CONTEMPORARY BLACK HISTORY

BLACK POWER BEYOND BORDERS

THE GLOBAL DIMENSIONS OF THE BLACK POWER MOVEMENT

EDITED BY NICO SLATE

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Black Power beyond Borders

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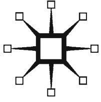

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For Manning Marable, 1950–2011

Of all our studies, history is best qualified to reward our research.

Malcolm X, “Message to the Grassroots”

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Introduction: The Borders of Black Power

Nico Slate

In the spring of 1970, a new set of icons adorned the brightly colored carnival procession that snaked through the streets of Port-of-Spain, the capital city of Trinidad and Tobago. Massive portraits of Malcolm X, Eldridge Cleaver, and Stokely Carmichael proclaimed solidarity with what had become known throughout much of the world as "Black Power." What did calls for "Black Power" mean on an island governed by black elected officials? In Trinidad and elsewhere in the Caribbean power was, to some degree, already black.

Some argued that Black Power was irrelevant in the West Indies. Stokely Carmichael disagreed. Born in Trinidad but raised in New York, Carmichael had become one of the most recognizable faces of Black Power after rising to prominence as a civil rights activist in the American South. While protesters carried his picture through the streets of Port-of-Spain, Carmichael galvanized advocates of Black Power during a visit to nearby Guyana. Carmichael's transnational activism not only demonstrated the resonance of Black Power in the Caribbean but also the complexities and contradictions of Black Power on the global stage. In Guyana, Carmichael declared that those of Indian descent and those of African descent, although united by poverty and a history of white oppression, needed to organize separately. In contrast, many Black Power activists in Trinidad and Guyana worked to overcome divisions between Afro-Caribbean and Indo-Caribbean communities. The Afro-Trinidadian protesters who carried signs declaring "Indians and Africans Unite Now" marched in the cause of Black Power, but theirs was a different Black Power than what Carmichael envisioned.[1]

Seeing Black Power in a global perspective means more than adding new characters to an old story. Asking *where* Black Power was requires asking *what* Black Power was. The global history of Black Power is more than the story of the overseas diffusion of an American movement. It is the story of many interwoven, at times fraught, and often surprising relationships between Black Power activists and their ideas throughout the world.

Black Power beyond Borders reframes the Black Power movement geographically, chronologically, and thematically. It examines the transnational dimensions of Black Power—how Black Power thinkers and activists drew on foreign

movements and, vice versa, how individuals and groups in other parts of the world interpreted "Black Power." It also expands the chronological scope of the Black Power movement by probing the relationship between Black Power in the 1960s and 1970s and earlier dimensions of the black freedom struggle. By examining Black Power beyond geographic and chronological boundaries, *Black Power beyond Borders* investigates the multiple meanings of Black Power within and beyond the United States.

By the time Stokely Carmichael popularized the slogan "Black Power" at a rally in Greenwood, Mississippi in 1966, the African American freedom struggle had long been interconnected with social justice movements abroad. From the antislavery movement to pan-Africanism to Gandhian nonviolent civil disobedience, American opponents of racism found support and inspiration overseas. While antiracist Americans looked abroad, activists throughout much of the world learned from African American struggles. Well before Mahatma Gandhi inspired African American advocates of civil disobedience, for example, he found encouragement and new ideas in the writings of Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Du Bois. A robust historical literature now chronicles the many transnational dimensions of the black freedom struggle. While some of these works include sections on Black Power, the majority focus on earlier histories.[2]

Black Power studies has itself become a booming field of inquiry. Black Power has attracted scholarly attention at international conferences such as the meeting of the Association for the Study of the Worldwide African Diaspora (ASWAD) held in Pittsburgh in 2011. A range of texts on the Black Power movement and its legacy have been written for both academic and general audiences. While much of the current literature looks at Black Power within a national or local context, increasing numbers of historians have mapped the global geography of Black Power. The majority of these studies focus primarily on the transnational imaginations and activities of African American activists. They examine one dimension—the American dimension—of what was a multisided transnational exchange. By examining the impact of Black Power beyond the United States, this volume contributes to the growing scholarship on the global dimensions of the Black Power movement.[3]

In addition to overcoming geographic borders, *Black Power beyond Borders* challenges the standard chronological and ideological boundaries of Black Power. In 1954, Richard Wright entitled a book on his travels in Africa, *Black Power*. Those words meant something very different to Wright than they would to Stokely Carmichael or other advocates of Black Power in the 1960s and 1970s. Still, many of the key facets of Black Power—black nationalism, armed self-defense, anticolonialism—were important elements of earlier struggles. One of the central arguments of this volume is that expanding the geographical boundaries of Black Power can help historians rethink the chronology of the movement as well.[4]

Debates regarding the chronology of the Black freedom struggle in the twentieth century often revolve around what historian Jacquelyn Dowd Hall has called the "Long Civil Rights Movement." Advocates of the "long movement" framework point to the limitations of the "classic" or "traditional" phase of the civil rights movement. Critics of the long-movement narrative counter that

including too much within the ambit of "Civil Rights" blurs historical divides that mattered to those who lived through them. At their best, these debates create more nuanced histories, sensitive to both continuity and change and willing to recognize differences between a range of temporal and geographic contexts. It is not just that black struggles predated the *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision in 1954 or lasted well beyond the 1965 Voting Rights Act. What matters is to understand *how*, *why*, and *when* those struggles changed over time.[5]

Black Power became front-page news in the late 1960s at a time not only of profound change in the racial dynamics of the United States but also of deep frustration at the pace and limits of that change. Years of struggle had produced landmark legislation but racial segregation in housing, education, and employment continued to dominate American life. The anger that helped propel Black Power onto the national stage can too easily be framed as an emotional and thus irrational frustration. Criticisms of structural racism and hope in black nationalism, much more than momentary eruptions of anger, long predated the emergence of Black Power in the awareness of many white Americans. Malcolm X is only the most-renowned African American figure to have espoused the central ideas associated with Black Power well before the late 1960s.[6]

Historians of black struggles in the North and West have been especially successful at offering innovative chronologies of civil rights and Black Power. Older histories linked the rise of Black Power to a shift in protest from the South to the cities of the North and West in the mid-1960s. Historians such as Thomas Sugrue and Martha Biondi have made clear, however, that the movement did not come North in the late 1960s. The struggle against racism had been in the North all along. Scholarship on the North and West has made more evident the need to think critically about the temporal and geographic boundaries of what historian Peniel Joseph has called the "Civil Rights / Black Power era."[7]

There is more at stake in these debates than merely the chapter headings of history texts. The way in which Black Power is bounded affects how we understand the relationship between race, American society, and global change over the course of the twentieth century. As the chapters in this volume indicate, the transnational dimensions of Black Power extend back to at least the 1930s and 1940s and continue through the years traditionally considered the heyday of the civil rights movement. Black Power did not emerge in the late 1960s to disrupt an otherwise unified movement for change. Old declension narratives that blamed Black Power for the fracture of the civil rights movement fail to recognize both the achievements of Black Power and its own long history. While recent scholarship has moved beyond such declension narratives, old conceptions of a divisive Black Power remain influential in depictions of post-1960s America as a time of dissolution and fragmentation. Especially in popular presentations of the 1960s, integrationist politics continue to be privileged at the expense of the long history of black nationalism.[8]

By moving debate beyond the stale dichotomy between integration and separation, the transnational history of Black Power complicates master narratives of the post-1960s era based on fragmentation. What might appear to be separation within a strictly American context was, on the global stage, an effort at integration—whether within the colored world, the African Diaspora, or the Third

World. In an era of widespread fascination with the "post-racial" as a form of border-crossing, the history of Black Power reminds us that race unified as well as divided. A more global perspective on Black Power can offer a more accurate portrayal of the transnational history of race and of the United States, histories marked both by fracture and interconnection.[9]

Together, the chapters in this volume pose a question at the heart of many transnational histories—how should historians understand interconnectedness across difference? Was there one Black Power movement or many Black Power movements?

As the chapters in this volume make clear, Black Power was interpreted and reinterpreted to suit local causes and changing conditions throughout the world. The variety of topics in this volume mirrors the diversity of Black Power on the global stage.

In this case, as in many, a transnational approach does not overturn but rather enriches the findings of more local and national histories. Scholarship on Black Power within the United States has demonstrated the internal variety of Black Power. Historians of women and gender have been especially influential at challenging homogenous conceptions of Black Power. Recent scholarship has made clear that the presence of patriarchy within Black Power did not go unchallenged. Black Power activists themselves debated how to respond to inequalities not only of race but also of class and gender. *Black Power beyond Borders* builds on the insights of earlier work to explore how the diversity of Black Power created divisions as well as new opportunities for unity, not just within the United States but worldwide.[10]

It is easy to celebrate the global spread of Black Power as an indication of the force of its rhetoric or the compelling resistance it offered to authority and imperialism in many forms. But the fact that activists in so many parts of the world found Black Power compelling demonstrates the ubiquity of the United States on the global stage. The spread of Black Power, a movement strongly opposed to American imperialism, ironically demonstrates the hegemony of the United States itself. Trinidadian Black Power activists were not the only protesters to carry images of American Black Power through streets throughout the world. Wherever Black Power emerged it did so with some degree of reference to American actors and ideas.

The ubiquity of American Black Power should not, however, be misunderstood as hegemonic. On the contrary, American Black Power was often appropriated abroad in ways that demonstrated only superficial knowledge of American actors or politics. The global dimensions of Black Power were marked not only by connections and solidarities, but also by divergence, miscommunication, and missed opportunities. The same, of course, could be said of the way in which Black Power activists within the United States looked abroad to revolutionary movements in Cuba, China, Algeria, North Vietnam, or elsewhere. The phrase "American Black Power" should denote neither a unified nor a purely domestic-minded Black Power within the United States. Several of the chapters in this volume examine the many American Black Power activists who traveled abroad to actively engage with overseas struggles. Reinforcing the insights of diasporic studies,

Black Power beyond Borders examines how concepts of Black Power were translated not just across national boundaries but also across time, political movements, and race itself. Such translation involved loss as well as creation.[11]

As Black Power moved abroad, the meaning of blackness within the movement changed. The transnational history of Black Power reveals the ability of a racially based resistance to racism to cross not just national but also racial boundaries. Black Power had inspired racial border-crossing even within the United States. Black Power helped inspire a range of antiracist struggles among Asian Americans, Indian Americans, and Chicana(o) Americans.[12] Several of the chapters in this volume explore the transnational process by which Black Power gained meaning for people who were not considered black. Other chapters reveal the complicated negotiations of blackness within the African diaspora, by examining linkages between race and other forms of identity, particularly gender and class. Black Power activists, at their best, resisted the imposition of homogenous identities and opposed the intersection of multiple oppressions.[13]

There was not one Black Power movement, global or otherwise. The very diversity of Black Power itself contributed, however, to the cohesiveness across time and space of what we might call "global Black Powers." Although too often portrayed as a force of division and fracture, Black Power offered new forms of unity and collaboration—not just for African Americans but for a range of oppressed people throughout the world. Nevertheless, as several of the following chapters reveal, the internal divisions and external repression that marked Black Power within the United States were common abroad as well. Just as Black Power activists within the United States were weakened by internal divisions and hampered by state repression, so also global Black Power activists struggled to maintain unity in the face of repressive governments—not only in North America and Europe but also throughout the postcolonial world as well.

Unlike many transnational histories that tend to portray a "breathless sense of freedom," historian Paul Kramer has praised imperial history for avoiding dichotomies between "emancipatory flows and oppressing borders." The global history of Black Power makes evident the importance of such a balanced approach to the history of border-crossing in the twentieth century. The borders of the Black Power movement were challenged not only by public figures such as Stokely Carmichael but also by many unrecognized advocates of Black Power within and beyond the United States. By thinking and acting beyond boundaries of race and nation, even local activists could bear Black Power across multiple borders simultaneously. But borders proved vital to both the successes and failures of Black Power. Black Power not only traveled beyond borders, but it also made evident the continued power of borders in a world still structured by states and divided by far more than white and black.[14]

In the first section of *Black Power beyond Borders*, Carol Anderson, Yevette Richards, and Donna Murch analyze the roots of Black Power. Anderson and Richards chronicle the history of Black Power before "Black Power" had become a recognizable slogan. All three authors challenge us to broaden our understanding of the politics of Black Power. In her chapter, Anderson

questions the traditional boundaries between the "radical" and "conservative" facets of the black freedom struggle. She argues that such labels fail to explain the responses of different African American actors and organizations to liberation struggles in Somalia, Libya, and Eritrea in the aftermath of the Second World War. By using transnational history to rethink the division between radical and conservative, Anderson demonstrates how a global perspective can help redefine what was radical about the power in Black Power. Richards similarly challenges the standard boundaries of Black Power by examining the activism and pan-Africanism of the African American labor organizer George McCray. By examining McCray's work in Africa, Richards probes the connections between class and Black Power on the global stage. She excavates the early history of the transnational links between antiracism and anticapitalism so prominent in the heyday of Black Power. While Anderson and Richards examine histories not normally associated with Black Power, Donna Murch examines the best-known Black Power organization, the Black Panthers. By examining the southern roots of many members of the Black Panthers, Murch demonstrates the relationship between the global spread of Black Power and migrations within the borders of the United States. She argues, for example, that the rural roots of many individual Panthers help explain their interest in the agrarian politics of the Chinese revolution.

The second section of this volume focuses on the global legacy of the Black Panthers. By tracking the many journeys of the Panthers—understood not only as individuals but also as icons—Robbie Shilliam, Oz Frankel, and I help to globalize the literature on the transnational dimensions of Black Power. More than any other Black Power organization, the Black Panthers have already garnered significant historical attention. As this volume makes clear, this attention is well deserved not only because of the significance of the Panthers within the United States but also because of their wide-ranging transnational legacy. While Murch demonstrates the centrality of migration to the history of the Panthers, the chapters by Frankel, Shilliam, and myself show just how far the Panther image itself migrated.

Frankel examines the Israeli Black Panthers, an organization that strove to mobilize those Israelis of North African or Middle Eastern descent (sometimes known as Sephardic or "orientals") who comprised in the early 1970s more than 50 percent of the Jewish population of Israel. By analyzing the history of the Israeli Black Panthers, Frankel addresses the politics of identity, globality, and "the radical analogy." Rather than a triumphant history of the impact of the Black Panthers abroad, Frankel offers a nuanced story full of disjuncture, elision, and appropriation. Continuing the discussion of the global dimensions of the Black Panthers and the power and limitations of transnational analogy, Robbie Shilliam examines two groups in New Zealand that drew inspiration from the Black Panthers: the Polynesian Panthers and a politically active street gang called "Black Power." By examining the politics of these groups and their knowledge of the Black Panthers, Shilliam assesses the meanings of Black Power in Polynesia

and larger questions regarding connections between resistance movements within and beyond the African diaspora. Moving well beyond notions of blackness and of African descent, Shilliam argues for the importance of settler colonialism to a more global understanding of Black Power and its legacies. Like Frankel and Shilliam, I use the global legacy of the Black Panthers to address the role of comparison and analogy in the transnational history of Black Power. Focusing in part on the Dalit Panthers, the organization of "untouchables" that began in Bombay (Mumbai) in 1972, I examine the history of Black Power in India in relation to the long history of comparisons between race and caste.[15]

The image of the Panthers that gained fame within the United States and abroad revolved to a large degree around the aesthetics of armed self-defense. The final section of this volume, "The Power in Black Power," uses a transnational framework to examine the meanings of power, violence, and nonviolence for Black Power activists. While Indians turned to Black Power to understand the relative strengths of violence and nonviolence, black American soldiers came to understand the violence of the American state from within. Yohuru Williams examines the spread of Black Power abroad via the experiences of these soldiers. By placing that experience in a larger discussion of the global resonance of Black Power, Williams analyzes how different notions of violence and radical action inspired Black Power activists. Scott Kurashige also reconceptualizes the meaning of power in Black Power. By comparing the philosophies and activism of Martin Luther King and the Chinese American Black Power activist, Grace Lee Boggs, Kurashige explores the transnational dimensions of what King called the "revolution of values" necessary to overcome "the giant triplets of racism, materialism, and militarism." In the concluding chapter of this volume, Kevin Gaines tracks the sonic culture of the Black Power movement across national boundaries, musical genres, and a range of media. By focusing on the career of Stevie Wonder, Gaines offers a new interpretation of the continuities and changes that marked the Black Power era. He suggests that the music of Black Power "can be viewed within a sustained collective critical project on the cross-fertilization of Afro-diasporic musics." Like this volume as a whole, Gaines challenges both the chronological and geographic boundaries of Black Power.

This book resulted from a truly collaborative effort. I am grateful to all of the contributors for their insights and for their patience. I am also grateful to Chris Chappell and Sarah Whalen at Palgrave MacMillan for their careful and gracious stewardship of the manuscript, and to Peniel Joseph for editing the series and for the inspiration of his scholarship. This book began as a conference held in April 2011 under the aegis of the Center for African American Urban Studies and the Economy (CAUSE) at Carnegie Mellon University. I would like to thank Edda Fields-Black and Lara Putnam for chairing panels at that conference. Finally, I am grateful to Joe Trotter, Giant Eagle Professor of History and Social Justice in the Department of History at Carnegie Mellon and director of CAUSE, for making the *Black Power beyond Borders* conference possible and for his tireless promotion of African American history within and beyond the university.

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Part I

The Roots of Black Power

1

Rethinking Radicalism: African Americans and the Liberation Struggles in Somalia, Libya, and Eritrea, 1945–1949

Carol Anderson

In 1949, scholar W. E. B. Du Bois complained bitterly that the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was useless in the fight to free Africa from colonialism because the association was just a "bourgeois set-up, afraid to do anything that is not respectable."[1] Indeed, historians' understanding of one of the most significant transformations in the twentieth century, decolonization, often echoes Du Bois's assessment that only "radicals" had the mettle to take on this battle for the right to self-determination.[2]

A key example is the focus on renowned actor, singer, and activist, Paul Robeson, and the organization he helped found, the Council on African Affairs (CAA), which were ultimately destroyed in the 1950s because of their commitment to anticolonialism and refusal to kowtow to the anticommunist witch hunts launched by the liberals and Right wing in American politics. Robeson defied the US government and paid the price. Rioters were allowed to run amok and disrupt his performances; the state department's Passport Office repeatedly denied his right to travel (and earn a living); and "FBI agents followed Robeson, tapped his phones, read his mail," and "intimidated his friends." In the end, one historian asserts, the CAA and Robeson were ruthlessly "hounded into oblivion . . . because of . . . [their] anticolonial and anti-apartheid work."[3]

While Robeson and the council paid dearly, scholars assert, the largest, oldest, and most influential black freedom organization in the United States, the NAACP, emerged from this early Cold War era morally wounded but barely scratched. Historians, including Gerald Horne and Penny Von Eschen, explain that in a "Faustian bargain" the association gladly accepted a pittance of civil

rights concessions on the domestic front in exchange for "silence on foreign policy issues" and "acquiescence in American and West European control of the world's colored peoples."[4] Indeed, some of the most recent scholarship repeats this assertion noting that with the onset of the Cold War, "liberal groups, such as the NAACP, had thrown their lot in with the Truman administration" and, as a result, "it became increasingly difficult for the association to maintain its determined stand on anticolonialism." With the NAACP in "retreat," the "cause of anti-colonialism fell to the far left."[5]

This framework, I argue, is too simplistic. To be sure, the black Left, as represented in this study by Robeson and the CAA, launched major initiatives in South Africa, Nigeria, and Kenya, yet there were times, although not fully acknowledged by scholars, when the council's other loyalties short-circuited the CAA's "main task" to support Africans' demand for democracy and freedom.[6] Conversely, historians have accepted too readily Du Bois's assertion that the NAACP had "taken no stand nor laid down any program with regard to Africa" and that the 1948 appointment of Walter White, association's secretary, as a consultant to the US delegation to the United Nations had tied the NAACP "in with the reactionary, war-mongering colonialism of the present administration."[7] On the contrary, Walter White's actions at that 1948 UN meeting, the association's head-on clashes with the state department, and the aid the NAACP provided to indigenous freedom fighters, such as Abdullahi Issa, leader of the Somali Youth League (SYL), indicate, instead, that scholars have overstated the association's abandonment of the colonized and collusion with imperialists.

In other words, the history of African American efforts to free the former Italian colonies of Somalia, Eritrea, and Libya complicates the assumptions concerning both the NAACP and Robeson. The fluidity of the policy stances of the Soviet Union and the United States provided an opportunity for the African American leadership to demonstrate its own independent vision of colonial liberation. Yet, while the association stood firm on its anticolonial platform, Robeson and the CAA wavered.[8]

This Cold War saga actually began with Italy's imperial quest in Africa and dreams of military glory in Europe. Both were dismal failures as mass murder, slavery, and mustard gas attacks defined Italian rule and conquest in Africa and abysmal defeats became synonymous with Fascist Italy's armed forces in Europe.[9] Nonetheless, when the Second World War ended, the Italians "indulged" in the ultimate fantasy that the Allies would not punish Italy for "'having tolerated the Fascist regime'" and would, therefore, return Eritrea, Somalia, and Libya, which were now occupied by the British military.[10]

The Allies, at least initially, scoffed and, instead, awarded Britain temporary control over all of the Italian colonies except an area in Libya known as the "Fezzan," which the French would administer. This was to be a stop-gap measure until the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM), comprised in this instance of the United States, Britain, France, and the USSR, could decide the colonies' fate.

As early as 1944, however, the Soviets had begun to determine which colony—Somalia, Eritrea, or one of the components of Libya (Tripolitania, Cyrenaica, or the Fezzan)—they wanted for themselves. And while the secretary of state

initially hedged, Soviet foreign minister Vyacheslev Molotov was not to be placated by vague assurances.[11] The Russians, therefore, pushed even harder at the CFM meeting in London in September 1945. Molotov asserted that the USSR had finally decided that Tripolitania would be an acceptable down payment on the yet-to-be determined reparations that the Italians owed the Soviets. Molotov assured his colleagues that the USSR had no intention of imposing its political or economic system on the Libyans. Nor was this a move to put the Soviet Navy at the heart of the British lifeline in the Mediterranean. Rather, he said, the USSR simply needed a warm water port for its "merchant fleet." Molotov also offered that the ceding of Tripolitania to the Soviet Union did not preclude the other victorious powers from taking possession of whatever colony they wanted, as well.[12]

Surprisingly, with the sounds of the 1884 Conference of Berlin echoing in the background, Secretary of State James Byrnes, an avowed white supremacist from South Carolina, balked at the idea of carving up Africa again. Instead, in a move designed to enhance the prestige of the newly created United Nations, keep the Soviets out of the Mediterranean and Red Seas, and lend credibility to America's image as an anticolonial power, he proposed that Eritrea, Somalia, and Libya be held in an international trusteeship with an administrator appointed by, and responsible to, the Trusteeship Council of the UN (instead of any particular nation).[13]

Byrnes argued that only an international trusteeship would "assist the inhabitants of the colonies to develop the capacity for self-government so that the people might be granted independence." Moreover, he added, it would preclude any single power from militarily or economically exploiting these colonies.[14] Byrnes then turned his attention to the USSR, specifically. He lectured the Soviets that "these areas [in Africa] must . . . not be regarded as spoils of war" and "colonial peoples ought not to be bartered about because of the misdeeds of their colonial masters."[15] Molotov, however, refused to back down. "So," the Soviet foreign minister queried, "you do not want to give us even a corner of the Mediterranean?"[16]

Although the NAACP had not yet picked up on this latest Scramble for Africa, Paul Robeson's Council on African Affairs had. Yet the CAA, which was founded nearly a decade earlier to secure the "political liberation of the colonized African nations," did not sound the alarm about North Africa and the Horn being carved up as if this was 1884 all over again.[17] Instead, with the French, British, and Soviets openly lusting after their own special piece of terrain along the Mediterranean and Red Seas, the CAA fully endorsed the Kremlin's bid for a trusteeship over Tripolitania—even though that would have come at the steep price of expanded French and British imperialism in the area. Robeson's council argued that the USSR was "a state without any imperialist ambitions or designs." In fact, the CAA continued, "behind the Russian request at London lies a subtle plan (subtle does not necessarily mean insidious . . .) to challenge the Western democracies to a race for the betterment of dependent peoples."[18] Robeson further explained that only the "Soviet Union has demonstrated how it is possible to wipe out colonialism and all that that word connotes within a single generation."[19]

In casting the Kremlin in this way, however, Robeson and the CAA had to ignore the inconsistencies between the Soviets' rhetoric and foreign policy. Indeed, the USSR had already willingly absented itself from the all-important first meeting of UN Trusteeship Council. That action alone, which the CAA reported in its own newsletter, *New Africa*, should have provided some indication about the low priority Moscow assigned to ending colonialism.[20] Indeed, as the *New York Times* detailed, the USSR made clear that the Kremlin was "not very interested in the trusteeship agreements for areas in Central Africa" or in "areas south of the Equator." The only colonial issues where "the Soviet Union was really concerned [were] in the Mediterranean and northern Pacific areas," especially regarding "the fate of the Italian colonies, Palestine and any islands north of the Equator in the Pacific."[21] In other words, the Soviets' interest in colonial issues was situation-specific and strategy-driven not, as the CAA tried to convince itself, broad-based, philosophical, or ideological.

The *Pittsburgh Courier*, however, had no illusions concerning the Soviets' bid for Tripolitania. "The hungry Russian Empire, 'defender of small nations' and 'champion of the world's workers,'" the *Courier* reported, "has already SWALLOWED half the Poles, many of the Finns, all of the Baltic peoples, half the Koreans, millions of the Chinese and most of the Manchurians, and," the editorial continued, "is now asking for 'trusteeship' over Tripolitanians and Eritreans while calling for peace and 'an end to imperialism.'"[22] What the Soviets really wanted, the *Courier* explained, was not "an end to imperialism" but, rather, a "foothold on the Mediterranean and the Red Sea to checkmate the Anglo-Saxon Powers."[23]

With the Soviets seeking to plunge the hammer and sickle right in the middle of the British maritime lifeline and Middle East oil, the state department now denounced its own international trusteeship idea as wholly impractical and dangerous. The Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) reaffirmed that position when it argued that it "would be contrary" to American interests to allow "the USSR . . . our . . . enemy," to gain "control of any of the colonies" even under the "guise" of a UN trusteeship. Yet, for all of its denunciations, the state department had no viable alternative except to hope that the nearly bankrupt British, who also believed that a "collective trusteeship would be undesirable on military grounds," could hang on long enough until the United States could stumble upon some solution. Not surprisingly then, the stalemate dragged on for years.[24] But by 1948, the combination of the stark, clear lines of the Cold War, the growing importance of Italy to European economic recovery and defense, and the heated electoral battles both in Italy and the United States compelled the state department to grope for some way out.

In Italy, the issue of regaining the colonies had become a major touchstone in the 1948 election.[25] "U.S. government leaders," in fact, "saw the 1948 Italian election as 'an apocalyptic test of strength between communism and democracy'—a test that might well determine the fate of democracy on the Continent."[26] Yet, because a tangled web of American allies were all demanding their share of the same stretch of territory in North Africa and the Horn, Byrnes's successor, Secretary of State George Marshall, ordered that any further discussions on the Italian colonies be postponed.[27]

In addition to trying to avoid an international quagmire, Marshall's recommendation was also prompted by domestic concerns. In 1948, Harry S. Truman was running for president and, to win an election that nearly everyone believed was already lost, he needed to garner both the large Italian American voting bloc and the sizeable African American one, as well. In New York City, for example, with a population of 4.8 million people, more than 1 million were either Italian American or African American. Because these two groups were at opposite ends of the spectrum on the issue of the Italian colonies, a nondecision, it was hoped, just might keep either from going into open revolt against the president.[28]

Republican party presidential candidate and New York governor Thomas Dewey certainly recognized the importance of the Italian American vote and openly campaigned for Prime Minister Alcide De Gasperi's government to be "given an ample opportunity to take part in the future development of the resources of" Eritrea, Somalia, and Libya. John Foster Dulles "worked with Governor Dewey" to once again "give the Italian people an opportunity to develop their former colonies." Afraid that Truman's ongoing silence would now prove to be a costly mistake, New York City mayor William O'Dwyer, "a fast talking, table pounding" Democrat, "who viewed most things in political terms and acted for political effect," issued his own statement calling for the "just and honorable" return of Eritrea, Libya, and Somalia to Italy.[29]

By this time, the NAACP had seen enough and denounced Dewey and company as no more than two-bit hustlers willing to "prostitute" the colonies "on the altar of domestic politics." The association had, therefore, called together a group of 22 national organizations to set out in clear, unfettered language where African Americans stood on the issue of the Italian colonies. "Although Messrs. Dewey, Dulles, and O'Dwyer may have forgotten the facts," Walter White exploded, "the colored world most certainly has not." Italy started the war. Italy lost the war. Italy, therefore, should not be rewarded for either.[30]

Then, after carefully detailing the legal stipulations in the 1947 Italian Peace Treaty that explicitly barred Rome from regaining control of North Africa and the Horn, the association went one step further and observed that not only should Italy back away from the colonies but so, too, should the Council of Foreign Ministers. The NAACP was disturbed that all the policy contortions in the CFM had everything to do with the East and West jockeying for strategic advantage and absolutely nothing to do with improving the quality of life for the indigenous people. It was wary of Secretary of State Marshall's "ominous" silence on the issue and his refusal to discuss the Italian colonies because that subject was in the realm of "high politics."[31] The association was equally suspicious of "Russia's role in this sorry business" because this supposedly avowed anticolonialist power had become one of the most passionate advocates for returning the Italians to North Africa and the Horn.[32]

That passion was born of geopolitics. Soviet archival documents, according to historian Sergei Mazov, make clear that "Realpolitik imperatives…dominated ideological considerations on this [the Italian Colonies] issue."[33] The Italian Communist party's (PCI) unexpected show of strength in the 1946 midterm elections convinced the Soviets that in 1948, with the appropriate bait,

they could actually have a duly elected, Kremlin-controlled government in Western Europe.[34] Moscow, therefore, was "keen that the colonial topic should become a prominent part of the election campaign, to give the Popular Democratic Front (communists and socialists) the opportunity of profiting from it as much as possible." Thus, just three days after the Italians inquired about the USSR's stance, Vice Foreign Minister V. A. Zorin, in a widely publicized announcement, "declared that the Soviet government confirmed its proposal to give Italy trusteeship of Somalia, Eritrea and Libya." In short, the Kremlin was more than willing to counter the US bid of Marshall Plan and CIA dollars with the allure of renewed colonial rule dangled before the Italian electorate. This simple act, the Soviets believed, would bolster the PCI's chances in the upcoming election by demonstrating that only the Communists had the Great Power backing to make North Africa and the Horn Italian domains again.[35] This new stance was reified during a four-power fact-finding mission in Libya, Eritrea, and Somalia, where the Soviets tried every possible maneuver to "enhance Italy's colonial record, inflate pro-Italian sentiments in the colonies, and show that the indigenous peoples were too unschooled to administer themselves."[36]

The Soviets' latest policy gyration, while causing immediate disgust among the NAACP leadership, left Robeson and the Council on African Affairs speechless. For a man and an organization that had steadily monitored the situation in the Italian colonies and railed against the rampant imperialism that oozed forth from virtually every policy option the Great Powers uttered, Robeson and the council now went mute. This public silence occurred even though the Kremlin's attempt to hand millions of Africans and Arabs over to their most dreaded enemy, the Italians, was widely reported in the *New York Times*.[37] Nonetheless, the New York-based CAA issued no articles, no press releases, no "urgent action" pleas.[38] Nothing at all by Robeson or the council that gave any indication about the Kremlin's harrowing plans for Libya, Eritrea, and Somalia.

Instead, what Robeson did say during this time was targeted at CAA executive director Max Yergan, who, cowed by the Second Red Scare, had tried in early 1948 to gain control of the organization and place its one hundred members squarely within the Right wing of US Cold War policy.[39] Robeson, thus, lashed out that "the United States was supporting 'an intensified drive to exploit the peoples of Africa' and . . . that Dr. Yergan 'is now unwilling to challenge the imperialist policy of the United States State Department.'"[40] Robeson valiantly argued that instead of capitulating, which was what Yergan advocated, the CAA "must oppose all policies, domestic or international which may threaten the success of the council's program . . . to foster the independence and advancement of Africans."[41] But, in truth, the council did not openly oppose "all policies"—only those of the United States and the West. Robeson voiced no public opposition when the "architects of Soviet foreign policy were interested in the geostrategic position of Libya, Somalia and Eritrea, rather than in . . . any revolutionary development there."[42] In other words, when confronted with the hard truth of the Kremlin's realpolitik masquerading as liberation ideology, Robeson "chose, as was his style with matters of deepest import, to say nearly nothing."[43]

Rather than being, as historian Penny Von Eschen described, "the center… of black American opinion on colonialism," Robeson and the Council's apparent acquiescence to Soviet foreign policy provided the opening for anticolonial leadership to shift to the NAACP.[44] At the association's September 1948 Conference on Colonial Policy, whose representatives were the "spokesmen for more than six million Negro Americans," the NAACP-led group asserted that if the Eritreans, Somalis, and Libyans were to have a fighting chance at political and economic independence, it was not going to be in the Council of Foreign Ministers where the biggest colonial powers in the world were the sole participants. The African American leadership insisted that the CFM acknowledge its inability to reach a decision, follow the dictates of the Italian peace treaty, and cede jurisdiction to the UN General Assembly. It was only there, where the voices and votes from Ethiopia, Liberia, Haiti, and India could carry as much weight as those of the United States or the Soviet Union, that the Italian colonies stood a chance of having "the wishes of the inhabitants" respected. The NAACP then resurrected Byrnes's proposal and urged the establishment of an "International Administration under a UN trusteeship" for the Italian colonies, to be followed within a limited, defined period of time, by independence.[45]

Before this could happen, however, the Council of Foreign Ministers would first have to admit defeat and turn the issue over to the UN. That tumultuous meeting began in September 1948 with the US ambassador confidently remarking that, in one way or another, it was clear that all of the foreign ministers agreed that Italy should regain control of Somalia. The Soviets, however, balked. Everything had changed. With the PCI losing the Italian election in the spring of 1948, the Kremlin now had no intention of supporting any of Rome's demands. The Soviets, therefore, declared it a "waste of time" to quibble about one colony or all for Italy, and then recommended that Eritrea, Somalia, and Libya come under a UN trusteeship administered by the four powers sitting around the table. The West was stunned. The corpse of James Byrnes's 1945 proposal, which the Joint Chiefs of Staff and state department had long since buried (and the NAACP supported), just came back with a vengeance. The Soviets were the "enemy." And, if this proposal went through, it would legitimately put the "enemy" within stalking distance of the Anglo-Americans' vaunted Mediterranean defense system. As expected, a heated duel between the USSR and the West ensued. Finally, at 11:30 p.m., deadlocked and worn out, the Council of Foreign Ministers agreed to turn the issue of the Italian colonies over to the United Nations.[46]

The Kremlin's latest policy shift revealed the costly constraints of Robeson's ideological box. In 1945, for example, he had fully endorsed the Soviets' land grab for Tripolitania. Then, in February 1948, Robeson acquiesced to the most dreaded of all possibilities—the return of the Italians to Africa—because the Soviets wanted to increase the PCI's chances in the upcoming election. Next, after the final CFM meeting in the fall of 1948, Robeson and the council finally broke their months-long silence, but then only to endorse Stalin's UN trusteeship proposal. In short, in the span of a few years, the council had supported or left unchallenged three distinct plans for the Italian Colonies, which just happened to

align with the positions taken by the Soviet Union at that time. And, although the CAA's latest move was cloaked in powerful liberation verbiage—"remember that Africa belongs to the Africans, and that the paramount considerations should be the needs and aspirations of the peoples of Libya, Eritrea, and Somaliland"—in truth, this widely swinging pendulum suggests that, in this case, the center of gravity for Robeson's anticolonialism was not necessarily the needs of the colonized but, in fact, Soviet foreign policy. Indeed, Robeson's situational anticolonialism led him, in 1948, to pillory the Republicans and Democrats for using the Italian colonies as "vote-bait," while overlooking that the Soviets were the first to dangle Africa's freedom in shark-infested electoral waters.[47]

The NAACP, however, stayed on course despite its own power struggle between Walter White and the association's cofounder W. E. B. Du Bois, who, in September 1948, had charged that the secretary had "hand[ed] the NAACP over to Truman" and, in the process, abandoned Africa. Those accusations, designed to discredit Walter White, grazed the secretary, but Du Bois got caught in the blowback. Within days, the association's board of directors fired its cofounder.[48]

Du Bois's dismissal has become, for scholars, the definitive temporal break—like BC (Before the Cold War) and AD (After Du Bois)—in assessing the militancy of the NAACP's anticolonialism. Gerald Horne writes that after 1947, the NAACP's growing anticommunism led to "the purge of W.E.B. Du Bois… and ultimately the retreat of the association from its deeply engaged and left-leaning posture on the global stage."[49] Murali Balaji notes that the firing was because Du Bois had attached "himself to radical causes that promised immediate liberation for colonized and exploited people" while the association's policies "only confirmed his long-held suspicions that the NAACP's activism would only go so far."[50] Similarly, James Roark insists, "Just as Du Bois' hiring during the [Second World] war had symbolized the new international commitments of the association, his firing gave notice of a return to domestic concerns."[51] Yet, because all these assessments come from Du Bois's perspective, scholars have missed the paradox that the NAACP's divorce from the "radical" Du Bois actually created an opening for a new, dynamic internationalist push by the association to discredit and destroy the structure of colonialism and "the white man's burden."

Immediately following the CFM meeting in September 1948, Walter White promised the Ethiopian legation that he, as a consultant to the US delegation, would "continue this struggle" against Italy in Paris at the upcoming UN meeting.[52] Thus, during the transatlantic voyage, when White and the other consultants heard a very complicated scheme unfold to dissect North Africa and the Horn, he girded for battle. Benjamin Gerig, the US delegation's trusteeship expert, had given a "coldblooded" appraisal of the rationale behind the Americans' new plan to carve out a little piece for everyone, except, of course, the Soviets and the indigenous inhabitants. Somalia, the Americans hoped, would keep the Italians happy *and* non-Communist. Southeastern Eritrea would give Ethiopia a colonial possession, an outlet to the sea, and a territorial buffer against Italian encirclement. The British would maintain Cyrenaica and the priceless military rights there. The United States would simply postpone a decision on the Fezzan and

Tripolitania and denounce Byrnes's international trusteeship plan as unworkable to "prevent Russia from getting a foothold" in Africa.[53]

For White, the "timidity of the American delegation on the question of colonies was startling." He declared that the US proposal was so misguided by "fear, military necessity or opportunism" that it missed the much larger picture. When Gerig challenged him to come up with something better, White immediately met with the other consultants and began to develop a counterposition. As the finalized draft circulated, with its stinging critique of the US plan and strong affirmation of an international trusteeship, the state department's Chester Williams ripped into the consultants and especially Walter White for "breach" of trust and "violation... of... confidential information." Gerig's discussion, Williams declared, was "off-the-record" and he insisted that everyone who had a copy of White's report "burn it"; it had to be "destroy[ed]." Duly intimidated, several consultants began to backtrack and even offered to amend the statement to make it more palatable to the United States.[54]

White, however, would not back down. He informed Williams and Eleanor Roosevelt, a member of the NAACP board of directors and the US delegation, that while the others may cave in to state department pressure, he had no intention of doing so. The "statement that I signed," White asserted, "must not be changed in any fashion." Moreover, he considered Williams's handling of the matter to be highly inappropriate and alarmist and that was "putting it with unbelievable mildness." White then made sure that Roosevelt understood that he was willing to "risk... antagonizing or even... alienating some members of the United States Delegation" by taking this issue directly "to the American public." The plan Gerig had outlined, White insisted, was based on keeping the Communists out, not on bringing democracy in. And that was the problem. This "negative" policy of "containing Russia," White explained, had to stop because it "play[ed] directly into the hands of the Communists." A prime example was the way the United States "abandoned" its own international trusteeship proposal simply because the Soviets had paraded the plan around as if it was their own. He acknowledged that there would be "risks" involved in implementing this international trusteeship, especially now that the Soviets also backed it. Nevertheless, he continued, "we must take... some calculated risks" because trying to prop up "dying colonialism" no matter how well "disguised" was going to "cost us in the long run."[55]

A packed UN agenda in the fall of 1948 ultimately forced the General Assembly to postpone the issue to the following year. Italy used this break in the action to raise the threat level. Although Italian foreign minister Carlo Sforza insisted that he had "no desire or intention to suggest the use of blackmail," that is exactly what he did when he swore to sabotage the centerpiece of the US Cold War defense strategy, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), if the Italians did not regain control of their colonies.[56]

Walter White fumed at "the sheer impudence... of the Italians," who, although their "economy is shored up almost entirely by the Marshall Plan," had the audacity to "tell... the United States... that they would not join the North Atlantic Pact unless they could have their imperialist way in... Africa." This only

reaffirmed White's conviction that "no greater threat—including war with the Soviet Union—could be created than a North Atlantic Alliance which [was based] on the perpetuation of colonialism for the benefit of white, industrialized, war-shattered and intellectually and morally decadent Europe." Regardless of the Italians' threat, White declared, the state department needed to remember that Italy's record as a colonial administrator was the epitome of "inefficiency, arrogance and barbarity." From any angle, White asserted, Italy was unfit to become a UN trustee. The association, disgusted with the United States for its "inexplicable" willingness to "buy…Italy's friendship with other people's freedom," quickly convened a "closed meeting" of 21 national organizations to develop a detailed policy statement, which asserted that if the United States capitulated to the Italians' demands, it would make clear that Africa was to be sold as a "quid pro quo for Italy's adherence to the North Atlantic Treaty."[57]

The NAACP, therefore, decided to provide an opportunity for the Somalis to undercut Italy's glowing reports of colonial benevolence. Indeed, in the estimation of Abdullahi Issa, "Walter White, Roy Wilkins and other members of the NAACP staff" provided "invaluable" "moral and material support" in getting the Somalis' cause before the UN's First Committee (the political committee) and the media.[58]

During its testimony and press conferences, the Somali delegation appealed to the United Nations to not "sacrifice our people on the altar of political bargaining and expediency," to understand that it was not a question of a trusteeship, but a question of an *Italian* trusteeship that was completely unacceptable. "If the Italians return," Abdullahi Issa intoned, "we will be as bad off as the natives in South Africa. We will never submit to this." He explained that the Italians, long before the fascists, had "abolished all education for natives, monopolized all commerce and industry, seized all fertile land…and instituted forced labor on Italian farms under conditions of almost incredible cruelty." The Somalis, Issa continued, "would rather be dead than accept Italian rule again." Thus, if the UN tried to hand their country back to Italy, he warned, "we…will fight, and to the finish."[59]

The Italians, however, were just as determined to regain what they believed was rightfully theirs. In the spring of 1949, Sforza met with British foreign secretary Ernest Bevin, with whom he had been at loggerheads over this issue, to work out a compromise that they could submit to the UN General Assembly. The controversial Bevin-Sforza Agreement, gave Cyrenaica to Britain, the Fezzan to France, Eritrea (except the Western Province) to Ethiopia, the Western Province to British-controlled Sudan, Somalia to Italy, and, in 1951, the Italians would take over Tripolitania. The need for the two-year lag time in Tripolitania, the British explained, was "to allow passions to cool off and to give the inhabitants of that territory the opportunity to realize that they had nothing to fear from Italy."[60]

The Libyans thought otherwise. With the announcement of the Bevin-Sforza deal, thousands upon thousands of Libyans took to the streets in protest.[61] In London, US ambassador Lewis Douglas reported that the press could only say that "Bevin…must have been extremely badly advised" because "at least 75 percent of Tripolitanians would be prepared to accept any plan for their future

except the return of Italy. It [was] not only that the Italians brutally killed tens of thousands—possibly hundreds of thousands—of Libyans . . . and appropriated a great deal of their land; [but] they did nothing whatsoever" during the thirty years they were in power "to fit the Libyans for eventual independence," there was "no Libyan doctor, lawyer, or administrator, and hardly a teacher" in the region. All it would take now was "one wrong move" by the United Nations "in favour of Italian trusteeship," and "widespread disorders and considerable bloodshed" would engulf Libya.[62]

Despite Douglas's warning, it actually appeared that the UN, because of strong American support, was going to make that "one wrong move" and sanction the Bevin-Sforza deal.[63] Walter White immediately noticed, however, that although the Italo-British plan in its entirety captured a two-thirds majority in the Dulles-engineered UN subcommittee, it was obvious in the paragraph-by-paragraph voting that the proviso that awarded Tripolitania to Italy could have difficulty getting through the General Assembly. White, therefore, devised a strategy to convince the abstaining nations to vote against the plan and make the Bevin-Sforza agreement crumble like a house of cards. Thus, prior to the final vote in the UN, the association's Roy Wilkins and Henry Lee Moon "joined the Somali and Libyan representatives in a series of conferences with the delegations [that] had abstained from voting on the issue." Those efforts paid off handsomely as Haiti "broke" from the US position, and "support[ed] the Soviet, Asiatic, and Arab blocs."[64] This action essentially nullified the entire plan.

At that point, the only way the United States could recover from having backed a proposal that had "smack[ed] of old-fashioned Western imperialism," one state department official asserted, was to identify a trustee with a "reputation," and a "willingness and capability" to prepare a *united* Libya for independence. The General Assembly had made it clear that it would accept nothing less.[65] With that, the United States pulled Libya off the auction block as a payoff to the Italians and concluded that the only remaining, face-saving colonial option for Italy was now Somalia.[66]

Ralph Bunche, as the highest ranking African American at the UN, immediately warned Roy Wilkins, now the acting secretary of the NAACP, that a deal was "being cooked up behind the scenes," and it was imperative that the association "have some one regularly on the job to do some lobbying." Bunche noted that the NAACP might not be able, like it did in the spring, to "pull the rabbit out of the hat at the last minute."[67] As soon as the association realized that the behind-the-scenes deal involved letting the Italians gain control of Somalia, Wilkins blasted the whole idea as "unthinkable." He urged Haiti to "continue its fight to wipe out the evils of the colonial system" and protect the rights of the Somalis. He pleaded with the Liberians to "join forces" with all other "liberty-loving delegations" to keep Italy out of Africa. And he lobbied the other delegations to "vote against the proposal to restore Italian administration" to Somalia.[68] The NAACP's efforts merged with UN secretary general Trygve Lie, who also championed an international trusteeship for the Italian colonies.[69]

Despite Lie's support and the NAACP's lobbying efforts, however, the United States countered with enormous "pressure upon countries in need of American

economic assistance" and, in the end, the state department's development dollars proved decisive. The General Assembly voted that Libya, under a British trusteeship, would become independent no later than January 1, 1952. But Somalia, as the association feared, would achieve its independence only after ten years of Italian trusteeship.[70]

Disappointed, Wilkins denounced the General Assembly's decision as a "partial victory." Granted, Libya won its independence and freedom from Italian rule. Yet, Wilkins noted, "Believing in self-determination, as we do, we naturally regret the failure of the General Assembly to heed the clearly expressed and oft-repeated objections of the Somalis to the return of their former oppressors."[71]

Even after the UN's decision, however, the NAACP would not let the issue of Somalia slip away and, instead, for years continued to help the Somalis "in every possible way... to avert domination of their country by Italy."[72] Thus, in addition to fighting Issa's deportation for allegedly being a communist, the association also "'emphatically' protested" the choice of General Guglielmo Nasi, an unindicted war criminal, as Italian special commissioner for Somaliland. "Surely," Roy Wilkins declared, "the United Nations cannot conceive of General Nasi, a previously fascist conqueror of British Somaliland and governor of the Gondar section of Ethiopia, as a just and suitable administrator for a liberated colony preparing itself for democratic self-government."[73]

For the NAACP, democratic self-government was the sine qua non of justice—globally and domestically. As a result, the association simply refused to be knocked off its anticolonial agenda by the turbulence and inconsistencies in US foreign policy. In the span of a mere four years, the state department's plans for North Africa and the Horn had ricocheted from Byrnes's international trusteeship, to "ominous" silence, to "coldblooded" dissection, to the Bevin-Sforza plan, and, finally, to the auctioning off of Somalia. Yet, through it all, the NAACP remained steady, kept its focus, and consistently demanded implementation of a foreign policy program that both the state department and Joint Chiefs of Staff branded inimical to US national security.

In addition, the NAACP did what Robeson and many other radical activists simply would not do, and that is to castigate both the United States *and* the Soviet Union for spouting anticolonial rhetoric one moment, then aiding and abetting imperialists the next. The association voiced its dismay that many "enemies" of colonialism and imperialism "who vigorously denounce oppression by the western states become absolutely mute and conscienceless when faced with the crimes of the rival imperialism of the Soviet Union."[74]

Nonetheless, this is not the "story" that most historians tell. Rather, a rich literature on this complex Cold War era has overlooked the internationalist, anti-imperialist actions of the NAACP and has, therefore, by the inexorable logic of the scholars' arguments, kept this organization in its domestic and domesticated civil rights "place" and truncated the spectrum of African American resistance to colonialism.[75]

Similarly, the martyred heroic arc of Robeson's saga has focused primarily on those areas, such as South Africa, where his dual value systems of anticolonialism and pro-Soviet communism aligned. But historians' focus on apartheid has

masked a deep, irreparable contradiction. As scholars Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin noted, the "feeble response of much of the West to the inequities of the racist regime in Pretoria strengthened the illusion that the intolerant Soviet one-party state was a force for global liberation."[76] Yet, communism was not synonymous with anticolonialism. The Kremlin's well-publicized bid to resurrect Italian rule in Africa and the obvious contempt Moscow held for indigenous people made clear that this was no liberator. Instead, the USSR's actions in North Africa and the Horn were antithetical to Robeson's realization that the "Somali people… would rather face 'complete extermination' than submit to the return of 'the oppressive and hated Italian rule'."[77] In North Africa and the Horn, therefore, Robeson's quest for anticolonialism was in bitter conflict with his faith in the Soviet Union. He had to choose. And, in doing so, Robeson became trapped in a dilemma from which he knew neither how to escape nor articulate.

Thus, the symbol of radicalism in the 1940s, Paul Robeson, was buffeted about, hamstrung, and silenced by his commitment to leftist politics. Meanwhile, to use historian Timothy Tyson's description, the "overly cautious, politically conservative" NAACP did everything in its power to ensure, in the words of Walter White, that there would be no "selling the natives of the African colonies down the river of imperialism."[78] Perhaps, now is the time to rethink radicalism.

Notes

1. W. E. B. Du Bois to George Padmore, April 7, 1949, *Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois* (Sanford, NC: Microfilming Corporation of America, 1980), Reel 64, microfilm, (hereafter *Du Bois*).
2. Gerald Horne, *Black and Red: W.E.B. Du Bois and the Afro-American Response to the Cold War, 1944–1963* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986), 56; Gerald Horne, *Red Seas: Ferdinand Smith and Radical Black Sailors in the United States and Jamaica* (New York:New York University Press, 2005); Gerald Horne, *Race Woman: The Lives of Shirley Graham Du Bois* (New York: New York University Press, 2000); James Roark, "American Black Leaders: The Response to Colonialism and the Cold War, 1945–1953," *African Historical Studies* 4 (1971): 253–270; Penny Von Eschen, *Race against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937–1957* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997); Timothy B. Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie: Robert F. Williams & the Roots of Black Power* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Fanon Che Wilkins, "The Making of Black Internationalists: SNCC and Africa before the Launching of Black Power, 1960–1965," *Journal of African American History* 92, no. 4 (Fall 2007); Robin D. G. Kelley and Betsy Esch, "Black Like Mao: Red China and Black Revolution," *Souls* (Fall 1999); Michael O. West, William G. Martin, and Fanon Che Wilkins, eds., *From Toussaint to Tupac: The Black International since the Age of Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009); Yohuru R. Williams, "American Exported Black Nationalism: The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, the Black Panther Party, and the Worldwide Freedom Struggle, 1967–1972," *Negro History Bulletin* 60, no. 3 (July–September 1997); Peniel E. Joseph, "The Black Power Movement: A State of the Field," *Journal of American History* 96, no. 3 (December 2009): 751–776; Kevin Gaines, "From Black Power to Civil Rights: Julian Mayfield and African American Expatriates in

Nkrumah's Ghana, 1957–1966," in *Cold War Constructions: The Political Culture of United States Imperialism, 1945–1966,* Christian G. Appy, ed. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000).

3. Martin Bauml Duberman, *Paul Robeson* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988), 296–301, 304, 328–330, 430, 539–550; Kate A. Baldwin, *Beyond the Color Line and the Iron Curtain: Reading Encounters between Black and Red, 1922–1963* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 212–213; "FBI agents…" in Vijay Prashad, "Comrade Robeson: A Centennial Tribute to an American Communist," *Social Scientist* 25, no. 7/8 (July–August 1997): 39–50; "hounded…" in Francis Njubi Nesbitt, *Race for Sanctions: African Americans against Apartheid, 1946–1994* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 22–23.
4. "Faustian" in Horne, *Black and Red,* 56; Gerald Horne, *The End of Empires*: *African Americans and India* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2009) 176; Roark, "American Black Leaders," 253–270; "silence…" in Von Eschen, *Race against Empire*, 107–118; "acquiescence…" in Robert L. Harris Jr., "Ralph Bunche and Afro-American Participation in Decolonization," in *Pan-African Biography*, Robert A. Hill, ed. (Los Angeles: African Studies Center UCLA, 1987), 133; Kenneth R. Janken, "From Colonial Liberation to Cold War Liberalism: Walter White, the NAACP, and Foreign Affairs, 1941–1955," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 21, no. 6 (November 1998): 1074–1075.
5. "liberal groups…" in Nesbitt, *Race for Sanctions,* 14; "became…" in Horne, *The End of Empires*, 180; "retreat" in Gerald Horne, *Mau Mau in Harlem? The U.S. and the Liberation of Kenya* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 94; "cause of…" in Thomas Dyja, *Walter White: The Dilemma of Black Identity in America* (Chicago, IL: Ivan R. Dee, 2008), 177.
6. Hollis R. Lynch, *Black American Radicals and the Liberation of Africa: The Council on African Affairs, 1937–55* (Ithaca, NY: Africana Studies and Research Center, 1978), 43–48; "main task" in Statement of Paul Robeson, May 14, 1944, Reel 1, *The Paul Robeson Collection* (Bethesda, MD: University Publication of America, 1991), microfilm (hereafter *Robeson*). The CAA and Robeson are the focus for this study because of their work on anticolonialism, as opposed to the Civil Rights Congress, the National Maritime Union, or other leftist/communist organizations, whose emphases were elsewhere.
7. Von Eschen, *Race against Empire*, 117, 118; Janken, "From Colonial Liberation to Cold War Liberalism," 1091; Roark, "American Black Leaders," 263; Horne, *Black and Red*, 56, 57.
8. For the diplomatic importance of the Italian Colonies issue see, Scott L. Bills, *The Libyan Arena: The United States, Britain, and the Council of Foreign Ministers, 1945–1948,* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1995), 10–11.
9. ibid., 59; R. J. B. Bosworth, *Mussolini's Italy: Life Under the Fascist Dictatorship, 1915–1945* (New York: Penguin Press, 2006), 381; I. M. Lewis, *A Modern History of the Somali: Nation and State in the Horn of Africa,* 4th ed. (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2002), 92–95; S. Pinkney Tuck to secretary of state, April 8, 1946, Box 6968, 865C.00/4–846, *General Records of the Department of State*, Record Group 59, National Archives II, College Park, MD (hereafter *RG 59*).
10. "indulged" in Rene Albrecht-Carrie, "Peace with Italy – An Appraisal," *Political Science Quarterly* 62, no. 4 (December 1947), 484; "having tolerated…" in Kirk to secretary of state, telegram, January 15, 1946, 765.00/1–1546, *Confidential U.S. State Department Central Files: Italy Foreign Affairs, 1945–1949* (Frederick, MD: UPA, 1987), Reel 1; Bills, *The Libyan Arena*, 38, 59–60; Robert Komer, "The Establishment of Allied Control in Italy," *Military Affairs* 13, no. 1 (Spring 1949), 25.

11. James Francis Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly* (New York and London: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1947), 95–96; Vladimir O. Pechatnov, "'The Allies Are Pressing on You to Break Your Will…': Foreign Policy Correspondence between Stalin And Molotov and Other Politburo Members, September 1945–December 1946," trans. Vladislav M. Zubok, Working Paper No. 26 of the Cold War International History Project (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, September 1999), 2–3.
12. Ibid., 3.
13. Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, 92–95.
14. "assist…" in Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, 93, 94; Record of the Fourth Meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers, Lancaster House, London, September 14, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1945, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1967), 2: 168, 171–172 (hereafter *FRUS*).
15. "these areas…" in Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, 95–96; "colonial peoples…" in "Extract from Notes Dictated in Advance of Meeting of Commission on a Just and Durable Peace and, in Substance, Used in J.F.D. Opening 'Off-the-Record' Statement to the Commission on November 8, 1945," November 8, 1945, Box 26, File "Byrnes, James F.," *Papers of John Foster Dulles*, Seeley Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ. (hereafter *JFD-Princeton*).
16. Pechatnov, "The Allies are Pressing on you to Break Your Will…," 2–3.
17. Description of the council's mission taken from, Von Eschen, *Race against Empire*, 20.
18. "Interpreting the Foreign Ministers' Discussion on Italian Colonies," *New Africa* 4, no. 9 (October 1945).
19. "Address by Paul Robeson," June 7, 1946, Reel 1, *Robeson*.
20. "Soviet Absent, U.S. Gets Presidency as Trusteeship Council Convenes," *New Africa* 6, no. 4 (April 1947).
21. James Reston, "Soviet Interest in Colonies Held Specific, Not General," *New York Times*, December 11, 1946, found in Reel 59, *Du Bois*.
22. "The Cannibals," *Pittsburgh Courier*, January 11, 1947. Emphasis in original.
23. "Italy's Former Colonies," *Pittsburgh Courier*, October 4, 1947.
24. "would be contrary," "the USSR…," "control of any…," and "guise" in Memorandum from the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee to the Department of State, July 8, 1947, *FRUS* (1947) 3:592–593; "collective trusteeship…" in F. E. Stafford (War Office) to Foreign Office, Enclosure No. 7 to 033/4859 (CA2a), May 14, 1947, FO 1015/34, Public Records Office/National Archives of Britain, Kew, United Kingdom.
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26. Wendy L. Wall, "America's 'Best Propagandists': Italian Americans and the 1948 'Letters to Italy' Campaign," in *Cold War Constructions: The Political Culture of United States Imperialism, 1945–1966*, Christian G. Appy, ed. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000), 89.
27. "Proposals for the Disposition of the Italian Colonies," OIR Report no. 4326, April 17, 1947, *O.S.S./State Department Intelligence and Research Reports*, *Part XIII, Africa: 1941–1961* (Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1980), Reel 3, microfilm; "The Secretary of State to the Embassy in the United Kingdom," August 3, 1948, *FRUS* (1948) 3: 931–932.
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30. "prostitute" and "on the altar …" in Rayford Logan, "Statement on Behalf of 22 National Negro Organizations Relative to the Disposal of the Former Italian Colonies in Africa," September 9, 1948, Box A322, File "Italian Colonies, Correspondence Regarding Disposition of, 1948–April 1949," *Papers of the NAACP*; Walter White to E. Albert Norris, Channing H. Tobias, Cordelia Green Johnson, Dorothy Height, B. F. McLaurin, Mabel S. Lewis, Louis T. Wright, and Lester Granger, telegram, September 3, 1948, Box A322, File "Italian Colonies, Correspondence Regarding Disposition of, 1948–April 1949," *Papers of the NAACP*; "Although Messrs…" in Walter White, "Italy's Former Colonies and American Policy," August 26, 1948, Box A81, File "Articles: Walter White Syndicated Column, 1948," Box A322, File "Italian Colonies, Correspondence Regarding Disposition of, 1948–April 1949," *Papers of the NAACP*.
31. Rayford Logan, "Statement on Behalf of 22 National Negro Organizations Relative to the Disposal of the Former Italian Colonies in Africa," September 9, 1948, Box A322, File "Italian Colonies, Correspondence Regarding Disposition of, 1948-April 1949," *Papers of the NAACP*.
32. Walter White, untitled article, September 10, 1948, Box A74, File "Articles: Walter White *Chicago Defender* Columns, 1948," *Papers of the NAACP*.
33. Sergei Mazov, "The USSR and the Former Italian Colonies, 1945–50," *Cold War History* 3, no. 3 (April 2003): 49.
34. Central Intelligence Agency, "Consequences of Communist Accession to Power in Italy by Legal Means," ORE 6–48, March 5, 1948, Box 214, File "Central Intelligence Reports: O.R.E.: 1948: 6–15 [6, 7, 9–15 January 13 – August 3]," *Papers of Harry S. Truman, Personal Secretary's File*, HSTL; "The Secretary of State to the Embassy in Italy," May 1, 1947, *FRUS* (1947) 3: 889. For Soviet control of the Italian Communist Party see, Silvio Pons, "Stalin, Togliatti, and the Origins of the Cold War in Europe," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 3, no. 2 (Spring 2001): 3–27; Richard Drake, "The Soviet Dimension of Italian Communism," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 6, no. 3 (Summer 2004): 115–119.
35. Mazov, "The USSR and the Former Italian Colonies, 1945–50," 70.
36. "enhance Italy's…" in Bills, *The Libyan Arena*, xiii, 37, 113, 129; Clifton Daniel, "Italian Colonies Cause Big 4 Split," *New York Times,* July 22, 1948.
37. "Soviet Alters View on Italian Colonies," *New York Times,* February 14, 1948; Clifton Daniel, "Shift on Africa by Soviet Studied: British Link Moscow Stand for Italy as the Trustee to Coming Elections," *New York Times,* February 18, 1948; "Big 4 Deputies Differ on Italian Colonies," *New York Times,* February 24, 1948.

38. A search of Robeson's microfilmed papers, the W. Alphaeus Hunton Papers at the Schomburg, all of the issues of CAA's publication, *New Africa*, during the time period, the W. E. B. Du Bois Papers, the FBI File on Paul Robeson, and the British Intelligence files on Paul Robeson indicated no public speeches, commentaries, etc. on the Soviets' plan to hand Eritrea, Somalia, and Libya back to Italy.
39. "Africa: Next Goal of Communists: An Interview with Dr. Max Yergan, America's Foremost Authority on Africa," *U.S. News & World Report*, May 1, 1953; "Goldwater Joins [James O.] Eastland, and Yergan in Outcries Against Unity in Congo," January 26, 1963, Box 1, File "Personal Papers – Newspapers articles about Yergan, 1952–1958," *Papers of Max Yergan*, MSRC.
40. "Robeson Accuses U.S. of Exploiting Africa," *New York Times,* April 7, 1948.
41. "Robeson Says He'll Continue Work with Reds," *New York Herald Tribune,* April 7, 1948, found in Reel 7, *Robeson*.
42. Mazov, "The USSR and the Former Italian Colonies, 1945–50," 49.
43. Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 39–72; "chose…" in Duberman, *Robeson*, 499. Duberman noted this tendency while discussing another matter but this is a pattern. Robeson similarly "clammed up" when he realized that the Soviet Union, after the Holocaust, was systematically executing Jews, Duberman, *Robeson*, 352–353.
44. Von Eschen, *Race against Empire*, 70.
45. "spokesmen for…" in Rayford Logan, "Statement on Behalf of 22 National Negro Organizations Relative to the Disposal of the Former Italian Colonies in Africa," September 9, 1948, Box A322, File "Italian Colonies, Correspondence Regarding Disposition of, 1948–April 1949," *Papers of the NAACP*; "the wishes…" and "International Administration…" in "Negroes Ask Plebiscite for Former Italian Colonies," September 9, 1948, Box 5, File "Diaries, Personal: 1948–49," *Papers of Rayford Whittingham Logan*, Library of Congress, Washington, DC. (hereafter *Logan Papers*).
46. "The Proposal by Soviet Delegation on the Former Italian Colonies," September 14, 1948, C.F.M./48/IC/Paris 1, Box 261, File "Italian Colonies-Record of Decisions & Documents; Special CFM-Ministers Meeting, Paris, Sept. 1948," *Records of International Conferences, and Expositions*, Record Group 43, NA; "Record of Decisions," September 13–15, 1948, Box 261, File "Italian Colonies-Record of Decisions & Documents: Special CFM-Ministers Meeting, Paris, Sept. 1948," *Records of International Conferences, and Expositions*, Record Group 43, NA; Bills, *The Libyan Arena*, 133–154; Mazov, "The USSR and the Former Italian Colonies, 1945–50," 72–73.
47. "Interpreting the Foreign Ministers' Discussion on Italian Colonies," *New Africa* 4, no. 9 (October 1945); "Action on Italian Colonies at Paris Conference is Test of Peace Aims," *New Africa* 5, no. 7 (July–August, 1946); "Petition to the United States Delegation to the United Nations Concerning the Disposition of Libya, Eritrea, and Italian Somaliland," *Spotlight on Africa: Action Appeal*, September 28, 1948, Reel 61, *Du Bois*; "remember Africa…" in "Council Urges Just and Prompt Decision on Italian Colonies," press release, September 28, 1948, KV/2/1829; "vote-bait" in Council on African Affairs, "Selling Africa for Votes," press release, August 27, 1948, Reel 2, *Hunton*. A preliminary review of left-leaning, anti-Soviet George Padmore's writings shows a similar focus on the West's attempts to recolonize North Africa and the Horn but no acknowledgment of the Soviets' activities. See, for example, George Padmore, "World Views: A Colonial Headache," *Chicago Defender*, February 10, 1948; "World Views: Africans Protest," *Chicago Defender*, April 10, 1948.

48. "hand[ed]..." in Dyja, *Walter White*, 175; Carol Anderson, *Eyes off the Prize: The United Nations and the African American Struggle for Human Rights, 1944–1955* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 141–144. While maintaining its anticolonial focus, however, the NAACP, at the same time, knuckled under to US Cold War pressure concerning human rights in the United States. See, ibid., 149–152.
49. Horne, *The End of Empires*, 180.
50. Murali Balaji, *The Professor and the Pupil: The Politics and Friendship of W.E.B. Du Bois and Paul Robeson* (New York: Nation Books, 2007), 246.
51. Roark, "American Black Leaders," 265.
52. Walter White to the First Secretary of the Imperial Ethiopian Legation, September 9, 1948, Box A322, File "Italian Colonies Disposition of, Correspondence Regarding, 1948–49," *Papers of the NAACP*.
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2

The Activism of George McCray: Confluence and Conflict of Pan-Africanism and Transnational Labor Solidarity

Yevette Richards

In the late 1920s, George Francis McCray began to build his reputation in the black national press as a vigorous proponent of race consciousness and racial solidarity. Influenced by Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), he promoted the themes in opinion pieces for the *Chicago Defender* newspaper. The establishment of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) in 1935 resulted in a broadening of McCray's activism. Paradoxically, he used his newspaper labor column to direct race consciousness toward the promotion of interracial labor unionism as a means of empowering workers, fighting discrimination, and opening up jobs to blacks. His political and civic work in this period revolved around labor education and research in service to movements for civil rights, labor rights, and social justice. Post-Second World War his work expanded to include themes of African liberation, pan-Africanism, and international labor solidarity.

McCray's twin interests in racial solidarity and transnational labor came together in the late 1950s when he began working in Africa for the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), a noncommunist global labor body composed of affiliates representing national labor federations. However, Cold War manipulations, ICFTU paternalism, colonial legacies, and pan-African divisions made it nearly impossible for him to operate, with any great success, as both a pan-Africanist and as a supporter of the West. While he found a permanent home on the continent and reveled in his African heritage, the European-dominated organization for which he had worked found itself on the losing end of rival pan-African struggles that developed out of the Cold War and the transition from colonialism.

This chapter explores the development of McCray's activism as well as the contradictions and conflicts that he encountered as he pursued different methods and strategies for improving the lives of black workers, both in the United States and in Africa. He uniquely differed from many pan-African writers who, as Lemelle and Kelley have asserted, failed to adopt "a critical stance toward capitalism and the class struggle within African and diasporan communities," although he at times shared some of their liberal assumptions of modernity, progress, and civilization, and espoused a gendered racial discourse predicated on masculine leadership.[1] Embedded within his national and transnational work was a strong commitment to a non-separatist, nonelitist form of Black Power, which together with his support of organized labor put him at odds with African and African American elites. In turn, he supported labor organizations as tools for black empowerment even though racism and paternalism permeated the membership and leadership ranks. McCray's activism within the transnational networks of pan-Africanism and international labor during the Cold War reveals both the power and weakness of his dual identities as an American and as a person of African descent. His experiences while working for the ICFTU fit into the definition of double consciousness that W. E. B. Du Bois articulated in his concept of the dual identity of being black and American in the United States. On a transnational scale, McCray's double consciousness as a pan-Africanist and as a supporter of the West represented "two warring ideals in one dark body."[2]

Overview

McCray's social activism was first recorded in 1928 when he began to write letters and editorials in the *Chicago Defender*. Print journalism was a popular mode of protest used by aspiring and established black leaders to propagate their solutions to racial proscriptions. Among those race leaders who embraced the power of the pen during the "nadir of American race relations"[3] were T. Thomas Fortune, W. E. B. Du Bois, Ida B. Wells, and A. Philip Randolph. McCray followed these stalwarts into the field, as the author of numerous articles published over three decades in the *Chicago Defender*. His status as a member of the American Negro Press facilitated the circulation of many of his articles in various black newspapers around the country.

Labor and civic circles provided other avenues through which McCray built his leadership in the fight for housing, civil rights, and workers rights, and the promotion of pan-Africanism and workers education and organization. He was a member of Chicago's Labors' Non-Partisan League, executive secretary of the Chicago Council of the National Negro Congress, a Julius Rosenwald Fellow for the Workers' Education Department in Hull House, a founder of the Afro-World Fellowship, chair of the CIO's Pan-African Labor Council, and president of a CIO Chicago union, Local 1006, the Government and Civic Employees Organizing Committee of the Illinois Department of Labor.

Described as "a conscientious student of African Affairs,"[4] McCray in 1953 began to devote greater attention in his writings to issues of African labor and

nationalism. In October of 1957, he became practically engaged in pan-Africanism and international labor when he took a nine-month leave of absence from his job to serve as a specialist for the US State Department's International Labor Exchange Service on a mission to teach labor education in Ghana. Coinciding as it did with the year of Ghana's independence, the tour left and indelible mark on McCray and proved to be a turning point in his career. It answered his romantic longing for ancestral home and provided him with the opportunity to witness the nascent development of national self-government under the direction of Africans. Heady with hope and pride, he ensconced himself within an African neighborhood and formed quick friendships with Ghanaian labor and political leaders.

With the purpose of convincing his African American readership of the strong bonds that connected them to Africa, he chronicled his experiences in a *Chicago Defender* column entitled "In New Africa." Traveling the country with officials of the Ghana Trades Union Congress (TUC), McCray was able to bring together his commitment to labor and blacks on a transnational scale. By September, he was back on the continent, this time in East Africa, where for seven years he worked with the ICFTU as a teacher and staff member of the newly established African Labor College located in Kampala, Uganda. In this capacity he also traveled the continent as head of the extramural department and as a labor advisor, giving educational seminars and attending various labor conventions and meetings. From 1965 until his retirement in 1975, he worked in West Africa for the AFL-CIO's African American Labor Center.

McCray's prolific writings on issues of race and labor on a national and transnational scale reveal practically nothing of his personal life. Remarking on McCray's taciturn disposition on the subject of his childhood in the South, a labor colleague stated that one could imagine that for a black activist of his stripe the South would have posed difficult challenges.[5] Yet, according to an FBI report on McCray, most of his Chicago neighbors knew very little about him or his family, either.[6] The basic facts of McCray's personal life primarily emerge from official government documents such as his FBI report, supplemented by information from relatives.

McCray was born on April 7, 1908, in Biloxi, Mississippi. His parents Rochelle and Erasmus McCray were from Georgia, as was his maternal grandmother, Mary Halsey. He spent a part of his youth in Florida, where his family traveled to work, and around 1920 he and his extended family were settled in Chicago.[7] By the end of the decade his mother had died and he was living with his 24-year-old brother, Gus, and 19-year-old sister, Susie. In this early period, McCray was a factory worker for W. D. Allen Manufacturing Company. He and his brother also worked for the Pullman Company where McCray reportedly met his future wife, 20-year-old fellow Mississippian Geneva Artemis Lee.[8] Marrying in 1931, they had four children. When McCray's sister Susie died in 1939, he along with his maternal Aunt Clifford and Uncle Turner took care of her four young daughters, financially and emotionally.[9] The Great Depression had left McCray jobless for about three years, but by 1940 he was employed with the Illinois State Employment Service. His last place of employment before leaving for Africa was

with the US postal service, a typical avenue of federal employment opened to blacks.

It was the application for this job that generated the FBI investigation, due to his past position with the Chicago branch of the National Negro Congress, one of the organizations on the attorney general's List of Subversive Organizations. The investigation revealed that although the neighbors could say very little about him, his work colleagues and associates and friends in activist circles testified that he was keenly dedicated to civil and labor rights, opposed communist influence in black organizations, and was a loyal citizen.[10] McCray's writings up until that time rarely engaged discussions of communism.

Race Consciousness

Maida Springer, a pioneer in forging ties between African labor and the AFL-CIO, recalled hearing that McCray's family, like hers, had supported Marcus Garvey's UNIA.[11] By the time of McCray's first public writings, a year had passed since Garvey had been deported to Jamaica following the commutation of his prison sentence. In this period of Garvey's defeat and humiliation, McCray viewed the absence of black unity and lack of black leadership as mutually reinforcing. Believing that Garvey was treated unfairly, he continued to support the major principles of Garveyism, in particular race pride and race consciousness fused with a class dimension. He noted that the prevalence of anti-Garveyism, which he clearly deemed to be unjustified, was an inhibiting factor to overall black unity:

> The stigma of being a Garveyite was sufficient to keep many people out of the organization although these people little understood the organization and had no real criticisms to make of it. Certain influential people withheld their membership and criticized the order and others did like wise for no really honorable reason.[12]

Similar to Garvey's philosophy and typical of black thought in the post-First World War period, McCray had little faith in the promise of American democracy and freedom for blacks. He cautioned blacks to not delude themselves into thinking that they were American citizens and that simply working hard and self-improvement would be recognized and rewarded.[13] With the post-First World War race riots a still recent memory and bleak job prospects ever present, McCray asserted that patriotism from Negroes is unappreciated in the United States, and that this rejection was resulting in the rising antagonism of blacks toward the nation. His claim that increased literacy resulted in less patriotism resonated with the lesson Frederick Douglass learned in an earlier period, that education ruined a good slave.[14]

Beyond nationalism, McCray had no confidence in international socialists or humanitarians either. He declared that these groups left out "one man" from their "glorious Utopia," "the pestiferous Negro." He ridiculed blacks who suggested organizing on the basis of "universal recognition of human rights," a concept he considered so remote as to be an idealistic abstraction.[15]

McCray contended that the subordinated position of blacks called for the use of race consciousness as "one of the most potent forces contributing to the solution of the American race problem." Since "men are little concerned with the opinions of their inferiors," he insisted that operating under the organizing principle of race consciousness was an intermediate step that would allow black leadership "to speak to our oppressors in a language intelligible to them." In the typical gendered language of the time, he held that this policy was the "only way to develop the manhood of the Negro." Moreover cooperation of this kind could help to develop among blacks an affection and preference toward each other.[16]

McCray connected the timidity that people had toward expressing race consciousness with an inferiority complex that "the social and intellectual tutelage of another race" spawned. He asserted:

> Unfortunately the above condition will continue as long as the operation of Negro movements must depend upon subsidies from white philanthropists; Negro history minimized and discredited in the public schools; Negro buildings and banks constructed by white people for Negroes, and a multitude of other objections subversive to the manhood of the Negro.[17]

McCray's belief that the race consciousness approach would also set the stage for blacks to make "one powerful attempt to effect recognition of our status as ordinary American citizens" reflects that he, unlike Garvey, had not completely given up on the prospect of inclusion in the American polity. Putting race consciousness into practice, he proclaimed, was the only way to bring white Americans to the realization of the "injustice, peril and social damage arising" out of the "infirmities of human nature."[18]

The ideology of colorism counted as part of the social damage that the race imbibed from its American experience. McCray denounced colorism, as Garvey also had although not always in an inclusive, affirming way. Garvey's failure in this regard led some of his critics to falsely view him as hostile toward light-complexioned blacks as a matter of principle.[19] However, light-complexioned blacks opposed to color and class distinctions, and who did not appear to have disagreements with Garvey's criticisms of interracial relationships, had trusted places within the UNIA. Henrietta Vinton Davis, termed an "octoroon," was perhaps second to Garvey in popularity and importance within the UNIA.[20] Garvey also implicitly trusted James Wormley Jones, who looked white, and had positions of distinction within the movement. In this latter case, Garvey's trust was misplaced as Jones was later revealed to be an agent under J. Edgar Hoover, the first black so employed. As undercover agent 800, he served as an expert agent provocateur and built the case that led to Garvey's incarceration.[21]

Outlining the psychological, social, and economic ramifications of colorism, McCray urged the *Defender*'s editor to denounce this intraracial prejudice as the first step in fighting racism of the larger society. McCray placed the onus on blacks for the negative repercussion of colorism on black employment.[22] The penchant of those white employers, who were willing to hire blacks, to only employ those of light complexion was rooted in sound business practices aimed

at attracting black customers. “Mulattoes have always been at a social advantage because foolish Negroes elevated and maintained them in the position,” McCray concluded. This is the way we “adapt ourselves to this environment, which exalts everything white and condemns everything black.”[23]

McCray viewed colorism as an expression of “our inferiority complex,”[24] rooted in the period of enslavement, which robbed blacks of individuality, leading them to become imitators of whites even to the point of physical modification.[25] He found it “pathetic if not ludicrous” for blacks to try to correct what they considered “nature’s error” in making them “with broader noses, thicker lips and kinky hair.”[26] Condemning this “blind allegiance and deification of whiteness,”[27] this “mania of racial obscurantism,”[28] he also connected colorism to what he held as black people’s preference for mates of lighter complexion, beginning with whites and followed by mulattos.[29]

This line of argument before a white audience could feed into negative myths of black people given that white-popular beliefs linked the struggle for equal rights with black men wanting “their” white daughters and the despoilment of white women as the cause of lynching. However, McCray catered his message to a black audience and furthermore was not concerned about the possibility that whites might access his message and either misinterpret it or willfully misuse it. In a later article for the *Crisis* magazine, McCray makes it clear that he opposes blacks censoring critical discussion, always trying to put their best foot forward in the presence of whites, or acting as though “anything reprehensible to Negroes must be excused by holding whites responsible or at least by showing they are no better.” “A Race Pride which obscures and minimizes our faults,” he declared, “offers no inducement to progress and is injurious.” Remarking on the power of blacks as a “fighting race” to use “Race Pride” in a positive way to build, he asserted:

> Too long have we sought the smiles of tin gods. We have expressed our resentments too passively—too negatively. We need to build our resentment into social structures as gigantic and perfect as our proscription is invincible.[30]

The one problem McCray had with race consciousness was that it played into the hands of what he called the “avaricious black capitalist class.” Asserting that the “intelligentsia has little sympathy for the black proletarians,” he generally viewed the black upper class as selfish and little more than exploiters of the vast majority of blacks who were working class.[31] Indeed, he partly blamed the educational system for this division, noting that the college experience did not develop within the student a sustained interest in blacks or lead “him” to be “benevolently disposed toward his race.” The “sole endeavor” of the college-educated man, he held, was to “promote his personal fortune.”[32] Amongst this leadership, he rejected what he called the “library of altruistic, idealistic theories similar to those Mr. Du Bois expounded in his youth,” and he noted that the Sanhedrin Movement accomplished nothing. As a united front of black organizations led by conservative Kelly Miller, this movement had been composed of Du Bois’s Talented Tenth and had rejected Marcus Garvey.[33]

The onset of the Depression brought renewed criticism of the black professional class. McCray accused them of being like ostriches with their heads in the sand, blind to the suffering of the black working class and ignorant to the fact that their plights were connected. In an article for the *Crisis,* McCray proposed that the organizational power of blacks as consumers be harnessed for economic survival. In proclaiming black economic cooperation as "the one great value of segregation" he concluded, "whatever our views on solving the race problem we cannot ignore the fact that our economic interests are one. For us this is our starting point. Any Negro who does not know this can hardly consider himself intelligent."[34]

Interestingly, in the months to come, Du Bois, the editor of the *Crisis*, would advance this line of argument as the separate-development thesis in a series of articles on the subject in the NAACP organ. His new strategic stance resulted in a clash with the integrationist NAACP executive board and his subsequent resignation from the group.[35]

In McCray's discussion of race survival, he castigated the "discriminating and labor monopolizing unions" for playing a key role in the "impassable barrier" blacks faced, and held that any plans that blacks made for the future must keep this economic lockout in mind. Perhaps referencing those who wanted to pursue the strategy of integration, McCray remarked that he would not repudiate the idea that the "latent goodness of white people will somehow protect us." But he also noted that he did not have much confidence in that prospect.[36]

CIO and Unionism

The rise of CIO industrial unions in the mid 1930s represented a major turning point in McCray's perspective on the possibilities of interracial organizing. Previously he had put the onus on blacks, stating that unity through race consciousness could in some way be deployed to help dispel the false beliefs of white workers toward blacks and consequently orient white workers to a tactical rejection of race prejudice as primarily a benefit of the capitalist class.[37] The establishment of the new labor federation as a rival to the more conservative and craft-organized American Federation of Labor (AFL) radically altered his outlook on the feasibility of white workers taking responsibility for building interracial movements for economic and political reform. To propagate support for unionization among blacks, he developed a column in the *Chicago Defender* entitled "Labor Front," which ran throughout the 1940s.

The CIO gave him hope as never before for expanded job opportunities for blacks, particularly as the federation supported nondiscrimination policies, as opposed to the "buck-passing, do nothing attitude" of the AFL.[38] Regularly dripping scorn on the AFL, McCray occasionally chastised Randolph for keeping the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters within the AFL. AFL convention delegates regularly scoffed at Randolph's antidiscrimination proposals and treated him with disrespect. Noting CIO union success in organizing blacks and cognizant of the antipathy with which blacks held the more overtly racist AFL unions, McCray wrote that "despite some notorious lilly-white (sic) exceptions the unions

are schools for democracy and racial tolerance." He insisted that they were "the only places" where interracial struggles to solve common problems also allowed blacks to "show the real worth of the Negro as a citizen."[39]

As black union ranks climbed to 20,000 in Chicago,[40] McCray continued his critical assessment of the black upper class for not helping the union movement even though, he noted sardonically, it was in their interest to do so, since they were "dependent upon the meagre (sic) earnings of thousands of Negro laborers, factory operatives and domestic servants." Referring to Du Bois's notion of the Talented Tenth, he stressed the point that blacks would not be saved by our exceptional men, "with all respect to Dr. Du Bois."[41] The "dominant economic interest of the Negro community," he declared, "is a wage earner's interest."[42]

Pan-Africanism

Post-Second World War, McCray expanded his labor activism to include a pan-African perspective that drew parallels in the conditions and circumstances among blacks around the world, particularly the condition of being under the rule of white supremacists whether in the southern states or in Africa. With racism so rampant in colonial and white-ruled Africa, McCray celebrated the smallest of victories that demonstrated interracial progress. He noted that a local branch of European mine workers in Northern Rhodesia, under tremendous pressure from black miners and the American-owned company, overturned 15-year-old rules reserving higher-paying skilled jobs for whites. Although the drop in job restrictions would not appreciably alter the average wage differential between whites and blacks of $350 and $16, McCray heralded the move as a rebuke against "the Negro-hating nationalists" of South Africa, who wanted to "extend their system of Jim Crow" beyond their borders.[43]

McCray also applauded the actions of white labor women who rejected the argument that the presence of black men either served to degrade them or undermine their safety. At a labor meeting on race relations in Liverpool, England, a woman stood up to a charge of "blackies" abusing "our women," by defying any of them to find guilty her black husband of 20 years with whom she had had three children. Similarly in South Africa white women delegates to a labor meeting rejected the charge that seating black men at the annual labor conference "would offend and degrade white women."[44]

These examples provided evidence of the global reach of the argument for restrictions on blacks based upon the charade of protecting white womanhood. Six years earlier, McCray reported that one oft-heard refrain used to destroy interracial organizing was "that union will put niggers in this plant working beside white women." He credited the CIO's support for a nondiscrimination policy and the "common sense of the majority of white workers" in CIO unions for rejecting these divisive tactics.[45]

These successes did not blind McCray to the tremendous barriers that Africans faced in struggles against colonialism and oppression. Even whites who wanted "a greater measure of justice for native people," he reported, were just a

handful, representing "lost voices in a wild wind."[46] However, McCray was not despondent, particularly when he noted African resistance. He cheered on the Kenya Land and Freedom Army, termed "Mau Mau" by the British, for fighting against the "land-grabbing settlers" and their African informant allies, whom he called "stool pigeons." He disavowed that the fighters were Communists, a typical charge against blacks active in campaigns for civil rights in the United States or for an end to colonial or white rule in Africa. McCray also had no qualms about Mau Mau as a tactic for striking fear in whites, calling it "a good weapon."[47] In general, he advocated for Africans to "destroy the influence of local white officials and missionaries."[48] In this regard, he praised Igbo leader Nnamdi Azikiwe for his policy of nonfraternization with Europeans as part of the protest against provisions of the McPherson Constitution, which foisted deleterious divisions among ethnic groups. McCray proclaimed that "Zik" was not like other Africans who, "seek and highly prize the social recognition of whites."[49]

McCray's goal in much of his writings on African struggles was to enjoin African Americans to acknowledge and celebrate their connection to the African continent. He brought to the attention of his readers their political connections to the African struggles, by noting that it was no coincidence that the US government in foreign affairs was downplaying the colonialism of its European allies while in domestic affairs was opposing permanent national fair employment legislation. "It would be sheer madness," he maintained, "for American Negroes to stand on the sidelines while desperate Africans pit their meagre (sic) strength against overwhelming odds."[50]

Before the Black Power movement of the 1960s, many blacks internalized the negative assessments of Africa that pervaded the culture, and eschewed any association with the continent or its peoples. McCray sought to overcome that resistance. He spoke on a basic level of the physical resemblances, particularly to "wooly heads," as a point of pride. With a nod toward the obvious racial admixture of many African Americans and probably knowledgeable of dynastic race theory, McCray attacked "prejudiced 'experts'" who want to "divide and confuse" blacks by labeling North Africans who would be considered "plainly Negro" in the United States as "Arabs and Caucasians, of all things."[51]

In his articles, McCray pointed with special pride to the anticolonial struggles of British West Africa. He identified the Yoruba and Igbo (wrongly in the case of the Yoruba whose enslavement was largely confined to Brazil and Cuba) as the ancestors of many African Americans.[52] While he upheld these two groups as the most advanced people of Nigeria, he portrayed Africans in the Gold Coast (now Ghana) as the "best educated, wealthiest and most modern," in all Africa and concomitantly the Gold Coast as the most "progressive and most highly developed" African country.[53]

Africans as modern subjects was a theme that McCray drove home. One of his articles features a picture of a young African assistant in Western business dress conferring with a white doctor about sleeping sickness (trypanosomiasis). The caption reads, "Contrary to the belief held by many that all natives in Africa are spear-bearing savages wearing loin cloths, many are well educated and dress as we do here."[54] In general, McCray believed that for Africans to avoid the complete

takeover of the continent's vast resources by outsiders, they needed to quickly become "modern" in the sense they had to "master business, arts, science and industry."[55]

During this period, McCray was in the forefront of resurrecting Marcus Garvey as an icon of black liberation. Lavishing praise on Garvey, he credited him for laying the groundwork for the independence struggles and for projecting a vision of a united black people. "Wherever in Africa the natives seek to throw off white domination," he proclaimed, "the name of Marcus Garvey is revered." Though he got a few of the details wrong, McCray traced for his readers the influence of the UNIA from South Africa to Kenya to Ghana. He noted the cooperation of the UNIA-associated African Orthodox Church with the Kikuyus in the formation of the African Independent Pentecostal Church, as an institution to counter the influence of Church of Scotland Missions, specifically on the practice of "female circumcision." While ignoring the exploitative basis for colonialism, land expropriation, and forced labor, missionaries and colonial officials often pointed to this practice as evidence of the heathenism and black savagery that justified colonial rule. McCray hinted at the missionary opposition as rooted in white supremacy, but failed to note the divisions among Kikuyus about this practice. As expected, given the gender logic of his day, McCray also did not advance a critique of the particular gendered way that women's bodies served as sites of struggle over African cultural practices and autonomy.[56]

McCray reveled in the rise of Garvey's disciples for his Zion, "smart young Africans," and "serious nationalists" such as Jomo Kenyatta and Kwame Nkrumah. Kenyatta had associated with Garvey during his Britain sojourn, while Nkrumah learned of Garvey during his time in the United States, when both he and Nnamdi Azikiwe had studied at the famed Lincoln University. Returning to the Gold Coast after the 1945 London Pan-African Congress, Nkrumah used American-styled campaign tactics to build a movement against colonialism. Although arrested for his activism, he still proved victorious in 1951 in the first universal suffrage national elections. The British then saw it in their best interest to let him out of prison to form a new government. Kenyatta would remain detained on false charges of being a part of Mau Mau until 1961 when the British also had to release him to form an independent government. McCray celebrated these two leaders, as followers of Garvey, the "Patron Saint of Restless Africa."[57]

McCray couched his praise for Garvey in deeply reverential terms harkening back to how his followers saw him in the 1920s. He recalled Garvey as that "dimly remembered would-be Messiah who with great eloquence … stirred the whole Negro world with his ideas of Africa for the Africans." He agreed with Garvey's conception of himself as a "martyr," "a man of destiny," someone who could reach immortality through the "ideas and philosophy" he imparted to "others capable of carrying on his great work."[58]

Although McCray offered this effusive praise, he also acknowledged to his readers, many of whom may not have remembered Garvey so fondly, that the man was not perfect and not all of his ideas were accepted by the current African leadership. The point of disagreement on which McCray chose to focus was relations with whites. He noted that Garvey would not have approved of the interest

of whites in Nkrumah's mission or of Kenyatta's choice to marry a white woman (although he did note that Kenyatta had left this second wife and their son behind in England when he returned home to lead the nationalist cause). Yet, McCray failed to engage in a discussion of Garvey's relations with whites that many of his critics found unforgivable, specifically his association with white supremacists, whom Garvey had viewed as honest representatives of white America's attitude toward blacks. Instead McCray's critique of Garvey was limited to the assessment that his program had started on a high note and ended with "a negative program of retribution against the white man." In the end, he noted, Garvey became embittered and his "mighty organization" "crushed by mismanagement, disillusionment and his own incarceration."[59]

Drawing on lessons of Garvey's failures, McCray opined that for Africans opposition to colonial rule as a unifying force was entirely too negative to work in long run.[60] He looked to Nkrumah to follow in the steps of Garvey in a positive way by building "a great empire in Africa strong enough to command the respect of all men." "This new Ghanaland," he asserted, "would include all the British territories in West Africa and much of the French." While he recognized that Ghana and indeed all of Africa needed to develop and control its wealth or else Europe would take it, he realized that independent countries needed foreign technical assistance and capital. One solution was for African Americans to help. Nkrumah, McCray told his African American readers, called for a Great Return of diaspora blacks to the continent to help in the "struggle for Africa for the Africans."[61] Within four years, as Ghana became independent, McCray would heed that call and not look back.

Although McCray is reported as a very loving father and uncle, his marriage could not be held together through the move to Africa. While Geneva, along with their two younger children, did go to the continent with him in the beginning, she chose not to stay. His sister's oldest daughter responded that while she believed that it was her uncle's "life goal to go to Africa," her Aunt Gene "was glad to see American soil" again. [62] Some time later he married a Nigerian woman named DorcasAjibamike Adewumi with whom he had four children.[63]

One of McCray's last public acts before going to Ghana was his participation on the Chicago committee of the Prayer Pilgrimage for Freedom, a gathering planned for the Lincoln Memorial on the third anniversary of the Supreme Court *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. The prayer pilgrimage coupled protest against the "terror and violence in the South" with support for civil rights legislation.[64] Like another African American expatriate to Ghana, Bill Sutherland, McCray would not be in the United States for the height of civil rights movement and the Black Power movement that followed in its wake.

Pan-Africanism and British Rule

Following McCray's nine-month stint in Ghana as a labor educator, he retuned to Africa three months later to teach at the ICFTU school, coined Kampala College. The ICFTU resolved that the school, which would train organizers and

union officers, would rely on a revolving five-person international staff until an all-African staff could be instituted. African American labor leaders A. Philip Randolph, Ted Brown, and Springer spearheaded the support of McCray for the "American" position on the international staff.[65]

However, the compromise that resulted in the labor school's establishment was a primary event marking the worsening of relations between the ICFTU and its African affiliates. Kampala College was the price the British paid to keep the AFL-CIO from working independently in Africa. The British in particular found Maida Springer's close relationships with African labor and political leaders disturbing.[66] McCray's presence would prove no less tolerable to the British than Springer's had been.

African affiliates did not object to Kampala College, but they were extremely embittered by what they viewed as the paternalistic control that labor leaders from colonial powers had over their external relations and ICFTU African policy. Under these conditions, many emerging African governments, as part of their policies of neutralism and nation building, began to pressure their labor centers to disaffiliate from the ICFTU. With Ghana, the country that McCray had pinned so much of his hope for pan-African unity, leading in the development of the All-African Trade Union Federation (AATUF) as the ICFTU's replacement, he found transnational work in support of pan-Africanism and international labor solidarity fraught with conflict and contradiction.

It is clear that McCray had an inkling of the opposition he would confront from Europeans. In response to a suggestion that he serve as principal of the school, McCray replied that the ICFTU European leadership would never agree, given that he was of African descent.[67] Swede Sven Fockstedt became the first principal, and from all reports was even-handed and did a credible job. Others on staff included Kenyan economist Joseph Odero-Jowi and Albert Lewis from the British TUC. Briton Albert Hammerton, an ICFTU representative in Africa since 1953, helped with administration and public relations.

For the year that Hammerton was at the school and through subsequent years of his work in the secretariat at ICFTU headquarters in Brussels, he engaged in unceasing criticism of McCray. Evidence points to Hammerton's personality and behavior as the main source for the discord. At this juncture he was held as a veritable pariah among African labor leaders who complained that he was condescending and too accommodating of colonialism, criticisms which the ICFTU discounted.[68] McCray described Hammerton as "a cynical ICFTU field representative who, after about five years wandering about this continent has lost all sympathy for or contact with African labor leaders."[69] Fockstedt pointed to Hammerton's diminished effectiveness, remarking that he had been too long in Africa and needed a rest and a change. He also noted Hammerton's negative impact on Lewis. Once Hammerton departed, relations between Lewis and the students and with McCray were better, though not ideal. [70]

Hammerton's loss of standing among African labor leaders did not stop him from circulating negative assessments of McCray to the other British staffer and to governmental and ICFTU officials. Behind Hammerton's criticism was the British sense that the AFL-CIO were interlopers in their internal affairs.

He praised Fockstedt and Odero-Jowi for getting things done in quiet ways to contrast their behavior with the American way of McCray "who wants to do things in a grand style."[71]

For his part McCray attacked the British staffers for upholding white supremacy in the guise of maintaining European prestige. Specifically, he criticized Hammerton for having advised Fockstedt not to live in McCray's neighborhood composed of Africans and some Italians because it would undermine his prestige as a white man and as the college's principal.[72]

According to Fockstedt, the differences between McCray and Hammerton immediately manifested in a deep split about the school's purpose and function.[73] McCray argued that the British staffers were not attuned to African realities and the curriculum and methodology reflected this state of affairs.[74] They, he declared, tried to direct Africans to use trade union tools "not to kill the lion feasting on his children, but to shoot the rabbit nibbling on the vegetables in his garden." He stated that he and Odero-Jowi thought it "nonsense" to teach Africans to strictly follow British patterns of organization and procedures. He also did not favor imposing American patterns of organization, but said all should be studied so that Africans might "adopt, adapt or develop methods to solve their problems according to their own needs and desires … If they can't do this they are lost forever for they will never be Americans or Englishmen nor anybody else except themselves."[75]

McCray also objected to the influence of employers, whose requested meeting with students at the school was used as an opportunity to make students fearful of the consequences of making demands. When the employers admonished the students not to kill the goose that lay the golden eggs, McCray only thought of the fact that these employers paid the unskilled African pitifully poor wages totaling from $30.00 to $40.00 a month. Some Africans received daily wages as low as 50 cents.[76]

British employers and government officials joined with Hammerton in opposition to McCray's influence. His closeness to the student labor leaders, his ability to empathize with the plight of African workers, and his support for pan-Africanism were all irritants. McCray had African informants inside the protectorate government's labor department looking out for him. They told him that colonial officials considered him a threat particularly because he had a likable as well as a "strong and persuasive personality."[77]

McCray's British critics were particularly livid over the contents of the *Labour Organizer*, the school paper he edited with the financial help of the AFL-CIO. They condemned it for supporting African nationalism instead of sticking with strictly trade union issues.[78] Hammerton insisted that it was the "mouth piece of the editor only," and accused McCray of publishing false information including one report that the ICFTU was ready to help launch a world boycott against South African goods and another one that verged "on being insulting toward the ICFTU Executive Board."[79]

George Foggon, advisor to the British Colonial Secretary of Labor and Trade Union Affairs, also expressed pointed criticism of the *Labour Organizer*. While McCray believed he used "great restraint" as editor, Foggon called the paper

"sheer propaganda," which breeds distrust of governments and employers.[80] His assertion during a meeting at the college that the paper was politically inspired, anti-British, and too pro-African brought strong rebuke from McCray and the students. Upon hearing Foggon state that the paper would undermine the government and employers' confidence in the school, McCray declared that he "got ready for an old-fashioned Chicago South Side brawl."[81]

Fockstedt suggested that Foggon used the school paper issue to accuse McCray of doing things that the British had long suspected him of doing, particularly helping the political movements.[82] Noting the hostility of the government toward the school, Hammerton was beside himself that McCray not only attended the All African People's Conference (AAPC), a meeting of political parties, but also did so, he argued, under false pretenses. He reported to Canadian Charles Millard, the ICFTU director of organization, that McCray had said he was going as a representative of a US newspaper but upon his return reported that AFL-CIO president George Meany asked him to attend.[83] Although Fockstedt remarked that McCray had a tendency not to identify himself enough with the ICFTU, he assured an ICFTU official that McCray did not get paid his per diem while gone and that he had reported upon his return that he served as an unofficial AFL-CIO representative.[84]

The distrust with which McCray and also Springer were held in ICFTU circles due to their race and nationality highlights one central irony. If not for their influence at the AAPC, trade union leaders would have en masse disaffiliated from the ICFTU in favor of a proposed African international. Although these African Americans had deep differences with the ICFTU policy and the behavior of some of the officials, they still believed that with African input transnational labor could be mobilized in support of African workers' interests. ICFTU officials, however, had long discounted that there was discontent among Africans with the organization on a level that would prompt their departure. Instead of paying attention to McCray's warnings about the need to take bold action in the face of a growing movement against ICFTU affiliation, they questioned his style and allegiances.

Cognizant of the ICFTU's distrust, McCray reached out cautiously to Millard stating that he had hesitated to write him about the grave dangers posed to ICFTU standing in Africa for which the ICFTU was in large part responsible, because he feared he would be misunderstood. McCray's solutions included sending ICFTU representatives to Africa who were either people of color or non-European whites deeply sympathetic to nationalism. He emphasized that what Africans needed as they tackled the critical business of organizing was an experienced representative who would work closely with them without condescension and provide advice and financial assistance. The assistance was essential, McCray declared, "for on this continent the sacrifices demanded of labor leaders and organizers are simply unbelievable." He always urged that money not simply be poured into Africa, which he saw as a waste of time and resources, but should be given in situations where a representative would "live, sleep, eat and work" along side Africans but not as a supervisor.[85]

He remarked: "I prepared the enclosed Memorandum at the request of friends in the USA" and "I humbly hope it might be helpful to you when once your irritation subsides" (underlined by Millard). He asked Millard to keep the memo confidential because "it can be easily misunderstood and certain people would regard me as an agent of American imperialism—and I do not mean Communists only."[86] Of course, he meant primarily the British within the ICFTU.

Millard's response focused less on the grave warnings and more on McCray's apparent collaboration with "USA friends." McCray regularly wrote to the AFL-CIO leadership and at the request of the ICFTU, the federation paid for half of his salary. The fact that Millard was not on good terms with the AFL-CIO leadership and was supportive of Hammerton did not bode well for McCray's attempt to gain support. Millard stated his disapproval of McCray's having sent copies of the report to people unknown to him and then asking him to keep the memo strictly confidential and personal. He thought it curious that McCray believed he would be irritated, but slighted him by saying that his approach perhaps reflected the problem of their two different trade union backgrounds. He also took exception to McCray's statement about people of color serving in Africa, interpreting that to mean only African Americans who he suggested, rather snarkily, may not be as well qualified to do the work as other groups. Whites discounting black ability was an old story for McCray, and Millard did not acknowledge his main suggestion, that Europeans should be avoided.[87]

Within months of this correspondence, the Ghana TUC disaffiliated from the ICFTU and led in the development of the AATUF, which would ban outside affiliation. Only then did the ICFTU understand the depth of African labor's discontent with its operations. In addition, the pressure that emerging African nations exerted on labor movements to disaffiliate meant that the ICFTU had poor prospects for survival.

While McCray continued to use his influence to shore up the remaining African ICFTU affiliates, he remained on good terms with a number of African labor leaders in the forefront of the campaign for ICFTU disaffiliation. In a report on a 1961 visit to Ghana, he remarked that he was greeted as a "distinguished guest and long-lost friend." In his conversations with John Tettegah, the general secretary of the Ghana TUC, he argued that Ghanaian labor, though disaffiliated from the ICFTU, should continue to come to the Kampala College. "We Africans," as he was wont to include himself, "should try to keep open as many doors of communication as possible."[88]

McCray, however, had to be disheartened by the separation he witnessed of labor leaders from the workers they purported to serve. During a long night of socializing and drinking with top-level Ghana TUC officials where ribald humor and deep camaraderie were on display, McCray noted the opulence and self-assurance of these men. "They are obviously prosperous, getting fat, and each has a driver and a big car—usually nothing less than a Mercedes-Benz." Only the deputy general secretary, Seth Dei Dawson, seemed unchanged in this respect. McCray said that he was "still looking as kindly and harmless as he did" when he was an ICFTU representative before Ghana's disaffiliation. He remained in

the workers housing estate behind the Accra cemetery, where he raised chickens in half of his small yard. During the socializing event Tettegah told the finance officer to give Dawson a large house. Everyone agreed, McCray said, and then proceeded to talk about profiteering and abuses in the government's housing program. Like his criticism of upper-class African Americans, McCray did not fail to criticize African labor leaders who practiced corruption and cupidity regardless of where they fell on the affiliation issue.[89]

Around this time McCray began publishing a second college newspaper in which he declared his credentials as a "staunch Pan-Africanist." The first issue also carried news of the independence celebrations of Nigerian and Cameroon, which McCray and a subsequent teacher at the school, Canadian Donald Taylor had attended. They are quoted as having "implored all to help maintain the freedom" of these countries and of "pray[ing] for the days when other African countries would be free and thus would emerge a strong unified Africa." Having rapidly lost their privileged positions as colonial overlords, the British were perhaps glad that at least McCray's paper was disputing the AATUF's claims of neutrality. In an article entitled "Mr. Tettegah and AATUF," Nashington E. Kaleno of Kenya accused AATUF leaders of seeking assistance from the World Federation of Trade Unions, the communist global labor body, while they accused others, meaning the remaining ICFTU affiliates, of being imperialist stooges.[90]

Among the African affiliates with a continuous connection to the ICFTU was the Nigerian affiliate. The Nigerian labor movement had a long history of turmoil and splits, which the affiliation issue only exacerbated. McCray's influence on behalf of the ICFTU was particularly strong in this country. In a 1961 visit, McCray upbraided Lawrence Borha, the general secretary of the TUC Nigeria, for not countering the latest maneuvers of the opposition. McCray believed that the opposition support came from Prime Minister Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, who wanted labor peace for foreign investment, and from political parties that wanted a stronger influence in the labor movement. Consequently and with some exasperation, McCray directed the Nigerian affiliate on how to proceed. But suddenly, taking stock of his outsider status, McCray commented with a bit of humor in his report to the ICFTU, "Of course I can't take over the running of the TUCN operation. And conspicuous management by me would look like outside interference."[91]

McCray continued to intervene with African labor and appeal to African governments to change their perception of the ICFTU and Kampala College as threats to nation building. In instructing the new ICFTU general secretary Omer Bécu of Belgium on how to counter the growing opposition to the college, McCray continued to show his double consciousness as a supporter of pan-Africanism and Western-based transnational labor. The ICFTU needed to demonstrate to African nationalist governments that the organization was not imperialist or subversive, he remarked, and that the ICFTU's efforts were based not on needs of Europe and the US but on Africa "as we, as totally committed Pan-Africanists, understand those needs."[92]

In an appeal to the African government of Milton Obote, he again switched between characterizing himself as part of the ICFTU college staff and as a

pan-Africanist. McCray spoke of "we" of the ICFTU being disappointed by the gulf between the Ugandan labor movement and the political party and noted that there was a need for "close integrated development, if we are going to develop the national unity and the sacrificing drive required to create the material wealth and the material power which we need not only to raise our standards of living, but in order to survive as a free and respected people in the world tomorrow." McCray's efforts were directed toward countering movements to close the ICFTU school based upon the contention of critics that the school was responsible for a wave of strikes.[93]

McCray like others saw that many African countries faced difficulties with development partially due to a shortage of skilled and educated people to fill posts in government commercial ventures as the new countries tried to overcome a colonial past of exploitation. He noted that the problem that newly independent countries faced was "how to get rapid economic progress without at the same time entrenching foreign control and domination over the economic life and ultimately the political affairs of each state." He differed with many African governments though in asserting that economic growth called for a strong African labor movement as well as an effective managerial class.[94]

In 1965, the last year of his employment at Kampala College, McCray wrote the ICFTU general secretary about ICFTU prospects in Africa. By this time, the ICFTU had lost most of its ICFTU affiliates. Adopting a bipolar framework, McCray stated that for the ICFTU to survive in Africa, there needed to be a "high level of coordination between the ICFTU, free trade unions and democratic western governments." He remarked, "Despite all our differences, contradictions, rivalries, and jealousies between our union movements and our respective countries, we are grouped together in one phrase 'the western powers and their agencies.'" With this statement McCray implicitly recognized the contradictions in his roles as a Westerner and pan-Africanist. He insisted, however, that only Africans could make the argument to save the ICFTU in Africa.[95]

Lacking strong African affiliates, the ICFTU African Labor College, which had trained hundreds of African labor leaders, finally met its demise in 1968 when Milton Obote's government abruptly closed the school. Only after the Cold War ended and Africans challenged the long rule of some of the continent's leaders did African labor centers again affiliate with the ICFTU.

Given that Fockstedt often defended McCray against British critiques of his pan-African sympathies, it is worth noting one of the few slights he spoke against him: "Brother McCray is really an American despite that he tries to give the impression that he is more African than the Africans themselves."[96] Maida Springer more positively and with a sense of humor declared that McCray was African down to his toenails. While McCray often declared his commitment to pan-Africanism and saw commonalities between African and African American cultures, he did recognize his American identity and his ties to the West. Yet, whereas the seemingly disparate interests of race consciousness and interracial labor organization came together for McCray in the United States, his support for pan-Africanism and labor solidarity on the transnational stage could not as easily hold together.

After working for the African American Labor Center in West Africa for ten years, McCray retired to Liberia. This move seems both fitting and curious. The choice is curious because Liberia had a strong reputation of suppressing labor rights and kowtowing to Western and particularly US corporate interest in the country's national resources and cheap labor. Although earlier, while living in the United States, McCray had praised President William V.S. Tubman for his successful bid to attract foreign capital and narrow the power differential between the ruling Americo-Liberian coastal elite and indigenous ethnic groups, during his period at Kampala College he criticized the leader for ruling over a police state. He praised the "so-called Americo-Liberians" in the labor movement for trying to make common cause with other African workers, a relationship that distinctly displeased the small Americo-Liberian elite that still ruled the country.[97]

On a personal level, perhaps McCray's attachment to members of the Liberian labor leadership, forged during his time with the AALC, played the major role in his residential decision. McCray also may have felt that the ties of consanguinity in Liberia, with its legacy of African American settlement, helped to reconcile his American and African identities. On a symbolic level, it is fitting that he lived in the same country where Marcus Garvey, whom he admired greatly, had pinned his hopes for a UNIA settlement that would welcome home the diaspora and serve as a base for the struggle to free Africa of colonialism.

As the years lived in Africa stretched to decades, perhaps McCray may have looked upon himself as essentially indistinguishable from the continent's diverse population of people. His connections to the United States certainly became tenuous. After 1961, his activities ceased to be chronicled in African American newspapers. In ill health, he returned to the United States in May 1984 intending to be with his son, Christophe in Denver, Colorado, and get medical treatment. However, he made it no farther than New York's Jamaica Hospital in Queens, where he died of cancer.[98] His death went unnoticed in the country of his birth, a disconcerting fact given McCray's career as a prolific writer and activist for civil rights, pan-Africanism, and organized labor. Without his presence in the United States, his pioneer work receded in the collective memory and was rendered invisible to the next generation of labor, civil rights, and pan-African activists.[99] Yet in the end his connection to the United States was acknowledged. The trail of little-known facts about his personal life ends with the US consulate in Liberia recording his death.

Notes

1. Sidney J. Lemelle and Robin D. G. Kelley, "Introduction," in *Imagining Home: Class, Culture and Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1994), 3.
2. W. E. B. Du Bois, "Of Our Spiritual Strivings," in *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Bantam Classic, 1903).
3. This term was coined by Rayford W. Logan in *The Negro In American Life And Thought: The Nadir, 1877–1901* (New York: Dial Press, 1954).
4. George McCray, "Notebook on Africa: White Supremacists in Africa Fear Gold Coast," *The Chicago Defender* (afterwards *CD*), May 9, 1953.

5. Byron Charlton, presently head of AFL-CIO Government Affairs, formerly an AFL-CIO field representative in Africa, an interim executive director of the African American Labor Center, and former Africa director for the Solidarity Center, phone conversation, March 3, 2011.
6. McCray's niece, Celestine Newell, remarked that their families were not wont to hang out in other people's homes. Her mother, Susie, explained to her that she had three siblings with whom she could play. Richards, telephone communication with Celestine Newell, March 27, 2012.
7. As an aside, McCray relates that as a small boy in Florida, he used to "bathe" in a mud hole at the side of a river. McCray, "Labor, Mining Centers are most Modern: In New Africa" *CD*, May 31, 1958.
8. The 1930 census report represents Gus's full name as Augustus. However, his great niece stated that his name was Gustoff. Some documents spell Geneva's other name as "Artimese." She was 20 years old when she married. For census information and interpretation, I am grateful for the assistance of Grace Dumelle, the genealogy and local history assistant in the Reference and Genealogy Services Section of The Newberry Library in Chicago, IL, and also to Gwen Podeschi, reference librarian at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, IL. See also McCray, FBI File 121 3194 1, obtained March 24, 2011. Richards, telephone communication with Newell.
9. Aunt Clifford reportedly was named after her family's enslaver at his "request." Richards, telephone communication with Newell. The names of McCray's children with Artemis are George, Jr., Jean Christophe, Hedy Rochelle, and Edwin Dewitt.
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52. McCray, "Nigerians Impatient over Rights."; and McCray, "Why the Uprisings?"
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3

When the Panther Travels: Race and the Southern Diaspora in the History of the BPP, 1964–1972

Donna Murch

In the mid-1960s, the Oakland-based Black Panther Party (BPP) emerged as a revolutionary new form of black politics that linked the local struggles of African Americans in the San Francisco Bay Area with the global and transnational struggles of socialism and decolonization. Catalyzed by the War in Vietnam, Malcolm X, and the tide of national independence, the Panthers defined their vision for African American liberation in internationalist terms. Ironically, this militant transnationalism grew out of very specific local conditions. Founded in Oakland, California, in 1966, the Black Panther Party for Self Defense (BPPSD) articulated the grievances of the East Bay's African American community whose origins lay in the mass migrations of the Second World War and its aftermath. The core leadership, as well as the rank-and-file, consisted of first- and second-generation migrants whose families traveled north and west to escape the southern racial regime, only to be confronted with new forms of segregation and repression. In his autobiography *Revolutionary Suicide*, Huey Newton placed the emergence of Oakland's BPP within this postwar history of flight, exile, and internal migration of African Americans. Newton explained:

> The great exodus of poor people out of the South during World War II sprang from the hope for a better life in the big cities of the North and West. In search of freedom, they left behind centuries of southern cruelty and repression … The Black communities of Bedford-Stuyvesant, Newark, Brownsville, Watts, Detroit and many others stand as testament that racism is as oppressive in the North as in the South. Oakland is no different.[1]

Although many scholars have described the Oakland-based BPP as the prime example of a northern, urban Black Power formation, in reality, the party leadership and much of its membership were very recent southern transplants.

As this chapter will show, the local particularities of the East Bay and its "southern diaspora" profoundly shaped the party and helped explain its success in building a popular base. At the national level, the BPP drew its inspiration from a rural movement in Lowndes County, Alabama, while internationally they embraced the Cuban, Vietnamese, and Chinese revolutions as their own. The left turn to Maoism and Third Worldism was a larger global phenomenon; however, in the case of Bay Area radicalism, these allegiances partially reflected the recent past of California's black community. As urban migrants, less than a generation removed from southern agrarian struggles, Maoism and land-based insurgencies held a special appeal. With its overwhelming numbers of southern-born residents, California was in many ways a coastal extension of the south. By 1970, California had the single largest number of southern-born African Americans in the nation.[2]

During the crucial years of transition in the black liberation struggle between the passage of the Voting Rights Act and the urban rebellions, the symbol of the panther with its promise of power and threat of resistance, became deeply appealing and applicable to a wide range of agendas. As a result, the political iconography of the "black panther party" had a long and complex sojourn of its own. The Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) first used the panther image in Lowndes County to mobilize an independent political party among rural sharecroppers in the summer of 1965. As part of Black Power's rising southern tide, Max Stanford of Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM) forged close ties with Stokely Carmichael and SNCC's Atlanta Project. By May of 1966, "Black Max" brought together members of SNCC with Black Arts poets Ted Wilson and Larry Neale to form the Harlem Black Panther Party. They hoped to create a united front organization that would enable SNCC to move into the urban north and use New York's dense infrastructure of black nationalist and radical activism to launch a national black party.[3]

With its usual caprice, however, history proved more elusive. The Harlem Party lasted little more than a year and, instead, the panther traveled west to the migrant communities of the San Francisco Bay Area. In a pattern inaugurated by the Watts rebellions, the comparatively small and recent black population settlements of California, rather than the historic black metropolises of New York or Chicago appeared at the forefront of post-civil rights struggle. A dynamic youth movement coalesced in the expansive network of urban college campuses and universities that crisscrossed the Bay Area with North Oakland's Merritt College at the center. By April 1966, dissidents from the Afro-American Association, California's first indigenous black nationalist group, and participants in Merritt Black Studies movement quietly joined RAM and formed the Black Panther Party of Northern California (BPPNC). Within six months, two other Merritt students, Huey Newton and Robert Seale, met at the North Oakland Poverty Center to draft the official platform for the BPPSD. They appended "Self Defense" to their name to distinguish themselves from earlier groups and to highlight their advocacy of armed police patrols. This Oakland-based party quickly eclipsed its predecessors, and in less than five years blossomed into an international movement with branches in over 61 US cities and 26 states.[4]

To many past and present, the Oakland BPP incorporated and even personified the major tenets of Black Power politics. Crisp paramilitary uniforms of black leather jackets, berets, and powder blue shirts combined with precision marching and martial display demonstrated racial pride and community accomplishment.[5] The BPP established an exclusively black rank and file membership and worked to set up independent institutions—including liberation schools, breakfast programs, and healthcare services. The party's substantial holdings in local property and large subscriber base for their newspaper also made substantial progress toward the most cherished of nationalist goals—economic autonomy. Most importantly, by acting "in defense of self-defense" and deploying the powerful symbolism of SNCC's Lowndes County panther, the Oakland party invented a powerful new medium for African American political expression and race-based mobilization.

When examined more closely, however, the BPP defies the usual parsing of black politics into overarching typologies, such as northern versus southern; integrationist versus separatist; nationalist versus internationalist; or even, civil rights versus Black Power. In different stages of the party's evolution, the BPP combined elements from all these different political tendencies to craft a community-based organization that addressed the needs of the local population during a particular historical conjuncture. While the Panthers have often been understood as the premier Black Power organization of the post-Watts era, through most of their history they explicitly repudiated the label, and chose instead to emphasize the international, and ultimately "intercommunal" nature of their organizing. One of my greatest surprises as a young researcher, was conducting oral histories with members of the Oakland BPP and asking them to explain how they understood the BPP as part of the larger Black Power movement, only to have them deny adamantly that this was the case. Erica Huggins stressed that this assumption is one of the greatest historical misconceptions about the BPP. "Most young people don't know that the Party wasn't a Black Nationalist organization. It just wasn't. It didn't even continually call itself a Black Power organization ... That might have been where we were conceived ... at that juncture in history ... Remember, our slogan was All Power To the People."[6]

The seeming contradiction between the Panthers' compelling use of racial iconography, while simultaneously disavowing black nationalism and Black Power, can be traced to the local origins of the party. Internal migration and the distinct historical diaspora that it produced, profoundly shaped the black political culture of the East Bay. The concept of diaspora has relevance not only beyond and between national boundaries, but also within them. Chain migration from Texas, Louisiana, and Arkansas structured the urban communities that gave rise to Oakland's BPP. In Eric Hobsbawm's words, as migrants "they looked backward as much as forward" and their geographic origins lent the racial politics of the Bay Area a striking heterodoxy. These transplanted populations carried with them the racial complexity of the Gulf Coast, and they combined this with the multiethnic, multiracial history of the Bay Area in which African Americans only surpassed the Chinese community as the largest racial minority in the aftermath of the Second World War. California's ever-present history of Mexican

expropriation, Chinese exclusion, and Japanese internment made it clear that African Americans in California existed under a complex and shifting system of racial hierarchies that Gerald Horne has alternately referred to as "diversified" or "compounded racism." In this context, the BPP's rainbow politics made profound sense at the local level. Comparatively lower rates of residential segregation, a robust Left political culture, and student movement also provided an environment in which multiracialism and alliance with progressive whites could flourish. By bringing together extensive oral history and published memoirs together with more traditional print sources, this chapter hopes to illuminate the enigmatic nature of the party that crafted the most compelling iconography of Black Power, while simultaneously repudiating it.[7]

While the concept of diaspora has usually been applied to describe transnational population movements, its has utility for the emerging scholarship on northern civil rights, Black Power, and black radicalism inside the postwar United States. This is true not only because these mid-century black social movements were inspired by and integral to the global dynamics of African and Asian independence movements, Decolonization, and the Cold War, but also because they were inseparable from the largest black population movement in American history. In 1940, over 75 percent of the total black population lived in the South with nearly half in rural areas; two out of every five African Americans worked as farmers, sharecroppers, or farm laborers. In the three decades encompassing the Second World War and its aftermath, black migrants poured out of the south in an ever-expanding tide fleeing racial violence and in search of higher wages and living standards of major metropolitan areas. The 1950s census documented that in the previous ten years "more persons moved from rural to urban areas than in any previous decade."[8] Between 1950 and 1960, over 1.6 million people migrated north and westward, to be followed by another 1.5 million in the subsequent decade.[9] By 1970, more than half of the African American population had settled outside the South with over 75 percent residing in cities.[10] The force of this internal migration transformed the United States leaving its deepest impression on West Coast cities such as Oakland, California, that historically possessed small black populations.[11]

James Gregory's recent book incorporates the diaspora concept into his understanding of internal migrations that he identifies as "one of the most seriously underanalzyed issues of twentieth-century American historiography."[12] In *The Southern Diaspora: How the Great Migration of Black and White Southerners Transformed America,* Gregory notes that an important motivation for the turn to diaspora is frustration over traditional migration studies' tendency to focus solely on causation rather than on the consequences and effects of mass population movement. His answer is to move beyond "the old push/pull conundrum" and to resurrect an older theory of migration that understands it as "a fundamental force of human history." In the context of postwar American and African American historiography, the importance of the diaspora concept is twofold. First, it interrupts the tendency toward American exceptionalism by encouraging historians to think about the links between "internal and transnational migration," while also endowing the story with a new gravity and dynamism.

Gregory muses, "A book about migration invites sleep. Diasporas have life and movement and power." [13]

Although the groundbreaking scholarship of Kim Butler and Brent Edwards focuses on transnational migration, many of their insights are applicable to the study of internal diaspora. Butler has argued for reorienting diaspora studies from focusing on individual groups to the social dynamics that produce them. "Rather than being viewed as an ethnicity," she argues, "diaspora may be alternately considered as a framework for the study of a specific process of community formation."[14] Both Butler and Edwards emphasize the importance of difference and communication between constituent parts of the African diaspora to the efficacy of the whole. This methodological insight has particular relevance for historians of postwar urban social movements seeking to explain how the historical sites of origin and settlement—domestic equivalents to "homeland and hostland"—intertwined in African American migrant communities and influenced their politicization.[15]

My book, *Living for the City: Migration, Education and the Rise of the Black Panther Party in Oakland,* demonstrates how the San Francisco Bay Area's "southern diaspora" spawned the local Black Power movement. This chapter draws on this local study, and places it within a larger national frame by tracing the genealogy of the BPP through its forerunners in other parts of the country. Within this intricate web of internal diaspora, the movement of peoples converged with the movement of ideas. The first section considers the genesis of the idea for a "panther party" in SNCC's Lowndes County Freedom Organization (LCFO), and then follows its sojourn north to Harlem. This journey was by no means, unidirectional or linear; it entails a complex story of organizations, personal relationships, political ideas that moved back and forth between regions. The second half of the chapter provides a more detailed discussion about the rise of the BPPSD in the fall of 1966 and its subsequent evolution from a black nationalist organization into an "intercommunalist" party. With each shift came a new philosophy and set of organizing principles. While this chapter gives the most sustained treatment to the emergence of Huey Newton and Bobby Seale's organization, by providing an overview of earlier panther parties, it highlights how southern migration and internal diaspora profoundly influenced the emergence and development of Oakland's BPP.

Lowndes County Freedom Organization

In the summer of 1965, Stokely Carmichael of SNCC and grassroots activists in Alabama formed a third party, the LCFO with the emblem of a crouching black panther. The choice of symbol was a strategic one meant to appeal to the county's impoverished sharecropper majority. Situated between the Edmund Pettus bridge and Montgomery, Lowndes County remained a Confederate citadel that had faced no "organized opposition since 1880."[16] SNCC chairman Stokely Carmichael described the region, "One of the poorest counties in the nation, it was feudal. About eighty families owned ninety percent of the land.

Of a population of fifteen thousand, twelve thousand were African, not a one of whom could vote."[17]

Ironically, in Alabama the title of "black panther party" had not been chosen by SNCC, but by the white-dominated local media. Carmichael called attention to the racial logic that underlay the media's designation of the LCFO as the "Black Panther Party." He pointed out that local newspapers never referred to the Alabama Democratic Party as the "White Cock Party," despite their choice of the racialized symbol and the slogan, "White Supremacy for the Right." Carmichael explained, "No one ever talked about 'white power' because power in this country is white. The furor over that black panther reveals the problems that white America has with color and sex; the furor over 'Black Power' reveals how deeply racism runs and the great fear which is attached to it."[18]

In the aftermath of the Voting Rights Act, the compelling image of the panther and the events of Lowndes County captured the imagination of many throughout northern and western cities. Its meaning resonated far beyond LCFO's modest aim of black electoral representation. John Hulett, the organizer of the LCFO explained, "The black panther is an animal that when it is pressured it moves back until it is cornered, then it comes out fighting for life or death. We felt we had been pushed back long enough and that it was time for the Negroes to come out and take over."[19] Although the goal was simply to elect black officials in a county that was over 83 percent black, the political symbolism of the panther took on a life of its own that traversed a variety of local black freedom struggles.

Harlem Black Panther Party

By 1966, internal divisions over questions of race and sex within SNCC combined with the passage of federal civil rights law, prompted its leadership to seek a new social base in northern cities. The embrace of "Black power" ideology and the subsequent withdrawal of financial support also necessitated this shift.[20] Throughout 1966, SNCC worked together with members of the RAM to cultivate independent organizing efforts under the panther symbol in Los Angeles, New York, Philadelphia, and New Jersey. Stokely Carmichael urged these local groups to coalesce into a national "Black Panther Party." However, these initial organizing attempts remained confined to their individual cities, and never developed enough capacity to expand or integrate into a national framework.

Prior to the founding of the Oakland BPP in October of 1966, the RAM functioned as the bridge organization that linked black radical groups across region. As SNCC sought to expand beyond the south into northern cities, RAM served as a central pathway. Its roots lay on Central State campus in Ohio where Max Stanford attended college, before leaving to go south with SNCC.[21] Stanford cofounded RAM in the spring of 1962, and helped forge links with SNCC, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), and Progressive Labor (PL). Although his plan to work as a southern civil rights organizer never materialized, "Black Max" retained strong ties to Stokely Carmichael, who became chairman of SNCC in May 1966. One of Stanford's most successful political strategies was

to cultivate friendships with the leadership of various groups and to interject his ideas and political agenda, while not always making it explicit that they were being recruited into RAM. These stealth alliances were so effective that a former member later joked that RAM was such a secretive organization that some members themselves did not even know they were part of the organization.[22] This strategy bore fruit in SNCC's Atlanta Project, and became an important factor in the organization's turn toward Black Power and revolutionary nationalism after 1965.[23]

RAM played a crucial role in the establishment of the first black panther party in the north. In May of 1966, the same month that Stokely Carmichael ascended to the chairmanship of SNCC, a group of Harlem activists came together with Max Stanford to found the Harlem Black Panther Party, a little-known group that preceded the founding of the Oakland-based BPPSD by nearly six months. The charter members were almost exclusively college educated, in their mid-to-late twenties, and combined the major tendencies of Harlem's fledgling Black Arts and Black Power movements. Poets Larry Neal and Ted Wilson met with members of Malcolm X's Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU), and in hindsight, some remembered the two groups as overlapping for a period of months. In fact, after an initial meeting in Morning Side Park to avoid FBI surveillance, they met at the house of Yuri Kochiyama to draft a "thirteen point program." Other charter members included Sam Anderson, a recent graduate from Lincoln University who had become affiliated with RAM and SNCC while still a student; former aide to Malcolm X Donald Washington; Lloyd Weaver, nephew to director of Housing and Urban Development, Robert Weaver; Harlem Youth United (HARYOU) organizers Eddie Ellis and Walter Richie; and SNCC member Al Pertilla.[24]

Ted Wilson described how the conjuncture between the SNCC's Black Belt project and the momentum of African decolonization inspired this eclectic group to found a new political party.[25] The experience of simultaneity, of the victories of the African independence combined with political defeat of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) and the ongoing, and relentless, violence unleashed against civil rights workers in the south, propelled them to search for new methods of organizing within their local sphere. Wilson explains:

> You gotta remember, this is around the period that African nations were starting to get their liberation. I was a profound supporter and admirer of Kwame Nkrumrah … Africa was our ticket out of here, a liberated Africa … Somehow, Max Stanford resurrected in our lives, around the spring of 1966. This is the summer of Black power … Stokely Carmichael and people had started something down South called the Black Belt Project … And they started the Lowndes County Freedom Organization … And from that, spinning off of that, because we were kind of affiliated with SNCC … Somehow it came out, "Well, let's start using the Panther as the symbol … the Harlem Black Panther Party."

While they were inspired by the LCFO, and hoped to merge with SNCC, their link remained tenuous. Instead, the new Harlem Party developed a loose

association that hinged on Max and Stokely's shared commitment to black internationalism.[26]

The Harlem Panther Party first entered the larger public's consciousness through its participation in protests against unfair hiring practices and curriculum in Harlem's public schools. These struggles represented early rumblings in the larger battle for community control of schools culminating in the I.S. 201 protests and the Oceanhill-Brownsville crisis. In the course of several weeks, the party became involved in school protests within walking distance of Panther office at 2409 Seventh Avenue. In early September, they worked together with the local P.T.A and the New York chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) to pressure P.S. 175 at 134th to allow for greater parental input and the incorporation of African and Afro-American history into the school's curriculum. When threatened with a boycott, the school relented and agreed to curricular changes and establishing a school council composed of parents, teachers, and administrators who would advise the principal. "We have so many schools in Harlem not functioning properly that should be shut down," explained a spokesperson for the Harlem Panthers, "We must continue to insist on improvements for all Harlem schools." Several weeks later, the Harlem Panther Party extended their efforts to P.S. 139, an "old and decrepit" primary school on 139th and to I.S. 201 at 127th St. and Madison Avenue in Spanish Harlem.[27]

The issue that attracted the most attention, however, was not their participation in these schools protests—which included a range of nationalist, civil rights, and parents groups—but their public embrace of the "neighborhood school." The Harlem Panthers distributed a pamphlet out of their 141st office that argued that African Americans must "work to preserve the neighborhood school concept to the extent that the administrative structure of these schools reflects the ethnic composition of the neighborhood in which the school is located." In a series of articles, the *Times* dubbed the Harlem Panthers as the "Anti-Integration Party," because white parents, not black, historically had used the concept to oppose racial desegregation. However, the Harlem Black Panther Party had appropriated the idea to justify the hiring of black personnel and faculty in majority black and Latino districts. Implicit, in this was a critique of prevailing civil rights strategies. "Neighborhood schools gave Harlem James Brown and Claude Brown," explained a member, "You don't have to integrate to make it."[28]

Initially, the leadership of the Harlem Party hoped to start chapters all over the country, however, several factors prevented this. Perhaps the most important was the level of FBI surveillance. Since the founding of RAM in 1962, Max Stanford had been deep within the crosshairs of local, state, and federal law enforcement. As a result, the Harlem Black Panther Party suffered high levels of infiltration from its inception. By May of 1967, J. Edgar Hoover publicly attacked Stokely Carmichael's alliance with Max Stanford in the *New York Times*, and attempted to redbait the chairman of SNCC through exposing his link to a "highly secret all-Negro Marxist-Leninist, Chinese Communist-oriented organization which advocates guerilla warfare." Hoover went on to accuse Carmichael of providing "Stanford assistance and guidance in forming the Black Panther party in

New York City." Within a month, the FBI staged a full-scale raid on Stanford's home and a series of other locations, arresting a total of 14 "alleged" members of RAM. The scale and brutality of state repression foreshadowed the fate of the Oakland's BPPSD within the coming years.[29]

An internal struggle among the Harlem Black Panther Party's leadership about whether to become a paramilitary cell or more of a traditional political party exacerbated these external pressures. A significant portion of the membership hoped to forge closer ties with Adam Clayton Powell's political machine to inject a stronger nationalist and community-control platform into Democratic party politics. The Harlem Panther Party's close relationship with HARYOU, Powell's pet community action program in New York, further reinforced this tendency by providing members with jobs in local poverty agencies. Part of the Harlem Panther Party's failure to expand stemmed from the narrow social base of the organization. Many of the participants came from previous organizations and networks, and they represented more of a loose affiliation of activists than an attempt to build a mass movement. While they sought to recruit broadly, Ted Wilson noted that "the majority of us were not coming off of no fatigues and work shirts . . . we came out of suits." Their choice of party hierarchy reflected this tendency with the leadership of the group divided between "executive" and "operational" director—titles that seemed better suited to the world of white collar work than of revolution. Their total membership never exceeded more than a hundred people, and by the summer of 1967, the Harlem Party dissolved. Ironically, the density of political opportunity—in contrast to the Bay Area as well shall see—muted the group's appeal. After the party's dissolution, its members moved seamlessly into other forms of activism, including working with Percy Sutton to establish New York's first black-owned radio station.[30]

Black Panther Party for Self Defense

The San Francisco Bay Area of the mid-1960s contrasted sharply with New York. Although the West Coast regional chapter of the NAACP resided in the East Bay, the dense cultural and political infrastructure of Black New York was largely absent. The black communities of South Berkeley, Oakland, the Fillmore, and Hunters Point traced their origins almost exclusively to a single generation of southern migration. In the 1940s, California's lucrative defense industries made the state a prime destination for black migrants. Sociologist Charles Johnson explained, "To the romantic appeal of the west, has been added the real and actual opportunity for gainful employment, setting in motion a war-time migration of huge proportions." As the system of agricultural tenancy collapsed in the rural south, this population movement vastly acclerated. Oakland's black population increased over fivefold from 8, 462 residents in 1940 (3%) to a remarkable 47,562 in 1950 (12%). A pattern of chain migration continued until by 1980, Oakland reached the racial tipping point with 157, 484 black residents, 51 percent of the city's total.[31] The resulting shift in demography secured Oakland's position as the largest black population center in northern California.

In the two decades following the Second World War, Oakland's recently settled African American community produced one of the most influential Black Power movements in the country. First- and second-generation migrants who came of age in the late 1950s and early 1960s composed not only the leadership, but also the rank-and-file of large segments of the BPP and other Black Power organizations.[32] In contrast to their parents who entered the San Francisco Bay Area in a time of economic boom, postwar youth faced a rapidly disappearing industrial base along with increased school, neighborhood, and job segregation. In response to the rapidly growing, and disproportionately young, migrant population, state and local government developed a program to combat "juvenile delinquency" that resulted in high rates of arrest and incarceration of black young people.[33] One of the most intriguing questions is why the symbolism of the Panthers resonated so strongly in African American communities throughout California. The mid-1960s witnessed a proliferation of Panther parties, including the Black Panther Party of Northern California, also known as the San Francisco Panthers, the Black Panther Political Party of Watts, and the Oakland-based BPPSD. These organizations emerged independently, linked only through their shared inspiration from the LCFO. If Oakland's BPPSD is any indication, the appeal of panther imagery was inseparable from the existential struggle of migrant youth against police brutality and the new technologies of incarceration that the state pioneered.[34] California led the nation in the scale and infrastructure of youth detention as well as the militarization of domestic policing.[35]

The social origins of the leadership in Oakland's BPP reflected that of the base. Huey Newton was born in Monroe Louisiana in 1942. The Newton family migrated west to Oakland in 1945 at the tail end of the wartime boom. Huey later described his childhood as typical of the generation burdened by the disappointments of southern exodus. Poverty, dilapidated housing, and most painful of all, a hostile and indifferent school system had left him illiterate through much of his teens. In a tone reminiscent of Malcolm X's prison sojourn, Newton's autobiography *Revolutionary Suicide* described his process of self-education punctuated by frequent visits to "juvy." Bobby Seale was a also first-generation migrant from Dallas, Texas, born on October 22, 1936. His father struggled to find steady employment as a master carpenter, traveling to nearby cities to find jobs, leaving the family with serious economic hardship. As Seale entered his teens, they relocated to the Bay Area from Port Arthur, Texas, and settled in Cordonices Village, one of the few public housing projects in Berkeley. A short stint in the Navy left Seale with training as a sheet metal mechanic, a dishonorable discharge and questionable future employment prospects. In the late 1950s, Seale began attending Merritt College at night with hopes of earning a degree in engineering. As his interest in "American Black History" grew, he shifted his emphasis from technical training toward the humanities.[36]

Power of Education

Attending community college was the single biggest influence on Newton and Seale's radicalization. "It was my studying and reading in college that led me to

become a socialist," Newton later explained, "the transformation from a nationalist to a socialist was a slow one, although I was around a lot of Marxists."[37] In the early 1960s, Merritt College and its close neighbor University of California, Berkeley, possessed a thriving political culture encompassing a radical spectrum from far Left groups to separatist black nationalist organizations.

In September of 1962, Newton and Seale met in the context of growing black student radicalization.[38] While Huey Newton and Bobby Seale later criticized cultural nationalists, their organizing trajectory started with the Afro-American Association and Merritt's Black Studies movement. In his autobiography written nearly a decade afterwards, Newton claimed to be one of the association's first ten members. His enchantment with the association was, however, short-lived, and he soon broke with Donald Warden.[39] His memoir *Revolutionary Suicide*, stressed how unsatisfying he found the association's philosophy. "Disillusioned, I left the organization, but not before I had gotten a lot out of it," Newton explained, "for one thing, I had begun to learn about the Black past, but I could not accept Warden's refusal to deal with the Black present." Rather than simply an ad hominem attack, tensions between these two represented contesting visions of black nationalism. Newton argued against the usual wisdom of economic nationalism, which sought to replace mainstream commerce with black enterprise. The BPP newspaper would later fully articulate this view, arguing that cultural nationalists mistakenly hoped to battle "racism with racism" and "capitalism with black capitalism."[40] Newton chose, instead, to stress the intersection between economic exploitation and race, ultimately basing his own political alliances on class. Bobby Seale explained, "This was the real split in terms of Black nationalist philosophy at this time. Huey saw that more cooperative, socialistic-type things were necessary for black people to use, to oppose the system." Both Seale and Newton described their persistent frustration with other groups over a chronic unwillingness, or inability, to translate ideas into action. In the words of Bobby Seale, "Huey was one for implementing things." Seale and Newton continually harangued "cultural nationalists," their pseudonym for those who fetishized African language and custom, refused alliances with all whites, and failed to make distinctions of class.[41] The privileging of interracial organizing set the Panthers outside much of the nationalist spectrum and proved to be a source of friction not only with Warden, but also SNCC, ultimately making a merger in 1968 impossible.[42]

The development of the Panther's brand of armed resistance had long roots dating back to the East Bay's black student movement. Before putting together the Panthers, Seale and Newton participated in the Soul Students Advisory Council (SSAC) between 1964 and 1966. Virtual Murrell, Alex Papillion, Isaac Moore, Kenny Freeman, Ernest Allen, and Douglas Allen formed the group. One of the council's first accomplishments was a large rally at Merritt protesting the draft of blacks into the military. However, their fight to implement black history classes at Merritt and to increase the hiring of black faculty and staff became their most sustained campaign. After a confrontation with white faculty member Rodney Carlisle over the content of his Negro History class, Huey became involved in this protracted struggle. He saw it as a precious opportunity to implement a new

type of organizing. In his autobiography, Newton described how he and Bobby had been searching for a program that would "capture the imagination of the community." Ultimately, they found this through addressing police violence and advocating the right to bear arms. Soon an opportunity presented itself to make this vision concrete.

Soul Students' negotiations with the school had bogged down. Newton proposed sponsoring a rally in support of the Afro-American History Program in which SSAC members would strap on guns and march outside Merritt College on May 19, Malcolm X's birthday. He stressed that students reorient their attention from Malcolm X's persona to his philosophy of self-defense, which Newton used to justify taking up arms. Soul Students' first priority should be using campus activity to recruit and broaden support from the "lumpen proletariat"—the hustlers, unemployed, and "the downtrodden" populations surrounding the school. This action would politicize them, call attention to police brutality, and intimidate the administrators into taking the students' demands more seriously. His fellow students refused, and Newton's relationship with the organization deteriorated even further when he and Bobby Seale decided to use money from the SSAC's treasury for bail and legal costs. Members of the central committee later accused them of stealing. After breaking with Soul Students, Newton approached the skeleton branch of the West Cost RAM with a program of self-defense. To the earlier idea of carrying weapons, Newton added a new one—patrolling the police. RAM also rebuffed him, dismissing his plan as "suicidal." Bobby and Huey interpreted their cowardice as a fatal flaw that would make it impossible for these "intellectual" groups to ever garner a mass following.[43]

Newton and Seale worked hard to adapt Frantz Fanon's revolutionary ideology to the particularities of Oakland. Originally born in Martinique and educated in France, Fanon had joined the anticolonial struggle for Algerian independence. His most famous work, *Wretched of the Earth*, argued that violence was a necessary part of decolonization. The peasant and lumpen classes played a central role in the brutal process of purging colonial oppression. This idea intrigued Newton, because like Donald Warden and the Nation of Islam (NOI), he saw the "brothers on the block" as the key constituency for organizing. He and Bobby Seale hoped to unite this group with the expanding black student body on the state and community college campuses. Huey, who had mastered the art of street speaking, which he and Bobby called "shooting everybody down," frequently quoted Fanon.

Fanon explicitly pointed out that if you didn't organize the lumpen proletariat and give a base for organizing the brother who's pimping, the brother who's hustling, the unemployed, the downtrodden, the brother's who's robbing the banks, who's not politically conscious—that's what lumpen proletariat means—that if you didn't relate to these cats, the power structure would organize these cats against you.[44]

Although Newton later referred to himself at various points as a socialist, "dialectical materialist," or Marxist-Leninist, his celebration of the *lumpen*

proletariat broke with classical Marxist principles. In conventional Marxism, the *lumpen* constituted an epiphenomenal class of little political significance who lacked any material relation to the means of production. In fact, their practice of larceny, property crime, and other forms of vice reenacted the larger capitalist ethos. Need and instability made them susceptible to the forces of power and difficult to organize.[45]

While the BPP had its origins firmly in early organizing efforts at Berkeley and Merritt College, Seale and Newton quickly distanced themselves from their campus roots and cultivated their image as "brothers on the block." Newton viewed the gun as a powerful "recruiting device" that would attract youth from the broader community; thereby, bridging the gap between students and the grassroots. This duality, merging different strata from "college and community," remained a hallmark of the BPP throughout its history. Given the sharp spike in local college attendance, this dynamic was strongest in Oakland, but it was true for other chapters as well. In describing the Chicago chapter, David Hilliard likened their strategy to Bunchy Carter's efforts in Los Angeles, "They [tried] to forge an alliance between the two largest concentrations of black youth—the campus and the streets."[46]

Police Patrols

As Newton searched for a medium to "capture the imagination" of Oakland's black community, he turned to the law library at the North Oakland Service Center, a poverty program that employed Bobby Seale. Drawing on his training from law school, Newton poured over the California penal code and soon discovered an old statute that legalized carrying unconcealed weapons.

After spending the summer discussing the right to bear arms with "brothers on the street," Newton and Seale decided that they needed a concrete program to present to people before starting police patrols. On October 15, 1966, in less than 20 minutes, Seale and Newton drafted the "Black Panther Party and Program" in the North Oakland Poverty Center.[47]

The Ten Point Program took its form from the NOI, its content from the Constitution and Bill of Rights, and its collectivist ideology from the East Bay Left. It was foremost a powerful statement of grievance for Oakland's black community that addressed all their major barriers to full citizenship and a greater humanity. Bobby Seale explained the gritty materialism that underlay what appeared to be a reformist program, "Huey understood that you answer the momentary desires and needs of the people, that you try to instruct them and politically educate them . . . and . . . the people themselves will [wage] a revolution to make sure that they have these basic desires and needs fulfilled." This strategy could be seen clearly in their program's focus on material essentials. Point number two calling for full employment, for example, addressed rapid deindustrialization following the Second World War that had dashed the rising expectations of southern newcomers. For the second-generation youth who came of

age in the early 1960s, unemployment was particularly brutal and had led to a near subsistence existence in the city that exacerbated constant conflict with the police. The Panthers continual rhetoric of "survival" spoke directly to these primary needs, and laid the basis for mass appeal. Although the Panther's Ten Point Program fell squarely within reformist- and rights-based political tradition, its aims were much more ambitious.[48]

Historian Paul Alekubulan has called Malcolm X "the ideological patron saint of the Black Panther Party." The former minister had tremendous impact on all the black nationalist/Black Power movements in California; however, the BPP set about translating this influence into concrete action. Landon Williams explained, "We felt ourselves to be the heirs of Malcolm and I remember Malcolm saying we demand to be treated as a man and a human being in this society right now, and we will have it by any means necessary."[49] Malcolm X's secular nationalism, which emerged fully after his split from NOI, reoriented black radical politics toward urban ills faced by migrants pouring into northern cities. Police brutality, substandard housing, and gerrymandering called for immediate intervention, rather than abstract promises of future territorial separation. Malcolm X's urgency inspired the early BPP and led them to search for new means of building a mass movement. Huey Newton pointed to the unfulfilled thrust of Malcolm X's OAAU combined with his insistence on the right to bear arms as an ever-present influence on the Panther Party.[50]

Several months before drafting the Ten Point Program, Huey started his police patrols informally by purchasing a police radio and tailing dispatches to West Oakland. He carefully observed the proceedings, and if he noted a violation of the law, Newton informed the victim of his rights and recited sections of the penal code from memory.[51] Newton's police patrols were part of a lsarger movement throughout California. As West Coast activists began to debate the meaning of Black Power, new methods for checking police violence immediately came to the fore. A variety of precedents had emerged after the Watts rebellions. Lennair Eggleston, known as "Brother Lennie," assembled community alert patrols (CAP) to monitor the LAPD. Rather than guns, CAP members carried notebooks and tape recorders to document police misconduct.[52] Closer to home, Marc Comfort, a local activist whose Oakland Direct Action Committee (ODAC) blended the nationalism of NOI with CORE's protest techniques, had set up street patrols in the summer of 1966.[53]

Newton broke decisively with the existing wisdom of both liberals and nationalists concerning police brutality. He noted the failure of many cities to establish successful civilian review boards, and the ineffectual nature of the Watts patrols that relied on police authorities themselves as the ultimate arbiters of conduct. Instead by encouraging African Americans to arm themselves, Newton hoped to heighten contradictions. By "raising encounters to a higher level" through patrolling the police with arms, Panther members would *enforce* a change in behavior. Through resurrecting an old statute from the California penal code that legalized carrying unconcealed weapons, Huey Newton's great innovation was to make the CAP into an active form of resistance. A former Merritt student and political ally of Newton argued that he masterfully blended the incongruous elements of CAPs

with the second amendment, bravado of Oakland's street gangs, and the power of Panther iconography. To reinforce his uniqueness, he added "The Black Panther Party for Self Defense" to distinguish his group from the others springing up around the country. Significantly, Newton explained in his autobiography that a primary purpose of the patrols was not organizing, but recruitment. Blunting police violence would impress the public and attract people to the party.[54]

After Newton and Seale formalized the party in October of 1966, their patrolling became a regular activity. "As our forces built up, we doubled the patrols, then tripled them," explained Newton, "we began to patrol everywhere—Oakland, Richmond, and Berkeley." Their characteristic uniform, black leather jacket, beret, and black boots gained increasing visibility in the community. Newton, Seale, and their new recruits drove around Oakland carefully observing police activity. Upon witnessing the questioning of black subjects, they would approach, stand at the allotted legal distance, and ask whether or not the detainee was being mistreated. In cases of obvious harassment, they loudly recited the penal code to educate both the victims and the bystanders of their rights. If police chose to arrest the individual, the BPPSD sometimes donated bail. Tailing the police with loaded weapons was another common strategy; thereby, inverting relations of power and reminding law enforcement of their duty to serve, rather than occupy, the community.[55]

The philosophy that underlay these actions was the definition of the African American community as a colony within the mother country that was regularly subjected to violence by a foreign occupying army. The Panthers did not create this idea—the internal colonization model spanned a number of Black Power and nationalist organizations influenced by Fanon and other theorists of decolonization—however, their police patrols translated it into a concrete form of politics. They appropriated paramilitary structure and imagery in service of community-based organizing. Enforcing Point Number Seven was simply the first step in liberating the San Francisco Bay Area's black population. Through focusing on the issue of police brutality, Huey Newton tapped an immense reserve of anger, especially among teenagers and young adults. Black youth, between the ages of 18 and 25, suffered constant police harassment and physical assault. Traffic stops had become dangerous flash points, and a range of real and imagined offenses from minor violations—failure to use tail lights or j-walking—to parking meter expirations often escalated into police violence and arrest. In San Francisco, constant surveillance of youth inside their own neighborhoods was so bad that police forced many youths to wear identification necklaces with their name and age for easy apprehension. Like soldiers before them, kids referred to these medallions as their "dog tags."[56]

The BPP was an important step in post-integrationist black politics that repudiated assimilation and separatism, while seeking new methods for the assumption of power. The BPP did not accept whites directly into its organization, but instead actively cultivated allies outside. The party declared, "We're not Black separatists, we don't believe in abstract notions of integration and abstract notions of separation."[57] Instead, they strongly encouraged funding from and relationships with other groups, progressive whites included; however, this alliance was built on coalition rather than integration.

Beginning in 1970, Newton coined the term “intercommunalism” to describe the current ideology of the party. The new philosophy recentered political focus on “communities” rather than nation-states. It also repudiated the party’s earlier stance on internal colonization in which African Americans formed a subjugated colony within the mother country. Newton now argued that the inevitable consequence of capitalist expansion and an increasingly integrated world system was the obsolescence of the nation-state as a means of confronting power. Seizing control of independent governments and redistributing wealth could no longer be the goal of revolution. The hierarchy between rich and poor nations meant that to do this in the United States would compromise the peoples of other countries. Newton’s solution was to base political organizing around a communitarian ideal in which resources had to be mobilized to serve “communities” rather than nations. David Hilliard summarized Newton’s position:

> In prison Huey developed an analysis of the present political moment . . . Nationalist struggles, even revolutionary ones, [he said] are beside the point. Capital dominates the world; ignoring borders, international finance has transformed the world into communities rather than nations. Some of the these communities are under siege—like Vietnam—and others conduct siege, like the United States government. The people of the world are united in their desire to run their own communities: the Black people of Oakland and the Vietnamese. We need to band together as communities.[58]

This formulation made it possible to link the party’s radical anticolonial and internationalist stance with its new commitment to domestic reform. Elaine Brown identified the death of George Jackson, the split with Eldridge Cleaver, and Newton’s visit to Beijing as central factors in his shift of revolutionary method.[59] An encounter with Mozambique’s Samora Machal in China reinforced Newton’s confidence in community-based programs for rebuilding the party. Machal, a former military leader, now headed up FRELIMO, the nationalist organization that was attempting to drive out the Portuguese. He emphatically stressed the power of building social infrastructure, like schools and hospitals, to inspire widespread support. These mass organizing techniques would become the key to making the party a revolutionary force of international significance.

The ideology of the party remained in flux throughout its history that reflected the succession of leaders and the needs of the moment. Newton and Seale ultimately created a new political fusion inseparable from the particularities of northern California. The racial diversity, historical strength of the Left, and the availability of public campuses provided a social context for their brand of “revolutionary nationalism,” which advocated black-led organizations with strong class- and issue-based alliances to progressives from other groups. The nationalist paradigm was married to an inclusive vision of coalition politics in which various groups organized inside their respective communities and forged ties through a shared agenda of anticolonial, redistributive, socialist politics. A common party slogan encapsulated this strategy, “Black Power for Black people, Red Power for Red people, Yellow Power for Yellow People, and Panther

Power to the vanguard."[60] As the party matured, the term "Black Power" was rarely employed, and to distinguish themselves from their cultural nationalist counterparts, members later denied that they were ever a Black Power organization.[61] Over the course of a six-year period their official ideology progressed through a succession of stages from black nationalism to revolutionary nationalism (explicitly blending socialism and black nationalism), to internationalism, and finally intercommunalism.[62]

Conclusion

Ultimately, Oakland's BPP is best apprehended through the historical circumstances that produced it. Large-scale southern migration to California, impelled first by defense industry and the inertia of chain migration—and later by the death throes of agricultural tenancy—created a displaced population with little economic or political access. For first-generation migrants, shipyard- and defense-related employment promised a vast increase in living standards that quickly dissolved in the war's aftermath. As jobs and money flowed to the suburbs in coming decades, the core of the migrant population found itself trapped in the familiar cycles of poverty and debt. While historians of the BPP and other California social movements have noted the importance of postwar black migration, insufficient attention has been devoted to *how* the transplantation of southern populations and culture fed the political upheaval of subsequent decades. This is particularly striking given that the southern civil rights movement is taking place during a time of unprecedented out migration of African Americans. In the three decades coterminous with the modern black freedom struggle, the majority of the black population shifted from a southern rural existence to a concentration in northern and western cities. As James Gregory has shown, this had profound political as well as demographic consequences. This fact is nowhere more resonate than in the history of Oakland's BPP.

Using the concept of internal diaspora reminds us that the nation is not the unified whole with discrete boundaries between regions that we often imagine. This has consequences not only for how we understand social geography but also political culture. Mass southern outmigration of the postwar era blurs the oft-invoked dichotomy between a nonviolent, direct action movement in the south and a militant Black Power movement in the north. While the effect of "southernization" extended throughout the United States, its effects were particularly striking in the case of California, which at mid-century possessed the largest numbers of southern-born migrants in the country. As a result, the golden state does not fit easily into the temporal and conceptual frameworks for understanding the transition from civil rights to Black Power. The traditional view of the modern black freedom struggle narrates a peaceful southern civil rights movement that achieved the legislative victories of the Civil and Voting Rights Acts, only to be disrupted by the unexpected outbreak of violence in Watts. In this account, the Watts rebellions inaugurated a new era of struggle focusing on Black Power and armed struggle in the urban north. This narrative of progression,

however, creates a false dichotomy. In the mid-twentieth century, large numbers of southern migrants transformed the face of urban California, and formed the vanguard of many West Coast Black Power/radical organizations. As in the case of the BPP, they carried southern lifeways and political culture with them, and this profoundly influenced the new forms of politics that emerged on the West Coast.

Significantly, the Panthers themselves consistently stressed the importance of their southern past to their activism. In his memoir, *This Side of Glory*, BPP leader David Hilliard quoted Melvyn Newton's (older brother of Huey Newton) description of his return to the Louisiana lowlands a year after his father's death.

> And what I found further was that families were there because that's where we began in the United States. You had families, peoples who developed their own institutions, churches, schools and businesses. You had cemeteries! Out here, in the West, the graveyards are set aside from the community. But there, the graveyards are *in the community*, in the churchyards! So even in death people are not separated.

Hilliard went on to explain how this idea of shared ancestry and historical memory of the south helped mobilize the subsequent generation of migrant youth.

When I think about the influences that inspired the spirit and work of the BPP—many of which are still not understood—this culture figures large among them. Many of the most important members of the party—people such as John and Bobby Seale and Geronimo Pratt, Bobby Rush and Fred Hampton—were imbued with the moral and spiritual values of their parents; and the work that went into the party, our dignity as an independent people, the communal ideal and practice that informed our programs, all stem in part from the civilization of which my mother and father were so representative a part.[63]

The affective dimensions of West Coast radicals' ties to the south raises a new set of questions both for Panther scholarship and for the larger field of African Americans history. Recent work on the African diaspora has focused on the history and interrelation of secondary and tertiary diasporas rather than the site of original return. As Robyn Kelley and Tiffany Patterson have argued, "Diaspora is both a process and a condition that is constantly being remade through movement, migration, and travel, as well as imagined through thought, cultural production, and political struggle."[64] What is striking about the Panthers is how they invoke a diasporic concept, but one that has little relation to pan-Africanism or African return. Instead, Panther intellectuals focused on their experience of southern exodus, and the ultimate disappointments of northern and western cities. They repudiated the nation-state and choose instead to use community as the unit of analysis that linked their local struggles to the larger international movements of the Cold War and decolonization.

In addition to incorporating a diasporic framework, which emphasizes movement and change within and beyond the boundaries of the United States, there also needs to be greater attention devoted to the south and southern migrants in American history. One of the obstacles has been a "poverty of theory," to borrow

a phrase from E. P. Thompson, about black rural populations in modern life. The tendency to focus on urban, coastal elites has obscured the important contributions of rural southerners to black radical movements. The rich literature on the southern civil rights movement has begun to address this silence, however, this vein of scholarship needs to be expanded to include a wider range of black activism, especially black radicalism, nationalism, and armed self-defense movements. Several important monographs have pointed the way, including Robin D. G. Kelley's pathbreaking *Hammer and Hoe*, Lance Hill's *The Deacons for Self Defense*, and more recently Stephen Hahn's *A Nation Under Our Feet*.[65] However, much more work needs to be done on the postwar era, which witnessed an exodus of black southern populations larger in percentages and real numbers than the Great Migration. The concept of the southern diaspora is a useful one for addressing this much-needed area of historical inquiry. Indeed, one of the most revolutionary qualities of the 1960s movements was to invert relations of power, and to put previously excluded groups at the forefront, making the last first and the first last.

Notes

1. Huey Newton, *Revolutionary Suicide* (New York: Writers and Readers Publishing, Inc., 1973), 14.
2. James Gregory, "The Southern Diaspora and the Urban Dispossessed: Demonstrating the Census Public Use Microdata Samples," *Journal of American History* 82, no. 1 (June 1995), 118.
3. Muhammad Ahmad, *We Will Return in the Whirlwind: Black Radical Organizations 1960–1975* (Chicago, IL: Charles H. Kerr Publishing, 2007); Donna Murch, "Interview with Eddie Ellis," March 17, 2007; "Interview with Sam Anderson," June 8, 2008; "Interview with Ted Wilson" August 7, 2006.
4. Donna Murch, "The Urban Promise of Black Power: African American Political Mobilization in Oakland and the East Bay, 1961–1977," PhD Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2004; Newton, *Revolutionary Suicide*, 110–127; Murch, "Interview with Ernest Allen," February 3, 2002; Paul Alkebulan, "The Role of Ideology in the Growth, Establishment, and Decline of the Black Panther Party: 1966 to 1982," PhD Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2004, 104.
5. Robyn Ceanne Spencer, "Repression Breeds Resistance: The Rise and Fall of the Black Panther Party in Oakland, CA, 1966–1982," PhD Dissertation, Columbia University, 2001.
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Part II

The Panthers Abroad

4

The Black Panthers of Israel and the Politics of the Radical Analogy

Oz Frankel

In early January 1971, Israeli newspapers reported on mounting frustrations among street gangs in the capital, Jerusalem. One member told a reporter, "We want everyone to know that we are here, and that something is going to happen. There are two kinds of people in this country—a superior one and an inferior one. Enough! If our parents were quiet all the time—we are not going to keep quiet."[1] *Al Hamishmar* daily quoted another youngster declaring, "We want to organize against the Ashkenazi government and the establishment. We will be the Black Panthers of the State of Israel."[2] The mayor of Jerusalem and the local chief of police discounted these early accounts, dismissing as ludicrous the very idea of a Black Panther-like agitation in the streets of Jerusalem.

Merely six weeks later, a new movement, seemingly born overnight, leaped onto the center of the Israeli public stage with unprecedented demonstrations and marches, media stunts, and defiant proclamations, including unveiled threats of violence. Claiming deprivation and even discrimination by the hands of Ashkenazi elites, the Panthers vied to mobilize *Mizrahi* Jews—Israelis of North African or Middle Eastern descent (sometimes known as Sephardic or "orientals") who comprised more than 50 percent of the Jewish population of the country. Zionism's rendition of the melting pot promised to bring all corners of the diaspora to the Jewish homeland. But as it had become apparent, severe inequalities persisted between Mizrahi Jews and those of European extraction, manifested in income, living conditions, social status, and representation in political and cultural institutions.

Within a few years, the Panthers fractured and all but disappeared as a force in Israeli public life. Nevertheless, their eruption—which prompted great sensation as well as deep fears of social disintegration—left an indelible mark on Israeli society, heralding a new phase in the development of the country's welfare state, including new social programs and supplementary budgets. As importantly, the Panthers' episode reshaped public discourse over disparities along Jewish ethnic fault lines in a nation that prided itself on its supposed egalitarianism.

Assuming the Black Panthers mantle proved politically powerful. In addition to the appellation, the Israeli movement, comprised of poor, unemployed and unemployable, mostly second-generation immigrants from Morocco (others arrived in Israel as children), borrowed from its American counterpart several of its tactics as well as the color line as a designator of disparities among the Jews of Israel. Through this lens, the Israeli Black Panthers appear to be another iteration of the late 1960s global revolt, furnishing additional evidence for the far-reaching visibility of the American Black Power movement at that volatile historical moment.

However, major aspects of the Israeli case cannot be fully explained by, or folded into, the "Global Sixties" paradigm.[3] They call into question our comparativist tendencies to group together social movements around the world in isolation from their immediate cultural and political environments. One argument that I propose at the outset is that the success of Black Power to inspire modes of radical action was rooted in the globalizing process itself, far beyond oppositional politics. Emulation and imitation of Black Power, the BPP in particular, was, ironically, another testament to US global hegemony, the rendering of American popular culture as a global lingua franca, as well as the American capacity—evident long before the twentieth century—to forge models and countermodels of oppression and emancipation. The BPP's global charisma capitalized on the purchase the American Other—both Native Americans and African Americans—had on Western imagination (and beyond) ever since the middle decades of the nineteenth century.

Moreover, the Israeli Black Panthers phenomenon, I argue, interlaced at least three alternative globalities, each with its own historicity, cartography, and mode of operation: First, the imperial dynamics of American commerce and culture; second, the late 1960s moment of world-encompassing oppositional outbreaks; and third, the globality of the Jewish diaspora with its ancient and, after 1967, reinvigorated ties and loyalties.

At the same time, in some of it chief features, the Israeli Black Panthers movement capitalized on dynamics that in recent years we have come to consider transnational rather than international or global. The Panthers' ability to shake Israeli society emanated, in part, from the particularities of the intimate relations between Israel and the United States at the turn of the 1970s. As we shall see, the Panthers coupled American and Israeli histories together not through the multiple contacts the BPP cultivated with foreign movements. Instead, the poignancy of the Jerusalem Panthers' provocation derived from the deteriorating alliance between American Jews and black politicos at the conclusion of the 1960s. The Black Panthers most defiant move was to assume the name of an organization that the Israeli establishment had denounced as staunchly anti-Zionist and anti-Semitic.

This chapter expands upon my previous work on the Israeli Black Panthers, which explored the transmission of political language, visual vocabulary, expressions of dissent and anger, from Oakland to Jerusalem. Here, I focus on the politics of identitarian analogies. The Israeli Panthers were launched with an analogy, announcing their wish to be *like* the American Panthers or become

"the black panthers of the state of Israel." They later dropped the particularizing clause "of the state of Israel," identifying themselves simply as the Black Panthers. (In the Israeli press, the title initially appeared ensconced between doubting quotation marks, "Black Panthers.") The analogical clause disappeared—as though no other movement carries the moniker Black Panthers; but the implicit parallelism it sustained—the one between the plight of Mizarhi Jews and African Americans—entered the discussion over Israel's social inequalities. A political analogy, such as the one proposed by the Jerusalem Panthers, exceeds the boundaries of a shared ideology or a common political critique, whether Marxist, postcolonial, or other. It operates as an anchoring device (or a quilting point) that organizes—and sometimes eclipses—ideology by concretely tying together the American and the Israeli ethnic/racial experiences. I term this affinity "radical analogy" not just for the politics it advanced but also because it radically collapsed differences of history, culture, and place—as the Jerusalem gang became *the* Black Panthers.

What political work were the Jerusalem youngsters performing by assuming another movement's identity? In what way did their gesture differ from other forms of transnational/international affiliation and solidarity? What rendered the BPP particularly conducive to this type of emulation and appropriation? Such questions are endowed with greater urgency today, as recent events in the Middle East (as was the case in Eastern Europe at the turn of the 1990s) demonstrate the power of protest movements to ignite and inspire others without necessarily forming a single entity, subscribing to a unified ideology, or even exceeding their narrow national purview.

In addition, the following discussion explores the affinities between the Israeli and the American Panthers taking into consideration that this comparison itself is to some degree the product of the Jerusalem group's decision to adopt the Panthers moniker—and that some commonalities exceed (or are obscured by) the implied American race/Israeli ethnicity continuum. For example, both organizations either vied to recruit (United States), or found their core base (Israel) among urban outcasts, including petty thieves, pimps, and juvenile delinquents. The Jerusalem youngsters ultimately mounted a *lumpen* revolt, as their founding group fit the description offered by the BPP of the lumpen-proletariat ("brothers off the block") and its political destiny, arguably better than the BPP leadership in Oakland.[4] Another point of convergence was the manner in which the two movements employed race/ethnicity to redefine class, largely refusing what later would be labeled identity politics; for which, paradoxically, both group would become icons—in their respective societies. Finally, I will situate the Jerusalem Panthers episode in the longer history of the Israeli and early Zionist encounters with the racial conflict in the United States.

Musrara

The Israeli Black Panthers were born in the small Jerusalem slum of Musrara. Musrara had been a middle-class Arab neighborhood, but following the 1948

war—now right on the border dividing Israel and Jordan—its houses were partitioned into tiny units without proper cooking and hygienic infrastructure. Populated with newly arrived Jewish immigrants, Musrara resided on the extreme social and geographical outskirts of Israel, and yet only a few hundred yards from downtown West Jerusalem. By the end of the 1960s, the neighborhood had about 4,000 inhabitants. Sixty percent of the buildings were deemed unfit. Crowding rates were double the national average—four people per room. A quarter of the heads of households lived on welfare.[5]

Spending most of their time outdoors among peers, and gravitating toward the dangerous thrills of no-man's land, many among the future Panthers would not complete their elementary education. Many had criminal records for pickpocketing, thefts, burglaries, and other offenses, and were consequently well acquainted with reformatory schools and juvenile delinquent institutions. By the end of the decade, the core group, numbering 15–20 individuals mostly in their early twenties, shared a sense of aimless drift and growing desperation. Following the 1967 war, a debilitating mid-decade recession was over, the economy grew fast, unemployment decreased, yet pockets of deep poverty remained, and unskilled workers had to compete with low-wage Palestinian laborers who joined the economy following the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. Even more frustrating was that immigrants from the West and especially from the Soviet Union—whose struggle to leave the USSR became the cause célèbre of world Jewry—were eligible for tax-exempt cars, modern, spacious housing and other such privileges. Jerusalem turned into a boomtown; new neighborhoods mushroomed on the old border. The Musrara youngsters felt left behind.

Two outside agents contributed to their rapid politicization. First was a new cadre of street counselors, working for the city's Community Work Division, who encouraged them to organize and take matters into their own hands. The progressive counselors were responsible for the first steps of the group's political education. Concerned about impending budget cuts and confident that exposing the youngsters' plight to the general public would raise awareness and generate support for social programs, the counselors also initiated the early contacts between the gang and the press.

Second, around the same time, several gang members, most notably Se'adia Marciano and Charlie Bitton befriended (mostly) Ashkenazi university and high school students, a few of whom had been active in the far Left-wing group, Matzpen ("Compass," or Israeli Socialist Organization). The proverbial hair-splitting, doctrine-driven, ever-brittle radical avant-guard, Matzpen—it had just splintered into three factions—was an anti-Zionist group, whose views were reviled by mainstream Israel. Contacts between the boys from Musrara and the politicos from well-off neighborhoods evolved first around the selling and the consumption of hashish. Following the war, Musrara emerged as a staging ground for illicit traffic between the Arab and Jewish halves of the city. Marciano used his underworld connections to help one of his new friends retrieve a stash of records that had been stolen from his apartment. The two groups sometimes came together in known bohemian hangouts, such as the Yellow Tea House. An observer describes the exchange as the meeting of the "socially marginal and

the politically marginal," characterized by mutual admiration and good humor. Conversation inevitably veered toward politics and the affairs of the day. One participant recalls spending a night on a Musrara terrace under billows of sweet-smelling smoke when another activist suddenly roared toward their hosts, why do you bother with petty thefts when you could grab real power?[6]

Night of the Panthers

That February, Marciano and friends filed a request for a permit to hold a demonstration. They prepared a leaflet under the heading, Enough!:

> We, a group of screwed over youngsters appeal to all those who are fed up:
> Enough of no work!
> Enough of sleeping 10 to a room!
> Enough of looking at the apartment houses for new immigrants!
> Enough of prison and beating every Monday and Thursday!
> Enough of government promises which are never fulfilled!
> Enough of Deprivation—Enough of Discrimination!
> Signed, the Black Panthers.[7]

Official response was utter panic. The police had already begun monitoring the group and one informant reported on a meeting in Musrara in which a Matzpen activist briefed the group about the BBP. According to police records, he told them that in the United States, the BPP brings together African Americans with other minorities and employs violence, even arms, to promote its cause. The single idea that unites them, he added, is a war against discrimination, a principle that should be adopted here in Israel as well. He reportedly instructed his listeners to prepare black flags for the coming demonstration and to place nails on their poles as prospective weapons against the police.

The police brought the permit request and its intelligence report to the attention of Prime Minister Golda Meir who, together with the minister of police and the mayor of Jerusalem, decided not to allow the demonstration, a decision that would later prove a political blunder. Moreover, the police dispatched vans to detain Panthers and Matzpen activists, 15 in all; such "preventive arrests" were rare but permitted by law. From the police perspective, the Panthers were nothing but a motley crew of delinquents tutored and manipulated by Matzpen, a group accused of serving the enemy's interests. Police top brass anticipated violence that might ignite tension throughout the country.[8] The Panthers did not come with any specific demand for themselves, which was rather unusual. One police officer would later comment, "They would have given them everything as long as they kept quiet, as long as they didn't raise the ethnic problem."[9]

Even while the organizers were kept behind bars, the demonstration took place, but instead of the group's grievances it focused on the matter of freedom of speech. Several hundred demonstrators arrived in front of City Hall Jerusalem, including a few literary celebrities. Most participants were sympathizers, progressive Ashkenazim who came to express solidarity, only a few Musrara residents showed up.

A rather modest and uneventful, this demonstration constituted the birth of the Israeli Panthers. In the following weeks they would become a sensation. Political leaders, youth organizations, students associations, Kibbutzim, journalists—all clamored to host, interview, or meet with the kids from Musrara. The establishment—government, city hall, and the police—deployed a multiprong campaign to neutralize the risk it perceived. On the one hand, it used intimidation, deligitimization, and other forms of political repression. On the other hand, it endeavored to embrace, domesticate, and co-opt them. Offers were made to resolve their personal problems, to send them to professional training, to get them jobs, to convince them to join the more established, and politically much tamer, mainstream associations that represented Mizrahi Jews. Israel was particularly alarmed by the idea that the world was watching. Even Arab newspapers now highlighted Ashkenazi dominance over Middle Eastern Jews, one in particular called for the Palestinian resistance to enter a dialog with the Israeli movement.

Three days after the first demonstration, the cabinet agreed on supplementary funds of 80 million Israeli pounds to cover urgent social needs such as daycare programs. *Ma'ariv* daily's headline read, "The 'Panthers' Helped the Cabinet 'Find' the Budget."[10] In the ensuing debate in the Israeli parliament (Knesset), members of the Right wing opposition blamed the troubles with the Panthers on government inaction. The religious parties denounced secularism and promiscuity. Some lawmakers, fresh from a tour of Musrara, warned that a volcano of anger is about to blow up. Their local host showed them scars they received in knife battles in neighborhood alleyways. The parliamentarians returned reportedly "shocked." A delegation of Panthers seated in the Knesset guest gallery had to be removed when, in violation of protocol, they applauded a lawmaker as he assailed the police. In short, the Panthers became celebrities. Deborah Bernstein, a sociologist who followed the Panthers as part of her PhD research, remembers a young boy telling her proudly in a Jerusalem market, "after all, who do you see on Television nowadays—Golda, Dayan and Se'adia Marciano."[11]

The first demonstration brought new supporters and activists, including two somewhat older men, Reuven Aberjil and Edi Malka (a founder of a group called "The Second Israel"), who would compete and clash with Marciano over the leadership of the group Another volunteer was an American-born academic, Dr. Naomi Kiss of the Hebrew University, who had worked in the United States for civil rights and other progressive campaigns. She facilitated ties between the group and foreign journalists, provided typing and chauffeuring services, advice, and other forms of support.

The Panthers phrased a list of demands that included the elimination of slums; free education for those in need, from kindergarten to university; free housing for destitute families; increased salaries for those supporting large families; and full representation of the Mizrahim in all institutions. After they began a hunger strike by the Western Wall, Prime Minister Meir agreed to meet with a delegation of five members. Her deputy, Minister of Education Yigal Alon and the Minister of Welfare Michael Hazani were also present. This was a meandering, tense discussion. Meir did not hide her anger at their choice of name. She also insisted on

individuating their grievances, interrogating each of them on their life choices and the reasons they found themselves outside the workforce. They handed her a list of 33 demands. She summarily rejected their request to observe the labor of a commission already instituted to review the problem of destitute youths. We have been dealing with the problem, don't think you have started a revolution, she retorted. Minister Alon explained that the government couldn't commit itself to accept such demands from outsiders, adding sarcastically, "There are white panthers and other cats and all kind of associations."[12] Meir told her guests that she acknowledges the issues of poverty but forcefully rejects the notion of discrimination, giving as a counterexample the fact that her daughter married a Yemenite Jew and her niece a Tunisian.

On May 1971, the group led a large demonstration known as the Night of the Panthers in the downtown Jerusalem's Davidka Square. A banner declared, "Join the Black Panther Rebellion, The Rebellion of the Sephardim." Skirmishes and outright clashes with the police broke out when demonstrators began marching toward another major site, Zion Square. The police arrested over one hundred rioters and bystanders. A water cannon sprayed the demonstrators with jets of water dyed green. Several instances of police brutality were documented.[13] Close to midnight, three Molotov bottles were hurled and one person was slightly injured. The government then pressured the Panthers to join the establishment-approved, Alliance of Moroccan Immigrants. The Panthers relented, only temporarily, so that their jailed comrades would be released.

Political Party

In their first year of operation the Panthers initiated roughly a dozen, mostly small demonstrations in the capitol and elsewhere. Sporadic Panther protests continued for several years. Activists and leaders came in and out of detention centers and sometimes had to go underground, communicating with their public through clandestinely circulated leaflets and flyers. The largest demonstration, in August 1971, had some 7,000 participants. Placards declared, "Away with Spiritual Oppression," "Abolition of Disparities—or—Abolition of the Government," "Down with the Government of Discrimination," and "Herzl [the father of modern Zionism] Where is Your Vision?" Demonstrators carried and then burned a black coffin as well as a caricature of Golda Meir with a pair of wings on her back. The caption read, "Golda Golda Fly Away." Downtown Jerusalem remained paralyzed for hours. The police was tipped off that the Panthers are preparing clubs and even intended on breaking into the Bank of Israel building. Policemen forcefully dispersed the crowd. Demonstrators countered by hurling stones. Twenty-one policemen and many others were injured, with twenty-four demonstrators placed under arrest. [14]

In early 1973, the Black Panthers resolved to run for the national elections in alliance with Knesset member Shalom Cohen, a veteran progressive journalist, under the banner, "The Black Panthers-Israeli Democrats." A rival faction established the "Real Panthers" party. The Cohen-led party won three seats in

the executive committee of the national trade union federation, the Histadrut. However, in the general elections—delayed because of the October 1973 war—it received only 11,700 votes (0.8% of the electorate), not enough to gain a seat in the Knesset. The war shelved social inequality to the bottom of the national agenda.

The Panthers registered as a nonprofit association and began the drive to organize cells for a national organization. Despite early impression of action and agility, the Panthers faced repressive measures as well as endemic internal difficulties. They did not have the experience and skills to mobilize a mass movement. Further crippling the group's ability to sustain a full-fledged political movement were internal struggles over leadership, confusion about methods of organization, and deep suspicions over collaboration with the police and financial matters.[15] Though sympathetic to the Panthers, many Mizrahi Israelis harbored misgivings concerning the group's links with the far Left as well as its association with violence, which in comparison to the American scene was in fact exceptionally mild.[16] Splinter groups continued to carry the Panthers moniker throughout the mid-1970s. In January 1974, the impoverished Hatikva neighborhood of Tel Aviv provided the setting for a large demonstration, which concluded with hours of clashes with the police. That year, Bitton was sentenced to prison for assaulting a policeman, which prompted hunger strikes and demonstrations. He went underground for a time. The following year, the Panthers held their first general convention, but with exceptionally modest results.

In 1977, Bitton joined the communist party Hadash. For the next 15 years, he would represent the party in the Israeli Knesset. Marciano served as a lawmaker for about a year on behalf of a Zionist Left party, Sheli (Peace for Israel). Others found political homes in different corners of the political spectrum. Ironically, the Panthers' eruption contributed to the ascendance of the political Right in Israel as it widened the gap between the labor party and its poor, Mizrahi constituency. In 1977, the Likkud leader Menachem Begin would become the prime minister. By the 1980s, new political movements vied to represent the discontent Mizrahim, most successfully the ultra-orthodox religious party Shas.[17]

Nevertheless, the Panthers' protest inspired a new discussion about social inequality and for a while this issue would be identified as "the problems raised by the Pantherim." Without extraordinary effort they were somehow able to raise to the surface of public consciousness social fractures that were widely felt but rarely addressed publicly. Hundreds of millions of Israeli pounds were devoted to additional housing projects. The government initiated remedial Head-Start-style educational programs.[18]

A glimpse into the aging Israeli leadership's anxiety in the wake of the Panthers' revolt is provided by a letter Yitzchak Olshan, former president of the Israeli Supreme Court, wrote privately to the retired prime minister David Ben Gurion. Olshan railed against what he termed the "horrendous propaganda" over alleged anti-Sephardic discrimination. He reminded Ben-Gurion of the prophet Isaiah's ominous warning, "Your destroyers and devastators will depart from you." In a less ominous tone, Olshan proposed that the next Israeli president (a largely ceremonial position) would be a non-Ashkenazi. [19]

A Few Comparisons

The BBP and the Israeli Black Panthers differed substantially in size, practices, and means. One common experience, however, was the radicalizing effect engendered by endless friction with law enforcement.[20] The Israeli Panthers complained bitterly about being harassed and humiliated by police officers throughout their adolescence and early adulthood. The police continued to target them as a movement, subjecting demonstrators and detainees to excessive force and unleashing other, some clearly illegal, means to disperse the group. It implanted informants, confiscated leaflets, harassed, and, at a certain point, closed down the neighborhood printing plant, which generated the Panthers' publications. Intelligence work amounted to political surveillance. The police informant Yacov Elbaz, who joined the group after the first demonstration, gave his handlers detailed accounts of conversations between the Panthers and leaders on both sides of the political spectrum. Most astounding, the police kept a full account of the conversation between Prime Minister Meir and the Panthers, as Elbaz was one of the delegates to the meeting. The police had little qualms about the methods it unleashed for they continued to view the Panthers as lowly, petty criminals and refused to accept that the youngsters from Musrara had become political subjects. Police reports prefaced the listing of Panthers' names with their prior criminal offenses. Marciano and Bitton were, therefore, burglars and thieves, and Aberjil, a pimp and drug dealer. Conversely, police brass also partook in the efforts of co-opting the Panthers, finding work for a few and even providing gratis tickets for public events. (The BPP were not subjected to much, if any, coddling at the hands of the American political establishment.)

Unlike the American case, however, most ordinary policemen in Israel as well as many officers came from the same ethnic and underprivileged background as the Panthers. The minister of the police himself was an Iraqi-born Jew, Moshe Hillel (this back seat cabinet position had been traditionally given to a Mizrahi Jew as part of the ethnic arrangements that typified the labor hegemony in the early years of the state). After the permit for their first demonstration was denied, the Panthers labeled Hillel the "Black collaborator." What right do you have, they asked in a leaflet, to deny members of your own ethnic community to demonstrate for rights that you already received because of your "Ashkenazicization?" "Why are members of Golda's ethnic community allowed to demonstrate for Soviet Jews and we are not permitted to say a word about our condition?" Despite scuffles with the police, the Panthers never embraced the idea and slogan of "self-defense."[21] They could not possibly have access to weapons, nor did the police ever use firearms against them.

Even more than police brutality, the Panthers found oppressive the inability to disassociate themselves from their criminal past, their ineradicable "mark of Cain." One consequence was that they were deemed unfit to serve in the military. (Some of those who were enlisted were discharged before concluding their terms for behavioral problems.). In a nation in which military service is an obligatory rite of passage, the status of being nonveterans made it doubly difficult for them to obtain jobs. Employers connoted the absence of military service with

criminality. It would have surely surprised the BPP to find out that one of the demands put forth by the Jerusalem group was to lower the bar for military service. Indeed, in the following year the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) launched programs to induct and train "marginal youth," previously considered subpar for enlistment. The Panthers argued for the abolition of institutions for juvenile delinquents and the establishment of vocational and agricultural boarding schools in their place as well as criminal record amnesty policy that would allow former criminals and felons to embark on productive lives. In the meeting with Meir, Aberjil proposed somewhat opaquely, "We shall erase the past of those who had a *past*." The Panthers never glorified their criminal past—or ever employed the term *lumpen*—instead blamed the ethnic gap, and the state, for pushing individuals toward crime.

Like their American namesakes, the Israeli panthers formulated a platform of social programs in the form of a list (there were in fact a few lists) that encompassed housing, education, prison reform, and similar measures. They also tried their hands at organizing a grassroots distribution of welfare. Shortly before Passover (1972), the group received some funds from wealthy Sephardim and distributed a hundred gift coupons for the purchase of food in one of the city's supermarkets. They also obtained large amounts of chicken, eggs, and other basic commodities, which they allocated directly to poor families.[22]

Twice they grabbed headlines with acts of social justice vigilantism. One morning, the residents of the affluent neighborhood Rehavia woke up to discover that the milk bottles delivered daily to their doorsteps were gone. Hours later, the Panthers were seen giving away free bottles of milk in a Jerusalem slum. In December 1975, a group of Panthers, together with a few university students, broke into the warehouse of the Shemen company and removed crates of olive oil, which had not been available in the shops for weeks. The Panthers claimed Shemen had been hoarding its products to increase profits. Again, they gave "free" bottles of oil to impoverished families.[23]

Both the Israeli Panthers and the BPP initially eschewed electoral politics—the Israelis never used "party" in their title—but later on decided to interject themselves into local (East Bay) and national (Israel) politics. Similarly, their respective narratives highlight the interplay, in the lifespan of a social movement, between the specific locale, where it had first emerged, and its efforts to forge and sustain a national apparatus. Despite the ambition to spawn a national organization, the Jerusalem group repeatedly retreated to Jerusalem, and more specifically Musrara, which continued to serve as its most loyal base.

Both the BBP and the Israeli Panthers practiced the politics of the spectacle—or the politics of the jolt—and honed a visual grammar of protest particularly adept to the fundamentals of late twentieth-century modern public sphere, especially the centrality of television as a medium for the transmission of images and short, immediately legible, political messages. Television was introduced to Israel only three years before the advent of the Panthers. It was *their* medium and a vehicle for many of their public actions, demonstrations, and marches. In the American scene, marches were more of a civil rights tool than a BPP tactic. Some

in Israel blamed television and the media in general for the Panthers phenomenon. One member of Knesset warned, "Television brought the U.S. to the edge of destruction by highlighting negative phenomena."[24]

Most importantly, perhaps, television and still images communicated affect, anger, rage, and defiance. Staging the revolt of the Israeli lumpen, the Panthers' public appearances violated norms of respectability and good conduct. They did not don uniforms of any kind, certainly not berets and leather jackets, because such revolutionary militarism would have seemed out of place in Israel. However, they gave visibility to a transgressive mode of being—habitually unkempt, loud, shouting crude expressions—that was all too familiar in daily street life but inimical to the rules of public institutions or mediated public exchange in the press or over the radio. Their disrespect targeted not just the Ashkenazi establishment but also the traditional leadership of Mizrahim in Israel, whom the Panthers perceived to be excessively deferential.

Meeting with Golda Meir, Aberjil lashed at her that she was not telling the truth. She was outraged. He had to apologize. Another delegate told her about the horror of juvenile reformatory, using the Israeli equivalent of the f-word to describe a rape of a boy by a jail guard. Meir seemed genuinely rattled by the information as well as by the blunt manner in which it was delivered, asking, "Did it happen in Israel?" When a few days after the Nights of the Panthers Shaul Ben Simhon, a leader of the mainstream, Alliance of Moroccan Immigrants, sought to clear the atmosphere by suggesting to Meir in public, "After all they are just a bunch of nice youths"—she strongly demurred:

> My dear friend [turning to Ben Simhon], they are not nice. I met with them. Many are angry with me for inviting them. They claim I gave them prestige. I am not sorry. As long as I hadn't spoken with them, I couldn't know what they were like. They were good boys once, some of them still will be—but some won't any more— How can a hand be raised in the state of Israel to throw a Molotov cocktail at a Jew? Whoever does that is not nice.[25]

Arguably, Meir was right. The Panthers did not want to be nice (the original Hebrew word, *nechmadim*, also denotes affable or even cute). But this off the cuff quip, "they are not nice," would come to haunt Meir as well as her memory in collective Israeli consciousness for decades to come, as it marked her a condescending leader out of touch with the Israeli masses. Meir became a target for Panthers' mockery, and their constant ridiculing of her coincided with their quest to reclaim masculinity, an ambition they shared with BPP rank and file. When women were involved in the Panthers, it was usually in marginal positions.

Ultimately, the main historical role of the Panthers was to articulate dissent and to expose publicly fissures in Israeli unity. They were—employing a famous title of a BPP anthology—Panthers who *speak*—and importantly, speak in public.[26] Their rise eventuated a moment of social discovery, introducing middle-class Israel to lingering destitution. One tactic was to bring journalists (both domestic and international) to visit Musrara to document its tiny, damp,

and overcrowded living spaces. Another was the public testimony of life in poverty, personal narratives that Panthers were expected to share, especially in the early stages of the movement. A third domain was public rhetoric either through the phrasing of banners, flyers, leaflets, and the Panthers' sporadic publications, or media interviews, speaking to different government and civil society forums, and incendiary speeches delivered during rallies and demonstrations. Leaders proved effective orators with increasing sophistication in addressing specific issues, each developing his own style for communicating with audiences.

Before they became Black Panthers, members of the core group were not politically aware. Their ties with the Marxist Matzpen helped mold the foundations of their ideological stance. The politicos convinced the Musrara youngsters that their predicament was engrained in the larger power structure of Israeli society. The Left activists also aided with crafting the "Enough!" leaflet and other proclamations. However, relationships between the two constituencies were unstable and sometimes tenuous. Publicly, the Panthers hid and even outright denied their links with the Left, claiming to represent only the poor and (initially) to shy away from politics altogether. In their publications, they even mocked Matzpen and other miniscule Left organizations for their esoteric character and failure to inspire a significant following among the disaffected. At one point, Matzpen activists were beaten out of a Panthers' meeting. Nevertheless, Matzpen and other radical splinters continued to volunteer ideological and other types of assistance at critical points.

Leaders arrived at somewhat divergent political viewpoints. A few, such as Kokhavi Shemesh—another latecomer—perceived their campaign to be part of a much-needed regime change in Israel. He said, "You can't frighten us with the destruction of the State, because we don't feel that we are partners in it."[27] Early on, Shemesh also identified with the Palestinian struggle and saw himself an Arab Jew, challenging the Israeli occupation of Arab territories. Most of the Panthers, however, preferred to focus on the domestic scene and to ignore the Palestinian question altogether, regarding their chief mission to be agitating the masses to demand the closure of the "socio-economic gap." Marciano said, "The important thing is that we woke them up. We showed them they have a right to speak out. Before, people used to say, it's all from heaven. Now—they know they have a right to speak out and shout."[28]

It was therefore typical of the group—and extremely different from BPP's practice—to publicly voice its loyalty to the state of Israel as it was also speaking of its sense of alienation and threatening revolt. For a while, the Panthers concluded their demonstrations with the collective singing of the Israeli national anthem. Their message was ultimately that of integration, demanding their rightful share in Israeli society. Marciano famously declared, "We want a piece of the pie, and if not there won't be a pie."

The language of recruitment they spoke was often ethnic but their political program foregrounded matters of class. They conceived of inequality largely in terms of economic disparities, hierarchies of status, and limited access to positions of power, also attacking symbols of Ashkenazi cultural dominance—Yiddish for instance, which by then was spoken infrequently and almost

exclusively by an older population or ultra-Orthodox Jews. Certainly, exchanges between European Jews and Asian/North African Jews featured familiar characteristics of the West/East encounter, including accents of orientalist erotic fascination as well as orientalist disdain and prejudice. For the Panthers, however, this cultural and what they at times referred to as "spiritual" deprivation constituted an affront to their honor; they rarely, if at all, detailed their sense of what constitutes Mizrahi culture.

Conversely, the language of class struggle, workers' rights, and even anti-capitalism was rather muted in their rhetoric, in part because the hegemony they militated again—especially the old guard of the labor party and their subsidiary trade unions—already claimed this vocabulary and those ideals as their own. The moniker "Black Panthers" provided, therefore, an enormously useful tool to slash through this ideological maze by resignifying class and ethnicity in a novel way. (To some extent, the reconfiguration of Marxist-driven class ideology, decolonization, and racial emancipation was also a contribution made by the BPP.)

Rather than the color "black," it was the figure of the panther that facilitated the articulation of political dissent. The panther stood for masculinity, action, stealth, and aggression. It became a signifier for a certain attitude, often labeled *pantherism*. One Haifa judge reportedly told a female defendant who spoke out of turn, "I won't allow you to pantherize [sic] in this courtroom." The panther also represented the disaffected, regardless of descent, otherwise denoted in Israeli parlance as the screwed-up or screwed-over. Thus pressured by Meir to reveal the extent of the Israeli Panthers' contacts with BPP, Aberjil said, "It could be the case that we have forty percent of their ideology, that they also have been deprived, 'screwed over,' and the fact is that they are violent—we are not."[29] It was not clear what those 40 percent were. While key figures of the BPP wrote books and occasionally delved into ideological nuances, the Musrara youngsters were not inclined in the least to grapple with theoretical intricacies.

Matzpen's connections abroad brought the Israelis to meet face to face with the American Panthers. In 1971, Bitton was invited to an international conference in Florence, Italy, where he got together with a BPP delegation. He responded to their question about racism that in Israel, as in the United States, "blacks are being discriminated against." The Americans pledged their support, informing him that when the Jerusalem Panthers were arrested they held a press conference to express their solidarity. They gave him BPP newspapers and other publications and even one of their records. However, he had to decline their proposals for further collaborations over the Middle East conflict. It was decided beforehand that, while abroad the Israeli Panthers would avoid the Palestinian question.[30] With the exception of a few chance encounters (Shemesh met with Angela Davis in another radical conference in 1973), no great intimacy ever developed between the two communities. Black Power's presence in Europe (in both West and East Germany for instance) never reached as far as Israel.[31] The names Huey Newton, Bobby Seale, and Eldridge Cleaver were not mentioned in Israeli Panthers' publications. Most of the ties they sought with radical organizations abroad were in Europe, not in the United States.

Appropriations

The selection of the name Black Panthers was largely a product of political serendipity. The Musrara gang knew little about the Oakland-born movement and there were other movements that drew their initial curiosity. Later, the Panthers would be pressured to change their name, which many Israelis deemed radically offensive. Proposed alternatives included the "Black Lions of Judea," and "Progress Seekers." But the Panthers owed much of their capacity to outrage Israeli society to their name, which was menacing, somewhat strange, indeed, uncanny. The public's shock cemented the Panthers' loyalty to their moniker. Theirs was arguably a curious case of negative or counterinterpellation—they recognized themselves only in the public's hysterical response to their own self-naming.

Much like their complex relations with the far-Left, the Panthers occasionally distanced themselves from their own moniker, explaining it away merely as a provocation, a means to draw attention to their cause. "The truth," they explained in one publication, "is that we are not panthers and we are not blacks but white." In their demonstrations, however, participants continued to chant, "We are all Panthers, We are all Panthers." The Black Panthers' designation elided traditional forms of Mizrahi civil society that usually congealed around national or regional origin—there were separate associations for Israelis of Iraqi or Moroccan descent, for instance—or specific communities in Israel, such as neighborhood committees. The Panthers thus helped crystallize a unified Mizrahi identity. On the one hand, the Israeli political arena was organized as a diverse tapestry of opinion, but, on the other hand, established political parties had a firm, stifling hold on politics and public life in general. Major parties had toiled hard to identify and cultivate "authentic" Mizrahi leadership. It took complete outsiders who had no stake in the prevailing political arrangement, literally nothing to lose, to challenge the political culture of controlled, paternalistic inclusion.

For Israelis, the term "Black Panthers" did not require introduction or explication, the reaction to its announced arrival in the streets of Jerusalem was visceral and immediate. As a cultural artifact rather than purely ideological construct, the BPP offered the Musrara gang a range of possibilities for appropriation.[32] The mechanism of borrowing was rooted, in part, in the BPP's own dialogue with the logic of American mass culture. American iconography, national symbols, and myths have become recognizable staples of global culture. Beyond particular narratives and images, the principles that guide the constant reshuffling of those icons are also internationally shared. As Rob Kroes, the American Studies scholar maintains, "American culture reproduces itself, through endless variation and recombination."[33] Thus, to give one example, rearranging recognizable symbols in a Lego-like fashion, allows advertisers to link freedom or the myth of the West with products such as cigarettes (the Marlboro Men in particular), beer, motorcycles, blue jeans—associating "freedom" with leisure and consumption.

The BBP did not engage in marketing or copyrighting. Nevertheless, it also vigorously and successfully practiced the art of re-assemblage, of the political pastiche-work, reframing gestures, symbols, and ideologies borrowed domestically

and abroad from Cuba, Red China, the decolonizing world—in novel, enticing, and titillating ways, embracing as an arch-symbol a moniker—itself famously appropriated—that departed from the traditional nomenclature of either African American civil rights or Left radicalism. Associating their movement with an animal mascot, the BPP partook in the allegorical tendency in American politics (elephants, donkeys, the moose bull, and in the 1960s, hawks and doves). But the totemic drive is also a feature of the marketplace. In this context, the Black Panther symbol operated as a logo. While it evoked reaction, and prompted identification it was open-ended, spawning a plethora of signifying possibilities. (Some ambiguity persists as to what the panther stands for in the animal world itself, for it interchangeably refers to cougars, jaguars, and leopards and, in addition, to mythic non-feline creatures.)

The BPP's cultural modularity allowed the Panthers in Jerusalem choice and inventive bricolage. They took the image of the black panther (copied verbatim), the clenched fist, the multipoint program, street theater, even Malcolm X's slogan "by any means necessary," and other bits of decolonizing rhetoric, but did not find useful, for instance, the military-style hierarchy, the beret, the self-defense motto, or, at first, the idea of being a political party.

Beyond allying themselves with the BPP, the Panthers imported elements of the American narrative of race. Long before 1971, the United States had provided global culture with an ur-text—historical plots, myths, and character archetypes—with which to measure local iterations. (To give a contemporary example for this typological predilection, the 2008 presidential elections in the United States, Israeli newspapers asked who is the Israeli Sarah Palin or the Israeli Barack Obama, or most often, counterfactually, why Israel does not have its "own" Barack Obama.) In Kroes's formulation, "America has become a *tertium comparactionis* in culture wars elsewhere, centering on control of the discourse of national identity and national culture. When America was typically rejected by one party in such contests, the other party saw it as a liberating alternative."[34]

Becoming Black Panthers implanted the American experience in Israeli soil. The Musrara Panthers were uncanny "Americans," inspiring comparisons. Thus, for instance, leaders spoke of the "black ghettos" in Israel (which was a wonderfully circular expression as the ghetto itself was a term borrowed from the history of the Jewish diaspora). A sign in one of the Panthers' demonstrations identified Israel's most infamous slum (Hatikva neighborhood in Tel Aviv) as "Israel's Harlem." Conversely, the Israeli establishment employed the American experience to rebuttal. Lecturing the Black Panthers on the importance of work—insisting there is no loss of dignity in menial labor—Prime Minister Meir told the Panthers that while he was a student in the United States, her own son had to engage in physically demanding, tedious jobs.

Zionism and American Race

The impact Zionism had on strains of the African American freedom movement, especially Marcus Garvey's Back to Africa campaign, has been widely noticed,

but little attention has been given to the role African Americans' plight had in shaping Zionism itself. David Ben-Gurion, the first prime minister of the state of Israel, maintained that he turned to socialism after reading Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* as a young boy. "*Uncle Tom's Cabin* stirred me . . . I was taken aback by the idea of slavery, that a man could exploit other men so crudely. Tom's innate nobility impressed me deeply. Slavery neither crushed him nor took away his humanity. It was easy to draw the parallel between his tale and the story of Moses who repudiated slavery for the first time in recorded history."[35] Ben Gurion was about 12 or 13 years old when he read Stowe's novel in an early Hebrew translation. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* were the first American works of literature to be translated to Hebrew in 1898.

Other Zionist leaders reported similar epiphanies. Zeev Jabotinsky, the father of the "revisionist" Right regarded *Uncle Tom's Cabin* "a book which most directly influenced history."[36] Zabotinsky was appalled by the Johnson-Jeffries riots of 1910. He then maintained that southern lynching was worse than the notorious pogroms in Kishinev and that, all in all, the European attitude toward Jews had been more rational and less perverse.[37] While imprisoned in Palestine in 1920, Zabotinsky lectured his fellow inmates about the condition of African Americans, and, after watching a KKK parade in Texas years later, he was convinced that one day American Jews and blacks would have to take their defense into their own hands.

The Jews in Palestine were not free from racial stereotyping, often following forms of European racialism. A popular candy (chocolate covered white cream on top of a round biscuit) was known in the 1940s as "Negro Head"—this, however, was the candy's appellation in Europe where it originated (it was first concocted in Demark). In the 1960s, it was renamed Krembo, meaning cream is inside. Israeli youngsters sang without compunction about the little Negro who drank a lot of milk so he would become white. Until mid-century, the biblical name for Africans, Kushim (after the Land of Kush, often associated with modern Ethiopia) was often used as a term of endearment, but, by the 1960s, Israelis adopted a new civil rights-inspired etiquette that associated Kushi with Negro and with racism. Altough it became obsolete, it resurfaced again in recent years as a symptom of a (quite racist) backlash against Ethiopian Jews who immigrated to Israel in the 1990s. The Israeli Supreme Court recently determined that Kushi is a racial slur and as such subjected to antidefamation legislation.[38]

A Flat for Rent, a classic Israeli children poem written by Leah Goldberg in the late 1940s and published in a book form in the 1950s, is an allegory about difference and tolerance written when the newly established Israel opened its gates to Jewish immigrants from all over the world. In the poem, a crass, dirty, white pig refuses to rent an apartment in a building because one of its residents is a black cat. With utter contempt, the neighbors chase him out. Israelis followed the Jewish involvement with the civil rights movement. As elsewhere, Martin Luther King, Jr. was idolized and a Hebrew song based on "I Have a Dream" would become popular in the 1970s.

However, by the conclusion of the 1960s, especially in the wake of 1968 Ocean Hill/Brownsville episode in Brooklyn, Israeli newspapers featured lengthy

reports about the apparent collapse of the alliance between Jews and African American politicos. Warnings about growing anti-Jewish sentiments among African Americans coalesced with concerns over New Left's anti-Israeli positions. (Preoccupied with the beleaguered Israeli public image abroad, the government established a special agency for public diplomacy.) Newspapers detailed various provocations, such as James Forman demanding that Jews pay reparation for slavery, SNCC activist Julius Lester reading an anti-Semitic song over the radio, or Stokely Carmichael citing Adolph Hitler as the white person he admires the most in response to a question by David Frost in his April 1970 show.[39]

The circumstances that led to the demise of the Jewish/Black 1960s partnership are outside the purview of this chapter. (Over the last two decades, the topic had been the focus of extensive literature.) Suffice is to say that, in retrospect, the alarmist view about complete breakdown—as well as the idealization of the pre-Black Power partnership—were at best somewhat exaggerated. To the degree that the rise of black nationalism involved expressions of anti-Israeli and even anti-Jewish sentiment, they were controversial among the African American political community itself. The Anti-Defamation League continued to report that anti-Semitism was lower among blacks than among the rest of the population. Some Jews were supportive of the BPP and the Panthers collaborated with Jews. From afar, however, Israelis could not or just refused to recognize nuance. The prevailing notion was that the black community is turning virulently anti-Jewish and that the BPP represents the worst manifestation of this transformation.[40] The daily *Yediot Ahronot* defined the group, "an extreme organization, with an anti-Semitic character, that has strong ties with Arab terror organizations and preaches armed revolution in the U.S. to undermine the current regime which it deems rotten."[41]

These concerns represented the Jewish American establishment's own anxiety but, in addition, betrayed Israelis' ambivalence about Jewish life in the United States. Following the "Six Days War," Jewish organizations volunteered enthusiastically to assist Israel, providing both money and political currency, in the process asserting their own power in American public life. Arguably, this development was a clear sign for the retreat of old constraints and prejudices. However, taken by the fate of American Jewry, Israeli journalists and emissaries often portray a bleak picture of a besieged and threatened community. As they denounced the New Left for its anti-Israeli stance, pundits predicted that the Jewish overrepresentation in the Weatherman and other radical organizations might prompt a Right-wing backlash. For these observers, the gap between anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism was incredibly narrow or even nonexistent.[42]

Israeli sensitivity to the perceived black hostility (and to the American public opinion in general) found expression in its somewhat confused reaction to the arrival of small groups of African Americans, self-fashioned, Black Hebrews or Black Israelites (or African Hebrew Israelite Nation of Jerusalem). Founded in Chicago by a former steel worker Ben Carter, members of the community declared themselves descendants of the tribe of Judea. Carter (who altered his name to the Hebrew, Ben Ammi Ben-Israel) settled first in Liberia with 350 followers. In 1969, the group was forced to move out of the country and began

entering Israel on temporary tourist visas. The first contingent settled in the small, impoverished "development" town of Dimona in the south and other groups followed suit.

The Israeli government was perplexed. The Chief Rabbinate of Israel did not recognize the newcomers as Jews. The Law of Return grants citizenship to those born as Jews or converted to Judaism. The Israeli foreign ministry, meanwhile, was looking frantically for more information in Monrovia, Chicago, Philadelphia, and New York among Jewish organizations and established congregations that included African American Jews. Minister of the interior, Yosef Bourg, a leader of the National Religious Party, speculated that the trickling in of the black Israelites might be an orchestrated conspiracy to shame Israel in the eyes of the world's court of opinion.[43] Other officials considered the scenario that if the newcomers would be permitted to stay, hundreds of thousand, or even more African Americans, escaping racial strife in the United States, would come knocking on Israeli doors seeking refuge.

The Israeli Consul in Philadelphia asked Jerusalem to allow the group quick conversions and the opportunity of settling in Israel, for, otherwise, this incident would not be construed as a religious matter, but, instead, as a case of racial discrimination.[44] The Black Hebrews' surprise move was already reported in the American press. A Pat Oliphant caricature presented two middle-aged African Americans—their suitcase labeled, Black Jews—facing three brawny Israeli immigration officers. The caption reads, "OK. We'll Admit You … Just Don't Get Uppity!" and a tiny side character at the corner opines, "Oy Vey, There Goes the Kibbutz."[45] However, the Israelites refused to convert and their situation became even more complicated after they renounced their American citizenship.

(Some Black Israelites were deported or denied entry, but others remained in Dimona and, today, in other Israeli locales. The community has grown—it is currently about 5,000 strong—and only recently was granted full resident status, a few young members even serve in the Israeli military, and a musical group has represented Israel in international competitions. Together with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, they recently set up a conflict resolution center in Dimona to teach nonviolence and reconciliation.)

The Israeli alarm facing the other African American invasions—the symbolic naming of the Musrara gang after the BPP—was mixed with opprobrium and indignation. "Lets imagine," wrote a reader to *Ma'ariv* daily, "that some group in Israel would have called itself Nazis, S.S., or so."[46] Conversely, the group put the onus of responsibility on the shoulders of Israeli society, insinuating that only in their desperation the Jerusalem youths resolved to attach themselves to a brand that was anti-Israeli or even worse. Talking to Meir, Marciano conceded that they knew the American Panthers supported the Fatah and "they are against Jews."[47] Marciano and his colleagues toyed with other schemes for stunts that walked the fine line between symbolic betrayal and acts of desperation, such as sending 50 people to a Catholic mission, asking to convert to Christianity, or queuing up in front of the Jewish Agency to demand air tickets back to their countries of origin.[48] None of these ideas ever materialized, but 15 men did send their military reserve cards back to the authorities, declaring they were not willing to be killed

for the state until the state helped them live properly. The IDF then had a senior officer meet with the reservists and committed to assist them and take their difficulties into consideration.

Among the chief addressees of the Black Panthers' protest were American Jews and world Jewry in general. One of the Panthers' most controversial plans was to send a delegation to the United States. Aberjil stated that the Panthers would ask their Jewish interlocutors, "are you giving money to Jews in a State of Jews, or to Ashkenazim. We want to know—Are we one people or two peoples."[49] Marciano added that this would be the first time American Jews will hear about Israel not from officials of the Jewish Agency, "some Berkowitz or Weisberg but Bitton and Aberjil."[50] More than any other of their schemes, this prospective trip was cast by the press as a blatant act of betrayal. It occasioned a break within the movement, prompting Edi Malka to leave and establish his own "Blue and White Panthers" (the former being the colors of the Israeli flag.)[51] Malka claimed that the journey to America was financed by an extreme Left organization backed by "one of the superpowers."

That trip never took place. A Panthers' delegate, however, spoke to the Zionist Congress in January 1972. The established Sephardic Community Council obtained permission for a Panther delegate to attend and address the Congress instead of their delegate. The Panthers also appropriated several of the methods that were common in the campaign for Soviet Jews, such as hunger strikes by the Western Wall and staging rituals of renaming main streets and squares during demonstrations, in one occasion, designating Zion Square, The Square of Mizrahi Jewry.

Such antics in the streets of Jerusalem received wide coverage in the American media. The *New York Times Magazine* mused about the "Panthers in Yarmulke."[52] Israeli visitors to US campuses reported home that the Panthers' uprising was the talk of the day among Jewish students and faculty. Social cleavages within Israel became a topic of discussion and reflection among the Jewish leadership as well. Thus, Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg, who marched on Washington, DC, in 1963, urged Israel to address the problems raised by the Panthers.

One dimension in the Panthers' operation, therefore, was seeking support and solidarity among Jewish communities outside of Israel, in line with established Zionist and diasporic traditions. The Panthers harped on the point that while the suffering of Soviet Jewry has received great attention, the plight of veteran immigrant to Israel remained hidden.

Analogies

Historically, Jews often occupied the symbolic role of the universal underdog or the archetypical point of comparison for the diasporic condition (and therefore, to give one example, Indians could be the "Jews of Africa," and so on). The Panthers, alternatively, situated the condition of underprivileged Mizrahim within the American racial matrix, drawing, in fact, two interlaced analogies, one between American race and Jewish ethnicity, and, another, more concrete, between themselves and the BPP.

Analogies, similes, and metaphors are the staple of political discourse and have been the subject of recent scholarship in cognitive science, linguistics (especially George Lakoff's influential work on political metaphors[53]) feminism, and queer theory. Research has demonstrated that political analogies are habitually evocative and emotionally charged. Often implicit and only partially articulated, analogies invite audiences to map for themselves the structural affinity between the "source" or "base" and the "target" of the analogy. They constitute a framework for reading a specific political situation through the contingencies of another situation or through some other symbolic schema. Effective metaphors and analogies have the capacity to reformulate public reasoning about particular issues.[54] One recent example of analogical rhetoric is the association proposed by George Bush and George W. Bush between Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait (1991) or his alleged ambitions to hoard weapons of mass destruction (2001) and the situation in Europe on the eve of the Second World War. This analogical strategy casts Hussein as the latter day Hitler. An opposing analogy links the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan with the 1960s American quagmire in Vietnam.

In another context altogether, many post-1960s descent-based identity movements sought to draw parallels between their quests and the African American historic struggle for emancipation. In the 1960s and 1970s, a few Latino (most notably the Young Lords) and Asian organizations took the BPP as their direct model.[55] The paradigmatic role that black liberation has assumed in American self-conception shaped, in recent decades, manifestations of identity politics among white ethnics as well. One symptom is the proliferation of the literature that questioned the whiteness of Irish Americans or Jews. Some observers regard this trend of color envy to be a dubious, even illegitimate effort to unduly annex an *unparalleled* legacy of inequality to enhance white communities' privileged status.[56]

Other groups—not identified by color, race, or ethnicity—including feminists and queer liberation activists have also gravitated toward the "like race" analogy. Gay and lesbian advocates have recently begun to reconsider this comparison, which has been politically efficacious (especially for legislative and juridical change) and yet seems to muddle substantial differences and important divergences among political movements. "Like race" analogies presume that sexual dissidents are one of the last groups of "minorities" to be excluded from full citizenship. Underlying this assumption is a liberal discourse of inclusion wedded to an optimistic narrative about the progressive march of freedoms in which the liberation of one group paves the way for the emancipation of another.[57]

The notion of parallel identities also denies that identities, regardless of their surface similarities, habitually converge rather than exist in complete isolation.[58] Janet E. Halley, who likened gay and lesbian advocates to "opportunists looking for a simile,"[59] points to the manner in which "like race" analogies constrict gay identity by ignoring that sexual orientation and sexuality movements are unique, "in harboring unforgivingly corrosive critique of identity itself."[60] Nevertheless, they might be inevitable, for "like race" arguments are so intrinsically woven into American discourses of equality justice that they can never be entirely

abandoned. Thus, in the case of American identity politics, analogies, especially "like race" analogies, have been critiqued for both proposing unfounded affinity among disparate groups, and, in contrast, for maintaining categorical distance that makes it inconceivable that identities may intersect or simply change over time.

Across the Atlantic, outside the American constitutional/civil rights discourse, the "like race" analogy had a somewhat different resonance—although the tension between the analogy's capacity to both mitigate and sustain difference remains. Being *like* the Panthers permitted the Musrara group to import a whole set of signs and assumptions, the color "black," the idea of the inner city, even the symbol of slavery. In one demonstration, Edi Malka declared, "Have we gathered today to ask for housing and education? NO!! We have gathered to ask for EVERYTHING—because we have been given nothing! We are the fifth wheel!!! We are the hewers of wood and drawers of water."[61] A Night of the Panthers placard declared, "Where Half the People are Kings and the Other Half Exploited Slaves."

The Panthers' defiant choice of name, as we have seen, amounted to a powerful political gesture but as an articulation of political ideology or as a mode of political affiliation across national boundaries it was rather limited. Curiously, the appellation secured the group a zone of ambiguity concerning its precise ideology and ultimate intentions, its relations to Zionism, and true ties with the rest of the radical world. Elusiveness was necessary for the purpose of self-preservation but, in addition, it evidenced an intrinsic uncertainty, even confusion, the complexity of the political learning process, and internal divisions. Ideologically and symbolically, becoming Black Panthers worked on a different register than joining an established international movement, Greenpeace for instance. This is not to criticize the Jerusalem Panthers for their political choices but to explore what conditions made it possible for them to claim to be the Black Panthers, and how the claim that bestowed agency also circumscribed their politics.

With the American narrative attached, "Black Panthers" functioned sometimes as a shortcut or as an elastic substitute for an ideological specificity. The audacious, some people claimed pretentious, designation was very concrete but the identity it granted could be shed or dismissed at will. Since the Panthers were obviously assuming or reenacting another group's dissent—they could easily concede this aspect of their existence to be a conceit, a bluff, leaving spectators and interlocutors wondering. This performative ambiguity was at the crux of the Panthers phenomenon.

It is the nature of political analogies that they reveal particular affinities and possible similarities as they conceal other connections and comparisons. The analogy itself is an inherently ideological tool. For American observers of the Israeli Panthers phenomenon, such as the journalist Judith Miller or the sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset, the Panthers were programmatically much closer to the civil rights movement rather than the Oakland-based group. Miller thought that the Jerusalemites were rather timid. Lipset maintained that the Panthers were more like white ethnics in the United States and the proper comparison

should be between African Americans and the Palestinians.[62] Indeed, in terms of prejudice, discrimination, and participation in Israeli society, the Arab/Jewish divide has been much deeper than that between Ashkenazim and Mizrahim. Lipset's observation coincided with the BPP's own analogical thinking, for its chief loyalty in the Middle East was to the Palestinian cause. As articulated by a BPP delegation that visited the Palestinian National Council in Amman, Jordan, in the summer of 1970, "There are important parallels between the condition of Blacks in America and the Palestinians. The Palestinians represent the forefront of the Middle Eastern national in their struggle against imperialism and racism."[63]

Conclusion

In many of its features, the story of the Israeli Black Panther was arguably *suis generis* in the larger narrative of Black Power's international and transnational impact at the turn of the 1970s. Its importance, beyond the confines of Israeli history, is twofold. First is the multidirectional vectors of transnational dynamics it exposes, which include the globalization of both hegemonic and oppositional American political forms in the United States, the foreign consequences of divisions within American society between Jews and Blacks as well as world-embracing ties of Jewish solidarity. As I argued elsewhere, the rise of Black Power in the United States had ripple effects on Israeli politics.[64] Second, as a *case study*, the Israeli Black Panthers episode demonstrates both the strength and the liabilities of the political analogy, in this instance, of conceiving of Israeli ethnic conflict in terms borrowed directly from the experience of another society. Similarly, while the Panthers' had all the accouterments of the globe-encompassing 1960s revolt, it also specifically fused Israeli and American history: directly, by bringing the American struggle to bear on Israel's social conflict and, vicariously, through the black/Jewish divide. The latter was an intricate process that involved cross-Atlantic projections and displacements of anger and frustration as well as fear, shame, and guilt. As such, it is reminiscent of the Freudian notion of *transference*.

There have been in recent years several initiatives to commemorate the legacy of the Black Panthers in exhibitions, books, and symposia and even to rejuvenate radical Mizrahi politics that departs from the mainstay of Sephardic identity politics over the last 20 years, epitomized in the electoral success of the ultra-Orthodox party, Shas. A recent book that celebrates the Panthers as a moment of reckoning in the encounter between European and Middle Eastern Jews in Israel—Sami Shalom Chetrit's *Intra-Jewish Conflict in Israel: White Jews, Black Jews* (2010) continues, as the title indicates, in the tradition of the Israel ethnicity/American race analogy. (Ironically, while the Panthers—at times—colored Mizrahi identity black, they did not color European Jews white. They were simply the Ashkenazim.) As a conclusion, I would like to suggest that while this recent political project is certainly valuable, more than it reveals color to be the deepest divide among Jews in Israel, it is a testament to the ongoing, multivalent Americanization of Israeli society.

Notes

1. *Yediot Ahronot*, January 20, 1971.
2. *Al Hamishmar*, January 13, 1971.
3. See, for instance, George Katsiaficas, *The Imagination of the New Left: A Global Analysis* (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1987).
4. See, for instance, Bobby Seale, *A Lonely Rage* (New York: New York Times Books, 1978), 153. For a recent critique of the Panthers' lumpen approach, see Chris Booker, "Lumpenization: A Critical Error of the Black Panther Party," in *The Black Panther Party* [*Reconsidered*], Charles E. Jones, ed. (Baltimore, MD: Black Classic Press, 1998), 337–362. Conversely, Charles E. Jones and Judson L. Jeffries challenge the view that the BPP was a "lumpen-based" organization, See Jones and Jeffries, "'Don't Believe the Hype': Debunking the Panther Mythology," in Jones, ed., *Black Panther Party,* 43–44.
5. Deborah Bernstein, "The Black Panthers of Israel, 1971–1972: Contradictions and Protest in the Process of Nation-Building," PhD Dissertation, University of Sussex, 1976, 139.
6. Interview with Haim Hanegbi, January 15, 2007.
7. "Dai" ("Enough") [Leaflet], *Israeli Left Archive***.**
8. Police Report. Black Panthers, March 3, 1971, Jerusalem Police Record Group 79 412/9, *Israeli State Archives*.
9. Bernstein, "The Black Panthers of Israel, 1971–1972," 159.
10. *Ma'ariv*, March 7, 1971; Yeushua Bitzor, "80 Million IP[Israeli Pounds]-to Treat Marginal Youth Following the 'Black Panthers' Affair," *Ma'ariv*, March 11, 1971.
11. Bernstein, "The Black Panthers of Israel, 1971–1972," 173.
12. Tali Lev, "'We Will Erase the Past of Those Who Have a Past,' The Full Protocol of the Black Panthers Meeting with The Prime Minister of Israel, April 1971," *Theory and Criticism* 32 (Spring 2008): 225.
13. *The Jerusalem Post*, May 19, 1971. On police brutality, see Eli Shimoni, "Good Behavior Gets you Nothing," *Kol Ha'am*, June 3, 1971.
14. "Protocol of the Knesset's Committee for Interior Affairs," August 24, 1971. Record Group 60, 197/7. *Israel State Archives*.
15. On the Panthers' infighting, see, for instance, Zvi Lavi, "The Head of the 'Panthers'' Slap in the Face," *Yediot Ahronot*, May 21, 1971.
16. Israeli sociologist Yochanan Peres surveyed in 1972 three slums in Tel Aviv and Be'er Sheva in the South. Twenty-seven percent thought the Panthers' claims were justified, 32 percent thought some of their claims were justified, 25 percent thought they were unjustified, 16 percent didn't know. As for means, 10 percent thought them justified, 12 percent thought some of their means justified, but 63 percent didn't consider them justified. Yochanan Peres, "Politics and Ethnicity in Three Slums," The Center for Applied Studies, 1972. Quoted in Bernstein, "The Black Panthers of Israel, 1971–1972," 448.
17. Now defunct, Hadash was a descendent of the Israeli Communist Party. By recruiting Bitton it sought, unsuccessfully, to establish inroads into the poor Jewish population. Its support remained overwhelmingly Arab. Shas is "the Worldwide Sephardic Association of Torah Keepers." At the height of it power it had 17 lawmakers and became the third largest party in the Knesset.
18. For details on the new social programs, see Uzi Benziman, "Israel is Getting Acquainted with the Panthers," *Ha'aretz*, September 19, 1971.

19. Yitzchak Olshan to David Ben Gurion, July 20, 1971. *The Ben Gurion Archives* [online], The Ben-Gurion Heritage Institute, Ben-Gurion University. http://bgarchives.bgu.ac.il/archives/archion/
20. For recent scholarship on the BPP, see Jama Lazerow and Yohuru Williams, eds., *In Search of the Black Panther Party: New Perspectives on a Revolutionary Movement* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006); Kathleen Cleaver and George Katsiaficas, eds., *Liberation, Imagination, and the Black Panther Party: A New Look at the Panthers and Their Legacy* (London: Routledge, 2001); Jones, ed., *Black Panther Party*.
21. In Israel, the term "defense" is associated with the military, IDF—Israel Defense Forces and with the Labor-led prestate underground, the Haggana—the Defense.
22. Bernstein, "The Black Panthers of Israel, 1971–1972," 239.
23. Ibid., 363.
24. Police report to the Knesset committee on the interior, August 24, 1971, Protocol No. 90 Record Group 60 197/7, *Israeli State Archives*.
25. Bernstein, "The Black Panthers of Israel, 1971–1972," 180.
26. Philip S. Foner, ed. *Black Panthers Speak* (New York: Lippincott, 1970).
27. Bernstein, "The Black Panthers of Israel, 1971–1972," 223.
28. Ibid., 205
29. Lev, "We Will Erase the Past of Those Who Have a Past," 201.
30. *Davar*, November 4, 1971.
31. See, for instance, Maria Höhn and Martin Klimke, *A Breath of Freedom: The Civil Rights Struggle, African American GIs, and Germany* (New York: Palgrave McMillan, 2010).
32. On the BPP as a cultural phenomenon, see, for instance, Amy Abugo Ongiri, *Spectacular Blackness: The Cultural Politics of the Black Power Movement and the Search of a Black Aesthetic* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010).
33. Rob Kroes, "American Empire and Cultural Imperialism: A View from the Receiving End," *Diplomatic History* 23, no. 3 (Summer 1999): 471.
34. Ibid., 464.
35. David Ben-Gurion, *RECOLLECTIONS,* Thomas R. Bransten, ed. (London: MacDonald and Co., 1970), 38.
36. Michael Brown, "The New Zionism in the New World: Vladimir Jabotinsky's Relations with the United States in the pre-Holocaust Years," *Modern Judaism* 9, no. 1, 1989: 73.
37. Golda Meir was moved by a theatrical production of Uncle Tom, although her judgment of American racism was less severe than Jabotinsky's. See Michael Brown, "The American Element in the Rise of Golda Meir, 1906–1929," *Jewish History* 6, no. 1/2, (1992): 37.
38. Rubik Rosenthal, "Who Did You Call Kushi" Hebrew Rav-Milim Blog, February 12, 2012, http://blog.ravmilim.co.il/2012/02/05/black/.
39. Clayrborne Carson, "Black-Jewish Universalism in the Era of Identity Politics," in *Broken Alliance: The Turbulent Times between Blacks and Jews in America,* Jonathan Kaufman, ed. (Touchstone, 1995). Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, *Troubling the Waters: Black-Jewish Relations in the American Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010). Eric J. Sundquist, *Strangers in the Land: Blacks, Jews, Post-Holocaust America* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2009).
40. See for instance, *Al-Hamishmar,* September 30, 1970. In March 1972, the Black Congressional Caucus resolved to disassociate itself from an anti-Israel resolution passed by the National Black Political Convention, in Gary, Indiana. "As black

elected representatives in the U.S. Congress, we reaffirm our position that we fully respect the right of the Jewish people to have their own state in their historical national homeland. We vigorously oppose the effort of any group that would seek to weaken or undermine Israel's right to exist." Quoted in Raymond W. Copson, *The Congressional Black Caucus and Foreign Policy, 1971–2002* (Hauppauge, NY: Novika, 2003), 18. Also, see *Ma'ariv*, March 23, 1972.

41. *Yediot Ahronot*, June 1, 1971.
42. Debates over the black/Jewish divide, including BPP's alleged anti-Semitism were raging in the American public sphere as well. See, for instance, Itzhak Epstein, "Open Letter to the Black Panther Party," in *Jewish Radicalism: A Selected Anthology,* Jack Nusan Porter and Peter Dreier, eds. (New York: Grove Press, 1973), 64–71. Gerald Emanuel Stearn, "Rapping with the Panthers in White Suburbia," *New York Times Magazine*, March 8, 1970. Philip Foner, "Introduction," in Philip Foner, ed., *Black Panthers Speak*, xxi.
43. Telegram from Yosef Bourg, minister of the interior, to the Israeli Embassy in Washington, DC, n.d. Foreign Ministry Files, 4593/41, *Israel National Archives*.
44. Letter from Moshe Yeger, Israeli Consul in Philadelphia, to Mordechai Shalev, head of the consular division, March 5, 1970. Foreign Ministry Files, 4593/41, *Israel National Archives.*
45. See, the *Cincinnati Post and Times-Star*, December 29, 1969. Over the years, Oliphant's caricatures have been criticized for insensitivity to minorities by Jewish, Arab-American and Asian-American organizations.
46. *Ma'ariv*, May 26, 1971. For another plea for a name change, see David Giladi, "Between Black and White," *Ma'ariv*, May 29, 1971.
47. Lev, "We Will Erase the Past of Those Who Have a Past," 200.
48. Bernstein, "The Black Panthers of Israel, 1971–1972," 193.
49. Ibid., 208.
50. *Ma'ariv,* August 1, 1971.
51. *Yediot Ahronot,* May 26, 1971.
52. *New York Times Magazine*, September 12, 1971.
53. See, for instance, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Leave By* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003).
54. See, for instance, Isabelle Blanchette and Kevin Dunbar, "Analogy Use in Naturalistic Settings: The Influence of Audience, Emotion, and Goals," *Memory & Cognition* 29, no. 5 (2001): 730–735.
55. Daryl J. Maeda, "Red Panthers, Red Guards, and Chinamen: Constructing Asian American Identity Through Performing Blackness, 1969–1972," *American Quarterly* 57, no. 4 (December 2005): 1079–1103. Mikey Melendez, *We Took the Streets: Fighting for Latino Rights with the Young Lords* (New York: St. Marine's Press, 2003).
56. Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Roots Too: White Ethnic Revival in Post-Civil Rights America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).
57. Siobhan B. Somerville, "Queer *Loving,*" *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 11, no. 3 (2005): 335.
58. For *intersectionality* see Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics," *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 4 (1989): 139–167. Siobhan B. Somerville, *Queering the Color Line: Race and Invention of Homosexuality in American Culture* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000). Mary Eaton, "Homosexual Unmodified: Speculation on Law's Discourse, Race, and the Constitution of Sexual Identity," in *Legal Inversions,* Didi Herman and Carl Stychin, eds. (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1995), 61–62.

59. Janet E. Halley, "'Like Race' Arguments," in *What's Left of Theory? New Work on the Politics of Literary Theory,* Judith Butler, John Guillory, and Kendall Thomas, eds. (New York: Routledge, 2000), 40.
60. Ibid., 42.
61. Bernstein, "The Black Panthers of Israel, 1971–1972," 205.
62. Seymour Martin Lipset, "The Israeli Dilemma" in *Israel: Social Structure and Change*, Michael Curtis and Mordecai S. Chertoff, eds. (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1973), 349–360. Judith Miller, "Israel's Black Panthers," *The Progressive*, March 1972.
63. *Ma'ariv*, September 4, 1970.
64. Oz Frankel, "What's in a Name? The Black Panthers in Israel," *The Sixties: A Journal of History, Politics, and Culture* 1, no. 1. (June 2008): 10.

5

The *Polynesian Panthers* and the *Black Power* Gang: Surviving Racism and Colonialism in Aotearoa New Zealand*

Robbie Shilliam

Introduction

Scholars of Black Power are increasingly exploring its global dimensions.[1] A number of studies have paid attention to the international connections and influences of key US Black Power people and organizations,[2] and the mapping of the influence of US Black Power across the American and African continents is well underway.[3] However, further analysis of the global import, influence, and effect of Black Power across the postcolonial world must pay more attention to the various ways in which its postcolonies have been inserted into global hierarchies of colonial and racial orders. In this respect, attention must also be paid to the particular lived experiences of the protagonists who have in various ways heard and interpreted the call to Black Power. This sensitivity is especially important when accounting for the influence of Black Power on colonized and/or oppressed groups that do not directly share an African heritage.[4]

Even within the US context it is clear, for example, that Red Power emerged from pasts, traditions of thought, and experiences of dispossession particular to First Nations,[5] despite being contemporaneous to and in many ways cognate to Black Power, and despite sharing the weight of FBI oppression.[6] Such considerations bring to light the centrality—and I would add global significance—of *settler* colonialism for the further study of Black Power. Under settler colonialism, the dispossession of land from indigenous peoples and its genocidal effect exists prior to and parallel to the exploitation of peoples based on racial exclusion from and discrimination within the civic sphere. This means that in most societies born from settler colonialism there exists distinct—albeit intimately

related—sedimentations of land dispossession and labor exploitation that form the uneven ground of white supremacist rule in thought and practice. While intimately linked, both with regard to the governance and mixing of oppressed peoples, colonialism and racism are nevertheless distinct.

Therefore, when understanding white supremacism as a technology of rule in societies born out of settler colonialism, it is not enough to focus only upon the racism that inheres in labor exploitation and social discrimination.[7] This recognition is evident in at least the rhetoric of many US Black Power activists. But other settler-colony contexts seem to have impelled a deeper grappling with this challenge. For example, the indigenous Australian Black Power movement addressed land dispossession, labor exploitation, and racial discrimination within their program because they suffered directly from all.[8] This is where the articulations of Black Power in Aotearoa New Zealand are instructive, not just on their own merit, but also with regards to how they might enrich understandings of the relationship between Black Power and settler colonialism more broadly. For this purpose, I examine the Polynesian Panther Party and the Black Power gang and how both have developed and pursued survival strategies against racism and colonialism.

In what follows I give more space to an analysis of the Polynesian Panthers because they provide the most explicit and intentional articulation in Aotearoa New Zealand of one of the most influential movements associated with US Black Power history, the Black Panthers. The Polynesian Panthers had to engage simultaneously with two sedimentations of white supremacism: the colonial dispossession of Māori, the indigenous peoples of Aotearoa New Zealand, and the racial discrimination and exploitation that met Pasifika peoples upon their immigration as laborers from South Pacific islands. I show how this engagement led to innovations in both the Panther survival strategy and the associated concept of "revolutionary intercommunalism." The Black Power gang was not directly modeled organizationally or ideologically on any US Black Power organization. Nevertheless, an analysis of the development of the gang's strategy for family survival as an answer to colonial dispossession is crucial for better understanding the relationship between Black Power (as a broad movement and ideology) and indigenous self-determination.

I proceed by first sketching out the immediate context in which Black Power emerged in late 1960s Aotearoa New Zealand as an ideological challenge to the white supremacism evident in the assimilationist policies that accompanied urbanization. I then turn to the Polynesian Panthers and explore their application of the survival program and the innovations in thought and practice that accompanied it. Finally I turn to the Black Power gang and explore the fragile development of a program for family survival.

Urbanization and the Emergence of Black Power

In the space of a decade, the percentage of Māori living in urban areas—as opposed to their mainly rural *tūrangawaewae* (places of belonging)—rose dramatically

from approximately from 35 percent to over 60 percent. The 1961 Hunn report, written for the Department of Māori Affairs, explicated the official position on this development.[9] It recognized that the Māori population, long considered moribund, was now growing at a significant rate, it noted the increased urbanization of much of this population, and it drew attention to the need to provide infrastructure to meet the needs of this population. But at the same time the report actively promoted urbanization by encouraging Crown purchase of Māori land to facilitate development programs, even while acknowledging that employment for Māori would be a future problem.

Most importantly, the Hunn Report stated with confidence that, rather than assimilation or segregation, the minority Māori population was "integrating" with the majority Pākehā/Palagi population (New Zealanders of European heritage).[10] And yet the report proposed in a distinctly racialized language that this "integration" was having the positive effect of modernizing Māori "complacently living a backward life in primitive conditions."[11] By the late 1960s, it had become evident to some that integration really meant de facto assimilation and that urbanization had encouraged a visceral and immediate racism felt keenly by Māori youth.

Complicating but in many ways intensifying this confluence of urbanization, racism, and assimilation was the encouraged migration of *Tangata Pasifika* (non-Māori peoples of the Pacific) over the same time period. Old colonial links with Western Samoa, Niue, Tokelau, Tonga, and the Cook Islands were used to pull unskilled and semiskilled laborers and their families to urban industry especially around Auckland.[12]

In this context of double migration, the key comparator of the growing "Polynesian problem" was the "Negro problem" in the northern cities of the United States.[13] Such comparisons were used, in part, by advocates of antiracist policies as a strategy to impel the government to consider radical changes to its de facto assimilationist policies. Many influential commentators questioned the prevalent complacent attitude that the race riots sweeping across American cities could never happen in harmonious New Zealand.[14] Alternatively comparisons with the "Negro problem" were also used as a racist rhetorical device to incite moral panic over the invasion of white citadels by brown natives, from home and abroad. And it is here that the concept of Black Power really gained traction in the public mindset. One editorial in the popular magazine *New Zealand Listener* mourned the death of Martin Luther King's peaceful reformist approach and bemoaned the turn toward Black Power and its "violent means."[15] The audacity of the idea of Black Power was attributed, somewhat sensationally by the mainstream press, to emergent Māori activism through the term, "Brown Power."[16]

The direct engagement by Māori and Pasifika youth with the meaning and strategies of US Black Power came from two broad constituencies. One was centered primarily amongst university students. Syd Jackson, for example, was a core member of Ngā Tamatoa (the "young warriors"), the preeminent Māori pressure group of the time. He undertook comparative studies on race and racism in the United States and New Zealand as part of his Masters in Political Science degree,[17] and was in part inspired in his activism by the books

of Eldridge Cleaver and Stokely Carmichael.[18] For some activists, then, Black Power was seen to be forcing a confrontation of New Zealand society with the reality of white supremacy. As one participant recounted, in an important youth conference, "Black Power is to stop white power . . . mention Black Power to Pakehas and they won't accept it. I mentioned it to one Pakeha and he said he would kill me."[19] However, others argued that equating Māori activism with Black Power effectively erased its "original indigenous impulse" and a Māori tradition of radical struggle against colonialism.[20] This statement is important because it is a reminder that Black Power and indigenous self-determination did not map smoothly onto each other.

But Black Power also resonated with disaffected youth—the "lumpen" in Cleaver's terms—whether hanging out in gangs on the street corner or locked up in prison. There were important personal overlaps with university students; nevertheless, activists generally acknowledged that the lumpen youth were, in a way, the natural constituency who would pick up Black Power. For, as an increasingly "landless brown proletariat with no dignity, no mana [authority], and no stake in society [,] like the blacks in America, they will stand outside society and aggress against it."[21] Indeed, the social habits and activities of these youth in the urban setting were de-facto and de-jure criminalized when judged through racialized assimilation policies and processed through the expectations and fears of the Pākehā/Palagi majority. It is amongst this disaffected and criminalized youth that we must primarily place our investigation of the affective and/or ideological embrace of Black Power. For example, a newsletter written by prisoners and organized by a famous Pākehā/Palagi nonconformist, Tim Shadbolt, spent several pages examining the Black Panthers and Black Power. Following this exposition was an article written by an inmate agitating to "stand firm and bit [*sic*] back at the pigs, as our coloured brothers in America are doing."[22]

The Survival Program of the Polynesian Panthers

Such agitations were put into practice by a group of ex-gang members from the inner-city Auckland suburbs of Ponsonby and Grey Lynn. The Polynesian Panthers began as an Auckland-based movement that would grow to over five hundred members, supporters, and family members in thirteen chapters across the country spread over 13 chapters throughout Aotearoa New Zealand (including as far south as Dunedin).[23] The Panthers were predominantly composed of *Tangata Pasifika* as well as some Māori and even an Indian brother. The first central committee was composed of ex-members of a Pasifika gang, the Nigs. The first chairman, Will 'Ilolahia, was the only member of the committee to attend university although it was his fellow gang members who protected him and supported him in this endeavor and who, in many ways, provided him with his "real education."[24]

Black Power literature was fast becoming ubiquitous. 'Ilolahia's encounter came in the course of his university studies although at the same time the president of another Pasifika gang, the King Cobras, had just come out of prison

brandishing Bobby Seale's book, *Seize the Time*.[25] All the while, family members and friends who had left school to work as seamen were returning with literature from the outside world.[26] 'Ilolahia encouraged his gang mates to make a principled decision to do something more for their immediate community than hanging on the corner. However, they could not call themselves the Black Panthers because a broad association of Māori and Pasifika gangs, which included some of their brothers, had already taken that name. Hence the *Polynesian* Panther Movement (PPM) was inaugurated in June, 1971.[27]

Those who subsequently joined initially assumed the movement to be a kind of acceptable gang.[28] But the Polynesian Panthers were something more. They sought to raise political consciousness, enthusiastically adopted the Black Panther's 10 Point Program so as to teach Pasifika families "to survive in the [New Zealand] system,"[29] and professed to be "the New Zealand response to the Black Revolution."[30] Structuring themselves in the same micro-nation format as their US counterparts with various ministerial portfolios,[31] the Polynesian Panthers echoed Huey Newton and Malcolm X's organizational mantra: "we cannot have black and white unity until we have black unity."[32] They undertook a variety of grassroots activities—some in partnership with their Palagi equivalent in Ponsonby, the Peoples Union—including organizing prison visit programs and sporting and debating teams for inmates; providing a halfway house service for young Pasifika and Māori men released from prison; running homework centers; offering interest free "people's loans," legal aid, and food banks that catered for six hundred families at its height. The Panthers also employed one of their members, Miriama Rauhihi-Ness, as a full-time community worker.[33]

Whilst community welfare was the major activity of the Panther Movement, their basic aim was more political: to eliminate the visceral and institutional racism that accompanied assimilation policies. Indeed, contentious debates about the effect of their community activities to promote structural change led, after a couple of years, to the transformation of the movement into a fully fledged party. While the community initiatives continued, more focus was placed on political education and mobilization of the people.[34] And with the adoption of a vanguard identity, more direct forms of confrontation with the exploitative and discriminatory power structure ensued. Such confrontations were already latent in the early days of the movement, taking the form of, for example, protest marches against Vietnam (placards with messages such as "no Vietnamese ever called me coconut" paraphrased Muhammad Ali), apartheid sporting contacts, and in support of justice for the Soledad Brothers.[35] The formal politicization of the Polynesian Panthers would concentrate direct action, which, again, had already begun with their involvement in the Tenants Aid Brigade, a group that had on one occasion physically confronted exploitative landlords and their political supporters.

Two direct-action campaigns stand out, the "PIG Patrol"—familiar to scholars of the Black Panthers in San Francisco—and the "Dawn Raids." With regards to the PIG Patrol, police would regularly descend upon bars that had a significantly Māori and Pasifika clientele and act extremely provocatively in order to engender a reaction that, no matter how small (for example, swearing), could facilitate an

arrest. Many of the clientele did not know their legal rights, hence, the Panthers' lawyer, David Lange (a future prime minister), helped to produce a legal rights document. In partnership with other activists as the Police Investigations Group (PIG), the Panthers would listen into police frequencies, preemptively follow the police vans, and run into the targeted bars to warn the clientele of an impending official visit and to distribute the legal aid leaflets.[36]

The Dawn Raids of 1976 targeted Tangata Pasifika families. Immigration from the islands had initially been welcomed in the past as an answer to the need for cheap labor. However, a worsening economic climate compelled the government to massage racist rhetoric to provide an easy scapegoat: the islander overstayer. The fact that the majority of overstayers were white and Western was ignored. Instead, Polynesian-looking youth were stopped on the street, regardless of whether they were Māori, Cook Islander, Niuean, Samoan, and regardless of being either a recent arrival or having been born in the country. Most traumatic was the practice of descending upon an alleged overstayer's house in the early hours of the morning and forcefully taking away whole families. There was much disagreement within the Panthers over the degree to which and the methods with which the government should be directly confronted. In the end, it was decided that Frank Gill, minister of immigration, should experience his own "dawn raid." The Panthers' arrival outside of Gill's house with lights and megaphone directing him to surrender himself to the authorities was timed to coincide with an ad hoc phone interview with a journalist from an Auckland newspaper. The event did much to undermine the legitimacy of the practice.[37]

The last official activity of the Polynesian Panthers was to participate in the Springbok protests in 1981. Space rules out a detailed analysis of these antiapartheid protests suffice to say that a mini-civil war ensued across New Zealand towns for the duration of the South African team's sanction-busting stay.[38] Panthers alongside other long-time activists and gang members were in the front line of often violent confrontation with the police as part of the "Patu (hit) Squad." In the aftermath, 'Ilolahia, with other prominent activists, narrowly escaped a prison sentence only by having the good fortune to be able to call upon the testimony of Desmond Tutu who was visiting at the time. Tigilau Ness, the minister of culture, was not so lucky and spent nine months in detention.[39] Both had been singled out in the past by the police for personal harassment and biased trials.[40]

Panther Power in the Pacific Context

Having sketched out the program and activities of the Polynesian Panthers, I now wish to examine the ways in which the movement articulated with the specificities of the New Zealand context. At a strategic level perhaps the most important difference of the Polynesian Panthers was the abrogation of armed struggle. While the philosophy of vigorous self-defense was accepted fully by the Polynesian Panthers, unlike in the United States, there was and is no constitutional right to bear arms in Aotearoa New Zealand.[41] Nonviolent (but direct-action) programs were hence the norm, although there existed a "military wing"

of the Polynesian Panthers that sometimes undertook directed actions that were just on the other side of legal. Nevertheless, the issue of violence was consistently debated.[42] Indeed, the more the government exhibited intransigence and active hostility as the decade wore on, the more activists sensed the possibility that society was heading toward violent revolution.[43] In some ways, the Springbok protests witnessed the height of such tensions with the Patu squad operating along distinctly martial lines. Yet even at this point guns were not introduced and, by a miracle, no one died.

In terms of influence it is important to count not just US Black Power but also Pasifika heritages, independence movements, opposition to French nuclear testing in the region, and Māori struggles for self-determination.[44] Pasifika aesthetics combined with African American when it came to dress code: men would wear "cultural shirts" along with the standard black dress, while women would wear "cultural dresses."[45] And while members were advised to read *Seize the Time* and *Autobiography of Malcolm X,* they were also encouraged to "read on our culture, to give us something to identify with."[46] These connections should be understood as living histories. Albert Wendt, for example, a seminal Samoan poet and writer, engaged with the Panthers.[47] Wendt's Masters thesis in History had investigated the Mau independence movement in Western Samoa against New Zealand trusteeship in the interwar period. Interestingly, one member of the Panthers had family connections to the Mau; his uncle was shot in the rebellion and his parents had kept the stories alive. His father came to Aotearoa New Zealand expecting no help from either Palagi or Māori.[48]

Such convergences indicate that, despite the alienation suffered by Pasifika youth, they were experiencing a dislocation rather than disconnection from their filial island cultures, stories, and political heritages. Indeed, the contested valuation of these heritages often formed the ground zero of Panther politics. For example, a key moment in Tigilau Ness's radicalization was his suspension from school for refusing to cut his afro. He was singled out despite Palagi "surfer" students being allowed to keep their hair long. Whilst the afro aesthetic owed much to Jimi Hendrix, the actual practice of the eldest boy growing long hair came from his Niuean heritage.[49] And while in New Zealand, being Niuean bore the stigma of Captain Cook's naming of the "Savage Island," Tigilau is also the name of a legendary Niuean *toa* (warrior) whose deeds span the Pacific.[50] Reflecting upon the source of his political convictions, Tigilau Ness believes that "the real pacific island influence in me is when you go hard, you go hard. You put everything you've got into your every being."[51]

Furthermore, particular Polynesian values informed the organization and operation of the Panthers. For example, Rauhihi-Ness spent most hours of her community work on the street in face-to-face discussions, a method of communication traditionally preferred across the Pacific region, rather than writing public reports so as not to break down the sense of pride upheld by Pasifika families.[52] Alternatively, the Pasifika practice of according respect to elders due to their demonstrated leadership underlay the organization of gangs such as the "Nigs" and followed through into the Panthers.[53] 'Ilolahia even considered this respect

to be a "revolutionary thing" because "there's all this European shit breaking up the [Polynesian] family unit."[54]

Mention of the family unit prompts an examination of the gender dimensions of the Panthers' survival program. Organizational rules dictated: "have respect for each other and help each other out at all times. Solidarity depends on how good our relationships are with each other. We are all equal."[55] This dictate did not stop the male Panthers from automatically "leading from the front." But neither did chauvinist attitudes stop female Panthers from making significant leading contributions and challenging their male counterparts. For example, Rauhihi-Ness, the Panther community worker, ordered the Panther men to attend group workshops to work through these issues.[56] It is important to note that Rauhihi-Ness had first come to the Panthers' attention through her organizing of a strike by Pasifika women over pay conditions.[57] This implies that the double-exploitation of Māori and Pasifika women (once as women, once as Polynesian) was an unavoidable part of the terrain upon which the Panthers developed their survival strategy. Moreover, received gender roles were unavoidably challenged in the very discharging of the Panthers' core duty to help their peoples "survive in the [New Zealand] system."

As I have noted, the Panthers, along with the Citizen's Association for Racial Equality (CARE), set up homework centers designed not only to promote "Polynesian culture" but also to "obtain better understanding and to encourage parents to participate in children's welfare and education."[58] However, these after-work-hour activities impacted directly on the time that families would usually spend at their church. Pacific churches in Auckland commanded a large share of community time because they functioned to re-congeal the social relations and cultural practices (including the use of language) that parents had had to leave behind when they left the islands. The Panthers recognized precisely this point that churches did "a lot to preserve the communalism that exists back in the Polynesian islands." And of course, as such, church leaders commanded significant respect.[59] Yet, for the survival of the youth, the Panthers were asking their parents to commit to alternative activities outside of this world. The seeming audacity of the Panthers' pursuit of social justice for their peoples led to charges by Pacific churches of being "Fia Palagi communists,"[60] agents of ungodly outsiders. More importantly, though, precisely because of this challenge, young Pasifika women found in the Panthers a social and purposive space outside of the home *and* the church. One female Panther remembers that "the ladies there felt they were pretty functional in regards to helping out, we weren't there to boost boys' egos, that's for sure."[61]

Again, I would suggest that this challenge to gender roles was not one that sought to dismantle but rather reacclimatize Pasifika cultures to work positively in a different context for the sake of community survival. In some ways, the implications of these challenges are still being worked out. For example, Alec Toleafoa, Panther and now churchman, is seeking to decolonize Christianity by critiquing the way in which the commandment for a special and exclusive relationship to God has tended to erode the special relationship between brother and sister that many Pasifika cultures hold dear.[62]

Pacific Innovations in Intercommunal Struggle

In terms of political ideology, the Polynesian Panthers provided an interesting reinterpretation of Huey Newton's "revolutionary intercommunalism."[63] For Newton, the shift to intercommunalism was predicated upon a deeper understanding of the global role of the United States as an imperial power that through military and economic intervention, disallowed the self-determination of colonized peoples to result in independent nationhood. This new framework of analysis required Newton to also disavow the preceding black nationalist representation of African Americans as an "internal colony." Instead, he now claimed that they existed as communities dispossessed of the means of self-governance. But precisely because of this dispossession, African Americans, Vietnamese, an so on, could be now conceived as "all very similar in terms of communities."[64] In fact, Newton's new framework cast a broad equivalence between all dispossessed communities so that they collectively formed the worlds *lumpen proletariat*.[65] Eldridge Cleaver, pushing Newton's line or argument to its logical conclusion, read the dispossession of a peoples' technologies of social reproduction as a universal moment—the lumpanization of humanity.[66]

In mind of the frictional relationship between indigenous and black struggles in North America, I want to suggest that Newton and Cleaver's revolutionary intercommunalism ran the danger of effectively smoothing the surface of white supremacy, hence collapsing the differentiated—even if intimately related—nature of its accumulated dispossessions, exploitations, and discriminations. And in this respect, the Polynesian Panthers had to make innovations because their situated position in the New Zealand settler (post)colony was unlike either their Australian or American sisters or brothers.

The parents of the Polynesian Panthers had migrated from the relatively cohesive cultural hinterlands of the islands with an assumption that Aotearoa New Zealand was the place to "get ahead."[67] Upon arrival parents encouraged their children to assimilate to enjoy the benefits of New Zealand society. However, the desire to enter into a majority Palagi society as an equal tended to foster an insensitivity to the prior and continuing dispossession of Māori (and its accompanying cultural genocide), a process that had created the dominant space for Pākehā society in the first place. Amongst many parents and elders—both Māori and Pasifika—this conjuncture of labor exploitation and land dispossession played into a "divide and rule" mentality.[68]

Nevertheless, at school—and under the gaze of white supremacy—Māori and Pasifika youth were all lumped into the same category of Polynesians. Indeed, those Pasifika youth who were born in Auckland, and therefore had a Kiwi accent, were often assumed to be Māori (as the Dawn Raids testifies to).[69] Therefore, there is a generational component to the early 1970s personal and ideological weaving of young Pasifika, Māori (and even Indian) suffering into a Black Power group. In fact, the assimilatory pressures described above soon started to affect Pasifika communities in ways similar to those experienced by Māori. For example, witness one Panthers' newsletter that drew attention to a Samoan lady who had been disallowed from speaking her language: "This is CULTURAL

GENOCIDE. These racist honkies have robbed the Maoris of their land and now are stripping other Polynesians of human dignity, pride and self respect."[70]

The Polynesian Panthers had to negotiate a terrain wherein unified opposition was necessary to the racism of assimilationist policies, but wherein the process of unification could not be made to render all Polynesian youth as the same kind of dispossessed lumpen. 'Ilolahia was confident that Māori and Pasifika youth shared the same problem: racism. Yet in identifying as a united front of Polynesians, Ilolahia was clear that Māori could and would not "loose their *Māoritanga* (culture) and replace their Maoriness."[71] Put simply, "the solution to our predicament lies in UNITY through DIVERSIFICATION, and not UNIFORMITY."[72] In terms of strategy, the land issue was strictly to be led and determined by "Māori Polynesians," although "non-Māori Polynesians" should "take a stance of solidarity and support."[73] Indeed, the Panthers took a supportive role in some of the seminal Māori struggles over land dispossession in the 1970s. During the great Land March of 1975, for instance, the non-Māori Panthers took on security roles for parts of the journey; Rauhihi-Ness, a core Panthers member and also Māori, took a much more involved part in organizing the Land March. The Panthers also supported the (re)occupation by the Ngati Whatua tribe of Bastion Point in Auckland, 1978.[74] Conversely, racial discrimination and exploitation over housing, education, the courts, work, and employment were issues that *all* Polynesians owned,[75] and here the Panthers regularly took leading roles.

As I have noted, Newton had developed the concept of intercommunalism as a way of making all struggles against dispossession equivalent, so facilitating a worldwide optic onto white supremacy. Alternatively, for the Polynesian Panthers, the concept effectively worked to safeguard a mode of solidarity wherein no group dominated over the other. This was a necessary strategy to produce a unity that was ethically sensitive to the particular way in which Pasifika peoples had entered into existing historical sedimentations of colonial dispossession in Aotearoa New Zealand. Yet the concept still provided an expansive optic onto global struggle. So while Newton's revolutionary intercommunalism buoyed a "tri-continental" approach,[76] the Polynesian Panthers hoped to cultivate an Australasia-Pacific common front, a region that also included indigenous peoples generally considered *not* to be Polynesian (i.e., the peoples of Australians, Papua New Guinea, and the Hew Hebrides).[77] Beyond that, they looked forward to a united Black Power front composed of all oppressed peoples in the "world struggle."[78]

Adapting Black Power ideology to the Pacific context had one more effect. Despite his intent to focus upon community development programs, Newton, the chief theoretician, conceptually rendered intercommunalism as a group condition defined by a *lack* of ability to self-determine. It should be noted, though, that the rank and file were much more concerned with community control in the practical and positive sense.[79] Alternatively, for the Polynesian Panthers intercommunalism as *both* a practice and a concept expressed a positive requisite and potential for self-determination to the extent that it sought to recover fundamental Polynesian mores of living. In retrospect, 'Ilolahia suggests that the unifying force of communalism had been significantly undermined amongst African Americans by the slavery legacy; and while the pronouns "brother"

and "sister" might be used by African Americans to redeem a racial solidarity, in most Polynesian languages there is no word for cousin, hence all relations really are types of brothers and sisters.[80]

The Black Power Gang: "Lumpen" Politics

Similar to their Pasifika counterparts, gangs of young Māori men formed through a precarious and reactive attempt to practice communal living on unforgiving urban soil. I consider the Māori gang phenomenon to be fundamentally political because even if the gangs did not consciously ascribe to, for example, a 10 point political plan, their very existence is testament to a basic collective survival strategy against the genocidal effects of urbanization and assimilationist policies. As noted above, the Polynesian Panthers finds its genesis in this cohort of what Cleaver would term the "lumpen" youth.[81] And in this respect, the Black Power gang can also be singled out for special attention.

Reitu Harris formed the Black Bulls in 1970. One story goes that the Bulls went to confront another gang—the Mighty Mongrel Mob—over an attempted rape and when the latter performed a *haka* (a posture dance) finishing with the taunt "and who are you?" Harris replied on the spur of the moment "we are the Black Power."[82] The Black Power are known for the relative strength of their organization and discipline vis-à-vis gangs in Aotearoa New Zealand. And the Wellington chapter (the first chapter) has especially been known for its politicized nature, again, relative to other gangs, which to a large extent is down to the activities of some of its key members including the national president, Harris. However, although the name suggests that the political edge of the gang owes something to the US influence, and despite the Black Power fist icon being adopted as a key motif for the gang "patch," the formative politicizing influences on the gang were much more diverse and idiosyncratic.

Bill Maung, a Buddhist political refugee from Burma, was seminal in encouraging the Black Power leadership in the 1970s to take a public stand on injustice and engage constructively with the political establishment.[83] The tradition of Catholic activism also entered into the mix, largely through an Irish-Pākehā member, Dennis O'Reilly, who became a gang spokesman and who is guided by the Jerusalem project of a famous Pākehā poet, James Baxter (with whom Maung also had an affiliation).[84] Key to this project is a positive embrace and working with *ngā mōkai,* a term that usually translates as slave yet in this context has been reinterpreted to represent the disaffected and ostracized of society. Other seminal influences include established Māori politicians of the time, such as Matiu Rata, and leaders in the Māori land struggle such as Eva Rickard.[85] Finally, Rastafari aesthetics that invoke demands for social justice for the dispossessed were in the formative years of the gang diffused through the medium of Reggae.[86] Vestiges of "dread talk"[87] are still audible today in the ascription of representatives of the establishment as "baldheads."

Over the years, the Black Power have been directly involved in political initiatives. Members have orchestrated sit ins at Parliament over housing issues[88]

and pickets of labor ministers.[89] They have been present at a number of key protest sites, including Bastion Point (1978), the Springbok Tour (1981), and Moutoa Gardens (1995).[90] The national president has taken part in calls to boycott general elections and has campaigned and stood as a candidate for Mana Motuhake, an independent Māori party;[91] Black Power spokesman Eugene Ryder has ran for a seat on the Wellington city council.[92] For a number of years in the 1980s, Abe Wharewaka, president of Black Power Sindi (Auckland chapter), ran a political conscience raising newspaper, *Te Iwi O Aotearoa,* that even featured interviews with the likes of Rasal Muhammad, son of Elijah Mumammad.[93]

The Black Power have even engaged with the Waitangi Tribunal, a commission of inquiry charged with making recommendations relating to breaches of the Treaty of Waitangi (1840) between the British Crown and Māori *iwi* (tribes). In the late 1990s, the Black Power was referred to in one of its reports in a section that defined *iwi*, which provided an opening for the gang to be at least considered as a contemporary urban tribe.[94] In 2008, some Black Power members lodged a claim with the Tribunal, which makes the case that gangs were a direct consequence of colonialism. Instead of pecuniary compensation, the claim demands "education as to why we're in the position we're in."[95] Moreover, another claim has been recently lodged by Te Aroha Trust, a work trust from the late 1970s, composed of women many of whom have carried close associations with the Black Power. This claim cites failures of the Crown leading to "cultural alienation, economic despair, impoverishment and violent abuse of Māori women and their whanau in gang environments."[96]

These directly political initiatives were and are of great importance. However, to my mind, they are the most visible manifestations of the day-to-day struggles over family survival. And it is here that the deeper politics of the Black Power reside. So at this point, I wish to return to the context of rapid urbanization that defined a whole generation of Māori youth who would gravitate to gangs.

Black Power as Family Survival

As I have claimed above, urbanization must be understood as one more chapter in the story of the colonially induced ethnocide and attempted genocide of indigenous peoples. Although 1960s New Zealand was ostensibly a postcolonial society, assimilation policies acted with precisely the violence attributed by Frantz Fanon to the colonial relation in general,[97] that is, to make it impossible for (post)colonized communities to live humanely, that is, in integrally social lives. Nowhere was this effect more concentrated than in the breaking up of the extended family organization (*whanau*) and the dissolution of its cardinal ethics of care (*manaaki*), compassion (*aroha*), and relational reciprocity (*whanaungatanga*). In the early 1970s, Hana Jackson, a Māori activist, summed up this effect of urbanization and assimilation passionately and acutely: "you are killing the basic human nature of the people—love for others."[98]

The first generation of Māori youth who associated with gangs had often been dislocated from their wider family/social support networks and political

structures that were centered around the predominantly rural *marae* (communal meeting complex). In addition, these youth had often lost—or had cut short—the enculturation practices, often undertook by grandparents. Alternatively, in the urban low-wage economy both parents would have to work, a practice that often led to child neglect, break-ups, and alcoholism. Many children experienced the loss of central figures in their early teens combined with abuse—physical and sexual—from immediate family members as well as so-called care providers. Moreover, the parents themselves had already suffered from concentrated assimilationist policies and had been pressured to distance themselves from their inherited languages, cultures, and values. And the child now also inhabited a directly and viscerally racist urban milieu.[99]

To appreciate the depth of this process of dispossession it is necessary to start with the fact that, even though both boys and girls bore the brunt of the physical, sexual, and institutional abuse that came with the break up of extended family structures, it was females whose subjection was compounded by the threat of abuse from their male partners and friends. This abuse came in the form of mundane domestic violence and also rape. In fact group ("block") rape, usually of women who were not in relationships with gang members, was very common during the 1970s. And despite the context in which the name was inaugurated, young men of the Black Power were generally as involved in this practice as other gangs.

Mumia Abu-Jamal's comments are as fitting for Aotearoa New Zealand as they are for the US context: "Sexism did not, and could not, exist in a vacuum. As a prominent feature of the dominant social order, how could it not exist in a social formation drawn from that order, albeit form that order's subaltern regions?"[100] After all, gangs were by no means the only culprits of the widespread racist, misogynist attitude and set of practices toward Māori women that existed in New Zealand society.[101] Indeed, women—and men—often experienced their first sexual abuse from the hands of institutional "carers" who were supposed to protect them. Moreover, Te Aroha Trust testimonies show the complexity of the relationship between men and women in gangs.[102] Some of these oral histories hint at the fact that many young men did not want to participate in rape, and might have been psychologically damaged by their participation. Nevertheless, such participation was necessary to prove their manhood in front of peers and hence ensure acceptance into their new *whanau*. Hence, Black Power men were at times the enemy and perpetrators of acute violence, but at other times they were brothers, cousins, partners, workmates, and protectors against the violence meted out by other gangs and Pākehā society at large.[103]

A series of events led to the eventual outlaw of rape by the Black Power. Key to this story is the resistance of women, especially those of Te Aroha Trust who directly challenged their men and the Black Power president himself on the issue.[104] It was a seminal moment. Approximately one decade later, the Black Power had set up a support group for domestic violence, *Pae Arahi o Te Manaaki* (the movement toward caring and dignity).[105] The challenge over rape may well have fast-tracked a growing desire by Black Power leaders to recuperate the deeper—and *positive*—social and cultural meaning of *whanau* with its attendant antimisogynistic cardinal values.[106] In fact, parallel to these challenges, the

Black Power had started to encourage a re-embracing of members' *whakapapa* (personal genealogies) and *Māoritanga* (culture). For example, the first national Black Power convention to be held at a *marae* was at Taiwhakaea in 1977; and it was at this *marae* that, later on, one of the first attempts to provide justice for a gang rape victim would be pursued through the protocols of the *tangata whenua* (people of the land).[107]

These parallel and inevitably conjoined trajectories further combined with one of the most important socioeconomic initiatives in the history of the Black Power. By the early 1980s, the government had started to support group work contract schemes wherein, as members of work trusts, gang youth could undertake "socially useful activity" (as O'Reilly characterizes it[108]) but on their own collective terms. The name of the Wellington trust, *Te Waka Emanaaki* (the canoe of caring), is indicative of the way in which some of the leadership of the Black Power were moving to reconnect to the cardinal values of *whanau ora* (family well-being).[109] *Te Waka Emanaaki* was physically based in an inner-city house that purposefully functioned as a *marae,* even though it was not officially sanctioned as such. In this respect, day-to-day gang life for men became much more intimately woven into family life.[110] A government report on funding the Black Power *Tatou te Iwi* trust in Auckland also noted that relationships had became more stable and women now enjoyed more respect from their men.[111]

However, such positive movements by the dispossessed of society are always fragile and easily disrupted by shifts in government policy. By the late 1980s, the arrival of neoliberal economic principles had forced the suspension of gang work schemes. Paradoxically, these changes encouraged a tripling of gang membership.[112] Heretofore, apprenticeships for Māori youth had purposefully placed them in towns far from their *tūrangawaewae* (place of belonging), which is why the majority of the original Black Power members of Wellington (but not the president) were from Tuhoe land, a significant distance away.[113] The first generation of Black Power had therefore by and large been skilled or apprentice workers.[114] Yet this was not so for the generations that came up under neoliberalism and who tended to bring with them a keener focus on criminal enterprises. Accompanying this new generation was the cultivation by the New Zealand police of a US-style confrontational/retributive rather than reconciliatory policing strategy toward gangs.[115] And in this climate a veritable plague of methamphetamine (trade and use) has recently hit gang members and their families with effects not entirely unlike those caused by the crack epidemic on African-American communities.[116]

Nevertheless, even in these unforgiving conditions, the *whanau* renaissance is still continuing amongst the Black Power and other gangs with Māori membership, albeit in fits and starts. Currently there is a growing pressure, fanned by Right-wing commentators and eagerly embraced by some sections of law and order, to entrench the principle of guilt-by-gang-association especially in terms of family connections and bloodlines.[117] In this contemporary climate, Ryder of the Black Power is promoting an audacious counterposition: a *positive* articulation of the Black Power as a new *iwi* (tribe), born initially out of a *kaupapa* (common purpose), but now transmitted through bloodline (*whakapapa*). Ryder seeks

to separate the negative activities of gangism from a positive identification of the Black Power as an *iwi* that, like all others, is composed of regional subtribes (*hapu*) and various *whanau.* In sum, cleaved of the self-destructive behaviors of gangism, Ryder envisages the Black Power gang as an *iwi* constituted through the cardinal ethics of care (*manaaki*), compassion (*aroha*), and relational reciprocity (*whanaungatanga*).[118]

Attendance to these ethics might even hold the potential of providing the basis for a cautious pan-gang movement against the self-destruction of whole generations of disenfranchised and dispossessed Māori individuals and families. In January 2011, members of both the Black Power and the Mighty Mongrel Mob convened at Otatara Pa, in the east of the North Island, for a day retreat. The discussion, concerning fatherhood and drugs, was led by John Wareham of the Eagles Foundation and assisted by Richard Habersham, an African American who, along with other activities, works as a community organizer in Washington, DC. At the end of a tumultuous day an accord was reached where gang leaders resolved to improve their parenting skills, support *whanau ora* and "strive for understanding of each other's issues as a step towards peace on the streets and in the jails."[119] To pursue these goals, participants agreed to register to vote, as most felt that at present they were not accepted by mainstream society as New Zealand citizens.[120]

Conclusion

The United States originated in a process of settler colonialism. The enslavement of Africans and the exploitation and discrimination of their descendents proceeded parallel and in overlap with the dispossession of the indigenous peoples of the land, their cultures, spirits, and lives. The same practices of dispossession are evident in Aotearoa New Zealand albeit operating with different intensities and successes. Although slavery was widely practiced in the South Pacific at the point in time where its Atlantic variant began to wind down, there were no slave plantations in the settler colony of New Zealand. Yet labor migration routes of *Tangata Pasifika* still owe much to the imperial projects of European powers in the Pacific, including enslavement for the sugar plantations of, for example, Queensland, Australia, and Fiji. And the attitudes and practices of colonial dispossession were forced upon Pasifika peoples upon their migration to Aotearoa New Zealand.

The sedimentation of different but related dispossessions, exploitations, and discriminations impelled by white supremacist rule thus constitutes the bedrock of New Zealand society.[121] Even today, various statistics regarding imprisonment, education, health, and employment reveal the persistence of this uneven ground, many of which are comparable to other postsettler colonies such as the United States. However, a comparative analysis of these two postsettler colonies has not been the purpose of this chapter. Rather, I have argued that examining the articulations of Black Power in Aotearoa New Zealand might contribute to a better understanding of the interplay between racism and settler colonialism in the Black Power phenomenon, conceived globally.

In this respect, the innovations of the Polynesian Panthers are testimony to the importance of developing a critique of white supremacism that is aware of the co-constitution of colonialism and racism. For this purpose, more attention must be given to (1) the interplay between the dehumanization of indigenous and nonindigenous but racialized and oppressed communities, and (2) the ways in which this interplay has not resulted in a smooth surface of common oppression but rather has produced a rough material made up of sedimented layers that are constantly being added to. This testimony is of direct relevance to present-day struggles in all postsettler colonies, and even more so with the waves of neoliberal-induced migration that have occurred over the last 30 years.

Furthermore, if we understand Black Power to be a fundamental and radical refusal to live under the oppressive regime of white supremacism, then the family survival strategy of the Black Power gang provides another kind of testimony. Quite simply, Black Power is nascent at the deepest sediments of oppression formed by settler colonialism. It should not surprise us, then, that Black Power would percolate upward in the most unexpected of forms. And if this is a world order that owes much to the settler-colonial project, then, in the most progressive sense, there is nothing exceptional about Black Power.

Notes

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4. See especially the Aboriginal Black Power movement, for example, Gary Foley, "Black Power in Redfern 1968–1972," 2001, http://www.kooriweb.org/foley/resources

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5. See the documents in Alvin M. Josephy, *Red Power: The American Indians' Fight For Freedom* (New York: American Heritage Press, 1971).
6. Ward Churchill and Jim Vander Wall, *Agents of Repression: The FBI's Secret Wars against the Black Panther Party and the American Indian Movement* (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1988).
7. See especially, Zainab Amadahy and Bonita Lawrence, "Indigenous Peoples and Black People in Canada: Settlers or Allies?," in *Breaching the Colonial Contract: Anti-Colonialism in the US and Canada,* Arlo Kempf, ed. (New York: Springer Publishing, 2009).
8. Lothian, "Seizing the Time"; Foley, "Black Power in Redfern 1968–1972."
9. J. K. Hunn, *Report on Department of Maori Affairs* (Wellington: R. E. Owen, 1961).
10. The first term is from the Māori language, the second term is Samoan.
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12. For an overview of the issues see Augie Fleras and Paul Spoonley, *Recalling Aotearoa: Indigenous Politics and Ethnic Relations in New Zealand* (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1999), 194–201.
13. Comparisons with Apartheid South Africa were also popular.
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25. 'Ilolahia, "Interview."
26. Tigilau Ness, "Interview," November 2009.
27. 'Ilolahia, "Interview."

28. Anae, *Polynesian Panthers*, 62.
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32. Polynesian Panther Movement, "Investigation Period," 1972, Personal Archive of Tim Dyce.
33. Paul Reeves, "Letter to Baldwin Sjollema, World Council of Churches," 1973, 4223.13.32, World Council of Churches Archive; Polynesian Panther Movement, "Where We the Panther Movement Have Aided Our People," 1972, Personal Archive of Author; Roger Fowler, "Interview," February 2011.
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38. See Jacob Pollock, "'We Don't Want Your Racist Tour': The 1981 Springbok Tour and the Anxiety of Settlement in Aotearoa/New Zealand," *Graduate Journal of Asia-Pacific Studies* 21 (2004): 32–43.
39. Ness, "Interview";' Ilolahia, "Interview."
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51. Satele, "The Polynesian Panthers," 101.
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60. Anae, *Polynesian Panthers*, 98.
61. Graham Reid, “Polynesia’s Radical Spirit,” *New Zealand Herald*, June 23, 2001.
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93. "USA Black Power," *Te Iwi O Atoearoa*, February 1990.
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98. Alexander MacLeod, "Maoris Voice Their Discontents," *NZ Listener*, March 22, 1971.
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100. Mumia Abu-Jamal, "A Life in the Party," in Cleaver and Katsiaficas, eds., *Liberation, Imagination, and the Black Panther Party*, 44.
101. Desmond, *Trust*, 229.
102. See for example, Desmond, *Trust*, 229-230
103. Ibid., 165.
104. Ibid., 250.
105. Ibid., 251.
106. Denis O'Reilly, "Gangs and the Culture of Alienation," 1979, Personal Archive of Tim Dyce.
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112. Andrew Allison, "Gangs Dark Side of Maori Renaissance," *Evening Post*, February 6, 1989.
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115. Jim Kayes, "Gang Close to Boiling Point, Says Harris," *Evening Post*, May 18, 1994.
116. O'Reilly, "Interview." It should be noted, however, that this "P" epidemic has impacted on all sectors of New Zealand society.
117. For an overview see Denis O'Reilly, "It's an Ill Wind," *Nga Kupu Aroha*, August 2010, http://www.nzedge.com/features/ar-denis41.html.
118. Ryder, "Interview."
119. "The Otatara Accord," 2011, In author's possession.
120. O'Reilly, "Interview."
121. Hopefully it will be obvious that I do not use this term as an identity politics, but rather as pertaining to a multidimensional system of racial-colonial oppression.

6

The Dalit Panthers: Race, Caste, and Black Power in India

*Nico Slate**

The word "Dalit," from the Marathi for "broken" or "crushed," has come to replace "untouchable" as the most common label for the more than 160 million people who live at the bottom of the caste hierarchy in India and other parts of South Asia. Names matter—never more so than when dealing with the identity of an oppressed minority. In 1972, a group of young Dalits in Bombay formed the Dalit Panthers. On August 15, 1973, the twenty-sixth anniversary of Indian Independence, the Dalit Panthers organized a march of some two hundred people through the streets of Bombay (Mumbai) in a celebration of what they called "Black Independence Day" ("Kala Swatantrya Din"). Drawing on the legacy of the Black Panthers, the Dalit Panthers challenged a narrative in which "independence" had already come to the Indian people. The very name "Dalit Panthers" marshaled notions of blackness and Black Power to present Dalit resistance as militantly unbounded by the triumphant complacency of self-proclaimed "democratic" nation-states.

In their writings, both collectively and individually, the Dalit Panthers made evident the inspiration of the Black Panthers. a Dalit Panther manifesto, written in 1973, declared:

> Due to the hideous plot of American imperialism, the Third Dalit World, that is, oppressed nations, and Dalit people are suffering. Even in America, a handful of reactionary whites are exploiting blacks. To meet the force of reaction and remove this exploitation, the Black Panther movement grew. From the Black Panthers, Black Power emerged … We claim a close relationship with this struggle.[1]

The Dalit Panthers were not the first Indian organization to claim "a close relationship" with African American freedom struggles. Indeed, the Dalit Panthers forged one of many links in a long chain of connections between black and South Asian struggles. In the late nineteenth century, a variety of social reformers

began to articulate analogies between the injustices of colonial India and the United States. These analogies fell into two broad and, at times, mutually contradictory categories. On the one hand, many historical actors compared American racism and British imperialism, juxtaposing African Americans and Indians in the fight for a collective freedom. On the other hand, comparisons between struggles against racial oppression in the United States with movements against caste oppression in India employed a race/caste analogy that compared African Americans only with low-caste Indians. From their inception, connections between Indian and African American freedom struggles called into question the meaning of freedom by challenging boundaries of race, caste, and nation.[2]

The word "caste," from the Portuguese "*casta*," encompasses two social categories with related but distinct meanings within India: "*jati*" and "*varna*." The word "jati" comes from the Sanskrit for "birth." Often associated historically with a particular occupation, one's jati decides, in many cases, one's spouse. *Varna* is a larger category. What many non-Indians imagine upon hearing the word caste, *varna* refers to the division of Hindu society into Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Sudras. This hierarchical order excludes Dalits as well as the largely rural communities of indigenous people known in India as "tribals." *Varna* literally means "color," a fact that has played an important role in the history of debates about race and caste. As that history makes clear, a range of actors have creatively translated between "caste," "jati," and "varna" to define and redefine particular identities. The Dalit Panthers, by juxtaposing the word "Dalit" with the English word "Panther," participated in the hallowed tradition of using language to build strategic bridges between race and caste.[3]

Transnational analogies are a form of translation. As the scholarship on diaspora makes clear, even those markers of identity most readily assumed to be given—race, sex, nationality—have been constructed over time through imaginative feats of transnational translation. Sociologists write of the "diffusion of innovations" across borders and time. Although the literature on diffusion often recognizes loss and miscommunication, notions of translation are better equipped to recognize the loss as well as the creation that accompanied the history of Black Power in India. Take, for example, the Dalit Panther manifesto's reference to a "Third Dalit World." Simultaneously globalizing Dalit identity and localizing notions of the Third World, the idea of a "Third Dalit World" mixed concepts of caste, ideology, and statehood. By proclaiming solidarity with the Third World, the Dalit Panthers mirrored the many American Black Power activists who not only declared support for the Third World but also suggested that African Americans constituted part of the Third World. The very idea of the Third World was a creative appropriation. Coined in 1952 by the French demographer, Alfred Sauvy, the phrase "Third World" drew directly upon French history by comparing the Third World to the Third Estate. The idea of a "Third Dalit World," while part of a long chain of creative transnational analogies, revealed the many discrepancies and divergences that distinguished each link in that chain. Other than Dalit activists, the vast majority of proponents of the Third World included all of India within its reaches, ignoring caste inequality. By declaring a Third Dalit World, the Dalit Panthers questioned the integrity of the Third World itself.[4]

Recent scholarship has tracked the many linkages South Asians have forged with other regions of the world, particularly within the broader Indian Ocean arena.[5] Similarly, historians have expanded the borders of the African American freedom struggle both temporally and geographically, often noting connections between the efforts of African Americans and South Asians.[6] The vibrant field of Black Power studies has been especially important to this historiographical expansion. While much of the current literature looks at Black Power within an expressly national or local context, increasing numbers of scholars have tracked the global terrain traveled by Black Power thinkers and activists.[7] There is, however, a widespread parochialism in much of the literature on the global dimensions of Black Power and of the black freedom struggle more broadly. The majority of these studies focus on the transnational imaginations and activities of African American activists, neglecting the ways in which Black Power came to have meaning for non-American audiences.

By globalizing the historical literature on the global dimensions of Black Power, the story of Black Power in India provides a needed geographical corrective to the historiography of the transnational dimensions of the black freedom struggle. The Indian case provides a unique window on two of the central themes of Black Power studies—the question of violence and the question of nationalism. Early accounts of Black Power emphasized a shift from nonviolence to violence and from integration to separation. Originally deployed as dichotomies distinguishing Black Power from the civil rights movement, the paired opposites violence/nonviolence and integration/separation have more recently been criticized by historians rethinking the established narrative of Black Power. Contemporary scholarship has challenged accounts of a sharp break in the black freedom struggle in the mid- to late-1960s. Much of what is associated with Black Power developed earlier, especially in the cities of the north and the west. Armed self-defense and black nationalism, revisionist historians argue, were long central to the black freedom struggle and remained so throughout what historian Peniel Joseph has called hyphenating terms often opposed to each other, "the Civil Rights-Black Power era."[8]

The history of Black Power in India both challenges and advances this new assessment. On the one hand, debates about Black Power in India echoed American debates regarding violence and nonviolence. The Indian story demonstrates the centrality of violence to at least the public image of Black Power. The tendency of some Black Power advocates to embrace violence, especially on a symbolic and rhetorical level, must be distinguished from the conceptions of nonviolence that dominated the black freedom struggle from the 1940s until the mid 1960s. On the other hand, postindependence Indian history demonstrates the need to also distinguish carefully between the militant rhetoric of activists and the overt violence of dominant classes and the state. While some Black Power activists associated India with Gandhi and thus with nonviolence, many Indian activists actively debated the continuing relevance of Gandhi and nonviolence in the face of persistent inequality and fierce repression. Studying Black Power in India complicates simplistic portrayals of a pure nonviolence. Armed self-defense and nonviolence need not be seen as mutually exclusive.

In the United States, as nonviolence became increasingly contrasted with armed self-defense, advocates of armed self-defense become associated with urban riots, armed rebellions, or other forms of aggressive violence. A once fruitful balance between nonviolent civil disobedience and armed self-defense became increasingly untenable.[9]

In addition to violence, Black Power has been associated historically with a shift from integration to separation or black nationalism. As recent scholarship has documented, however, black nationalism often entailed not just a turning away from integration with white Americans, but also a turning toward people of color throughout the world. The history of Black Power in India demonstrates that this turning toward was actually a meeting with—as the transnational initiatives of Black Power activists were reciprocated by a variety of Indian individuals and groups—themselves often charged with separatism and disloyalty to the nation. From the vantage point of India, Black Power appears less as a separation than as the culmination of many decades of transnational integration within a global community of the oppressed—what the Dalit Panthers called the "Third Dalit World."

Violence and the Power in Black Power

In June 1969, Jagjit (J. J.) Singh, an Indian American businessman and prominent community leader, sent a long letter to his friend Jayaprakash Narayan. One of the most-renowned political figures in twentieth-century India, Narayan had dedicated much of his life to grassroots community organizing. A strident critic of the Indian government's failure to dramatically reduce poverty, Narayan had recently been quoted in the press seeming to condone violent opposition to the government. In 1968, Singh had presided over a discussion on "Black Power" at the India International Center in Delhi. In his letter to Narayan, he turned to the lessons of Black Power to convince Narayan "that man will remain close to the animal so long as he is unable to eschew violence." Singh wrote, "Negro leaders in America will tell you that but for the violence methods adopted by the negroes, no advancement of the coloured people would have taken place." Singh granted that the threat of violence may have pressured American leaders to respond, at least in part, to the demands of African American protesters. He added, however, that a more global perspective revealed the superiority of nonviolence. "Some people," Singh stressed, "must think and work for the ultimate good of the human race which can be achieved only by eschewing violence." For evidence, Singh returned to the global implications of African American history. He declared, "Martin Luther King kept on talking of non-violence notwithstanding the fact that almost all negroes decried his stand."[10]

Singh failed to recognize any middle-ground between violence and nonviolence. His dichotomous vision led him to overstate the degree to which many black activists had abandoned King and nonviolence. Well after King's assassination, many activists recognized the merits of nonviolence. Although the numbers of those devoted to "pure" or "philosophical" nonviolence dwindled, many still

recognized the pragmatic and tactical benefits of nonviolent civil disobedience. Still, by the summer of 1969 a variety of African American activists had publicly rejected nonviolence. In repudiating nonviolence, some demonstrated the same oversimplified conception of violence and nonviolence that Singh revealed in his letter to Narayan.

Meeting in Baltimore in 1966, CORE, one of the first civil rights organizations to employ Gandhian nonviolent civil disobedience, voted to eliminate a commitment to the "technique of nonviolence in direct action" as a requirement for chapters. Floyd McKissick, CORE's chairman, attacked nonviolence as a "dying philosophy" that had "outlived its usefulness." McKissick stopped short, however, of totally rejecting nonviolence. He asserted, "I think nonviolence in the future will only be a technique and a strategy."[11] In 1969, well after many of its original members had left, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee changed its name to the Student *National* Coordinating Committee. These public disavowals of nonviolence communicated a significant shift in the movement. This shift was not, however, from nonviolence to violence. Rather, a pragmatic synthesis of civil disobedience and armed self-defense gave way to a rejection of "pure nonviolence" in favor of a rhetoric of violence.

The career of Robert F. Williams, a charismatic leader suspended from the NAACP for advocating armed self-defense, exemplifies the lost opportunities that resulted from the dichotomization of black freedom struggles into oversimplified notions of violence and nonviolence. Early in his career, Williams utilized armed self-defense to protect nonviolent protesters in and around his home of Monroe, North Carolina. Williams demonstrated that armed self-defense and nonviolent protest were not mutually exclusive. Rather, the ability of nonviolent activists to mobilize black communities depended largely on the capacity of local blacks to physically defend activists. At the same time, the willingness of nonviolent protestors to suffer brutal assaults brought national and international pressure to bear on the federal government. Nonviolent tactics and armed self-defense worked together to channel white violence into less deadly and more politically useful situations. The symbiosis of nonviolence and armed self-defense could not be named, however, as the very idea of armed blacks sparked fear throughout white America. After Williams publicly defended armed self-defense and was quoted seeming to endorse retributive violence, he was forced out of the NAACP. After being wrongly accused of kidnapping a middle-aged white couple, Williams and his family fled to Cuba and then to China. He became increasingly focused on violence as a tool of liberation. In effect, Williams became the advocate of aggressive violence that his critics had earlier conjured.[12]

Indian activists had long debated the merits of nonviolence. The dichotomy of violence and nonviolence distanced, however, many Black Power activists from India itself. Just as the civil rights movement became equated with a one-dimensional image of Martin Luther King, the Indian freedom struggle was reduced in the American consciousness to a static image of Gandhi. In both cases, the practical symbiosis between nonviolent civil disobedience and armed self-defense was lost. Gandhi's legacy became reduced to a narrow notion of nonviolence. Gandhian civil disobedience was increasingly marginalized by calls for more

"militant" resistance. As early as 1962, poet LeRoi Jones (later Amiri Baraka) criticized "the idea of 'passive' resistance" as "an Indian 'rope trick' that cannot be applied in this scientific country." In 1965, novelist John O. Killens wrote in *Black Man's Burden*, "Please do not give us the example of India and Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi." Killens declared, "The situations are not similar; they could not be more dissimilar." The Black Power movement, despite drawing heavily on transnational linkages with the Third World, turned away from India to learn from violent revolutions in Cuba, China, and North Vietnam. The nonviolent nationalism of the Indian freedom movement had little significance for many black nationalists of the 1960s and 1970s. The equation of India with Gandhi and of Gandhi with nonviolence overshadowed the continued relevance to black struggles of Indian anticolonial nationalism, economic self-sufficiency (*swadeshi*), and colored cosmopolitanism.[13]

Even as the influence of India declined among African Americans, the black freedom struggle continued to inspire Indians. Like J. J. Singh, many Indians understood the tension between violence and nonviolence as a dichotomy between Martin Luther King and Black Power. Even before King visited India in 1959, his reputation as a disciple of Gandhi had earned King a sympathetic audience throughout much of India. The legacy of King took on renewed meaning in India after his death. In 1969, the Indian Postal Service issued a commemorative stamp that memorialized Dr. King. The Delhi office of the United States Information Service distributed a glossy 26-page tribute to King. American government officials presented King as a key figure in a new, more just America and played on King's relationship to Gandhi to gain Indian support for the United States. American propaganda ignored both the diversity of Indian opinion of Gandhi and the many ways in which the United States had failed to live up to King's vision.[14] Just as Gandhi remained a controversial figure in India, many Indians debated King's significance. As in the United States, King became drawn into a larger argument about the merits of nonviolence and the legacy of the civil rights movement in a changing world.

In 1967, the Indian writer, T. K. Mahadevan, sent the African American poet Langston Hughes a detailed essay. Entitled "A Search for Meaning: An Indian Approach to the Negro Revolution," Mahadevan's essay focused on whether nonviolence remained meaningful in the late 1960s. Linking Gandhi with other renowned Indian exemplars of nonviolence, Mahadevan wrote, "In the India of today, Buddha and Asoka and Gandhi are but receding memories." Mahadevan lamented the decline of nonviolence but refused to accept the most extreme criticisms of Black Power. He declared, "One of the puerile arguments against the Negro's present fascination for 'Black Power' is that this could lead to a complete break with the white majority and an unequal confrontation." Mahadevan rejected such alarmism. Nevertheless, he distanced himself from those Black Power activists who were turning away from nonviolence. "The Negro," he wrote, "cannot hope to fight the numerically superior white power structure with its own weapons." Given the practical advantages of nonviolence for a struggling minority, Mahadevan wondered, "Why has the Negro become disenchanted with nonviolence so quickly?" He blamed a combination of impatience and

widespread misconceptions regarding the nature of nonviolence. In particular, Mahadevan lamented that nonviolence had become equated with pacifism and an otherworldly spirituality that he labeled "the ecclesiastical vanguard."

Mahadevan recognized that the growing militancy in the black community resulted in part from the limited successes of the civil rights movement. He employed his knowledge of caste to question the benefits of superficial forms of integration. "I do not think the Negro has achieved anything," Mahadevan declared, "merely by being able to sit cheek by jowl with his white compatriot and drink the proverbial cup of coffee." As evidence, he noted, "In caste-ridden India—despite the many trickles of progressive legislation since Independence, the description is still apt—the *bhang*i and the Brahmin rub shoulders in the bus and the cinema, but that is about all." While criticizing superficial integration, Mahadevan rejected any form of exclusive separatism. "It would be easy," he granted, "for the Negro to withdraw into a closed circle all his own and assert his dignity." But, he argued, "If parallel lines are bad enough, closed circles are infinitely wrong." Mahadevan's solution was not, however, for African Americans to embrace their American identity. Rather, he located the struggle against American racism within a larger series of struggles for justice throughout the world. "I believe that the problem of racial discrimination in the United States cannot be solved in isolation," Mahadevan declared, "but only as part of the worldwide struggle for human rights."[15]

All the Blacks of the World

In September 1963, the Bombay journal *United Asia* reported on the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom during which Martin Luther King delivered his iconic speech, "I Have a Dream." In 1859, two years after the Sepoy Rebellion, known by some as the First War of Indian Independence, the white abolitionist John Brown was hanged after attempting to foment rebellion among the 6 million slaves living in the American South. Noting the wrong year and confusing John Brown with his friend, the renowned African American abolitionist Frederick Douglass, the *United Asia* editorial stated, "Frederick Douglas was the abolitionist negro killed in the year 1857—the year in which the brown-skin Indians of Asia rose in their first mighty revolution against the white imperialism of the British." Thus, *United Asia* used the racial dimensions of British colonialism to connect its readers to the struggles of African Americans. Bringing this race/colony comparison forward in time, the editorial declared, "The atrocities on negro demonstrators reminded people in India of their experience of the British methods of suppression during Gandhiji's great movements of 1920, 1930 and 1942." "These memories of the past rose up to our minds," the editorial added, "and we could almost feel physically the pain, the anguish, the suffering of the negroes." The editorial simultaneously recognized that a race/caste comparison remained to challenge Indians:

> The millions of untouchables in India might as well regard the negroes struggle for equality and human dignity as their own struggle ... Their struggle against the

> high caste tyranny is almost identical in content with the great battle the negroes of America are fighting. It may be that the American negro is fighting not only for himself and for his brethren in America but for all the submerged castes, for all the blacks of the world whether they be in America or in India.[16]

King's legacy—and the "I Have a Dream" speech in particular—have become neatly contained in a national story in which the goals for which King fought are presented as having already been accomplished. The Black Power movement, in this story, is portrayed as antithetical to King's goals and methods. King's engagement with caste reveals a more expansive understanding of the ongoing African American struggle, a struggle that continues to have relevance for, as the editors of *United Asia* put it, "all the blacks of the world."

Confronting the intersection of class and caste in India sharpened King's analysis of the structural inequalities of race and class in the United States, revealing strands of King's thought that dovetailed with Black Power. In an article for *Ebony* composed after his trip to India, King wrote that even independent India confronted "the problem of segregation." "We call it race in America; they call it caste in India," he explained. "In both places," King continued, "it means that some are considered inferior, treated as though they deserve less." Before King left for India, the secretary of the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi (Gandhi Memorial Fund) and one of the organizers of the trip, suggested to King that he "would be particularly interested to know how Gandhiji wrestled with the problem of untouchability in India and succeeded in showing the [way] out against the heaviest odds." Such a framework for the history of caste, in which Gandhi heroically struggled against untouchability, would remain foundational to King's own understanding. In a Palm Sunday Sermon on Gandhi, King offered his own memories of seeing the poverty of Dalit communities and stressed Gandhi's opposition to untouchability. King overlooked the limitations of Gandhi's approach to caste inequality, as well as the animosity between Gandhi and Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, the most prominent Dalit leader. King's purpose, of course, was not to offer a nuanced understanding of the struggle against caste in India, but to use that struggle to inspire change at home. He consistently compared caste in India with race in the United States. In his article for *Ebony*, "My Trip to the Land of Gandhi," King noted that Gandhi walked with Dalits into temples previously closed to them. King declared, "To equal that, President Eisenhower would take a Negro child by the hand and lead her into Central High School in Little Rock."[17]

While King recognized the ongoing brutality of caste in India, he concluded that "India appears to be integrating its untouchables faster than the United States is integrating its Negro minority." Both nations had laws against discrimination, King explained. "But in India," he wrote, "the leaders of Government, of religious, educational and other institutions have publicly endorsed the integration laws."[18] Furthermore, the Indian government had "set forth a constitutional provision making untouchability illegal" and had spent "millions of dollars a year in scholarships, housing, and community development to lift the standards of the untouchables."[19] In his book *Why We Can't Wait* King recalled Jawaharlal Nehru's defense of India's policy of "reservations" for Dalits in government

employment and education. When King's travel companion Lawrence Reddick asked if such an affirmative action policy constituted reverse discrimination, Nehru responded that it might but that it was still a necessary "way of atoning for the centuries of injustices we have inflicted upon these people."[20]

King's interest in caste continued after he returned from India. In April 1959, King asked William Stuart Nelson for "books or pamphlets" on the caste system, explaining that he was "making a study of untouchability." Nelson replied with materials, adding that black protests were "proving a source of great encouragement to and re-awakening of people in India … thereby serving the cause of non-violence in the very country which has witnessed its most significant demonstration."[21] The First Southwide Institute on Nonviolent Resistance to Segregation, held in July 1959, featured speeches not only from King, but also from Nelson and Richard Gregg. One of its resolutions stated, "We make common cause with the oppressed and submerged peoples of the world—particularly the unfreed peoples of Africa and the former 'untouchables' of India. We call upon them to adhere to the principles of nonviolence in our common world struggle."[22]

Poverty proved central to King's understanding of what united the "submerged peoples of the world." In a sermon on "The American Dream," delivered at Ebenezer Baptist Church on July 4, 1965, King recalled being introduced during a visit to a school for Dalits in the South-Indian state of Kerala. The principal of the school proclaimed, "Young people, I would like to present to you a fellow untouchable from the United States of America." King explained that for a moment he was "a bit shocked and peeved" that he had been "referred to as an untouchable." Then, he told his congregation, he began to think about motels where he could not stay, lunch counters that would not serve blacks, still segregated buses and schools, and the fact that "twenty million of my brothers and sisters were still smothering in an airtight cage of poverty in an affluent society" and that "these twenty million brothers and sisters were still by and large housed in rat-infested, unendurable slums in the big cities of our nation." Finally, King told his audience, "I said to myself, 'Yes, I am an untouchable, and every Negro in the United States of America is an untouchable.'" King's sermon bears a strong resemblance to an earlier account written by King's advisor, Benjamin Mays, of his own visit to a school for Dalits. That King borrowed the account from Mays matters less, however, than that King chose to introduce an emphasis on urban poverty that was in tune with his own experiences in India and his growing concerns about the structural racism of urban ghettos.[23]

Viewed from the subcontinent, the Black Power and civil rights movements overlapped within a shared struggle for human rights that transcended notions of freedom as national unity. On March 15, 1970, the anticolonial activist and feminist, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, published an articled entitled "Black Power on the Move" in the Bombay newspaper, *The Bharat Jyoti*. Rather than focus on recent events, however, Kamaladevi demonstrated the continuity of Black Power with earlier assertions of colored solidarity. She narrated her own encounters in the 1940s with Indian Muslims who had journeyed to the United States to forge links with African American Muslims. While Kamaladevi criticized the

"messianic" nature of the Nation of Islam and its reliance on anti-white rhetoric, she ultimately defended the religious practices of the black Muslims she met as expressing "the need for identity and the desire for self-improvement."[24] For Kamaladevi, the importance of pride in blackness transcended time, space, and markers of identification. She saw black Muslims in the 1940s as advocates of Black Power and early indications of its global nature.

Of Dalits and Pariahs

A feminist, socialist, and anticolonial nationalist, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya demonstrated how a radical resistance to any one form of injustice could lead to a more inclusive opposition to the intersections of many forms of oppression. In the early 1970s, while Kamaladevi was narrating her own early encounters with Black Power, the Dalit Panthers debated the merits of the kind of inclusive coalition politics that Kamaladevi embodied. At issue was whether to define the organization solely in terms of anticaste activism or to welcome allies in a larger struggle against many kinds of oppressions. Part of the debate concerned how to define the word "Dalit." Some Dalit Panthers argued that "Dalit" should embrace only particular castes. Others argued for a broad definition that embraced all those oppressed and downtrodden, whether by caste, class, gender, or other forms of identity.[25]

A manifesto prepared in 1973 took the broader approach. The manifesto defined Dalits not only as "members of Scheduled Castes and Tribes," but also as "neo-Buddhists, the working people, the landless and poor peasants, women and all those who are being exploited politically, economically and in the name of religion." The authors of the manifesto demonstrated strong socialist leanings. According to the manifesto, to "eradicate untouchability," land would have to be redistributed. "The Dalit must accordingly accept," the manifesto urged, "other revolutionary forces as part of his own movement."[26]

The debate concerning the ambit of the Dalit Panthers echoed divisions between American Black Power activists. The Black Panthers, on the one hand, approached social inequality from a Marxist standpoint and urged solidarity with all progressive forces. More culturally nationalist organizations, on the other hand, such as Maulana Karenga's US organization, rejected alliances with white leftists. Just as these differences created conflict within American Black Power, competing approaches to alliance-building fractured the Dalit Panthers. One of the main authors of the inclusive 1973 manifesto that championed "all those who are being exploited," the Dalit poet Namdeo Dhasal, was expelled from the Dalit Panthers soon after the manifesto's publication. Dhasal's proximity to communist leaders was seen by some Dalit Panthers as compromising his commitment to Dalit advancement. Dhasal's expulsion precipitated a wider split in the movement. Self-styled "Ambedkarite" factions claimed the mantle of B. R. Ambedkar, while other groups embraced a self-consciously Marxist orientation. It is unclear whether either side recognized the degree to which such divisions mirrored the fate of Black Power in the United States and throughout much

of the world. Divisiveness, ironically, emerged as one of the common threads in the global history of Black Power.[27]

While the Dalit Panthers debated which allies to embrace within India, the organization publicly trumpeted its linkages to the black freedom struggle and other overseas movements. Popular publications, ranging from *Time* to the Dalit magazine *Asmitadarsha*, contributed to Dalit knowledge of the Black Panthers. Like the Black Panthers, the Dalit Panthers emerged from urban communities with severe poverty and large unemployed populations of young people, distant from established political parties. The Dalit Panthers emulated the organizational structure of the Black Panthers, electing a president, a defense minister, and a general secretary. One publication declared, "The Dalit Panthers aspire to join hands with the Dalits (oppressed) of the world which includes the oppressed and the exploitated [*sic*] people in Cambodia, Vietnam, Africa, Latin America, Japan and even in USA (specially with the Blacks)."[28]

The relationship between the Dalit Panthers and the Black Panthers demonstrates the importance of distinguishing between two forms of integration—integration within and beyond the nation. Both groups of Panthers confronted governments that defended equality in theory but all too often buttressed inequalities of power and privilege. Both groups denounced the limitations of their governments and were accused of separatism. Both reached out internationally, forging solidarities across not just the borders of nations but also of races and castes. Both rejected integration within the nation but actively pursued integration on a global scale.

The complexities of integration confronting Dalits were echoed in a book published by the Dalit Action Committee in Bangalore in 1979 as *Apartheid in India* and reprinted in multiple editions as *Dalit: The Black Untouchables of India*. These titles indicate the ongoing importance for Dalit activists of connections with larger freedom struggles. In an epigram before the title page, the author of the book, V. T. Rajshekar, a journalist and longtime advocate for Dalit rights declared, "The problem of India's Untouchables is not only India's internal problem, but an international problem."

The republication of *Dalit: The Black Untouchables of India* provided black activists the opportunity to champion Dalit integration within the African diaspora. An edition reprinted by Clarity Press in Atlanta in 1987 contained a long "publisher's note" that decried untouchability as "a centuries-old experiment in forced political integration under conditions of segregation and cultural assimilation." A footnote described integration as forced inclusion within a polity. The note explained, "Forced assimilation occurring under unequal conditions is unlikely to result in a minority's subsequent achievement of objective or subjective equal status with the majority population." The note went so far as to label such integration "ethnocide." In a separate foreword, black internationalist author Yusuf Naim Kly asked, "Does the philosophy of an undefined integration without social, cultural or economic equality simply promote a more permanent form of domination?" Rather than integrate within a hierarchical society, whether structured by race or caste, Kly encouraged oppressed minorities such as Dalits and African Americans to find common cause.[29]

The publisher's introduction and an afterword by Runoko Rashidi, an African American activist, advanced the thesis that Dalits are the descendents of African peoples. "The Untouchables, originally the African founders of the lush Indus Valley civilization," the introduction declared, "were invaded and conquered by fair-skinned Aryans from the North." The Aryan invasion theory of caste extends back to the nineteenth century and continues to elicit debate in India and elsewhere. Rashidi's afterword, entitled "Blacks as a Global Community," was originally published with the subtitle "Dalits are world's most oppressed people" in the anticaste journal *Dalit Voice* in August 1994. Rashidi described Dalits as "probably the most oppressed people on earth," while including them within the African diaspora as "Black people" and "members of the global African community." Scholar Vijay Prashad has thoughtfully critiqued such transnational solidarities forged on the notion of supposed ties of ancestry. Troublingly, these linkages have become overlaid in recent editions of *Dalit Voice* with an aggressive anti-Semitism. Such prejudices mar what has been an important voice for Dalit rights in India and abroad.[30]

Much like their American namesake, the Dalit Panthers found their political and economic goals stymied by official repression and undermined by internal disagreement, but nevertheless left a significant cultural and literary mark on the ongoing Dalit struggle. A new Dalit Panther political party has become an important force in the large South-Indian state of Tamil Nadu. An emphasis on pride in being Dalit remains central to this new organization. Like its predecessor, the new party draws on analogies with African American struggles. In December 2007, Ravi Kumar, a Dalit Panthers legislator, praised a resolution passed more than one hundred years earlier in the Dravida Mahajana Sabha. The resolution, passed in 1891, called for punishment for "whoever expresses or addresses the depressed classes as 'pariah' to ridicule them.'" Kumar added, "Even the African Americans had not passed a resolution seeking a proscription of the use of 'nigger' back then."[31] The word "pariah" derives from the large Dalit community of Paraiyars, a community that provides the largest block of support to the Dalit Panthers.[32] By referencing the importance of language to the long history of Dalit resistance and framing that history in comparison with African American struggles, Ravi Kumar employed transnational analogies to support ongoing Dalit struggles for justice.

The popularity of the word "Dalit" stems in part, like the word "nigger," from the ability of an oppressed group to appropriate and thus undermine derogatory terms of abuse. In 1974, a young Dalit poet, Daya Pawar, addressed a poem to higher caste Indians who had become enraged by the racism they encountered in the United States. Pawar entitled his poem "You Wrote from Los Angeles." The poem begins by quoting unnamed high-caste Indians outraged by their experiences with American racism. Pawar responds by noting the hypocrisy of such sentiments. How could high-caste Indians complain about racism while perpetuating the injustice of caste? In his poem, Pawar employs American racism as a mirror to challenge high-caste readers to confront the realities of caste oppression.[33]

Just as the Black Panthers contributed to a resurgence of pride in the word "Black," the Dalit Panthers encouraged Dalits to embrace aspects of their identity

that had long been used to denigrate them. The word "Dalit" symbolizes the ability of young Dalits to embrace their own brokenness, and to see their oppression as a source of strength and pride. Namdeo Dhasal, the Dalit Panther founder expelled due to his Marxism, entitled his first volume of poetry, *Golpitha*, after the rough, red-light district in Mumbai in which he spent his youth. In a poem entitled, "Poverty as My Own Independent Piece of Land," Dhasal claimed poverty itself as part of his inheritance.

Several Dalit authors have compared black and Dalit struggles to emphasize the power that stems from embracing adversity. In 1974, Janardan Waghmare wrote, "The Negro should not change the colour of his hide, nor the Untouchable his caste. There is no difference between the place of the Negro in America and the step or level of the Untouchable in India. And so for a long time both were caught in the whirlwind of self-denigration and self-hatred." That same year, another Dalit author, Gangadhar Pantawane, opened a seminal article on Dalit literature by quoting James Baldwin: "Our humanity is our burden, our life, we need not battle for it; we need only to do what is infinitely difficult—that is accept it."[34]

Linkages between Dalit and African American struggles continue to demonstrate the potential of transnational solidarities, as well as the many obstacles that prevent such solidarities from achieving significant victories. The Black Panthers remain inspirational for some Dalit activists. In Aurangabad, Maharashtra, in a museum dedicated to B. R. Ambedkar, the journalist Edward Luce found that half of the books in the museum's library were about the Black Panthers. The museum curator told Luce, "We feel a lot of kinship with what blacks suffered in America before the civil rights movement and what blacks suffered in South Africa under apartheid." Several commentators have compared and contrasted Barack Obama and Kumari Mayawati, the first female Dalit chief minister of Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state. While the elections of Obama and of Mayawati demonstrate real achievements, neither political figure has been able to reverse generations of inequality and their achievements have been disappointing to many. Although a sizeable middle class has emerged among both African Americans and Dalits, the vast majority of both communities remains disproportionately poor. In the choice of their name, the Dalit Panthers signified hope for a global struggle against caste in all its forms. Names matter. They provide hope and a source of connection between disparate struggles. But when confronting the kinds of endemic inequality that mark both India and the United States, transnational solidarities must go beyond names if they are to have deep significance. In 1973, the Dalit Panthers declared, "The Third Dalit World, that is, oppressed nations, and Dalit people are suffering." Regardless of what we call it, the Third Dalit World continues to suffer.[35]

Notes

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The Shared Struggle for Freedom in the United States and India (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012) and in Nico Slate, "Translating Race and Caste," *The Journal of Historical Sociology* 24, no. 1 (March 2011): 62–79.

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Part III

The Power in Black Power

7

"They've lynched our savior, Lumumba in the old fashion Southern Style": The Conscious Internationalism of American Black Nationalism

Yohuru Williams

In this chapter, I explore the global influence of Black Power—realized and unrealized, authentic and imagined. By no means exhaustive, this brief exploration is meant to illuminate the myriad ways in which the Black Power movement created new avenues of resistance, while forcing what historian Peniel Joseph has aptly described as a conscious reckoning with American democracy and democratic principles at the local, national, and international level. I contrast the imagination of Black Power activists and the paranoid imagination of the US government. I focus, in particular, on the experience of soldiers, often at the forefront of Black Power within the United States and abroad. In the process, I seek to illustrate the ways in which African American activists and their understanding of internationalism were at the center of these discussions, underscoring the role of, and reaction to the conscious internationalism of Black Power advocates, both at home and abroad.

Part of the reason for this realization among military personnel was the growing unrest within its ranks. Military authorities could not easily blame such unrest on either foreign influences or the Black Power movement. The armed forces' own institutional racism was the primary culprit. Reports of the disproportionate burden borne by African American troops fighting and dying in Vietnam underscored more than a century of unfair policy and practice within the armed services. The problem, as James Westheider astutely observes in *Fighting on Two Fronts: African Americans and the Vietnam War,* was not overrepresentation of African Americans but their unequal concentration in active zones of combat. The military's growing fear of black militants within its ranks

did not deter deployment of black troops in the most hostile of combat regions. Nevertheless, concern that some soldiers might be prone to join the enemy led to aggressive intelligence gathering at home. Such concern increased as more radical elements within the black community described America itself as the "greatest purveyor of violence in the world today."

That description, of course, came from the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King in his celebrated 1967 Riverside Church speech. On this issue of the war, however Dr. King was a late comer. Even before the race riots that broke out in American cities in the 1960s, military intelligence routinely focused on so-called subversive elements within the black community who might embrace violence, especially on college campuses, as a means of redress for their grievances. This fear followed the general prescriptive formula of suspicion based primarily on race. Historian Frank Donner attributes the "extensive coverage" of the nation's colleges and universities to "the role of the campus in the anti-war movement, as well as draft resistance." More easily accomplished on university campuses, the fear of Black Power malignancy within the general population also occupied the military's attention but with directives that were far less clear and specific. During hearings chaired by Senator Sam Ervin, to determine the scope of domestic military intelligence in 1971, for instance, army operatives from Region II of the 111th Military Intelligence Group in Winston Salem, North Carolina, revealed standing orders from superiors to monitor "any suspicious black man, learn his identity and find out what he was up to."[1]

African American leaders from Frederick Douglass to W. E. B. Du Bois had encouraged black enlistment as a means of demonstrating patriotism while also contesting for full citizenship. By the time of the escalation of the war in Vietnam, however, both the domestic and global landscape had changed. African Americans, who had once welcomed war as an opportunity to prove their metal and worthiness of citizenship, had little reason to believe, especially in light of the brutal repression visited on civil rights demonstrators, that their service would make any difference. More importantly, the 1950s and 1960s brought a new identification with African and Third World liberation struggles, which Black Power advocates such as Muslim minister Malcolm X were quick to exploit. Although neither of these factors seemed to affect African American enlistment rates—later made moot by the imposition of the draft. In fact, African Americans served in higher proportions during the Vietnam War than in any other war. Within the military, there was a clear about-face from previous wars where questions about African Americans fitness for combat often dogged their service. In Vietnam African Americans faced a much higher chance of serving on the frontline. As a result, casualty rates for black soldiers skyrocketed with African American troops comprising nearly 25 percent of all combat fatalities in1965 alone.[2]

Despite a steady chorus of African American voices raised in opposition to the war at home, military intelligence, nevertheless, chose to focus on the potential danger from outside the United States. The emergence of and African American identification with African liberation struggles clearly presented the military with a two-front war of its own, monitoring domestic sources of unrest while evaluating the dangers of Black Power within its ranks. In terms of the

later, significantly, the military refused to view this danger as a conscious choice on the part of black soldiers as much as the influence of foreign propaganda. In 1967, for instance, in advance of the October "Confront the War Makers" antiwar demonstrations in Washington, the army assistant chief of staff for intelligence requested that the National Security Administration furnish his office with regular reports of efforts by foreign governments, individuals, or groups acting on their behalf, to influence the activities of American "peace" or "Black Power" groups. Army intelligence was interested specifically in "the nature of such instruction or advice" as well as the "identification of U.S. individual or groups in contact with foreign agents."[3] The army again seemed to discount the possibility of grassroots support among African Americans for Third World liberation struggles. In other words, the military persisted in seeing Black Power as a problem from the outside in rather than from the inside out.

While subsequent investigations in the 1970s tended to paint this as a by-product of rogue military intelligence, there is some evidence that suggests that these directives were in response to pressures from the highest levels of government. In the scramble to justify revelations concerning government spying on civilians in the early 1970s, former CIA director Richard Helms, for instance, explained that his agency had established a special program in response to repeated requests for more intelligence from President Lyndon Johnson. According to Helm's it was Johnson's persistent calls for information pertaining to foreign influences on domestic protesters that led to CIA's involvement. In spite of its original directive, to uncover the "extent to which Soviets, Chicoms (Chinese Communists) and Cubans are exploiting our domestic problems in terms of espionage and subversion"; in August of 1967 the CIA provided additional instructions. It further advised its station chiefs of the importance of "keeping tabs on radical students and U.S. Negro expatriates as well as travelers passing through certain select areas abroad."[4] The fear of course was the potential for such targets to fall under the influence of subversive forces while aboard. The Johnson administration did not need to look any further than its own backyard to know that the threat was not entirely international in origin, a fact that the US military was beginning to appreciate with a greater sense of importance toward the close of the decade.

To appreciate the problem this posed for the military, one must first consider the global influence of Black Power. To be sure, the American military was not the only institution struggling to come to grips with the meaning of the Black Power movement. For decades before Vietnam, African Americans had been engaged in conscious identification with African and other Third World liberation struggles made more visible by anti-Vietnam War protests.

This chapter unfolds in two parts. In the first, I examine the conscious internationalism of the Black Power movement against the backdrop of the early 1960s and the buildup of the war in Vietnam. While college campuses remained a primary focus of military intelligence, Black Power ideology clearly penetrated down to the community level where numerous organizations, including the NOI promoted a Black Power agenda that was also internationalists in perspective. In the second half of the chapter, I return to the question of the US military and its attempts to domesticate Black Power within its ranks. I argue that the

mishandling of Black Power was a by-product of the military's failure to appreciate the conscious internationalism of the movement as a whole.

As Kimberly Phillips has observed, "Commanders and other observers blamed 'racial tensions' in the United States on the blacks' growing militancy in Vietnam, but the politicization and radicalism of blacks deepened in Vietnam because of the menacing and brutal context of combat." "Ordered to kill, bomb, and assault Vietnamese," she continues, "black GIs and Marines participated in or witnessed the military power of the United States unleashed on civilian populations." On the ground, these military conflicts were often framed in racialized language and practices evoking the inequality they felt at home. In the end, Phillips argues that black soldiers used Black Power more as a mechanism of self-defense within desegregated but still highly racialized armed services and as a method of analysis for understanding the complex and overlapping issues of race, violence, and power that converged on them as agents of the United States Military in Vietnam.[5]

* * *

In 1961, the American press "rediscovered" black nationalism, or at least a brand of black nationalism that it had not been accustomed to dealing with for some time. Although they had been talking about the dangers of black nationalism abroad for more than a decade, columnists and editors seemed at a loss to explain what they routinely saw as the fruit of mounting black frustration in the United States and its curious preoccupation with African independence movements.

In March of that year, *New York Times* columnist Robert L. Teague was one of more than a handful of journalists who went in search of an explanation in Harlem, New York. There, he found a vibrant Black Power movement heavily identified with Africa, not yet branded by politicians or the media, but very real and influential nevertheless. Teague, for example, described his encounter with a bearded middle-aged black man, only identified as Willie, who was passing out handbills reading, "They've lynched our savior, Lumumba in the old fashion Southern Style." When queried about the flier, Willie responded, "is it so strange that I mourn Lumumba? Why does a Jew in New York get mad when something happens to another Jew he's never seen in Israel? Why does a Pole or a Hungarian in this country get mad about things that happen thousands of miles away?"[6]

Willie saw himself as part of a global community of people of African descent. Indicative of the works of both Joseph Harris and Bernard Bailyn, Willie's identification with Patrice Lumumba underscores the importance of the concept of an African diaspora and understanding modern history in the context of an Atlantic World, in which the exchange of everything from "microbes to man" were traded among the nations of the Atlantic Rim—including the ideas of liberalism, nationalism, and the much feared germ of revolution.[7]

James Lawson, president of the United African Nationalist Movement, was even more adamant. "Our ties," he explained in a meeting where Teague was in attendance, "have to be linked to Africa." The pantheon of African nationalist heroes that emerged on the streets of Harlem was no accident and illustrates the

degree to which events on the continent mattered even to working-class African Americans in the United States. Noting the presence of some "200 and 300" avowedly African nationalist groups, with fluctuating memberships of between 5 and 15 thousand in New York alone, Lawson explained that most of the groups "follow the basic principles of the late Marcus Garvey: educate, elevate and unite the black man. We believe that our future must be linked with that of our brothers in Africa."

A cornerstone of the program to educate was the inclusion of street-level orators, who were a fixture in Harlem at that time and who regularly interspersed diaspora history with the political views and social commentary associated with their program. One of the "people's historians" whose work was commonly discussed on the street was the eminent African American historian John Henrik Clarke, who was a fixture in Harlem and who regularly attempted to contextualize the news of emerging nations in Africa and civil rights protest in the United States.

In an essay published in the fall of 1961, for instance, Clarke sought to put in this larger context the February 1961 United Nations demonstrations-turned-riot staged by various African American organizations over the murder of Patrice Lumumba. Dismissing reports that tried to tie the demonstration to a new strain of black militancy, Clarke concluded, "This nationalism is only a new manifestation of old grievances with deep roots." "Nationalism, and a profound interest in Africa," he continued, "actually started among Afro-Americans during the latter part of the nineteenth century. Therefore, the new Afro-American nationalism is really not new."

Interestingly, Clark also referenced the murder of Lumumba as a lynching. However, his explanation illustrates how he imagined that African Americans had internalized international struggles by applying the sufferings of those abroad to their own experience. As Clark explained, "Suddenly, to them at least, Lumumba became Emmett Till and all of the other black victims of lynch law and the mob." Clarke shows how a significant segment of American blacks came to understand international events in a uniquely American context. Through their own identification with American apartheid, he continued:

> The plight of the Africans still fighting to throw off the yoke of colonialism and the plight of the Afro-Americans, still waiting for a rich, strong, and boastful nation to redeem the promise of freedom and citizenship became one and the same. Through their action, the U.N. demonstrators announced their awareness of the fact that they were far from being free and a long fight still lay ahead of them. The short and unhappy life of Patrice Lumumba announced the same thing about Africa.

Clarke outlined two fundamental interpretations adopted by the white press to explain the riot at the UN. "Belatedly," he explained, "some American officials began to realize that the foreign policy of this country will be affected if the causes of the long brooding dissatisfaction among Afro-Americans are not dealt with effectively." "Others," he continued, "quick to draft unfavorable conclusions and compound misconceptions, interpreted this action as meaning there was more Afro-American interest in African affairs than in the affairs of the United States."

"Both interpreters" he concluded, "seemed to have missed a vital point—the United States has never had an official policy based only the granting of complete citizenship to Afro-Americans, nor has the United States ever had an official policy based on the complete elimination of, or approving of the complete elimination, of colonialism in Africa."[8]

Clarke announced the local, national, and international dimensions of black nationalism, hinting at the still undefined "Black Power Movement" that emerged alongside the civil rights movement in the United States. He furthermore offered a view of Global Black Power that was a synthesis of black nationalism and pan-Africanism. Scholars at the time clearly recognized the import and relationship of agitation in the United States with events abroad. As Harvard political scientists Rupert Emerson and Martin Kilson conceptualized the problem:

> Today Negro agitation and the way in which it is handled by the United States, both nationally and locally, is a matter of crucial concern not only to heads of state around the world but also to many millions of people in many countries. What they think of American intentions and of the way in which the civil rights struggle is handled, brought to them in stories on the air and in the press and in appalling pictures, is a matter which Americans can ignore only at their peril.[9]

Of course, the increased interest in the origins of black nationalism predated the UN riot. In a 1959 speech delivered at North Carolina College and covered by the *Los Angles Tribune*, the dean of the Atlanta University School of Education and father of civil rights activist Julian Bond, Dr. Horace Mann Bond, spoke of the deep connection between the United States and African nationalism. However, he did so from a unique perspective. He told the audience that "African nationalism's original ancestors were the men who pronounced that all men were created equal and endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights—life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."[10]

In pointing to the "American origins" of black nationalism, Bond was not only highlighting the influence of the American Revolution, but also the exposure to ideas of nationalism and pan-Africanism as reimagined by African American and Afro-Caribbean intellectuals and activists. Such ideas were encountered by African and Asian students trained in or simply visiting the United States (e.g., Kwame Nkrumah and Ho Chi Minh, respectively), which transformed their lives and laid the groundwork for major transnational political shifts. It is perhaps not surprising that Bond should make this connection, since he was one of a number of African American educators that helped to mold future African heads of state on black college campuses. This is in an important point, especially in underscoring the identification of African Americans with Third World liberation struggles because the ideas being discussed were certainly not foreign to American blacks. They were the same rights and privileges promised and denied in the United States to African Americans.

While significant work has been done and is being done about black college campuses, the history those studies seek to tell must be supplemented with the interests of the grassroots and how it came to also identify with Africa. Donna Murch

has written brilliantly of the relationship, through the Black Panthers, that developed between the black campus and the street. As Kevin Gaines, Peniel Joseph, Ibram Rogers, and others have done when exploring black college connections at the grassroots; it might be equally useful to include elements of the international that converged upon African American intellectuals and activists. That is to focus attention on not only college campuses and urban centers across the United States, but also to excavate the public and private spaces where African Americans exchanged ideas and culture with other peoples of the Atlantic world.

For example, by 1961 the black Muslims and their fiery spokesman Malcolm X had become the scapegoats for what in reality was more than a half-a-century connection between African, Afro-Caribbean, and African American nationalists. As Manning Marable documents in his book, *Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention*, the black Muslims thought of themselves as a part of the international Muslim community, with Malcolm X and other black Muslims traveling to the continent well before Malcolm's celebrated Hajj in 1964. Nevertheless, it was on the streets of Harlem that Minister Malcolm was able to forge these experiences into a political philosophy. A political philosophy, of course, that also positioned African Americans as prime actors in the struggle against global oppression.[11]

Black nationalists—on campuses, street corners, in grassroots organizations, and elsewhere—were not the only ones concerned with understanding their place in the global fissure that occasioned the demise of old-world colonialism in the 1950s and 1960s. Nations have always been concerned and on the lookout for barometers of social change abroad that might pose a risk domestically. After more than four decades of turmoil and unrest in Europe occasioned by the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars, Austrian minister Prince Metternich famously declared, "When France sneezes Europe catches a cold." The same could be said of the Red Scare during the period of the First World War. While much has been made of the fear of communism in the United States in the post-Second World War era, a number of historians have illustrated that the former colonial powers' anxieties over the spread of African nationalism was also a major concern.

Not surprisingly, as African Americans looked to foreign shores for revolutionary inspiration, segregationist leaders in the Southern United States looked to other colonial powers as the bellwethers of storms on the horizon. Much has been made of white Southern legislators' fierce anticommunism as a means of defending and promoting segregation, but they had abundant "evidence" to support the danger posed by this new strain of nationalism in the context of undermining race relations. In a speech in Stellenbosch in February of 1953, for instance, former chief of the South African state information office, Otto Duplessis, outlined what he perceived to be the greatest threat against South Africa. As he explained, "Since the war, three great forces have emerged in the world: Communism, Asiatic nationalism, and Black Nationalism." "These forces," he continued, "are fighting not against us [the Nationalist Party] but against the white people of South Africa."[12] Enforcing the notion of a race war of black and brown peoples allied against whites, Duplessis reminded his audience, "The Asians are generally regarded here as colored people."

A year later, talks and a series of meetings between the leaders of Indonesia, Burma, Ceylon, India, and Pakistan led to the Bogor Conference. Held in late December of 1954, Bogor laid the basis for the Bandung conference held in April of 1955, which, in the eyes of many in the West, threatened to make Duplessis' forecast a reality.

If African and Asian nations now threatened to spread the fires of nationalism across the globe, where had they acquired the germ? Even at the time, African American intellects such as John Henrik Clark identified lessons learned in the United States as the source and, as early as 1961, laid out the argument that would eventually become one of the rallying cries of both Malcolm X's organization of Afro-American Unity and the Black Panthers. As he explained, "In spite of the diversity and contradictions in words and objectives, all of the Afro-American nationalists basically are fighting for the same thing. They feel that the Afro-American constitutes what is tantamount to an exploited colony within a sovereign nation." Clarke, however, went one step further, claiming African American ownership, "In this regard the Afro-American nationalists have extended the basis of their fight to include the reclaiming of their African heritage." "In identifying their fight for national liberation with the new resurgence of Pan-Africanism (actually an Afro-American creation)" he continued, "the Afro-American not only as an instrument for the unification of Africa, but as a broader means for the unification of all people of African descent the world over. In taking this historical step they have turned away from a leadership that was begging and pleading to a more dynamic leadership that is insisting and demanding."[13]

Both Horace Mann Bond and John Henrik Clarke's privileging of African American influences on African nationalism and, by extension, global Black Power helps to explain the US government's deep concern over the potential danger inherent in such a global vision in the 1960s: concern that the fruits of those revolutionary embers might once again burn in the United States. One can see a variation of this thinking in the comments by Malcolm X that ultimately led to his expulsion from the NOI.

On December 1, 1963, just days after President John F. Kennedy's assassination, Malcolm X laid blame for Kennedy's violent demise on the culture of violence promoted by the US economic and foreign interests. "Being an old farm boy myself," he told a packed audience, "chickens coming home to roost never did make me sad; they've always made me glad." Clarifying his position to reporter Louis Lomax, Malcolm X was even more explicit about his meaning, "I meant that the death of Kennedy was the result of a long line of violent acts," he explained, "the culmination of hate and suspicion and doubt in this country. You see, Lomax, this country has allowed white people to kill and brutalize those they don't like. The assassination of Kennedy is a result of that way of life and thinking. The chickens came home to roost; that's all there is to it. America—at the death of the President—just reaped what it had been sowing."

It was not just in the realm of political violence, as foreseen by Malcolm X, but also the reverberations of revolutionary ideas and democratic values that were coming back to haunt the United States in the face of independence movements in Africa. The history of the American Revolution spoke to the sanctity of

liberty and equality elegantly captured by Thomas Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence. As students from across the continent of Africa arrived in the United States in the period after the Second World War to attend the historically black colleges and universities, they often departed with the words of Thomas Jefferson and Thomas Paine ringing in their ears and an imagined blueprint for an independent and united Africa.

Many of the African leaders who came to prominence in the African Independence Movement and Third World liberation struggles during the 1950s and 1960s were educated in the West, including Kwame Nkrumah, who studied at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania. Nkrumah's well-documented interaction with African American civil rights and Black Power advocates, as well as fellow expatriates, while he was in the United States is instructive.

In his role as president of the American Society for African Culture, in 1959 Horace Mann Bond declared, "Nationalism in Africa was made in America by American trained Africans who have inspired the whole continent to assert the rights of Africans." African nationalism's origins, Bond maintained, "were to be found with the men who boldly declared that all men were created equal, and endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights–life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." While acknowledging Jefferson's debt to thinkers of the French Enlightenment, Bond nevertheless concluded, "In the hands and minds of Jefferson and Franklin, these words became living flames that have burned through the centuries, and in this country have found favor in the hands of the American-trained Africans who thereby have inspired the whole continent to assert these rights for Africans."

Bond personally mentored Kwame Nkrumah while serving as president of Lincoln University and was heavily involved in African affairs. He also had attended the All African Peoples Conference hosted by Nkrumah in Accra, Ghana, in 1958. Bond's intent in focusing on the American origins of black nationalism may have been to use the rhetoric of the revolution against those in the West in general and the United States in particular who sought to undermine African liberation struggles—America's chickens again come home to roost. By conceptualizing their struggles as born of the same necessity of the founders, Bond boldly challenged the basis of Western imperialism and hegemony. Bond also recognized the potential threat this posed to the United States. "We are dependent upon African raw materials for the continuance of industrial technology," he explained to his audience, "how Africa goes, determines how the world will go." In acknowledging the West's economic dependence on the continent, he clearly recognized the roots of efforts to undermine the realization of black nationalism in Africa.

Black power advocates were consciously looking beyond US borders for friends and not necessarily wedded to the political practice of democracy. Western powers were not the only entities concerned with criticism of American democracy, calls for a separate black nation, and the potential threat posed by the conscious internationalism of black nationalism and Black Power. Certain civil rights leaders and organizations also expressed concern. As John Henrik Clarke conceptualized the conflict, "The smug middle class leadership of organizations like the

NAACP and the National Urban League have missed (or misjudged) the new tempo of restlessness among the Afro-American newly alerted masses. They still seem to think of this group as being uneducated, unwashed and unorganized worthy of being led but not worthy of being touched or listened to."

Civil rights leaders such as Roy Wilkins and baseball legend Jackie Robinson were frustrated by the attention given to black militancy. As Robinson complained in an open letter to A. Phillip Randolph in March of 1964, "We are living in an age when extremism captures the headlines; the extremism of a Faubus or a Wallace or a Malcolm X. The coverage given Cassius Clay for embracing Black Muslims dwarfs the attention given Floyd Patterson for devoting time and energy to help underprivileged youngsters." "We will not be silent," Robinson continued, "when misguided members of our race seek to give the impression that the Negro, in his fight for integration, would seek to win that fight through separation or segregation or rejection of the white friends who share a common belief in democracy."[14]

When the US government instituted a draft to ensure the military service of "unwashed" masses of which Clarke spoke, it provoked an important showdown within civil rights organizations over the potential danger of Black Power to derail gains made toward full citizenship. Military service was an obligation of such citizenship. Civil rights leaders' concerns about broadening the struggle in the United States to embrace issues of inequality and justice abroad certainly became an issue for debate. Despite his widespread humanitarian efforts in Africa, Jackie Robinson, for instance, was convinced that the struggle for civil rights was one to be fought entirely in the United States. Robinson's concerns about black separatism echoed similar concerns voiced by those in leadership positions within the NAACP, including its Executive Director Roy Wilkins, who also worried about shifting attention away from the struggle for civil rights with anything that suggested a solution short of full inclusion for African Americans in mainstream American society. At its annual convention in June of 1960, NAACP delegates, for instance, battled over a proposed resolution banning the use of the term "black nationalism," which for the NAACP at least according to the *New York Times* "was embodied and represented by the 'Black Muslim' Movement."[15] The resolution was ultimately defeated but the debate illustrates a central point about the mainstream movement's relationship to black nationalism.

Up until 1964, many Americans saw black nationalism as the product of foreign influences and associated expressions of nationalist thought with those on the radical fringe, like the black Muslims who clearly looked beyond the bounds of the United States. For similar reasons, over the course of the decade and despite an earlier more internationalist outlook the NAACP consistently shied away from international coalition building as a means of advancing the civil rights agenda. The Cold Warriors within the organization obviously saw this as harmful to American prestige and feared that it would lead to a loss of influence and support with sympathetic government officials while confirming segregationist claims that the organization was little more than a communistic front. In 1967, for instance, Wilkins cautioned the organization's officers of the dangers of trying to link the struggle in the United States with Third World liberation movements. "You cannot serve the civil rights struggle at home by involving it in

a struggle abroad," Wilkins lectured.[16] As a practical matter, the NAACP leadership worried about the parsing of resources and energies better committed to achieving change at home. In April of 1967, for example, the association adopted a resolution about civil rights organization's involvement with the burgeoning peace movement. Describing efforts to "merge the civil rights movement with the peace movement" as "a serious tactical mistake," the NAACP concluded, "We are not a peace organization nor a foreign policy association. We are a civil rights organization." "The NAACP," the resolution continued, "remains committed to its primary goal of eliminating all forms of racial discrimination and achieving equal rights and equal opportunities for all Americans."[17]

In spite of the critique of some civil rights figures and organizations, the United States' ongoing engagement on foreign soil during the Vietnam War and the large number of blacks' enlisted in the military made the presence of an international perspective amongst a significant portion of black Americans inevitable. It also raised issues of African American loyalties in an international struggle where they had more in common with the enemy than their countrymen and where propaganda might effectively target the black soldier not only by pointing to the inequality of African American at home but also within the US military. Thus, the complexity of a war with a Third World country, with its own legacy of ethnic nationalism, along with domestic events spurred by the civil rights, Black Power, and antiwar movements, forced black troops and the military branches as a whole to grapple with problematic issues of racism and inequality.

The question of the black soldier, for instance, illustrated another dimension of the GI Movement, not centered only on draft dodgers and conscientious objectors, but also on the soldiers in the field struggling with the weighty contradictions of US domestic and foreign policy and those who would exploit such contradictions with the purpose of undermining the war. As David Zeiger explained, "What gave the GI Movement so much power was its deep connection to the broader movement it was part of. That movement wasn't just students resisting the draft to keep from going to Vietnam themselves (another popular myth, in my view). It was the Black Panther Party; it was Vietnam Veterans Against the War; it was national organizations that were constantly expanding the scope of protest against the war; it was students who were shutting their campuses down to force companies like Dow Chemical off campus and end university complicity with the war; it was all those things and more."[18]

In an article in *Daedalus i*n 1965, Harvard political scientists Rupert Emerson and Martin Kilson pointedly raised the issue:

> The United States can no longer live unto itself, nor can Asia and Africa be seen, or see themselves, as isolated continents: we have all become integral parts of a single field of interaction embracing all mankind. Certainly, no one can contend that the American pattern of racial discrimination was any more morally defensible after the First World War than after the Second, but what the rest of the world was then prepared to tolerate indifferently has now become internationally intolerable. This revolutionary change in the world's climate has imposed upon American political leaders the necessity of taking speedy and radical action in a sphere in which they could formerly delay action from year to year and decade to decade.[19]

Aside from the more complex issues of ethnic nationalism abroad, the failure of the US government, including all branches of the military, to police white supremacy fed black anger and frustration during the Vietnam War. This frustration was perhaps best captured by Muhammad Ali, who famously quipped, "I Ain't got no quarrel with the Vietcong. Aint no Viet Cong Ever Called Me Nigger." The statement took on a life of its own, inviting cross comparisons between African Americans and America's so-called enemy abroad. In some people's eyes, Ali's statement represented what was characterized as a new breed of black militant. His statements regarding the war also betrayed the conscious internationalism and solidarity that many African Americans had long felt toward the darker races. As Ali stated, "No, I am not going 10,000 miles to help murder and burn other people to simply help continue the domination of white slavemasters over dark people the world over. This is the day and age when such evil injustice must come to an end."[20]

Again, this was not a new phenomenon. As Kimberley L. Phillips chronicles in her book, *War! What is it Good For?: Black Freedom Struggles & the U.S. Military from World War II to Iraq,* America's military history is fraught with the contradiction of black soldiers fighting for a country that consistently treated them as subhuman. During the Colonial Era, African American military service posed a problem for what would become the United States, since presenting those who had been enslaved with arms to fight for a cause in which they had a real stake was a risky exercise. During the First World War, the French High Command sought to assuage Southern racialist sensibilities by discouraging undue contact and fraternization between the French military, the French civilian population, and African American soldiers. The desegregation of the armed forces under Harry S. Truman in 1948 was certainly not enough to solve this ongoing challenge, as many units remained segregated, if not in practice then in spirit. African American soldiers were still subjected to second-class treatment.

As theatres of war changed from Europe and the South Pacific to Asia and the Far East, and as the balance of power shifted as a result of decolonization efforts in Asia and Africa during the 1950s and 1960s, the United States Government found itself dealing with populations whom, unlike the French, would not look kindly upon requests not to "spoil" Black soldiers by treating them as full human beings and equals to any other group.

In addition to these concerns, problems on the domestic front, most notably decisions to send combat troops to quell US urban unrest, had a serious impact on both soldiers and the military high command. Some soldiers questioned the morality of deploying the military to quiet political dissent on American soil, while the military was doing its best to address the potential nightmare of a two-front war with a powerful internal enemy—disgruntled soldiers—on its own frontlines. These tensions were exacerbated by the influence of black nationalism and Black Power—both on the domestic front, in the military and in some of the countries in which American soldiers were deployed. Violent clashes between troops including two significant outbreaks of racial violence at Camp Lejeune, NC, and Camp Kaneohe, Hawaii, (which left 31 injured), also added to the problem. Military authorities also faced the prospects of a concentrated

propaganda campaign aimed at black soldiers from radical sources both at home and abroad.

Military concerns over such propaganda were certainly not new. In 1942, journalist Pearl Buck worried about the impact of American race relations on the war effort and the impact of Japanese propaganda that focused on Jim Crow segregation. Citing the potential effectiveness of such propaganda Buck noted, "For specific proof the Japanese point to our treatment of our own colored people, citizens for generations in the United States." "Every lynching, every race riot," she concluded, "gives joy to Japan. The discriminations of the American army and navy and the air forces against colored soldiers and sailors, the exclusion of colored labor in our defense industries and trade unions, all our social discriminations, are of the greatest aid today to our enemy in Asia, Japan."[21] In the 1940s, the Nazis propaganda machine also used race a powerful propaganda tool. Two decades later a vibrant antiwar movement in the United States and the writings of the Black Panthers in particular fed efforts by radical students abroad to make direct connections with African Americans in pursuit of a very difficult goal, the creation of an international antiwar movement. The message resonated abroad and, as in the Second World War, propaganda and Black Power literature aimed at American black soldiers exhorted a revolutionary solidarity predicated on racial inequality in the United States.

The American military believed that they faced a significant threat from the rhetoric and literature of black nationalists and Black Power organizations that possessed the authenticity to question African Americans unfair treatment in the military and worsening conditions back home. They were also in a position to call for blacks to abandon service or even join the vanguard of a Third World revolutionary army committed to smashing imperialism.

Just as the civil rights and Black Power movements influenced American diplomacy, both movements also heavily influenced the armed forces. Here we can see two distinct vantage points of Global Black Power. The first is from the perspective of African American soldiers, who shipped out to all corners of the globe carrying with them the infectious seed of American-exported black nationalism. The other is from US military officials, who were left scrambling to reconcile growing militancy within their ranks at the same time as they tried to execute an increasingly unpopular war. Through the resulting policies and actions, US military officials unwittingly served as transmitters of what, if successful, could represent a serious challenge to their efforts.[22]

The Black Power movement, in particular, helped to create a context for black soldiers to voice their grievances and register their discontent with American domestic policy, as well as with the war in Vietnam. The potential power of that voice posed a real concern for the American military. It also concerned older black veterans and some in the civil rights community who worried that such disaffection might be seen as treasonous.

A disproportionate number of black soldiers served in the Vietnam War, representing 12.6 percent of men under arms during the peak years of US engagement from 1965 to 1969, despite only making up 11 percent of the total US population. The war exacted a heavy toll, with blacks accounting for almost 20 percent

of all combat-related deaths. In 1965 alone, an estimated one-fourth of the army's fatalities were African Americans. In the field of combat, African American soldiers faced further discrimination, often making up half of the men on the frontline.

In addition to the discrimination they faced in the military, young African American troops were also offered an all-expense paid trip to witness firsthand the global nature of oppression often chronicled by proponents of Black Power. Furthermore, events at home—including urban rebellions beginning with Watts in 1965 and continuing throughout the decade—did not escape the attention of black GIs and served to further undercut their morale.

The assassination of the civil rights movement's apostle of peace, the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, in April of 1968 brought tensions to a head. This was especially true on domestic bases and in rear support units in the field, where the dangers posed by combat did not act as a suppressant to racial tensions and violence. Perhaps the worst of this type of violence occurred at the Cam Ranh Bay, Republic of Vietnam (RVN) navy base, often described as the nerve center of the navy's operations during the war. While mourners lined the streets to remember the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, white sailors dressed in sheets hoisted the Confederate flag and burned crosses to celebrate his assassination. It took several days for authorities to quiet the resulting hostility. Such disturbances at both domestic and foreign military installations, which dealt with similar issues that civilian African Americans faced throughout the states, underscored tensions between black and white soldiers.

For the most part, at least publicly, the military refused to accept that it had a problem and often downplayed the racial and political overtones of these disturbances. Toward the close of the decade, however, this became increasingly more difficult as attention on the war in Vietnam increased. In many ways foreshadowing the Attica Riot, which took place in New York in 1971, and mirroring the growing prison movement, in August of 1968 black soldiers imprisoned at the US Army stockade at Long Binh, RVN rioted over their subhuman treatment. The resulting violence, which claimed the life of one white soldier—not to mention numerous injuries and extensive property damage—served notice that the problem was much bigger than what military brass was willing to admit.[23]

In response to this problem, the various branches of the military and the department of defense conducted more than a half-dozen studies. Each sought to consider ways of tamping down on problems while increasing black troop's morale and the potential for even greater penetration of radical ideas that the enemy might exploit. As if to confirm what black soldiers already knew from experience, a study conducted in January of 1970 found support waning among African Americans for the military. Commissioned by Army Chief of Staff General William C. Westmoreland, the report concluded, "Negro soldiers seem to have lost faith in the Army system." The report sought to explain this loss of faith and the increase in racial tensions as a product of the climate at home and African Americans' lack of awareness about their long history in the nation's armed forces. Among other things the report observed that African American soldiers "are not aware of the many accomplishments of the Army in their behalf

and their leaders are sometimes either unaware that their soldiers have complaints or are unprepared to handle those problems which do come to their attention."[24] "The unfortunate dilemma of the young Negro soldier is that he has a legacy in the long gray line, but has not been told it. He is confused by the world around him, baited by some of his white racist bunk mates, hounded by black militants, who preach violence and black separatism, and all the while is longing for military leadership throughout his chain of command to recognize and communicate with him." The army's position betrays the military's quandary over acknowledging the soldiers concerns and its own ambivalences about how to deal with them.

As the military continued to ponder its options, black troops never ceased pushing the boundaries in their attempt to come to grips with the meaning of the war and their place in it. Throughout the course of the war, African American soldiers had been organizing and introducing the trappings of the civil rights and Black Power movements into the military. Often the genesis of such organizing was organic. At other times, it came in response to incidents.

Such was the case with a Black Power group, the Moormen, that was formed by black sailors at Camranh Bay, Vietnam, shortly after the King assassination disturbance. For the first year of its existence, the group met with marked hostility from military personnel. Nevertheless, by September of 1969, they claimed 150 members at the Marine training installation at Quantico Virginia alone. Calling themselves a "study group," the body was more of a hybrid organization than an association of strict followers or adherents of any one group or philosophy. What most set the group apart was its adoption of the symbols of black cultural nationalism, including Afro hairdos and the clenched fist Black Power salute. The literature and issues these groups addressed put them squarely at the forefront of discussions about global oppressions as the very shock troops of American imperialism abroad. By the time the group surfaced on the radar of the American press in the fall of 1969, they had already profoundly influenced military brass eager to control the potentially explosive situation.

In the aftermath of the uprisings on US military bases, the military confronted the interesting problem of actually exporting black nationalism by allowing African American soldiers to sport the symbols and have access to the literature of radical black organizations. With African Americans disproportionately making up the enlistment rolls of troops in Vietnam, the situation required close monitoring and innovative solutions.

Furthermore, the military had to balance its efforts against the concerns of white soldiers who were often offended by the display of anything Black Power. "How do you think we feel when we see Black Power flags or when we see them give their Black Power salute?" a white sergeant complained to *Time* Magazine. "I can tell you one thing; it sure doesn't make us happy." These concerns were echoed by an older generation of black soldiers, such as Marine Gunnery Sgt. James H. Ball, who told *Jet* Magazine "The white Marines won't like this any more than I'd like seeing them in Ku Klux Klan robes."[25]

In an effort to "come to grips with the problem of racial friction," in the fall of 1969, Marine Commandant General Leonard F. Chapman authorized all

unit commanders to allow Afro hairstyles among black soldiers, providing that "it conforms with current Marine Corps regulations." He further approved the use of the Black Power salute as long as it was not used in "official ceremonies or as an act of defiance." The fact that this order originated with the Marine Corp was significant, given the history and tradition associated with the organization. The most regimented of the American armed forces, the marines were the last branch of the military to desegregate. Furthermore, these deep traditions in the marines, as acknowledged by *Jet Magazine*, where one is "A Marine first and then an American," made the corp the last place one would expect compromise. The fact that it came from these quarters, of course, underscores the seriousness of the military's concerns. The relaxation of these rules also came with a provision by authorities to end unfair practices in duty assignments, promotions, the handling of grievances, and the meting out of discipline. The order, which was set to expire in March of 1970, was to be followed by permanent and equally strong guidelines.

Although black nationalist marines stationed at the Quantico facility accepted the military's gesture, it did not stop them from questioning the corps' motives. The Moorman and other groups recognized the inherent contradiction in the military's policy and, to a certain extent, in their own actions. The symbols of Black Power were born in protest. Any attempt to co-opt them would be ridiculous on its face. By sanctioning the symbols of their power, the marines were in essence working to declaw Black Power. The Moormen received the new move with caution. Willie Hagood, who was serving as the organization's minister of information, spoke to the heart of the problem, "How are you going to wear a 'neatly trimmed' Afro? There's no such thing. And what does soul music in a juke box have to do with a racist sergeant who's been sidestepping the rules for years?"[26]

Nevertheless, the theater of what was happening was impressive, and gave radical GIs a safer, if more circumscribed, arena in which to explore their own politics. "A uniformed visitor," *Jet Magazine* observed after visiting with the Moormen in 1970, "might have thought they stumbled onto an underground black guerilla base, where the invasion of a "honky stronghold" was being plotted in secret."

At the end of the day just as the Moormen had theorized, the military's change of heart was not all altruistic. *Jet* Magazine saw the policy as a recruitment tool, a view that the Moormen also shared. Furthermore, the military's new policy also came just as the government was using troops in massive numbers to coral black students on southern campuses. The attempted use of black soldiers to quell domestic disturbances had already created problems. In 1968, black soldiers stationed at Texas' Fort Hood made headlines after they were beaten and thrown in the stockade for refusing to deploy to Chicago to help end demonstrations there. The soldiers, who eventually came to be known as the Fort Hood 43, were punished severally for their act of insubordination. Thirty-five received trials by special court-martial. The other eight were given general court-martials. Tried and convicted by what one source called "the all-white all brass judge-jury system of the Army," the majority of the men were stripped of their rank, given

the maximum six month stockade sentences, and fined two-thirds of their pay for each month in prison. The army also extended their enlistments, since time spent in the stockade counted as bad conduct punishable by an additional six months in the military. Ironically, the crime with which they were charged was not insubordination, but failing to show up for reveille. None denied, however, that their act was a deliberate act of defiance, considering the fact that they had formulated the plan not to show during an all-night summit held on a post street corner. "Most GI's who do not make reveille," noted one GI, "are given a couple days of KP and a reprimand."[27] The army intent in 1968 was clear: to send a strong message that the military would not brook any protest or dissent within its ranks.

In granting the Moormen the right to exist, military authorities attempted to substitute a cultural nationalist aesthetic for revolutionary black nationalism and Black Power. Furthermore, allowing black soldiers to sport baby Afros and greet one another with the modified Black Power salute allowed military authorities to appear willing to compromise while also giving them a distinct advantage in identifying and tracking soldiers who might potentially pose a problem.

Despite the military's efforts to address their fear of the dangerous potential of Black Power, in 1971 the US military reported twice the number of fragging deaths. This seemed to parallel the disrespect for authority seen at home in the increased murders of policemen, which state and federal law enforcement officials laid at the feet of black militant organizations like the BPP.

Founded in 1966 by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale, the BPP's talk of a revolutionary vanguard predictably fed fears among US military officials about the potential for Black Power to erode military morale and discipline, if not the out-and-out mutiny that fragging represented. Black Power militants who regularly expressed support for Third World liberation struggles obviously augmented these fears. More often than not, however, Black Power militants encouraged African Americans not to serve in the military in the first place.

For example, former Black Panther leader Bobby Seale talked about his discharge from the air force for "bad conduct" and subsequently penned a poem "Uncle Sammy Call Me Fulla of Lucifer," which documented his experience and for which he was subsequently jailed for reciting it on an Oakland street corner in 1966. The poem began with the memorable line, "Uncle Sammy don't shuck and jive me" and ended with the pledge "I will not serve."[28]

However, despite its insistence that blacks avoid military service, the BPP also espoused the treasonous rhetoric feared by the military and those loyal to its interests. Upon his release from prison in 1970, Huey Newton explained that one of the BPP's top priorities would be the recruitment of an African American unit to fight alongside the Vietcong. NAACP president Roy Wilkins bristled at the suggestion, causing him to publicly ponder why "a young black American, as smart and articulate as Huey Newton could be so overcome with the anguish of a people 9,000 miles from the United States that he downgrades the suffering of his own people in the slums of Los Angeles or in the shacks of rural Alabama?"[29]

If Wilkins was disappointed by Newton and the BPP's visions of an alliance with Third World revolutionaries, the National Liberation Front in Vietnam was

nevertheless impressed. In 1971, Madam Binh, the foreign minister of the provisional revolutionary government of South Vietnam, sent a brief communication to the BPP detailing the escalation of bombing by the US Air Force and requesting that the Panthers "mobilize [your] peace force, [in] your country [to] check [the] US dangerous venture [in] Indochina."[30]

Glimpses of how the Panthers imagined Third World revolutionary struggles emerge from US law enforcement documents as well. For example, during the New York 21 Trial in New York City, Panther informant Paul White testified that Panther leader Lumumba Shakur required all New York Panthers to view "The Battle of Algiers" as a form of training. Indicative of the attractiveness of international consciousness, the *Soul City Times* was confident that White's ploy to poison the jury and public against the Panthers could backfire. "Many of the jury were clearly absorbed by the film. The connection between the Algerian Revolution and the Black Struggle in America is right there. The oppressed-oppressor roles are clear, as is the racism inherent in colonialism. The Casbah becomes Harlem. And the justice Algerians struggle for liberation at any price is clear."

The rhetoric and international consciousness of the BPP allowed would be allies at home and abroad to imagine the potential for cultivating a transnational anti-imperialist solidarity movement that would fight against US imperialism and racism. Taking their cues from the Panthers, many saw American blacks as the vanguard of that struggle. Just as the Panthers spoke of harnessing the power of the black lumpen proletariat, many foreign organizations sought to make connections with black soldiers, who in many cases were the only African Americans in their orbit. As historian Maria Höhn notes in a 2008 article in the *German Studies Review,* as early as 1967, German student radicals, seeking to establish ties with the Black Panthers, directed their energies toward cultivating African American GIs stationed in Germany. The German students were heavily influenced by an underground GI newspaper, "Voice of the Lumpen," which often carried articles by the Panthers and made similar claims to the necessity of a worldwide freedom struggle enlisting the aid of oppressed peoples across the globe.[31]

In the final analysis, as Emerson and Kilson observed, "From great wars come unexpected consequences—certainly consequences unforeseen, and usually undesired, by those responsible for shaping the policies which led to war." Much of the "new" scholarship is reflective of the conventional wisdom of the time, and Emerson and Kilson were definitely way ahead in recognizing the reciprocal nature of a transatlantic exchange between the United States and Africa. "The Negro American has played a role in the stimulation and shaping of African nationalism," they explained in 1965, "and the mere existence of the newly sovereign African states, now constituting a quarter of the membership of the United Nations, has changed the nature of the American scene."[32] This was significant for the two political scientists, who saw in it "the restructuring of American race relationships." Emerson and Kilson argued that this particular restructuring was emerging within a "new framework" springing from international conditions largely produced by the Second World War. They identified three primary

elements of this new framework. First, they noted, "America's status as a superpower whose interests reach to every corner of a shrinking world and whose actions affect every people, no matter how remote." Second, they pointed to "the coming of the Cold War and the global confrontation with Communism." Lastly, they pointed to "the debut of problems of race and color on the international stage consequent upon the rise of postwar Asian and African nationalism."

The conscious internationalism of African American activists had reverberations in many different arenas, at home and abroad. This included influencing activists and historians at the grassroots, black colleges, and policies within the US military. In the case of the military, while the motivations for their responses were as disparate as the organizations that claimed Black Power as their banner, in the end, the conscious internationalism of the movement itself forced officials to take it seriously and abandon a policy of business as usual. Whether real, imagined or, in most cases, a little of both, the threats and the promises of a global Black Power movement had influence and power beyond the boundaries of the United States. Its principles were internalized, reimagined, imported, and exported by African Americans, who were respected members of a worldwide freedom struggle.

Notes

1. For testimony regarding Winston Salem, NC, from the Ervin Hearings, see Frank J. Donner, *The Age of Surveillance: The Aims and Methods of America's Political Intelligence System* (New York: Knopf, 1980; Vintage, 1981), 306. On general surveillance during the period, see Kathryn S. Olmsted, *Challenging the Secret Government: The Post-Watergate Investigations of the CIA and FBI* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Roy Talbert, Jr., *Negative Intelligence: The Army and the American Left, 1917–1941* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1991); Christopher H. Pyle, *Military Surveillance of Civilian Politics, 1967–1970* (New York: Garland, 1986).
2. Gail Lumet Buckley, *American Patriots: The Story of Blacks in the Military from the Revolution to Desert Storm* (New York: Random House, 2001); Brenda L. Moore, *To Serve My Country, To Serve My Race: The Story of the Only African American WACS Stationed Overseas during World War II* (New York: New York University Press, 1996); James M. McPherson, *The Negro's Civil War: How American Negroes Felt and Acted during the War for the Union* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1991); Michael Lee Lanning, *The African American Soldier: From Crispus Attucks to Colin Powell* (New Jersey: Citadel Press, 1999); Morris J. MacGregor and Bernard C. Nalty, *Blacks in the United States Armed Forces: Basic Documents* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1997).
3. Final Report, Book II of the Senate Select Committee to Study Intelligence Activities, 108; see also William Conrad Gibbons, *The U.S. Government and the Vietnam War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 856.
4 Helms testimony can be found in Book II Final report of the Select Committee to study governmental operations with respect to Intelligence Activities of the United States Senate, 452.
5. Kimberly Phillips, *War! What Is It Good For?: Black Freedom Struggles and the U. S. Military*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, Press, 2012), 224.

6. Robert L. Teague, "Negroes Say Conditions in U.S. Explain Nationalists' Militancy: Negroes Explain Extremist Drives," *New York Times* (March 2, 1961): 1; Harold Cruse, *Rebellion or Revolution?* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 69.
7. Bernard Bailyn, *Atlantic History: Concept and Contours* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005); Darlene Clark Hine, Trica Danielle Keaton, and Stephen Small, *Black Europe and the African Diaspora* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2009); Joseph E. Harris, ed., *Global Dimensions of the African Diaspora*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1993).
8. John Henrik Clarke, The New Afro-American Nationalism Fall 1961, http://www.africawithin.com/clarke/new_afro.htm.
9. Rupert Emerson and Martin Kilson, "The American Dilemma in a Changing World: The Rise of Africa and the Negro American," *Daedalus* 94, no. 4 (Fall 1965): 1056.
10. African Nationalism Traced Back to Benjamin Franklin Durham; Article Type: News/Opinion Paper: *Los Angeles Tribune*; February 20, 1959, vol. 19, no. 2, p. 19, Los Angeles, California.
11. As John Henrik Clarke declared in 1961, "Harlem has always been the incubator for Black Nationalism in too many organizations and too many leaders with conflicting programs." While Harlem may have been the epicenter, as recent local studies of the south and urban north show, reverberations of this conscious internationalism were felt throughout the United States—from Philadelphia, PA, and New Haven, CT, in the East to Oakland, CA, and Seattle, WA, in the west to Des Moines, IA, and Omaha, NE, in-between.
12. Albion Ross, "Malan Aide Sees a Hostile World," *The New York Times,* February 15, 1953, 21.
13. John Henrik Clarke, "The New Afro-American Nationalism," *Freedomways* 1, no. 3 (Fall 1961).
14. Robinson to A. Phillip Randolph March 28, 1964, 195.
15. NAACP Upholds Students' Sit-Ins By Farnsworth Fowles Special to *The New York Times*. *New York Times (1923-Current file);* June 26, 1960; ProQuest Historical Newspapers *The New York Times* (1851–2007), 72.
16. Roy Wilkins, "Civil Rights Must Stand on Own Merits," *Justice*, April 15, 1967.
17. *Crisis* (April 1967): 126–127. The loyalty shown by staunch Cold Warriors such as Wilkins and Robinson did not exempt them from government scrutiny, especially once they expressed ideas counter to the Department of State and the FBI. In fact, even the most innocuous statements brought the label of extremism. For example, Robinson was later targeted by the FBI after he spoke out in defense of the BPP in September of 1968, saying that they were an organization with "an interest in seeking peace" and denouncing reports to the contrary as the work of "uninformed newsmen." A subsequent memo from FBI director J. Edgar Hoover to Presidential Counsel John Ehrlichman tried to loosely tie Robinson to leftists and communist groups.
18. David Zeiger, "Did the GI Movement End the Vietnam War? And What Is the Real Legacy Of the GI Coffeehouses?" http://differentdrummercafe.org/gimovement.html.
19. Emerson and Kilson, "American Dilemma in a Changing World," 1056.
20. Muhammad Ali, "The Measure of a Man," *Freedomways* 72, no. 2 (Spring 1967): 1010–1102.
21. Pearl S. Buck, *American Unity and Asia* (New York: John Day, 1942), 29.
22. Historically, the military had been one avenue through which African Americans could push for democratic reform. Early victories, such as Executive Orders 8802 and 9981, were clearly Cold War victories. Later reforms came in part through the influence of the civil rights and Black Power movements. Even with the passage of the

Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, deeply entrenched racial attitudes in the American military did not die. In the late 1960s, as US involvement in Vietnam escalated, African-American soldiers' frustrations worsened.

23. Bernard C. Nalty, *Strength for the Fight: A History of Black Americans in the Military* (New York: The Free Press, 1986), 306–317; See also Wallace Terry, *Bloods: An Oral History of the Vietnam War by Black Veterans* (New York: Random House, 1984).
24. "Study Shows Negroes Losing Faith in Army," *Racine Journal Times*, January 25, 1970.
25. Ibid., 24.
26. "A New Order Allows Black Marines to Have More Soul," *Jet Magazine,* September 25, 1969, 22**.**
27. "Fort Hood 43," *Flag in Action*, no. 2, http://www.sirnosir.com/archives_and_resources/library/articles/flag_in_action_06.html.
28. Bobby Seale, *Seize the Time: The Story of the Black Panther Party and Huey P. Newton* (New York; Baltimore, MD: Black Classic Press, 1991), 27–28.
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30. SNCC Papers, Reel 53, Howard University; Williams, "American Exported Black Nationalism," 16.
31. Maria Höhn, "The Black Panther Solidarity Committees and the Voice of the Lumpen," *German Studies Review* 31, no. 1 (February 2008): 133–154; Besenia Rodriguez, "'Long Live Third World Unity! Long Live Internationalism': Huey P. Newton's Revolutionary Intercommunalism," *Souls: A Critical Journal of Black Politics, Culture & Society* 8, no. 3 (Summer 2006): 119–141.
32. Emerson and Kilson, "American Dilemma in a Changing World," 1056.

8

From Black Power to a Revolution of Values: Grace Lee Boggs and the Legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr.

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> The black revolution is much more than a struggle for the rights of Negroes. It is forcing America to face all its interrelated flaws—racism, poverty, militarism, and materialism. It is exposing evils that are rooted deeply in the whole structure of our society ... and suggests that radical reconstruction of society is the real issue to be faced.
>
> —*Martin Luther King Jr.*

Jacqueline Dowd Hall's essay on "the long civil rights movement" and the politics of collective memory opens with this trenchant quote from Martin Luther King, Jr. For Dowd Hall, the bowdlerization of King ("frozen in 1963, proclaiming 'I have a dream'") lies at the core of the sanitized narrative of the "short" civil rights movement. Dowd Hall wants us to remember King as "the democratic socialist who advocated unionization, planned the Poor People's Campaign, and was assassinated in 1968 while supporting a sanitation workers' strike."[1]

But having established that King had thoroughly condemned the systemic and intersectional nature of American oppression and declared that he was a democratic socialist—something King did in word privately, in deed publicly—Dowd Hall drops the matter of King almost entirely. For the body of the text, she refers to King only in a few aside comments while reviewing new currents of twentieth-century American historiography. Then she ushers him back in to cement her argument through the essay's conclusion and draw our attention to the "long" movement's unfinished agenda. We need to appreciate, Dowd Hall argues, that "the challenges faced by the civil rights movement stemmed from what Martin Luther King Jr. called 'evils that are rooted deeply in the whole structure of our society,' evils that ... persist and in some ways have been compounded."[2]

The many virtues of Dowd Hall's sweeping and seminal essay have been widely acknowledged.[3] What new debates, therefore, must it now provoke? Here, I want to focus on King as a jumping-off point. Dowd Hall uses King to open and close her essay, assigning him the task of offering an invocation and a benediction. But she affords King no part in the struggles her essay seeks to bring to our attention. The effect is to liberate King from being stuck in 1963 only to freeze him instead in 1967–1968. Missing, therefore, is an analysis of how King moved from the "dream" of 1963 to the "evils" of 1967–1968. What new developments, questions, and challenges prompted this shift? What agonies and unresolved dilemmas did this shift produce?

The social historian's imperative to emphasize enduring structures over fleeting events and grassroots agency over charismatic leaders is a powerful one indeed. But the pitfall of structural analysis is a one-sided perspective. In Dowd Hall's case, the obstacles to progress she presents are external in nature, almost exclusively the product of realities and constraints imposed upon people of color or workers by others. However, as Sundiata Cha-Jua and Clarence Lang have argued, understanding social movements, community organizing, and popular struggles entails wrestling with the dynamic tensions at the heart of their existence.[4] To the degree Dowd Hall presents us with a chronologically constant contradiction resolvable through the ever-elusive and seemingly transhistorical ideals of civil rights unionism and social democracy, she neglects to appreciate fully how and why collectives of people come together in different times and places to foster new hopes, a new sense of self, and a new set of relationships.

The purpose of this chapter is to place Martin Luther King back into the struggles of the "long" period and consider his evolution as a thinker, a preacher, and a movement builder alongside that of Grace Lee Boggs's role as a philosopher, proselytizer for secular causes, and movement builder. It was written as a companion piece to the book I have coauthored with Grace Lee Boggs—a project connected to my work with Grace since 2000 as a community organizer documentarian, archivist, editor, and writing collaborator.[5] A daughter of Chinese immigrants born in 1915, Grace Lee earned a BA from Barnard College in 1935 and PhD in Philosophy from Bryn Mawr College in 1940—a feat nearly unimaginable for an Asian American woman during the Depression. Unable to find work within academia, she became a grassroots organizer within the black community of Chicago, developing a close 20-year relationship with C. L. R. James through mutual membership in Left organizations and collaboration on a series of intellectual projects. This work overlapped with and was eventually succeeded by her extensive civil rights, Black Power, and community-based activism in Detroit in partnership with James Boggs—her late husband, an African American autoworker from rural Alabama. Working as a team—to the point that it is difficult to separate out their respective contributions—James and Grace Lee Boggs became best known as dedicated organizers in Detroit's black community and radical theoreticians in places beyond.[6]

I want to be careful to eschew facile parallels. Whereas King was arguably the most prominent and influential figure in twentieth-century US history, Boggs was (and remains) an unknown quantity to the vast majority of Americans—her

most significant involvements did not produce the type of societal impact that in any way approached that of King's. Instead, it is her biographical distinctions that render her intriguing today. Whereas Grace's gender, ethnicity, and political commitments sidelined her from the mainstream debates of twentieth-century politics and culture, I contend that this marginalization left her well positioned to identify the unresolved contradictions of twentieth-century movements. This is what makes her thoughts on King's legacy salient to our twenty-first century dilemmas.

Having since established a more independent identity, Grace remains exceptionally active today—perhaps uniquely so for a 97-year old—as a writer, public speaker, and activist. In *The Next American Revolution*, Grace references her work as a community activist confronting the postindustrial abandonment of Detroit to offer a vision of rebuilding social and economic relations from the ground up. For instance, the rise of the urban agricultural movement exemplifies the shift that is pushing grassroots activists away from reliance on factory jobs, a shrinking welfare state, impotent trade unions, and the politics of minority grievance and toward a new emphasis on self-reliance, local community building, and ecological sustainability. She especially highlights the way that Martin Luther King's call for a "revolution of values" to overcome the "giant triplets of racism, materialism and militarism" speaks to our societal predicament today.

My discussion of King and Boggs will foreground four interrelated concerns that push beyond the social democratic interpretation of King and the "long" civil rights movement. First, a focus on their comparative development with relation to the development of the movements in which they participated highlights *the relationship between the struggle over ideas and the struggle on the ground*. Because both saw themselves as immersed within revolutionary movements, both in their own ways accepted responsibility for propagating revolutionary theory and practice.

It would be fair to say that my method in this chapter is to read King's life the way that Boggs has read her own, which brings me to my second concern. I am particularly interested in examining King as a prime example of what Boggs calls a *dialectical thinker*, one who sees historical development occurring through the production and resolution of internal contradictions. I focus especially on King's life preceding and following the "compressed" civil rights era to gain a sense of how he formed his theological/theoretical perspectives during his student years and what went into the radical stances he adopted in the last years of his life. Bringing Boggs into the pictures widens our chronological scope even further. Because her activism predated the Montgomery Bus Boycott by 15 years and has continued more than 40 years beyond King's assassination, she has witnessed, participated in, and processed far more living history than King could have in his intense but abbreviated life.

Third, my study seeks to reap the benefits of linking civil rights and Black Power as historical moments intersecting in the 1960s without suffering the costs of conflating the two. As dialectical thinkers, King and Boggs appreciated that the different movements in which they participated represented a collective leap forward for the political status and consciousness of black America, forever altering

the conditions of life and struggle. Nevertheless, they likewise understood that these movements were *opening up more contradictions than they were resolving*. By 1967–1968, the distinct paths of King and Boggs had converged to such degree that they found themselves grappling with a common set of questions—all revolving around the central theme, "Where do we go from here?" There were no pat answers. Moving forward would not simply be a matter of fulfilling a radical mission but rather of rediscovering and redefining that mission.

Finally, the efforts of King and Boggs to understand the new problems and address the new questions arising over the course of the 1960s led them to draw strikingly similar conclusions. Transcending the integrationist and liberal tendencies of the civil rights movement, King emphasized the need for a *radical revolution of values* to overcome the "giant triplets of racism, materialism and militarism." This particular reading of King as a radical, which Grace would come to embrace, remains vastly underappreciated. It has been best explored by a small handful of scholars, such as Vincent Harding and James Cone, but tends to be overlooked by those who emphasize either his secular or religious influences rather than seeing the interaction between the two.[7] Transcending black nationalism and Marxist notions of materialism, Grace and Jimmy Boggs advanced the concept of *dialectical humanism*. They insisted, echoing King in ways they could not immediately appreciate, that the rebellion and militancy inherent in the Black Power movement fell well short of revolution. King and Boggs would unite—in theory, not practice—behind visions of a *two-sided revolution*, which saw grassroots actions as the catalyst for *self-transformation and structural-transformation*. They defined revolution both by the humanity-stretching *ends* to be achieved and the beloved community-building *means* by which to achieve those ends. King, of course, was killed while organizing the Poor People's Campaign, which he called his "go for broke" strategy. Boggs would engage in a new round of philosophical reflection and political study followed by the implementation of a new activist agenda rooted in the tattered neighborhoods of Detroit.

Thinking Dialectically

"During the 1960s," writes Grace Lee Boggs, "Jimmy and I had paid little attention to the speeches and writings of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Like other members of the Detroit black community, made up largely of former Alabamians, we rejoiced at the victories the civil rights movement was winning in the south." She was, for example, "one of the organizers of the huge June 23, 1963, Freedom Now march down Woodward Avenue in Detroit that was organized by the Detroit Council for Human Rights and led by Dr. King, arm-in-arm with labor leader Walter Reuther and Detroit Black Power leaders." However, Boggs recounts, "as activists struggling for Black Power in Detroit, we identified much more with Malcolm X and tended to view King's call for nonviolence and for the beloved community as somewhat naive and sentimental." In November 1963, Grace served as "one of the main organizers and Jimmy was the chair" of the Grassroots Leadership Conference at which Malcolm delivered his speech about the black revolution

"anticipating his break with the Nation of Islam." The Boggses felt such a strong connection to Malcolm and what he represented to the black movement that they subsequently went to Harlem to discuss the prospect of him moving to Detroit to study and organize alongside them. Still, Grace "became increasingly troubled by the way that black militants kept quoting Malcolm's 'by all means necessary,' ignoring the profound changes that Malcolm was undergoing in the year following his split with the Nation of Islam."[8]

During the 1980s and early 1990s, she began to reconsider King's life and work. Her embrace of King begins with her assertion that he was a dialectical thinker.

> To my delight I discovered that Hegel had been King's favorite philosopher. This reminded me of the influence that Hegel has had on my own life ever since I read his *Phenomenology* in my early twenties and learned that the process of constantly overcoming contradictions, or what Hegel called the "suffering, the patience, and the labour of the negative," is the key to the continuing evolution of humanity.[9]

Reading Hegel as a student had made Boggs "acutely aware of the power of ideas to be both liberating and limiting." She continues:

> From Hegel, I had gained an appreciation of how we as human beings have evolved over many thousands of years, struggling for Freedom (or what we today call "self-determination"). Constantly striving to overcome the contradictions or negatives which inevitably arise in the course of struggle, constantly challenged to break free from ideas which were at one time liberating but had become fetters on our minds because reality had changed, we are required to create new ideas that make more concrete and more universal our concept of what it means to be free.[10]

During the 1940s and 1950s, Grace helped make signature contributions to Marxist-humanist theories that distinguished her and her comrades from the materialist heritage influencing most leftists. Shortly after joining the Workers Party in 1940, a common respect for Hegel drew her to C. L. R. James and Raya Dunayevskaya, leaders of the Johnson-Forest Tendency—a self-identified grouping within the party—and key mentors to a still wet behind the ears Grace Lee. Combined with Dunayevskaya's Russian background, Grace's study of Hegel and knowledge of German language proved critical to the Johnson-Forest Tendency's translation of the "early" Marx's Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts—the first published in English. C. L. R. James reported in 1947 that "Ria Stone [Grace's party name], with an academic training in philosophy, eased the road to the fundamental grasp of the principles of the Hegelian dialectic and their application to Marxian economics, sociology and politics."[11] Grace reflects:

> Being a Marxist for us meant focusing not on property relationships but on the spiritual as well as the physical misery of capitalism. Capitalism, we argued, reduces the worker to a fragment, robbing them of their natural and acquired powers. It alienates them from their species and communal essence. Socialism, by contrast, means the reappropriation by the oppressed of their human and social essence.

The Johnson-ites, moreover, "emphasized the significance of the independent 'Negro' struggle in the making of an American revolution." And against hierarchical notions of power and centralist organizational models, "they celebrated and encouraged the self-activity and self-organization of workers and marginalized people, seeing them as the force to bring about real social change."[12]

Although King would come to movement organizing much later than Grace Lee and C. L. R. James, his writings and speeches invoked Hegelian themes time and again, always pointing to the half-truths inherent in opposing perspectives and seeking resolution on a higher plane of unity. King's dialectical reasoning was in part driven by an attempt to reconcile contradictory life experiences. As Taylor Branch argues, King's "own small world had been a blend of opposites—serenity and ambition, knowledge and zeal, church and state, Negro and white." One could add to this list: North/South, liberalism/fundamentalism, and nationalism/integrationism.[13]

While we should be careful not to overstate the extent of Reinhold Niebuhr's influence on King (and thereby understate the influence of his upbringing within the black church), it was ultimately Niebuhr's work that shaped King's dialectical approach to philosophy and theology. Niebuhr's neo-orthodox view emphasizing original sin helped to round out King's theological reading of history, sociology, and the nature of man. Although deeply tied to the black church and intent on becoming a preacher in the talented tenth vein of his father, King had moved north to escape the confines of both Jim Crow segregation and the fundamentalism of Daddy King's orbit. First at Crozer Theological Seminary and then at Boston University, he gravitated toward Personalism and liberal Protestantism, generally enjoying himself and thriving within an integrated social context. But the liberal optimism he drew from his readings, his professors, and his newfound personal and political freedom encountered its dialectical other in Niebuhr's endemic concept of social sin. King would thus come to see the world as one in which "both ideal and achievement must be suspended in a dialectical relation." Social relations were a synthesis of the ethical ideal of agape love and the practical reality of Justice—enforced by power and, if necessary, imposed through coercion. "For Niebuhr," King especially noted, "the only adequate religious expression of the human situation is a combination of this-worldly and other-worldly hopes."[14]

The idealism of King's student days was quickly tested as he became immersed in the real life struggles of Montgomery and beyond. Squaring off against entrenched white supremacist foes and facing constant threats to his personal safety, King—often in conflict with pessimistic readings of Niebuhr—strove to uphold the ideal of agape love, while asserting that social justice must be attained through pursuit of the beloved community. He constantly maintained faith that God provided the "resources of grace" to carry out his mission—one that the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) at its creation defined by the phrase "to redeem the soul of America." As the civil rights struggle broadened and intensified, King understood that nothing short of a revolution could fulfill this mission.

American Revolutions

At the core of Grace Lee Boggs's embrace of King lies his recognition—shared with Jimmy Boggs—that his task and the task of movement builders in the United States was to make an *American* revolution. Since their 1953 union, Grace and Jimmy Boggs insisted that no model of revolution could be imported from another epoch or place. Instead, an American revolution must be forged in response to the specific conditions of American capitalism and empire, building particularly upon indigenous traditions of struggle.

C. L. R. James shared this general prescription but disagreed as to where it should lead. In 1962, the Boggses broke with C. L. R. over their position that changes in the structure of the US economy necessitated "revisit[ing] some of the foundational concepts of Marxism." (Grace writes that C. L. R. "disowned us.") Their split document was published by *Monthly Review* in 1963 as *The American Revolution: Pages from a Negro Worker's Notebook* with Jimmy as author but both developing the ideas informing it. As Grace recounts, Jimmy was an organic intellectual who had lived though three epochs: agriculture during the sharecropping/Jim Crow-era of the South; the industrial age at the height of Detroit's prosperity; and now automation, which was bearing down on the working class by the 1950s. This provided him with "the audacity, the chutzpah, to recognize . . . that Marx's ideas, created in a period of material scarcity, could no longer guide us in our period of material abundance and that it was now up to him to do for our period what Marx had done for his." Drawing especially from Jimmy's experiences in the plant and struggles with the United Auto Workers (UAW) bureaucracy, the Boggses contended that automation was deprivileging the role of the industrial proletariat as vanguard and heightening the relevance of capitalism's "outsiders" to anticapitalist movements.[15]

Their focus on those rendered marginal by the evolving process of accumulation prepared them for the eruption of Black Power. In the wake of their split with C. L. R. James and the publication of the *American Revolution*, the Boggses began to spin a whole new web of personal and political relations. The actor Ossie Davis, who became a lifelong friend, recalled discovering "this little book" of Jimmy's:

> Immensities of thought reduced to images so simple that coming away from the book I was indeed born again. I could see the struggle in a new light, I was recharged, my batteries were full, and I was able to go back to the struggle carrying this book as my banner. Ruby and I bought up copies and mailed them to all the civil rights leaders, Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, Whitney Young. We thought all of them should have access to this book. It would give them an opportunity to be born again.[16]

Connections like these gave Grace and especially Jimmy budding reputations as theorists of the black revolution. For example, using historical examples to demonstrate how demographic change necessitated political succession, their seminal 1965 essay "The City is the Black Man's Land" provided context for the emerging calls for black community control.[17]

But as the "outsiders" of the early 1960s transformed into the rebels of mid-to-late-1960s urban unrest, nowhere more powerfully than in Detroit, the limits of radical agitation became increasingly clear to them. It was not enough, as Saul Alinsky had instructed, "to rub raw the sores of discontent." Increasingly, Jimmy railed against the "narrowness" of those militants who ran around saying, "I hate this lousy country." What was required was a passionate belief, perhaps even a faith, in the potential for the United States to transform itself into a radically better society. "America: Love it enough to change it" became the rallying theme of the Boggses' new attempts to build a revolutionary organization during the 1970s and 1980s.

As he likewise surmised changing conditions, challenges, and possibilities, Martin Luther King would alter his vision of an American revolution in such ways that it began over time to reflect that of the Boggses. King's Americanism, however, emanated from a very different place. As Thomas F. Jackson demonstrates, King, having read Marxist and Christian socialist literature, concluded during his student years that he stood for democratic socialism. These influences, however, would not surface prominently and consistently in his public discourse until his later years.[18] Between the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the early 1960s, King would push liberal politicians to abandon their self-centered caution and act on the civil rights movement's timetable; however, he consciously articulated the movement's goals in a manner that was generally amenable to a liberal framework of justice. His close friend from graduate school, Cornish Rogers, remarked that "King was a person who was able to take the black movement and put it in the category of the American Revolution."[19]

King's liberal Americanism was idealistic in a dual sense: in its optimism and in its derivation largely from study rather than through immersion in politics. The Montgomery boycott was thus his political baptism by fire. By the age of 26, King was an experienced and charismatic preacher who would enthrall the media and move the spirits of hundreds who sustained the boycott. But a political strategist he was not. The Montgomery struggle depended upon the organizing experience of local activists such as Jo Ann Robinson and E. D. Nixon. King also turned for support and guidance to northerners like Bayard Rustin and Stanley Levison, who had been in and around leftist movements—as the Boggses had been—dating back to the Depression. They would prove increasingly influential with the 1957 creation of SCLC and the development of the civil rights movement on a national scale. Close advisors like Rustin and Levison helped King and SCLC to plan their activities, deploy the tactics of nonviolent resistance, raise funds, and work in alliance with multiple formations crossing organizational, regional, and generational lines (all three in the most significant case of SNCC). They figured especially prominently as movement leaders used grassroots mobilization and media attention to influence Washington politicians. The movement's progress toward the crowning legislative achievements in 1964–1965 was, of course, anything but smooth. The "Children's Crusade" in Birmingham and "Bloody Sunday" in Selma noticeably sharpened the conflict, and King himself was being granted more than ample opportunities to endure a Hegelian "suffering of the negative" he had relatively eluded in his pre-Montgomery life.

Still, despite the drama and tumult that preceded it, 1965 would prove to be a dramatic point of rupture. King ultimately concluded that the movement that began as a fight for civil rights needed to bring about a "revolution of values" going "beyond traditional capitalism and Communism," each of which represented a "partial truth." As he wrote in *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?* (1967):

> The stability of the large world house which is ours will involve a revolution of values to accompany the scientific and freedom revolutions engulfing the earth. We must rapidly begin the shift from a "thing"-oriented society to a "person"-oriented society. When machines and computers, profit motives and property rights are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, materialism and militarism are incapable of being conquered.[20]

King sensed ever more strongly the Niebuhrian contradiction between the goodness of man (blessed with "the wisdom of the cross") and the curse of original sin (which precluded the selfless ideal of agape love, thus marking the "foolishness of the cross"). His take on each of the "giant triplets" bore this out. First, fulfilling the legislative agenda of the civil rights movement only exposed how deeply entrenched racism was in America. SCLC's difficult 1966 venture into Chicago, designed in effect to take the civil rights movement to the north, demonstrated to King how the prospect of even nonviolent integration was threatening to millions of whites and produced a strong backlash. America was "sick," and "white racism" was a cancer in her core.[21]

Second, through his outspoken defiance of the Vietnam War, King moved from a stance of philosophical opposition to war toward a condemnation of American aggression, declaring that "my own government" was "the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today." The American campaign to defeat the national liberation movement in Vietnam was, in King's view, the epitome of imperialist wars producing global chaos. In this age of "guided missiles" and "misguided men," the choice was "nonviolence or nonexistence." With pictures of naked Vietnamese children struck by napalm bearing down on his conscience, he remarked, "A civilization can flounder as readily in the face of moral and spiritual bankruptcy as it can through financial bankruptcy."[22]

Third, King shifted from a critique of poverty and inequality to mounting an outright attack on materialism. From an early age, he had preached that technological and material progress threatened spiritual wholeness. He maintained his concern with private virtue through his later years, fretting particularly that the success of integration was producing "middle-class Negroes" who "had forgotten their roots and [were] more concerned about 'conspicuous consumption' than about the cause of justice." Their drive for upward mobility left them "untouched and unmoved by the agonies and struggles of their underprivileged brothers."[23] Yet, he also recognized that such pursuits were part and parcel of a broader capitalist system, whose profit imperative lay behind the problem of militarism, and the societal diseases of selfishness and greed, which further elevated the evil of racism.

What was thus clear to King was that the "giant triplets" were interconnected and mutually reinforcing: only revolutionary force could dislodge them from their place at the center of society. No doubt King understood that he was charting course thorough stormy seas. Maintaining a strategic relationship with northern liberals and southern moderates had been critical to the strategy for achieving civil rights. Moreover, not long after issuing an initial and somewhat reserved critique of the Vietnam War in 1965, he had backed away from the subject out of fear it would jeopardize his standing as a civil rights leader. What pushed King to move full speed ahead by 1967 was the interrelationship between his analysis of the deepening material/spiritual crisis and his unflappable religious conviction. More than a tactic, nonviolence remained a nonnegotiable principle in the pursuit of agape love. But the more the reality King confronted stood in contradiction to this ideal, the stronger he condemned the sins.

King's call for a revolution of values was thus perfectly consistent with his otherworldly hopes. "Ultimately," he was convinced, "a genuine leader is not a searcher of consensus but a molder of consensus."[24] His greatest challenge was actualizing a revolution of values in such a manner that it crystallized the "this-worldly" hopes of millions of Americans of all races. Amid the multifaceted turmoil of King's final years, two broadly defined obstacles stood out.

The first problem was that King's radical posture left him increasingly isolated politically. Following his conscience, generally against the advice of those in his inner circle, King broke ranks with the mainstream of the Democratic Party. The shift occurred first at the local level. During the Chicago campaign of 1966, King was surprised not only by the fervor of white opposition to integration but also by Mayor Daley's readiness to follow a white ethnic base far to the right.[25] At the national level, King grew increasingly frustrated by the Johnson administration's failure to move beyond formal equality to "economic justice." After meeting with leaders and young militants in the aftermath of the urban rebellions, he saw the uprisings as misguided but understandable responses to entrenched poverty, racism, and police violence. Like the Boggses, he understood that automation was creating a new problem of structural unemployment that—combined with racism—was eliminating the ladder of black working-class progress that had stimulated the Great Migration. The War on Poverty was not only woefully inadequate to address these problems; it too was opening up new contradictions. While King despaired how even small pots of federal money could co-opt black leaders, Black Power leaders escalated their political rhetoric through militant posturing—most demanding more resources and all insisting upon "community control" of all publicly supported programs and institutions. Unless some bold, concrete measures were implemented to redress these glaring social ills, rising frustration of the black grassroots would make it near impossible for King to lead a movement rooted in integration and nonviolence. On top of this, King accepted the criticism coming from both inner-city youth and Black Power leaders such as Stokely Carmichael that he could not with clear conscience preach nonviolence to African Americans while remaining silent on the question of the war.

King's antiwar stance marked the biggest rupture point, one that placed him squarely against those at the seat of state power. President Johnson was furious and

took it personally (privately calling King "that nigger preacher"). J. Edgar Hoover found more ammunition to fuel his case for counterintelligence activities.[26] By the spring of 1967, however, King clearly knew that his strong stance would prompt such responses. What he had hoped—and where he had badly miscalculated—was that delivering a long and detailed explanation of his antiwar position (at the distinguished Riverside Church rather than a demonstration) could provoke a serious, point-by-point debate about the merits and costs of the war. That the exact opposite occurred devastated King. While he was admittedly shaken by a new wave of white backlash—protestors in Grosse Pointe, Michigan called him a "commie" and a "traitor"—King was especially disturbed and disappointed by dismissive editorials from the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*—the elite "liberal" media that had once served as a conduit for his message.[27]

For its part, black America was united by a common respect for King. (Carmichael eulogized him as "the one man of our race that this country's older generations, the militants and the revolutionaries and the masses of black people would still listen to.") But programmatic differences sharpened during the mid-to-late 1960s. Sensitive to public opinion, other mainline civil rights leaders and organizations stuck by President Johnson and distanced themselves from King. "Peace and civil rights don't mix" was the consensus view. Unproductive exchanges with figures such as Ralph Bunche, Whitney Young, and Roy Wilkins left King feeling that they were utterly hopeless, that they lacked his moral clarity and conviction and could not possibly be swayed. But although many liberals—black and white alike—perceived and chastised King's radicalization as a capitulation to militants and extremists, his shift in stance and tone failed to breach the widening divide between SCLC and the Black Power generation.[28]

King's political isolation magnified his second problem. Despite his sometimes brilliant maneuvers (e.g., *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*) and highly accelerated learning curve, King was not a developed political theorist or strategist. Yet, he was convinced that he needed to envision and enact social mobilization and transformation on an unprecedented scale (certainly unprecedented in his experience and perhaps also unprecedented in American history) and on an exceedingly accelerated timetable.

In this regard, the SNCC split—both its internal break with integration and nonviolence and the break between itself and SCLC—weighed especially heavy on King.[29] The break with SNCC meant far more to King than losing the nonviolent movement's "shock troops" (as well as now having to expend considerably energy worrying those troops might turn against SCLC's campaigns). The loss of SNCC as a grassroots organization—one that exemplified Ella Baker's concept of shared leadership—meant the absence of a counterpart or corrective to King's and SCLC's tendency to foster change by creating headline-grabbing events that would necessitate Washington intervention. Indeed, King echoed the Boggses's "city is the black man's land" statement when he testified to the US Senate that it "may well be the Negro's supreme duty to rescue himself by saving the sinking cities of the Nation."[30] Nevertheless, King ultimately believed that big problems demanded big solutions from the federal government. And the more isolated and frustrated King felt, the more he felt the need to maximize the impact of

his iconic status—placing himself at the center of sensational acts. He could not escape, in other words, an ultimately top-down model of social change and social democracy—one that failed to thoroughly account for the "slow and respectful work" necessary to bring about the deeper transformation of values and solidification of relationships that sustain a movement over a protracted period.[31]

The upshot was his 1968 call for a Poor People's Campaign—a concept rich in potential but wholly impoverished by a lack of operational clarity. It was King's best attempt to enact a revolution of values. But this vision of revolution was not only idealistic; it was also such an original concept that there lacked a body of political theory to substantiate it. The political strategists and comrades that helped him carry the movement from Montgomery to Selma either did not share King's vision of a revolution of values, could not stomach the risks it would take to pursue it, or simply could not imagine how to put a revolutionary agenda of this sort into practice.[32] Within SCLC, the organization's attempt to broaden the geographical and topical scope of its activities was leading to the rise of self-interested factions, each competing for King's seal of approval. Now, King was pushing SCLC to its most ambitious undertaking ever—Birmingham and Selma on an exponentially larger scale. Yet, it had never taken the time to think entirely through its setbacks in Albany and Chicago.

Had King survived to see it to fruition, the Poor People's Campaign (PPC) might have developed into an event unprecedented in American history. The thinking behind the PPC, however, was rather conventional. King and SCLC turned to white social democrats like Michael Harrington to help them quantify the meaning of economic justice. The PPC's bottom line was massive federal legislation to guarantee "jobs or income." Tactically, the plan was to have thousands of poor people camp out in Washington, lobbying Congress if that was all that was necessary but potentially attempting to shut down the city if it came to that. It was a chance to redo the march of the Bonus Army. Given how many elements in society he felt had become corrupted, co-opted, or unhinged, King was counting on a mass mobilization from below—a multiracial demonstration of the truly dispossessed. The PPC in this sense bore an uncanny resemblance to what Malcolm X spun as the people's plan for the 1963 March on Washington before President Kennedy and the civil rights leaders turned it into a well-mannered "farce." Yet, King believed it must be supremely disciplined. Pulling this off would be anything but easy.

Even supporters of King's vision for the PPC cautioned him to think it through longer and take greater time to prepare. But King felt a deep sense of urgency to press forward with what he called his "go for broke" strategy. As he proved days later with his "to the mountaintop" speech, King's conviction remained intact; his words still inspired. But his floundering efforts to bridge the gulf between his revolutionary ideals and an increasingly chaotic reality had left him mired in bouts of depression, self-doubt, and poor health. In the end, the titanic event that would grab the nation's attention, at least temporarily, would not be the PPC but King's assassination.

The Two-Sided Revolution

"As I have read and re-read King's speeches and writings from the last two years of his life," Grace Lee Boggs wrote in 2004, "it has become increasingly clear to me that King's prophetic vision is now the indispensable starting point for 21st-century revolutionaries."[33]

Boggs, in retrospect, sees that King's theological grounding served as a basis for him to develop what was in large measure the most advanced analysis of where the struggle stood in the mid-to-late 1960s. Demonstrating the power of nonviolent protest to overcome the reign of white supremacist terror in the south, the civil rights movement's achievement of formal equality had brought what King called "the first phase of revolution" to a close. But whereas blacks in King's analysis continued to push toward "their ultimate goal [of] total, unqualified freedom" alongside economic justice, formal equality "brought to the whites a sense of completion." This contradiction brought to fore the second phase of struggle marked by white backlash and black rebellion. King defined white political entrenchment and grassroots reaction as the obstacles of "counter-revolution," which any movement must necessarily overcome. At the last annual leadership retreat he attended, he implored SCLC to see that what was required to implement the next phase of struggle were "programs to bring the social change movements through from their early, and now inadequate, protest phase to a stage of massive, active, non-violent resistance to the evils of the modern corporate society." This would entail a new synthesis of the creative, nonviolent civil rights mode of organizing and the urgent, rebellious mode of the Black Power era. While the first wave forged a movement born out of love for all humanity, King noted, "the most creative collective insight" of this "new breed of radicals" ("whether they read Gandhi or Fanon") lay in their understanding of "the need for action—direct, self-transforming and structure-transforming action."[34]

For Grace, this ability King demonstrated to think dialectically has proven critical to the new assessment of both King and the 1960s she has articulated over the past decade. She wondered "as violence in Detroit and other cities escalated in the wake of the urban rebellions":

> Might events have taken a different path if we had found a way to infuse our struggle for Black Power with King's philosophy of nonviolence? Is it possible that our relationships with one another today, not only inter—but intraracially, would be more harmonious if we had discovered how to blend Malcolm's militancy with King's vision of the beloved community? Could such a synthesis have a revolutionary power beyond our wildest dreams? Is such a revolutionary power available to us today?[35]

Underlying this change in sentiment lay a theoretical paradigm shift she considers crucial:

> In retrospect, I now realize that one of the main weaknesses of the Black Power movement, which has not been sufficiently acknowledged, was that we were

> still stuck in the scientific socialist ways of thinking that in one form or another empowered most activists in the first half of the 20th century. It was in that period, under the influence of the March on Washington movement led by A. Philip Randolph, that I decided to join the struggle against capitalism and racism. In those days it didn't enter our minds that victims of oppression needed to embody or exemplify new standards of behavior. Their suffering was too stark. Our role, as we saw it, was to help them understand that capitalism and racism were responsible for their plight and that the only solution was to get rid of these "isms." That is why we struggled for political power. This is still the revolutionary scenario for most Leftists.[36]

These were not the type of conclusions drawn overnight or in a fit of anguish or panic. For Grace, they resulted from a multidecade process of both study and summation of new organizing endeavors that paralleled her evolving view of revolution as "a patient and protracted process" rather than a D-Day single and final event. Neither does she cling to old ways of thinking tied to previous errors and limitations, nor does she write off past mistakes as total foolhardiness. Like King, she views them within the frame of the "suffering of the negative."

For the Boggses, the key trigger of an epistemological crisis was the 1967 Detroit rebellion. The "contradictions and chaos" of the late-1960s and a reconsideration of their place within the events of that heady period prompted them to draw for the first time a distinction between rebellion and revolution. In his analysis of the rebellion for the *Detroit News*, noted journalist Louis Lomax wrote that "Detroit's responsible Negroes [were] casting a jaundiced eye at six persons in their community," implicating the Boggses as two of the six Black Power activists whose ideas and practices had fomented uprising.[37] While they (contra-Lomax's report) saw the rebellion as an event "which exploded spontaneously" (not to mention while they were out-of-town), they accepted the responsibility for dealing with its consequences and addressing the new political and philosophical questions it posed. On the one hand, they upheld the righteousness of the urban rebellions by foregrounding the sociopolitical conditions that produced the "riots." Rebellions erupt in opposition to oppressive situations, they asserted. They comprised a necessary stage in revolutionary development, breaking the threads that hold the old order together and announcing the arrival of new actors on the historical stage. On the other hand, as they would write in *Revolution and Evolution in the 20th Century* (1974), "Rebellions tend to be negative, to denounce and expose the enemy without providing a positive vision of a new future." Rebellions tend to be temporary, producing reform at best but not transformation. They begin with a flurry, with the oppressed believing that "*we* can change the way things are," but too frequently end with them saying "*they* ought to do this and *they* ought to do that." The Boggses feared that people stuck at the stage of rebellion could only develop a sense of powerlessness and victimhood.[38]

As they concluded that neither militant rhetoric nor ideology could serve as a barometer of radicalism, Jimmy and Grace began to dissolve one of the primary walls that had separated them from King. In their view, too many black militants had characterized revolutionary change primarily by shifts in relations of power, defining principally the things they were against rather than for. The result

(in line with their interpretation of the Bolshevik Revolution) was that those who actually assumed positions of authority at a variety of levels were ill-prepared to deal with concrete problems of governance. The Boggses became a growing thorn in the side of Coleman Young, in particular. The Detroit mayor's aggressive implementation of affirmative action hiring transformed the face of municipal government. However, as Young tried in vain to reverse the city's decline by implementing a series of mega-developments fueled by massive corporate subsidies, Jimmy and Grace eventually saw him as overwhelmed by the socioeconomic challenges wrought by deindustrialization and population loss. For the Boggses, Young's tenure hit rock bottom, when he demolished the entire Poletown neighborhood to give the land free of charge to General Motors to build a plant—a highly automated plant, however, that provided so few jobs that the mayor was soon turning to the parasitic casino industry as a postindustrial savior. For his part, Young would name white racist hostility as the primary foe of black-led Detroit, constantly portraying the suburbs as a colonial yoke around the city's neck. Others, especially militants in Detroit and beyond, named state repression as the primary obstacle to black advancement. They could point to the example of the Black Panthers, who created a wave of community-based "survival programs" but became entrapped in confrontations with state power. Without denying the severity of these problems, the Boggses countered that the point of being a revolutionary theoretician was to develop a program capable of overcoming the "counter-revolutionary" backlash and to recognize the need for new theoretical and practical leaps forward as the struggle opened up new contradictions. They criticized, for instance, the Third Worldists and pan-Africanists (e.g, Stokely), whose attempts to import the revolution from beyond American borders they perceived as not just efforts in vain but evasions of responsibility.

In the end, they argued that the dominant tendency of the black movement was now headed toward incorporation into the system. Many activists saw an opportunity to aid their communities by taking influential positions in government, to use the power of the state to bring about redistributive justice. The Boggses, however, warned that there were few checks on the co-optation of leaders or corruption of money and power. In the aftermath of Jimmy Carter's election with the backing of prominent black leaders, Jimmy Boggs declared that "the black movement was dead." He meant "dead" metaphorically as in reaching a Hegelian dead end. (By that same token, he had long since declared the UAW and the Communist Party dead.) The black movement activism to which the Boggses had devoted much of their adult lives, believing it was the key to making an American revolution, might still produce meaningful results; but it was no longer the agent of world-historical change.[39]

As much as they fretted over the positions black politicos were adopting, the Boggses were equally troubled by those who shunned political engagement entirely. They witnessed the rebellious spirit of the 1960s morph into the new cavalier ethos of the 1970s ("Do your own thing"), increasingly marked by criminal and destructive behavior. They chastised the rhetorical posturing of "black and white radicals [who] make a virtue of irresponsibility and a virtue of vice—so long as it is the vice of an oppressed person." They took pains to author a popular

pamphlet called "Crime among Our People" to specifically attack the problem. Here was Jimmy's influence taking over. Grace had grown up in middle-class America, her politics derived from reading Dewey and Marx and having been trained by leftists. By contrast, Jimmy had been raised in a rural, southern African American community where the imperative was "to make a way out of no way." It was second nature for him to assert that self-abusive behavior destroyed self-reliance, while black-on-black crime destroyed community.[40]

Together, they moved toward a broader articulation of revolution that synthesized the lessons of their local practice with their evolving understanding of global conditions and their readings in theory and philosophy. As the Boggses asserted in *Revolution and Evolution in the 20th Century*, defining the positive content of a revolution entails more than affirming or even liberating one's identity (e.g., as a minority or an oppressed person/class); humanist notions of revolution mandated the creation of new historical agents—what the they termed the "new man/woman." As those on the left hunkered down for endless debates of the 1970s to name the primary contradiction in the world—Was it still the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat? the United States versus the USSR? the imperialists versus Third World liberation movements? patriarchy versus feminism? the lumpen versus everyone else?—the Boggses asserted a wholly new formulation: *the primary societal contradiction was between economic/technological overdevelopment and political/human underdevelopment*.

This was a decisive break with the materialist tradition—one that built upon *The American Revolution*'s earlier analysis of how new technology (taking the form of automation in Detroit's factories) was rendering millions of workers redundant and creating new forms of alienation. Marx lived in a time of scarcity, they argued, a time when the efforts of "technological man/woman" to conquer nature remained incomplete and the social/cultural consequences of boundless growth and economic development had only begun to reveal themselves. Now, the nineteenth-century idea of socialism primarily as a historical stage in which planned, centralized production heightened technological capacity so that the state could enact redistributive justice had to be problematized. Even the Johnson-Forest's Marxist-humanist sense of the "invading socialist society" had placed too much emphasis on the role capitalist production itself played in the spontaneous construction of socialist organization and values. Pushing the theory of Leninism beyond its natural limits, the Boggses stressed the new role that agents of revolutionary change would have to play to transform both themselves and a nation characterized by dominance, expansion, and conspicuous consumption:

> The revolution to be made in the United States will be the first revolution in history to require the masses to make material sacrifices rather than to acquire more material things. We must give up many of the things which this country has enjoyed at the expense of damning over one-third of the world into a state of underdevelopment, ignorance, disease, and early death.[41]

Some years later in the 1990s, Grace would see the complementarity between their "dialectical humanist" exposition of revolution and King's definition. Revolution,

both agreed, must be two-sided; self-transformation and structural-transformation must go hand-in-hand. For Grace, this new way of thinking emerged from the postmodern conundrums arising in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War—the very period in which King was coming of age:

> What [most radicals] have failed to recognize is the new challenge created by the dropping of the atom bomb that ended World War II. The splitting of the atom brought us face to face with the reality that human beings had expanded our material powers to the point where we could destroy our planet. Therefore we could no longer act as if everything that happened to us was determined by external or economic circumstances. Freedom now included the responsibility for making choices. In the words of Einstein: "The release of atomic power has changed everything but our way of thinking. The solution to this problem lies in the heart of mankind."[42]

Boggs attention to this point highlights what the readings of King as democratic socialist fail to take into account. King's focus on poverty was a particular manifestation of the spiritual vacuum at the center of society. His calls for affirmative action, Keynesian stimulus, and welfare state measures were not meant as final solutions but merely as first steps in moving from chaos to community.

As she survived Jimmy's 1993 passing and moved beyond the "vanguard party" pretentions still prevalent in their unorthodox take on Marxism-Leninism, Grace began to interpret history and its relationship to the present quite differently. As she stated in 2006, "The civil rights movement, launched by the Montgomery Bus Boycott in December 1955, was the first struggle by an oppressed people in Western society from this new perspective" stressing the two-sided character of revolution. Through their movement building activities, "a people who had been treated as less than human struggled against their dehumanization not as angry victims but as new men and women, representative of a more human society." Tens of thousands of African Americans and their civil rights allies employed "methods, including creating their own system of transportation, that transformed themselves and increased the good rather than the evil in the world." These were not the mere actions of an interest group exerting political pressure through mass force to prompt policy changes. These were change agents "exercising their spiritual power and always bearing in mind that their goal was not only desegregating buses but building the beloved community." The upshot, Grace asserts, was that "they inspired the human identity, anti-war and ecological movements that during the last decade of the 20th century have been creating a new civil society in the United States."[43]

Grace has also commented more openly about the role of gender within movement organizing. Focusing on general trends rather than universal experiences, she contrasts the organizing of the 1960s with the best of the activism she sees emanating from a younger generation today "The movements of the Sixties," Grace recounts, "were led mostly by men coming out of a patriarchal culture. So there was a lot of top-down vertical leadership. At most of our meetings, conferences and demonstrations, charismatic males made fiery speeches that made bitter and angry masses angrier and more bitter." However, women activists, "discovering that the personal is political," began "patiently building a spiritual

framework for our everyday lives" through new models of relationship building and community organizing. Her polemical conclusion is purposely meant to provoke a debate she feels is sorely lacking. "The absence of this philosophical/spiritual dimension in the Black Power struggles of the 1960s," Grace asserts, "helps to explain why these struggles ended up in the opportunism, drug abuse, and interpersonal violence which continue to plague our neighborhoods."[44]

The Fierce Urgency of Now

If my discussion of King risks tramping over already well-tread ground, it is intended to hammer home a point too frequently overlooked in the post-revisionist idealization of King as an anti-imperialist and social democrat. At the time of his death, King's "revolution of values" remained largely an otherworldly hope not only because of strident external opposition but also because of King's and the movement's limited ability to envision and carry it forward as a this-worldly hope. Consider Grace's similar assessment of Malcolm after he broke with the NOI but declined the Boggses's 1964 proposal to move to Detroit. "Personally, Malcolm impressed me as a very open-minded and thoughtful person," she writes. "But I also had the sense that politically he was very much alone and uncertain about what he should be doing and where he should be taking the movement."[45]

Today we are challenged to go beyond merely identifying the Promised Land that King envisioned for us. We must also think through what it will take to blaze a trail there, to do so through harsh conditions and constantly altering terrain, and to walk that journey with many more than those that surrounded King in his final weeks.

This has been the mission of Grace Lee Boggs. "We will never know what King might have done had he not been assassinated," she remarked in 2003. "What we do know is that, in the thirty-five years since his death, the 'giant triplets' of racism, militarism, and materialism have become even more dehumanizing."[46] From the 1970s onward, everything changed and nothing changed. Blacks took political power in Detroit. The Vietnam War ended. And the Big Three automakers entered a three-decade crisis that brought them to or near insolvency. However, during Coleman Young's stormy tenure, racial segregation and hostility in the Detroit area intensified. Many of those fleeing the city became the new base of support for Reagan's militaristic rhetoric and politics targeting foes both at home and abroad. And even as the wealth evaporated in Detroit, materialist aspirations drove a new wave of conflict and alienation in city and suburb alike.

Grace was not only blessed with time denied King to witness and change history, she was also blessed with a sense of "place and space to begin anew." For starters, she had place and space to pause for reflection. Perhaps most significantly, Grace and Jimmy Boggs had place and space to put ideas into action and, thus, to learn over and again from trial and error. To be certain, their attempts to build a revolutionary organization looked far more impressive on paper than they did in practice, never amounting to more than a handful of small collectives scattered around the United States. But given more time than King and

spared the immediate pressures he faced, the Boggses could focus their energies on new local initiatives. They declared that Marxism-Leninism, social democracy, the New Left, and the black movement had all run their course. Thus, it was now necessary to move from redistributive justice to rebuilding our cities and reconstructing human relations from the ground up. This would mandate going beyond the politics of minority grievance to developing multiracial strategies to combat a system that was multinational in scope. And this meant creating models of work, education, art, and community that would transform those rebels filled with righteous anger into productive change agents who understood that self-transformation and structural-transformation must go hand in hand. Protest politics rooted in militancy, which at best generated rebellion and reform, gave way to community-building activism rooted in love.

Detroit was and remains the crucial venue for this re-envisioning of radical struggle. This became clear to me as I lived and breathed Detroit for most of the past decade. With the specter of economic collapse, the effects of environmental degradation, and the dark side of globalized commerce now looming over the whole population, it has become far easier to see that what's bad for Detroit is bad for America. For Grace, what we must ultimately see in Detroit is the prospect of a radically different way of life, when necessity and possibility combine to facilitate the beginning of a rupture with the culture of the industrial age. Since traditional forms of politics (including ostensibly oppositional forms) have failed so fantastically in Detroit, a very different kind of activism has taken root in the city, epitomized by organizations like the youth leadership program/movement, Detroit Summer, founded by the Boggses and their close associates in the early 1990s. Their work may appear small scale and the change they wrought incremental: here a mural; there a community garden; a collection of poems or songs documenting the ideas of youth. But what they foster is a radical spirit of humanism. Out of the depths of poverty, segregation, despair, abandonment, pollution, and marginalization, grassroots activists are springing to life projects and movements that while local in scope are projecting and shining a light on the fundamental human values of hope, cooperation, stewardship, and respect. It is in this regard that Grace (with her Detroit associates) has made thousands come to see the sprouting of a farm in the middle of a concrete jungle as transformative in ways that even a large mass protest is not. Included in this grouping of converts are Vincent Harding and John Maguire, two of King's (and now Grace's) close friends and advisors. Not coincidentally, Harding and Maguire coauthored the primary text of King's "Beyond Vietnam" speech—the one that best embodied King's "revolution of values" vision.

This opportunity amid crisis is what in the end constitutes for Grace Lee Boggs "the fierce urgency of now." Perhaps, she surmises, it had to take us mortals 40 years of development and suffering to come to terms with the challenge of fulfilling King's "revolution of values." While others debate which dreams (of his and theirs) Barack Obama can or can't, will or won't fulfill, Grace sees Detroit's and the world's prospects for a brighter twenty-first century in the instilling of humanist values through such small-scale but easily replicated projects.

Notes

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1. Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past," *The Journal of American History* 91, no. 4 (March 2005): 1234.
2. Ibid., 1261.
3. Few serious historians of the civil rights movement would take issue with Dowd Hall's critique of the neoconservative whitewashing of history. However, one additional glaring problem worth noting in Dowd Hall's essay is her failure to transcend a biracial imaginary, which I argue inhibits our ability to fully understand black/white relations as well as multiracial relations. See Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race: Black and Japanese Americans in the Making of Multiethnic Los Angeles* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).
4. See Sundiata Keita Cha-Jua and Clarence Lang, "The 'Long Movement' as Vampire: Temporal and Spatial Fallacies in Recent Black Freedom Studies," *The Journal of African American History* (Spring 2007): 265–288.
5. Grace Lee Boggs with Scott Kurashige, *The Next American Revolution: Sustainable Activism for the Twenty-First Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).
6. Grace's complex relationship to Asian-American history, identity, and movement building is partially addressed in her autobiography, *Living for Change* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998).
7. Vincent Harding, *Martin Luther King, The Inconvenient Hero,* rev. ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008); James Cone, *Marin & Malcolm & America: A Dream of a Nightmare* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991).
8. Boggs and Kurashige, *Next American Revolution*, 82–84.
9. Ibid., 86.
10. Ibid., 58.
11. C. L. R. James, "Balance Sheet of Trotskyism in the United States, 1940–1947" (1947), http://www.marxists.org/archive/james-clr/works/1947/balance-sheet/ch04.htm.
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14. Martin Luther King, Jr., "The Theology of Reinhold Niebuhr," April 1953–June 1954, Boston, MA, *King Papers: Vol. II*, 270–271.
15. James Boggs, *The American Revolution: Pages from a Negro Worker's Notebook* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1963); Boggs and Kurashige, *Next American Revolution*, 65–69.

16. Ossie Davis, “Born Again,” Memorial Celebration for James Boggs, Detroit, MI, October 23, 1993, http://www.boggscenter.org/bornagain_ossie.html.
17. “The City is the Black Man’s Land” can be found in the collection, James Boggs, *Racism and the Class Struggle* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970).
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19. “Conversation between Cornish Rogers and David Thelen,” *Journal of American History* 78, no. 1 (June 1991): 61.
20. Martin Luther King, Jr., *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967),186.
21. Quote from Laurel, MS address, March 19, 1968, in Cone, *Marin & Malcolm & America,* 234.
22. King, *Where Do We Go from Here*, 186; Martin Luther King, Jr., “Beyond Vietnam,” April 4, 1967, New York City, http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/publications/speeches/Beyond_Vietnam.pdf.
23. King, *Where Do We Go from Here*, 131.
24. Quoted in Cone, *Marin & Malcolm & America,* 238.
25. William S. White, “Rebuff to Dr. King,” *Washington Post*, April 11, 1967, A17.
26. On Lyndon Baines Johnson and J. Edgar Hoover see especially interviews in the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) documentary, *Citizen King.*
27. David Garrow, *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference* (New York, W. Morrow, 1986), 601; “Dr. King’s Error,” *The New York Times*, April 7, 1967, 36; “A Tragedy,” *Washington Post,* April 6, 1967, A20.
28. Garrow, *Bearing the Cross,* 571–573.
29. See Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 215–304.
30. In August 1967, King declared that while he did not “believe in black separatism,” white intransigence made it a reality. Quotes from Jackson, *From Civil Rights to Human Rights,* 306 and Cone, *Marin & Malcolm & America*, 226.
31. See Charles M. Payne, *I’ve Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), especially 236.
32. See especially Harding, *Martin Luther King,* 131–156.
33. Grace Lee Boggs, “The Beloved Community of Martin Luther King,” *Yes! Magazine*, May 20, 2004, http://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/a-conspiracy-of-hope/the-beloved-community-of-martin-luther-king
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35. Boggs and Kurashige, *Next American Revolution*, 85.
36. Grace Lee Boggs, “Catching Up With Martin,” Address to the Institute for Democratic Renewal/Project Change, Union Theological Seminary, New York, September 29, 2006, http://www.boggscenter.org/catching_with_martin-revised.shtml.
37. See Jonathan Tilove, “At 91, Grace Lee Boggs Still Plotting Revolution,” *Newhouse News Service*, May 16, 2007, http://jonathantilove.com/at-91-grace-lee-boggs-still-plotting-revolution/.
38. See “Introduction” to James and Grace Lee Boggs, *Revolution and Evolution in the 20th Century* [*RETC*] (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974), 13–23.
39. See Boggs, *Living for Change*, 167–172.

40. Ibid.; *RETC*, 192.
41. *RETC*, 140.
42. Boggs, "Catching Up With Martin."
43. Ibid.
44. Quotes from Ibid. and Boggs and Kurashige, *Next American Revolution*, 173–174.
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9

Music Is a World: Stevie Wonder and the Sound of Black Power

Kevin Gaines

In this chapter, I want to consider the sonic culture of the Black Power movement, specifically, the discourse on blackness in music recorded live or in studio, or recordings of speeches, poetry, film soundtracks, radio broadcasts, and other artifacts dating from the 1960s and 1970s. Insofar as Black Power is known to successive generations, it is often *seen*—through visual iconography, fashion, and political spectacle, as depicted in film footage and documentary photography. Nevertheless, as a substantial body of critical writing and scholarship has shown, African American writers, activists, and visual artists of the era were often inspired by black music.[1] The sonic culture of Black Power, through commercial recordings of speeches, poetry readings, spoken-word performances, interviews, radio broadcasts, and most prominently, music, offered a crucial means by which local information and messages about liberation struggles reached national and international audiences. During the 1960s and 1970s, popular music became a critical site for reflection on the meaning of blackness, on the historical relationship of African Americans to the United States, to the African diaspora, and to the world.[2] The global reach and influence of the Black Power movement was arguably achieved through the era's recorded music, as much as the iconography of images of US black liberation struggles brought by documentary photography, film, and television to overseas audiences, or the international touring of black and African activists and musicians.

My approach builds on an extensive literature that investigates the relationship between popular music and the black freedom and liberation struggles of the 1960s and 1970s.[3] It is also informed by recent work in sound studies that situates popular music within "soundscapes," indicative of social processes of meaning-making shaped by race, power, mass media, and sound technologies.[4] To speak of the sonic dimension of Black Power is invariably to invoke a canon of musicians and instrumentalists, just as discussions of the Black Arts literary movement tend to privilege a handful of well-known figures.[5] Rather than specifying

a canon, however, I hope to describe a moment in which black writers, activists, and musicians gained inspiration from the black freedom struggle and inhabited the same cultural "airspace" defined by movement activism, Black Studies university curricula, and mass media. Although many musicians (and writers) would be germane to such a discussion, I will focus on the work of Stevie Wonder (the stage name of Steveland Morris), who was influenced by the musical, literary, cultural, and political crosscurrents of black freedom struggles. In addition, Wonder's unique subjectivity as a sightless black musician/artist with extraordinary ability and ambition make him a fitting vehicle for a sonic exploration of the Black Power era. Apprehending the world largely through sound, and discerning a social world of differences and power relationships through the observations of those around him, Wonder was arguably well-attuned to the limitations of facile, doctrinaire assertions of blackness. In other words, Wonder's awareness of race was more aural than visual, heard through speech, accent, and the spoken subtleties of racialized experience and meaning that, for better and for worse, suffuse our language and affect. It also matters a great deal that Wonder's success as a Motown recording artist and his struggles for artistic and financial control coincided with the high tide of the black freedom movement of the 1960s, whose urgency, at times, seemed to inform his highly personal songwriting. In his 1967 recording "Until You Come Back To Me," the lyrics "I'm going to walk by myself to prove that my love is true," and "Living with you my dear/Is like living in a world of constant fear," implied more than the fears and struggle for independence and mobility felt by many sightless people. The singer's willingness to incur risk and confront fear to salvage an imperiled romance made the song an allegory for the lonely struggle of nonviolent civil rights demonstrators to save American democracy from the violence of white supremacy.[6]

Social realities are as powerfully apparent to the blind as they are to those able to see. Thus, Wonder's view of the moral bankruptcy of racism was unexceptional. However, blackness, for Wonder, was primarily a sonic world. To be black was first to be surrounded by the voices of loved ones, relatives and friends, with their "downhome" accents and inflections, and the intimations of social hierarchy in their talk of their hopes and their disappointments. This natal community of speakers of black southern-inflected English was part of an expansive public world of sound. Apart from the natural sounds of wind and wildlife at a public park or similar setting, there were the man-made sounds broadcast over radio and television, upon which most Americans relied on for news, information, and entertainment. All of us have known the comfort of familiar sounds and voices. And tuning in to radio and television programs are widely shared experiences. But for Wonder, from an early age, the sounds of everyday life, and the technologies that communicated them, were not to be taken for granted. Radio and television broadcasts of the speech and oratory of public figures, and the inimitable "voices" or styles of actors, writers, and musicians through film, books (whether Braille or recorded versions), and music, were revelatory sources of historical consciousness, and diasporic and human connections for Wonder. The tape recorder, and of course, the recording studio, were crucial technologies for Wonder in honing his aspirations and talents as musician, artist, and

producer. It is significant that Wonder has often included ambient sounds in his music. Perhaps the most famous example of this is his hit "Living For The City," a tragic tale of a young man who had migrated to New York City from "Hardtime, Mississippi" in search of freedom and opportunity. Instead, he becomes a victim of false arrest and incarceration. The song employs an *audio verité* interlude, with ambient sounds of police sirens, the judge's gavel, and the metallic clash of prison bars closing. Wonder's vivid sonic rendering of the technologies of racial oppression echoed James Baldwin's accounts of the systemic abuses of the police and courts, and powerfully evoked the end of an era of social progress for African Americans in postindustrial US cities.[7]

His career synonymous with the global circulation of black music styles through mass media technologies and the historical processes of African American urban migration, US civil rights, and Third World decolonization, Wonder might also be regarded as an African American exponent of the idea of Négritude, Leopold Senghor's theory of the cultural unity of the black world. As president of Senegal, Senghor presided over the First World Congress of Negro and African Writers and Artists in Dakar in 1966. The event not only provided a showcase for Senghor's views of the universal appeal of Afro-diasporic cultures, but also occasioned intense debates among black and African intellectuals over the appropriateness and validity of Négritude as an ideological blueprint for Africa's development. For his part, Wonder has at times exhibited political and cultural pan-Africanism in paying homage to such global superstars as Duke Ellington and Bob Marley, by supporting the antiapartheid movement during the 1980s, and by writing and recording music inspired by a range of global Afro-diasporic styles.[8]

Wonder's music—often displaying a curatorial interest in Afro-diasporic music traditions and black history, and influenced by the sermons, oratory, songs, and writing of the black freedom struggle—fits squarely within a tradition of black modernist writing and expressive culture that privileged an Afro-diasporic vernacular voice. Indeed, black writers and artists mined the creative possibilities of black vernacular speech, language, music, and Afro-diasporic religions within a global culture of black modernism (manifested by the diasporic literary movements of the New Negro renaissance, Negritude, Afro-Cubanismo, and nation language) whose key exponents included Langston Hughes, Nicholas Guillen, Paulette Nardal, Aimé Cesaire, Louise Bennett, and Kamau Brathwaite.[9] Their assertions of an oppositional black cultural identity from various locations of the black world rejected the racialism and primitivism of Westerners' discourse on the language, music, and song of enslaved and colonized blacks and Africans. During the US civil rights movement, the prominence of distinctively black-sounding voices in the public sphere, whether spoken or sung, posed an implicit challenge to the assimilationist imperatives of white liberalism. Black sound and its meanings had long been contested terrain since Frederick Douglass and W. E. B. Du Bois, to name only two examples, made recourse to black musical expression to defend the humanity of African Americans.[10] But with the wind of global black freedom and anticolonial movements at their backs, and an explosion of black musical talent bursting into the post-Second World War mainstream

American culture, black writers as diverse as Hughes, Ralph Ellison, Ann Petry, James Baldwin, Leroi Jones/Amiri Baraka, Nikki Giovanni and others derived literary inspiration and critical insight from black music, just as such African American musicians and composers as Duke Ellington and Wonder were inspired by literary models and approaches.[11]

In the United States, the civil rights movement seemed to energize the impassioned delivery of those soul and R&B artists who were both talented and more importantly, fortunate enough to be heard on top 40 radio and to appear on national television during the 1960s. A mutigenerational group of writers active during the Black Arts movement took note of several black recording artists whose music articulated black demands for freedom, including jazz artists Charles Mingus, Max Roach and Abbey Lincoln, Duke Ellington, John Coltrane, and Billie Holiday, and soul and R&B performers Sam Cooke, Otis Redding, James Brown, Curtis Mayfield, Marvin Gaye, Aretha Franklin, Nina Simone, Donnie Hathaway, Stevie Wonder, and others.[12] The global dimensions of the Black Power movement arguably were achieved through the international circulation of black music, as much as the international travels of such black radicals as Malcolm X, Stokely Carmichael/Kwame Turé, or Angela Davis, or the proliferation of iconic images of struggle generated by the BPP, or the Black Power protest by Tommie Smith and John Carlos during the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico City. The appearance of Stevie Wonder at FESTAC, the Second Festival of Black and African Arts and Culture, held in Lagos and Kaduna, Nigeria, in 1977, brought his music to audiences in that country, and also brought him into contact with such black and African artists as Fela Anikulapo-Kuti, the Ghanaian-British band Osibisa, Trinidad's The Mighty Sparrow, and Brazil's Gilberto Gil.[13]

Why examine the sonic and musical cultures of Black Power, as opposed, for example, to the movement's vast archive of visual images? Although part of the sonic realm, television and other "mainstream" media outlets often presented black militancy in a notorious light that pandered to white fears, anxieties, and racism.[14] While film footage of Black Power spokesmen theatrically venting their fury might alienate many whites (as sensationalist network news framings may well have intended), by contrast, the sonic culture of blackness was often mediated by indigenous cultural institutions and produced by and for a primary audience of African Americans. Commercial recordings of the sermons and speeches of Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, Rev. C. L. Franklin, and others, were distributed as sources of inspiration and political education. Flying Dutchman Records, a San Francisco label specializing in jazz, soul, and experimental music, released albums by the spoken-word artist Gil Scott Heron, as well as *Soul and Soledad*, a 1970 interview of Angela Davis. The mass distribution of album and cassette recordings of the speeches of Malcolm X gave a much wider circulation of the ideas of this pivotal figure, whose pervasive influence is evident in the anthology, *For Malcolm: Poems on the Life and Death of Malcolm X*, edited by Dudley Randall and Margaret Burroughs, and published by Detroit-based Broadside Press in 1967.[15] The mid-century phenomenon of poets reading their work on long playing albums, with or without musical accompaniment, was emulated by writers and spoken-word artists of the Black Arts movement, most notably Scott-Heron,

Nikki Giovanni, the Last Poets, Jayne Cortez, and others. These long-playing albums, with their potent blend of style and message, combined with the continued vibrancy of black radio during the crossover commercial success of soul music, seemed to realize Harold Cruse's vision of the economic and political benefits to be reaped from African American cultural entrepreneurship.[16]

If some Black Power spokespersons emphasized the rhetoric of armed self-defense and revolutionary nationalism, one also finds within the sonic culture of the 1960s and early 1970s the persistence of what Craig Werner has called the "gospel impulse." For pop artists with a background in the church, including Aretha Franklin, Donnie Hathaway, Stevie Wonder, and others, gospel arrangements signaled their proud embrace of black cultural heritage alongside ideals of racial reconciliation. The gospel impulse suggests an underlying continuity between "civil rights" and "Black Power," that resonated politically as well as musically. Gospel instrumentation and call-and-response vocals were key stylistic elements of the cover versions by Aretha Franklin and Donnie Hathaway of Nina Simone's anthem, "Young, Gifted and Black," anchoring the song's celebration of an emancipated black consciousness in the Afro-Christian tradition. African American gospel music was the soundtrack to an African American narrative of urban migration, striving, and perseverance. During the 1960s, many thousands of African Americans in the Deep South boycotted, sat in, marched, braved jail, beatings, and economic intimidation, and organized, all the while singing freedom songs; in Northern cities, the spirit of protest caught fire with demonstrations against discrimination in public schools and housing, and one could hear in African American popular music a social yearning for the beloved community, even in songs of romantic longing. Accordingly, gospel, jazz, and soul music exerted a powerful hold of on the imaginations of such poets as Nikki Giovanni, Amiri Baraka, and Gil Scott-Heron. For them, black popular music expressed collective aspirations for political and economic freedom, and spiritual fulfillment.

As some Black Power spokespersons rejected nonviolent tactics and integrationist goals, music journalists solicited the opinions of popular recording artists, and Stevie Wonder was no exception. An African American journalist interviewed Wonder in a Baltimore hotel suite on July 23, 1967, as news of civil unrest and fires in Detroit reached them. Stunned, Wonder attributed the disorder to poverty and unemployment, and a lack of knowledge about the movement on the part of both blacks and whites. When asked his views on Black Power, Wonder responded, "It's not riots, and Black Power [isn't] hate, either. It's love and the vote."[17] Wonder's view of Black Power and the underlying causes of the Detroit riots were probably influenced by his experience of performing at benefits for SCLC on the eve of the March on Washington in 1963, and in 1966, when Martin Luther King launched the Chicago freedom movement. Wonder seemed also to be endorsing Malcolm X's view of power gained through electoral politics as a solution to the plight of urban blacks. As with the music of Curtis Mayfield ("Movin' On Up"), Wonder seemed intent on bridging contending strands of black protest and projecting a united front.[18]

Wonder's identification with the struggle for equality made him good copy for journalists in the African American press. While Wonder, like other celebrities,

participated in such events as the NAACP Image Awards in Los Angeles, he was also a frequent presence within a national black public culture increasingly defined by cultural nationalism, the pursuit of Black Power through electoral politics, and pan-Africanism. Wonder was present at the first nationally televised Miss Black America Pageant in 1969, and at the Congress of African Peoples in 1970 in Atlanta. Well before the advent of Black Power, Wonder had lent his support in benefits on behalf of sightless and disabled people, and often referenced his own blindness in the context of the freedom movement. In 1969, while taping a national television appearance on the Tom Jones show, he denied that his blindness was a disability, saying that the truly handicapped are those who hate.[19]

Many scholars, including Peniel Joseph, Komozi Woodard, Thomas Sugrue, and Matthew Countryman, have viewed the rise of Black Power during the 1960s and 1970s in the context of the entrenched racism in Northern cities.[20] The violent response of rock-hurling whites in Cicero, Illinois, when Martin Luther King led a march against discrimination in housing and employment in that city, demonstrated that the nation was only beginning to address deep-seated inequality and prejudice. Amidst a growing white backlash, and challenges to his leadership by black militants and radicals, King parted company with the administration of President Lyndon Johnson when he declared his opposition to the Vietnam War. In his April 1967 sermon "Beyond Vietnam," King spoke of the need for a revolution in values, calling on Americans to reject racism, poverty, and militarism, and to view their destiny as bound up with that of the oppressed people of the world. His assassination in Memphis a year later plunged the nation into civic unrest and political crisis. The assassination of King, followed by that of Robert Kennedy two months later, inspired a great deal of politically charged popular music.[21] Message songs called for peace in Vietnam and the healing of racial and social reconciliation at home. Throughout the turbulent years of the freedom movement, African Americans listened to black-owned radio stations, and popular music over its airwaves. What they heard, I would argue, in addition to on-air personalities' spoken-word performances of improvisational black vernacular speech, was music that provided critical contemplation, a sense of moral authority, and hope. The movement's communal ideals were broadcast into domestic and intimate spaces; African American popular music, of the 1970s, the best of it, cultivated the inner life and freedom dreams, to invoke the work of Robin Kelley, of African American and other listeners.[22]

As black activists struggled against racism, poverty, sexism, and US imperialism, popular music, provided a public forum for the airing of these persistent social contradictions. For many blacks, the systemic violence of police brutality and political assassinations at home, and military interventions in South East Asia Africa and Latin America mocked American ideals of freedom and opportunity. In his song "Big Brother," from the album *Talking Book*, Stevie Wonder voiced an indictment of American inequality and state violence in a spare acoustic arrangement propelled by his bluesy-harmonica and a neo-African beat: "Your name is Big Brother/You say that your tired of me protesting/Children dying everyday . . ." Wonder's "Big Brother," inspired by George Orwell's novel

1984, references the novel's depiction of the "telly" as instrument of surveillance and control. Decrying the opportunism and mendacity of politicians, Wonder's song makes clear their utter lack of credibility and legitimacy: "You killed all our leaders/ I don't have to do nothing to you/ You caused your own country to fall." The song's vision of mass media and political manipulation possibly alludes to Gil Scott Heron's "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised." Moreover, Wonder's indictment of the killing of black leaders recalls another scathing spoken-word piece by Scott Heron, "No Knock" from his 1972 album *Free Will*. "No Knock" angrily references the epidemic of police repression of black activists and citizens, including the predawn police raid and assassination of Chicago BPP leaders Fred Hampton and Mark Clark on December 4, 1969.[23]

Wonder seemed to confine his criticism to the political leadership of the United States, but a more comprehensive assessment by other critics was also underway. Internationally, such activist/intellectuals as Frantz Fanon, C. L .R. James, and Kwame Nkrumah had pointed to the limits of national independence in Africa and the Caribbean. The key obstacles, as they saw it, were the bourgeois nationalism of postindependence elites who used state power for self-enrichment, and on neocolonialism, or the persistence of foreign economic control, as obstacles to substantive change.[24] The pan-African movement of emergent African nations was politically fractured, with radical pan-African states committed to socialism and the total liberation of Africa opposed by a pro-Western bloc of African states. In the Caribbean, the cleavage between sovereign nation-states and radical grassroots opposition parties was manifested in the banning of the radical Guyanese scholar and activist Walter Rodney from Jamaica, where he had held an appointment at the University of the West Indies, in 1968.[25]

In Africa and the Caribbean, popular music provided a forum for protest and dissent against persistent poverty and the autocratic rule of elites and military strongmen. The Nigerian Afrobeat bandleader Fela Anikulapo-Kuti emerged as a radical pan-Africanist whose songs excoriated bigman-ism and military dictatorship, and declared solidarity with the "sufferheads," his term for Africans trapped in poverty and deprived of a political voice. And the music of numerous reggae artists, led by Bob Marley, would bring the struggles of impoverished Jamaicans to a worldwide audience. Both Fela and Marley paid a heavy cost for their outspoken social criticism and advocacy for the disfranchised of the black world; Fela was jailed, beaten and his mother murdered in an army raid. Marley and several others were seriously wounded in an apparently politically instigated attack. The dub poetry of Michael (Mikey) Smith (who lost his life in an incident of political violence in Jamaica) and Linton Kwesi Johnson, championed by Barbadian poet Kamau Brathwaite, reflected continuing struggles against discrimination and poverty among blacks in Britain and the Caribbean.[26]

These and many other African American and Afro-diasporic musicians carried demands for social justice for the people of Africa and the Caribbean to global audiences. Paul Gilroy has written extensively of the importance of the global circulation of Afro-diasporic musics and expressive cultures as a conduit for oppositional black politics. Gilroy's work on the antiphonal aesthetics and political meaning of African American soul and hip-hop and their reception

among blacks in Britain reminds us of the complex relationship between global circulation and local consumption.[27] Even before the advent of Black Power, many African American, Caribbean, and African recording artists performed this role as global (and local) exponents of black freedom and democratic hopes, even as they themselves were inspired by other Afro-diasporic styles and musicians: Paul Robeson, Lord Kitchener, Duke Ellington, Harry Belafonte, Miriam Makeba, Nina Simone, Dizzy Gillespie, James Brown, Aretha Franklin, Curtis Mayfield, Bob Marley, and Stevie Wonder.

These and other internationally acclaimed artists produced popular music that often integrated social commentary and messages of black pride, self-love, diasporic solidarity, and freedom. The commercial recordings and performances of black musicians broadcast over television and radio that circulated within the broader American culture during the 1960s and 1970s era of crossover suggest the importance of radio and television as resources for African American individuals and communities in their quest for cultural identity and national citizenship. Bearing in mind the persistence of racial discrimination and continuing assaults on black humanity and selfhood in the United States, Britain, and throughout Western culture, the struggle for identity and community is an ongoing problem among people of African descent.

At a moment when Black Power was often willfully misunderstood in the mainstream US press, the proliferation of R&B and soul singers steeped in the gospel tradition on radio and television implied that black pride was not antiwhite. Amidst the traumatic events of the late 1960s and early 1970s, including political assassinations, white backlash, and state repression, the artistry of such gospel singers as Mahalia Jackson, Marion Williams, and others, and their music's spiritual force epitomized Afro-Christian humanism. The gospel aesthetic of black pop vocalists declared that African Americans would enter American society on their own terms, with their cultural heritage intact, and proudly front and center. With a gospel choir led by James Cleveland, Aretha Franklin recorded "Amazing Grace," a double album that saw her return to her origins in the black church. In 1970, Stevie Wonder released the neo-gospel hymn, "Heaven Help Us All." This message song, with lyrics by Motown songwriter Ron Miller, and with Wonder's melismatic lead vocal backed by a gospel choir, offered listeners a unifying vision of hope even as it condemned white backlash, the unfinished business of the Great Society's War on Poverty, and the atrocities of the Vietnam War.

The Black Studies Moment: Music, Youth, and Political Education

Wonder's music was a sonic counterpart to the reflections of Black Arts era writers on black consciousness. It also matters a great deal that Wonder's emergence as pop superstar coincided with the expansion of young African Americans entering higher education. Wonder, who triumphed over social disadvantages through genius, hard work, and by affirming his black cultural heritage, became an inspirational figure for black university students who were themselves grappling with issues of identity and the terms and conditions by which they would

integrate American society. The poet June Jordan engaged these urgent matters of identity and assimilation for black students in a 1971 anthology *New Perspectives on Black Studies* edited by the African American historian John Blassingame. Jordan linked the struggle for African American consciousness to vital questions of freedom and identity for contemporary society. Jordan, who was then working with an academic bridge program that prepared disadvantaged black and Latino youth to attend City College in New York, posed the key question: "How can I be who I am?" For Jordan, this was not a question of authentic blackness. It was not a question of being, but of becoming. A crucial component of higher education entailed a critical opposition to the racialized assumptions of the dominant society: "We [referring to African Americans] lead the world stubbornly down the road to Damascus knowing … that this time, we must name our god." Tellingly stressing the need for free-thinking and intellectual independence with her use of the lower case "god," Jordan called on young African Americans to reject the possessive individualism of a society founded on the enslavement of their ancestors. Instead, "we choose community. Black America, in white. Here we began like objects chosen by the blind. And it is here that we see fit to continue—as subjects of human community." As black youth were enrolling in universities in unprecedented numbers, Jordan believed that Black Studies was a vital complement to the black student's technical and professional training: "He cannot honorably, or realistically, forsake the origins of his possible person. Or she cannot … The urgency of his heart, his breath, demands the knowing of truth about himself: the truth of black experience." Jordan, like other black feminists, seemed skeptical of the pervasive rhetoric of revolution, to which she alluded as a "miracle. " Instead, she brought liberatory slogans down to a human scale. As African Americans gained knowledge of themselves and their history, and embraced a social ethic of community, the ultimate goal was realizing one's human potential.[28]

Jordan's reflections on the role of Black Studies as a means of self-realization for African American youth are consonant with the widespread rejection by Black Power advocates of the illusions of color-blindness and white liberal declarations of the irrelevance of racial differences, of whiteness and blackness. For Jordan, the mission of Black Studies was to provide orientation and meaning to African American students in white majority university campuses, and to facilitate their self- and social awareness as they advanced socially and professionally in US society. The music of Stevie Wonder, and his contemporaries, particularly Gil Scott-Heron, shared this interest in education as a means of personal fulfillment and social uplift. They, and other politically outspoken black musicians spoke and sang of the importance of knowledge of African American history for a liberated black consciousness.

This "Black Studies" perspective is evident in "Where I'm Coming From" (1970), Wonder's final album produced under the auspices of his original contract with Motown records. The album marked a pivotal juncture in Wonder's struggle to achieve artistic and financial control of his destiny. On his twenty-first birthday, Wonder voided his Motown contract, and left Detroit with his wife and lyricist Syreeta Wright for New York City. "Where I'm Coming From" finds Wonder still searching for musical concepts that were entirely his own (though a hint of

future songwriting and arranging brilliance was evident on the hit single, "If You Really Love Me," on which Wright also sings). Though uneven, the album conveys his developing social outlook with heartfelt conviction. Wonder casts his lot with the broad refusal of young blacks to accept the world as defined by white society.

The song "I Want to Talk To You" finds Wonder performing racial conflict through different voices and accents. With a comic delivery reminiscent of black humorists like Bill Cosby or Richard Pryor, a multitracked Wonder satirizes white society's expectations that blacks conform to its norms by staging a dialogue (moving back and forth between stereophonic channels) between a bluesy, alienated, impoverished, self-doubting "black" male persona, and a comically high-pitched, patronizing vaguely southern "white" man who arrogantly insists: "Don't think my world's untrue/My world can be true, if you do what I tell you to!" The argument resolves with Wonder's black protagonist's shouted rejection, "Don't want to talk to you!"("What do you mean by that, boy?," Wonder, as the clueless white antagonist, comically interjects) "… I've been listening to you for 250,000 years … You can't tell me nothin', white man!" Throughout, the song's stark racial confrontation is softened by the irony and humor of Wonder's lyrics and his playful dialogic performance of contrasting spoken and sung vocal inflections.

The Sly Stone-influenced psychedelic funk of "Do Yourself a Favor" features 1960s vintage stream of consciousness lyrics replete with images of social unrest, angrily shouted over a clavinet and organ-heavy arrangement (shades of Billy Preston's "Outa Space"). Wonder's chorus exhorts his audience to "… educate your mind/ Get yourself together/Hey there ain't much time." The Beatle-esque suite "Sunshine in Their Eyes," seemingly inspired in part by his earlier hit "(There's a) Place in the Sun," opens as a ballad in which Wonder's vocal, backed by the endearingly off-key singing of a children's chorus, laments the hunger and deprivation suffered by children: "You and I may never see them cry/Or wonder why the world's so cold/You feel that their too young/ To take a look around/ But in their faces I can see the trouble all around/." The tempo increases with a new section that elaborates "the trouble all around." Recalling Marvin Gaye's "What's Goin' On," Wonder frames his narrative of urban decline, crime, poverty, and the war in Vietnam in familial terms whose details evoke the collapse of community:

> Oh my mother's worried cause she feels the world is ending … Papa's been real careful, cause his brother Sam was robbed trying to buy just a loaf of bread for baby John … Cost of living's up but the pay is low down, Hate to see the babies starve cause Mama can't be found/Sister lives alone, bolts and chains the doors at night, never ever walks an alley or a shorter way … Brother Bill's gone fighting in a place where he's a stranger, but good men die a stranger in every war.

The singer yearns for "love to be in the hearts of all," and for the freedom from want symbolized by "the day there's sunshine in [the children's] eyes." Wonder's foregrounding of the suffering of children and the need to ensure social justice on their behalf is a recurrent theme in his music. In Wonder's 1976 album *Songs*

in the Key of Life, the inclusion of an ambient outdoor recording of the voices of children at play follows immediately after the protest song, "Saturn," an indictment of earthly greed, violence, and injustice by an otherworldly visitor from the peaceful planet with glowing rings.[29]

Like Nina Simone's anthem "Young, Gifted and Black," consciousness was a key concern in much of the popular music produced by Wonder, Aretha Franklin, Curtis Mayfield, Gil Scott Heron, and others. Scott Heron's spoken-word piece "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised," indicts television as an instrument of cultural domination. "Revolution's" fast-paced litany of references juxtaposed high politics and lowbrow culture, including TV advertisements, situation comedies, soap operas, Hollywood film actors, civil rights moderates, and the reviled political leaders President Richard Nixon, Attorney General John Mitchell, and Vice President Spiro Agnew.[30] The cumulative effect of Scott Heron's rapid-fire piling on of such references was an exposé of all manner of cultural illusions and oppressive acts: the expropriation and marginalization of black music for the profit of whites; the American cultural mainstream's obsession with whiteness; and the materialism and violence of US society—for emphasis, Scott Heron repeated the line, "There will be no pictures of pigs shooting down brothers on the instant replay," suggesting that police brutality was as routine as a televised spectator sport. The piece concludes with the assertion that "the revolution will be no re-run, brothers. The revolution will be live." Scott Heron's work would have been familiar to Wonder. Their paths first may have crossed in New York in the early 1970s, where Wonder resided while composing and recording a vast output of music that would form the bulk of the material on his next several critically acclaimed albums. By the late 1970s, Wonder invited Scott Heron to tour with him, after the terminally ill Bob Marley was unable to do so.[31]

Wonder's classic single "Superstition" (1972) is worth considering within the Afro-diasporic musical discourse on consciousness. Apart from the fact that Wonder played on the majority of the song's instrumental tracks, the record is notable for its synthesis of aesthetics and overt content. Indeed, the song's Afro-diasporic content is more evident in its style and aesthetics than its lyrics, which, without making overt reference to race, warn of the perils of superstitious beliefs: "When you believe in things you don't understand, you suffer/Superstition ain't the way." The song's "racial" meaning derives more from its sonic context rather than its text, though, from Wonder's perspective, the song's lyrics might refer to the importance of specific knowledge about his physical surroundings as a matter of personal safety. Wonder's need as a sightless person to know his surroundings challenges all of us to choose reason over the various illusions to which we fall prey, including the visual illusion of race. At the same time, Wonder's rejection of superstition resonates with the self-awareness and specific knowledge black people need to survive in an all-too-often hostile, objectifying, and violent Western world. Implicit in Wonder's warning about superstition is an understanding of the link between ideology and power, of a state of delusion that "keep[s] me in a day dream" and leads to resignation and inaction. Sad is the song, indeed.

Viewed from the standpoint of the existential quest of black people for cultural identity, freedom, and citizenship in a Western culture founded on enslavement

and colonialism, the song's Afro-diasporic sonic elements may well suggest the validity of African cultural heritage as a basis for knowledge, being, and consciousness. The relaxed tempo of Wonder's instantly recognizable drum-kit introduction evokes not only the groove of funk, but also West African highlife, though by the song's third verse the tempo has accelerated noticeably, as a West African drumming ensemble in performance might do. The song's hook, the hypnotic two-bar clavinet ostinato riff that dominates each verse, its halting, off-kilter accents hinting at collapse until managing always to land safely on "the one" or first beat of the measure, yields a pleasure quite different from melodic beauty. The riff's fractured sense of time, of tension and release, feels like a perpetual state of exile and return to "the one." A second, overdubbed clavinet part by Wonder provides a contrasting rhythmic anchor in the form of an Afro-Latin clavé. The danceable groove resulting from the layering of rhythmic parts implies a communal path to self-awareness, an antidote, however transitory, to alienation, and an imagined safe harbor from the dangers conjured by the unsettling lyrics. The horn arrangement announces the presence of the jazz tradition. The hard-bop figure played by trumpet and saxophone cued by the line "thirteen month-old baby" echoes the syncopated clavé-clavinet pattern. The half-note pattern played by the horns over the chorus's warning "when you believe in things …" and later, Wonder's high-pitched scream atop the bridge between verses two and three, intensify the lyrics' sense of doom and foreboding: "the devil's on his way." As if to underline the words "you suffer," a stinging horn accent abruptly halts the groove, just long enough for the singer to remind us to reject superstition. Wonder's "Superstition" appears to weigh and renounce the ambivalent point of view of the misleadingly titled Willie Dixon Chicago blues song "I Ain't Superstitious." Dixon's singer, hedging his bets, can't let go of his folk beliefs, good luck charms, and ritual gestures meant to ward off ill-fortune. Like the insistently modern-minded Richard Wright, Wonder rejects superstition as a bygone, self-destructive relic. But for Wonder, the communal pleasures of Afro-diasporic sound suggest an escape from suffering, through a higher plane of consciousness, for blacks, and for humanity.[32]

Looking Within: Gender, Community, and Black Power

The singing voices of black women have been a significant counter to the patriarchal character of black institutional and public life. As Angela Davis has argued, the songs of Bessie Smith, Billie Holiday, Ma Rainey, and other blues women broke silences on intra-racial gender politics.[33] If we consider the musical artistry of other indelible voices, including Marian Anderson, Mahalia Jackson, Ella Fitzgerald, Holiday, Sarah Vaughan, Nina Simone, Aretha Franklin, and others, they have sounded and symbolized the strength and resiliency of black women, and at crucial moments, voiced themes of black protest. Besides Billie Holiday's long association with the antilynching song "Strange Fruit," Marian Anderson's 1956 recording "Crucifixion," renders the spiritual "They crucified my Lord, and he never said a mumbling word," with a controlled fury that seemed mindful of

such recent atrocities as the murder of Emmett Till in Mississippi, and the lynching tree as a latter-day American version of the cross.[34]

There is a famous story of a record store in Roxbury (a black neighborhood in Boston) playing Aretha Franklin's "I Never Loved a Man" on the day of its release in 1967 again and again on its outdoor speakers, as couples danced on the sidewalk to its hypnotic electric piano accompaniment. At that moment, Franklin's recorded performance of the singer's confession of desire arguably awakened mass desires for personal and social fulfillment. Despite, or because of the highly fraught gender politics of the Black Power movement, black women writers and artists were active in the Black Arts movement. And the voices of African American women performers like Aretha and Billie Holiday haunted the imagination of black women poets, many of whom were intent on naming sexism and patriarchy within an indictment of the racism, class inequality, and oppressive foreign policies of US society. The poet Nikki Giovanni released a long playing album of her poems, "Truth Is On Its Way," backed by gospel music arrangements of traditional hymns. Giovanni's album included a tribute to Aretha Franklin that praised her as an icon of blackness, while meditating on the personal costs exacted on Franklin by the demands of fame and mass adulation.[35]

Aretha's clarion voice symbolized black women's prominence, albeit incompletely recognized and affirmed, in black public culture, particularly the black church. Indeed, as I have argued, gospel music, with its heritage of the life-affirming spirituals composed by anonymous slaves, loomed large in the sonic culture of Black Power. That memorable anecdote of spontaneous intra-racial pleasure generated by Franklin's "I Never Loved a Man," whatever one may think about the song's gender politics, highlights the capacity of music to enact utopian desires for social harmony, desires rooted in the realities of tensions between men and women, particularly in the movement and in intellectual and cultural settings. Despite frequent calls for black unity and solidarity, the role of women in the context of black liberation was a contentious issue for many. One need only recall the outcry against the prominence of black feminist literary and cultural production, including Ntozake Shange's 1976 Broadway production, *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow Was Enuf*, and Michele Wallace's *Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman* (1978), which took as its subject the sexist backlash to independent and assertive black women.[36]

Wonder's music would soon show the influence of funk, the soundtrack of black militancy, which, while allowing a range of moods and styles, was perhaps more widely known as a vehicle for the masculinist outlook of James Brown and a spate of lesser purveyors during the early 1970s. But while funk symbolized the newly assertive mood of black Americans through its refusal of pop conventions in favor of an Afro-diasporic aesthetic privileging rhythm and dance, Wonder's music would evolve into a personal fusion of jazz, funk, pop, gospel, and soul, all undergirded by his masterful drumming. Following the precedent of Sly and the Family Stone, Wonder formed an interracial recording and touring band with female backup singers, Wonderlove. Both musically and politically, Wonder's music advanced a Senghorean vision of the cultural unity of the black and African peoples, and of the universal appeal of Afro-diasporic

cultures. As if to suggest political solidarity among blacks in the West as victims of police brutality, Wonder performed "I Shot the Sherriff" with Bob Marley at the Dream Concert, a benefit for the Jamaica School for the Blind, held at the National Stadium, in Kingston Jamaica, on October 4, 1975. A year earlier, press reports described Wonder's plans to move to Ghana to establish a school for the blind. Although Wonder's interest in Africa was genuine, such statements may also have been part of his ongoing contract negotiations with Motown. Wonder's performances in Nigeria at FESTAC in 1977 were well-received. He eventually performed at the National Theater in Accra, Ghana, in 1994, and maintains a residence there.[37]

Wonder's temporary self-imposed exile from Motown in 1970 as he moved to gain control over his artistic and financial affairs, and his forming of Wonderlove, reflected the pursuit of self-determination and institution building among African American musicians in the 1960s and 1970s. As employment opportunities for African American jazz musicians in urban centers dwindled with the closing of nightclubs and other establishments in black communities due to urban renewal and deindustrialization, African American jazz musicians established collectives and community-based performance spaces. George Lewis has written a compelling history of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM) in Chicago, which, though founded on black cultural nationalist ideals, reflected the complex and evolving black subjectivities of its members.[38] The St. Louis-based Black Artists Group (BAG), and the Pan Afrikan Peoples' Arkestra founded by jazz pianist and composer Horace Tapscott in Los Angeles, enacted the spirit of cultural nationalism, self-reliance, and community-activism that characterized a wide array of political and cultural organizations inspired by Black Power. The cooperative spirit and political intent of these groups was powerfully exhibited by others, including the New York-based spoken-word pioneers, The Last Poets, and the Washington, DC, women's a capella group Sweet Honey in the Rock. Sweet Honey in the Rock was founded in 1973, and its music offered a beacon of insight and defiance against the social welfare cutbacks, defense buildup, and anti-civil rights agenda of the Reagan administration. Sweet Honey's members raised their voices in protest against these forces of reaction with the group's synthesis of black feminism, anti-imperialism, African American freedom songs, and Latin American *nuevas canciones*. The point of these organizations of black musicians was that art was an integral part of life, and song was the lifeblood of community, as Bernice Johnson Reagon, the former member of the SNCC Freedom Singers and founder of Sweet Honey in the Rock, has insisted.[39]

While one could focus on revolutionary nationalism, cultural nationalism, or separatism as distinct expressions of Black Power ideology, Wonder's political outlook was shaped primarily by the Christian humanism of Dr. King. Wonder's music and public statements reported in the press echoed Dr. King's advocacy of nonviolence, his opposition to the Vietnam War and US imperialism, his indictment of materialism, and his redemptive ideal of community. Wonder was not alone in this regard, for this progressive vision was evident in much of the intellectual, cultural, and particularly musical discourses contemporaneous with

the Black Power movement. Without reducing Wonder's copious and complex musical output to a single meaning or aesthetic approach, his 1970s albums, while often infused with a playful spirit of individual freedom and artistic expression, were also, crucially, occasions for consciousness-raising and advocacy of social justice.

Wonder's musical collaborations and associations help place him squarely within the gender dimensions of Black Power. Arguably Wonder's most important collaboration of this period was with his wife and songwriting partner Syreeta Wright, before, during, and after their brief marriage. In Wright, who was one of many aspiring Motown recording artists, Wonder had not only a talented lyricist, but also a partner in formulating an eclectic black countercultural sensibility. Very much in keeping with the confessional writing of Black Arts movement poets June Jordan, Nikki Giovanni, and others, Wonder and Wright composed emotionally intimate songs about their relationship and the end of their marriage after less than two years. They continued to collaborate after their divorce. At the height of their courtship and marriage, Wright contributed lyrics and background vocals for Wonder's 1971 album, "Where I'm Coming From." Wonder went on to produce Syreeta's first two solo albums, both recorded after their divorce—and they remained close friends and occasional musical collaborators until Wright's death in 2004.[40] Wright was apparently an inspiration for Wonder's bittersweet songs ("Cause We've Ended Now as Lovers," "You and I") that offer the consolation of an enduring friendship that survives the end of a romantic relationship.

Wonder's and Wright's social concerns paralleled efforts by activists, writers, and musicians during the Black Arts movement to clarify African Americans relationship to the antiwar, counterculture, and women's movements. (On the gay liberation movement, Wonder apparently did not take a position, though he later performed with longtime associates Dionne Warwick, Gladys Knight, and Elton John on "That's What Friends Are For," a number 1 hit record that raised consciousness and $3 million for AIDS research in 1986.) Wonder's and Wright's albums of the 1970s reflect a preoccupation with the rapidly shifting politics of black consciousness. "Black Maybe" is a Stevie Wonder composition sung by Syreeta that appears on Wright's self-titled debut album from 1972. "Black Maybe" joins a mini genre of songs that question dogmatic and perhaps superficial declarations of blackness. The song also suggests that the questioning is directed at a woman: "Black Maybe, or maybe this is just your color for the day/ … Black maybe, you better come around/ Black maybe, or maybe you're just talking trash … / Black maybe, or maybe your color I better not ask … /Black woman, you better wash your man's tears away/ Black maybe it's time for you to wake up, come around." The gender tensions hinted at in "Black Maybe" find more overt expression on "Superwoman," from Wonder's album "Music of My Mind," on which Wonder's vocal complains of his lover's misplaced career ambitions, smugly declaring that he knows her very well, while she doesn't understand his needs. Like "Superwoman," many of the songs on Syreeta Wright's debut album are inspired by the couple's relationship. "Keep him like he is" has Wright's lyric and vocal imagining God's decision that her husband at birth was "wonderful,"

as created; the song implies her own, and Wonder's, acceptance of his blindness. Such declarations of unconditional love are countered by the misleadingly titled, "To Know You Is to Love You," whose first verse, sung by Wonder, strikes a rueful note: "... but to know me is not that way it seems." Syreeta's cover version of the Beatles' "She's Leaving Home," on which both Wonder and Wright can be heard using the talk box, is a marriage of soul and psychedelic music. It is difficult not to hear the couple's amiable divorce as the subtext for the recording, with the sonic contrast of Wonder's electronically modified "good-byes" reinforcing the emotional impact of Wright's lead vocal.[41]

After declaring independence from Motown, Wonder assembled his own beloved community, employing family, friends, and fellow musicians. During the 1970s, Wonder freelanced as a producer and session musician, nurturing the careers of many artists, including singers Minnie Riperton, Deneice Williams (who shares his fondness for gospel music), Chaka Khan and Rufus, B. B. King, The Jacksons (formerly the Jackson 5), the post-Diana Ross Supremes, the Main Ingredient, Buddy Miles, Gil Scott Heron, Michael Henderson, and the Jamaican reggae group Third World. On Riperton's breakthrough album "Perfect Angel," on which Wonder contributed his services as producer and musician, along with Wonderlove, the song, "The Edge of a Dream," is a jazzy ballad tribute to Dr. King written by Riperton and her husband, Richard Rudolph. Wonder played piano on the song.[42]

In the song "You and I," on the 1972 album "Talking Book," Wonder sings, "In my mind, we can conquer the world, in love ..." More than just a romantic love song, "You and I" speaks to love as *agape*, a force for reconciliation and building community. As such, "You and I" implicates Wonder in a number of relationships: between him and his audience; with his creative collaborators, especially Syreeta Wright; and with those artists he chose to produce out of a sense of aesthetic (and political) kinship. Although he also collaborated with nonblack musicians, including Jeff Beck and Paul McCartney, to give two notable examples, in his role as producer for such artists as Syreeta Wright and others, Wonder's efforts might be seen as a precursor of the black rock collective.[43] Wonder leveraged his clout as a writer and producer on behalf of these artists, whose music was not readily embraced by black or white radio formats. He would continue to enact ideals of community and solidarity, as well as an expansive notion of blackness, and a keen sense of the obstacles faced by African American musicians in the restrictive realms of pop radio and the music industry, by partnering musically with a host of others. He promoted the popularization of reggae music among African American audiences, though with limited success. For Wonder, the political significance is not necessarily to be found in the lyrics of any given song, but rather, in an aesthetic approach privileging experimentalism, individuality, and the right to be heard, despite the racializing categories of pop radio formats and the commercial recording industry.

Several ideas and themes resonated within the sound of Black Power, and in the music of Stevie Wonder. Religion and spirituality, as symbolized by gospel performance styles and arrangements, offer healing and a sense of hope, a divinely ordained image of personal dignity, and a prophetic injunction to create a more just society. Politics was and is defined at the fundamental level of human

relationships, rather than ideological slogans. Ideals of communal solidarity, certainly for Wonder, were inseparable from ideals of individual freedom and fulfillment. As the centrality of the Black Studies movement would suggest, education was and is of paramount importance for youth. The measure of a society's moral standing is how it treats its children, an idea Wonder may have encountered in the songs of Gil Scott-Heron, or the writing of James Baldwin. Artistic production and creativity are part of life, and music is the lifeblood of community.

At a time in which conservatives unabashedly employ antiblack and anti-immigrant racism to advance an antigovernment agenda, it seems crucial to revisit the broader sonic culture of the Black Power era, with its moral critiques of racism, exploitation, and imperialism, its complex critical engagement with black history, and its global vision of social justice. The speeches and music of the Black Power era, coinciding with the Black Studies movement, also represented African American history and culture without apology to white America, and to the world. Black Studies discourse and the music of the late 1960s and early 1970s were powerful vehicles for the socialization of young African Americans. It is important to view Stevie Wonder as a product of a moment defined by pointed critiques of institutional racism and demands on the US state to commit its vast resources to fight poverty, and address human needs at home and abroad. Although this world is receding, and indeed, is threatened by economic recession and a concerted Right-wing political attack against organized labor and social welfare programs, it is not ancient history. Wonder and many others remain active in keeping the egalitarian and social justice ideals of Martin Luther King and the black freedom movement alive. The music, oratory, and writing inspired by the black freedom movement, and its intersection with the women's and antiwar movements, provided nothing less than a moral and political education for a generation of American youth. Perhaps a sustained engagement with the music and sonic culture of the black freedom struggle can play a similar role for today's young people, schooling them in the transformative potential of the nonviolent movement, its global consciousness and connections, and the sacrifices made not only by and for African Americans, but also for the betterment of humankind. It is important for us to hear again and anew the immortal voices of struggle emanating from the black world's unfinished struggles for liberation.

Notes

1. See, for example, Lorenzo Thomas, *Don't Deny My Name: Words and Music and the Black Intellectual Tradition* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008); Farah Jasmine Griffin, *If You Can't Be Free, Be A Mystery: In Search of Billie Holiday* (New York: One World/Ballantine, 2002); Richard J. Powell, *Black Art and Culture in the 20th Century* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1997); Kamau Brathwaite, *Roots* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993); Nathaniel Mackey, "Other: From Noun to Verb," *Representations* 39 (Spring 1992): 51–70; Ralph Ellison, *Shadow and Act* (New York: Vintage Books, 1964).
2. One might begin to investigate the music inspired by Black Power through the compilations "Black Power: Music of a Revolution" (Shout Factory B00020SHGW), "Listen Whitey! The Sounds of Black Power, 1967–1974" (Light in the Attic B006R6N1G6),

and "Change Is Gonna Come: The Voice of Black America" (Kent Records UK B000MMLMSA).

3. See, for example, George Lipsitz, *Footsteps in the Dark: The Hidden Histories of Popular Music* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007); Richard Iton, *Search of the Black Fantastic: Politics and Popular Culture in the Post-Civil Rights Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Mark Anthony Neal, *What the Music Said: Black Popular Music and Black Public Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1999).
4. Some recent examples of sound studies that are particularly enabling for my project have appeared in the special issue of *American Quarterly* edited by Kara Keeling and Josh Kun, "Sound Clash: Listening to American Studies," 63, no. 3 (September 2011). They include Art M. Blake, "Audible Citizenship and Audiomobility: Race, Technology, and CB Radio," 531–553; Gayle Wald, "Soul Vibrations: Black Music and Black Freedom in Sound and Space," 673–696; Eric Lott, "Back Door Man: Howlin' Wolf and the Sound of Jim Crow," 6097–6710; and Barry Shank, "The Political Agency of Musical Beauty," 831–855.
5. On the Black Arts movement, see James Smethurst, *The Black Arts Movement: Literary Nationalism in the 1960s and 1970s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Margo Crawford and Lisa Gail Collins, *New Thoughts on the Black Arts Movement* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2006); Elizabeth Alexander, *The Black Interior: Essays* (New York: Graywolf Press, 2004).
6. There are numerous biographies of Stevie Wonder, but among the works that situate him to some extent within the civil rights movement, see Craig Werner, *Higher Ground: Stevie Wonder, Aretha Franklin, Curtis Mayfield and the Rise and Fall of American Soul* (New York: Crown, 2004); James E. Perone, *The Sound of Stevie Wonder: His Words and Music* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2006); Dennis Love and Stacy Brown, *Blind Faith: The Miraculous Journey of Lula Hardaway, Stevie Wonder's Mother* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2002); Ted Hull (with Paula L. Stahel), *The Wonder Years: My Life and Times with Stevie Wonder* (Tampa, FL: n.p., 2002); John Swenson, *Stevie Wonder* (New York: Harper and Row, 1986); and Constanze Elsner, *Stevie Wonder* (New York: Popular Library, 1977).
7. For an insightful discussion of "Living in the City," see Farah Jasmine Griffin, *Who Set You Flowin': The African American Migration Narrative* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 97–98. James Baldwin has written of his personal encounters with prisons and the criminal justice system in *No Name in the Street* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1972), 100–118; 142–149 and in his essay "Equal in Paris," in *Notes of a Native Son,* James Baldwin, ed. (New York: Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), 138–158.
8. On the debates over Négritude at the Dakar Festival, see Penny Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press,), 158.
9. Studies of this conjuncture of overlapping literary diasporas include Brent Hayes Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004); Kevin Meehan, *African American and Caribbean Cultural Exchange* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi Press, 2009); Louise Bennett, *Jamaica Labrish* (Kingston: Novelty Trading, 1966), and Kamau Brathwaite, *History of the Voice: The Development of Nation Language in Anglophone Caribbean Poetry* (London: New Beacon Books, 1984).
10. Frederick Douglass, *The Narrative and Selected Writings* (New York: The Modern Library, 1984), 28–30; W. E. B. Du Bois, "The Sorrow Songs," in *The Souls of Black Folk,* W. E. B. Du Bois, ed. (New York: Penguin Books, 1989), 204–216.

11. Langston Hughes, "Bebop," in *The Collected Works of Langston Hughes: The Early Simple Stories, Volume 7,* Donna Akiba Sullivan Harper, eds. (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2002), 227–228; Hughes, *Ask Your Mama: 12 Moods For Jazz* (New York: Knopf, 1961); James Baldwin, "Sonny's Blues," in *Going to Meet The Man,* James Baldwin, ed. (New York: Dial Press, 1965); Ann Petry, "Solo on the Drums," in *Miss Muriel and Other Stories,* Ann Petry, ed. (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1971), Amiri Baraka, *Blues People: Negro Music in White America* (New York: William Morrow, 1963); Nikki Giovanni, "Poem for Aretha," in *Collected Poems,* Nikki Giovanni, ed. (New York: William Morrow, 1996).
12. For insightful discussions of the relationship of black music with the civil rights and Black Power movements, see Nelson George, *The Death of Rhythm and Blues* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1989), and Mark Anthony Neal, *What the Music Said: Black Popular Music and Black Public Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1999).
13. John Collins, *Fela: Kalakuta Notes* (Amsterdam: KIT, 2009); Dorian Lynskey, *33 Revolutions Per Minute* (New York: Harper Collins, 2011), 231–244. On FESTAC, see Michael E. Veal, *FELA: The Life and Times of a Musical Icon* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2000), 183.
14. For an example of a problematic media framing of Black Power, see the CBS News documentary "Black Power and White Backlash," which originally aired on September 26, 1966. In author's possession.
15. Dudley Randall and Margaret Burroughs, eds. *For Malcolm: Poems on the Life and Death of Malcolm X* (Detroit, MI: Broadside Press, 1967).
16. Harold Cruse, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual* (New York: Quill, 1984), 42, 71.
17. Wonder's reaction to the Detroit riot is quoted in Al Rutledge, "A Pocket Full of Soul," *Baltimore Afro-American*, September 2, 1967, A-1.
18. Werner, *Higher Ground*, 140–141.
19. "Bigotry is the Real Blindness" *Los Angeles Sentinel*, May 8, 1969, F-4.
20. Peniel Joseph, *Waiting 'til the Midnight Hour: A Narrative History of Black Power in America* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 2006); Komozi Woodard, *A Nation within a Nation: Amiri Baraka (Leroi Jones) and Black Power Politics* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Thomas Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North* (New York: Random House, 2008); Matthew J. Countryman, *Up South: Civil Rights and Black Power in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).
21. An incomplete listing of message songs after the King assassination, most of which made the US pop and R&B charts, includes from 1968: Dion, "Abraham Martin and John" (also recorded by Smokey Robinson); Aretha Franklin, "Think"; James Brown, "Say it Loud—I'm Black and I'm Proud"; The Young Rascals, "People Got to Be Free." From 1969: Syl Johnson, "Is It Because I'm Black"; The Impressions, "Choice of Colors"; Richie Havens, "Freedom" (performed at Woodstock); Joe South, "Games People Play"; Sly and the Family Stone, "Everyday People"; The Band, "The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down"; Elvis Presley, "In the Ghetto"; Edwin Starr, "War (What Is It Good for?)." From 1970: Stevie Wonder, "Heaven Help Us All"; Nina Simone, "Young Gifted and Black"; Marvin Gaye, "What's Going On"; The Five Stairsteps, "Oo-o-h Child"; Gil Scott Heron, "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised." Note also, Bob Dylan, "George Jackson" (1971); and The Staples Singers, "When Will We Be Paid (For the Work We've Done)" from the concert movie *Soul to Soul* (1972).
22. Robin D. G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2002).

23. Stevie Wonder, *Talking Book* (Tamla B00004S36A), released October 28, 1972; Gil Scott Heron, "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised," from the album *Small Talk at 125th and Lenox* (Flying Dutchman Records, 1970); "No Knock" appears on Gil Scott-Heron, *Free Will* (Flying Dutchman/RCA FD-10153), released in August, 1972.
24. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1966); Kwame Nkrumah, *Class Struggle in Africa* (New York: International Publishers, 1970); C. L. R. James, *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution* (Westport, CT: L. Hill, 1977).
25. Rupert Lewis, *Walter Rodney's Intellectual and Political Thought* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1998).
26. Kamau Brathwaite, "The History of the Voice," in Brathwaite, ed., *Roots,* 259–304.
27. Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack: The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press), 153–222.
28. June Jordan, "Bringing Back the Person," in *New Perspectives on Black Studies,* John Blassingame, ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1971), pp. 28-39.
29. The emphasis on children as victims of institutionalized racism and the beneficiaries of social amelioration is also seen in Gil Scott Heron's "Save the Children" from the album *Pieces of a Man* (Flying Dutchman/RCA), released in 1971.
30. President Nixon came in for similar criticism in Wonder's single "You Haven't Done Nothin'" from the album Fulfillingness First Finale (Tamla) released July 22, 1974, and Lamont Dozier's hit single "Fish Ain't Bitin'" of the same year, with its caustic references to "Tricky Dick, tryin' to be slick …"
31. Scott-Heron, "The Revolution Will Not be Televised."
32. "Superstition," the first hit single from Talking Book, was released in November 1972. For a musicologist's analysis of the song, see Tim Hughes, "Superstition," *Groove and Flow: Six Analytical Essays on the Music of Stevie Wonder,* PhD dissertation, University of Washington, 2003, 140–177.
33. Angela Davis, *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998).
34. James Cone, *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2011).
35. Peter Guralnick, *Sweet Soul Music: Rhythm and Blues and the Southern Dream of Freedom* (New York: Back Bay Books, 1999); Nikki Giovanni, "Aretha Poem" in "Truth Is on Its Way," in *Collected Poetry of Nikki Giovanni 1968–1998* (New York: William Morrow, 1996)
36. Ntozake Shange, *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide/when the Rainbow Is Enuf* (San Lorenzo, CA: Shameless Hussy Press, 1975); Michele Wallace, *Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman* (New York: Dial Press, 1979). Wallace discusses the negative reception of Black Macho in her collection of essays, *Invisibility Blues: From Pop to Theory* (London: Verso Press, 1990).
37. John Collins, *West African Pop Roots* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1992), 65.
38. George Lewis, *A Power Stronger Than Itself: The AACM and American Experimental Music* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2008).
39. Bernice Johnson Reagon, booklet for the album *Voices of the Civil Rights Movement: Black American Freedom Songs 1960–1966* (Smithsonian Institution, Program in Black American Culture R 023), released 1980, p. 4. See also Bernice Johnson Reagon and Sweet Honey in the Rock, *We Who Believe in Freedom: Sweet Honey in the Rock … Still on the Journey* (New York: Anchor Books-Doubleday, 1993).
40. Dave Laing, "Syreeta: Stevie Wonder's Partner in Music and (Briefly) Marriage," The Guardian (July 13, 2004), http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/2004/jul/13/guardianobituaries.artsobituaries1. Accessed May 3, 2012.

41. "She's Leaving Home" appears on Wright's debut album, *Syreeta* (MoWest MW 113), released June 1972. For an account of their marriage and collaboration, based on conversations with Wonder and Wright, see Elsner, *Stevie Wonder*, 124, 126, 161–179.
42. "The Edge of a Dream" is from Minnie Riperton's album *Perfect Angel* (Epic), released June 1974. Wonder composed the title track and "Take a Little Trip."
43. Maureen Mahon, *Right to Rock: The Black Rock Coalition and the Cultural Politics of Race* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004).

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