leading sector at this point of development within the world

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Muhammad Ahmad, Toward Black Liberation, Part I [Cleveland, Ohio: Legacy Communications, Inc., 1990] p. 2

socialist revolution. This constitutes the dual character of the African American liberation struggle for reparations and self-determination.⁹¹²

Why is the African American Struggle for Reparations so Central to the Struggle for Socialism in America?

V. I. Lenin said, “The national question must be clearly considered and solved by all class conscious workers.” Often it is the struggle for emancipation of the oppressed nationalities that thrust forth a revolutionary momentum or spark within the whole struggle for socialism in a state, and often wins international support for its just cause, thus mobilizing sectors of the world proletariat. This has happened in Russia (pre-1917) and also in other places in Europe, Africa, Asia and the U.S. (African Americans in the 1960s). The recent conscious display of internationalism for the liberation of South Africa shows the importance of the national question to the international proletariat.

Trotsky in 1940 correctly forecasted that African Americans are the most dynamic segment of the working class (in the U.S.), the most capable of revolutionary courage and sacrifice and are destined to become its vanguard.⁹¹³ In the 1940s, C.L.R. James added to this thesis, saying that African Americans had the right to have their independent revolutionary cadre organizations which would carry out this process.⁹¹⁴ James Boggs extended the paradigm further, saying that African American workers were constantly being thrown out of the labor process because of automation and cybernation, becoming an underclass, but not yet a de-classed lumpened element. He felt young African American workers would be forced to demand fundamental change, or engage in insurrectionary upsurge against the system and could be guided to revolutionary action.⁹¹⁵

The politics of departure: Building a resistance movement in the African American community against racism and fascism. In order to build a resistance movement against racism, a political awareness (based on revolutionary political education) must first be built. This is because the political consciousness of the African American community has been retarded or arrested due to the COINTELPRO campaign that is operative in a subtler (covert) manner than before. As a result, the brothers and sisters who comprehend the words fascism, right-wing, reactionary, conservative, and genocide are, for the most part, young elders, and have retreated back into the African American Christian church. While sectors of the church can be incorporated into the African American anti-fascist front, there are sectors that have become more reactionary and identify its interest with that of the religious right (cover for political fascism) campaign of conservatism (code for fascism). In the descending line of development of capitalism, the battle for democracy leads directly towards a struggle for socialism. Many of the movement’s previous allies, such as in the 60s, will become subtle (covert) enemies because of their often hidden opportunism and gross individualism. They see accommodating to the system as the answer. The youth, on the other hand, are politically underdeveloped, and have to be educated from scratch.⁹¹⁶

⁹¹² Ernest Mandel (ed.) 50 Years of World Revolution: 1917-1967 [New York: Merit Publisher, 1969] p. 208

⁹¹³ Ibid.

⁹¹⁴ C.L.R. James The Independence of the Black Struggle [Washington, D.C.: AAPRP, 1975] p. 2

⁹¹⁵ James Boggs Racism and Class Struggle [New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970] p. 15

⁹¹⁶ Dr. Margaret C. Simms, “Black Youth Face an Uncertain Job Future” Focus, April 1988, pp. 6-7

The political maturation of the masses of African American people will become politically educated through class struggle, the struggle for empowerment in the electoral arena, community and at the point of production. Much of this political maturation will develop around the struggle to advance reforms in the political system. While this may be the case, the political radicalization of the majority of 6.6 million African Americans who are registered Democrats, will develop from political ruptures or polarization over issues and principles that affect the historical relationship of African Americans to the capitalist system.

All African American revolutionary collectives should unite in N'COBRA through a democratic process that works out a dialectical strategy and tactics of achieving reparations for African Americans. It is proposed that all such forces unite to put as much pressure on Congress and also the rest of the Congressional Black Caucus to support H.R. 40, the "John Conyers Bill." They should study reparations for African Americans and raise the political re-educational level of the African American community by having "literacy campaigns" that teach the Black ABCs. Through the process of self-education of the Africans and African Americans, the historical basis for reparations and our right to self-determination will be understood. "A second-class citizen is a 21st century slave."

Black political power must fight to open up the political process and equitably distribute public and private sector resources. This will help people to see the real politics of capitalism, beyond its racist form. It will also help people to see the need for organizing and changing the political system in ways that unite and empower African Americans and poor people to directly contribute to the shaping and making of the political decisions that directly affect their lives. Campaigns to elect African American officials must therefore be based on a clear program, which is democratically developed by the people themselves. The candidates must come out of the mass struggles, which they pledge to continue, and are held accountable to, once in office. This accountability is an important aspect of the struggle for self-determination. Political accountability of elected and appointed officials must therefore take an organized and mass democratic form.⁹¹⁷

Part of this broad coalition effort is the Reparations Bill, H.R. 40 "The John Conyers Bill, now preparing to go before Congress. To expand this effort, petition "reparations" drives should be presented to others of the Congressional Black Caucus. On the local level, each African American and progressive Councilperson, State Representative and Senators should be asked to raise the issue and to pass a resolution through their respective political institution. This was done in Cleveland, when Councilperson Fannie Lewis led the effort of the Cleveland City Council passing a resolution supporting reparations. It is within this context of mass action that African Americans can take their demand of reparations to Washington, D.C. with a mass march on the U.S. Congress and to New York with a march on the United Nations, as well as sending representatives around the world calling for international support for African Americans.

Within the context of independent African American political empowerment should come the question of how we implement tactical plans around reparations? In order to make reparations real for the masses of African American people tactics must flow from the defensive political "fight back" to the offensive, political revolutionary action. Mass

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Ted Glick, "Back to Basics" NCIPA Position Paper [New York] p. 5

revolutionary action means taking the political offense. It means agitating, both inside and outside of the capitalist political structure, to isolate the reactionary forces and cause a political polarization/realignment of political forces inside the U.S. Though this may occur on a limited scale at first, it will be of tremendous educational value in raising the class-consciousness of African Americans and all workers. This can be done on the local level by supporting an insurgent, independent third political People's Party, with tickets, blocs and caucuses that are anti-establishment and anti-machine.

From below: that is outside of the electoral capitalist system, political "reparations" demonstrations by the army of the unemployed should call for full employment. Also within the demand for reparations should come the call for a "second reconstruction", that establishes an urban conservation corps. This corps establishes funding for community development corporations that would institute job training and apprenticeships in the skilled trades between black trade unionists and unemployed city youth. The movement would also demand free university education and for organized African American workers to prepare to call on all labor to support a general strike led by African American workers.

The motion to build an independent political movement by African Americans, most notably around the campaign for a New South in Alabama, should be supported and built both regionally and around the nation. While many African Americans have remained outside of the ranks of the capitalist party, many need to take the struggle inside the Democratic Party in order to galvanize a "progressive people's bloc" to force the KKK and conservative racist imperialist politicians either out of the Democratic Party, or to a political showdown, thereby impacting the local, regional and national political arena. The object would be to develop a broad infrastructure and to lay the groundwork for building an independent "People's Party" by running "democratic socialist" candidates who have a base in the neighborhood movement.

The intergenerational cultural traits that have been transmitted in the African American community are inadequate for empowerment in the 21st century. The African American's lifestyle must become one of a scientifically holistic spiritual/materialistic culture. This new movement culture must utilize the essence of eastern spiritual disciplines and the scientific aspects of dialectical and historical materialism, synchronized with the latest capitalist technology to mold a "new culture", a "new people", and a "new generation" free from all forms of substance abuse, disciplined and prepared to bring in a new socialist world.

The African American struggle for liberation will take years to be successful, and it will take years of mass revolutionary action to weaken, confuse, and overthrow the American capitalist class, which must be done in conjunction with workers of other races, if it is to be successful. Protracted struggle states that African Americans are a weaker force than the capitalist class; it will take many years of mass revolutionary assaults on the system, forming coalitions and alliances with other people of color and Euro-American workers, to spark a revolution.

The African American national liberation struggle for reparations and self-determination is central to the world revolution, because it is the internal Achilles' heel (weak link) of U.S. imperialism, the citadel or headquarters of world imperialism and capitalism. Due to the supremacy of U.S. imperialism and the interdependence of all nations on the world market,

which is dominated by Euro-American finance capital, national liberation breaks or “de-linking” from the imperialist system or socialist revolution can be stalemated by U.S. imperialism in the New World Order.

The key is to find the “international link” that can serve as the catalyst in the permanent world revolution. African Americans were a significant percentage of all unionized industrialized workers in the industrial core in the United States. They are rapidly being displaced, but still play a role there, as well as concentrations in the commercial and service sectors of society.

African Americans must create a mass action movement for people’s democracy and reparations to put an end to the genocide. The general social crisis besetting America will soon turn into a political crisis as fewer and fewer people support the status quo. Because African Americans are politically backward, rather than having a clear direction of social transformation (revolution), social chaos and anarchy is beginning to occur. African American males, who represent 1/20th of the population, now constitute fifty percent of the prison population. The institutional genocide and the lack of jobs is forcing African American males to become criminals in an effort to maintain their manhood. If they are going to go to prison, let it be for the political purpose of advancing the Black Liberation struggle, and not as victims of their own genocide. Don’t let us fall into the trap of becoming criminals without struggle against the system.

The ultra-right (KKK, Nazis, Skinheads), are utilizing this situation by secretly benefiting from the drug trade in the inner cities, building a dangerous paramilitary right wing movement, and systematically launching attacks against African Americans, other people of color, and progressives. Their intention is to further divide the proletariat (working class) and exploit the situation, creating a race war, and then seize power of the American state. Our slogan should be “turn the race war into a class war”. As the economy gets worse, the ultra-right will step up its attacks. We can expect an increase in racism and racist attacks, but at the same time, organizers must reach out their hands to other people of color and progressive Euro-Americans, forming unity with the small progressive community. It is hoped that the progressive coalition will weather the storm and be able to win over, or neutralize, previous reactionary Euro-American workers who come to see that the Euro-American capitalist class is their class enemy.

An African American revolutionary organization will be needed to achieve this monumental task in this time of social crisis, chaos, anarchy and political crisis. To guide such a vanguard will be an ideological unity (philosophical agreement) among the leadership and the membership, a vision of a new, more humane society, the science of strategy and tactics of revolutionary experience based on actual practice. We say that philosophical agreement can be “democratic socialism”. A political vanguard and people’s guard will be needed in the period of bitter struggle, attacks and strategic unity that is ahead.

Why is the African American Democratic Revolution for Reparations Related to the Overall Cause of Creating a New Socialist America?

African Americans, the most oppressed sector of the proletariat (besides the Native American) in the U.S. imperialist state, with the longest history of resistance against the state, makes them an important factor for the socialist revolution in America. Every

revolution has a center or base. The African American as an oppressed nationality, has served as the inspiration for all people in America in the struggle for human dignity, economic democracy, and workers' rights. Even within the center of the eye of the storm, the struggle in the South has been the continuous "spark" for the last forty years. The African American living in the center (metropolis, citadel) of world imperialism (U.S.A.) are suppressed by its direct control under U.S. imperialism. The U.S. capitalist class not only benefits from super surplus value reaped from African American labor that is produced from racism (300 billion to one trillion dollars) and a dual labor market (economic apartheid), but also sucks the consumer power of the captive African American nationality reaping billions of dollars annually. Self-determination, in any form, can only be achieved under socialism and probably under the late stages of socialism in America.

Why is this the Case?

It is because imperialism in its new form as Narco/U.S. imperialism, with its monopoly of technological resources, continuously stagnates the world revolution. It can do this through economically withholding foreign aid, control of world market prices, constant underdevelopment, maintaining dependent accumulation, unequal development and unequal exchange in the racist world economic world order.

The African American is in a strategic role as far as world economics/politics is concerned. Their national liberation revolution is the antithesis (opposite) of U.S. imperialism. The African American people are a major source of super surplus value (profit) for U.S. imperialism's reaping hundreds of billions of dollars, making the African American the equivalent of being the sixth largest national economy in terms of per capita national income for U.S. exploitation in the world (billions of dollars turned back into the system).

What White Americans can do?

Cadre should encourage African Americans' white allies among the youth on white college and university campuses to form American Friends of African Americans, Caucasians for Reparations, Students for Reparations, and Labor for Reparations on campus and in their communities. They should start petition drives to ask their Congressional Representatives and Senators to support reparations for African Americans and the H.R. 40 bill in Congress.

Whenever possible, they should run for office as "Reconstruction" candidates in the white community in opposition to conservative Democrats and conservative Republicans when there is no progressive Democratic candidate inside the democratic party to increase the progressive sector of the Democratic Party and to put reactionary Democrats on the defensive inside the democratic party; also to defeat conservative republicans inside or centralist republicans as opposed to conservative republicans. As a progressive bloc of 54-plus million people, the Reparations/Reconstruction Coalition has the power to defeat the ultra "compassionate conservative" right. This coalition should try to get as many community organizations and unions to support the move to pass H.R. 40 as well.

The Question of Reparations for African Americans and the Working Class Struggle towards Democratic Socialism

The demands for reparations for African Americans in terms of free post-secondary education and job retraining for ten generations, and free medical care, can be linked to the labor working class demand for free post-secondary education (college and university up to and including Ph.D. level) and free medical care for all workers and for all children of the working class making less than \$60,000/year in family income in the 21st century.

What are the Prospects for a Renewed Mass Breakthrough in Consciousness?

More and more people are becoming improvised. If these sectors are mobilized in political struggle against the capitalists and stay free of drug and alcohol addiction (the new opium of the people), these mobilized sectors can be instrumental in the raising of the mass consciousness.

Revolutionary theory teaches that the world revolution can only succeed if the working class in the capitalist countries support the struggle for the liberation of the colonial and semi-colonial peoples (Third World), and if the working class in the colonies and semi-colonies support the working class in the capitalist countries. In this period of time, it is essential that the working class in the capitalist countries struggle against the neo-colonialist globalization imperialist phase of their country's capitalist government covering their multi (transnational) corporate designs. To enhance worldwide unity of the working class, the working class in the U.S. must become anti-imperialist, anti-racist, anti-sexist, and anti-neocolonialist.

It has been said, in the epoch in which imperialism exists, that it is impossible for a genuine people's revolution to win victory in any country without various forms of help from the international revolutionary forces, and even if victory was won, it could not be consolidated. With the U.S. being the center of world capitalism, neocolonialism and imperialism, we must build a worldwide united-front to support the revolution for democratic socialism inside the United States.

The Struggle Against Racism, Class and Gender Oppression is International

Malcolm X Said that people will begin to realize that racism is not something that you can confine to any one country, especially with the power and influence that America has. Malcolm X eluded that the United States is dictating to the entire world through its propaganda media and American racism is like a cancer spreading all over the world. He felt that because racism has become international, the fight against it should be fought on the international level.

Fulfilling the working classes' historic mission depends on its ability to come to know itself, stand and fight for itself, and lead other classes and strata as well as itself. Accomplishing the historic mission of the working class presupposes that it is fully conscious of itself, and hence the necessity of unity within itself.

Unity within the working class pivots around many questions. Progressives believe that the fight against racism and for equality is decisive for building such unity. Given the present composition of the American population, there are 225 million white Americans, 36.5 million African Americans, 37.4 million Hispanic Americans and 11.5 Asian Americans. The Third World (people of color) population is expected to grow in the U.S. in the future

that raises illuminating dimensions (questions?). If conditions continue in the present trend these “Third World” minorities in the U.S. will be rendered to the low-tiered marginal aspect of the labor market, and forced to compete against themselves for the low-paying jobs, which the capitalist hopes will weaken their unity.

If population projections continue to correspond with reality; in 2050, African Americans will constitute 15% of the American population, Hispanics, 33% and Asian Americans, 13%. Sixty-one percent of the American population in 2050 will be people of color. The struggle for racial equality and representation in government based on proportional representation could become a fierce struggle, unless a sizable portion of the white working class aligns itself with the cause for racial equality and proportional representation. America could look similar to a pre-liberation apartheid (without the signs, but a technological divide), South Africa.

But if the 61% of the internal Third World community builds “bridges rather than walls”, its unity and progressive action in alliance with the progressive sector of the white working class could produce a progressive majority that could galvanize the labor movement.

Proportional Representation

While mass demonstrations, strikes and insurrections play a major role in defeating imperialist/capitalist class rule, revolutionaries in America need to also utilize the political system to educate the masses. African American revolutionaries must advance the struggle for legal black political empowerment by building a legal third political party that breaks African Americans’ allegiance to the racist-capitalist system’s Democratic/Republican parties, and at the same time, educate African Americans that they cannot achieve freedom through the bourgeoisie legal political process.

Politically, we should ask ourselves what are the limits of electoral politics? Electoral politics will probably be an important arena of struggle for sometime to come, and should be utilized. But to speed the process of running independent progressive activists for office, African Americans must push the system to its limit, opening up parameters of a new uncompromising leadership to emerge. The issue or demand for proportional representation, which is nothing but reparations in government (democracy), according to African American numbers in the population, can be a revolutionary demand if properly addressed.

At all times in the 21st century, we must call for and work toward political proportional representation. This idea simple means that as taxpayers and as a distinct racial and ethnic group in America, whatever numerical numbers we represent percentage-wise at the national, state and local level, correspondingly we should have that same amount of elected officials who are African Americans.

The demand for independent community control autonomy, plus raising class demands in an independent political movement such as demanding the public ownership of utilities, low-cost transportation, a reduction of income taxes for working people, a progressive

income tax, raising taxes on the rich and corporations, and no taxation without representation, are key demands for the period.

Politically, organizers must demand reparations for African American soldiers who were forced to fight in U.S. imperialism's racist wars. There are over 100 political prisoners in America's prisons from the struggles of the 60s and early 70s. They are the most courageous soldiers and the most brilliant spokespersons. Organizers must demand their immediate release and amnesty of all charges against them. Organizers must demand restitution for all victims of COINTELPRO (Counter-Intelligence Program), and above all, politically we demand reparations for the African American people from the United States government. Politically, we encourage the young African American cadres to run for political office locally, as independent candidates for a People's Party.

In order to be successful, African Americans must engage in a mass direct action civil disobedience "resistance" movement against racism and capitalism. Struggling against the system allows African American and poor working people a positive social outlet, turning the negation of self, the internal self-hate that racism and class exploitation creates in us (alienation), and turning it toward the enemy of our race and class-the racist capitalist class. Nonviolent and other direct action is an effective means for creating crisis for the system. Direct action is most effective when it uses civil disobedience or creative disorder; that is when it disrupts the system's "business-as-usual" and threatens the interests of businessmen and politicians.

If African Americans are to be successful in our liberation, we must combine legal strategy, direct action, cooperative economic development, and electoral politics. All four are necessary ingredients for a winning strategy. The concept of creative disorder, civil disobedience and by "any means necessary" should be combined. In most cases, we should attempt nonviolent civil disobedience, and/or general strike before resorting to violent civil disobedience (urban rebellions). The object would be to drain the system as well as engaging in economic boycotts. The object of protracted strategy must lead to the mobilization of millions of African Americans for revolutionary, total (active) resistance. Tactics should mobilize the youth into active civil disobedience against the system and encourage thousands upon thousands of African Americans to join the revolutionary African American organization and to build a multinational, independent third political party that systematically moves to the transition of socialism in America.

African Americans must develop an organization and program that helps them in their personal survival under capitalism and also teaches them to engage in scientific, collective action against the system. The people's organization should have a holistic health culture that encourages people to pro-active safe sex, discourages them from smoking and drinking, which are health hazards, and seeks to motivate them to abstain from drugs, and to discipline their cardinal sensations or hedonism, which they have learned from capitalism. The organization must provide a complete social analysis, which will give the people a social meaning and purpose in life. This will provide the people with a survival culture, but must be combined with revolutionary direct action or "any means necessary", if we are not to face institutional genocide. One common objective that many African Americans can presently agree upon is unity in trying to get H.R. 40, the John Conyers Bill, passed in Congress. H.R. 40 fundamentally states:

“To acknowledge the fundamental injustice, cruelty, brutality, and inhumanity of slavery in the United States, and the 13 American colonies between 1619 and 1865, and to establish a commission to examine the institution of slavery, subsequently de jure and de facto racial and economic discrimination against African Americans, and the impact of these forces on living African Americans, to make recommendations to the Congress on appropriate remedies, and for other purposes.”

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled.*⁹¹⁸

There are presently 39 African American Congresspersons in Congress. African Americans have the potential of a unified front nationally, for the purpose of the passage of H.R. 40. With that goal, we can ask our allies to support us in achieving this objective that is only the beginning of a protracted struggle to benefit the interests of the people. So African Americans are calling for an accountability of elected officials to the electorate, not to rich business interests. We, the people, will try a nonviolent legal political transformation of the political system. If it doesn't work, then we must address Dr. King's question, "Where do we go from here?"

African Americans need to realize that while we can win concessions and polarize the contradictions of the system against our enemies through the electoral process. We will not be able to vote in freedom, justice and equality. Eventually, with others of the working class, the majority of the working classes will have to overthrow the capitalist class, using any means necessary.

Cultural Pluralism in 21st Century America

The Multinational Proletariat Concept and Socialism

Most Marxists in America view the U.S. proletariat as a monolithic proletariat with common material interests. U.S. Marxists theoreticians constantly discuss the United States of America as a multinational capitalist state without doing a scientific national, race and class analysis. The U.S.A. is a multinational capitalist state, but it is also an imperialist colonial settler state. Its foundation and expansion was based on colonialism and imperialist oppression. This imperialist oppression takes on deep forms of national oppression today. Within the boundaries of the U.S. imperialist state are oppressed nations and an oppressor nation. The lack of a clear understanding of the national question within the domestic borders of the U.S. imperialist state has led the majority of the socialist movement to make incorrect formulations.

Will socialism in America mean the dismantling of the imperialist state known as the United States of America? It may mean that and much more. It will mean granting the right of self-determination, including the right to succession, to the oppressed nationalities held in imperialist bondage by the monopoly capitalist state. The terms of self-determination, cannot be dictated by the white working class, because the white working class has been class collaborators with the monopoly capitalists – imperialists for years, thereby sharing in

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H.R. 40 H., p. 1

oppressing, and having benefited materialistically from imperialistic and racial oppression.

The white working class's historical support of the capitalist ideology of racism has made them the bulwark of reaction and slowed down the historical trend towards socialism in the Americas and throughout the world. A truly revolutionary socialist government in America, however the national geo-boundaries are changed, would have to consider granting reparations to the oppressed nationalities who are under the present imperialist government and the Third World in general. The white working class received partial benefits from the super-exploitation of labor extracted from the internal oppressed nationalities and the external neo-colonies of the Third World under imperialism and monopoly capitalism.

Lenin's report to the Second Comintern Congress was a model of how a historically concrete situation is analyzed to determine the content of the national question in the imperialist epoch. Lenin stressed that his most important point on the national and colonial question is the distinction between oppressed and oppressor peoples. Dealing with the subject at the end of 1922 in the "Question of Nationalities or Autonomisation", he stressed the importance of a truly internationalist working class approach in establishing fraternal relations between previously oppressed and oppressor peoples. Not only should formal equality be observed, he stressed, but the former oppressor nation should assume inequalities that would compensate for the actually existing inequality. Therefore, the revolutionary socialist government⁹¹⁹ of the United States of America would have to reorder its productive forces to partially repay the Third World for the crimes of genocide committed by the imperialist government. This means that preferential treatment and material benefits will not go immediately to the majority of the white working class, even after the formal elimination of racism and after the achievement of the revolutionary socialist government of the United States of America. The majority of the white working class in the U.S. would have to be prepared for a period of austerity.

This means, in the process of protracted struggle in what now constitutes the United States, that socialists must struggle to develop within the white working class, a revolutionary internationalist, anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist perspective. The white American working class should be educated that they are a "minority" of workers in the world who have received material incentives and benefits; U.S. standard of living from the neo-colonial imperialist exploitation of the majority of the workers of the world; the Third World worker, both inside and outside of the U.S. Therefore, it is their revolutionary duty to give up the material and cultural benefits they have achieved by living in the capitalist center and supporting the capitalist class for so long. If white workers want to unite with the majority of the workers of the world, they will have to engage in proletarian self-sacrifice (arrested development) and pay reparations to the Third World.

An interesting political development is the increasing Third World population inside the United States. Recent estimates state that by the year 2020, African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, Asian Americans, and other Third World people will make up 50%-60% of the total population of the United States. The ratio of whites to African Americans and Hispanics alone will be 2 to 1; African Americans will constitute 18.9% of the

⁹¹⁹ Institute of Marxism, Leninism, CC CPSU, Leninism and the National Question [Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977] p.

population, Hispanics, 20.7% and Anglo Americans, 63%. This data shows that if African American and Hispanics form a progressive alliance along with 20% of Anglo Americans who are left of liberal center, they could form a progressive majority in that period, even if Anglo American males are still the bourgeoisified privileged minority reactionary sector of the U.S. proletariat.

As the proletariat in the U.S. becomes majority Third World, the question of socialist revolution, and the democracy of the proletariat may take on new dimensions, possibly even cultural dimensions. The national question, the right of self-determination for the oppressed nationalities, might be resolved through autonomous regions or republics, designed for preferential economic and social development, but still being part of a Union of Socialist States of America. This may be the form of the future socialist revolution. In addition, the formation of a mass multi-national Democratic Socialist party would require proportionate membership of the Third World workers' numbers in order to truly represent the working class.

With the new racist restructuring of the U.S. labor market; the industrial concentration shifted from the inner city to the suburbs and rural areas; Euro American workers will continue to be the privileged workers of U.S. imperialism. They will constitute the "largest minority" of the U.S. labor force and they will have the highest concentration at the industrial point of production. Instead of racism decreasing, and wage differentials between them and African American workers getting smaller, racism is increasing and the income gap is widening. "White skin privilege", the material basis for racism, is being refortified by the capitalist class in a deliberate attempt to split the U.S. working class. White (Euro American) workers in the 21st century will hold the "industrial concentration key" to call a general strike. They will also be in a position to keep industrial production running if they retain a racist false class consciousness and support a right wing fascist movement. Euro American comrades really need to relate to raising the political consciousness of this strata of workers. By the year 2020, white men will be the second largest minority in the U.S. behind white women, consisting of 30% of the population. White males, who are the most privileged sector economically, control the majority of political positions of power and business administration will no longer be the majority of the country. The material (population) base for a great anglo "white" chauvinism (fascist nationalism) is deteriorating at the same time as the reactionary sector of the capitalist ruling class is fostering a Euro American right wing fascist movement to counter the inevitable trend towards socialism in America.

The Third World sector of the American proletariat represents the lower sectors of the proletariat whose oppressed nationalities have faced race, national, gender and class oppression. The Anglo-Saxon (WASP) sectors of the proletariat represent the higher (privileged) sectors of the U.S. proletariat who have received partial fringe benefits from race, national, gender and class oppression; that is the imperialist relation of the U.S. to the oppressed nationalities in the U.S and the Third World. The white skin privilege that Euro American workers have benefited from provides us with the peculiar characteristics of a multinational socialist revolution in America.

Ernie Mkalimoto described the white skin privilege as principally a material one which has resulted in the blunting of class-consciousness among proletarian whites. Mkalimoto says that all North American workers share in the U.S. plunder of the Third World; a process that

began around the turn of the last century and continues today. However, due to the existence of “white skin privilege” African American workers have benefited far less, this advantage is almost meaningless.⁹²⁰

The white proletariat, which benefits from the super-exploitation of surplus value extracted from the backs of the Chicano, African American nationalities and other minorities, is the proletariat of the oppressor nation. In reality it has acted historically, it acts presently, and reacts as a racist nation proletariat. Benefiting from national oppression economically, structured in a dual labor market and reinforced through an imbalance in educational capital, upward mobility in the labor market, the white working class has developed a false imperialist class-consciousness. But this false class-consciousness has a material base that is based on national oppression of oppressed nations, internally and externally. The key questions for Marxist-Leninists in correctly applying the laws of development, objective reality to the U.S. imperialist state, is upholding the right of self-determination, including the right of succession of oppressed nations domestically. The situation is developing that, in the next twenty years, inside the United States, a politically under-represented majority, suffering from high rates of under- and un-employment (hidden economic apartheid) will exist, which will make the United States of America appear very similar to that of a South Africa.

Presidential Election 2000

The 2000 presidential election will no doubt go into the history books as one of the most controversial finishes in the 200-year history of American democracy. Strikingly similar to the election of 1876 when the country was divided around political issues and divided on partisan lines, which ended Reconstruction, the presidential election of 2000 was equally contested around political issues, elimination of Affirmative Action and Abortion: the Women's right to choice, all equally split on partisan lines.

The 2000 presidential election was the first election, which ended up in the courts, with the Supreme Court ultimately determining the presidential winner, George W. Bush. In 2000 only 51 percent of the adult population voted, a little more than 100 million people. The discrepancy is that the election was decided by 200 votes in a state that George W. Bush's brother, Jeb Bush, is Governor -- the state of Florida.

As shown in the Electoral College results there were sharp regional divisions in the vote of 2000. Bush ran strong in the South and Mountain West whereas Gore turned in a good showing in the Northeast and Pacific Coast States. Bush won the Electoral College by 271 to 266. Gore won the popular vote by 48.4 to 47.9 percent. This is the first time since 1888 that the winner of the popular vote lost the decisive Electoral College count.

What are the underlying reasons this could take place?

One is legal disenfranchisement. State law varies widely when it comes to crime and voting. According to the group, Human Rights Watch currently 3.9 million Americans are disenfranchised. Forty-six states deny prisoners the right to vote. In 32 states felons on parole aren't allowed to vote, in 29 states someone on probation isn't allowed to vote and in

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Ernie Mkalimoto, Revolutionary Nationalism and the Class Struggle [Detroit, Michigan: Black Star Press, 1970], p. 7

10 states (mostly southern) impose a lifetime ban on convicted felons. Such is the case for Florida and Alabama where 31 percent of African American males are disenfranchised for life.⁹²¹

In four states (Maine, Massachusetts, Utah and Vermont) felons in prison are allowed to vote. Thus in the deciding state of Florida over 361,681 African-American males were legally disenfranchised in the November 2000 election. Two and very important, was the fact according the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights founded in 1957; investigating voting irregularities during the 2000 presidential election in Florida stated widespread voter disenfranchisement and clear violations of the Voting Rights Act disenfranchising African-American voters was the central feature in the outcome of the Florida election. The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights collected more than 30 hours of testimony from more than 100 witnesses – all taken under oath and reviewed more than 118,000 pages of pertinent documents. It subpoenaed a cross section of witnesses including Florida Governor Jeb Bush, Florida Secretary of State, Katherine Hams, members of Governor Bush's Select Task Force on Election Reforms and Florida's Attorney General.

It is impossible to determine the total number of voters who were turned away from the polls or deprived of their right to vote. It is clear that the 2000 presidential election generated a large number of complaints about voting irregularities in Florida. The Florida attorney general's office alone received more than 3,600 allegations 2,600 complaints and 1,000 letters. In addition, both the Democratic and Republican parties received many complaints from Floridians who either could not vote or experienced difficulty when attempting to vote.⁹²²

The disenfranchisement of Florida's votes fell most harshly on the shoulders of African-American voters. The magnitude of the impact can be seen from any of several perspectives:

- Statewide, based upon county-level statistical estimates, African-American voters were nearly 10 times more likely than non-black voters to have their ballots rejected.
- Estimates indicated that approximately 14.4 percent of Florida's African-American voters cast ballots that were rejected. This compares with approximately 1.6 percent of non-black Florida voters who did not have their presidential votes recorded.
- Statistical analysis shows that the disparity in ballot spoilage rates between black and non-black voters is not the result of education or literacy differences. This conclusion is supported by Governor Jeb Bush's Select Task Force on Election Reforms, which found that error rates stemming from uneducated, uninformed, or disinterested voters account for less than 1 percent of the problems.
- Approximately 11 percent of Florida voters were African-American; however, African-Americans cast about 54 percent of the 180,000 spoiled ballots in Florida during the November 2000 election based on estimates derived from county-level data. These statewide estimates were corroborated by the results in several counties based on actual precinct data.

⁹²¹ Mansfield B. Frazier, "Felony Voting", *Downtown Tab*, November 16-29, 1998. pp. 16

⁹²² Draft Report: Voting Irregularities in Florida During the 2000 Presidential Election (*U. S. Commission on Civil Rights*, June 8, 2001) pp. 1

Poor counties, particularly those with large minority populations, were more likely to possess voting systems with higher spoilage rates than the more affluent counties with significant white populations. There is a high correlation between counties and precincts with a high percentage of African American voters and the percentage of spoiled ballots, that is, ballots cast but not counted.

- Nine of the 10 counties with the highest percentage of African American voters had spoilage rates above the Florida average.
- Of the 10 counties with the highest percentage of white voters, only two counties had spoilage rates above the state average.
- Gadsden County, with the highest rate of spoiled ballots, also had the highest percentage of African American voters.
- Where precinct data were available, the data show that 83 of the 100 precincts with the highest numbers of disqualified ballots are black-majority precincts.

Three, the stopping of the recount and the partisan voting of the U.S. Supreme Court determined the outcome of the election. Because Bush's lead over Gore in the initial count was less than one-tenth of one percent, Florida law mandated an automatic recount. With the margin between Bush and Gore down to 537 votes, the election hinged on whether or not the undervotes (ballots that showed no vote for president) would be examined by hand or not. The Gore campaign pointed out that in counties that used punch-card systems (such as Palm Beach, Miami-Dade, and Broward) that 1.5 percent of the ballots showed no presidential vote whereas only 0.3 percent of the ballots in counties that used scantrons were recorded as blank. The reason offered for this difference was that some people do not punch holes all the way through the card, thereby not fully removing the indentation – the now-famous "chads". It just so happened that the counties that used punch cards favored Gore than Bush. The Bush campaign realized this and opposed any manual recount. They argued that such a review of the ballots was inherently arbitrary and subject to manipulation and differing standards.⁹²³ Bush's lead over Gore had dwindled to less than 200 votes and further recounting would have most likely erased his lead entirely.⁹²⁴

The Florida Supreme Court ultimately ruled in favor of Gore's request to have any ballots that did not register a vote for president recounted by hand. The U.S. Supreme Court in *Bush v Gore* (2000) overruled the Florida Supreme Court and held that although a recount was legal, the same (and more precise) standards for evaluating ballots would have to be applied in all counties. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that there was not enough time to recount all the ballots in an orderly fashion by the time the electors were to vote on December 12.

After the court ruled 5-4 (on partisan lines) against a vote recount in Florida, Justice John Paul Stevens, in a sharply worded dissent wrote:

"Although we may never know with complete certainty the identity of this year's presidential election, the identity of the loser is perfectly clear. It is the nation's confidences in the judge as an impartial guardian of the law".

⁹²³ Ibid, pp. 2-3

⁹²⁴ George C. Edwards, III, Martin P. Wattenberg, Robert L. Lineberry, *Study Edition, Government in America People, Politics and Policy* [New York: Longman, 2002] pp. 272-273

Jesse Jackson said:

"To me the issue, one, is the court so political that its mind was already made up; that's a real question. Justice Scalia's son is a lawyer who works for Bush, and Justice Thomas's wife is recruiting staff members for Bush who works for the Heritage Foundation. I had hoped that the Court could rise above the political partisanship".⁹²⁵

The fourth factor was the third party candidate of the Green Party, Ralph Nader. Although Nader's support dropped from 5 percent in some pre-election polls to about 2.7 percent on election-day, it seemed likely that he cost Gore the election in some states. In Florida, Nader received over 97,000 votes or nearly 200 times the 537-vote margin between Bush and Gore.⁹²⁶ With such results it seems like this is a good time to seek a constitutional amendment to provide for direct election of the president.

The Conflict Between Civil Liberties, Human Rights and National Security, Post September 11th

On September 11, 2001, the World Trade Center and the Pentagon were attacked. Three days later, on September 14th, Congress passed a resolution. This law allowed President George W. Bush to use, "all necessary and appropriate force against anyone associated in the terrorist attacks".

On October 26th, the U.S. Congress passed, and President Bush signed into law, the USA Patriot Act, also known as H.R. 3162. Its purpose is to intercept and obstruct terrorism. Essentially, America is at war with a relatively undefined enemy. Nonetheless, this enemy is generally referred to as Arab and Muslim terrorist organizations.

America often reduces the strength of its civil liberties, to the point of arguably infringing on the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights, which form the basis of American society. This reduction of civil liberties occurs when America is either in the midst of a declared war, under attack, or when it feels as though its "vital interests" are threatened. In terms of U.S. foreign policy, the present oil and energy interests of the U.S. Government form the primary catalyst for the War on Terrorism.

As it applies to U.S. domestic policy, the U.S. Government has used the War on Terrorism as an excuse to advance and strengthen the authority of the executive branch of government. The combined executive powers of the U.S. Attorney General, John Ashcroft, Homeland Security Chief, Tom Ridge, Immigration and Naturalization Service Commissioner, James W. Ziglar, Secretary of State, Colin Powell, and President Bush, have worked to control internal dissent.

What does Bill **H.R. 3162: Uniting and strengthening America by providing the appropriate tools required to intercept and obstruct terrorism in the brief**, say and have the ability to do?

⁹²⁵ Mansfield B. Frazier "With the Help of the U.S. Supreme Court Bush Steals Presidency, but Governing May Prove Difficult", *City News*, (December 14 – December 2000), pp. 1a cont. 5a

⁹²⁶ *Op. Cit.* (Government in America), pp. 275

The Act cuts back on Constitutional Checks and Balances

- It give sweeping new powers of detention and surveillance to the executive branch of government and law enforcement agencies, and deprives the courts of meaningful judicial oversight to ensure that the law enforcement powers are not being abused.
- It gives the Secretary of State the authority to designate any group, foreign or domestic, as a terrorist organization, an authority that is not subject to review.
- It creates a broad new crime of “domestic terrorism” and expands the range of crimes defined as “terrorist offenses” and the penalties attached to them.
- It permits investigations based on lawful First Amendment activity, if that activity can be tied somehow to intelligence purposes.
- It undermines the privacy protections of the Fourth Amendment, and expands the ability of the government to spy through wiretaps, computer surveillance, access to medical, financial, business and educational records, and secret searches of homes and offices.
- It undermines fair due process procedures granted by the Constitution, extended to non-citizens in over a century of U.S. Supreme Court rulings, by permitting the government to detain non-citizens indefinitely, even if they have never been convicted of a crime.

What Do the First and Fourth Amendments Say?

The First Amendment says:

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and the petition of Government for the redress of grievances”.

The Fourth Amendment says:

“The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly in the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.”

What the Act Means for Citizens and Non-citizens

- The Act eliminates much of the judicial oversight established in the 1970s, after revelations that the U.S. Government and the F.B.I. were spying on over a half million Americans during and after the McCarthy era, and widely opens the door to new possibilities of abuse.
- Law enforcement officials no longer are tied by the rules of criminal law before conducting searches in criminal cases. People can be subjected to roving wiretaps, or have their homes and offices secretly searched in criminal investigations without a demonstration of “probable cause” of a crime. Surveillance can follow a targeted individual to any computer or telephone he or she might use, based on a single warrant that can be used anywhere in the United States.
- Internet communications of Americans can be spied on, if law enforcement agents tell a judge that this surveillance is “relevant” to an ongoing criminal investigation.

The C.I.A. and the F.B.I. can monitor computers and phones without having to demonstrate use by a suspect, or a target of a court order. If the F.B.I. certifies to a court that it needs this information to conduct an “intelligence” investigation, it can obtain access to sensitive educational, medical, financial, mental health, and other personal records.

- Information collected in formerly secret grand jury hearings, or through wiretaps in a criminal case, can be disclosed to intelligence agencies, if that information is seen as “foreign intelligence information,” including any information that “relates” to the National Defense or Security, or the conduct of foreign affairs. The Act provides for broad sharing of information among the F.B.I., C.I.A., I.N.S., Secret Service and National Security Agency.
- Americans engaged in civil disobedience or another form of protest activity might be charged with “domestic terrorism” if violence erupts.
- They may have to provide DNA samples if convicted of “any crime of violence.”
- The Attorney General may submit a written application to a court for an order requiring an educational institution to give access to formerly protected records and student data of both foreign and American students. The court will issue the order based on mere certification that the records are needed for an ongoing investigation.
- Some of the expanded surveillance powers “sunset” after four years, and will expire on December 31, 2005, unless re-authorized by Congress. Others will not. Because the Act provides for only very limited reporting requirements, it is difficult to see how Congress will evaluate whether the “sunset” provisions should be renewed in four years’ time.

While the USA Patriot Act promises to strengthen domestic security during a time of the declared War on Terrorism, the Act also repeals the freedoms guaranteed to all Americans outlined in the First and Fourth Amendments. Such rights infringement at home allows the executive branch to fulfill its foreign policy agenda, by stifling the voices of dissent at home.

What has happened since the USA Patriot Act was Passed?

The Justice Department released a list of 5,000 foreign men wanted for questioning. Not because of any evidence of wrongdoing, but because they fit a profile. Over 15,000 detainees are being held since September 11th. Academic freedom is under attack. Nationwide, university professors have been criticized, and even fired, for statements they have made since September 11th. The Foundation for Individual Rights and Education in Philadelphia is legally representing more than a dozen professors, who have said college officials, and even students, have sought to silence them since the terrorist attacks.

Dr. Sami Al-Arian, Computer Sciences professor, was fired from the University of South Florida, on May 10, 2002 and Professor Richard Berthold was fired from the University of New Mexico, December 10, 2001.

Has this happened before in America?

Yes. Briefly, starting in 1918, the U.S. Army sought to limit antiwar sentiment and anti-lynching activity in the African American community. After World War I, in 1919, the F.B.I. and the I.N.S. raided Russian-American communities and deported 249 immigrant

workers. In 1920, the F.B.I. and I.N.S. staged nighttime raids in 33 cities against the Communist Party and the Communist Labor Party, which led to the rounding up of over 3,000 people and the deportation of 760 in the infamous Palmer Raids. Also in the 1920s, the F.B.I. infiltrated the U.N.I.A., the African Blood Brotherhood, stealing documents and creating havoc. Recently, related documents show that the F.B.I. secretly targeted Marcus Garvey. Garvey was imprisoned, and later exiled.

On December 7, 1941, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor (the United States). On February 20, 1942, Franklin D. Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066 passed in Congress, giving the President and the military authority to evacuate all people of Japanese descent. On March 30, 1942, one hundred twenty thousand Japanese-Americans began to be placed in Internment (Concentration) Camps.

In the 1950s, notable historians such as W.E.B. DuBois were arrested as agents of a foreign power. Both DuBois, and Paul Robeson, who were leaders of the Council of African Affairs, were subpoenaed by the House of Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). Robeson's salary is reported to have dropped from \$100,000 to \$1,000 in one year. He was forced to tour Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union in order to survive economically. In the late 1950s and 1960s, J. Edgar Hoover and the F.B.I. harassed Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X. They, along with Stokely Carmichael, H. Rap Brown and myself, were targeted for destruction.

Thus, history shows that during the World War I, World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War, the United States Government strengthens its foreign military policy by silencing the voices of dissent at home with policies that directly affect the nation's civil liberties. The present War on terrorism, and the signing of the USA Patriot Act, shows that history is repeating itself again.

2001

A World Conference on Racism in Durban, South Africa was convened where slavery and continual racism were declared crimes against humanity. Europe, the United States and Israel were indicted. This event was purposely overshadowed by 9/11.

2004

The Philadelphia Board of Education announced it would make African-American Studies mandatory and inclusive in its curriculum by 2009.

The Million Workers March was called in response to the attacks on working families and to the millions of jobs that were lost during the Bush administration. The "Real Clarence Thomas", a leader of the International Longshore Workers Union Local 10 based in San Francisco, California was a co-chair of the march.

2005

Challenges Short Term Strategies and Objectives of the Tenth Anniversary of the Million Man March: The Five Point Program

Prelude: One of the purposes of the Tenth Anniversary of the Million Man March will be to impress upon the President of the United States of America, the Senate and the House of Representatives the importance of them addressing and passing H. R. 40, the John Conyers Bill. It asks Congress to acknowledge the fundamental injustice, cruelty, brutality and inhumanity of slavery in the 13 colonies and the United States between 1619 and 1965, to establish a commission to examine the institution of slavery, subsequent de jure and de facto racial and economic discrimination against African Americans, the impact of these forces on living African Americans, to make recommendations to the Congress for appropriate remedies, and for other purposes.⁹²⁷

Brothers and sisters, we know this may be a long-term goal, but it is one that may set the direction for the next generation of youth to achieve, until they become imbued with the spirit to create a Reparations Action Movement (RAM).

What can be done now?

Sister Alderman Dorothy Tillman of Chicago's City Council in 2002 required companies that do business with the city to research their history to determine any links to slavery. As a result, J. P. Morgan and Chase & Company are in the process of entering into partial reparations' settlements (Jet, February 7, 2005, p. 14). It is important that we approach our councilpersons and ask them to do the same, as well as our senators and legislators on the state level. In addition we need to spread the word to get every city council in every state to pass a similar ordinance.

One of our first steps should be to establish a legal committee to do research on companies doing business in our cities and across our states. When we find firms who had links to slavery we should send a delegation to them to demand that they pay reparations. If they refuse, we should engage in selective boycotts of these firms, engage in creative social disorder (dislocation) and demonstrate against these firms. As we approach the 10th Anniversary of the Million Man March, we should consider what concretely we could demand that can be immediately implemented.

As of 2003, African American men made 73% of the median income of white men. African American women made 92% of white women's median income, which is lower than white men, but higher than that of African American men. According to the Congressional Black Caucus' Agenda for the 109th (2005) Congress, which focused on employment and economic security, unemployment rates for African Americans are consistently almost double the rates for white (Caucasian) Americans. The median weekly earnings of full-time African American workers is consistently over \$130.00 less than white workers who are similarly educated and situated. The poverty rate for African Americans is almost double the national poverty rate, 24% vs. 12.5%, and more than triple, 33% vs. 9%, for children under the age of 18. Much of what is being reported came of the Concerned Brothers Retreat, held Saturday, January 22, 2005 at Camp Forbes.

One: Civilian Conservation Corps

To be funded by state, city and national governments and funds from private businesses, to pay the African American unemployed, semi-employed and under-paid employed,

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H.R. 40, p. 1

monies to go to school for job training and apprenticeship programs in skilled trades and the latest technological fields (free of charge), while they are put to work rebuilding the infrastructure and other areas (housing, business, public buildings) of the cities and rural areas, as well as funding for continuing education. This was called Urban Conservation Corps initially, but was later changed to Civilian Conservation Corps in order to reflect the fact that while the majority of our people lived in cities many also lived in rural areas. It was initiated in the 1930s during the Depression, and African Americans are currently in a Depression. While the present administration may not implement it, by demanding it we can put the project on the political agenda so that it can be addressed in the 2008 presidential elections.

Within the five-point program, we have a responsibility to attempt to put into action a collective unity plan, applying a policy of self-reliance or self-help to begin to lay the groundwork for solving some of our problems. The Congressional Black Caucus, in its agenda addressing the question of “closing the achievement and opportunity gaps in education”, state that in 2003, thirty-nine percent of African American fourth grade students read at or above a basic reading level, compared to 74% of white fourth graders. Thirty-nine percent of African American eighth grade students performed at or above a basic math level, compared to 79% of white eighth graders, and high school completion rates are 83.7% for African Americans and 91.8% for whites. Bachelor degree recipients are 16.4% for African Americans and 31.7% for whites, and the digital divide is that 41.3% of African Americans are capable of accessing the Internet, compared to 61.5% of whites.

Various African American scholars and leaders, including psychologists, have long contended that the problem of low achievement in school is due to low self-esteem and lack of self-confidence, that in most cases, is caused by negative images within the media, religious, cultural, social and educational superstructure of a white racist, capitalist, social system. African American youth are bombarded by a Euro-centric mis-education; one based on lies and an anti-African ethos. This educational genocide mentally kills the positive self-initiative of the African American child.

Two: African Centered Education

We need an African centered education. We need to learn of the great leaders (men and women) who have struggled and given their lives to make a better future for us, and our youth. African Americans need to be taught African and African American history from grades K-12 and throughout college. Being in the majority in Cleveland, and other major cities across the country, we should demand that an African and African American (Africana) perspective and history be included in the teaching of every subject possible. While we do this, our educator/activists need to help the youth to establish African/African American history clubs in the Junior and Senior High schools, churches, mosques, and neighborhood centers.

At the same time, we should form statewide coalitions to take petitions of registered voters across each state to petition our state legislators and state departments of education to follow the example of Maryland. Maryland’s Department of Education incorporated African American history into the curriculum of its public school system in 2004.⁹²⁸ They were the first in the United States to do this.

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Crisis January/February 2004, Volume 111/1, p. 14

Three: Learning Centers

We need to establish independent learning centers to teach math, history, science and languages from an Africana perspective. There should be two areas of discussion in these learning centers, youth issues and adult issues.

Four: Economic and Political Development: Self-Reliance

There are 228,852 African American residents in Cleveland; 94,500 African American households. The main issues for most African Americans in Cleveland are:

- a) High rates of unemployment (Cleveland is hard hit because Ohio had 18% manufacturing jobs, as opposed to 11% in other states. Most of the manufacturing jobs went overseas due to globalization, and firms employing unskilled or semiskilled labor have moved to the suburbs, for the most part, making it very difficult to obtain employment, due to lack of adequate transportation).
- b) Unwed parenthood
- c) Incarceration (see the Bracey Plan: a Strategic Spending Plan)
- d) Develop an African United Front. African Americans constitute 51 to 52% of the electorate in Cleveland. There is no reason why African Americans in Cleveland cannot elect one of their own to be Mayor, to address political and economic development issues for the majority of the electorate.
 - 1) We should have collective ongoing voter registration and voter education drives.
 - 2) We should become active in building strong ward organizations and youth leadership in each ward.
 - 3) We should become more active in political campaigns.
 - 4) We should make coalitions and alliances with others in the city, i.e. Hispanic, Arab, Asian and progressive whites.

A single parent heads 63% of the African American families living in Cleveland; 40% of them live in poverty, with an average income of \$24,747 and only 10% hold a bachelor's, or higher, degree. Within this dynamic, African Americans have been programmed to support the suburban economic neo-colonialism of white businesses. In the Learning Centers an African American network of businesses can be established with the circulation of a contemporary African American business guide and conscious development of a supportive, self-reliant economy attempting to re-circulate the dollar inside the community as often as possible. Wherever possible, we should establish economic cooperatives. We can explore food co-ops, collective buying programs, food markets, collective gardening of empty lots, free medical clinics, dentists, car washes, television and radio programs, construction firms, solar, wind and alternative energy sources, as well as product marketing and advertising.

Five: Family Planning Centers:

What we have now is a generation or two of young (baby) mothers attempting to raise babies. As a result of the lack of knowledge about living a holistic lifestyle and raising children to become responsible adults, as well as being in need of a re-education themselves; many African American mothers and fathers are in desperate need of family planning from an African centric point of view. We need a new direction in crisis

prevention/management; holistic nutrition (diet), budgeting, health care (hygiene), exercise, a holistic lifestyle dealing with needs rather than wants, the proper way to carry oneself with dignity and self-respect, (The African American personality). We have many conscious sisters and brothers in the community who can help with this. The Family Planning centers could be a part of the learning centers.

We conclude presenting this as a rough sketch of a 5-point program.⁹²⁹

There was much struggle on the local levels for Minister Louis Farrakhan to present a tentative program and to broaden his perspective for the Millions More Movement march. Farrakhan did by inviting everyone, calling for a third party of the poor and demanding reparations for African-Americans

Hurricane Katrina

The country and the world were shocked when on August 29, 2005 Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast, drowning New Orleans and causing more than one billion dollars of property damage across broad swaths of Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas and Alabama. While the official count in the number of deaths was more than 1,600, the unofficial count was over 10,000. In New Orleans alone, nearly two hundred thousand homes were destroyed or rendered uninhabitable. Along the Mississippi Gulf Coast another seventy thousand homes were destroyed. Five million people were left with no power, and it may have been a month before all power was restored.

What amazed people is that even though a Category 3 or 4 Hurricane was predicted to wipe out New Orleans since 2001, the U.S. federal government under the Bush Administration and its agency FEMA (the Federal Emergency Management Agency) failed miserably to adequately respond in saving lives and providing relief. Monies available for national disasters had been diverted to the war in Iraq and humanitarian aid was turned back. While those with cars could evacuate New Orleans, the African Americans and poor were left to drown. In short, the benign neglect became silent genocide.

400,000 people, 80% of the population evacuated in New Orleans on their own resources, and that of their families, churches and non-governmental agencies; and with no assistance from any branch of the U.S. government—federal, state or local, or the Red Cross.

The Louisiana State police reported that 18,000 vehicles per hour were streaming out of the city and the surrounding areas. (Note: If this report is correct, then we estimate that it took at least 12 to 22 hours to evacuate 400,000 people. And this historic grassroots, mass movement has been and continues to be denounced or characterized by murderers, racists and fools, as chaos.)

“The poor,” however, “were just left to fend for themselves,” said Rep. Jose Serrano of New York. On August 30, 2005, Katrina hit New Orleans, and later, as breaches in three places of the levee system on the Lake

⁹²⁹ Prepared for the Greater Cleveland Reparation Mobilization Coalition meeting on “Reparations and the Tenth Anniversary of the Million Man March”, February 25, 2005.

Pontchartrain side of New Orleans flooded 80% of the City, as was inevitable and predicted, 150,000 residents remained in the city.

The vast majority of those who stayed were reported to have been unwilling or unable to leave because they did not have vehicles, money for gas and other transportation. Also, many residents were unable to travel because they were elderly or infirm; or had no place or family to go to, and no money to live on once they got there.⁹³⁰

The untold story of Hurricane Katrina and the disaster of New Orleans is the role that Blackwater Mercenaries deployed in New Orleans of forcibly turning back fleeing African Americans and poor people, who were left to die on the streets or who were murdered outright. Heavily armed paramilitary mercenaries from the Blackwater private security firm, infamous for their work in Iraq, were openly patrolling the streets of New Orleans. Some of the mercenaries said they had been “deputized” by the Governor of Louisiana, while others said they were under contract with the Department of Homeland Security and had been given authority to use lethal force. It may take years before the full story of the genocide of New Orleans is told.

The Racial Implications of the Scientific-Technological Revolution

The Scientific-Technological (S-T) revolution, which has been advancing at a furious pace for the last 15 years, has increased racial stratification within the world labor market. It has polarized and developed a two-tiered society worldwide based on a technological ‘electronic’ apartheid system.

At the same time, this restructuring has led to the ‘downsizing’ of the Western proletariat’s aristocratic privileges it once had in relation to the Third World. This aspect of international class war by the capitalists against the proletariat delineates the class dimensions of the S-T revolution. Simultaneously, the S-T revolution exacerbates and intensifies the racial implications of the worldwide capitalist system, impoverishing the entire working class, and super exploiting its racial/Third World peripheral spheres. This process creates an extralegal, economic, genocidal war against ‘Western capitalist societies’ internal racial underclass reserve army of labor.

Financial wealth in the capitalist economy is increasingly concentrated in smaller circles of monopoly capital:

In the United States, 94 percent of all financial wealth is owned by the top 20 percent of the population, (48 by the top one percent), leaving only 6 percent for the bottom 80 percent. The main mechanisms for the augmentation of wealth on behalf of the rich are corporations. The top 200 manufacturing corporations in the United States own more than 60 percent of all manufacturing assets.⁹³¹

By the early 1990s, the top 600 U.S. corporations grossed more than 80 percent of all sales

⁹³⁰ Bob Brown, *They Kissed New Orleans and Its Poor Good-bye!* [Washington, D.C.: Pan African Roots, September 8, 2005], p. 8

⁹³¹ Michael Dawson and John Bellamy Foster, “Virtual Capitalism: The Political Economy of the Information Highway,” *Monthly Review*, July-August 1996, Vol. 48, No. 3 p. 43

revenue in the U.S. economy. “The largest 300 corporations in the world now account for 70 percent of foreign direct investment and 25 percent of world capital assets.”⁹³²

Downsizing: There has been a steady decline in the hourly take home pay of thousands of U.S. workers since the mid-1970s. With the increase of technology, productivity by U.S. based transnational corporations has increased. The need for high-paid, low-skilled workers decreased as transnational corporations were able to cross national borders due to trade agreements. The NAFTA and GATT trade agreements allow transnational corporations to move capital and jobs to wherever labor is cheapest. At the same time, transnationals utilize national or nation-state borders to their advantage to lower wages.

One of the reasons for corporate ‘downsizing’ is to upgrade transnationals’ bureaucracy to manage new fluidity of global capital in the electronic S-T stage of monopoly capitalism. The leaner and meaner factor is in actuality fatter and meaner. The capitalists are seeking to make maximum surplus value in the least amount of time almost ‘by any means necessary’. Hundreds of thousands of U.S. workers face an uncertain future as U.S. based transnationals downsize. At the same time it is important to understand the fluidity of the international alliance of capital that the S-T revolution is producing.

The Impact of the S-T Revolution Throughout the World

There is a deep, material connection between the upheavals in Russia (previously the Soviet Union) and Eastern Europe, the temporary postponement of full-blown crises in the capitalist centers, the intensifying North-South conflict, and the worsening conditions faced by African Americans. That connection is the revolution of productive forces taking place worldwide.

This scientific and technological revolution centers on a profound shift to electronic, computer-based production of goods and services ‘electronic industrialization’. It has been taking place in the capitalist West for the last 30 years and is reshaping social and political, as well as economic relations across the globe.⁹³³

Western transnationals have proven most flexible at adapting to and utilizing the scientific and technological revolution for their own profit seeking aims. Their course of electronic industrialization has increased labor productivity and simultaneously produced a high rate of unemployment. Hundreds of thousands of workers have been displaced, and the standard of living of the working class has been reduced.

World Underclass: In the process of global restructuring, millions in the Third World are becoming impoverished.

Labor replacing technology is producing a global glut of labor, both skilled and unskilled. Human labor is becoming worthless. As a result wage rates are falling. The small, highly skilled global workforce that will ultimately result from the changes currently underway won’t be large enough to buy all the goods the system produces. As production is modernized to compete on

⁹³² Ibid., p. 43

⁹³³ Paolo Guerrieri and Carlo Milana, “Changes and Trends in World Trade in High Technology Products,” Cambridge Journal of Economics (1995), Vol. 19, p. 226

the world market, a huge and permanent increase in unemployment results, with all the social, political and economic consequence.⁹³⁴

The global glut produces stagnation in the international capitalist system, particularly in its center—the United States. Stagnation and the falling rate of profit can be seen in the slowing of growth in the U.S. economy, which dropped from 4.4 percent in the 1960s to 3.2 percent in the 1970s, 2.8 percent in the 1980s, and 1.7 percent from 1990-94. This was a drop of about 60 percent between the 1960s and 1990s.⁹³⁵

Though capital needs a reserve army of the unemployed to threaten the employed in terms of strikes, class struggle due to the increased productivity created with fewer workers through the use of automation in much of the world's population is becoming superfluous to the global market system.

Presently 30 percent of the world's labor force is either unemployed or underemployed, 120 million employed and 700 million underemployed. Altogether 820 million workers are living on the fringes of the global economy.⁹³⁶

The International Labor Organization (ILO) forecast that unemployment by the end of 1994 would reach 8.6 percent in the industrialized nations alone—the highest level of joblessness since the Depression of the 1930s.⁹³⁷

Outside the main capitalist centers of the United States, Western Europe, and Japan, flexible use of the scientific and technological revolution by the transnationals helped bring a category of 'Newly Industrialized Countries' (NICs) into being. The rapid growth of the NICs expanded the circulation of commodities on the world market, as well as within the NICs themselves. These nations began to compete for spheres of influence in a restructured world capitalist market. The rapid increase in the standard of living of NICs like Taiwan, South Korea, and Singapore helped aggravate the contradictions within the countries previously under the socialist system.

The present crisis that exists in Eastern Europe and Russia stems from two main factors. One is the failure to implement socialist democracy after the defeat of fascism in World War II. The second is the failure to concentrate on making maximum use of the scientific and technological revolution in the civilian sector.

Surrounded by U.S. imperialism and hostile capitalist world, Russia was forced to develop a military—industrial complex in order to develop parity with the United States. In the 1960s, Russian leadership underestimated the potential impact of computer technology in enhancing the economic level of society. Instead of concentrating on internal development of computer technology, the Russian government thought it could buy this technology on the world market. But Washington initiated a worldwide technological blockade against Russia. As a result, even though the Russians achieved military parity with the United States between the 1960s and the 1980s, its economy began to seriously stagnate.

⁹³⁴ "Draft Political Resolution," *Rally, Comrades!* (Feb. 1995), p. 3

⁹³⁵ *Op. Cit.*, (Dawson and Foster, *Virtual Capitalism*), p. 45

⁹³⁶ "Unemployment: Capitalism's Achilles Heel: Review of the Month," *Monthly Review* (Dec. 1994), Vol. 46, No. 7, p. 7.

⁹³⁷ Robert A. Issak, *Managing World Economic Change: International Political Economy* [Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1995] pp. 200-201

Meanwhile, driven by the scientific and technological revolution, major changes were going on elsewhere in the world. The economic powers and standards of living within the NICs were on the rise. Japan and Germany were increasingly competing for economic leadership of the capitalist world. 'High-tech' production and information methods in the West were developing rapidly.

Yet the standards of living in Eastern Europe and Russia were stagnating due to their economic lag. Even though these societies had free university education, medical care, etc., their general standards of living (food, housing, clothing, transportation, etc.), began to decline according to industrial world standards.

Eastern Europe and Russia also lacked democratic political processes. Because of this and Western subversion—intelligence operations, mass discontent developed among their populations.⁹³⁸

Still, the underlying basis for the rapid changes in Eastern Europe and Russia (and their current fascinations with the West) was the urgent need for scientific and technological rejuvenation in their productive forces.

Capitalism also faces a structural crisis. Due to its ability to produce more with fewer workers, it displays a consistent pattern of overproduction, under-consumption, and high unemployment. Yet the actual emergence of a crisis has been postponed. A main factor in the delay is the degree of profit made by transnationals from the economic booms caused by military ventures into the Third World. Despite the delay, a crisis will soon break loose.

In order to survive, capitalism must expand, yet capitalism has been rapidly exhausting its avenues of expansion. The capitalist West needs the markets of Eastern European countries, Russia, and China, and those countries, in turn, need the technology of the capitalist West. This mutual need has produced an interdependence among economies of all nations. The Gorbachev policy since 1985 has been to move to 'market socialism' and reduce regional conflicts. This has resulted in several negotiated settlements and the withdrawal of Cuban and Russian troops from Ethiopia, Angola, Namibia, and Afghanistan.⁹³⁹ Democratic revolutions, or counter-revolutions, were allowed to occur in Eastern Europe in 1989.

The decision of Eastern Europe and Russia to establish 'market socialist' economies, their failure, and their interdependence on the technology of the capitalist West shifted the major revolutionary contradiction in the world. Today that contradiction has U.S. imperialism leading (militarily) the capitalist West in opposition to the interests of the peoples of the Third World. Put differently, it is the industrialized countries, both North and South, standing against the underdeveloped countries of the South, a contradiction fraught with racial overtones.

Without the opposition of a strong internationalist, non-racist, humanist Russia, the

⁹³⁸ Michael Parenti, *The Sword and the Dollar: Imperialism, Revolution and the Arms Race* [New York: Martin's Press, 1989], p. 135

⁹³⁹ I. Meszanos, *Beyond Capital: Towards a Theory of Transition* [New York: Monthly Review Press, 1995], pp. 771-772

possibility for racial stratification of the international labor market increases. The door is opened for a more sophisticated form of racism to manifest itself. The mainstay for anti-imperialism falls on countries like Cuba, Libya, Vietnam, China, and North Korea, which are now the real examples of socialism in the world today. The concentration of technology in the North helps shove the underdeveloped South into further dependence on the North.

Impact on African Americans

Economic restructuring within the United States has impacted all sectors, but African Americans have been particularly hard hit.

Unskilled unemployment grew over the postwar years because the cost of unskilled labor rose more than the cost of capital, of unskilled labor and imports of products of unskilled labor in developing countries.⁹⁴⁰

Because African Americans were already the marginal sector of the industrial working class in the United States, they are being displaced in greater numbers as transnational corporations go high tech (automation) and/or flee overseas.⁹⁴¹ There is also a highly conscious dimension to this process: the capitalist class is doing its best to construct a homogeneous, stable and docile working class. It is purposely displacing African Americans from the most strategic sectors of the economy.⁹⁴²

Capitalism produces 'creative destruction' uprooting old relations, customs, and communities, and establishing new ones. In the African American community, global restructuring, with its emphasis on skilled, high—tech labor replacing unskilled, industrial-mechanical labor, has uprooted and almost disintegrated the African American family. It was the availability of a post World War II boom in industries (steel, auto) in urban areas, which caused millions of African Americans to migrate north to secure 'better-paying' jobs. This occurred simultaneously with the mechanization of southern agriculture and the use of the mechanical cotton picker starting 1944. Centered at the lower rungs of the unskilled, mechanical-industrial workforce, African Americans began to receive the brunt of displacement from the industry first, in greater numbers due to robotization, cybernation, and automation of industry. This process intensified as mechanical industrialization moved overseas to exploit cheap unskilled labor. This destructive process rendered the African American community in shambles as the race, class and gender hierarchy in the labor market became more stratified on the basis on race and unleashed economic war on African American males.

Michael C. Dawson, in Behind the Mule: Race and Class in African American Politics, shows how in the 1980s, the racial hierarchy in the labor market reconstituted itself in more rigid forms. In terms of employment and pay rate, the previous race, class and gender hierarchy before the 1980s was white male, black male, white female, black female. Since the 1980s, white females have surpassed black males in terms of white-collar employment and wages. The stratification now is white male, white female, black male and black female. While capitalist regimentation is concentrated on the economic underdevelopment

⁹⁴⁰ David Schwartzman, "Unemployment, Capital and Unskilled Labor," in John Eatwell, ed. Global Unemployment: Loss of Jobs in the 90s [Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1996], pp. 79-80

⁹⁴¹ Donald Tamaskovie-Devey, Gender & Racial Inequality at Work: The Sources and Consequences of Job Segregation [Ithaca, NY: ILR Press, 1993], p.63

⁹⁴² Michael C. Dawson, Behind the Mule: Race and Class in African American Politics [Princeton, NJ: 1994], p. 24

of African American women, African American men have suffered greater rates of unemployment of all American workers since 1984. Thus the S-T revolution, having impacted unskilled labor in industrial mechanization (auto, steel industries), has led to an institutional economic, genocidal and lumpenization process among African American men.

Some groups say the electronic revolution is affecting all groups in society, with a developing white underclass, which is true. It is the author's contention that the quadruple aspect of contemporary capitalism's forms of oppression—race, class, gender and nationality (culture)—has genocidal effects on African Americans. In addition, the electronic revolution, coupled with the devastating effects of drugs, which Nelson Perry says is only third as a multinational industry (behind auto and steel), launders the profits of the system, props it up and prolongs its impending worldwide depression.

First, because African Americans were the last into industrial mechanization, their concentration in major industries (auto, steel, coal) was in the unskilled or semi-skilled positions, which have, for the most part, been roboticized. The Midwest, which once had the highest median-per-family income for African Americans, has dropped to the lowest level since 1986, with the highest rate of unemployment due to robotics. This affects the most marginalized sector of the previous industrial proletariat first (in terms of racism, it impacts African Americans the most). Because of the geographical racial concentration (density) in central cities, this process has a devastating residential effect on neighborhood deterioration.⁹⁴³ As unemployment rises in these concentrated areas, drugs replace the legal market and give rise to black on black crime, to the extent of 'self-destruct' genocide. African Americans, a national minority oppressed on a quadruple level, are thus being 'wiped out' by the electronic revolution, drugs and the criminalization resulting from the effects of both (i.e., one million African American men in prison).

This process lies behind the relegation of a significant portion of the African American community to the status of a permanently unemployed 'underclass'.

At a structural level alone, the extraordinarily high and sustained unemployment level among Black Youth is a function of converging factors, the movement of capital to foreign soil, from the cities to the suburbs, and from northern cities to select areas of the Sun Belt. Other factors are: (1) the changing character of work, reflected in the decline of manufacturing, and the increase in advanced service sector occupations... and (2) changing immigration patterns of the last decade, that have produced a certain kind of competitive employment.⁹⁴⁴

One out of five African Americans aged 18-21 does not have a high school diploma—the precondition for obtaining most entry-level jobs, entering military service, gaining admission to most apprenticeship programs, or going to college. As a result, many African American youths are being turned into a permanently unemployed 'underclass', and they often turn to selling and using drugs as a means of economic survival.⁹⁴⁵ This increase

⁹⁴³ Douglas S. Massey & Nancy A. Denton, *American Apartheid Segregation and the Making of the Underclass* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993], p. 132.

⁹⁴⁴ Troy Duster, "Social Implications of the 'New' Black Underclass," *The Black Scholar* (May/June, 1988), p.3

⁹⁴⁵ Douglas G. Glasgow, *The Black Underclass: Poverty, Unemployment, and Entrapment of Ghetto Youth* [New York: Vintage Books, 1981], p. 55.

illegal activity makes more African American youth victims of criminalization, as their numbers swell the prison population. With the jobs that remain in the public and commercial sectors requiring job retraining, or technical training, many African American youths, especially male, are left out of the process. The few jobs available are often low paying, which reduces the median income of the African American family and forces the community into a state of underdevelopment. All this takes on the genocidal aspects for the African American community.

High-Tech Indentured Servitude

Vijay Prashad, in “Contract Labor: The Latest Stage of Liberal Capitalism,” discusses how modern capitalism is wiping out the traditional privileges of intellectual labor and is creating a “high-tech indentured servitude”. He talks about immigrant-labor, now the essential part of global class formation, of menial workers from the Third World being confronted with these relations of production (wages), lack of health insurance, etc., imposed upon menial laborers in the industrialized nations. Prashad talks about how contract (temporary) labor has become the dominant form of labor relations, and that since 1992 temporary jobs increased by 250 percent across the United States, leading to millions of workers’ gradual socioeconomic marginalization in relation to the labor market.

Contract labor has become a common way for firms to extract maximum profits from labor, whether in manufacturing, or service... workers are, in effect, indentured and without hope of attaining what had been minimum standards of welfare capitalism. Menial jobs are not the only ones being given on contract, but also mental jobs, from secretaries to computer programmers to graphic designers. Even though both mental and menial labor fall under the same rubric of contract labor, the class and national differentials, which divide the various states of indenture cannot be ignored.⁹⁴⁶

Prashad goes on to say that while the U.S. economy is purported to be in ‘recovery’, with a supposed drop in unemployment in May 1994 to 6 percent, most of the new jobs now available are for low pay, while frequently offering a minimum wage which is only 90 cents more than it was in 1974. In the last 15 years, the minimum wage lost 23 percent of its value. Many new jobs are temporary, which curtails job security and prevents workers from organizing unions.⁹⁴⁷

Reasons for the Rise of Racism in the Present Period

U.S. economy hegemony (dominance) over the world capitalist economy is being challenged by Japan and Western Europe, particularly Germany, with the latter in the first and second positions economically in the world market. The world has been broken into three spheres of influence, with Japan in dominance within the Asian rim sphere, China now a growing major socialist market, Germany in a United Europe, and the United States in the Americas maintaining political hegemony through military superiority over the world.

⁹⁴⁶ Vijay Prashad, “On Contract Labor: The Latest Stage of Liberal Capitalism,” *Monthly Review* October 1994, Vol. 4, No. 5-6, p. 19.

⁹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 20

The first tendency we find in this new period is that the United States has lost economic hegemony in the capitalist world to Japan and Germany, but it is maintaining 'political hegemony' by reverting to military actions, 'being policemen of the world' for the international capitalist class. At the same time, it is protecting and advancing the interest of its transnational corporations. While there is greater 'interdependency' of all countries' economic social systems due to the new international division and stratification of labor, competition between capitalists has become more intense. The inter-investment of imperialist countries and transnational corporations have created a new one-world economic order.

Imperialist/monopoly capitalist nations, led by U.S. imperialism, have dominance over the world, because of the structural crisis of world capitalism. Failing to extract enough surplus profit from the Third World, due to increased international competition for markets, lack of expansion of markets, the Third World debt, and over-production and under-consumption, the capitalist classes of Europe, the United States and Canada are pushing their countries to a form of 'democratic neo-fascism'. This is imperialism's reaction to its structural crisis. This is what Malcolm X called the international, Western capitalist class power structure.

Racism is rising in Germany, France, Britain, the United States and Canada. Due to intense competition for spheres of influence, nations, continents in the world, the imperialist powers face a crisis of over-production and under-consumption in the industrial center. Monopoly capitalists must extract greater surplus value (profits from labor power) from their domestic working class, which will produce a lower standard of living in industrial capitalist countries (downsizing). This means the governments of the center must 'move to the right' domestically to curtail human rights because the contradictions in the relations of production have increased on the home front. The capitalist center countries therefore become more chauvinistic and nationalistic (bourgeois nationalists) fighting for special interests reflected in all layers of their society that serve the interest of their bourgeoisie—Euro-American 'white' racist nationalism. This means that, as the oppression of communities of color in the capitalist center intensifies, racism raises its ugly head. U.S. imperialism faces fierce competition from Western European countries and finds it harder to penetrate the European market. Gaining less profit, it is also receiving falling rates of return. With competition from the Asian market, racism in the capitalist center, and imperialist aggression in the Third World take on greater importance.

From the wage differentials between the wages of white and African American workers (discrimination in the labor market) in the United States, 50 billion dollars in profit each year is made for U.S. capitalists. Another 40 to 50 billion dollars in profits is made from Hispanics, Native Americans and Asians.⁹⁴⁸ From Third World countries, after foreign aid is extracted, another 50 billion dollars is made, and from the super exploitation of African American athletes and entertainers by American Zionists, another 50 billion dollars. Our estimate is that U.S. imperialists, and its Zionist allies extort 250-300 billion dollars annually from people of color worldwide.

The new capitalist world order, after the collapse of European and Soviet socialism, means that there will be more neo-colonialist aggression from imperialism and Zionism. When recession or depression looms over the United States, it creates military aggression in the

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Victor Perlo, Economics of Racism [New York: International Publishers, 1975], p. 84

Third World to extend an area of expansion for its transnational corporations. The ties between profit-making of U.S. transnational corporations in times of recession and the role of the U.S. military industrial intelligence complex in expanding or creating booms in the capitalist order due to military aggression and expenditures should not be underestimated.

It must be realized that the Zionist state of Israel serves the purpose of destabilizing the Arab, African and Third World, and is a beachhead in the Middle East for U.S. imperialism. Zionism, as a movement, is the enemy of the people of the Third World and people of color because it is a form of 'political racism'. The principle contradiction in the world today is the north/south polarity between U.S. imperialism allied with Zionism, and the Third World. Zionism is a movement to establish a white capitalist settler colonial state in the Middle East, using the guise of religion. It is important for people of the Third World to unite and wage a political offensive against Zionism by educating the masses of the economic ties of various corporations, banks and infrastructure. Because the United States supports the Zionist state of Israel, and is a main center of world reaction, it is important for all anti-Zionists to influence the political future of the U.S. Anti-Zionists and anti-imperialists in the Third World must unite with people of color inside the United States to struggle against the rightward drift of the United States.

Imperialism and the New World Order

What is imperialism? Imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism. Imperialism is when a nation aggresses against another nation to influence or control that nation's political, economic, cultural or military policy, and/or to gain control of its natural resources. Historically, as capitalism consolidated and expanded in Europe and America, securing colonies in Africa, Asia, and South America, it developed into the system of imperialism.

Private property based on the labor of the small proprietor, free competition, democracy, all the catchwords with which the capitalists and their press deceive the workers and the peasants are things of the distant past. Capitalism has grown into a world system of colonial oppression and of the financial strangulation of the overwhelming majority of the population of the world by a handful of "advanced" countries.⁹⁴⁹

Workers in the Western nations reaped part of the profits from the super exploitation of the colonies. This spoliation of the working class in Europe and America provides the material base for false class-consciousness, a consciousness of the Western proletariat to identify with the interests of their bourgeoisie. This occurred in the United States and Western Europe.

If we approach the problem of the labor aristocracy on a world scale, we must consider most U.S. industrial workers as forming a labor-aristocracy as compared with workers in other countries.⁹⁵⁰

The capitalist bourgeoisie granted the Western working class fringe benefits from the system. Lenin correctly saw this development of a 'white skin' privilege and called on socialists to struggle against the national chauvinism of their bourgeoisie. Instead, most workers in Western countries supported their bourgeoisie in the first imperialist war.

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V.I. Lenin, Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism [Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1975], p.5

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Y. Varega, Politico-Economic Problems of Capitalism [Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1968] p. 130

As far back as 1915 Lenin drew the conclusion that in the epoch of imperialism a socialist revolution could be victorious at first in some, or even in one separate country, and that the simultaneous victory of socialist revolution in all capitalist countries was impossible.⁹⁵¹

The Great October Revolution in Russia ushered in a new era. In the early 1920s, Lenin analyzed that the world socialist revolution would be a combination of anti-imperialist revolutions in the colonies, as well as worker revolutions in developed capitalist countries.

In some of the most developed capitalist countries, the maturing of the forces for socialist revolution is slowing down because the bourgeoisie has succeeded in splitting the working class movement and creating the section of working class aristocracy and bureaucracy.⁹⁵²

In some of the less developed capitalist nations, the working class, and other sections of the people, experience double and triple oppression. The class contradictions and class struggle assume more acute forms, resulting in these countries becoming more politically mature for revolution. This leads to the formation of weak links in the chain of imperialism, links that can be broken sooner than others. Since the second imperialist war, the weak links in the imperialist chain were broken by the anti-imperialist and socialist revolutions in Africa, Asia, and South America.

In the 1980s, U.S. imperialists fought counter-insurgency warfare against the Sandinistas until they were able to temporarily reverse the gains of the Nicaraguan revolution, which had stalemated the El Salvadorian revolution. U.S. imperialists in the 1980s invaded Grenada and Libya, in the 1990s invaded Panama, Somalia, Haiti, and Iraq, and engaged in an economic blockade of socialist Cuba. Since 1945, U.S. imperialism has acted as the policeman of the world for the capitalist class under the hegemony of the labor aristocracy. The workers of capitalist Western countries fought against the Korean, Algerian and Vietnamese revolutions.

In the present period, imperialism is impoverishing workers worldwide, and the objective conditions for international workers' socialist revolution is ripening. In today's world, imperialism usually takes the form of a white, Western, capitalist nation attacking an underdeveloped Third World nation and is a form of 'international political racism,' the haves against the have-nots. This is how the United States is planning to stimulate the U.S. economy again—by attacking another Third World country.

Domestic Agenda of the American World Order

The U.S. capitalist class, in order to extract more surplus value from North American workers and lower the wages of both Canadian and U.S. workers, has initiated the North American Free Trade Agreement, where they will super-exploit the cheap labor of Mexican and South American workers by the United States. Under conditions of intense competition between the developed capitalist countries, the capitalist ruling class of Western countries are opting for a move to the right, and their drive is to isolate, neutralize, or destroy all workers' resistance in their countries, particularly people of color.

⁹⁵¹ U.S.S.R. The Fundamental of Marxist-Leninist Philosophy [Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1968], p. 457

⁹⁵² Ibid., p. 456

U.S. imperialism's strategy is broadening with the further expansion of multinational corporations to the Third World (the underdeveloped countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America) and the reaping of super profits from cheap labor.

It is more profitable for multinational corporations to produce industrial products in the Third World, (because of low wages), and ship them back to the United States to assemble and sell to the American people at high prices. Also, multinational corporations sell their finished products back to Third World nations (markets) for phenomenal profits. The U.S. proletariat (working class) is rapidly being reduced to a consumer proletariat, purchasing products that are produced in other countries but sold on the U.S. market. This external expansion of U.S. imperialism causes internal contradictions of recession as more of the domestic labor force is displaced from the productive process.

Real wages of American workers have steadily declined from the boom years of the mid-1960s. Since 1969, there has been a constant trend from relative poverty to absolute impoverishment for various strata of the U.S. proletariat. The recession of 1974 onwards is due to the structural crisis capitalism faces in the present era.

At the same time, the labor bureaucracy of the AFL-CIO, with its class collaborationist policy of supporting U.S. imperialism, helps impede class consciousness among workers inside the imperialist state by struggling for higher wages within the system. The labor aristocracy has forced American workers to take concessions, even in relation to wage increase demands and job security. Rather than struggle against the flight of U.S. capital to the Third World, the union bureaucracy has conceded to national chauvinism of viewing foreign workers and the products they produce as reason for the loss of American workers' jobs.

Instead of educating workers to struggle against the imperialist system, the labor aristocracy actively supports the U.S. government in its designs to neo-colonize the Third World.

Economically, the difference is that sections of the working class in the oppressing nations receive crumbs of the super-profits which the bourgeoisie of the oppressing nations obtain by extra exploitation of the workers of the oppressed nations.⁹⁵³

Africa has become a main focus for U.S. imperialist expansion in recent years. There have been countless overthrows of progressive governments in Africa, executed with the supervision of the CIA. The main kernel for capitalism today is the struggle to fully incorporate Africa into the capitalist sphere.

Africa's natural resources are being exploited for new markets of expansion. The second war of liberation fought by the People's Republic of Angola against the reactionary Angolan forces, in alliance with the Union of South Africa, had the full support of U.S. imperialism. U.S. imperialism supported the South African economy through its investments and multinational corporations' operations there.

⁹⁵³ V.I. Lenin, "A Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism," *Collected Works, Vol. 19* [Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1972] p. 242

For several years, the U.S. steel industry had rapidly declined. Between 1974 and 1982, domestic steel production dropped by 10 percent.

At the same time, the U.S. steel industry siphoned domestic profits and reinvested them in Third World nations where authoritarian regimes guaranteed low wages from a nonunion labor force. Imports from foreign nations producing steel now exceed one-fifth of the domestic market. Since 1975, U.S. imports of South African steel have increased 5,000 percent. South Africa is an industrialized nation that gets super surplus value from Africans' labor, who produce diamonds, gold, and a variety of valuable products for the world's capitalist economy. Its liberation is attempting to be used as an extension of the world capitalist system.⁹⁵⁴

The South African units defeated at the battle at Cuito Cuanawala in 1988 in southern Angola by the combined forces of MPLA (Angolan), SWAPO (Namibian), Cuban, and ANC (South African Freedom Fighters) led the way to free elections. SWAPO won elections, which led to an independent Namibia and the freedom of Nelson Mandela from prison after 27 years. It propelled the democratic process for a free multiracial South Africa leading to democratic elections in 1994.⁹⁵⁵

After decades of struggle to free Palestine, U.S. imperialists supports the colonialist, racist state of Israel. Its support of Israel has kept a capitalist beachhead in the Middle East to neutralize the national liberation struggle of Arab people.

To avoid wage increase demands of organized labor inside the national boundaries of the United States, multinational corporations are moving their bases to the South and Southwest. This internal expansion is designed to exploit the unorganized labor force of the underdeveloped South. Even with this expansion, companies are moving to states and towns that are predominantly white, representing a major national contradiction for U.S. capitalism. It involves the drawing of workers into the labor force at a cheaper rate, at the same time expelling them from the labor force in the Northeast and North-Central areas. The traditional industrial proletariat in these areas has been devastated. They suffer loss of jobs, often with no hope of reemployment, and sometimes they lose their homes and life savings.

As capitalist expansion increases in the South, more black people in the South will become part of the black industrial proletariat. This process has already led to a heightening of class-consciousness and class struggle in many places in the South. This has led to black workers organizing for justice in the South.

At the same time, the technological revolution in the electronics industry (high-tech) is displacing more and more workers from the productive process. Workers with 15-20 years' work experience are being displaced from the labor force as industries leave the Northeast and Midwest sections of the country. Complete industries, such as textiles are being wiped out because they cannot compete with foreign imports that can be sold at cheaper prices, because foreign workers earn lower wages. Workers in the United States are either forced

⁹⁵⁴ Manning Marable, "Along the Color Line," *The Vindicator* (May 31, 1985) Vol. 15, No. 8, p. 8. David Deutschmann, ed. *Angola and Namibia: Changing the History of Africa* [Australia: Ocean Press, 1989] pp. 120-125

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to be permanently unemployed, or seek job retraining in high-tech industries. These developments, and others, are bound to lead to an internal crisis for U.S. imperialism.

Is the African American Still of Strategic Importance to the American and World Socialist Revolution?

Eminent black social scientist and political activist, C.L.R. James claims that an independent black movement has appeared at every key period of social crisis in America and has given stimulus to the labor movement.⁹⁵⁶

The Million Man March on October 16, 1995, demonstrated the potential of the African American national liberation struggle to the world socialist revolution. Like the French workers' general strike in 1995 against the French government's austerity plans, the Million Man March, the African American equivalent of a general strike, laid the basis for a true mass mobilization that could eventually lead to the transference of power to the working class.⁹⁵⁷

African Americans most important impact in relation to the American revolution, will be in areas where they are in greater number to the technological complexes and services of the American capitalist empire. Even in terms of a Southern black working class strategy, sheer numbers in terms of labor power, African Americans are limited unless they serve as a catalytic agent to propel the seventy-five million or more white American workers in the productive sector toward a progressive direction, along with helping to radicalize the 17.5 million government workers and 17.5 million who work in the nonproductive service of the private sector.

Due to the S-T revolution with plastics (i.e. the development of hard and durable plastics having the resistance of steel; development through the space industry replacing much of steel in manufacturing products, particularly automobiles), it is easier and more economical to transport machinery parts through trucking, rather than railroad or ship inside the United States. Assembly plants have moved to interstate intersections on the outside of central cities, to assemble parts, because they can be easily transported anywhere by truck (highway system). 'White ethnic' urban villages have emerged around the U.S. near the assembly plants. Malls, shopping centers, and retail businesses have developed near urban villages, making the economic growth in the urban villages surrounding major central cities like an urban economic bantu (similar to the Bantu villages in South Africa) situation in the last 10 years. A high-tech apartheid system is evolving into a new form of residential segregation and structural unemployment.⁹⁵⁸

When most American radicals think about a revolution in the United States, they visualize the oppressed masses, workers, Blacks, women, rising up to sweep away the bourgeoisie and institute a new socialist society. So preoccupied are they with the social forces—which are necessary for any revolution—that they lost sight of the role revolutionary theoreticians must play in creating the new, different and challenging ideas without which any mass uprising can go beyond rebellion to revolution. Or, they can believe

⁹⁵⁶ Melvin M. Leiman, The Political Economy of Racism: A History [London: Pluto Press, 1993], p. 318.

⁹⁵⁷ See Muhammad Ahmad, "The Great Million Man March," Independent Political Action Bulletin (Winter 1996) Issue #12, pp. 5-8

⁹⁵⁸ Christopher B. Lemberger and Charles Lockwood, "How Business is Reshaping America," The Atlantic Monthly October 1986, p. 45.

that the last word on revolution was written by Marx and Engels in nineteenth century Europe or Lenin and Trotsky in twentieth century Russia.⁹⁵⁹

Technology, the Changing Nature of the Workforce and Proletarian Class Struggle

The high-tech revolution taking place in the Western (center) capitalist world is increasing dependency, technological neocolonialism, underdevelopment and unequal exchange between the Third World and the capitalist West. At the same time, to further exploit the Third World, the international capitalist class is rapidly industrializing the Third World, making it a decentralized proletariat (no one country or region in the Third World conducts the entire production and administration process for industrial products). While doing this, capitalists are changing the nature of the work process in the West. It is no longer based on mechanical/industrial (unskilled/semiskilled) labor. The new high-tech (electronic) work process of the Western capitalist countries is necessary for the administration of 'white collar' labor that is engaged in the computing data process of production. This is necessary for the administration of the world market 'interconnectedness of economics, inter-communalism' that of a 'global empire—the new world order.'

Ruination of the White Industrial Proletariat and Bourgeoisification of the Lower White Collar Electronic Service Proletariat

U.S. capital is ruining sectors of the Anglo-American proletariat, forcing many industrial workers into underemployment and unemployment. At the same time, it is expanding a medium wage, technological electronic service professional or white-collar proletariat that identifies itself with the upper strata of the petty bourgeoisie or upper middle class.

Presently, this professional electronic service proletariat, 'white-collar labor' cannot sustain the material conditions and lifestyle of the upper middle petty bourgeoisie, but they hope or aspire to eventually reach the upper middle strata through the 'illusion' of upward mobility. These aspirations, based on 'economism,' the 'personal accumulation of commodities,' propels them to maintain their 'false class consciousness' and become bourgeoisified into thinking on chasing the 'American Dream.'

The combination of high-tech industry in major southern cities and large northern urban centers makes African American labor, concentrated within high-tech, central to the American revolutionary process. Essential to this development is the organization of white collar African American female labor (the computer programmer, data processor). Revolutionaries need to look at the feminization of high-tech labor. More and more, African American women are going into data processing and related fields.

Social Formation and Value in the High Technocratic Society

Samir Amin, in Unequal Development, says social formations are organized structures that are marked by a dominant mode of production and modes of production that are subordinate to it. With the creation of the electronic scientific high-tech information

⁹⁵⁹ James and Grace Lee Boggs, "A Critical Remembrance" in Paul Buhle, C.L.R. James: His Life and Work [London: Allison & Busley, 1986], pp. 177-179.

revolution in the 21st century, and robots replacing a large part of mechanical-manual labor in the production process, the contradiction between mental and manual labor will increase. The entire proletariat will transform and, in particular (in the Western center), will become predominantly a mental, 'intellectual' service labor proletariat. The surplus value extracted from the new high-tech proletariat will be related to their 'intellectual' labor that will service the system, but will be productive labor by helping the global capitalists to be continuously innovative, expanding and avoiding crisis and collapse on a macro-level. The wages received from this high-tech 'international' proletariat will be sufficient to purchase the commodities produced with less manual (mechanical) labor, while producing higher productivity. The free time of this service high-tech proletariat will be used, for the most part, to consume the mass global capitalist culture that will keep the entertainment, sports and media sector of the interconnected, interdependent commercial capitalists afloat.

A local educator says that in the advanced stages of technocracy human labor (manual, mechanical, industrial) and raw materials lose value. Hegemony and control of capital is dependent upon the control of intellectual property that, by definition, has no geographic boundaries. Labor unions and advocates for workers' rights may win battles, but they will certainly lose the war if their efforts are focused on critically controlling the means of production through temporary measures, like defeating NAFTA and GATT. The real arena has little to do with economic policies based on geography and other artificial borders that were created by the capitalists during their great world wars. Intellectual property (knowledge, information, creativity) has created a new currency unrelated to the availability of land or labor. Since the latter is in excess globally, it has ceased to be a factor.

More and more mechanical labor (manual) in the 21st century will be rendered into service or unproductive labor in the new world order. Value, in turn, will become the mental 'intellectual' labor time involved in the technical aspects of producing commodities. This, in turn, will create greater alienation on the part of the "new" proletariat. Their labor will be on an individual level so that a minute aspect of the productive process will become a thing of which they are alienated from, even greater than the productive process or the global system.

The following quote from a local educator, in critiquing Ahmad's assumptions of the massive influx of African American women into the information system via the data process, just reinforces the fact that the structural hierarchy of high-tech is still dominated by white males and is an area where affirmative action access needs to take place.

The high-tech labor force does not refer to data processing, or any job sector typically dominated by women. These are fields dependent upon electronics, but the high-tech part has to do with the development of software, design, maintenance and operation of advanced automated equipment (robotics). All of these fields continue to be dominated by white males. High-tech also includes the biomedical field, advance polymer sciences, environmental control systems, agri-technology, etc. The user interface that is operating computers is not essentially high-tech, but service of the high-tech mechanism....⁹⁶⁰

Takis Fotopoulos, in The Nation-State and the Market, says today's decline of the nation-

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Conversation with a local educator, Cleveland, Ohio 1995

state is closely linked to the present internationalized phase of the marketization process. He says the statist period of active state control of the economy and interference with the self-regulating mechanism of the market, which has lasted for approximately 50 years, has exhausted itself. Fotopoulos goes on to say, “once a market economy is established, its own grow-or-die dynamic tends to undermine any serious attempt to create a self-protective mechanism of society against the hegemony of the market and transforms society itself into a market society.”⁹⁶¹

Society is formed on the basis of unity of productive forces and productive relations. Productive relations are the laws defining property and the relationship of people to property in the process of production. The constant, spontaneous development of the productive forces eventually disrupts the unity. An epoch of social revolution creates new productive relations that reflect the level of, and are compatible with, the newly productive forces.

In terms of new productive relations, we are referring to the increased use of contract labor and the forced global migration of mental labor. The newly developed productive forces come from the high-tech-information-electronic computer revolution, which increases productivity with fewer workers.⁹⁶²

Fotopoulos says that growing internationalization of the market economy today relies on the expansion of the world market rather than on the growth of the domestic market previously. This has important implications regarding the state’s economic role.⁹⁶³

The Internationalization of the Market and Super-National Institutions

Fotopoulos goes on to state that today it is not the nation-state that serves the needs of the economic elite in terms of the supply side of the economy, but rather the internationalization of the marketization process that leads to the creation of large economic blocs. The economic role of the nation-state is being progressively downgraded into the EEC (European Economic Community), the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the informal Far Eastern Bloc (Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Malaysia, Thailand, Hong Kong, and Singapore).⁹⁶⁴

Fotopoulos, like Anthony Giddens in The Class Structure of the Advanced Societies, describes the new class stratification in post-industrial society that has taken place.

In the post-industrial society, a new class of specialized and well paid workers in high-tech sectors has emerged, which together with a significant part of those in full-time employment in the expanding services sector, constitute the electoral clientele of the neo-liberal consensus. The same social groups also make up the majority of the two-thirds society. These groups are hostile to any expansion of state-ism and are increasingly

⁹⁶¹ Takis Fotopoulos, “The Nation-State and The Market” in Society and Nature, Vol. 2, No. 2, p. 37.

⁹⁶² Nelson Perry, African American Liberation and Revolution in the United States [Chicago: Workers Press, 1992], p. 21.

⁹⁶³ Fotopoulos, “The Nation-State and the Market,” p. 62.

⁹⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 67.

attracted by the ideology of the private provision of services, like health, education and pensions. The remaining 'one-third' consists of the unemployed, part-time, low-wagers, in other words, all those constituting the new 'underclass', who either abstain from the electoral process altogether, or support extreme right-wing movements.⁹⁶⁵

The neo-liberal consensus (for an internationalization of the market) has replaced the social-democratic (statists) consensus as the major strategy of the international institutions that control the world economy (IMF, World Bank, etc.). The need to minimize the socioeconomic role of the state in the present phase internationalization of the marketization process is no longer a matter of choice for those controlling production, but rather it is a necessary condition for survival.

Most important in the internationalization of the market as a new phenomenon is international electronic cultural imperialism, which occurs in an electronic environment where 75 percent of the international communication flow is controlled by a small number of multinationals, rendering cultural nationalism (on a national level) almost meaningless. In essence, a new international capitalist culture is perpetuated in all areas of the world through electronic media, often, but not always, Eurocentric. It idealizes the role of the individual, rampant individualism, sexism, stereotypes, the rich capitalist class, is its civilian troops (police), and the intelligence political police and invisible government (FBI, Army, CIA, Interpol, etc.). Cultural imperialism no longer needs gunboat diplomacy to integrate and absorb diverse cultures, because the marketization of mass communications worldwide sets the precondition of 'negating' cultural diversity.

Class struggle for the new strata of proletarians, who will eventually become the majority of the workforce in the capitalist (center) West (America, England, France, Germany, etc.) will replace mass industrial workers in 'strategic' industries and become the key proletarian force (by numbers and also strategic importance taking on a new form). Instead of the nineteenth century paradigm of industrial workers seizing control of nationwide industry, engaging in a mass general strike, and the vanguard party seizing the power of the state, revolutionaries need to investigate the parameters of a class conscious high-tech strata of the working class (i.e., computer operators) in various areas of government, business, banking, armed forces, etc., and engaging in an 'international computer virus' to wipe out the electronic process, which in the 21st century would be the equivalent of a general strike, and would lead to a crisis in the system. This, coordinated with mass democracy 'insurrections' in the streets, may be the new form of class struggle and organization in the 21st century.

Estimate of the Economic Crisis and Default

The contradictions of the U.S. capitalist class (imperialism) pose an interesting dynamic in relation to the structural crisis in the world capitalist system. One of the main contradictions in the United States is that capitalists, in their search for greater profits, are creating growth of unproductive service labor in the state sector and the deterioration of productive labor in the industrial sector. The U.S. capitalist class, who still has hegemony over the capitalist world, is investing industrial capital in the Third World countries because of cheap labor,

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Fotopoulos, "The Nation-State and the Market," p. 71

low taxes, and profitable, exploitable, mineral resources. American capitalists are investing this industrial capital at the expense of the national development of the United States. Thus Marx's statement that 'capitalists know no homeland' has become a material reality. The United States, in return, is rendered into a high-tech service economy with a white-collar nonproductive proletariat servicing world capital rather than reproducing capital.

Globalization: Capital can move in mind-boggling quantities at high speeds over international telecommunications networks.

Capital is no longer restricted by time, place or labour. It can produce ad hoc: to the customer's needs, 'just-in-time'. Its factories are not fixed in place, nor does it need to aggregate thousands of workers on the same floor. It can, instead, take up its plant and walk to any part of the world where labour is cheap, captive and plentiful, moving from one labour pool to another, extracting absolute surplus value....⁹⁶⁶

What is the Aim of the Globalization of World Capital?

The U.S. and Western European capitalists have in mind to further exploit the Third World, This is being done by building an industrial working class in the Third World that is dependent on Western capitalist technology that is centered in the United States and Western Europe. From the process of the overseas expansion of capital (industries), the capitalists reap super profit from cheap labor. The object of the capitalists is to develop a Third World industrial working class that will be dependent on the West for computer S-T service and which will be able to consume the glut of commodities on the world market. The long range strategy of the capitalists is to create a 'bourgeoisification' of the Third World proletariat by creating a labor aristocracy in the Third World—a strata that benefits from the overseas expansion of industrial production and is different from the comprador bourgeoisie that controls most Third World states.

This will be a difficult process for the capitalist class because the Third World has already been through the first phase of the national democratic liberation revolution and, in several cases, the first stage of socialist construction. The purpose of the capitalist class is 'recompradorization' of the Third World.

Note: There is a glut of commodities on the world market due to over-production and under-consumption caused by automation (the ability to produce more with fewer workers).

Three Meanings of 'Techno-Globalization'

One such meaning is that an increasing proportion of technological innovations are exploited in international markets: we term this the global exploitation of technology. Second, there is international collaboration between firms, sharing know-how with competitors from different countries, along with a parallel process of international collaboration between governments and academic institutions: this we term global

⁹⁶⁶ A. Swanendan, an interview, "Heresies and Prophecies: The Social and Political Fall-out of the Technological Revolution," Race and Class April-June 1974, Vol. 37, No.4, p. 2.

technological collaboration. A third meaning, especially dear to students of multinational corporations, is that firms are increasing integration of their R and D and technological activities: this we term the global generation of technology.⁹⁶⁷

The nation-state hence becomes a major instrument in the globalization process of their home-based multinational corporations.

The bourgeoisification and compradorization of the Third World is hoped to consume the glut of commodities on the world market and prolong the structural worldwide crisis in the capitalist system. The secondary aspect of the capitalist expansion is the re-incorporation of Russia, China and Eastern Europe into the world market as an arena of capitalist expansion and speculation.

The capitalists are rapidly in the process of rendering the United States (particularly) and Western Europe into computer scientific technological service centers for the world. The new Western S-T service proletariat is basically non-unionized, and the capitalists temporarily have labor on retreat. Western labor became 'bourgeoisified' with the existence of a strong labor aristocracy since World War I, but there has been an intense structural crisis in the capitalist system since 1974 from over-production and under-consumption caused by the S-T revolution (automation and cybernation). The capitalists have had to reduce the Western proletariat's wages to levels of Third World workers in an effort to extract more surplus value from the backs of Western workers. The capitalists were forced to alleviate(eliminate) the 'bourgeoisie privilege' and incentives to Western workers because of the glut produced by the S-T electronic industrialization revolution.

Inside the United States, consumer debt (due to the over-saturation of its market) is basically 'unpayable' by most consumers. This, plus the U.S. nation-state debt, makes the U.S. economy extremely unstable.

With the global alliance of capital and the transnationals seeking to maximum surplus value irrespective of national boundaries in the least amount of time and labor using telecommunications, needs to think globally. While there is still a need for independent black radical formations (as long as racism exists), to be successful, black labor and white labor must unite. Revolutionary internationalist, rather than a nationalist agenda—either black or white—is a more appropriate ideology for the 'new' situation. With the formation of the Labor Party of America, this may be possible. But even the Labor Party must make an intensive effort to incorporate labor of color inside the United States. It must have an 'internationalist' strategy to deal with the new stage of international capitalism and the transnational corporations which use the U.S. nation-state as its base. Western labor, which is beginning to organize the service sector, has a choice now, to move toward building a mass revolutionary socialist movement or enter into a new stage of neo-fascism and worldwide ruination of the international proletariat.

African-Americans and Globalization: The New Stage of Capitalism

⁹⁶⁷ Daniele Archibugi and Jonathan Michie, "The Globalization of Technology: A New Taxonomy," *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 1995, Vol. 19, p. 125.

Nations and nation states still exist but the sovereignty and autonomy of the nation state is rendered subservient to the strata of trans (multi) national capital of the capitalist class. The hegemonic nation-state of transnational capital becomes one of global empire or a transnational state.

The nation state of the hegemonic transnational capitalist power in the present era of globalization often comes in conflict/contradiction with the national aspirations of the people (working/underclass) of the nation including capitalists who are not big enough to reap benefits from globalization. Therefore, there is a basis in the core countries and especially in the hegemonic center of a broad united front against trans (multi) national capital, capitalist class and the ruining effects of globalization. As Samir Amin has often stated, the goals of the transnational capitalists is to lower the working wages of American and other core country workers to the level of Third World (developing) countries. This gradual deterioration of a livable working wage with guaranteed health benefits and social security represents the waning power of the U.S. hegemonic section of the transnational capitalist class. It can no longer or is no longer willing to concede "fringe material" benefits to U.S. workers for supporting imperialism. The struggle for hegemony over the world (global empire) economy by U.S. transnational capital is a tedious one; one in which the U.S. has sought and fought to maintain since 1945. Dominance over a global empire is one which the U.S. inherited since 1990 (with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Eastern European Socialist bloc) and one which has severe contradictions.

The U.S. workforce in 2004 was 131.5 million with 24.2 million of it being part-time employees.⁹⁶⁸ About a tenth of Toyota Motor Corps U.S. production labor force is temporary workers.⁹⁶⁹ In 2003 there were 111,278,000 households in the United States. One percent of the households, 1,112,780 households, control 40% of the wealth in the U.S. As of 2003, African-American men made the median income of 73% of that of white men. African-American women made 92% of white women's median income and 86% of white men's median income.⁹⁷⁰

So the racial and economic hierarchy in terms of wages is:

1. White males
2. White females
3. African-American female
4. African-American male

This change of racial economic apartheid has occurred in the last twenty-five years. This is significant because African-American females are paid less for equal work of white males or white females; because wages are based on male wages. According to the Congressional Black Caucus Agenda for the 109th (2005) Congress, focusing on employment and economic security,

unemployment rates for African-Americans are consistently almost double the rates for white (Caucasian) Americans; the median weekly earnings of full time African-American workers is consistently over \$130.00 dollars less than white workers who are similarly educated and situated; the poverty

⁹⁶⁸ Art Pines "Temporary Part-time Labor Trims Growth of U. S. Jobs" *The Plain Dealer*, Sunday, October 10, 2004, pp. 4

⁹⁶⁹ Michael Yates, "A Statistical Portrait", *Monthly Review*, Volume 56, Number 11, April 2005, p. 20.

⁹⁷⁰ Ibid (Yates), p. 16

rate for African-Americans is almost double the national poverty rate (24% vs. 12.5%) and more than triple (33% vs. 9.8%) for children under the age of 18. The average African-American household has 7% of the wealth of the average white household.⁹⁷¹

So, in the period of Globalization the capitalist class is extracting more surplus value (profit) from African-American workers as the entire American proletariat (working class) is being reduced into a non-productive service sector proletariat.

African-Americans have achieved only 57% of the economic status of whites according to an Urban League report "The State of Black America 2005". In 2001, 13.1% of white households had zero or negative net worth, while this was true for 30.9% of African-American households. The median financial wealth holdings of stocks, bonds, cash and the like of African-Americans was \$1,100; for whites (Caucasians) it was \$42,100.⁹⁷² According to Dr. Manning Marable, for baby boomers, people born between the years 1946-1956, African-Americans will leave their children upon death in debt while whites will leave their children 11 trillion in wealth born between the same years.⁹⁷³

At the same time, profits of U.S. corporations soared by a third to 102 trillion in 2003 from \$767.3 billion in 2000.⁹⁷⁴ Since 2000, the U.S. has lost 821,000 jobs. Michigan has lost 223,900 jobs since January 2000 and the unemployment rate has climbed from 4.6% to 6.9%. In Ohio, 222,600 jobs have been lost and the unemployment rate has risen from 3.9% to 5.7%.⁹⁷⁵

America's 350,000 small manufacturers account for over half the total value of the U.S. industrial production.

20% of Northeast Ohio's employment base is devoted to making parts for cars and trucks. In 10 years the auto supply industry will probably toss 20 to 25% of its jobs...most of the downsizing will result from productivity improvements. (Cybernation and automation);...parts account for 70% of a vehicle's cost.⁹⁷⁶

Since the end of World War II approximately five to six million or over thirty percent of the African-American labor force became concentrated in the industrial core center of the American labor process. By the 1980's there were three million African-American union members. Among the industrial core of the American working class, African-Americans represented the most militant sector. The policy of the Global-multinational (Transnational) capitalists to concentrate on a homogeneous "WASP" industrial core concentration labor force is the deliberate policy to dislocate African-Americans from industrial concentration. This declasses and lumpenizes African-American workers especially male youths who are unskilled or semi-skilled and limits African-American social dislocation power or the ability to halt the economic system through a general strike.

⁹⁷¹ Congressional Black Caucus Report, 2005

⁹⁷² Op. Cit. (Yates), p. 22

⁹⁷³ Manning Marable, on panel with Minister Louis Farrakhan at the "Conference of the Black Mayors," April 29, 2005, Columbus, Ohio (tape)

⁹⁷⁴ Op. Cit., (Pine), p. G-4

⁹⁷⁵ "Bush says economy slow for some but promises he'll stay the course." The Plain Dealer, Tuesday, May 4, 2004, p. 44

⁹⁷⁶ Peter Krause, "Cheaper, Larger, Leaner," The Plain Dealer, Sunday, October 10, 2004, p. 10

The building of a homogeneous "WASP" labor force maintains the racist white skin privilege of the white workers, stratifies, splits the working class on racial lines and keeps the most backward sectors of the American working class loyal to the interests of the Global-multi-national (Transnational) capitalists. This leads to accelerated development in white America and continuous underdevelopment of minority communities leading to unequal development as long as capitalism exists.

There are approximately 2.5 million African-American trade unionists in 2005.

Barbara Ransby in her article, "US: The Black Poor and the Politics of Expendability" stated that 30% of the manufacturing jobs eliminated by downsizing in 1990 and 1991 were jobs held by "African-Americans."⁹⁷⁷

African-American unemployment remains stagnant at 10.8% while white unemployment dropped to 4.7%, making African-American unemployment more than twice that of whites."⁹⁷⁸

The move to the right politically of the United States ruling class has led to the criminalization of African-American males particularly, due to the lumpenization caused by semi-skilled jobs in industry exported overseas which is the economic cause of many inner city males to participate in the drug traffic. Also with the industrialist policy of retaining few older African-American workers extracting greater surplus value from their labor through speed ups often due to robotics (increased labor productivity) and the conscious policy of hiring few young African-American male workers is making the African-American male an endangered species. The criminalization of African-American males will continue to increase the longer monopoly capitalism exists. As this form of genocide takes place a conscious policy of mis-education by the capitalist media structure is being waged against working class communities of color in particular. The media warfare is to dis-orientate the African-American and Third World proletariat inside the United States from its national, class and social tasks of carrying the struggle for democracy through to a socialist revolution. In the descending line of development of United States monopoly capitalism when the major area of expansion at the base (electronics, technological, micro-chip) is reproducing less real value and the class contradictions are increasing and the rate of expansion is contracting, the superstructure (government social programs); the politico-ideological takes on greater importance of interjecting false class consciousness into the working and oppressed masses of the American empire.

The dis-education process helps continue and increase black on black self hate that takes the form blacks killing blacks usually over control of the drug traffic. This becomes a form of self destruct genocide.

Downsizing (de industrialization) and outsourcing symptoms of globalization grossly affect the African-American community because it eliminates a living wage for unskilled, non-college African-American males in particular who have no alternative but to participate in the drug traffic which leads to criminalization and neo-slavery by the prison-industrial complex. According to Robert L. Allen,

⁹⁷⁷ Barbara Ransby, "US: The Black Poor and the Politics of Expendability, *Race and Class*, 382 (1996), p. 102

⁹⁷⁸ Urban League's Annual "Black America" report cites "Stagnant Unemployment, High Obesity and Prison Rates, *Jet Magazine*, May 21, 2005, Volume 109, No. 18, p. 4

...Equally ominous was the rise in the 1980's of the prison-industrial complex and with it the wholesale criminalization and incarceration of African-Americans especially young black males. The U.S. has the largest prison population in the world, currently over two million prisoners. With only 5% of the world's population, the U.S. has 25% of the world's prisoners. Some 50% of U.S. prisoners are African-American.⁹⁷⁹

There are 2.2 million prisoners in U.S. prisons and 7 million in the criminal justice system.

African-Americans are three times more likely to become prisoners once arrested and an African-American's average jail sentence is six months longer than a white person for the same crime: 39 months versus 33 months.⁹⁸⁰ In ten southern states conviction and imprisonment for a felony results in disenfranchisement.

It was estimated that as of 1998, 1.4 million African-Americans (including nearly 13% of all black males) had been barred from voting. (New York Times, 10/23/98)

Currently 3.9 million Americans are disenfranchised. In 32 states felons on parole aren't allowed to vote; in 29 states your right don't change, someone on probation isn't allowed to vote and in 10 states (mostly southern) impose a lifetime ban on convicted felons.⁹⁸¹ Thirty one percent of African-American males of voting age in the state of Alabama have lost their right to vote and 31 percent also in the state of Florida.⁹⁸² In 2005, the number of African-American males who have lost their right to vote was 15 percent.

Due to globalization and the failure of the Northeast manufacturers to compete with overseas cheap labor, unemployment in Cuyahoga County and Cleveland was gross.

Cuyahoga County unemployment rose to 6.6% in January, from 5.7% in December. Cleveland's climbed to 8.7% from 7.6%...In January 2005 Ohio State lost 8,200 non-farm jobs. January's decline followed losses of 7,500 jobs, in December, 2,500, in November and 6,600 in October (of 2004).¹⁶⁹⁸³

Excess production capacity (a tendency of capitalists to flood or over saturate the market) creates falling profits for corporations which produces a glut of commodities on the world market from under-consumption due to downsizing, increased part-time labor, unproductive service labor with reduced wages in most western post-industrial nations and unequal development of workers in third world countries (Africa, Asia and Latin America); who don't make enough wages to consume the products they now manufacture from the raw materials extracted from their nations.

The global glut of commodities makes reliance of consumption of commodities (consumer market) the basis to the stability of the world economy.

⁹⁷⁹ Robert L. Allen, "Reassessing the Internal (Neo) Colonialism Theory Today," The Black Scholar, Volume 35, No. 1, p 7

⁹⁸⁰ Urban League's Annual "Black America" report cites "Stagnant Unemployment, High Obesity and Prison Rates," Jet Magazine, May 2, 2005, Volume 109, No. 18, Tab, November 16-24, 1998, p. 16

⁹⁸¹ Op. Cit. (Allen), p. 7

⁹⁸² Mansfield B. Frazier, "Felony voting," Downtown Tab, November 16-24, 1998, p. 16

⁹⁸³ Allison Grant, "NE Ohio jobless numbers continue to rise," Greater Cleveland Community News, Volume 18, Issue 4, April 2005, p. 3

The world uses about 80 million barrels of oil a day...U.S. consumption alone is expected to grow nearly 50% in the next 20 years.⁹⁸⁴ Oil tankers transport nearly forty billion gallons of oil the world consumes on a daily basis. Because of the global competition for oil between the U.S., Western Europe, Canada, Britain, Japan and China with a short supply ready for refinement the price of oil increases. Gerald Horne in "Imperial Intrigues", says,

The scramble for oil and other resources and the collapsing dollar are the major economic weaknesses of the U.S.⁹⁸⁵

Horne goes on to say that "oil is the glue that is binding Cuba-China-Venezuela and Brazil."

Simultaneously a "major new alliance is emerging between Iran and China," according to the Washington Post of November 17, 2004. The two allies

Signed a preliminary accord worth \$70 billion to \$100 billion by which China will purchase Iranian oil and gas and help develop Iran's Yadavaran oil field, near the Iraqi border. Earlier this year, China agreed to buy \$20 billion in liquified natural gas from Iran over a quarter century... in turn China has become a major exporter of manufactured goods to Iran, including computer systems, household appliances and cars.⁹⁸⁶

China is the world's fastest growing economy and is buying raw materials, such as oil, natural gas and other materials at a phenomenal rate. For instance, China as of October 10, 2004 was consuming 40% of the world's cement supply.⁹⁸⁷ There are approximately 200 million cars in America. 1 2 million cars are sold in the United States every month.⁹⁸⁸ High gas (oil) prices hit the U.S. consumption rate, which is 2/3's of the perpetual accumulation of capital globally because people living in the suburbs have long ways to travel going back and forth to work and to malls and their homes.

What produces the world glut? Cybernation (a complete automated production process) and automation in the workplace worldwide (through new technology) takes fewer workers to produce more commodities (increased productivity). In the drive to increase profits, the capitalists establish plants and invest wherever there is the cheapest labor (low wages-third world, particularly China) and reduce wages in post-industrial western countries subjecting them to become high-tech service workers of a global world economy thus rendering those societies into non-productive labor economies. Unions are smashed and benefits are lost for many workers in the U.S. who now work two or more non-unionized part-time jobs with no benefits or job securities. As a result, those part-time workers go further into debt and cannot consume at the rate they did before. Americans are \$663 billion in consumer debt. Because U.S. consumers make up two-thirds of the profit of the world economy when they can no longer consume at the rate they did before, the global capitalist system enters into a major structural crisis as it now is teetering on a worldwide (concentrated in the U.S.) depression.

2006

⁹⁸⁴ "Public begins to hear implications of oil production peaking", *The Plain Dealer*, Sunday January 16, 2005, p. G-4

⁹⁸⁵ Gerald Horne, "Imperial Intrigues," *Political Affairs*, Volume 84, No. 4, p. 43

⁹⁸⁶ Ibid. (Horne), p. 44

⁹⁸⁷ Julie Chao, "Coal drives China's growth pollution chokes its cities," *The Plain Dealer*, Sunday October 10, 2004, p. A-4

⁹⁸⁸ Chris Seper and John Funk, "Digging deep to headoff oil crisis," *The Plain Dealer*, Sunday, May 29, 2005, p. A16-17

The Jena 6

In late August 2006, in the small Louisiana town of Jena, which is 85% white; the beginning of a major case of racial injustice developed. African American student, Kenneth Purvis asked the principal of Jena High School, which is 15% African American, if he could sit under a tree in the school's courtyard; a tree where white students traditionally congregated. He was told by the principal that, "he could sit wherever he liked because it's a free country." After the African American students sat under the tree (now cut down), white students hung three nooses from the tree.

Three white students admitted to hanging the nooses, but they insisted they had intended nothing sinister; the nooses, they said, had been inspired by watching a frontier justice scene from *Lonesome Dove*.

LaSalle Parish school superintendent, Roy Breithaupt recommended to a disciplinary committee that a few days of in-school suspension was adequate punishment for what he termed a juvenile prank.⁹⁸⁹

African American parents, outraged by this decision, gathered at a local Baptist Church to demand that white students be expelled for their racial act. The LaSalle Parish District Attorney said later that his inaction was because there was no state law for 'hate' crimes.

The next day during lunch hour, a small group of African American athletes decided to sit under the tree en-masse. Within a few minutes every African American student at the school had joined them. Many white students took offense and the situation became very tense. The school's principal called an emergency assembly that afternoon. The white students sat on one side of the auditorium and the African American students on the other, in accordance with custom. Every police officer in Jena, in full uniform, was asked to attend as well.

District Attorney Reed Walters told the students that the unrest at the high school had to stop. Turning his attention to the Black side of the auditorium, Walters said, "I can be your best friend, or I can be your worst enemy." Then he pulled a pen from his suit pocket and waved it with a dramatic flourish. "I want you to understand," he said, "that with a stroke of my pen I can make your lives disappear!"⁹⁹⁰

White students responsible for the hanging of the nooses were overjoyed by the lenient discipline they received and by the district attorney's less than subtle threat.

In early September 2006, the entire school campus was placed on lockdown because the situation had become so tense. In the next few weeks several sporadic clashes between the African American male athletes who had led the protest sit-in and the circle of white boys responsible for hanging the nooses took place.

One Thursday night in early November, somebody (still not known) set fire to the central academic building at Jena High School. Friday's classes were canceled, but a previously

⁹⁸⁹ Alan Bean, "Interview. Racism in Jena, Louisiana: The New Jim Crow," *International Socialist Review*, September-October 2007, Issue 55, p. 20

⁹⁹⁰ Ibid. pp. 20-21

scheduled student dance at the social center called the Fair Barn went on. An African American athlete, Robert Bailey and his friends Theo Shaw and Ryan Simmons, went to the Fair Barn after receiving a cell phone invitation from a white girl. They asked the woman at the door if they could attend the dance. As soon as Bailey's foot crossed the threshold of the dance hall, a twenty-year-old white man asked, "Are you Robert Bailey?" Without warning, or waiting for an answer, he punched Robert in the jaw. Other white students joined the attack and kicked, punched and hit Bailey over the head with a beer bottle. Adult chaperones broke up the fight and the next day the white man who attacked Bailey was charged with misdemeanor battery. No one else was charged. Robert Bailey was exiting a local convenience store the next morning with the same friends he had been with the night before. One of the white men who had battered Bailey was walking towards the door. When he saw Bailey and his friends he ran back to his truck and was soon brandishing a pistol-grip pump-action shotgun.

Theo Shaw and Ryan Simmons took cover behind parked vehicles, but Robert Bailey wrestled with the white man for control of the weapon. When Theo and Ryan came to his aid, they were able to wrestle the shotgun away.

Then, not knowing what to do with the weapon, they ran off with it. Eventually Robert, Theo and Ryan were charged with assault and theft of less than \$500. Their would-be assailant wasn't charged with anything.⁹⁹¹

A few days later, a white student named Justin Barker "got up in the face" of African American athlete Mychal Bell. Barker was good friends with the noose circle of white boys. Barker left, hollering insults at Mychal Bell and his friends, and giving them the finger.

Eventually there was a fight in which a white student making racist comments at Black students was beaten. He was treated for a concussion and multiple bruises. Yet the student, Justin Barker, was well enough that evening to attend a school function.⁹⁹²

Six African American athletes between the ages of 15 and 17, Mychal Bell, Carwin Jones, Bryant Ray Purvis, Jesse Beard, Theo Shaw and Robert Bailey were arrested. Five of them were charged as adults for attempted murder and conspiracy. The sixth was charged as a juvenile. Mychal Bell pleaded innocent; was tried for "attempted murder" and convicted as an adult that carried the maximum sentence of twenty-two years in prison.

The mass pressure has had an impact in the town and state. The Jena 6 finally got the proper legal representation, and the conviction of Mychal Bell for attempted murder as an adult was overturned; he was released on bail September 27. Bell and the other five youth now face charges as juveniles and a new trial. Significantly some whites in the town are visible and speaking out against the double standard.⁹⁹³

As the case received more grassroots support, 50,000 demonstrators marched on the town of Jena, Louisiana demanding "Free the Jena 6," on the day that Mychal Bell was initially

⁹⁹¹ *Op. Cit.* (Bean) p. 21

⁹⁹² "Race and Class in America: What the Jena 6 Case Shows," *Against the Current* 181, November/december 2007, Volume 22, Number 5 (new series), p. 2

⁹⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 2

scheduled to be sentenced for his role in the beating of a white classmate. Bell was released on bail, but had his bail revoked for speaking out on a national tour. He is now serving time as a juvenile. The Jena 6 case has yet to be resolved as of press time.

Hate crime: the torture of Megan Williams

The Williams family, Black Lawyers for Justice and the Support Committee for Megan Williams, a 20 year-old, five-foot two-inch African American woman with disability needs, are demanding that federal “hate-crime” charges be brought against her abductors and torturers. Megan was lured into a Logan County, West Virginia trailer by her previous boyfriend, where she was repeatedly raped, choked, stabbed, forced to eat dog and rat feces by six white tormenters. They kept her for a week, berated her calling her ‘nigger’ incessantly, sodomized her with a stick and kept her with a noose tied around her neck for lengthy periods.

Six white defendants, four men and two women, are charged in the attack, which included other gruesome acts of sadistic torture. Megan’s mother, Carmen Williams told the press that “we don’t know everything they did to her,” and her daughter has suffered severe trauma as a result.

Democrats gained dominance in both the House of Representatives and the Senate. Senator elect Barack Obama has emerged as a central progressive charismatic figure in the Democratic Party. If he can develop and consolidate a progressive bloc inside the Democratic Party it may stimulate young people to become politically involved “again and lead to another breakthrough.

2007

The year two thousand and seven will be recorded as an historical year. In this year there has become a public outcry against President George W. Bush’s war against the people of Iraq. Many Republican congress people sensing an aura of “defeat” are reluctantly beginning to urge Bush to de-escalate the imperialist war: The assumptions which the American people originally supported the invasion and overthrow of the Saddam Hussein regime was that he had “weapons of mass destruction” and connections to Ibn Laden. After four years of involvement now in an Iraqi civil war, no weapons of mass destruction have been found or connections to Al Quadi. While protest in the U. S. is not as great as it was during the Vietnam war due to the fact of no draft and a professional volunteer army; if the projected “surge” of U. S. troops doesn’t subdue the Iraqi resistance by late September 2007, there may be an upsurge of anti-war protest in the U. S. But with the recent U. S. Supreme Court rulings, it seems like “the people’s movement in the U. S. for human rights, democracy and justice has been setback. Part of the ultra right conservative agenda has been to reverse affirmative action and abortion rights. It sought this by seizing all three branches of government, congress, the presidency and the Supreme Court, which it succeeded in doing in the election of 2000 and consolidated in the election of 2004 with a majority conservative Supreme court; conservative Republicans were able to pull off the “Legal counter-revolution” of 2007. Linda Greenhouse reporting for the New York Times news service in the Philadelphia Inquirer, Sunday July 1, 2007 said

As a result, the court upheld a federal antiabortion law, cut back on the free speech rights of public school students, strictly enforced procedural

requirements for bring and appeal cases, and limited school districts' ability to use racially conscious measure to achieve or preserve integration.

As a result, the young generation of the 21st century needs to become active in a new movement to reverse “the conservative” legal “counter revolution of 2007. As we go to press Senator Barack Obama has emerged as a the new progressive figure in the democratic presidential primary for 2008.

Barack Hussein Obama (born August 4, 1961) is the junior United States Senator from Illinois and a member of Democratic Party. The U. S. Senate Historical Office lists him as the fifth African American Senator in U. S. history and the only African American currently serving in the U. S. Senate.

Born to a Kenyan father and an American mother, Obama grew up in culturally diverse surroundings. He spent most of his childhood in the majority-minority U. S. state of Hawaii and lived for four years in Indonesia. After graduating from Columbia University and Harvard Law School, Obama worked as a community organizer, university lecturer, and civil rights lawyer, before entering politics. He served in the Illinois Senate from 1997 to 2004 . launching his campaign for U. S. Senate in 2003.

Obama delivered the keynote address at the 2004 Democratic National Convention while still an Illinois state legislator. Boosted by increased national standing, he went on to win election to the U. S. Senate in November 2004 with a landslide 70% of the vote in an election year marked by Republican gains. As a member of the Democratic minority in the 109th Congress, Obama co-sponsored the enactment of conventional weapons control and transparency legislation and made official trips to Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and Africa.⁹⁹⁴

Though his candidacy may not win, the new population demographics of a recent report of the census campaigns similar to his may fare better in the near future. According to the report one in three Americans belong to a minority group.

Of the 300 million people living to the U. S., nearly 200 million are Whites; 40 million are African Americans and 44 million are Hispanics, the largest minority group Asians account for 14 million and Native Hawaiian and other pacific islanders make up 1 million. American Indian and Alaska Natives comprise 4 million of the population.

Such a growth rate of people of color or minority combined with the shifts back to the center or left of center of the majority (200 million white Americans) could lead to the opportunity for a more equalitarian new America in the 21st Century.

As We Go to Press

Senator Barack Obama has emerged as the overwhelming leading candidate for the presidential nominee in the Democratic Party. Recently, having decisively beat Senator

⁹⁹⁴ Barack Obama from Wikipedia, The free encyclopedia <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barack> Obama, p. e

Hillary Clinton in North Carolina and losing to her by only two percentage points in Indiana, Barack seems to be the man to beat. He only needs 188 delegates to officially secure the nomination.

The fact that an African American man has mounted so successful a campaign for the nation's highest political office speaks volumes about the changes that have occurred in America even since Jesse Jackson made his bids for president in the Democratic primaries in 1984 and 1988. Since 1988, an "anti-racist majority" of young, middle-aged and some elderly voters have emerged as a mature sector of the electorate.

Though the Democratic primary process is a race to the finish; in the overall race for the nomination, Obama leads with 1,840.5 delegates, including separately chosen party and elected officials known as "superdelegates." Clinton has 1,688. With six primaries left, it is estimated that Clinton will probably win Kentucky, West Virginia and Puerto Rico, and Obama will probably win Oregon, Montana and South Dakota. There are 217 delegates in the final six primaries.

Obama, however, won't win enough of those delegates to claim the nomination because of the proportional method used by the Democrats to award them.

That leaves the nomination in the hands of about 270 superdelegates who have yet to be claimed. Superdelegates are the party and elected officials who will automatically attend the national convention and can support whomever they choose, regardless of what happens in the primaries and caucuses.

Nearly 800 superdelegates will attend the national convention. About 220 remain undecided and 50 others will be named at state party conventions and meetings throughout the spring.⁹⁹⁵

So the superdelegates will probably choose the next Democratic presidential candidate based on their ability to swing the blue-collar white American vote. Obama's previous association with Reverend Jeremiah Wright and his weakness of drawing white blue-collar voters in large states such as Pennsylvania, Ohio and Texas may be a telling point in the choosing of the 2008 Democratic Party's Presidential Candidate.

If Obama secures the nomination and chooses a good white Vice Presidential prospect who can pick up the white blue-collar vote, then such a ticket has a good chance of defeating the Republican nominee, Senator John McCain and whoever he picks as his running mate. All in all, 2008 is a historical year in terms of the struggle for democracy and equality in America and the world.

⁹⁹⁵ Stephen Ohlemacher, "Obama wins most delegates in Tuesday's primaries."
http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20080507/ap_on_el_pr/campaign_delegates