REVOLUTIONARY ACTION MOVEMENT (RAM):
A CASE STUDY OF AN
URBAN REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT IN
WESTERN CAPITALIST SOCIETY

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ABSTRACT

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Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM): A Case Study of an Urban Revolutionary Movement in Western Capitalist Society

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The primary intent of this thesis is to present a political descriptive analysis of the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM), an urban revolutionary movement active in the 1960's. An attempt has been made to portray the historical context, the organization, ideology of the RAM organization and response of the state to the activities of the organization.

The thesis presents a methodological approach to developing a paradigm in which the study of urban revolutionary movements is part of a rational analysis. The thesis also explains concepts and theories that are presented later in the text. A review of black radical activity from 1900 to 1960 is given to provide the reader with historical background information of the events and personalities which contributed to the development of RAM. A comparative analysis is made between urban revolutionary movements in Latin America and the United States in order to show that the RAM organization was part of a worldwide urban phenomenon.

The scope of the thesis is to present an analysis of the birth, early beginnings of RAM as a national organization, and Malcolm X's impact on the organization. The thesis also covers RAM's organizational activities

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The 1960's have been written into American history as a period of mass political activism. The anti-war movement, anti-poverty movement, the women's movement, and, of course, the black liberation movement are some of the few social political movements which characterized the decade.

During the decade, several organizations within the black liberation movement advocated urban guerrilla warfare as a method of achieving self-determination for Afro-American people. These organizations maintained that the capitalist state/system was the main cause of oppression of black people in America. Throughout the decade, these organizations had numerous clashes with representatives of the state such as the police, FBI, National Guard, and Army. As a result of confrontations with the state, many members of the urban guerrilla groups were imprisoned, exiled, assassinated and driven underground. During the same decade urban guerrilla movements emerged in Latin American countries. In the 1960's and early 1970's, urban revolutionary movements were a new phenomenon in capitalist countries in the Western hemisphere.

The task of the proposed research is to present a descriptive analysis of urban revolutionary movements that emerged in the Western hemisphere in the 1960's and 1970's with particular emphasis upon the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM). RAM was chosen for the topic of this study because it was the first revolutionary black nationalist organization to emerge in

the black movement in the 1960's. Also because it used various tactics, from mass demonstrations to armed self-defense, and was the first organization in the 1960's to advocate the use of urban guerrilla warfare to achieve the objective of an independent black socialist republic in the south. Major theoreticians such as Abraham Guillen, Carlos Marighella, Mario Roberto Santucho, Robert F. Williams, Malcolm X and Max Stanford will be examined for their contribution to developing a conceptual framework and theoretical paradigm for urban guerrillas.

In developing a descriptive ananlysis of RAM, the Revolutionary Action Movement, as one of the urban revolutionary movements in capitalist countries in the Western hemisphere, certain theoretical and conceptual approaches to the subject matter have to be defined. The first thing that has to be defined is what method of approach should be used in describing a new phenomenon in which a recognized academic methodology has yet to be developed. In analyzing RAM, the researcher will use a dialectical and historical materialist method. This is a method whereby the researcher approaches the subject matter as a material phenomenon that is constantly changing and is subject to economic/political laws governing human society.

> According to materialist dialectics, changes to nature are due chiefly to the development of the internal contradictions in society, that is, the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production, the contradictions between the old and the new; it is the development of these contradictions that pushes society forward and gives the impetus for the suppression of the old society by the new. Does materialist dialectics exclude external causes? Not at all. It holds that external causes are the condition of change and internal causes are the basis of change, and that external causes become operative through internal causes. In a suitable temperature, an egg changes into a chicken, but no temperature can change a stone into a chicken because each has a different basis. There is a constant interaction between the people of different countries. In the era of

> capitalism, and especially in the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution, the interaction and mutual impact of different countries in the political, economic and cultural spheres are extremely great.[1]

To further explain the dialectical method, it is essentially a method that holds that no phenomenon in nature can be understood if taken by itself. Phenomenon cannot be isolated from surrounding phenomenon because in so doing a phenomenon must be considered in connection with the surrounding conditions, and cannot be understood or explained unless considered as inseparably connected. No historical force is considered a separate entity, but is rather considered an interconnected force which affects and is affected by other phenomenon in the world system. In analyzing a formation such as RAM from a dialectical and historical materialist perspective, the political forces, economic structure, relationship of classes in U.S. society, historical development of the black liberation movement, political climate of the period and class structure of the black community must all be synthesized in the study. The focus of this study will be to analyze all of the material phenomenon which interacted with RAM and with which RAM interacted during the decade of the 1960's.

A historical materialist point of view is essentially the extension of the principles of dialectical materialism to the study of social life and the application of the principles of dialectical materialism to the phenomenon of the life of society and its history. Being that the proposed research is a descriptive analysis dealing with a given historical period of time, the method of historical materialism would apply to the study.

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[1]Mao Tse Tung, "On Contradiction," Selected Readings from the Works of Mao Tse Tung (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1971), p. 89.

Therefore, the historical background presented in the introduction has a direct correlation with the body of the material to be presented later.

Some of the factors the researcher will attempt to determine in the study are:

1. What produced the phenomenon or what was the dialectical process that led to the origins of the organization?
2. Factors that led to the growth of the organization.
3. Factors that led to the decline of the organization.
4. What was the class composition of the membership of the organization? Did it change from origin to demise?
5. What was the age composition of the organization? Did it change in the growth/decline process?
6. What was the size of the membership of the organization from its origin, apex and demise?
7. Usefulness of the organization as a model for the future?

Within the context of dealing with RAM, an urban revolutionary movement, and the state's response to it, the researcher will analyze the state's historical response to other revolutionary movements in American history.

Data Collection Methodology

Several research techniques will be utilized during the course of this study.

Primary and secondary sources of historical data will be researched. Internal and public documents of RAM will be examined. The researcher has collected a complete set of RAM's public documents and a less complete set of the organizations internal documents. In addition, newspaper accounts, magazine reports and books dealing with the movement shall be researched. As a participant observer, primary data of the research will be used. From 1963 to 1968, the researcher collected New York and Philadelphia newspaper

and magazine accounts in an attempt to keep abreast of the media coverage of RAM.

Eyewitness accounts will be utilized in the research. Twenty-five people who were active in the organization and who represent various Black communities will be interviewed. The sample will include ex-RAM members who remain incarcerated, and comrades, friends and relatives of deceased members to determine the relationship of their death to their political activity.

To develop a descriptive analysis through primary sources, from eyewitness accounts and interviews, the researcher will try to determine:

1. What motivated people to become involved in the organization?
2. The participants' class background, age and sex.
3. Forms of repression used against the membership of the organization, such as, prison, exile, and assassination.
4. Current location and status of participants.

In order to validate primary resources, FBI documents on the movement will be examined. Also, the research will include an examination of FBI files on the major individuals involved in RAM. Personal tape recorded interviews with these individuals will be conducted. The researcher will investigate how repression, jailings and other forms of harassment have altered the lives of individuals involved.

Major Theories

Many of the studies on the black liberation movement in the United States suffer from two major defects: they fail to place the black liberation movement in a larger context to being part of a world-wide anti-colonial, Third World and socialist revolution, struggling to liberate itself from the world capitalist system; and most researchers of the black

liberation movement in America usually highlight the role of individuals and their contributions to the race, rather than placing emphasis on the masses as the makers of history. Many researchers fail to concentrate on the mass character of movements that have occurred in the black liberation struggle and when they do, they fail to show the historical continuity from one period of mass struggle to another. Within the context, the vast majority of black social scientists fail to understand or show the dialectical relation between racial and class exploitation of black people in the United States. In order to understand the dialectical nature of racial and class exploitation, it is necessary to develop an analysis of the world capitalist system and the relation of black people to capitalism and slavery. Understanding the dialectic of race in relation to the dialectic of class requires the development of a new paradigm. This would require a more comprehensive study of the role of slavery to the development of capitalism.[2]

A complete analysis of the dialectic of dual oppression, race and class, will not be attempted here but a brief sketch is provided to aid the reader in interpreting the meaning and significance of the Revolutionary Action Movement.

> Slavery existed as a mode of organization of production and Africa functioned as a supplier of slaves prior to the introduction of Africans into the American colonies. Slavery resulted from the need for large amounts of unskilled labor for labor intensive industries. Africa was selected as a supplier of slaves because Europe needed a large population pool that was readily accessible but outside its economic system, so that the negative economic consequences of the removal of manpower would not harm the European economy.[3]

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[2] Eric Williams, Capitalism and Slavery (New York: Capricorn Books, 1966), p. 127.

[3] James A. Geschwender, Class, Race and Worker Insurgency (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978), p. 3.

An American agriculture developed to a mode of agriculture compatible to a labor-intensive system of production, it eventually turned to Africa as a supplier of labor. Theordore Allen, in Class Struggle and the Origin of Racial Slavery, mentions how indentured servants, from Europe were used as the first labor supply in 17th century Virginia. Africans were also imported as indentured but unlike their European counterparts, were very rapidly reduced to the position of chattel slaves. The enslavement of Africans as opposed to Europeans is significant because it necessitated the development of the ideology of racism. The availability of African labor, the tremendous profits that could be made in the trade and the dependence of the expansion of crops, such as cotton, on slave labor brought about the eventual institutionalization of African slavery. The origin of racism in America is based in class struggle. Racism, which begins to arise as an ideology in 17th century Virginia, is an attempt, not only to justify slavery as is commonly thought, but to divide the unity which had formed between the European indetured servants and the African slaves who rose in the Bacon rebellion against the colonial state.[4]

The history of chattel slavery from 1619 to 1861 is a history of Black resistance to the American slave system. African captives resisted slavery in various forms, from insurrections on slave ships during the middle passage, sabotage, maiming and killing animals, non-cooperation, work slowdowns, running away, suicide, work strikes, to organized rebellion and guerrilla warfare. During slavery, some 204 slave insurrections occurred, some having the objectives of seizing land and forming an

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[4]Theodore William Allen, Class Struggle and the Origin of Racial Slavery (Hoboken: HEP Publishing Company, 1975), p. 6.

independent black nation.[5] Slave plots were recorded in New York as early as 1712 and 1741. An insurrection was recorded in South Carolina in 1720 and again in 1739-1740. In Georgia a slave plot was discovered in 1739. The largest and most notable organized slave plots were the Gabriel Prosser conspiracy in Virginia in 1800, the Denmark Vesey conspiracy in South Carolina in 1821 and the Nat Turner insurrection in Virginia in 1836.[6]

Resistance continued and became more intense during the years preceding the Civil War. Economically, slaves were being used more as an industrial labor force for southern industry prior to the outbreak of the Civil War.[7] The combination of the Unior Army and black slaves destroyed the confederacy and ended slavery.[8]

With the end of the Civil War, blacks participated in attempting to reconstruct American society. During this ten to fifteen year period black people were elected to various positions in the Reconstruction governments in the South, but the overwhelming issue of the period which was not resolved, was the economic issue. For the masses of black people and for many black leaders, it was felt that the plantations should be divided into 40 acre lots and given to the freedmen. After much struggle in South

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[5]Herbert Aptheker, Negro Slave Revolts (New York: International Publishers, 1962), p. 19.

[6]Harvey Wish, "American Slave Insurrection Before 1861," The Journal of Negro History, XXII (July 1947), pp. 299-320. Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, Washington, D.C.

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

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

Carolina and other areas of the South, the issue was raised in Congress by Thaddeus Stevens when he proposed the Homestead Act. Congress failed to pass the Homestead Act and for the most part the black peasantry remained landless. Thus black people were economically distressed. After Reconstruction was defeated with the Hayes-Tilden Compromise of 1877, black people were reintroduced into the economic system as sharecroppers in the capitalist agriculture plantation system.[9] In the traditional period, before the bourbon planter class re-consolidated its stranglehold over the southern economy, black and white farmers organized a movement to fight for the interests of small farmers. In the early 1870's, the Southern Farmers Alliance was formed in Texas. It encouraged black farmers to organize a parallel organization and in December, 1886 in Houston, Texas, the Colored Farmers Alliance developed. The Colored Farmers Alliance often disagreed with the white Farmers Alliance but worked with it for the most part in combating the agri-capitalists and their allies. From the Populist movement, the People's party was formed. The Populist revolt failed when its major spokesmen, Ben Tillman in South Carolina and Tom Watson in Georgia, capitulated to the bourbon planter class' ideology of racism.[10]

Black people for the most part were used as sharecroppers in the southern plantation system until the beginnings of World War I when they were drawn into the industrial labor force. The incorporation of a large percentage into the industrial labor force changed the life style of black people from agricultural to urban. The influx of large of numbers of black people

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[9] Ibid.

[10] Robert L. Allen, Reluctant Reformers (New York: Doubleday City, New York, 1975), p. 79.

into urban centers gave rise to nationalist and radical movements among black people from 1900 to the present.[11]

In understanding the historical dynamics of black America from its earliest development in North America to the onset of World War I, the reader will be better prepared to comprehend the major concepts and theories utilized in this study of RAM. The following section develops and defines specific concepts utilized in the study and is followed by a review of the literature.

Major Concepts

The internal colony model theory used in this study states that black people in America are an oppressed nation of a new stype, having unique or special features to their colonial oppression. Black people are not only a nation within a nation, but are a "captive nation" which was originally kidnapped and transplanted by force to America from their original homeland, Africa. As a result, they are a "trapped" colonialized nation held in colonial bondage within the geographical boundaries of the colonial mother country, the United States, the world's most powerful imperialist country.

> The evolution of American Blacks as an oppressed nation was begun in slavery. In the final analysis, however, it was the result of the unfinished bourgeois democratic revolution of the Civil War and the betrayal of Reconstruction through the Hayes-Tilden (Gentleman's) Agreement of 1977.[12]

During slavery, the post-reconstruction period, and to the present, as a result of racist oppression, black people in the south developed

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[11]Harold Baron, "The Demand for Black Labor" Radical America, Vol. 5, No. 2, March/April, 1971.

[12]Ibid.

attributes of an oppressed nation. Black people are discriminated against because of their common African ethnic origin. In the Black Belt South (an area encompassing 150 counties from Mississippi, Georgia, Louisiana, South Carolina and Alabama), black people have traditionally had a common economic relationship to the land; are united by a common historical experience; and have a special culture and psychological make-up based on these historical experiences.

The national democratic revolution concept views the black liberation movement as a struggle of a colonialized nation whose ultimate goal of gaining (bourgeoise democratic rights) human rights can only be achieved through national autonomy or independence from the racist and capitalist United States government.

Two-stage revolution refers to a theory that a dull process can take place in a national democratic revolution. This means that the capitalist phase can be skipped in the struggle for national independence in a national democratic revolution; and that the revolution in the process of achieving independence from the colonial country can be transformed into a socialist revolution.

National liberation is a concept that describes a struggle of an oppressed nation to achieve national independence and self-determination from the colonial oppressor country.

Urban guerrilla warfare is the utilization and application of the strategy and tactics of irregular, paramilitary, non-conventional guerrilla war to urban centers.

Revolutionary black nationalism is the theory that black people of the world (darker races, black, yellow, brown, red, oppressed peoples) are all enslaved by the same forces. Revolutionary black nationalism is the

ideology of world black revolution of oppressed peoples rising up against their former slavemasters to create of a "New World" free from exploitation and oppression of man by man.

> In the world today there is a struggle for world war between two camps, the haves (Western or white capitalist nations) and the have-nots (Eastern or newly independent nations struggling for independence, socialist nations). There are two types of nationalism. One type suppresses or oppresses, that is, a nation or particular group reaps profits or advances materially at the expense, exploitation, slavery or torture of another group or nation. In this nation and in the world today, this nationalism is considered "white nationalism" or the cooperation of the white Western nations to keep the new emerging opppressed world in bondage. This is capitalist or reactionary nationalism. The other type of nationalism is to liberate or free from exploitation. That is the binding force of a nation or particular group to free itself from a group or nation that is suppressing or oppressing it. In this country and in the world, this is considered black nationalism or revolutionary nationalism. We can see that black nationalism is the opposite of white nationalism; black nationalism being revolutionary and white nationalism being reactionary. We can also see that nationalism is really internationalism today.[13]

The Black underclass is a concept which states that the vast majority of black people in the United States are part of an industrial reserve army, not regularly employed and when employed, restricted to the marginal unskilled labor market. Black people, along with Mexicans, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, Native Americans and Asians, constitute a subproletariat: a section of the proletariat (working class) that is kept in the unskilled labor market because of racism at the work place and in society in general.

The street force is a concept that states that because of racism at the work place much of the black working class is seasonally unemployed. Due to their irregular employment, this element of the black working class, which is usually young black workers, engages in extra legal activities to

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[13] Max Stanford, "Revolutionary Nationalism, Black Nationalism or Just Plain Blackism," Black Nationalism in America (ed.) Bracey, Meier, Rudwick (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1970), pp. 512-513.

make a living. Unlike the lumpen-proletariat, these workers do not become "declassed" in consciousness, for they either look for employment or work as part of the labor force when the opportunity presents itsfelf. As a result of their seasonable unemployment they are constantly in the streets and are referred to as the street force.

Self-determination refers to the concept that subjected nations oppressed by a colonial power have the right to national independence.

Reparations is a concept that a nation or group of people wrongly abused, colonialized, and/or victims or genocide, have the right for repayment of the crimes committed against them, by the government which committed them.

Genocide refers to a conscious government policy to destroy a group of people, such as an ethnic minority, cultural grouping or religious group.

The black cultural revolution is a process by which the consciousness among Afro-Americans of their African heritage and "blackness" is encouraged. It alters their cultural identity with their European-American (Caucasian) oppressor and the values of the European-American capitalist system.

The national black strike is a concept of black workers conducting a general strike to achieve the goal of self-determination and national independence. The concept is based on the assumption that black workers hold strategic, unskilled and semi-skilled jobs in major industries, such as, steel and auto; and that a general strike coordinated with mass demonstrations and urban guerrilla warfare, could paralyze the U.S. economy and create a revolutionary crisis in the United States and the world capitalist economy.

The protracted war of national liberation is a theory that the black movement in America cannot be successful except through a socialist revolution. The black liberation movement is seen as a national democratic revolution seeking self-determination and national autonomy from the United States government. It would take a long (protracted) armed struggle (war) to achieve this goal.

The race and class analysis states that black people in the United States are exploited on the basis of their ethnic origin (race), but the essence of this exploitation is based on their oppression as part of the working class. The analysis states that racism was invented to rationalize slavery and the slave trade. It states that black people suffer a dual oppression (race and class).

Discussion and Review of the Literature

There are a number of writers who have published materials on urban guerrillas. The most important of these appear to be:

1. Hodges, Donald C., ed., Philosophy of the Urban Guerrilla: The Revolutionary Writings of Abraham Guillen, New York, William & Morrow & Co., 1973.

2. Marighella, Carlos, Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla, London, International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1971.

3. Haywood, Harry, Black Bolshevik, Chicago, Ill., Liberator Press, 1978.

4. Blair, Thomas L., Retreat to the Ghetto, New York, Hill & Wang, 1977.

5. Cohen, Robert Carl, Black Crusader, New Jersey, Lyle Stuart, Inc., 1972.

6. Quartim, Joao, Dictatorship and Armed Struggle in Brazil, New York, Monthly Review Press, 1971.

7. Nunez, Carols, The Tuparmaros: Urban Guerrillas of Uruguay New York, Times Change Press, 1970.

8. Moss, Robert, Urban Guerrilla Warfare, London, The International Institute for Strategies Studies, 1977.

Reviews

Donald Hodges, in Philosophy of the Urban Guerrilla, deals with the writings of Abraham Guillen, the major political and military theoretician of urban guerrillas in Latin America. Guillen, in his wirtings, raises theoretical arguments against the use of rural guerrilla warfare in Latin America. He particularly attacks the strategies of Che Guevara and Regis Debray, emphasizing that over 50 percent of the population in Latin America now lives in urban areas. Guillen using this data calls for urban guerrilla warfare.

Guillen also states that the praxis for socialist revolution has shifted to the Third World and argues that the principle antagonism in the world is not between the imperialist powers but between the imperialist powers and the underdeveloped world.

Guillen asserts that socialist revolution will not occur in the capitalist center (Europe and the United States) until revolution is victorious first in the periphery (underdeveloped world). When focusing on revolution for the Americas, Guillen says that workers in the U.S. have developed a false 'bourgeois' class consciousness, due to the materials benefits, 'high economic standard of living', they received from the imperialist relationship the United States has with the Third World.

Guillen's major point is that Latin America is a colony of the United States. He believes that workers in the United States will be forced into revolutionary class consciousness as a result of the drop in the standard of living in the United States due to a revolution in Latin America. Guillen believes that if Che Guevara had gone to Argentina and waged urban guerrilla war, he would have received mass support and would have ignited a continent-wide revolution. The call for a continent-wide Latin American

revolution is the central theme in Guillen's writings.[14]

In the Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla, Carlos Marighella gives a definition of the urban guerrilla for Brazil and describes what his personal qualities are. Marigehlla states that for the most part urban guerrilla activity will be underground. The author says the urban guerrilla is one who fights with arms, and that expropriation of government resources and the resources of big capitalists and imperialists are key. Marighella sees the banking network as being essential to the capitalist system's nerve center; therefore, he sees bank robberies as an important part of the urban guerrilla's strategy. The author states that to become an urban guerrilla one has to pay special attention to technical preparation. Part of the technical preparation he advocates is learning and practicing various kinds of fighting, of attack, personal defense as well as hiking, camping, practice or survival in the woods, mountain climbing, swimming, skin diving, training as frogmen, fishing, harpooning, and hunting. Further aspects of technical preparation of the urban guerrilla are knowledge of typographical information, auxiliary medicine, emergency first aid, knowledge of arms, knowledge of various types of ammunition and explosives, and how to make molotov cocktails. Marighella goes on to elaborate how urban guerrillas must be organized in small firing groups of four or five. He describes the essential logistic of the urban guerrilla which he breaks down into CCEM and MDAE. CCEM stands for:

C--food
C--fuel
E--equipment
M--ammunition

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[14]Donald C. Hodges, ed. Philosophy of the Urban Guerrilla: The Revolutionary Writings of Abrahm Guillen (New York: William and Morrow and Company, 1973).

MDAE stands for:

M--mechanization
D--money
A--arms
E--explosives

These are the essential things urban guerrillas have to consider if they are going to be successful. One thing Marighella states is "Every good urban guerrilla must be a good driver," Five things the urban guerrilla must do says the author are:

1. take the enemy by surprise
2. know the terrain better than the enemy
3. have greater mobility and speed than the enemy
4. have a better information service than the enemy
5. be in command of the situation and demonstrate decisiveness.[15]

Marighella describes different types of action models for the urban guerrilla which are armed assault attacks, the bank assault, raids and occupations of government buildings, factories, schools and radio stations, ambushes, street tactics, strikes and work interruptions, seizures and expropriations of arms, liberation of prisoners, executions, kidnapping, sabotage, terrorism, armed propaganda and psychological war. Other essentials are, in carrying out actions, the urban guerrilla group never abandons a wounded urban guerrilla, either at the site of action, or to be left to fall into the enemy's hands. Marighella describes what he considers to be the seven sins or weaknesses of the urban guerrilla. They are inexperience, boasting about actions, vanity, exaggerating one's own strength,

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[15]Robert Moss, Urban Guerrilla Warfare (London: The International Institute for Strategies Studies, 1971), p. 26.

precipitious action, to attack the enemy when he is most angry and to fail to plan things and act out of improvisation.[16]

Black Bolshevik, Harry Haywood's autobiography, encompasses his growth and political development as a black theoretician for the Communist Party from the later 1920's to the mid-1950's. Haywood's book is a political autobiography which traces the development of "the Afro-American National Question" in the Communist International and the American Communist Party, and the struggle for a revolutionary mass line or practice within the CPUSA. Haywood describes the rise of race pride, consciousness and militancy amoung the black troops during World War I. He also traces the impact of the World War race riots of 1919 and the effect they had on him as a veteran. In chapter four of Black Bolshevik, Haywood gives an overview of a secret paramilitary revolutionary nationalist organization that emerged in the 1920's, the African Blood Brotherhood (ABB).

Haywood's description of the ABB is important because little is known of the ABB's development Haywood, in chapter eight, traces how he came to the conclusion that Afro-Americans constituted an oppressed nation of a "new kind." Asserting that "Afro-Americans are not only a 'nation within a nation,' but a captive nation, suffering a colonial-type oppression while trapped within the geographic bounds of one of the world's most powerful imperialist countries." Haywood explains how first Lenin, Stalin and other members concluded that blacks, having maintained a stable community and being in majority in many counties of the Black Belt South, are an oppressed nation with the right to self-determination. Haywood then

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[16]Carlos Marighella, Minimanual of the Urban Guerilla (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1971).

explains his impressions as a student in the Soviet Union and the struggles against white chauvinism which took place in the early 1930's inside the Communist Party. He goes on to explain his work as an organizer for the CP. Haywood's strength is his longevity and his ability to recall events. Throughout Black Bolshevik he writes about the internal policy of the CP in doing "Negro" work. Black Bolshevik deals with, for the most part, the struggle over the black belt thesis inside the Communist Party. This struggle had effects on the black liberation struggle. It was in the sixties that the black belt thesis was again picked up by several black organizations.[17]

In Retreat to the Ghetto, Thomas Blair gives a historical background to the black nationalist movement tracing the contradiction over goals for the black liberation movement back to debates between Frederick Douglass and Martin R. Delaney in 1847. He then discusses Bishop Henry M. Turner of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and the rise of emigration (migration) movements such as "Pap" Singleton's in the 1870's. Blair also discusses the Booker T. Washington, W. E. B. DuBois debates, the rise of the Garvey movement, nationalist movements in the 30's and 40's, and the role the Communist Party played from 1930 to 1945 in the black liberation movement. The author deals briefly with the civil rights movement in the late 1950's. Blair attempts to give a comprehensive history of Malcolm X. He then gives an overview of the civil rights and black power movements in the 1960's. Blair, in his chapter on "Revolutionary Black Nationalism" gives one of the few comprehensive overviews on the Revolutionary

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[17]Harry Haywood, Black Bolshevik: Autobiography of an Afro-American Communist (Chicago, Illinois: Liberator Press, 1978).

Nationalist Movement as a whole. Blair then covers the cultural nationalist and Pan Africanist Movement of the 1960's and 70's and ends with the New Black Politics of the seventies. Blair attempts to give an analysis of RAM and put it in a historical perspective. As of present, Blair's section on RAM is the most extensive treatment of the subject yet published.[18]

Black Crusader is a biography of Robert F. Williams, an advocate of urban guerrilla warfare and participant/organizer of armed self-defense in the 1960's. The book describes Williams' early years and how he developed a race/social consciousness fighting racial discrimination in the Marines. The author describes how Williams joined the NAACP after returning to Monroe, North Carolina, his home town. Eventually, Williams became the local NAACP chairman and recruited members from the bars and pool rooms and as a result, the Monroe, North Carolina NAACP chapter had a working class composition. The KKK in North Carolina constantly terrorized the black community and was trying to wipe out the NAACP. To counter this racist offensive, Williams utilized his army experience by organizing armed defense guards and waging guerrilla warfare against the racists forces in North Carolina for five years. Because of his militant actions and press statements, Williams was soon censored by the national leadership of the NAACP. After a tough struggle with the national leadership, Williams was re-instated into his former post, after receiving overwhelming support from the majority of the NAACP membership.

Williams' tactics were not only in the realm of armed self-defense. In the spring of 1960 after successful peaceful sit-ins had been carried out in Monroe, Williams ran as an independent for mayor.

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[18]Thomas L. Blair, Retreat to the Ghetto (New York: Hill and Wang 1977).

Williams was invited to Cuba along with other Afro-American writers in 1960. Williams' exposure to the Cuban revolution convinced him that a government could eliminate racism if it wanted to. Williams became increasingly militant and became one of the first leaders in the 1960's to take an anti-imperialist stand. In 1961, during a time of racial tension in Monroe, Williams was forced to flee a combined KKK, FBI and N.C. state police/guard manhunt. Williams went to Cuba, where he received political asylum. Williams stayed in Cuba from 1961 to 1966. While there he organized a radio program and raised the question of urban guerrilla warfare as a tactic for the black liberation movement in the United States. During this period, he became chairman in exile of the Revolutionary Action Movement. After various political bouts with members of the American and Cuban Communist Parties, Williams took refuge in China. Williams stayed in China until 1968; then he moved to East Africa before coming back to the United States. In 1968, Williams was elected president of the provisional Republic of New Africa. After returning to the United States, Williams got in several disputes over tactics with former associates and resigned from all his organizational posts. In the last chapter of Black Crusader, Cohen presents Williams' "Three Part Plan."[19]

In Dictatorship and Armed Struggle in Brazil, Joao Quartim describes the development, transformation and contradictions of the ruling class in Brazil. He describes how, because of the split in the national bourgeoisie in Brazil and the rise of nationalism, a pseudo-democracy was about to be created which threatened the interests of the imperialists. As a result, a coup d'etat took place establishing a counter-revolutionarly military

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[19]Robert Carl Cohen, Black Crusader (New Jersey: Lyle Stuart, Inc., 1972).

dictatorship. This led to an escalation of class conscious conflicts in Brazilian society. Quartim then precedes to make a class analysis of Brazil. He describes the working class and the organization of workers' struggles in 1968, the peasant struggles in the countryside, the role of students in building a new vanguard, and the marginal sector. Quartim then describes how the legal struggle was transformed into a revolutionary war. The author describes the splits that took place on the left over strategy and tactics, the preparation for armed actions and the first armed actions. He then describes the role of rural guerrilla warfare and the development of urban guerrilla warfare and urban guerrilla organizations in Brazil. Quartim then describes the first two years of urban partisan warfare, how urban guerrilla organizations were defeated, and their regroupment perspectives for the future.[20]

Carlos Nunez in The Tupamaros, begins by describing Uruguay, its size, population and history. The author describes how the organizing of the sugar cane workers movement which culminated in the first cane workers march organized by Raul Sendic. This was the genesis of the Tupamaros. In July, 1963, ten years after Castro's attack on the Moncada Army garrison in Cuba, a group of militants, headed by Senic, raided the Swiss Colony Rifle Club and seized automatic rifles. This action was considered the beginning of armed struggle in Uruguay. The Tupamaros (National Liberation Movement) seemed to have become an organization after this event. At first, the Tupamaros were part of the armed branch of the Socialist Party. In 1964, the Tupamaros pulled more raids for arms, explosives, and bank

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[20]Joao Quartim, Dictatorship and Armed Struggle in Brazil (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971).

robberies for funds. A highpoint in unrest occurred in Uruguay in 1965. Strikes especially among banking and civil service workers, led by the half million member, National Workers Convention, convened a 48-hour general strike. The Uruguayan government responded with repression against the people's movement. In 1966, the government went on the offensive hunting Tupamaros, killing two, finding ammunition and hiding places. The struggle escalated in 1968 as inflation rose and the workers called a 24-hour general strike. In support of the strike the Tups (slang for Tupamaros) started kidnapping important public figures of the bourgeoisie and imperialist system to help force the Uruguayan government to meet the demands of the workers. Nunez concludes his book by dealing with the theory and practice of the Tups. He also shows how movements similar to the Tups are spreading across Latin America.[21]

Moss begins his monograph on, Ruban Guerrilla Warfare, by developing an overview. He states how most strategists on guerrilla warfare, until recent times, thought that the city was the graveyard for revolutionaries. The author then gives a historical overview of terrorism as a political weapon. The section covers organizations such as the KKK, OAS in Algeria to the Narod Turkish People's Liberation Army, IRA, FLQ to the FLN. Moss then describes varieties in urban militancy and how political situations escalate into military ones. The author then describes how, since the death of Che Guevara in Bolivia, Latin American rural guerrillas movements failed. Latin American security forces who were equipped and "advised" by American counterinsurgency forces became increasingly able to handle rural uprisings.

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[21]Carlos Nunez, The Tupamaros: Urban Guerrillas of Uruguay (New York: Times Change Press, 1979).

Also, Latin America went through the transition from rural based agricultural society to an urban industrial based society. Guerrillas dealing with these factors began to change their tactics and began to focus on the cities. Moss then goes on to describe the arsenal of the urban guerrilla which essentially deals with the tactics guerrillas use. The author then discusses the limits of urban guerrilla warfare. In his conclusion, Moss does not take a definite stand on whether urban guerrilla warfare can be successful or not.[22]

This description of the methodological approach, major theories and concepts raised in this study was intended to provide the reader with a conceptual framework from which he can base his analysis of this study. To comprehend a social movement of a people, it is easier to grasp its internal dynamics by understanding the historical context from which it emerged.

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[22]Robert Moss, Urban Guerrilla Warfare (London: The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1971).

CHAPTER TWO

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

This chapter is designed to present the historical context within which the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM) emerged. A study of RAM only has political significance if it is analyzed within the historical context in which it occurred. RAM was not an isolated creation, it was a product of the political atmosphere, a reaction to state oppression and a response to the demands of the black movement. In approaching this study, the student of history and political science needs to identify the modus operandi of studying the era that produced it.

The 60's was unique because of its high level of political activism, particularly on the part of a large segment of the black community. Among the masses in the black community, the 60's is remembered as the black revolution. To study the black revolution at that time, there are several things that must be understood. One is that the 60's did not occur in a vacuum nor did massive resistance subside because it was the end of an era.

The revolution, because it faces a powerful oppressive system, is a protracted or prolonged struggle. The black revolution in America must be viewed as a continuous historical process that takes many twists and turns, that has advancements and setbacks, and that employs different tactics in different historical periods. The revolution in the 60's went through three distinct stages:

a. the non-violent direct action phase which fought against segregation, 1960-1963;

b. the transition period, 1964-1966;

c. the insurrection stage, 1967-1969.

The movement in the sixties was not new; instead, it was a continuation of the black radical tradition which had been part of the black liberation movement since before the Civil War. Within this tradition were various trends: emigration; socialist revolution; the creation of a black republic in the United States; revolutionary black nationalism; plus variations and combinations of all the above. The purpose here is not to give a complete history of the black radical tradition, but rather to highlight those trends and organizations that provided a more direct historical bearing on the emergence of RAM.

Two major philosophical strands within the black liberation movement which seem to be in contradiction with one another, but are sometimes synthesize by organizations, are Marxism and Black Nationalism. These philosophical strands are based on the historical conflict within the black movement as to whether separation, integration or overthrow is the correct strategy towards achieving liberation. This conflict of whether to integrate or separate or overthrow has a long history going back to the classical debates between Frederick Douglass, Martin Delany and Henry Highland Garnet in the Colored People's Conventions in the early 1800's.[1]

With the advent of the Civil War, black leaders put their ideological debates in the background in order to concentrate on destroying the chattel slave system. After the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation, the North winning the Civil War, and the passing of the 13th, 14th, and 15th

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[1]Howard Holman Bell, A Survey of the Negro Convention Movement, 1830-1861 (New York: Arno Press & New York Times, 1969).

Amendments, black leaders were faced with surmounting problems. During the eleven years known as the Reconstruction period, black people's efforts were concentrated on immediate economical, educational and political empowerment. With the ending of Reconstruction, black radical and nationalist movements reemerged.

The 1800's and 1890's were periods of mass struggle against repression. Edward Bylden and Bishop Turner organized Afro-Americans to return to Africa. Benjamin "Pap" Singleton led the 'exodus of 1879' of 40,000 Afro-Americans from the South in an attempt to make a black state out of Kansas. In 1890, the Texas Colored Farmers Association proposed the formation of an independent black state.[2] Also in 1890, the Nationalist Education Association proposed the southern states to become an independent black republic; and in 1913, Chief Alfred C. Sam started a repatriation movement in Oklahoma, and Nobel Drew Ali organized the Moorish Science Temple which was established in several cities.[3]

World War I was a turning point in black radicalism because of the social, economic and political conditions that accompanied this war.[4] Hundreds of thousands of blacks migrated to major northern cities looking for jobs and/or escaping the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) terror in the South. The overcrowded conditions, poor housing, and de facto discrimination destroyed the illusion for the recent migrants that 'things were okay in the north.'

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[2]Edwin S. Redkey, Black Exodus: Black Nationalist and Back to Africa Movements, 1880-1910 (New Haven: London Yale University Press, 1969).

[3]Earl Ofari, "Black Radicalism in the 19th Century," Black Scholar. Vol. 5, No. 5, (February 1964), p. 5.

[4]Ibid.

The racism black soldiers faced in the U.S. Army, including several gun battles with white racists in southern towns, heightened the national (race) consciousness of black people. During the summer of 1919, known as the Blood Summer, approximately 400 blacks and whites were killed as whites led by the KKK attacked blacks in various areas of the United States. Black people fought back with arms and were in a near mass insurrectionary mood.[5]

In the 1920's Marcus Garvey adapted Booker T. Washington's basic program of self-help with the added concept of African Nationalism. Garvey concluded the African-American would never gain civil equality in America and that the only way black people would be protected from racial abuses by Caucasians, in this country and others, would be by forming a strong independent African continental government. His program was one of a mass migration back to Africa for those with skills and a spiritual and cultural return to Africa by all persons of African descent. He said that if all persons of African descent supported a central continental African government, it would have the power to protect Black peoples throughout the world. Garvey's concept was a form of Black Zionism. He felt that a vanguard was needed to liberate the motherland and form an independent African government. Garvey organized a Black Army for the purpose of liberating Africa, called the African Legion. He also organized a nurse corps called the Black Cross Nurses. He had the beginnings of an air force, motor corps and bought several ships to transport his vanguard to the mainland. Garvey organized the first nation-wide black nationalist newspaper called the

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[5]Mary Frances Berry, Black Resistance/White Law New Jersey: Prentice, Inc., 1971. (Also) Robert H. Brisbane, The Black Vanguard Origins of the Negro Social Revolution, 1900-1960. (Valley Forge, Penn., The Judson Press, 1970), Chapter 3.

Negro World which has a weekly circulation of several thousand.[6] Through these vehicles Garvey organized approximately five million African-Americans into the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA).

The Garvey movement was part of the New Negro Movement in which black radicalism came into full blossom. In a certain sense, the Garvey movement, though it represented the feelings of millions of Africans, was the right to center wing of the black liberation movement of its time.

The UNIA aroused pride in black people, and several incidents between authorities and Garveyites occurred. For the most part, the Garvey movement channeled black activism away from agitating against racist/class oppression in the United States and towards returning black to Africa. This became the bone of contention between most black radicals and Garvey as his movement intensified. But even though the Garvey movement concentrated its efforts on repatriation, it affected the political atmosphere in the states.

In New Orleans, Garveyites protested 'Jim Crow' trolley car seating, refusing to sit in the 'colored' section. Blacks turned en masse with guns to demand that the mayor of New Orleans allow Garvey to speak after Garvey had been refused. Garvey came to New Orleans and sopke in the black community. On one occasion, the white police entered an auditorium where Garvey was speaking and according to an eyewitness account, the entire audience rose to its feet with guns and demanded the white police to leave. The white police left and Garvey had a peaceful meeting. In New

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[6]Amy Jacques Garvey, Garvey and Garveyism (New York: Collier Books, 1963), p. 40.

York City, Garveyites attacked white men at random.[7]

> Such an incident occurred on June 20, 1920, when two hundred Garveyites burned two American flags in a bonfire on East Thirty-fifth Street in Chicago. Two white men were killed and a Negro policeman was wounded in the uproar that followed.[8]

During the same time period, Black members of the left were also very active. Among those representing the left wing of the black liberation movement in the 1920's were Hubert Harrison, Chandler Owen, A. Phillip Randolph, W. A. Domingo and Cyril P. Briggs. Chandler Owen and A. Phillip Randolph, editors of the The Messenger magazine, were close to the Socialist Party and advocated a democratic transition to socialism as a solution to the race problem, while W. A. Domingo, who edited The Emancipator, became a Black bolshevik.[9]

During this period, the African Blood Brotherhood (ABB), the first nation-wide revolutionary nationalist organization in the history of the black liberation struggle, emerged. This organization was later to be the prototype for RAM. The ABB was a secret organization organized by Cyril P. Briggs in 1919. The ABB was tight-knit, semi-clandestine, paramilitary group which saw itself as the Pan-African Army of a world-wide federation of black organizations. ABB membership ranged from three to five thousand most of whom were ex-servicemen, though a sizeable contingent was West Indian. The membership was kept small to keep the organization tight. Briggs started a monthly magazine titled The Crusader in

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

[8] Robert H. Brisbane, The Black Vanguard (Valley Forge: Judson Press 1970), p. 97.

[9] Jeff Henderson, "A. Phillip Randolph and the Dilemmas of Socialism in the United States, 1917-1941," Race and Class, No. 18, 22 August 1966, p. 143.

1910.[10] The Crusader became the ABB's official organ and at its peak had a circulation of 33,000.[11] Briggs also circulated The Crusader News Service which was distributed to two hundred black newspapers. The ABB's headquarters were in New York with fifty branches including locations in Chicago, Baltimore, Oklahoma, Omaha, West Virginia, the Caribbean, Trinidad, Surinam, British Guiana, Santo Domingo, the Windward Islands and throughout Africa.

The African Blood Brotherhood was a Revolutionary Nationalist organization which applied a Marxist world view and the theory of class struggle to the plight of Black Americans. The organization was headed by a supreme council led by Briggs. It was the first black revolutionary organization to utilize a race and class analysis.

> Unlike the Pan-African movement led by Dr. DuBois, this brotherhood emphasized working-class leadership and consciousness; this also distinguished it from Marcus Garvey's movement. As to the latter, it was differentiated because it felt that a successful struggle for liberation by the Black millions inside the United States was possible and necessary and would itself by a decisive contribution to the liberation of Africa. In that regard, the Brotherhood's outlook and that of DuBois were very close.[12]

The ABB advocated armed self-defense and took credit for playing a leading role in defending black neighborhoods in the Tulsa, Oklahoma race riot of 1921.[13]

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

[11]Theodore G. Vincent, Black Power and the Garvey Movement. (San Francisco, Calif.: Ramparts Press, 1971), pp. 75-85.

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

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

Part of the ABB's program was organizing black workers into labor unions which would work for the betterment of their economic conditions and would act in close cooperation with class-conscious white workers on common issues. The ABB also proposed establishing co-operatives as an economic srategy. On alliances, the ABB saw a coalition with the Third World and radicalized white workers in the United States.

> There can be only one sort of alliance with other peoples and that is an alliance to fight our enemies, in which case our allies must have the same purpose as we have. Our allies may be actual or potential, just as our enemies may be actual or potential. The small oppressed nations who are struggling against the capitalist exploiters and oppressors must be considered as actual allies. The class-conscious white workers who have spoken out in favor of African liberation and have a willingness to back with action their expressed sentiments, must also be considered as actual allies and their friendship cultivated.[14]

The ABB and The Crusader were supporters of the Russian Revolution and saw socialist revolution as the answer to black liberation.

> Briggs were definitely a revolutionary nationalist; that is, he saw the solution of the "race problem" in the establishment of independent Black nation-states in Africa, the Caribbean and the United States. In America, he felt this could be achieved only through revolutionizing the whole country. This means he saw revolutionary white workers as allies.[15]

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

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

[15]Harry Haywood, Black Bolshevik (Chicago, Ill.: Liberation Press, 1978), p. 124.

proposal was defeated.[16]

The ABB's early ideological development of the notion of an independent black republic in the United States paved the way for its refinement in the Communist Party of the United States of America.

> By 1923-24, the Brotherhood had ceased to exist as an autonomous, organized expression of the national revolutionary trend. Its leading members became communists or close sympathizers and its posts served as one of the Party's recruiting grounds for Blacks.[17]

During this period, Marcus Garvey and W. E. B. DuBois engaged in bitter ideological debate that often degenerated into personal attacks. Essentially, DuBois was opposed to Garvey's de-emphasis of domestic mass activity against racial segregation in the United States and his emphasis on separation of the races and race purity. DuBois believed Garvey's ideas about capitalism were naive, his business adventures grandiose, and his concepts of building an African empire were romantic. Garvey on the other hand, criticized DuBois for being elitist and alienated from the masses of Africans. Garvey built a mass movement and DuBois worked with the radical intelligentsia. Both were staunch Pan-Africanists but varied in style and tactics.[18]

The ideological debates between Garvey and DuBois were similar to the arguments between Frederick Douglass, Martin Delaney and Henry Highland Garnet in the Colored people's Conventions in the early 1800's. The Garvey-DuBois conflicts proved to be haunting legacies in the ideological

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[16]Ibid., p. 126.

[17]Theodore Vincent, Black Power and the Garvey Movement (San Francisco, Calif.: Ramparts Press, 1971), p. 234.

[18]Martin O. Ijere, "W. E. B. DuBois and Marcus Garvey as Pan-Africanists: A Study in Contrast." Prescence Africaine, No. 89, 1st Quarterly, (1974), pp. 188-206.

struggle for clarity (direction) in the black liberation movement in the 60's and 70's, for the same political trends were debated again.

The Communist International (Comintern) leaders, impressed by Marcus Garvey's ability to organize millions of Africans and the important role oppressed nationalities played in making the Russian Revolution successful, felt that a socialist revolution in America had to deal with black nationalism and that the organization of blacks had to be given top priority.

The suggestion was strongly reinforced since Lenin's analysis of the situation concluded that imperialism was the major reason for the persistence of capitalism. He developed a perspective which elevated the colonial struggle for national self-determination to a level of almost equal importance to that of the class struggle of the European proletariat.[19]

Lenin observed in 1916, in his "New Data on the Laws Governing the Development of Capitalism in Agriculture" and his analysis in 1917 in "Statistics and Sociology" that

> In the United States, the Negro (and also the Mulattoes and Indians) account for only 11.1 percent. They should be classed as an oppressed nation, for the equality won in the Civil War of 1861-1865 and guaranteed by the Constitution of republic was in many respects increasingly curtailed in the chief Negro areas (the South) in connection with the transition from the progressive, pre-monopoly capitalism (imperialism) of the new era, which in America was especially sharply etched out by the Spanish-American imperialist war of 1898 (i.e. . . . . a war between two robbers over the division of the booty). . . .[20]

A Commission of the Communist International was organized to draft a report on the Negro Question at the Sixth Congress of the Comintern in

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[19]Mark Naison, Marxism and Black Radicalism in America: The Communist Party Experience, pamphlet (Somerville, Mass.: New England Free Press, reprint from Radical America, May-June, 1971).

[20]V. I. Lenin, "Statistics and Sociology," Collected Works, Vol. 23, August, 1916-March, 1917 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1974), pp. 275-276.

1928. The commission concluded that Blacks in the North were an unassimilable minority and a captive nation within a nation in the Black Belt South.

The Sixty World Congress of the Comintern met in Moscow in July and August of 1928. After much debate, the black belt thesis was approved as an official policy of the Comintern and American CP.

Probably more than any other integrated group the Communist Party U.S.A., organized in 1921, played a significant role in influencing the black movement in the 1960's. In the early 1920's, the CP was not able to win mass recruits from the Garvey movement. The CP had about twenty-four black members in 1927.[21] Failing to seize control of the Garvey movement the CP organized the American Negro Labor Congress (ANLC) in Chicago in October, 1925. The ANLC never proved to be much of a success, not having more than 500 members.

In the 1930's, the CP decided to champion the cause of Negro rights. Its willingness to fight racism won many black recruits. The CP began to clash with the NAACP and other traditional Negro organizations. The Comintern, meeting again in 1930, saw the Negro Question as a central part of organizing a socialist revolution in the United States. It issued a resolution again calling for a Black Belt Soviety Republic in the South.

But the success of winning black people to the ranks of the CP was based on its comming to the defense of black people, helping them with everyday situations, and dealing with economic issues. One celebrated case was that of Angelo Herndon.

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[21]Theodore Vincent, Black Power and the Garvey Movement (San Francisco: Ramparts Press, 1971), p. 234

> Angelo Herndon, a Negro Communist, had been convicted and sentenced by the State of Georgia under a Civil War statue for inciting a riot. The specific charge was that Herndon distributed a book which urged the establishment of a Black Belt Republic in the South.[22]

Herndon's conviction was reversed by the United States Supreme Court. During the 1930's and 1940's an estimated 10,000 blacks joined the CP making up 10 percent of its 100,000 membership at its peak. By linking its work with the unemployed leagues in massive campaigns to protect evicted tenants and victims of police brutality, the CP, throughout 1934, expanded its popular base. It began a major cultural program in the black community publishing the Negro Liberator newspaper, combining artistic events with politics, and encouraging young black writers to write for The New Masses, The Communist and The Daily Worker.[23]

Black cadres of the CP worked with almost every black organization during this period. The CP was instrumental in helping a group of black Alabama sharecroppers, threatened with eviction, to organize the Alabama Sharecroppers Union. The Alabama Sharecroppers Union organized 12,000 black sharecroppers around a program calling for redistribution of the land, total racial equality and extensive federal relief. The Union engaged in several gun battles with local authorities, which was the beginnings of mass radical armed struggles of the rural black poor against the ruling class.[24]

But the independent organizing of blacks by the CP threatened many whites cadres inside the CP. Black nationalist tendencies among black

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[22]Ibid., p. 137.

[23]Ibid., p. 13-14.

[24]Dale Rosen and Theodore Rosengarten, "Shoot-Out at Reeltown: The Narrative of Jess Hull, Alabama Tenant Farmer." Radical America, Vol. 6, No. 6, Novembe December 1972.

communists were viewed as bourgeois, narrow, reactionary tendencies and agruments against radical black nationalist working class organizing were raised. The principle objection was that nationalism and independent black organizing divided the working class and alienated white workers.

In the early 1930's a black mass "Don't Buy, Where You Can't Work" campaign started in Chicago. Soon it spread to Detroit, Cleveland, Los Angeles, Baltimore, Maryland, Washington, D.C. and Harlem, New York.[25] In the spring of 1933, Sufi Abdul Hamid began organizing this movement in Harlem. Garveyites joined Sufi and they organized mass rallies and picketing of stores in Harlem on 135th Street. During the campaign, anti-white and anti-Jewish sentiments came from the demonstrators and the Communist Party, fearing the rise of another black nationalist movement they did not control, labeled Sufi a 'Harlem Hitler.'

To counter the black nationalist movement, the CP initiated demonstrations and a boycott of a large Harlem cafeteria. The campaign was fully integrated and had the support of the CIO and Adam Clayton Powell.[26]

In 1935, the Soviet leadership, which had organizational ties with the CPUSA, fearing the rise of fascism in Europe, instructed the national leadership of the CPUSA to subordinate its struggle to build an alliance with the liberal bourgeoisie to build a popular front against fascism. All Black nationalist elements in party organizing was played down or suppressed. The Party leadership insisted that all Party meetings be integrated including ones in Uptown Harlem.[27] The Alabama Sharecroppers Union was disbanded and

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[25]Mark Naison, "The Southern Tenants Farmers Union and the CIO," Radical America, Vol. 2, (September/October 1968), p. 31.

[26]Ibid., pp. 140-141.

[27]Mark E. Naison, "The Communist Party in Harlem in the Early Depression Years." Radical History Review, 3 (1976), pp. 68-95.

its members told to join the National Farmers Union. [28] The Negro Liberator was discontinued.

In 1935, the Joint Committee on National Recovery, a coalition of twenty-three black organizations, met at Howard University and discussed the idea of forming a national congress (Black united front). [29] The National Negro Congress (NNC) met in February, 1936 in Chicago. There were 817 delegates present, representing 585 organizations from twenty-eight states. A. Phillip Randolph was elected president of the NNC and within a year, thirty local councils of the NNC were formed around the country. The NNC forged an alliance with the CIO and was effective in helping to organize Black steelworkers. Through the NNC support of the CIO, Black workers viewed the automobile sit-down strikes in the late 30's as a progressive development. A second meeting of the National Negro Congress was held in Philadelphia in 1937. A youth group, the Southern Negro Youth Congress, was also set up in that year.

In 1939, the Soviet Union signed a non-aggression peace pact with Nazi Germany. With the change in foreign policy of the Soviet Union, the line of the CPUSA changed also. Overnight the line of the CPUSA shifted from organizing a popular front against fascism to attacking Franklin D. Roosevelt and keeping the United States out of an imperialist war.

In the National Negro Congress, a showdown occurred between A. Phillip Randolph and the Communists. The Communists seized control of the NCC and railroaded their denunciation of Roosevelt's war preparation and British

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[28] Mark E. Naison, "Black Agrarian Radicalism in the Great Depression: The Threads of a Lost Tradition," Journal of Ethnic Studies, (Fall 1973), pp. 49-65.

[29] Mark E. Naison, "Harlem Communists and the Politics of Black Protest," Marxist Perspectives, Vol. 1, No. 3, (Fall 1978), p. 37.

and French imperialism. Randolph and others felt domestic issues were more important than issues of foreign policy and in protest Randolph resigned as president of the NNC denouncing the Communists.

> Blacks at this time were generally anti-war in that they saw little reason to fight for a country that was not prepared to grant them even basic human rights. The Communist Party, for its part, sought within the NNC to shift the entire emphasis of the programme from domestic issues to foreign aid. Randolph had no truck with such an opportunistic approach to the concerns of black people.[30]

Most other community-based organizations, independent of the CP, soon left the NNC.

The battles between the Communitist Party in its attempts to seize control of the black liberation movement and independent black organizing during the 20's, 30's and early 40's would reoccur in the 1960's.[31]

As America prepared for World War II, black leaders turned their concerns to segregation in the armed services. When a White House conference in 1940 failed to bring any results, A. Phillip Randolph called for a black March on Washington. Through the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, of which he was president, A. Phillip Randolph began mobilizing in New York most of the black civil rights organizations into the March on Washington Movement (MOWM). Randolph had called for a March on Washington of 50,000 blacks to demand the federal government provide blacks with jobs in the war industries. MOWM branches were formed all across the country and at Randolph's insistence MOWM was kept all black.

The Communist Party came out against the MOWM.

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[30]Jeff Henderson, "A. Phillip Randolph and the Dilemmas of Socialism and Black Nationalism in the United States, 1917-1941," Race and Class, 20:3 (1978), p. 156.

[31]Robert H. Brisbane, The Black Vanguard (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1970), p. 155.

> At its inception the CP attacked the MOWM as a key component of the Government's strategy to seduce blacks into the war effort, and stripped of its conspiratorial overtones, this analysis does carry some weight. However, after Hitler's invasion of the USSR in June, 1941, CP policy took another about-face. Now the Soviet Union must be defended at all costs and organizations such as the MOWM which might hinder the intervention of the United States were no longer seen as agents of the federal government, but rather as agents of the Nazis.[32]

Throughout World War II, the CP tried to tone down protests in the name of "national unity." Black rights became secondary to the party and to maintaining the war effort to defeat the Nazis. Many blacks became bitter, either left the Party or were alienated from it. The Party also denounced the Harlem rebellion of 1943 as "fifth columnists." It also discouraged the formation of black caucuses in the labor movement.

Bitter debate developed inside the CP in the 1950's whether black people were still an oppressed nation or had become an oppressed national minority seeking integration, which could only be achieved through the success of a proletarian revolution. By the latter 1950's, the Party dropped the Black Belt thesis in favor of integration.

Black cadres in the Communist Party who maintained the "national question" were purged for "bourgeois narrow nationalist tendencies" or left the Party in the 1950's. Among those cadres were Cyril Briggs, Richard B. Moore, Sufu Abner Berry, Harold Cruse and Queen Mother Audley Moore who later became the political mentor of the RAM cadre in Philadelphia in 1963 and in New York in 1964. Harold Cruse became active in the Black Arts Movement in Harlem in 1965 led by LeRoi Jones, and was a New York leader of the Freedom Now Party in 1963. Harry Haywood was in contact with Soulbook and RAM cadres on the West Coast.

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[32]Ibid., p. 157.

Unlike the Garvey movement and the Black cadres of the 20's, the initial stages of the black movement in the sixties had its center of activity in the South. The movement utilized non-violent direct action tactics against segregated public facilities in the South. Support demonstrations developed in the North protesting the Jim Crow laws. Towards the end of 1963, spontaneous violent demonstrations occurred in Jacksonville, Florida and Philadelphia. Starting in 1964, spontaneous violent urban rebellions occurred in approximately five northern inner cities.

Between 1964 and 1966, the form of mass protest began to change from mass non-violent demonstrations against segregated facilities in the South to violent mass urban rebellions against the capitalist system in the North. This period can be called the transition period because the two forms of protest existed simultaneously with non-violent demonstrations still being the predominant form of protest.

The year 1967 introduced a different stage. In this year, over 200 cities had reports of violent rebellions. Mass spontaneous urban rebellions continued until 1969, when they seen to have been replaced by sniping of police in 1970.

The revolution of the 1960's dates back to the Montgomery boycott. On December 1, 1955, a black seamstress named Mrs. Rosa Parks refused to give her seat to a white man because she was too tired to stand. She was arrested for violating the city's segregation laws. After the arrest, a group of black women asked ministers and civil leaders to call a boycott on December 5th, the day of Mrs. Parks' trial. One of the ministers who responded to that call was twenty-six year-old Martin Luther King, Jr., pastor of Montgomery's Dexter Avenue Baptist Church. From mass meetings

the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA) was formed.[33] The MIA organized a car pool to transport black workers who lived too far to walk back and forth to work. The MIA's demands were:

a. a guarantee of courteous treatment;

b. passengers to be seated on a first-come, first-served basis with blacks seating from the back;

c. employment of Negro drivers on predominantly Negro bus routes.[34]

At community meetings, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., emerged as the pricipal leader of the boycott. Montgomery merchants and civic leaders tried to break the boycott but after a year of struggle, the U.S. Supreme Court declared Alabama's state and local laws supporting segregation on buses unconstitutional. The Montgomery boycott served as an example of successful mass direct action. Dr. King insisted the success of the boycott had been because its participants had adhered to non-violence. He soon became the advocate of a passive resistance movement. Other communities organized similar campaigns.

By 1957, Dr. King had organized the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) to develop the non-violent mass direct action movement. Dr. King, along with A. Phillip Randolph and Roy Wilkins of the NAACP, organized a mass prayer vigil in Washington, D.C. which was the largest black protest demonstration in history. By 1958, small non-violent demonstrations were tested in different places in the country.

Nineteen sixty began with the aura of high expectations for black working class struggles for national democratic rights. On February 1, 1960,

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[33]Ebony Pictorial History of Black Americans. Vol. 3, (Chicago: Johnson Publishing Company, 1970).

[34]Haywood W. Burns, The Voices of Black Protest in America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 39.

four freshmen at A & T College in Greensboro, North Carolina, sat in at a Woolworth lunch counter downtown. In a matter of days the idea leaped to other cities in North Carolina. During the next two weeks, sit-ins spread to fifteen cities in five southern states. Within the following year, over 50,000 people, most were blacks and some whites, participated in some kind of demonstration or another in a hundred cities and over 3,600 demonstrators spent time in jail. In a year, several hundred counters had been desegregated in Southern cities. The main centers of protest were Nashville, Tennessee, Atlanta, Georgia, and Orangeburg, South Carolina.

> Nearly 1,300 arrests had been made by this time . . . . There were 400 arrests in Orangeburg, about 150 in Nashville, nearly 40 in each of Tallahassee and Florence (South Carolina), about 80 in Atlanta, about 65 in Memphis and nearly 85 in Marshall, Texas. In the North, college students staged supporting demonstrations and raised funds for arrested Southern students. The focus of the sit-ins was broadening to include libraries, museums, and art galleries; the methods . . . . were . . . . wade-ins, stand-ins, kneel-ins and other forms of non-violent direct action.[35]

Miss Ella Baker, an organizer for SCLC, decided to hold a conference bringing together the sit-in leaders. She asked SCLC to underwrite it financially. Miss Baker went to her alma mater, Shaw University, to secure facilities for a meeting of about a hundred students. By the time of the conference on April 15-17, 1960, demonstrations had spread so fast there were sixty centers of sit-in activity. Also, nineteen Northern colleges were interested enough to send delegates. Over two-hundred people came to the conference on Easter Weekend, one-hundred twenty-six student delegates from fifty-eight different Southern communities in twelve states.[36]

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[35] Ibid., p. 42.

[36] Howard Zinn, SNCC (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), p. 3.

The student leaders decided to remain independent of all the adult civil rights organizations. They formed a coordinating committee called The Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). When SNCC was formed, it served as an ad hoc coordinating committee for local centers of action. In the early sixties, SNCC provided the movement with a center for non-violent direct action against racial discrimination. In the North, white students formed the Northern Student Movement (NSM) that raised funds for SNCC.

The turning point for SNCC came when the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) started the freedom rides in 1961.

Members of CORE began the freedom rides on May 14, 1961, to test a Supreme Court decision outlawing segregation in transportation terminals. After one of CORE's integrated buses was bombed on May 20 near Anniston, Alabama and another was mobbed in Birmingham, CORE decided to call off its rides.[37]

A group of Nashville SNCC students, led by Diane Nash and students in Atlanta, continued the Freedmon Rides. They decided to leave school for the movement. Most of those who left school promised to give SNCC a year, others a full time commitment. Black students re-activated the movement in 1961, and before the summer was over, students from all over the country had taken rides in the South.

In the fall of '61, SNCC found it increasingly difficult to keep action going on the college campuses. By this time, a core of students had left school and were working full time with SNCC. This transformed SNCC

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[37]Bracey, Meire, Rudwick, Conflict and Competition: Studies on the Recent Black Protest Movement (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1971), p. 140.

from a student group to a professional civil rights organization.

Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, embarrassed by the freedom Rides, suggested the civil rights organizations jointly sponsor a campaign to register Southern black voters. When the Justice Department seem to offer federal protection for registration workers and white liberals procured foundation money to finance costs, civil rights groups agreed to develop the project.

SNCC soon became the main focus of organizing mass voter registration drives in the rural South. Between 1961 and the fall of 1962, SNCC workers conducted many courageous drives in Mississippi.

> In December of 1962, SNCC made a major breakthrough. It managed to work with the Albany movement to mobilize hundreds of blacks to fill the jails. The protests were against the city's segregation laws. Later Dr. King was brought in and national attention came to the issue. This was the first time SNCC, a student group, had moved masses of poor blacks in the rural South. Albany soon became a prototype for later actions in 1963.[38]

In the North, another type of mass movement was developing. It was the Nation of Islam, led by Elijah Muhammad. The Nation of Islam, branded by the white press as the Black Muslims, believed the white man was the devil, advocated racial separation, a black nation in the South and practiced unarmed self-defense. It was a religious movement created by Wallace D. Fard in 1930.

Fard began organizing the "Nation" in Detroit. In two years the Nation had acquired a membership of about 8,000 and had developed a University of Islam, an alternative elementary and secondary school. After continuous harrassment from police and school authorities, W. D. Fard and his

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[38] Muhammad Ahmad, "On the Black Student Movement, 1960-1979." The Black Scholar, Vol. 9, No. 8, (May/June 1978), p. 4.

first lieutenant, Elijah Karriem, later to become known as Elijah Muhammad, fled the city going to Chicago for refuge. There, W. D. Fard and Elijah Muhammad established Templer Number Two. According to early accounts, pressure from the government forced W. D. Fard to disappear and he left the country.[39] After Fard's disappearance, Elijah Muhammad deified him by designating Fard Allah in the person (flesh) and himself the last messenger of Allah.[40] A power struggle in the Detroit Temple developed among those accepting the version of deification and those who opposed it. Elijah was forced to leave Chicago for Washington, D.C. where he established another Temple. In the early 1940's, Elijah Muhammad was convicted of draft evasion and sentenced to five years in prison. After serving two and half years, he was paroled. He returned to Chicago and started rebuilding the Nation. The turning point for the "Nation" was the recruitment of Malcolm Little later to become known as Malcolm X and El Haji Malik E. Shabazz.

Malcolm, while serving an eight- to ten-year jail sentence for burglary, was converted to Islam after consistent correspondence from his brother Philbert. Malcolm then corresponded with Elijah Muhammad for five years. Upon his release from prison in August of 1952, Malcolm was a steadfast Muslim, and as such, was assigned to "fish", recruit new members. He fulfilled his assignment so well that he was made assistant minister of the Detroit Temple in the summer of 1953. Towards the end of the year, he received special training in Chicago from Elijah Muhammad. In 1954, Malcolm was sent to Boston where he organized Temple Eleven and in Philadelphia Temple Twelve. By June, 1954, he was sent to organize a Temple in Harlem.

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[39]Interview with "Papa" Wells, (A founding member of the Nation of Islam.), Detroit, Michigan, 1971.

[40]Ibid.

During the next five years, Malcolm X was Muhammad's best trouble shooter and organizer for the Nation of Islam. Malcolm was virtually becoming a myth inside the nationalist movement in the black community.

In 1959, Malcolm established a monthly newspaper which later became known as Muhammad Speaks. By the early 1960's through TV talk shows with Malcolm and debates with all of the major spokesmen of the civil rights organizations, Malcolm X became a household word. Malcolm X and the Nation of Islam, now 40,00 strong, had become a challenge to the civil rights movement.[41]

During the late fifties and early sixties, two mass movements were developing simultaneously, one integrationist/non-violent in the South and the other separationist/unarmed self-defense in the North. Both movements had religious overtones. The movement in the South had strong ties to the Black Christian church and the Northern movement was an Islam movement.

A third trend which was a secular political tendency was presented by Robert F. Williams. Williams, in 1957, as president of the Union County, North Carolina branch of the NAACP, armed the black community against KKK attacks. Williams also used direct action mass demonstration of the civil rights groups, but his demonstrations were protected with armed guards. His open advocation of armed self-defense and public statements of "meet violence with violence" led to his suspension as local NAACP branch president in 1959. Through overwhelming support of the membership, he was reinstated in 1960. Williams was the forerunner of the revolutionary nationalist movement. He fought hard against racial injustices in the legal system,

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[41] Malcolm X, The Autobiography of Malcolm X (New York, New York: Grove Press, 1964).

publicizing the infamous "Kissing Case", the case of two black boys accused of kissing a white girl and charged with rape.

This is a brief overview of the climate events that led to a new development in the black liberation movement, the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM).

CHAPTER THREE

URBAN REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENTS IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE UNITED STATES, 1960-1970

> Guerrilla warfare is an inevitable form of struggle at a time when the mass movement has actually reached the point of insurrection and when fairly large intervals occurs between big engagements in the Civil War.[1]

While Chapter Two provided a discussion of the historical evaluation of political activity that led to the emergence of RAM, this chapter should investigate the political atmospheric conditions that led to urban revolutionary warfare. RAM's ideology became one of guerrilla activities in direct response to societal conditions.

A classic example of urban guerrilla warfare during the 60's existed in Latin America. A comparative analysis of the revolutionary activities that took place in Latin America and the U.S. will contrast traditional and "non-traditional" activities that will show how guerrilla warfare was adapted to the United States and its influence on the emergence of RAM.

In investigating the historical era in the western hemisphere, the United States and Latin America, the writer will also discuss philosophies of various revolutionary theoreticians. Various theoretical analyses of rural and urban guerrilla war and how they have been applied to both regions, Latin America and the United States, will also be discussed. Latin America and the United States are conducive for comparative analysis

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[1]V. I. Lenin, Marx Engels Marxism (Peking Foreign Languages Press, 1978), p. 1983.

because of their centrality to the United States dominated world capitalist system.

A major contribution factor to the emergence of conditions conducive to urban revolutionary warfare in both the U.S.A. and Latin America was the great transfer of migration of sub-proletariat (previous agricultural workers in the agricultural sector) from rural to urban from the early 1940's to the 1960's. The majority of the emigrants to these cities were displaced agricultural workers. This influx transformed the social fabric of both societies. By the mid-60's, forty percent of the black population in the United States was concentrated in ten Northern urban centers.[2] In Latin America, a similar migrating pattern took place. By the early 1970's, fifty percent of the population in Latin America was concentrated in urban centers, while in the United States fifty percent, over 15 million black people are concentrated in 50 of its cities.[3]

As one scholar asserted:

> Latin American cities are growing faster than any in the world, but industrialization has lagged behind, creating vast and unpoliceable slums.[4]

Developments in the United States because of its hegemonic position, influenced the transformation of other capitalist countries.

Abraham Guillen, a major Latin American revolutionary theoretician, asserts that Latin America is a direct colony of the United States from which U.S. imperialism extracts enormous wealth from the super-exploitation of the Latin America proletariat.

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[2]James Boggs, Racism and the Class Struggle (New York: Monthly Review Press), p. 39.

[3]Ibid., p. 17.

[4]Robert Moss, Urban Guerrilla Warfare (London: The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1971), p. 4.

Urban guerrilla warfare began to rise in both Latin America and the United States within this context. The forms of urban guerrilla warfare varied in accordance with the national characteristics in each country in Latin America and varied to some extent among urban guerrilla groups in the United States. But all could be grouped under one of the following types as specified by Robert Moss;

(1) technological terrorism in the industrial cities;
(2) ghetto revolts and separatist uprisings; and
(3) urban violence in the preindustrial cities (notably Latin America).[5]

The success of the Cuban Revolution had profound impact, particularly in the Western hemisphere because it was:

1. the first Western hemispheric revolutionary to win;
2. the first to use guerrilla warfare;
3. first to defy the United States over an extended period of time;
4. first to declare Marxism as the ideology of the revolution.

These tenets influenced and even inspired revolutionary activities in Latin America and the United States.[6]

The Cuban Revolution occurred at a crucial period in world history. Its success only ninety miles from the shores of the United States had tremendous international impact, particularly in the Third World. In the 1960's, Africa was undergoing its first stage of decolonization, with previously colonized countries receiving nominal political independence. In the United States, the civil rights movement developed into a mass movement with the birth of the "sit-ins". China and the Soviet Union entered into open polemics concerning the future direction of the world socialist revolution. China, led by Mao Tse-Tung, advocated guerrilla warfare as

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[5]Ibid., p. 4.

[6]Ernest Halperin, "The Ideology of Castroism and Its Impact on the Communist Parties of Latin America." CENIS, Col. C, July 1, 1963, p. 27.

a tactic for people in the Third World seeking national liberation from colonialists and imperialist powers.

The Cubans, though economically aligned with the Soviet Union, maintained an independent line from it. Che Guevara emerged as the major theoretician of successful socialist revolution. He saw the Cuban model as an example for the rest of Latin America. Che Guevara considered the Cuban Revolution made three fundamental contributions to the revolutionary movement in the Americas. They are:

1. people's forces can win a war against an established army;

2. revolutionaries did not have to always wait for all the revolutionary conditions to be present;

3. in underdeveloped parts of America, the battle-ground for armed struggle should in the main be countryside.

Such are the contributions to the development of the revolutionary struggle in America, and they can be applied to any of the countries on our continent where guerrilla warfare may be developed.[7]

Communists and leftist groups formed throughout Latin America breaking off from the traditional 'Moscow' oriented Marxist-Leninist parties. These groups, called 'fidelistos', sent cadres to Cuba for guerrilla training. Between 1960 and 1965, rural guerrilla armies developed in Columbia, Venezuela, Guatemala and Peru. Leftist critics of the Cuban strategy emerged in Latin America, however. The most notable is Abraham Guillen. Che Guevara states, "guerrillas are the fighting vanguard of the people"[8] stationed in a certain area, armed to carry out a series of warlike actions for the strategic seizure of power. They must have the support of the

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[7]Ernesto Che Guevara, Guerrilla Warfare: A Method (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1964), p. 3.

[8]Ibid., p. 2.

worker and peasant masses of the region and the whole territory in which they operate. Guillen differed with Guevara stating:

> Today the epicenter of the revolutionary war must be in the great urban zones, where heavy artillery is not as efficient as in the countryside for anihilating guerrillas tied to the land (like the Peruvian guerrillas under the Luis de la Puenta or the peasant republics in Columbia). If a city is not liberated in the course of a mobile revolutionary war, if the population is on the side of the forces of liberation and space is symbolically in the hands of the reactionary army in this situation and until it is both politically and strategically convenient to liberate the whole city, the enemy cannot employ its heavy artillery without firing at its own cities.[9]

Guillen's critique of Guevara and Castro's emphasis on rural guerrilla warfare for the America's and the failure of rural guerrilla movements in Peru, Colubmia, Venezuela and Guatamala caused Latin American revolutionaries to make a reassessment of Cuba's political/military strategy.[10]

Revolutionaries from various Latin American countries visited Guillen for lessons on urban guerrilla warfare. With more than two thirds of the pouplation of Argentina, Uruguay, Venezuela and Chile living in cities, and over 50 percent of the population in Mexico, Brazil and Columbia living in town, urban guerrilla strategy seemed a feasible tactic.

The first urban guerrilla organization in Latin America was named the National Liberation Movement (Tupamaros) formed in Uruguay in 1973. The Tupamaros blazed the trail for other urban guerrilla organizations in the region.

The name Tupamaros came from the name of Caudillo Tupac Armau, an Inca who in 1780, staged an Agrarian rebellion for the independence of

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[9]Donald C. Hodges, ed. Philosophy of the Urban Guerrilla, The Revolutionary Writings of Abraham Guillen. (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1973), pp. 233-243.

[10]Moss, Urban Guerrilla Warfare, p. 4.

Indians in Uruguay. The Tupamaros thought the fundamental principle of organization is a revolutionary act in itself, that being prepared, equipped and violating bourgeois legality generated revolutionary awareness, organization and conditions. The Tupamaros analyzed, if there is no adequately prepared group, revolutionary situations are wasted and not taken advantage of. They argued that armed struggle and direct action itself prepares the people and builds the mass movement. According to the Tupamaros:

> A revolutionary movement must be prepared itself for the armed struggle at any stage, even when conditions for the armed struggle don't exist . . . for at least two reasons. Because an armed leftist movement may be attacked by repression at any phase of its development and it must be prepared to defend its very existence.[11]

The Tupamaros militant who is underground and involved in political work in either a union or a mass movement, must try to organize a group within the union to support the activity of the armed group. His role is to educate the union members about the armed struggle and if possible make the union more radical. The Tupamaros feel the armed group must be part of a political organization of the masses at every stage of the struggle. They believe:

> Every vanguard movement, in order to maintain its very nature at the culminating point of the struggle, must participate in that struggle and must know how to guide popular violence against oppression in such a way that it suffers the least possible losses.[12]

In some countries, guerrillas combined rural warfare with urban guerrilla struggle. One country in which this took place was Nicaragua. The best case of the use of rural/urban guerrilla warfare is the Sandinista

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[11]Carol Nunez, The Tupamaros (New York: New York Times Change Press, 1970), p. 26.

[12]Ibid., p. 28.

National Liberation Front (FSLN) named after General August C. Sandioni, leader of the first guerrilla force to fight U.S. Marines. Fighting them in 1,000 battles from 1926 to 1934, Sandioni was assassinated in 1934.[13]

During 1961 to 1963, the FSLN was formed, defining itself as an anti-imperialist, revolutionary organization dedicated to overthrowing Somoza and destroying the bureaucratic, military and economic structures that supported his government. The FSLN immediately developed a guerrilla army. In 1963, military attacks on government outposts were launched from Honduras but they were militarily unsuccessful. The FSLN then turned its efforts towards developing a political base in Nicaragua and building a clandestine and semi-legal network to provide logistical and political support for armed struggle.

This work was concentrated in the cities in the form of popular civilian committees and the Revolutionary Student Front. After 1966, the FSLN, after developing the nucleus of a revolutionary army, returned to the mountains launching an offensive at Pancasan Campaign which was seen as a political victory to most of the Nicarguan left.[14] The FLSN began to put emphasis on protracted war. After evaluating 1962-1967 experiences, they developed a strategy known as prolonged popular war (guerra popular prolongada, GPP). The GPP stressed organizing the rural proletariat, the largest sector of the working class, as the main social base of the revolutionary movement.[15]

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[13] NACLA"S Latin America and Empire Report. "Nicaragua." Vol. X, No. 2, (February 1976), p. 14

[14] Ibid., p. 15.

[15] Nicaragua: On the General Political-Military Platform of Struggle of the Sandinista Front for National Liberation. (Oakland, Calif.: Resistance Publications, 1978). Also, NACLA Report on the Americas, "Crisis in Nicaragua," Vol. XII, No. 6, (November/December 1978), p. 20.

In Argentina, the Revolutionary Workers Party and the People's Revolutionary Army led by Mario Roberto Santucho emerged waging urban guerrilla war. Brazil, in 1966, witnessed the development of many guerrilla organizations resulting from political splits within the Brazilian left.[16] The Revolutionary Nationalist Movement (MNR), basing its strategy on a rural insurrectional foco, planned rural armed struggle in conjunction with the Bolivian guerrilla struggle, then led by Che Guevara, to mark the opening of armed struggle throughout the Cono Sur-the southern portion of Latin America. Based in the Caparao mountains, the RNM was surrounded by a batallion of the Brazilian First Army in 1967 and a whole guerrilla detachment was captured. The failure of rural guerrilla warfare in Brazil and Bolivia caused the surviving Brazilian left to make their foco the cities.

In 1967, Carlos Marighella formed the Action for National Liberation (ALN). In February, 1968, the ALN published the Standpoint Manifesto describing the specific laws and requirements the struggle was subject to according to the unique conditions of Brazil. By August 1968, the ALN staged a spectacular train expropriation of about $30,000.

In March, 1968, the United States Consulate in Sao Paulo was bombed by the RNM. In June, 1968, RNM commandos attacked the Sao Paulo Army Hospital, surprising Brazilain army guards and seizing ten of the latest FAL rifles just acquired by the Brazilian Army.

The Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM) opened another urban armed struggle in Rio in 1969. RAM commandos attacked the military prison of Lemos de Brito and liberated six comrades. The RAM then carried out a

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[16]Mario Roberto Santucho, Argentina: Bourgeois Power, Revolutionary Power (Oakland, Calif.: Resistance Pub., 1975).

series of bank raids and hit and run battles with police in Rio. On May 1, 1969, the radio station in Sao Bernado was seized by ALN commandos.

Cuba had a significant influence on Latin American revolutionaries. In the early 60's, Cuba's Official foreign policy was support for guerrilla warfare in Latin America. As Cuba began to de-emphasize guerrilla warfare in Latin America and began to concentrate on domestic economic development, Latin American revolutionaries began to shift to urban guerrilla tactics in order to rely on their own regional resources. Urban guerrilla warfare continuously developed with greater intensity in Latin America in the early 70's.[17]

Parallel to the Latin American areas, the black movement in the United States having its own laws of development, began to develop towards armed struggle. In the late 1950's, Robert F. Williams, former president of the Monroe, North Carolina branch of the NAACP, organized an armed defense guard in the black community to fight racist attacks by KKK against the black community in Monroe, North Carolina. Williams advocacy of "Meet Violence with Violence," was publicly denounced by Dr. Martin Luther King, SNCC, CORE and the National Leadership of NAACP. As the black movement for civil rights gained mass momentum in the early 1960's, vigorous debate took place inside the movement over using non-violence or violence as a tactic. Williams, failing to receive support from the traditional Negro Leadership (i.e. NAACP, CORE, SNCC, SCLC, Urban League), moved further left, seeking support from the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), Workers World Party, and a section of the Communist Party. His alliance with the left frightened many

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[17] Joao Quartin, Dictatorship and Armed Struggle in Brazil (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971).

conversative leaders in the civil rights movement and also the United States government. Williams became a critic of the U.S. government's domestic and foreign policy. He supported the Cuban Revolution and became a founding member of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee. The Fair Play for Cuba Committee was a committee of Americans who were opposed to the United States imperialist aggressions against Cuba. After making two trips to Cuba, flying the Cuban flag in his back yard and constantly agitating for Afro-Americans to rise up in armed self-defense, he became a target of the U.S. government's counter-intelligence program (COINTELPRO), a program designed to destroy the black liberation movement. In August of 1961, in the midst of an armed confrontation in Monroe, Williams and his family escaped an assassination plot organized against him by the combined forms of the KKK, North Carolina State Police, National Guard and FBI. The FBI initiated the largest manhunt in its entire history to capture Williams.[18]

After months of flight and no news of his whereabouts, Williams surfaced at a press conference in Havana, Cuba. The revolutionary government of Cuba granted Williams political asylum. This news electrified the progressive forces of the world because for the first time in history a black radical political leader had defied the U.S. government and had escaped its racist clutches.

Williams, exiled in Cuba from 1961 to 1965, helped to internationalize the black liberation struggles. While in Cuba, Williams met with revolutionaries from Latin America, Africa and Asia. His propagating of international support for the liberation of Afro-Americans helped to develop solidarity with guerrilla organizations in Latin America and other parts of

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[18]Robert F. Williams, Negroes with Guns (Chicago: Third World Press, 1973), p. 126.

the world. In 1963, Armed Forces of national liberation of Venezuela (FALN) blew up one of Rockefeller's oil refineries to protest the bombing of the Birmingham Four (black girls who were assassinated while in Sunday School) during civil rights demonstration there.[19] Mao Tse Tung, chairman of the Chinese Communist Party, called on all progressive forces of the world to support the Negro's struggle against racial discrimination in the United States.[20] Malcolm X's break from the Nation of Islam with his popularizing of the concept of armed self-defense and black nationalist, along with the first urban rebellions in 1964, aligned the black liberation movement in the U.S. with the world socialist revolution. Through his travels in Africa, Malcolm met with African socialist leaders Ahmed Ben Bella of Algeria and Kwame Nkurmah of Ghana among others, made alliances of mutual support of the African revolution world-wide.

Williams called for armed revolution by Afro-Americans weekly through his "Radio Free Dixie" from Havana, Cuba. In the February, 1964 issue of his monthly newsletter, The Crusader, Williams raised the possibility of a successful minority revolution by Afro-Americans employing urban guerrilla tactics.[21] In his article, Williams asserted racism is America's Achilles heel.

> When the brutally oppressed Afro-American speaks of violent resistance to savage racial dehumanization, he reaps a whirlwind of reasons and causes why such a reaction supposedly is insane and suicide . . . . The fact is that the racist oppressors of the Afro-American realize the insecurity and vulnerability of

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[19]Interview with Armed Forces of National Liberation of Venezuela (FALN) (Havana, Cuba, August, 1964).

[20]Mao Tse Tung, Statement in Support of the American Negroes Struggle Against Racial Discrimination in the United States (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1963).

[21]Robert Carl Cohen, Black Crusader (Secaucus, New Jersey: Lyle Stuart, Inc., 1972). p. 212.

> the most powerful military complex in the world to a violent internal struggle, wherein its horrible and sophisticated weapons of war will be ineffective. The internal defense of the U.S. is a possibility that money cannot buy.[22]

In the February, 1964 issue of The Crusader, Robert F. Williams described urban guerrilla warfare in the United States:

> The new concept of revolution defies military science and tactics. The new concept is lightning campaigns conducted in highly sensitive urban communities with the paralysis reaching the small communities and spreading to the farm areas . . . the new concept is to huddle as close to the enemy as possible so as to neutralize his modern and fierce weapons. The new concept creates conditions that involve the total community, whether they want to be involved or not. It sustains a state of confusion and destruction of property . . . during the hours of day sporadic rioting takes place and massive sniping. Night brings all out warfare, organized fighting and unlimited terror against the oppressor and his forces.[23]

Robert Williams predicted what would happen when urban guerrilla principles were applied in the highly industrialized urban areas of the United States:

> The factory worker will be afraid to venture out on the streets to report to their jobs. The telephone workers and radio workers will be afraid to report. All transportation will grind to a complete standstill. Stores will be destroyed and looted. Property will be damaged and expensive buildings will be reduced to ashes. Essential pipe lines will be severed and blown up; all manner of sabotage will occur. Violence and terror will spread like a firestorm. A clash will occur inside the armed forces. At U.S. military bases around the world, local revolutionaries will side with Afro GI's. Because of the vast area covered by the holocaust U.S. forces will be spread too thin for effective action. U.S. workers, who are caught on their jobs, will try to return home to protect their families. Trucks and trains will not move the necessary supplies to the big urban centers. The economy will fall into a state of chaos.[24]

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[22]Robert F. Williams, The Inner City Voice, Volume 2, No. 1, (October 1969), p. 6.

[23]House on Un-American Activities, Guerrilla Advocates in the United States (Washington, D.C.: GOP, May 6, 1968), pp. 6-7.

[24]Ibid., p. 19.

August, 1965 brought the Watts Rebellion. The theory of Williams and Malcolm X had become materialist reality. Thousands of African-Americans burned down buildings, looted, sniped at police and helicopters bringing Los Angeles to almost a standstill, with the masses chanting "Burn Baby Burn". The Watts Rebellion of 1965 has been considered by many political scientists as the turning point in the black liberation movement in the 1960's. From 1965 to 1968, urban rebellion or urban geurrilla warfare, was the major ideological tendency of the masses in northern cities. Urban rebellions were seen as a legitimate form of protest against racial injustice inside the United States. Among the street force (seasonably unemployed) urban rebellions were considered part of the world black revolution.

Urban Rebellions

With greater intensity and frequency each year during the mid-60's, the urban rebellions started in northeastern cities, such as Philadelphia and Newark on a small scale in 1964 and spread west to Los Angles and south to Greensboro, North Carolina in 1965. The Watts Rebellion in Los Angles was considered the turning point, because it was the first time that the masses of black people unified for a cause and implemented what they considered to be a protest through large scale burning and sniping at police. In the spring and summer of 1966, rebellions had spread to thirty-eight cities. And by 1967, the Newark and Detroit rebellions had reached the same intensity that Watts had.

> The Detroit and Newark rebellions were part of the massive country-wide wave of Black rebellion which began in 1964 and reached high points in 1967 and 1968. During the year of 1967 alone, 164 rebellions broke out, 103 of them occurring in the month of July alone.[25]

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[25]"Hail the 10th Anniversary of the great 1967 Afro-American Rebellions in Detroit and Newark," The Workers Advocate, Vol. 7, (August 1977), p. 16.

There are various accounts of the number of urban rebellions in the 1960's and the amount of people involved. According to Joe R. Feagin and Harlan Hahn in Ghetto Revolts from information provided by the Civil Disorder Clearinghouse at Brandies University, there were 329 important rebellions (riots) in the five years between 1964 to 1968 involving thousands in 257 cities. In 1967, 71 important rebellions were recorded in 82 cities with 233 disorders recorded in 168 cities in which 18,800 persons were arrested for riot related offenses, 3,400 injured and 82 persons killed. During the same five-year period, records revealed that 52,629 persons were arrested for riot related offenses, 8,377 injured and 220 persons killed, most of whom were black civilians.[26] From recorded accounts of arrests of participants, eyewitness accounts and surveys, some social scientists estimate about 250,000 to 300,000 black people were active in the urban rebellions in the 60's.[27] Some researchers and participant observers state that approximately a million Afro-Americans actively participated in the urban rebellions in the 1960's. If this estimate is correct, urban rebellions were a form of mass revolt. Regardless of the variation of estimates by researchers, urban rebellions did receive mass support from Afro-Americans. Urban rebellions therefore should be included in any paradigm that tries to develop a comprehensive analysis of the mass movement of Afro-Americans in the 1960's.[28]

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[26]Joe R. Feagin and Harlan Hahn, Ghetto Revolts (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1973), pp. 102-103.

[27]Thomas F. Parker, ed., Violence in the U.S., Vol. 1, 1956-1967, (New York: Facts of File, Inc., 1974).

[28]As a participant-observer researcher, the author would estimate that one in every twenty persons involved in the urban rebellions in the 1960's, was arrested. From interviewing other participants in the rebellions, many conclude that more people were involved in the rebellions but didn't get arrested.

There were several individuals and organizations who helped fan the fires of the urban rebellions in the 1960's. Malcolm X had the greatest effect in the rebellions from the onset of the 60's. His brilliant oratory laid the ideological framework for much of the younger generation. In 1964, Malcolm began to espouse the doctrine of revolutionary black nationalism and called on the black people to arm themselves for self-defense. His slogan of "Freedom by Any Means Necessary" was repeatedly stressed by Malcolm at his weekly Sunday mass public meetings.

During the Harlem rebellions in 1964, Malcolm's prominence was reflected in the violent reactions of black people. "We want Malcolm", shouted by protesters during the Harlem Rebellion, while at the same time, they threw rocks and bottles at the police. It was at this time that Malcolm suggested the possibility of urban guerrilla warfare as a tactic in the black liberation struggle.

In the spring of 1964, a revolutionary black nationalist organization named the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM) began to work with Malcolm X. RAM was organized in 1962 in Ohio and had expanded into a national organization by 1964. RAM as an organization advocated urban guerrilla warfare, mass rebellions, and national black strikes as forms of struggle for the black national movement. Its goal was to create an independent black republic through a socialist revolution.

In 1966, Stokely Carmichael, chairman of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) at the time, also had a hand in influencing of the urban rebellions through his speeches on college campuses. After his speeches there were sudden rebellions.

Rap Brown, Carmichael's successor, also made a significant contribution to the proliferation of revolutionary change. While leading a mass demonstration in Cambridge, Maryland, brown was shot and later charged with

inciting to riot. As a result of Brown being shot, charged with inciting to riot, Carmichael left the country. He went to the Second Tri Continental Conference in Havana, Cuba, where he, in his speech, called on Afro-Americans to use urban guerrilla in the United States.

In the spring of 1966, rebellions had spread to 38 cities.

> According to the grand jury findings on the Cleveland riot of July 18-23, 1966, RAM was using as its headquarters and training grounds a recreation center in the heart of the Hough district where the riot took place. This center, called the JFK house--the Jomo "Freedom" Kenyatta House after the President of Kenya and the former leader of Mau Mau was described by Senator Frank J. Lausche (D-Ohio) as a "training round" for snippers. The Cleveland grand jury noted that one of the principles in the city's riot was Lewis G. Robinson, the former founder and "ultimate head" of the JFK House and also a member of the "Freedom Fighters of Ohio." The Medgar Evers Rifle . . . the Deacons for Defense and the Revolutionary Action Movement.[29]

While the Revolutionary Action Movement was intensifying its activities in the United States, several developments began to take place in Cuba that would affect the future of urban guerrilla movements in the Americas.

In 1964, Che Guevara came to the UN and attacked both United States imperialism and Soviet revisionism. Che traveled to Africa and during his tour, bitterly criticized the Soviet Union.[30] The Soviet Union pressured Fidel. An open split began to develop between Fidel and Che. Che was siding with the Chinese in the Sino-Soviet debate and Fidel with the Soviets.

Che decided to help open up another front. He organized a contingent of 125 Cuban guerrillas and went into the Congo to fight with the Congolese rebels. After six months, Che assessed the rebels didn't possess "the will

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[29]HUAC, Guerrilla Warfare Advocates in the United States (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1968), p. 21.

[30]Daniel James, Che Guevara (New York: Stein and Day Publishers, 1969), p. 158.

to fight" and returned to Cuba.[31] Fidel began to place less emphasis on exporting revolution and began concentrating on stabilizing the Cuban economy. While Fidel supported Che in his later venture in Bolivia in 1966, it was lukewarm support. With the "Guevaraists" having lost the political struggle in Cuba, guerrillas in Latin America basically had to go for themselves. Revolutionaries in Latin America turned toward the cities and relied on their own resources.

As the struggle between the revolutionary communists and the bourgoise communists took place in Cuba, the question of the right of Afro-Americans to self-determination became one of international intrigue. Robert Williams, then chairman in exile of the RAM, began to receive pressure from the revisionists. Williams met with Che right before Che's dissappearance in Cuba.

> It was around this time that chairman of the Communist Party in Havana called him into his office and declared, 'Williams, we want you to know that the Revolution doesn't support Black Nationalism. We believe in integration, in white and black workers struggling together to change capitalism into socialism.
>
> Only in this way can there be an end to discrimination. Black Nationalism is just another form of racism. Cuba has solved her race problem, but if we went along with your ideas about Black, self-determination in the United States, it wouldn't be long before somebody would start demanding that our Oriente Province should become a separate Black state as well as we are not going to let that happen.[32]

Che told Williams that he supported Afro-Americans rights to use armed self-defense and was in opposition to the Cuban Communist Party's official

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[31]Ibid., p. 159.

[32]Robert Carl Cohen, Black Crusader (Secaucus, New Jersey: Lyle Stuart, Inc., 1972). pp. 289-290. Also, Kalamu Ya Salaam, "Robert Williams: Crusader for Internation Solidarity," The Black Collegian, Vol. 8, No. 3, (January/February 1978), p. 56.

position of supporting Martin Luther King, Jr. Che promised his support to Williams but shortly after their meeting was dropped from the Cuban Communist hierarchy.[33] Williams soon began to have trouble in Cuba.

Williams was even denied "observers" status at the Tri Continental Conference held in Havana in January, 1966. It was only after African revolutionaries came to Williams and brought him to the conference that he was allowed to attend. At the conference, a struggle over a resolution recognizing black America as an oppressed nation occurred between third world revolutionaries and the revisionists controlled by Moscow oriented parties. As a result of the racism on the part of the bourgeois communists, Williams and his family left Cuba in 1966 and moved to China.

Though the Revolutionary Action Movement was isolated from support in a majority of the socialist world, it continued to organize. Having to fight reactionary tendencies in the black liberation movement, the racist "revisionist bourgeois" U.S. Communist Party and counterinsurgency from the U.S. government, it found itself up against insurmountable odds. In an attempt to develop a mass political perspective in the black liberation movement, RAM formed a coalition with SNCC in developing the Black Panther Party.

In 1967, RAM organized militias in many cities and issued a general call for mass self-defense.* Some political scientists consider 1967 to be the 'first national Afro-American uprising.' Though, for the most part, the urban rebellions were spontaneous, black revolutionaries were active in them. Reliable sources indicate black revolutionaries had a race in the winter of 1967 to see who could create the largest urban rebellion. In the

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[33]Ibid., p. 292.

*See Appendix.

summer of 1967, it was reported that Detroit won the race, Newark took second place, and Plainsfield, New Jersey came in third. In order for the reader to get an inside view of what actually happened, a first hand account would seem appropriate. The following are interviews of those who were active participants in the 60's rebellion. Due to the nature of the subject, the real names of the respondents will not be used.

The interviews were made with members of various revolutionary movements who were directly involved in one way or another with the organization of the special tactics and strategies of the urban rebellions.

Brother W. -- Watts, California

> Brother O. was a member of the Nation of Islam in New Jersey from 1959 to 1963. In 1963, he became a roving field officer/organizer for the RAM organization based in New Jersey.
>
> At the outbreak of the Watts (Los Angeles) Rebellion, he was in the riot area. He was painting "RAM" on the walls when he was approached by a brother who told him not to do that. He was questioned as to where the brother was from and later taken to a house containing approximately twenty brothers who were also affiliated with RAM.[34]

Brother E. -- Cleveland Ohio

> Ahmed Evans and Ali Khan (both now deceased) were section leaders of RAM in Cleveland. Ahmed, Ali and others met during the spring of 1966 and decided to create another "Watts". They decided it was time to test urban guerrilla warfare. Military units were trained and the city was divided into areas, with each unit having its own territory and commander. The units were named the Black Nationalist Army.[35]

Brother O. -- Newark, New Jersey

> Thirty brothers left the Nation of Islam in 1966 who were considered rebels, formed a military cadre. One brother from Newark, Brother O, was a member of their cadre as well as being a member of RAM. He was a liaison between RAM and them. The cadre was well prepared; they had street maps and a well devised chain of command. The cadre met with Brothers X, D, and O of the east

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[34] Interview with Brother W., Philadelphia, PA, July, 1968.

[35] Interview with Brother E., Cleveland, OH, 1973.

coast RAM leadership. Plans were worked out for urban guerrilla warfare tactics, in the upcoming summer, when the rebellion was to break out.[36]

Brother A. -- Cleveland,Ohio

During the rebellions in the summer of '66, the Black Nationalist Army went down into action. They fought police sometimes door to door in neighborhoods. Some sections of the inner city rose up in complete support of the nationalists as we battled police. During 1967, units of the army couldn't utilize the situation because a major commander was underground and several key members of the units had been imprisoned as a result of their activity in the 1966 rebellions, and subsequently, there was a division between the sectional commanders. Finally in 1968, the Army regrouped.[37]

Ahmed* was constantly being harrassed by the police. He came to the council to seek guidance. He said he "couldn't take it any longer and the next time he would have to take action." Every unit within the council agreed that if the situation persisted, all units in the city would go into action opening up other fronts. On July 23, 1968, the police attacked Ahmed's house on Auburndale Street in the Glenville area of Cleveland. Ahmed's unit fought back in battle and later that night over units moved into action for backing as the rebellion continued.

Brother V. -- Detroit, Michigan

A well established cadre was formed in Detroit. Brother V planned to organize area militas that would "get-down" and engage in urban guerrilla warfare in the summer of 1967. X was brought in and taken to the bars and pool rooms where he spoke of the coming summer. After his rap, volunteers were called for. Brother V said he would return to organize the militias. No one was asked formerly to join RAM. They were only requested to participate and get down in their neighborhoods in the summer. After Brother V organized the militias, RAM engaged in a mass campaign by painting slogans on the walls of Detroit calling for self-defense. It read: "Join the Black Guards." Street to street fighting during the rebellion was well executed.[38]

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[36]Interview with Brother O., Philadelphia, PA, August, 1968.

[37]Interview with Brother A.,

*Ahmed Evans was the prime minister of 'New Libya,' a Cleveland, Ohio based section of the Republic of New Africa.

[38]Interview with Brother V., Detroit, Michigan, 1968.

These interviews give an indication of the intensity of struggle occurring during the late 60's. The mood of black people shifted in the mid-60's.

> The mood of blacks became one of aggression as they watched their brothers and sisters in the south being attacked by dogs and police at non-violent demonstrations. Blacks perceived the police as an occupational army whose purpose was not to protect them, but to protect the property of white merchants, regardless of the cost to our black people. This mood or consciousness of the blacks was catalyst in setting off the outbreaks in the northern cities in 1967.[39]

The assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, which occurred in 1968, brought a new wave of urban rebellions. Black people were angry. More than 110 cities went up in flames as blacks struck back in retaliation. The army was on alert and the country was in crisis. But the Black Liberation Movement was on the defensive as right wing forces began an open assault.

At this time, most of the rebellions took place in the southern cities. Mao Tse Tung, chairmen of the Communist Party of China, issued a statement in regards to the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King.

> Some days agao, Martin Luther, the Afro-American Clergyman, was suddenly assassinated by the U.S. Imperialist. Martin Luther King was an exponent of non-violence. Nevertheless, the U.S. Imperialist did not on that account show any tolerance towards him, but used counter-revolutionary violence and killed him in cold blood. This has taught the broad masses of the black people in the United States a profound lesson. It touched off a new storm in their struggle against violent repression sweeping well over a hundred cities in the United States, a storm such as this has never taken place before in the history of that country. It shows that an extremely powerful revolutionary force is latent in the more than twenty million black Americans.[40]

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[39]Robert T. Ernest and Lawrence Hugg, Black America-Geographic Perspectives, Anchor Press, 1976.

[40]Mao Tse Tung, April 16, 1968 Statement in Support of the Afro-American Struggle (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1968), p. 1.

Mao goes on to state that it is only through the realization that the Afro-American movement is part of a domestic class struggle that black people will attain the freedom they have so long deserved. Furthermore,

> Racial discrimination in the U.S. is a product of the colonialist and imperialist system. The contradiction between the black masses in the U.S. and the U.S. ruling circles is a class contradiction. Only by overthrowing the reactionary rule of the U.S. monopoly capitalistic class and destroying the colonialist and imperialist system can the black people in the United States win complete emancipation.[41]

The Chinese sensing the revolutionary potential of the black liberation movement in America wanted to support it. The Chinese were going to give two million dollars to the black movement.

> . . . Robert Williams faced the nefarious work done by the left and specifically the Communist Party (CPUSA) in China and in Cuba. He faced also the slight inability for the Chinese Marxists to understand our racial attitudes . . . .
>
> . . . They also knew from Robert Williams, and the evidence began to show in New York in '64 and Watts in '65, that there was in fact a burgeoning military movement here in America. They wanted to give an expression of support. A man who later became disgraced Lin Piao, was one of the leading figures in urging that they make this concrete contribution to the Black Struggle.[42]

The United States government responded to the black liberation movements' potential by unleasing its massive COINTELPRO campaign. By 1970, thousands of activists were either framed, killed, driven underground or into exile. On the other hand, urban guerrilla warfare picked up in Latin America in the early 1970's. In Latin America, particularly Uruguay, urban guerrilla warfare took a more concentrated (organized vanguard) form. In the United States, urban guerrilla warfare was more coordinated with spontaneous actions of the masses.

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[41] Ibid., p. 2.

[42] Kalamu Ya Salaam, "We Are New Africa: RNA and the Promise of Pan African Nationalism in America." Black Books Bulletin, Vol. 4, No. 4, (Winter 1976), p. 2.

> There are four main urban guerrilla techniques that have been explored over the past few years, and largely explain the success of a group like the Tupamaros. They are (I) Armed propaganda; (II) Political kidnapping, (III) Stiffening riots and strikes; and (IV) Subversion of the security forces.[43]

Armed propaganda was used in both the United States and in Latin America, while political kidnapping was a major tactic used by the Tupamaros. In Latin America, urban guerrillas were more open usually admitting they were members of the revolutionary organization, while in the United States urban guerrillas were more clandestine, seldom if ever admitting they were part of the organization. For instance, no person inside the United States was ever reported through the press or news media of being a member of the Revolutionary action Movement. The only public figure of RAM was Robert F. Williams, its chairman in exile, who was living in Cuba and China. Nor were any of RAM's activities or actions publicized.

The Tupamaros kidnapped the Brazilian consul, Dias Gomide and CIA agent, Dan Mitrions, demanding in exchange a hundred detained guerrillas. The Uruguayan government refused to concede and a 'state of siege' occurred in Uruguay. Guillen criticized the Tupamaros for having an over centralized struture and incorrect tactics. Instead, he leaned to the Revolutionary Popular Organization (OPR-13) which combined armed struggle to support workers immediate demands.

> While the Tupamaros supported the Broad Front, OPR-13 used its armed units to win the strike at the Portland Cement Company, where workers with anarcho-syndicalist tendencies demanded higher wages . . . . The Broad Front lost the elections, while the workers at Portland Cement won the strike.[44]

Guillen goes on to describe how successful urban guerrilla war must be

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[43]Robert Moss, Urban Guerrilla Warfare (The International Institute for Strategic Studies: Long, 1971), p. 9.

[44]Donald C. Hodges, Philosophy of the Urban Guerrilla (New York: William and Morrow and Company, 1973), p. 273.

protracted. Guillen states:

> What is important is not to win space, but rather to destroy the enemy and to endure longer . . . .
>
> Strategically, a small guerrilla army must operate in view of bringing about a mass insurrection without engaging the popular forces in an initial battle, without fastening itself to a given space, (urban barricades), without creating fixed mountain encampments (as long as it is weak in space, it must know how to endure in time.)[45]

While the scope of this paper is to investigate urban revolutionary movements in the Americas, it should be noted that the concepts can be applied universally.

The concept of urban guerrilla warfare was used by the Vietnamese against the U.S. imperialists during the Tet offensive in 1968. Robert F. Williams, visiting Hanoi, congratulated General Vo Nguyen Giap of the success of the Tet offensive offering him a toast. General Giap, toasting him back, congratulated Williams saying, "We learned from Detroit to go into the cities.[46]

General Giap's appropriately illustrates the nature of people's war:

> . . . to conduct a people's war, it is necessary to mobilize the entire people. This is a fundamental concept in our Party's line is necessary to mobilize all people's forces, to turn the entire country into a revolutionary bastion, to devote everything to the war, and to use all forces and national resources to protect the revolution." To mobilize and organize the entire population to participate in the uprising and war, is our Party's method of educating and organizing the masses widely, deeply, and constantly, from the lower to the upper level and in accordance with a correct revolutionary line . . . .[47]

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[45] Ibid., p. 234.

[46] Interview with Robert Williams: Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 1969. Also, Kalamu Ya Salaam, "Robert Williams: Crusader for International Solidarity," The Black Collegiate, Vol. 8, No. 3, (January/February 1978), p. 58.

[47] General Vo Nguyen Giap, Banner of People's War, the Party's Military Line (New York, 1971), pp. 26, 28, 29.

In North America, the Black Liberation Army (BLA) formed in 1971 in response to the U.S. government's attacks against the black liberation movement. Fighting repression, the BLA battled police and the FBI from coast to coast. By 1973, many members of the BLA had been either assassinated or captured. There is an estimate that America has approximately 65 black prisoners of war, 20 black political prisoners and 550,000 black prisoners in its concentration camps.

Urban revolutionary movements, which emerged in the 1960's and 70's, have laid a legacy in the struggle for state power by the oppressed in Latin America and the United States. They were reflections of upsurges of mass movements in each area.

CHAPTER FOUR

EMERGENCE OF RAM

The intent of this chapter is to present a descriptive historical analysis of the growth and development of RAM into a systematic organization. It is also the intent of this chapter to describe the events and personalities that contributed to that growth.

The Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM) evolved from the southern civil rights movement of the early 1960's and the black nationalist movement in Northern cities. As a result of the sit-ins, students in northern cities organized solidarity demonstrations. Traditional civil rights organizations like the NAACP and CORE held mass rallies in northern black communities. Black and white students demonstrated against Woolworth stores and along with progressive clergy led economic boycotts. Black students with more radical leanings in the north, while supporting SNCC, had a tendency to reject its non-violent philosophy. Some of these students joined CORE to participate in direction action activities.

In the summer of 1961, at the time of freedom rides, Robert F. Williams, president of the Monroe, North Carolina Chapter of the NAACP issued a nation-wide call for Afro-Americans to arm for self-defense and go to Monroe for a showdown with the KKK.[2] Williams also called for freedom riders to go to Monroe to test non-violence.

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[1] Ebony Pictorial History of Black Americans, Vol. 3, (Chicago: Johnson Publishing Company, 1970), p. 2.

[2] Haywood Burns, The Voices of Negro Protest in America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 42.

Within the white left, The League for Industrial Democracy (LID), planneed to form a student branch called Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). SDS was to hold a conference on the new left at the National Student Association (NSA) conference in Madison, Wisconsin. SNCC was also represented at the NSA conference.

During the conference, news of Williams' flight into exile reached movement circles. Discussions among black SNCC and CORE workers and independent black radicals took place as to what significance the events in Monroe, North Carolina, had for the movement. Black cadres inside of SDS met and discussed developing a black radical movement that would create conditions to make it favorable to bring Williams back into the country. This was a small meeting of about four people. Donald Freeman, a black student at Case Western Reserve College in Cleveland, Ohio, said he would correspond with everyone and would decide when to meet again. One of those present at the meeting was a student at Central State College in Wilberforce, Ohio.

During the fall of 1961, an off-campus chapter of SDS called Challenge was formed at Central State. Challenge was a black radical formation having no basic ideology. Its membership was composed of students who had been expelled from southern schools for sit-in demonstrations; students who had taken freedom rides and students from the north, and some had been members of the national of Islam and African nationalist organizations. Challenge's main emphasis was struggling for more student rights on campus and bringing a black political awareness to the student body. In a year-long battle with the Central State's administration over student rights, members of Challenge became more radicalized. Challenge members attended student conferences in the south and participate in demonstrations in the north.

Freeman sent letters to the Challenge cadre, discussing ideological aspects of the civil rights movement.

In the spring of 1962, Studies on the Left, a radical quarterly, published Harold Cruse's articles, "Revolutionary Nationalism and the Afro-American."[3] Cruse, in his article, described Afro-Americans as an oppressed nation within a nation. Freeman wrote a letter to the Challenge cadre telling them to seriously study the article. He also said black radicals elsewhere were studying the article and that a movement had to be created in the North similar to the Nation of Islam, using the tactics of SNCC but outside of the NAACP and CORE. The Challenge cadre studied Freeman's letter but did not know where to begin.

After much discussion, the Challenge cadre decided to form a broad coalition party to take over student government. Meetings were held with representatives from each class, fraternity and sorority. A slate was drafted and a name for the party was selected. At the meeting of the coalition party, the name Revolutionary Action Movment was chosen. But it was felt by the members at the meeting that the word revolutionary would scare Central State's administration so they decided to use Reform Action Movement (RAM) for the purposes of the student election. It was called RAM, later to be known as the Revolutionary Action Movement.

The Challenge cadre met and decided to dissovle itself into RAM and become the RAM leadership. RAM won all student government offices. After the election, the inner RAM core discussed what to do next. Some said that all that could be done at Central State had already occurred, while others disagreed. Some of the inner core decided to stay at Central State and run

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[3]Howard Zinn, SNCC (Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 1964), p. 3.

the student government. A few decided to return to their communities and attempt to organize around Freeman's basic outline. Freeman, in his letters, outlined a general perspective of creating a mass black working class nationalist movement in the north. He stressed this movement had to be political and more radical than the Nation of Islam. He emphasized that the movement should use direct action tactics but would not be non-violent.

Two of the students who decided to return to their communities were Wanda Marshall, former student leader of RAM and Max Stanford.

Freeman wrote to Stanford in Philadelphia, saying that he was going to Philadelphia in the summer of 1962 and that he wanted Stanford to organize a meeting. Freeman went to Philadelphia and met with a group of Stanford's high school friends. He discussed the movement and the direction it had to take. Later in discussions with Stanford, Freeman gave instructions that Philadelphia should become a pilot project for the outline of the type of movement he described in his letters to the RAM cadre. He said the movement once started should be called the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM). Freeman continued to travel from city to city. In September of 1962, Stanford went to the National Student Association headquarters in Philadelphia. There he met Marion Barry from SNCC, who was in Philadelphia to help raise funds for SNCC. Wanda Marshall transferred to Temple University and began working with black students there.

Stanford began studying with Mr. Thomas Harvey, president of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA).[4]

In the process of working with SNCC, Stanford met the black left in

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[4]Akbar Muhammad Ahmad, "A Brief History of the Black Liberation Movement in the 1960's: Focus on RAM." (unpublished speech: Chicago, Illinois: Northeastern Illinois University, July 1, 1978), p. 4.

Philadelphia. One acquaintance was Bill Davis, a leader of an independent black Marxist cadre called Organization Alert (OA). During this time, Stanford had discussion with Marion Barry about the direction of the civil rights movement. One night while listening to the discussion in NSA office, Miss Ella Baker encouraged Stanford to continued to develop his ideas.

After Marion Barry left Philadelphia, Bill Davis asked Stanford to join Organization Alert. Stanford wrote Freeman about OA and Freeman decided to meet with Davis. Freeman went to Philadelphia in October of 1962 and after long discussions with Davis told Stanford that OA was too bourgeois/intellectual and not sufficiently action-oriented. Freeman had organized the African-American Institute in Cleveland in 1962. He was also a school teacher in the Cleveland school system. He told Stanford that he had to start something independent of OA. Stanford was still not convinced. Freeman left and returned to Cleveland.

During a meeting of OA, Davis harshly criticized SNCC and said that SNCC would never change. Stanford opposed that position, saying that SNCC was at the center of the movement and events would force SNCC to change. The discussion ended in a heated debate. Stanford discussed the debate with Wanda Marshall of the original RAM cadre.

During the Thanksgiving break, Marshall and Stanford decided to visit Malcolm X. Stanford wanted to seek Malcolm's advice about joining the National of Islam. Marshall and Stanford met with Minister Malcolm in New York. After a lengthy black history lesson by Minister Malcolm, Stanford asked Malcolm if he should join the Nation of Islam. Malcolm, to Stanford's surprise, said no. He said, "You can do more for the Honorable Elijah Muhammad by organizing outside of the Nation." [5]

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[5]Interview with Malcolm X, Shabbaz Restaurant, November, 1962, New York.

Minister Malcolm's statements convinced Marshall and Stanford to do independent organizing. Stanford drafted a position paper titled 'Orientation to a Black Mass Movement, Part One' and circulated it among the black left in Philadelphia, stating that:

> Organizers must be people who can help masses win victories around their immediate problems. Organizing should be centered around Black youth with the objective of building a permanent organized structure . . . .
>
> . . . the organizing of the black working class youth should be the primary concern for the black revolutionist because the black working class has the substained resentment, wrath and frustration toward the present social order, that if properly channeled can revolutionize Black America and make Black America, the vanguard of the world's black revolution. Within the black working class, the youth constitute the most militant and radical element. Therefore, effective mobilization and channeling of their energies will function as the catalyst for greater militancy among African-Americans.[6]

Stanford went to visit Mrs. Ethel Johnson, who had been a co-worker with Robert Williams in Monroe, North Carolina, who was then residing in Philadelphia. Mrs. Johnson read the paper and later told Stanford she would help him organize in Philadelphia. Stanford continued to circulate his position paper getting various activists opinion of it. But as time passed he was still reluctant to start a group of his own.

Freeman returned to Philadelphia for the Christmas holidays. At a meeting with Marshall, he harangued Stanford for not having organized. It was decided at that meeting to organize a study group in January of 1963. Towards the end of 1962, Marshall and Stanford called together a group of black activities to develop a study/action group.

Within a month's time, key black activists came into the study/action group. Two central figures were Stan Daniels and Playthell Benjamin. After

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[6]Max Stanford, Orientation of a Black Mass Movement. (Philadelphia; Unpublished RAM documents, 1962), p. 4.

a series of ideological discussions, the Philadelphia study/action group decided to call itself the Revolutionary Action Movement. (RAM). It decided it would be a black nationalist direct action organization. Its purpose would be to start a mass black nationalist movement. By using mass direct action combined with the tactics of self-defense, it hoped to change the civil rights movement into a black revolution. RAM decided to work with the established civil rights leadership in Philadelphia and eventually build a base for mass support.

RAM contacted Rev. Leon Sullivan who had organized selective boycotts in the early 60's and volunteered to help with the selective boycotts which the Philadelphia ministers were conducting against industries that discriminated in their hiring practices.

RAM distributed leaflets in the tens of thousands door to door throughout the community, Stanford states:

> With about 15 people we distributed about 35,000 leaflets in three days. Brother Stanley Daniels and myself covered almost all of West Philly, block by block, going in bars, candy stores, slipping leaflets under people's doors, working into the early hours of the morning.[7]

In the early months of 1963, a new Philadelphia NAACP president was elected named Cecil Moore, an attorney who was prone to direct-action.[8]

Temple University initiated a pilot project called Philadelphia Community Action (PCA) composed of white liberals who had been given a grant of one million dollars to study black people in North Philadelphia. No black people from the community were included on the commission. The NAACP decided to hold a mass rally to protest the commission. Moore asked all

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[7]Max Stanford (Muhammad Ahmad), Formative Years: Fall, 1962-63 (Unpublished paper, Amherst, Mass., 1974), p. 1.

[8]A Cadre Discussion on RAM. (Unpublished paper), p. 3.

community groups to help in organizing the project.

The RAM study/action group immediately became involved. RAM members circulated through North Philadelphia streets with homemade loud speakers, holding street meetings and handling out leaflets. RAM members went into the bars and pool rooms holding rap sessions.

The rally was a total success. But all that the petty bourgeois community leadership did was give flowery speeches. The week following, the NAACP and RAM picketed the PCA offices. For some reason the NAACP called off the picketing and not too much came of the protest.

RAM members felt the movement needed a voice that was independent of the existing civil rights groups. RAM assessed all the civil rights groups except SNCC as bourgeois and also analyzed the Nation of Islam as having a bourgeois orientation. It was thought that a black radical publication should be created. RAM began publishing a bi-monthly called Black America. To begin to agitate the masses, RAM circulated a free one-page newsletter called RAM Speaks. RAM Speaks addressed itself to local issues that was constantly arising in the movement. Black America was more theoretical dealing with the ideology of RAM. Members of RAM went on radio and publicized their study group and program.

As more community people joined the RAM study group, the class and age composition of the study group changed from basically students in their early 20's to members of the black working class who were in their early 30's.

RAM decided to begin mass recruitment. The organization began to hold mass street meetings in North Philadelphia. Free weekly African and Afro-American history classes were held, taught by Playthell Benjamin, a young self-educated historian. Cadre meetings would discuss building RAM into a

mass movement.[9] Queen Mother Audley Moore, a former CP organizer, sponsored monthly black nationalist ideological training sessions at her house which RAM members whould attend.

Through its publication, Black America, RAM began to communicate with other new nationalist formations. In San Francisco, Donald Warden had started the Afro-American Association. In Detroit, Luke Tripp, John Williams, Charles (Mao) Johnson, General Baker and Gwen Kemp were the leadership of UHURU, a revolutionary nationalist student collective and in Cleveland; Freeman had organized the Afro-American Institute. Sterling Stuckey, Thomas Higgenbottom and John Bracey, Jr., had formed National Afro-American Organization (NAO), in Chicago, and there was a black literary group in New York called UMBRA. Stanford would travel around on weekends in the south and across the north to keep in touch with new developments.

The year 1963 produced the second phase of the protest era. By spring, through the efforts of SNCC and SCLC organizers, various Southern cities were seething with protest revolt. SNCC began mobilizing blacks in mass voter registration marches in Greenwood, Mississippi. Mississippi state troopers attacked the demonstrators and masses of people were being jailed.

The turning point of mass black consciousness and for the protest movement came during the spring non-violent offensive in Birmingham, Alabama. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who had become the symbol of the direct action non-violent struggle through the efforts of SCLC and SNCC, pushed Birmingham to the brink. The racists tactics of using dogs, tanks, and water hoses on women and children, was too much for the African-Americans to stomach.

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[9]Editorial. "The Panthers: Communist Guerrillas in the Street," American Opinion, Vol. XIII, No. 4, p. 7.

Within months mass demonstrations had occurred all over the south. The movement seriously began to gel as the mood of black people in the North became angry.

In Philadelphia, the NAACP called a mass demonstration in front of City Hall in which RAM participated, carrying signs calling for armed self-defense. NAACP president Cecil Moore decided to test mass direct action in Philadelphia by protesting against union discrimination on a construction site at 30th and Aduphin Streets in the heart of the black community in North Philadelphia. He asked RAM to help in the mobilization. The construction site was in RAM territory, three blocks from its office.

> By the time Cecil made the decision to go into mass action, we sat down with him and told him that Philadelphia would be another Birmingham, Alabama. Cecil, seeing that we were young, not knowing we were organizers, just didn't believe it. He said, 'Okay, go ahead.'[10]

Moore made NAACP's equipment available to RAM.

Ram immediately took a survey of the community, asking residents if they would support demonstrations in Philadelphia similar to the ones being held in the South.

> We found our key contact people in doing the survey. Like we would drop leaflets on who was with us. People would tell you, if you are doing this, don't go somewhere because so and so works for so and so. That is what the survey provided us with. Then, we would just walk up and down North Philadelphia preparing the people. At the time, demonstrations were occurring in Jackson and Greenwood, Mississippi. We asked people, if we had this kind of demonstration up here, would you come?[11]

The overwhelming response was "Yes". RAM members circulated throughout the community with leaflets and bull horns, going door to door, talking to street gangs.

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[10] A Cadre Discussion on RAM, (Unpublished paper), p. 3.

[11] Ibid., p. 4.

The demonstration was scheduled to start at 6:00 a.m., May 27, 1963. RAM leaders Stan Daniels and Max Stanford joined the picket line, which blocked the workers, all whites, from entering the construction site. Within minutes the Philadelphia police formed a flying wedge and attacked the picket line. Singling out Daniels and Stanford, twenty police jumped them as they fought until unconscious.

As word spread throughout the community, thousands of people went to the construction site. Daniels and Stanford were arrested for inciting to riot. In the police station, Stanford asked to make a phone call. He called Minister Malcolm X and told him what had happened. Malcolm went on the radio that night in New York and traveled to Philadelphia two days later, speaking on radio again. Word spread about what was happening in Philadelphia not only throughout Philadelphia, but the entire East Coast. Within a week, 50,000 to 100,000 people participated in demonstrations that often turned into violent clashes between the masses and the police. The pressure became too much for the NAACP and they called off the protests.

The name RAM became known among black radical circles in the North. The May demonstrations were the first breakthrough in the North which had mass involvement. Grassroot organizations in various communities in the North began to use direct action tactics. Brooklyn CORE used the mass confrontation methods RAM has used at the Down State Medical Center demonstrations in New York.[12]

The major factor for RAM's rapid organizational and ideological development was the involvement in its beginning of veterans of the civil rights, black nationalist and left movements in RAM. Mrs. Ethel Johnson, a co-

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[12]Ahmad, "A Brief History of the Black Liberation Movement in the 1960's: Focus on RAM," p. 4.

worker of Robert F. Williams in Monroe, North Carolina had moved to Philadelphia. While there, she helped organize RAM and became a member of its central committee. She trained the younger RAM members and passed on lessons from her rich experiences in armed struggle. Queen Mother Audley Moore trained the RAM cadre in the philosophy of black nationalism and Marxism-Leninism. Queen Mother emphasized the importance of understanding the national question and the demand for reparations. She organized the African-American Party of National Liberation in 1963 which formed a provisional government with Robert F. Williams elected premier in exile. RAM cadre were members of the party.

The national NAACP convention was being held in Chicago during the summer of 1963. Moore decided to take Stan Daniels and Max Stanford "to keep them out of trouble while I'm gone."[13] Stanford and Daniels stopped through Cleveland on the way to Chicago. There they conferred with Freeman, who decided to drive into Chicago and introduce Daniels and Stanford to the cadre there.

In Chicago there was general discussion of what had been started in Philadelphia and then the discussion centered around what could be done in Chicago. Someone mentioned that Mayor Daley and Reverend Jackson, the head of the Baptist convention who had publicly denounced Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and civil rights demonstrations, were going to speak at the NAACP rally that Saturday.

It was decided that the cadre would organize community support to protest against Daley, and Daniels, and Stanford would organize the youth inside the NAACP convention. Daniels and Stanford stopped an NAACP Youth

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[13]Cecil B. Moore, Conversation in the Philadelphia NAACP Office, 1963.

dance. They called for support of the upcoming demonstration. NAACP officials became alarmed and stopped them from speaking. The Chicago cadre, in the meantime, contacted activists and others in the community about the demonstration scheduled for July 4th. Leaflets were handed out on the streets, subways and buses.

The NAACP rally proceeded as planned, with top NAACP people in attendance. To keep the NAACP youth from participating in the demonstration, the top brass had all the youth delegates sit on stage with them. Mayor Daley was introduced. Demonstrators marching from the back of the park began booing Daley. The booing was so loud that Daley could not finish speaking; he became angry and left. Then Reverend Jackson was announced as the next speaker. As Jackson approached to podium, the demonstrators began to chant. "Uncle Tom Must Go." The audience picked up the chant. Demonstrators charged the stage. Twenty-five thousand people became enraged and a full scale riot broke out as the masses chased Jackson off the state into a waiting car that sped him off to safety.

It was decided by the cadre to get Daniels and Stanford out of town immediately because the city might bring inciting to riot charges against them. Daniels was sent back to Philadelphia and Stanford to Cleveland. In Cleveland, Freeman told Stanford to go to Detroit to check on UHURU and to help them get things going. In Detroit, Stanford met with UHURU and told them what had happened in Chicago.

A black prostitute named Cynthia Scott had been shot in the back and killed by a white policeman the previous weekend. UHURU decided to hold a rally and protest demonstration in front of the precinct of the guilty cop. UHURU approached the Group on Advanced Leadership (GOAL), a black nationalist civil rights group, for help in the demonstration. Within two weeks,

marches were organized against the precinct with thousands in the community participating. Stanford returned to Cleveland and reported what was developing in Detroit. From Cleveland he returned to Philadelphia.

By mid-July, sixty-three local grass roots activists were talking about marching on Washington and bringing the capital to a standstill.

Freeman decided the time had come to call the various revolutionary nationalist cadres together in what was called a Black Vanguard Conference. The Black Vanguard Conference was to be a secret, all-black, all-male conference to draft strategy for the proposed march on Washington and the direction of the movement. The conference was held in early August in Cleveland, Ohio. Activists attended from Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, and Cleveland. Detroit was barred because of a security leak in the cadre there.

Freeman presided over the conference. Discussion centered around changing the existing civil rights movement into a revolutional nationalist movement. It was discussed that the cadre could achieve this by infiltrating the existing civil rights groups (CORE, SNCC, NAACP, SCLC). The march on Washington was also discussed. It was decided that an organizer would be sent into Washington prior to the march to decide what kind of a strategy the cadre should take during the march.

During the discussion on what form the coalition of activists should take, the beginnings of an ideological split emerged. Chicago and New York favored using the name RAM since RAM had established a mass breakthrough of developing community support. Those advocating this position wanted a tight-knit structure based on disciplined cells, with rules and organization based on democratic centralism. Freeman argued against this position and advocated a loose coalition called the Black Liberation Front.

Philadelphia voted with Freeman, and because Freeman had more experience than most of the activists there, the rest voted on calling the gathering the Black Liberation Front (BLF). Chicago also raised the question of whether the BLF should be a Marxist-Leninist formation, but there was no consensus or agreement; so it was decided that the BLF would be revolutionary nationalist.

At the March on Washington, the cadre met again. The BLF organizer who had been sent to Washington reported that the march did not have support from the majority of the local black community there. From his conversations with people on the street, many did not know a march was being planned for D.C. It was also observed that the army was posted at strategic places in the city and was on alert to move in case of trouble. On the basis of the report, it was decided just to participate in the march and observe.

By chance, while cadres were handing out leaflets in the community, they ran into Donald Warden, who was then chairman of the Afro-American Association (AAA), a nationalist organization based in Oakland, California. A meeting was set up with Warden, who explained what the AAA was about for about 2½ hours. After the meeting, it was decided that the cadre would stay in touch with Warden, but Freeman concluded that Warden was a bourgeois nationalist. It was decided that the cadre would go back to their respective locales and build bases.

After the March on Washington, several events occurred which shaped the civil rights movements and later the black liberation movement. One was the bombing of four black girls in a church in Birmingham, Alabama. The news of this both angered the black community and sent waves of demoralization inside the civil rights movement. It was like a mortal blow

after the March on Washington. Then came the assassination of John F. Kennedy, President of the United States. Many Negroes across the country felt they had lost a friend. To the RAM cadre the ultra-right had made a move.

Malcolm X, speaking the Sunday after the assassination, made reference to the Kennedy assassination as "chicken coming home to roost." Elijah Muhammad, head of the Nation of Islam, suspended Malcolm from speaking for 90 days and later extended the suspension indefinitely.

In Philadelphia, a white cop shot a black epileptic in the back of the head and killed him. A coalition of black radical groups held mass rallies to protest police brutality. After one of the rallies, black teenagers began small-scale rioting. Members of RAM, observing the riot, began to theorize about the potential of this kind of activity.

The coalition led mass marches on the cop's police station only to be met by machine guns staring them in the face. The coalition decided it had gone as far as it could go without getting innocent people hurt.

Freeman traveled to Philadelphia to talk to the RAM cadre. He told the cadre to cease all public activity and said that the ultra-right was preparing to crush the movement. The word was "go underground".

Development of RAM into a National Organization

The year 1964 was a year of transition for the civil rights movement and a year of ideological development for black radicals. In January, Brookly CORE, led by Isaiah Brownson, planned the Stall-in at the World's Fair to protest discrimination being practiced there. The purpose of the Stall-in was to stop or slow down traffic in the streets and subways, to bring New York City to a standstill. To disrupt the function of a city was a new tactical use of civil disobedience.

> The leadership of the national office of CORE publicly opposed Brooklyn CORE. James Farmer and Roy Wilkins came out against Brooklyn CORE. For the SNCC came out in support of Brooklyn CORE. For the first time, the question of Black people disrupting the system was advanced in the civil rights movement. This tactic of Black people disrupting the economy, or a city of the government was a different kind of tool. The stall-in was not successful because it had been publicized in advance and the police were waiting.[14]

While the Stall-in was not successful, it raised questions of the possibility of the movement disrupting the functioning of the system.

Two events occurred in March, 1964 that changed the direction of the black liberation movement. Malcolm X announced his independence from the Nation of Islam and Robert F. Williams' article "Revolution Without Violence," in the February, 1964 issue of Crusader reached the States. Robert Williams' article "Revolution Without Violence?" raised many eyebrows. In it he described how many blacks could bring the U.S. to a standstill through urban rebellions and urban guerrilla warfare. This went beyond the concept of armed self-defense.

Almost every activist was watching Malcolm's development to see in what direction he was heading. Freeman from the BLF was at Malcolm's press conference and encouraged him to proceed in a more radical direction. Freeman decided it was time to challenge SNCC concerning the concepts of armed self-defense and black nationalism on its own home grounds, the South. He called Stanford to Cleveland and gave him instructions to organize an all-black student conference in the south. The BLF had connections with nationalists who were inside local SNCC groups. One particular group was the Afro-American Student Movement (ASM) at Fisk University in Nashville, Tenneessee.

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[14]Don Freeman, "Black Youth and Afro-American Liberation," Black America, (Fall 1964), pp. 15-16.

Stanford was sent to Detroit to raise money for the conference. While fund-raising he went to see James and Grace Boggs, then two leading theoreticians of the black liberation struggle. In discussions with Stanford, Grace Boggs described the problems that had emerged in the Michigan Freedom Now Party, as lessons to avoid in organizing. Robert Williams' February, 1964 Crusader article was discussed and Stanford described RAM. Boggs asked Stanford to write an article on RAM, which she later printed in Correspondence, a bi-monthly periodical which was published in Michigan. Stanford also wrote Malcolm telling him of the upcoming student conference he had discussed with Freeman. From there Stanford went South to the annual spring SNCC conference to recruit SNCC field workers, especially from Mississippi, who were responsive to an all-black student conference.

From May 1st to the 4th, 1964, the first Afro-American Student Conference on Black Nationalism was held at Fisk University. It was the first time since 1960 that black activists from the north and south sat down to discuss black nationalism. The conference was the ideological catalyst that eventually shifted the civil rights movement into the Black Power movement. Don Freeman, in his article "Black Youth and Afro-American Liberation," described the conference:

> The first conference session evaluated "bourgeois reformism." The integrationist civil rights organizations CORE, SNCC, NAACP, etc., substantiate Dr. W. E. B. DuBois' conviction that 'capitalism cannot reform itself; a system that enslaves you cannot free you". . .
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> . . . The impotence of traditional or "bourgeois" nationalism was examined. The delegates agreed that the traditional nationalist approach of rhetoric rather than action was ineffectual because it posed no pragmatic alternative to "bourgeois reformist" civil rights activities . . . . Nationalist demands for an autonomous Black American economy were termed bourgeois due to failure to differentiate such an economy from capitalism and unfeasible because of the white and Jewish capitalist' intention to perpetuate "suburban colonialism" their exploitation of Black Ghettos. The consensus was that Afro-Americans must control their neighborhoods, but the realization of that necessitates, Rev. Albert

> Cleage's terms, a "strategy of chaos" involving more devastating civil disobedience than the kind undertaken by the established reformist groups . . . .
>
> . . . The assembled nationalists asserted that the young nationalists are the vanguard of a Black Revolution in America, but they must create: 1) an organizational apparatus to "translate" nationalist ideology into effective action; this requires Black financing to insure Black control; 2) dedicated, disciplined, and decisive youth cadres willing to make the supreme sacrifices to build and sustain a dynamic Nationalist Movement.[15]

The conference stated that black radicals were the vanguard of revolution in this country, supported Minister Malcolm's efforts to take the case of Afro-Americans to the U.N., called for a black cultural revolution, and discussed Pan-Africanism. The conference drafted 13 points of implementation. The 13 points were:

1. Development of a permanent underground secretariat to carry out plans.
2. To push the Bourgeois reformist as far "up tempo" as fast as possible, while at the same time laying a base for an underground movement.
3. The Conference united with the African, Asian and Latin American Revolution (Attempt to get financial help from friendly forces).
4. Adopt Robert F. Williams as leader in exile.
5. The achievement of Afro-American solidarity (to push the restoration of the Revolutionary Spirit to Pan-Americanism).
6. Conference philosophy--Pan African Socialism.
7. The establishment of Internal Bulletin for Conference.
8. Construction of a Pan-African Student Conference.
9. Secretariat contact all student liberation organizations around the world to develop rapport and coordination.
10. National Public organ, name: Black America.
11. Charge genocide against U.S. Imperialism before the United States.

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[15]Ibid., pp. 15-16.

12. Secretariat develop program for Revolutionary Black Nationalists.

13. Develop two Revolutionary Centers.[16]

The impact of the conference was such that the Nashville Student Movement brought Dr. King to Nashville the weekend of the ASM conference. During his speech, Dr. King attacked the conference as "hate in reverse."[17]

From the conference BLF-RAM organizers went into the south to work with SNCC. With the permission of SNCC chairman John Lewis, an experimental black nationalist self-defense project was started in Greenwood, Mississippi.

In discussion with the Mississippi field staff of SNCC, BLF-RAM organizers found the staff was prepared to establish a state-wide armed self-defense system. They were also prepared to move in an all-black nationalist direction. All that was needed was money to finance the project.[18] In the meantime, Monthly Review published an article titled, "The Colonial War at Home," which included most of Stanford's Correspondence article, "Toward a Revolutionary Action Movement," edited with some of Malcolm's remarks, and excerpts from Robert Williams' "Revolution Without Violence?"[19]

The article was discussed by the majority of the SNCC field staff. SNCC was polarized between black and white organizers and between left and right wing forces within SNCC.

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[16]Revolutionary Nationalist, Volume 1, November 1, Summer, 1965.

[17]Sister R. taped interview, October 1, 1978, Washington, D.C.

[18]James Foreman, The Making of Black Revolutionaries. (New York: Macmillan Co., 1972), p. 374.

[19]"The Colonial War At Home," Monthly Review., Vol. 17, No. 1. May, 1964, p. 2.

> James Foreman violently opposed us. In fact, he asked the staff in Greenwood to cut-off our food supply which they refused to do. Eventually the SNCC office was moved from Atlanta to Jackson for that summer. Some interesting things occurred that summer, one, the majority of the Mississippi field staff wanted to break from that whole integrationist approach, did organize some self-defense activities and was ready to break with SNCC but a question of finances, and this is a key question for any nationalist. If they broke from SNCC, did we have the fund-raising apparatus to finance them as organizers? Two, at the state-wide SNCC staff meeting in Greenville that summer, Brother Askia and I met some young brothers who were ready to build a Black army.[20]

Most of the whites opposed armed self-defense and black nationalism. They and their supporters considered the BLF-RAM cadres as enemies. Political debates took place within field staff meetings as to the direction SNCC and the black liberation movement.[21] Most of the black members of the Mississippi SNCC field staff thought that the majority of black people were beyond the voter registration stage. The debates became heated arguments extending into late hours of the night. Bob Moses, the head of the entire Mississippi SNCC Project, believed a segment of the federal government would reform itself. His strategy for freedom summer and the formation of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party was to force a confrontation with the racists in hope that the Federal government would come to the aid of Black people. The revolutionary black nationalists position was that the Federal government was the enemy of black people and had never been on black people's side. The two sides were in a clear ideological conflict. The integrationist, reformist faction eventually won in the organizational split because they controlled the economic resources of the field staff.[22]

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[20]Ahmad, p. 8.

[21]Roland Snellings, "The Long Hot Summer," Black America, Fall, 1964, p. 13.

[22]Ahmad, pp. 8-9.

SNCC began to involve large numbers of white students in the movement in the summer of 1964. Their involvement led to their radicalization which later they developed into the anti-war student movement.

The crucial milestone of SNCC's road to radicalism was the Freedom Summer of 1964. Freedom Summer grew out of a remarkable mock election sponsored by SNCC in the autumn of 1963. Because the mass of Mississippi's black population could not legally participate in choosing the state's governor that year, Robert Moss conceived a freedom election to protest mass disenfranchisement and to educate Mississippi's blacks to the mechanics of the political process. The Council of Federated Organizations (COFO), organized a new party called the Mississippi Freedom Democrats, printed its own ballots, and in October conducted its own poll. Overwhelming the regular party candidates, Aaron Henry, head of the state NAACP and the Freedom Democratic nominee for governor, received 70,000 votes, a tremendous protest against the denial of equal political rights. One reason for the success of the project was the presence in the state of 100 Yale and Stanford University students, who worked for two weeks with SNCC on the election. SNCC was sufficiently impressed by the student contribution to consider inviting hundreds more to spend an entire summer in Mississippi. Sponsors of this plan hoped not only for workers but for publicity that might at last focus national attention on Mississippi. By the winter of 1963-64, however, rising militancy in SNCC had begun to take on overtones, of black nationalism, and some of the membership resisted the summer project on the grounds that most of the volunteers would be white.[23]

During the Freedom Summer sponsored by COFO in Mississippi, six people

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[23] Bracey, Meier, Rudwick, et al Conflict and Competition: Studies in the Recent Black Protest Movement (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1971).

were killed, eighty beaten, thirty-five churches burned and thirty other buildings bombed.[24] Student volunteers taught in Freedom Schools where 3,000 children attended.

> They organized the disenfranchised to march on county courthouses to face un-yielding registrars. Most importantly, they walked the roads of Mississippi for the Freedom Democratic Party (FDP). Denying the legitimacy of the segregated Democratic Party, COFO opened the FDP to members to all races and declared the party's loyalty to Lyndon Johnson. The goal of the FDP in the summer of 1964 was to send a delegation to the Democratic convention in Atlantic City to challenge the credentials of the regular Democrats and cast the state's vote for the party's nominees. To mount this challenge against the racist Democrats of Mississippi, COFO enrolled 60,000 members in the FDP and then organized precinct, county and state conventions to choose 68 integrated delegates to go North. The FDP, in which tens of thousands of black Mississippi citizens invested tremendous hopes, was a true grassroots political movement and the greatest achievement of Freedom Summer.[25]

The FDP went to Atlantic City to challenge the Mississippi regulars. Northern liberals tried to work out a compromise that would appease the FDP and at the same time keep the bulk of the Southern delegations in the convention. President Johnson's proposal was to seat all the Mississippi regulars who pledges loyalty to the party and not go grant the FDP voting rights but to let them sit on the floor of the convention.

The FDP refused this proposal and Johnson sent Senator Hubert Humphrey to draw a compromise. Humphrey offered to permit two FDP delegates to sit in the convention with full voting rights if he could choose the delegates. The Mississippi white regular walked out and the FDP, led by Mrs. Fannie Lou Hammer, decided not to accept the comprise.

Malcolm and RAM

The pivotal personality and force in the mass development of revolutionary black nationalism unmistakely is Malcolm X. Malcolm X had emerged

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[24]Ibid., p. 140.

[25]Ibid., p. 142.

as a national spokesman and leader in the black liberation movement by 1963.

Malcolm's break with the religious black nationalism of the Nation of Islam was an important development because it provided the movement with a public center for political black nationalism.

On March 8, 1964, Malcolm held a press conference declaring his independence from the Nation of Islam. He first organized the Muslin Mosque, Inc. a Sunni Muslim organization of which he would be Iman. The philosophy of the Muslim Mosque, Inc. he said would be black nationalism. But Malcolm represented a different brand of black nationalism which was revolutionary black nationalism.

> I am prepared, Malcolm said, to cooperate in local civil rights actions in the South and elsewhere and shall do so because every campaign for specific objectives can only heighten the political consciousness of the Negroes and intensify their identification against white society . . . .
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> There is no use deceiving ourselves, Malcolm said. Good education, housing and jobs are imperative for Negroes, and I shall support them in their fight to win these objectives, but I shall tell the Negroes that while these are necessary they cannot solve the main Negro problem.[26]

Malcolm had many objectives in mind. One was involving disciplined Muslims and black nationalists in the civil rights movement and transforming the civil rights movement into a human rights movement.

The failure of the FDP to be seated led SNCC to attempt organizing an all black independent political party a year later.

Stanford called an emergency organizational meeting in Detroit of BLF cadres, James and Grace Boggs, and other supporters. He gave a report on the conditions within the Mississippi field staff which was ready to move

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[26]George Breitman, The Last Year of Malcolm X (New York: Schocken Books, 1967), pp. 19-20.

into armed self-defense. It was discussed that a national centralized organization was needed to coordinate the new movement. The Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM) was the name chosen for the new movement. After much discussion, it was decided that the movement should be structured on three levels: the first would be of tight-knit cells in cities that would build political bases and financially support roving field organizers, who would work full-time like SNCC field organizers in the community and at the same time act as a national liberation front coordinating a broad coalition of black nationalist groups. The second level was made up of local chapters, and the third of secret members who would financially support the organization's work.

Ideological contradictions were present from the start. Political debate centered around the status of black people and strategy for liberation. The nationalists stated that black people were an internal colony, a nation within a nation whose national territory was the Black Belt South. They said that in the process of liberation through a black socialist revolution the black nation would separate from the United States.

The socialists, on the other hand, represented by James and Grace Boggs, asked the question, what would happen to the rest of the country? Could the white left be given the responsibility to govern? What would guarantee that they would be any less racist than those presently in power? After much discussion, a compromise was drafted. The position was that black revolutionaries would have to seize power in a socialist revolution in the United States, maintaining a black dictatorship over the U.S., with the south being an autonomous region. The Boggs' presented the argument that black migration was moving towards cities and that by 1970 blacks would constitute the majority of inner cities in the ten major urban areas. Their

position was that the organization should place emphasis on building black political power in the cities.[27]

A twelve-point program was drafted by a committee, read and discussed by the conference. The program included:

1. Development of a national black student organization movement.
2. Development of ideology (Freedom) schools.
3. Development of Rifle Clubs.
4. Development of Liberation Army (Guerrilla Youth Force).
5. Development of Propaganda, training centers and a national organization.
6. Development of Underground Vanguard.
7. Development of black workers "liberation unions."
8. Development of block organization (cells).
9. Development of the nation within nation concept, government in exile.
10. Development of War Fund (Political Economy).
11. Development of black farmer coops.
12. Development of Army of black unemployed.

Officers for the movement elected.

International Spokesman . . . . . Malcolm X [28]

International Chairman . . . . . Robert F. Williams

National Field Chairman . . . . . Max Stanford

Executive Chairman . . . . . Don Freeman

Ideological Chairman . . . . . James Boggs

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[27]James Boggs, Racism and the Class Struggle (New York: Monthly Reveiw Press, 1970), p. 39.

[28]It was suggested that Malcolm X would be the spokesman for the movement. The field chairman was to go to New York to talk to Malcolm about it. RAM members went back to their communities to organize cells, while others traveled around spreading the movement.

Executive Secretary . . . . . Grace Boggs

Treasurer . . . . . Milton Henry/Paul Brooks[29]

RAM's activities during this period helped radicalize both Malcolm and SNCC. RAM organizers in New York would consult with Malcolm daily and whereever Malcolm went in the country, his strongest supporters and also his harshest critics were members of RAM.

Malcolm's awareness of developments in the movements moved him in a more activist direction.

> Once he had made the break, Malcolm passed successively from a Pan-Africanism that emerged into a Third World political perspective. And at the time of his death, he was on the verge of becoming a revolutionary socialist.[31]

Malcolm agreed to become the spokesman but felt his role should remain secret because the United States intelligence aparatus would become alarmed about his connection with Robert Williams, who was in exile in Cuba.

Malcolm was preparing to develop a public mass organization which he intended would be instrumental in leading the broad mass movement and would serve as a united front. He asked that RAM organizers help in forming that organizaiton and also infiltrate it to develop a security section. He knew the Muslim Mosque, Inc. was infiltrated by police agents and did not know who he could trust. Malcolm had just returned from his first trip to Africa. He was in the process of attempting to get African nations to endorse his proposal to take the U.S. to the United Nations for its violations of the Human Rights charter in its crimes against Afro-Americans.

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[29] Twelve Point Program of the Revolutionary Action Movement. 1964.

[30] "Malik Shabbaz--The Man History Has Forgotton," African Mirror, February, Vol. 2, No. 3, (March 1979), p. 11.

[31] Ibid.

Both Malcolm and RAM saw that the internationalization of the Afro-American struggle was necessary to win allies and to isolate the U.S. government. In the organizational discussions which were held daily for a month, various aspects of the struggle were analyzed.

While many writers discussed Malcolm's change in philosophy and outlook, few traced Malcolm's evolutionary development. Malcolm's celebrated statement concerning some white people not being racist after he made the Hajj did not represent the end of his development on the question. While Malcolm was embracing socialism and ideologically evolving outside of the confines of Islamic thought before the time of his death, he still maintained a position of organizing the black nation independently for national liberation.

His Hajj statement was released in April after he had made his first trip to Africa and the Middle East. While Malcolm saw an eventual alliance between the black movement and revolutionary whites, he constantly said, "There can't be any workers solidarity until there is first, Black Unity."[32]

The field chairman asked Malcolm about his statements of white people being in Mecca and his feeling that some could be worked with. The field chairman stated that he felt Malcolm would lose his black nationalist following which was his base of support. Malcolm stated that while in Algeria an Algerian revolutionary showed him a picture of himself that looked as dark as Marcus Garvey, and the statements under the picture made it appear that Malcolm was advocating the superiority of people based on skin pigmentation, i.e., that darker-skinned Africans were superior to lighter-skinned Africans. The publication had been circulated by the United States

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[32]Interview with Malcolm X, June, 1964, New York, New York.

Information Agency (USIA). The Algerian revoluationary convinced Malcolm that if this kind of propaganda had confused him and was isolating Malcolm on the continent of Africa, then, the racists must have been successful in isolating Malcolm from the board masses of Afro-Americans. The Algerian revolutionary discussed the concept of the mass line with Malcolm. Malcolm felt that there would always be black nationalists in America but that he had to reach the masses of our people who had not become black nationalists yet. He had also been under pressure of the Arabs to practice "true Islam." So he felt it was best that he tone down his line.

It was decided that Malcolm would infiltrate the civil rights movement and later transform it into a black revolution. In order to do this, RAM and others would make preparations for Malcolm to go South. Malcolm would eventually join demonstrations utilizing the right of self-defense. He would be the mass spokesman for armed defense units that would be centered around him and a black united front.

Malcolm then set about creating the mass organizational form. Malcolm's hard core wanted to call the organization the National Liberation Front (NLF) but it was decided that a public NLF was premature and would frighten most people. Malcolm asked the organizers to come up with a name for the organization. The next week the Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU) was chosen. A program for the OAAU was drafted and presented at Malcolm's Sunday mass rallies at the Audubon Ballroom in New York City.

The field chairman of RAM and Malcolm, during the month of June, worked out plans for developing an international black nationalist movement. From daily discussions on the political perspectives of RAM, Malcolm would incorporate the ideas in his Sunday speeches.

The OAAU was to be the broad front organization and RAM the underground

Black Liberation Front of the U.S.A.

Malcolm in his second trip to Africa, was to try to find places for eventual political asylum and political/military training for cadres. While Malcolm was in Africa the field chairman was to go to Cuba to report the level of progress to Robert F. Williams. As Malcolm prepared Africa to support our struggle, "Rob" (Robert F. Williams) would prepare Latin America and Asia. During this period, Malcolm began to emphasize that Afro-Americans could not achieve freedom under the capitalist system. He also described guerrilla warfare as a possible tactic to be used in the black liberation struggle here. His slogan, "Freedom by any means necessary," has remained in the movement to this day.

Malcolm left for Africa in July and Stanford, the RAM field chairman, left for Cuba at the end of July. While Malcolm was in Africa, Harlem exploded. The para-military in Malcolm's organization decided to join the rebellion and participated in armed self-defense actions against racist oppressive forces. Masses of our people exploded in Rochester, New York. The revolutionary Muslims (Malcolmites) engaged in armed struggle against the repressive forces there. Brooklyn CORE held a demonstration to protest police brutality. The demonstration precipitated a mass rebellion. The Brooklyn RAM cadre went into revolutionary action.

While in Africa Malcolm was poisoned. He also received news of a split within his organization created by police agents.[33] In Cuba, Robert Williams told the field chairman that the movement was too out in the open, that it was being set up to be destroyed. He felt Malcolm's press statements exposed too much prematurely, that he was functioning as if he had

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[33]Interview with Malcolm X, January, 1965, 22 West Restaurant, New York, New York.

a force which he had not developed yet. In retrospect, Malcolm felt a sense of urgency because he knew he was a marked man and would be killed soon.[34]

Also, while in Africa, Malcolm met with John Lewis and others of SNCC. Malcolm had a tremendous impact on African leaders and had an explosive effect on the masses of Africans. One incident occurred while he was in Nigeria speaking at a university. During the question and answer period, a Negro from America working with a U.S. government program there, made some remarks defending the U.S. government. After Malcolm answered him, the Nigerian students were so angry that they chased the Negro out of the auditorium to a field and were going to hand him on a flag pole. The Negro would have been hung if professor Essien Udom had not intervened and saved the Negro's life. This incident gives some indication of the impact that Malcolm had on Africa.

Malcolm's importance as an international spokesman has been recorded but not fully understood by black Americans. From the program of the OAAU, we get an understanding of some of his basic objectives.

> The organization of Afro-American Unity will develop in the Afro-American people a keen awareness of our relationships with the world at large and clarify our roles, rights and responsibilities as human beings. We can accomplish this goal by becoming well informed concerning world affairs and understanding that our struggle is part of a larger world struggle of oppressed peoples against all forms of oppression.[35]

In Africa and the Middle East, Malcolm met with heads of state in an attempt to solicit support for his proposed indictment of the U.S. at the United Nations. Among his avid supporters was Ahmed Ben Bella, President of Ghana.

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[34]Interview with Malcolm X, July, 1964, New York, N.Y.

[35]George Breitman, The Last Year of Malcolm X (New York: Schocken Books, 1967), pp. 19-20.

From government documents published in 1964 on Malcolm, the U.S. government estimated that Malcolm had set U.S. foreign policy in Africa back ten years. Malcolm became a prime target of the U.S. government's intelligence apparatus -- FBI, Army Intelligence and CIA. Other cities also exploded during the summer of 1964 and the repressive forces were blaming it on Malcolm rather than on the conditions that caused the rebellions.

> In a domestic context Washington saw Malcolm as a long-range threat: He was widely popular with the black masses, but plagued by organizational and recruiting problems that reduced his political effectiveness. But in foreign affairs Malcolm was an imminent and serious danger; more than any other single factor he was responsible for the growing suspicion and fear with which many African countries viewed Washington's intentions.
>
> Washington did not accept this threat to its Third World relations with equanimity. Malcolm X had become a marked man.[36]

When Malcolm returned from Africa in November, 1964, he described his experiences in Africa and the Middle East and began to talk more about socialism in the Third World.

> Almost every one of the countries that has gotten independence has devised some kind of socialist system. . . . None of them are adopting the capitalist system because they realize they can't operate a capitalistic system unless you are vulturistic: you have to have someone else's blood to suck to be a capitalist.[37]

But Malcolm's organization and his personal life were in a shambles. The pressure from the repressive forces was taking its toll on him. Malcolm tried to regroup. He set up a liberation school within the OAAU. He returned to Africa to consolidate support for his petition to the U.N. Malcolm had opened up avenues for brothers and sisters who were Muslims

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[36]Eric Norden, "The Assassination of Malcolm X." Hustler, (December 1978), p. 98.

[37]George Breitman, The Last Year of Malcolm X (New York: Schocken Books, 1967), pp. 19-20.

to go to the University of Al-Azhar in Cairo, Egypt, and other places in the world for guerrilla training. RAM published its periodical Black America. Malcolm in his speeches in Africa would say, "This is my publication."[39]

Malcolm returned from Africa and began to have mass meeting in January, 1965. In January, 1965, Malcolm began to lay out a perspective for the black revolution. But before he could lay out and develop his perspective, the CIA, FBI, New York police noose began to tighten around him.

Malcolm had achieved part one of his objectives, the internationalizing of our struggle. Branches of the OAAU had been established in England, France, and Ghana, now was time to expand the OAAU nationally. Right before his death, Malcolm had entered into phase two of his program of direct action. He went to Mississippi and Selma, Alabama to speak and was preparing to begin to lead the civil rights movement to the proposed transition to human rights.

Malcolm's military wing was to have eventually moved into the south to provide security for demonstrations and develop community self-defense groups.

Early in February, Kaliel Said, a member of RAM who had been sent into Malcolm's organization to develop a security wing, was arrested on the Statute of Liberty bomb plot. Inside the Muslim Mosque, Inc., and OAAU, Kaliel's arrest upset Malcolm's internal security. It also set the public climate the intelligence forces wanted for conspiracy. At this point, the U.S. government plot went into action. Malcolm was expelled from France,

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[38]Interview with Malcolm X, January, 1965, 22 West Restaurant, New York, New York.

[39]Ibid.

his house was fire bombed and he was assassintated on February 21, 1965.

The first mass spokesman for revolutionary black nationalism had been shot down just as the movement was developing. The revolutionary nationalist movement was under attack.[40]

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[40]RAM was accused, in New York's newspapers of being responsible for Malcolm's assassination. During this period, RAM published a newspaper, Afro-World, with the headlines: "Malcolm Lives."

CHAPTER FIVE

THE RAM ORGANIZATION

The purpose of this chapter is to present an analysis of the RAM organization and a synopsis of events in the movement related to the RAM organization. Aspects in the development of the Black Panther Party, Republic of New Africa and League of Revolutionary Black Workers will be discussed. These organizational forms were an outgrowth of the organizing efforts of RAM activists and are important in an understanding of RAM's impact.

During the summer of 1963, RAM concentrated on building secret political cells in different parts of the country. These cells were to remain underground and to develop an underground movement. They were to be the support apparatus for field organizers who were openly trying to transform the civil rights movements into a revolutionary black nationalist movement. These cells were to finance the activities of the field organizers and the liberation army, once dedeveloped, to hide the organizers when forced underground, to provide the liberation forces with supplies and intelligence information on the activities of the racist governmental apparatus.

Interviews with ex-RAM members disclosed that the class composition of RAM varied.[1] For the most part in the early beginnings in early 1963

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[1]Interviews with twenty-five ex-RAM members, 1978-1979. Interviews were conducted in Philadelphia, New York, Washington, D.C., Cleveland, Chicago, Atlanta and Boston.

and 1964, the organization consisted of students and intellectuals. According to Brother A., a former RAM member, the class composition of the RAM membership in New York during the 1963-64 period consisted mainly of intellectuals, writers, poets, and artists, some of whom came out of the Umbra (black literary collective), others were recruited from the Brooklyn Chapter of CORE. In Philadelphia, the class compostion changed also. Stan Daniels, Paythell Benjamin and Wanda Marshall, who were students, constituted the local RAM leadership. But by fall of 1963, Jomo L. M. X. (ex-Korean war veteran), Mable Holloway and William Woodley, grass roots community activities, had emerged in the Philadelphia RAM leadership.

As the RAM leadership began to change in class composition, the membership of the organization began to grow. In an interview with Sister Y., recruited from the Communist Party in Chicago, she describes the method of organizational growth in her area.

> Field organizers traveled in and out of the city to organize local chapters, teach ideology and help train cadre. Local chapters were responsible for developing local membership, had to raise its own funds. Some funds went to national.[2]

RAM would organize demonstrations around local issues but never used the name RAM. In Chicago, RAM worked through a coalitation demanding quality education for black students. RAM would have educational and ideological study groups under its name. RAM was a secret cell type of organization. Sister Y. was asked the question, what type of organization was RAM? She responded:

If you were part of the study group or part of the cell, that's all you would know.[3]

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[2]Taped interview with Sister Y., Chicago, Illinois, October 30, 1978.

[3]Ibid.

All recruitment into the organization was made by personal contact. There were no RAM offices after 1963 and one could not join the organization by mail. The recruiter was responsible for new recruits. All new recruits had to first be involved in a RAM front and were evaluated on their work within the front activities. If they were approved, they had to submit a written and verbal report and pass orientation one before being considered a RAM member. There were three levels of membership in the organization: those who were professional, 'full-time' field organizers; members having completed orientation two, paid dues, met the standards for the "main criteria for cadre" and were considered active members; and secret members who gave the organization financial support. The RAM organization had three different types of cells or units. Area units were established in a community with members living in the same area where the unit was established. The area unit tried to gain as much influence as possible in its community by organizing around local community issues. Work units were set up in factories, job sites or industries. They organized the League of Black Workers. Political units were organized to actively infiltrate the civil rights movement and lead the black liberation movement.

There was a strict code for RAM cadres.

Code of Cadres

1. Absolute loyality to the movement and its leadership.
2. High revolutionary spirit.
3. Constant advanced training Revolutionary Black Internationalism.
4. Strict observance of movement discipline.
5. Direct connection with the masses.
6. Strick observance of the rules of the safe-keeping of secrets.

7. Ability to work independently (very important in time of revolution).

8. Willingness to work. Unselfishness.

Rules for the Safekeeping of Secrets

1. Making absolutely no mention of secrets which should not be mentioned.

2. Making no attempt to find out secrets which should not be known.

3. Taking definitely no look at the secrets which should not be looked at.

4. Mentioning absolutely no secrets in private correspondence.

5. Recording no secret matters in private notebooks.

6. Discussion no secrets in places not advantageous to security.

7. Keeping a careful custody of classified documents carried on a tour and making sure they they will not be lost.

8. Waging a resolute struggle when discovering violations of security system and acts of losing and disclosing secrets and reporting immediately to the superior.[4]

Punishment for violation of the code for cadres took different forms depending on the seriousness of the violations. A RAM member always had the right to appeal any charges brought against him and had a right to a trial. If the charges were of a treasonous nature, the military affairs committee or the defense minister was instructed to handle the matter.

RAM was governed by a secret central committee (soul circle). Few officers of RAM were ever known. The RAM organization was based on collective leadership and democratic centralism was its internal organizational principle. The RAM organization had a youth section called the Black Guards. The role of the Black Guards was to protect RAM leadership

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[4]RAM Organizational Document, 1965, p. 4.

and to purge the black community of counter-revolutionaries. The Black Guards were to be the forerunner of the Black Liberation Army.

RAM also established rifle clubs in various northern communities. Many times followers of Malcolm X were part of an alliance inside these rifle clubs.

RAM infiltrated the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) in several cities. RAM's strategy was to push the bourgeois reformers as far up tempo as fast as possible, while at the same time laying a foundation for an underground movement.

RAM organized black nationalist-oriented student groups on black campuses in the South and predominately white universities in the North. These groups had various names at different times. One such student group was the Afro-American Student Movement based in Nashville, Tennessee.

The Afro-American Student Movement sponsored a National Afro-American Student Conference on Afro Youth in Nashville, Tennessee, October 30th - November 1, 1964. This conference was attended by gang members from Chicago and students from other areas of the country. The conference was entitled, "The Black Revolution's Relationship to the Bandung World."

RAM also established contact with gangs on the west side of Chicago. In Cleveland, a youth group of ex-gang members was formed. RAM propagated its anti-imperialist ideology to the black community through a quarterly magazine it published called Black America. RAM was the first black organization in the 1960's to oppose the United States government imperialist aggression in Vietnam. In the Fall 1964 issue of Black America, RAM stated,

> On this Fourth of July, 1964 when white America celebrates its Declaration Independence from foreign domination one hundred and eighty-eight years ago, we of the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM) congratulate the Vietnamese Front of National

> Liberation for their inspiring victories against U.S. imperialism in South Vietnam and thereby declare our independence from the policies of the U.S. government abroad and at home.[5]

In 1964, Grace Boggs and Rev. Albert Cleage were instrumental in developing a strong statewide Freedom Now Party. Some members of UHURU were organizers for FNP.

Also, in 1964, UHURU members went to Cuba where they met Robert F. Williams, Fidel Castro, Che Guevara and Muhammad Babu. Some joined RAM. In 1965, they regrouped and formed a chapter of the Afro-American Student Movement in Detroit which put out a theoretical journal called Black Vanguard, edited by John Watson. Black Vanguard was distributed to black workers in the plants but was too theoretical and thick for a positive response from workers.

In January of 1965, RAM experienced its first organizational crisis. James and Grace Boggs resigned from their positions in the movement. This left only two public officers, Freeman and Stanford. Through correspondence, both decided to resign their positions in the organization. An emergency meeting was convened in Cleveland, where it was decided that new leadership should be elected. Discussing the analysis of Robert F. Williams, who emphasized the movement should be underground, the new leadership decided it was best to remain secret. From that point in January, 1965 on, all leadership in RAM was secret, and all materials written for RAM publications would be anonymous. The political perspective of RAM changed. The concept of a black dictatorship of the U.S., while still being maintained, began to take a secondary position to the black nation in the South.

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[5]"Greetings to Our Militant Vietnamese Brothers," Black America, (Fall 1964), p. 21.

In response to the U.S. increasing involvement in the Vietnam War and U.S. troops invading Panama, RAM issued an appeal to U.S. troops to turn on their imperialist enemies.[6]

In 1965, Dr. King began with going to jail and holding demonstrations in Selma, Alabama. Malcolm X came to Selma while Dr. King was in jail, spoke and offered an alternative to non-violence.

After Malcolm's assassination, ex-RAM officials experienced repression by various arms of the state. Freeman was indicted by a Cleveland grand jury and fired from his job as school teacher in a Cleveland junior high school. All the black student participants who had traveled to Cuba were subpoenaed by a federal grand jury in New York investigating the Statute of Liberty bomb plot. Stanford was investigated by the federal grand jury for subversive activities.

After Dr. King got out of jail, he announced that he would lead a march from Selma to Montgomery. His assistants convinced him not to lead the march in the beginning. Instead, Hosea Williams of SCLC and John Lewis of SNCC led the march of about 525 people. After the marchers crossed Pettus Bridge going to U.S. Highway 80 they were confronted by a battalion of state troopers. After an exchange of words the troopers attacked. After the attack, Dr. King announced he would continue the march. Suffering setbacks at the beginning, the march was finally successful.

The civil rights movement was entering a crisis though. For many civil rights activists, segregation was crumbling too slowly. The impact of revolutionary black nationalism began to penetrate the ranks of SNCC and it began to reevaluate its integrationist outlook in 1965.

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[6]Appeal to Afro-Americans in the United States Imperialist Armed Forces, July 4, 1965. See Appendix A.

During 1965, SNCC began discussing how to form a black student movement. The Northern Student Movement (NSM), began to organize Afro-American student groups of black students on white campuses in the North while SNCC focused on black students in the South.

Several events took place in 1965 which affected the civil rights movement. The Deacons for Defense, an all black, community self-defense organization, developed in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. The Deacons provided civil rights marches in Louisiana with armed protection. They also had shootouts with the KKK and on several occasions, Louisiana policemen. RAM and other black nationalists formed northern Deacons for Defense support groups.[7] RAM and the Deacons developed an alliance. Both groups helped one another organizationally and physically. In August, 1965, the Los Angeles black community exploded. Revolutionary nationalists engaged in armed struggle against the racist repressive forces. Not knowing RAM was in Watts, RAM organizers from New Jersey went to Watts, where they found strong revolutionary black nationalist cells. In New York, RAM members began meeting with black youth discussing the formation of a black liberation army.

Revolutionary nationalists around the country studied the August mass rebellion in Watts. They saw that spontaneous mass rebellions would be the next phase of the protest movement and began discussing how they could give these rebellions direction.

RAM was also active in helping LeRoi Jones develop the Black Arts Movement. The Black Arts Movement was originally to be the cultural wing of RAM. RAM, though a secret movement, was gaining popularity and

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[7]Thomas F. Parker, ed. Violence in the U.S., Vol. 1, 1956-67 (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 1974), p. 115.

influence in northern black communities. On the international level, Robert Williams, RAM's chairman in exile, issued an appeal for world support and spoke at international conferences in Asia and Cuba. The communist Party of Cuba disagreed with his black nationalist analysis and began to sabotage the movement's influence in international circles. This produced a crisis for the movement as avenues of potential support were cut off.

In the United States, the American Communist Party disagreed with RAM's race and class analysis, and its clear conclusion that black people were a colonized nation in the U.S. The CP consequently organized against RAM.

In 1965, several movement activists were drafted into the army. Some decided to go, while others decided to start a black anti-draft movement. Those who went into the army were immediately isolated from others soldiers by army intelligence.

In Detroit, General G. Baker, Jr. received his draft notice. He wrote a political letter to the draft board denouncing U.S. imperialism. ASM decided to protest the General's induction. They put out leaflets and press announcements stating that 50,000 blacks would show at the Wayne County Induction Center when General had to report. Only eight demonstrators were there but the threat of mass action had convinced the U.S. Army to find General unsuitable for service.

Different members of the Detroit cadre began to go in different occupational directions. Watson and Williams became students at Wayne State and General worked in the auto factories. In 1965, Glanton Dowdell came into the cadre. Glanton's stret experience added valuable skills to the cadre.

> A dropout from the 5th grade, he was put into a home for mentally retarded at the age of 13. In prison on and off since he was 16, he was finally incarcerated on a murder and robbery charge in Jackson. There he organized a strike of black prisoners against discrimination by forming a selected cadre. In prison he read voraciously, learned to paint and after 17 years was released through the intervention of a black probation officer who recognized his genius.[8]

On the West Coast, Ernie Allen held a news conference announcing his refusal to participate in the U.S. Army because of its racist practices.

SNCC began to undergo a policy change. Its staff decided to organize an all-black party in Lowndes County, Alabama. When RAM leadership received news of this, it decided to closely study these developments.

Various activists were called together in the spring of 1965 in Detroit, Michigan. The meeting included James and Grace Boggs, Nahouse Rodgers from Chicago, Julius Hobson from D.C., Bill Strickland of the Northern Student Movement, Don Freeman from Cleveland and Jesse Gray, a harlem rent strike leader, and other activists from around the country. The conference formed the Organization for Black Power (OB). The purpose was to raise the position that the struggle was for Black Power and for black state power and not just for black independent political power. That if the black liberation movement was going to be successful Black people would have to think about seizing control, one way or another, over the state and other forms of government. OBP was conceived as a coalition of organizations that would organize black people to politically take over large metropolitan areas in the 1970's.[9] The Organization for Black Power

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[8]Grace and James Boggs, Detroit: Birth of a Nation, Pamphlet, October, 1967, p. 7.

[9]Max Stanford' FBI Cointelpro Document, Vol. 1, Washington, D.C., FBI Release under freedom of Information Act, 1978), p. 20.

was a short lived group because of ideological splits.

During the winter months of 1965, RAM leadership developed their ideological perspective into a political document entitled, "The Struggle for Black State Power in the U.S." The document described the difference between a riot and a revolution and outlined what RAM felt was the future direction of the black revolution in U.S. This document was widely circulated among movement activists. It called for raising the question of Black Power within the movement. In Detroit, RAM cadre published a periodical in the automobile plants titled Black Vanguard. In New York, RAM began working with a youth gang called the Five Per Centers. After having been radicalized through political education classes, they formed themselves into the Black Panther Athletic and Social Club.

The radicalizing year for SNCC was 1965. The Atlanta project based in Vine City and led by a collective of Bill Ware, Mike Simmons, Don Stone and Dwight Williams started a black consciousness movement inside of SNCC. The Atlanta project was also instrumental in changing SNCC policy in foreign affairs. It started the first anti-draft demonstrations in the country which consequently led to SNCC publicly denouncing the war in Vietnam. At one point there was near gun play between James Foreman and his supporters and the Atlanta project over the question of black nationalism.

Stokely Carmichael in the meantime, was in Loundes County, Alabama organizing the Loundes County Freedom Organization, an all black political party whose symbol was the black panther. At the annual spring SNCC meeting, Foreman backed Stokely Carmichael who became chairman of SNCC in 1966.

James Meredith began his, 'Memphis to Jackson March' on Sunday, June 5, 1966. His march was to dramatize fear among blacks in Mississippi and encourage them to exercise the right to vote. On Monday,

June 6th, Meredith was shot in the back by a white man with a shotgun. Taken to the hospital, major civil rights leaders pledge to continue the march. During the march, an ideological split occurred between Dr. King and SNCC and CORE. At a rally, Stokely began to shout, "We want Black Power," and the audience began chanting Black Power. Soon the Black Power movement was born nation-wide.

Stokely Carmichael became, for while, the new black mass spokesman. Resulting from his efforts in Loundes County, Alabama to build an all black political party, the Black Panther Party formed in northern areas.

In the early part of 1966, it was decided that many of the black revolutionaries across the country who were engaging in armed struggle were isolated and needed a public organization from which to operate legally.

When the shift towards Black Power occurred in SNCC, RAM decided to develop a public mass black political party. RAM began having a series of meetings with local nationalist organizers in Harlem, along with Harlem representatives of SNCC. These meeting, which were a coalition of activists, decided to set up an independent black political party which would be a northern support apparatus of the Loundes County Freedom Organization, whose symbol was the black panther. It was decided to call the party the Black Panther Party. Stanford wrote Carmichael asking if it was alright to use the name Black Panther. Through the New York SNCC office the word came back, "Ok, go ahead." Queen Mother Audley Moore on July 13, 1966, began organizing weekly Black Nationalist Action Forums at the YMCA in Harlem. These meetings were recruiting sessions for the Black Panther Party.[10]

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[10] Riots, Civil and Criminal Disorders. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1969), p. 4237.

The Black Panther Party was established in New York in August, 1966. Stokely went to New York and met with the Party. Discussions centerd around ideology, direction and national expansion of the Party. It was decided that the Party would be a coalition of SNCC, RAM and other organizations.

Through the organizational structure, a directive was sent to RAM cadres to develop a public coalition with community activists to develop the Black Panther Party. The purpose of the BPP was to provide a political alternative for black people to the capitalist, racist Democratic and Republician parties and also exhaust the legal political means of protest.

> We saw that the purpose of the Black Panther Party was to offer Black people a radical political alternative to the political structure of this country. We did not see the Party as waging armed struggle but of moving the masses of our people to that political position and thereby to another stage of struggle. Even though armed struggle was being waged at this time, we needed a political and ideological forum that moved our people through struggle against the system, to that point. The purpose of the Black Panther Party was to exhaust the legal avenue of struggle within the system[11]

According to Alkamal Ahmed Muhammad, an ex-member of the New York Black Panther Party, the Black Panther Party was part of a city-wide network. The Black Panther Party had reached a broad stratum of people. Approximately 300 people attended weekly Black Panther Party meetings from July to October, 1966. The BPP, with community groups, called a boycott of two elementary schools in Harlem on September 12, 1966, to protest the absence of black history reading materials in the New York school system. This was the beginning of the community control of schools movement.[12]

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[11]Akbar Muhammad Ahmad, "A Brief History of the Black Liberation Movement in the 1960's" Focus on RAM," unpublished, p.10.

[12]Alkamal Ahmed Muhammad, Taped Interview (New York: December 20, 1978).

Black Panther Parties were established in Detroit, Cleveland, Chicago, San Francisco, and Los Angeles and eventually Oakland, California. Within the Party there was discussion of organizing black workers.

> For Black Panthers to be meaningful, it must deal with the question of economic power as related to the political system. This means Black Panthers must develop an overall program. The question of economics presents the development of Black Union organizations as part of the party to seize economic power in both the urban and rural south. In the urban south it would pose the fight against job discrimination . . . . and white union discrimination especially on federal supported projects and in the rural south it would deal with "people" ownership of the land.[13]

In New York, Black Women Enraged (a revolutionary black nationalist women's group), began picketing against U.S. Army recruiting offices. They were protesting the U.S. government drafting black men into the racist U.S. army to fight in a racist and imperialist war.

In early 1966, the Atlanta project held demonstrations at the local office in Atlanta, trying to stop the drafting of Mike Simmons.

Mass spontaneous rebellions occurred in more northern inner cities in summer 1966. House-to-house fighting occurred between the liberation forces and the racist repressive forces in Cleveland, Ohio.

Problems soon emerged in the Black Panther movement. Differences over tactics arose. In the NY, BPP, a faction led by Larry Neal and Eddie Ellis wanted to picket and pressure the black mafia into financially supporting the party. They also wanted to pimp local politicians for support. Egged on by agent provocateur, Donald Washington (who was eventually shot by the people in Washington, D.C.), the party split into two factions. Similar developments occurred in Detroit, but the major split occurred on the West Coast.

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[13] Ibid., p. 12.

Brother G., an ex-Black Panther Party and RAM member, from Oakland, California, in a taped interview, recalled Bobby Seale (who had been purged from RAM for drunkenness and irresponsibility) joined Huey P. Newton in forming the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense in Oakland, California. Bobby and Huey first tried to take over a student group formed by RAM called the Soul Students Advisory Council at Merritt College. In the midst of the power struggle, it was learned that Bobby and Huey had taken fifty dollars from the student groups treasury without authorization. When most of the students did not support them, Bobby and Huey resigned from the student group.

> Major differences and near gun play occurred between the Black Panther Party of Northern California led by Ken Freeman and the BPP for Self-Defense led by Huey P. Newton. The ideological differences stemmed from Huey's open display of guns, brandishing them into the police's faces and challenging them to shootouts. The dissension between the Panther parties continued until May, 1967.[14]

According to Brother D., an ex-member of the Black Panther Party of Northern California, one of the discussions centered on the role of armed struggle. Bobby Seale's and Huey P. Newton's position was that the armed vanguard went out and brought down repression on the community. The BPP of Northern California did not have the answer to how to successfully pull off a revolution but knew from the lessons of Nazi Germany that premature repression could also crush a people's movement. Bobby Seale saw a revolution as one gigantic shootout:

> A revolution is when the police is on one side of the street and the revolutionaries line up on the other side of the street. Whoever pulls their pieces first and gets off the rounds and survives wins the revolution.[15]

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[14]Early Anthony, Picking Up the Gun. (New York: Dial Press, 1971).

[15]Taped Interview with Brother D., January 18, 1979.

The Black Panther Party for Self-Defense in Oakland, California started an armed patrol monitoring police. The Oakland Panthers wore uniforms and openly displayed guns. Huey P. Newton, Minister of Defense challenged police to a shootout on several occasions. The BPP of Northern California felt it was adventurous to be openly carrying guns. They felt it led to premature confrontations with police and unnecessary repression. But the Oakland Panthers continued to grow. They began to get public attention. In February 1967, armed Panthers marched into the airport and escorted Mrs. Betty Shabbaz, (Malcolm X's widow) to an awaiting car. But, what made the Oakland Panthers famous was their march on the state capitol to protest California's gun laws. In October, 1967, Huey P. Newton was found shot, along with a dead policeman. Huey Newton was originally charged with murder. A large "Free Huey" campaign went into effect.

The Black Panther Party for Self-Defense in Oakland, was in constant conflict with the Black Panther Party in San Francisco and Los Angeles. The conflict escalated when Eldridge Cleaver began to rise in the Oakland hierarchy. Gun battles almost occurred between the branches. The Oakland branch began publishing a paper called the Black Panther with Cleaver as editor.

During the early months of 1967, the RAM leadership's analysis was that because of the vast amounts of poverty, unemployment and police brutality in the black community, the summer of 1967 was going to be one of mass rebellions. RAM decided to give the forthcoming mass rebellions a political direction and arm the community for defense against racist attacks. It proposed to develop black militias and organize black youth into a youth army called Black Guards, the forerunner of a Black Liberation Army. The Black Guards were to be a defense army and also the political

cadre that would aid the vanguard, RAM, in leading the world black revolution.

RAM saw black youth as being the most revolutionary sector of black America. RAM also analyzed that black people needed to engage in a black cultural revolution to prepare them for a black political revolution. Within the black cultural revolution would also be a black anti-draft movement. The slogans of "America is the Black Man's Battleground," "Unite or Perish" and "Black Power" were raised. RAM described the cultural revolution:

> The purpose of a Black Cultural revolution would be to destroy the conditioned white oppressive mores, attitudes, ways, customs, philosophies, habits, etc., which the oppressor has taught and trained us to have. This means on a mass scale a new revolutionary culture.[16]

RAM called for unity of revolutionary nationalists:

> The first step is for revolutionary nationalist and those who agree on basic principles to unite and form a Black Liberation Front. This does not mean that any group dissolve into autonomy, but rather work in common agreement.[17]

RAM issued its critical analysis of the Communist Manisfesto and the world Marxist perspective to the world socialist revolution in a document entitled, "World Black Revolution." RAM decided to issue a nation-wide call for armed self-defense and to be active in the mass rebellions.

Along with the mass uprisings in the inner cities, RAM planned student revolts in black colleges and among high school students. The Black Guards, RAM youth leagues, were to organize African-American history clubs to teach black history. These clubs would lead protests demanding the

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[16]Revolutionary Action Movement, Internal Document. Some Questions Concerning the Present Period, 1967, p. 2.

[17]Ibid.

right to wear "natural" hairdos, African dress, and the right to fly the Red, Black and Green flag in rallies. The college students would demonstrate for more student power with the purpose of turning the Negro colleges into black universities:

> In March, 1967, students of the Black Power committee at Howard University demonstrated against General Lewis B. Hershey, Director of the Selective Service System. As he attempted to deliver a speech, they jumped onto the stage shouting, "America is the black man's battleground."[18]

SNCC organizers and student activists from around the country met with the RAM leadership in the spring of 1967. They were told to pick up on developments at Howard. Their activities spread to different black universities and eventually to white campuses where they demanded black studies programs. The 1967 Howard protest was the first major black student rebellion of the decade directed specifically against a university administration. It inaugurated a series of black student protests against the administrations of both black and white institutions of higher education, protests which gathered increasing momentum in 1968-69 and were generally built around the demand for "black studies" programs.[19]

As part of the black cultural revolution, RAM attempted to organize a revolutionary black women's movement and worked with other groups to set up black cultural committees to spread "revolutionary black culture" in the black community. RAM felt:

> The key in this period of the revolutionary nationalist is to develop a popular movement inside Black America. The purpose of creating this popular movement will be an attempt to develop a national united front or Black Liberation Front. This would

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[18]Michael W. Miles, The Radical Problem: The Logic of Student Rebellion (New Jersey: Antheneum Publishers, 1971), pp. 192-193.

[19]Ibid.

> mean attempting to unite all sectors of Black America under a common slogan led by revolutionary nationalists.[20]

RAM was very active during the year, 1967. It was attempting to organize street gangs, students, women's groups, politicalize the urban rebellions and develop anti-Vietnam war resistance in the black community. The state responded by imprisoning RAM organizers "en masse" in the summer of 1967. On the east coast, in Philadelphia and New York, police intelligence units fabricated plots against the RAM organization. There was the Queens New York 17, Roy Wilkins and Whitney Young assassination plot and the Philadelphia Riot and Poison Plot. In Detroit, RAM organizers were arrested on riot charges. In Cleveland, there was a manhunt for RAM organizers.

Some of those remaining in the streets were killed in the process of fighting police, the National Guard and the U.S. Army. Others continued to organize the street force and students and mobilized the community for legal defense of incarcerated members.

From taped interviews with twenty-five ex-RAM Black Guards (BG) members, it was discovered that there was a great influx or growth in RAM membership between 1966 and 1968. A mass recruitment drive between January, 1967 to May, 1968 in the organization of the Black Guards was seen as a major reason for United States government repression against RAM in those years. Most of those interviewed had been recruited through the Black Guards. They felt the BG's was a mass youth movement with revolutionary potential.

Of the twenty-five ex-RAM/Black Guards members interviewed, twenty-three were from working class families and felt their backgrounds had

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[20]Revolutionary Action Movement, Internal Document. "Some Questions Converning the Present Period," 1967, p. 4.

contributed to their becoming involved with the RAM organization.

The RAM organization grew during the 1967-68 period. In Philadelphia in 1967, there were approximately thirty-five RAM members. By 1968, estimates by ex-Black Guards members figure Black Guards' membership to be from 350-500 Black Guards members.

In Cleveland, by 1968, there were 800 to 1,000 members in units of the Black Nationalist Army. The RAM organization and its affiliates were estimated to be 200 in Chicago, 200 in Detroit and 100 in New York. At its highest point of membership, the RAM organization was said to be about 3,000 with 2,000 supporters. The age range of the organization though varied was primarily young. Twenty of the twenty-five ex-RAM/Black Guards members interviewed joined the organization when they were between the ages of 17 and 19.[21]

The black cultural revolution reached the high school level when seven thousand black student demonstrated at the Philadelphia Board of Education on November 17, 1967, demanding black history classes, the right to wear African clothes, and the right to salute the black nation's flag. Frank Rizzo, Philadelphia's police commissioner, had the demonstration attacked. Black Guards, unarmed in the demonstration, engaged in hand-to-hand combat with police. By 1968, the movement had spread to many cities, with black students organizing massive boycotts and walkouts demanding black history classes.

The revolutionary black nationalist movement became a mass movement in 1968. Thousands of angry Afro-Americans rose in revolt, burning over

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[21]Taped interviews with ex-RAM/Black Guards members.

one hundred cities protesting the April 4th assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The Oakland, California branch of the Black Panther Party began to grow. From January to June, 1968, a dozen new Panther chapters were established throughout the nation. In the month of June, alone a thousand new members were recruited into the Party.

> During the summer of 1967, the Party had drafted Carmichael to serve as Panther Field Marshall for the eastern half of the United States. Early in January, 1968, Cleaver and Seale, who were now out of prison, flew to Washington, D.C. to talk with Carmichael and to invite him to speak at the upcoming rally for Newton in Oakland. The talks with Carmichael were expanded to include other members of the SNCC hierarchy. The upshot was the establishment of an alliance with SNCC. Carmichael was made Honorary Prime Minister of the Panthers, James Foreman, Minister of Foreign affairs, and H. Rap Brown, Minister of Justice.[22]

The SNCC-Panther alliance did not last long. By mid-July, H. Rap Brown and James Foreman resigned their posts in the Party. Stokely Carmichael retained him and was eventually expelled from SNCC. The Panther leadership feared Foreman as a tactician:

> Thus in late July when the Party high command got word that Foreman was "bad-mouthing them" up and down the country, it decided to do something about it. Led by Cleaver and Seale a squad of sixteen Panthers burst into the SNCC office at 100 Fifth Avenue in New York City and ordered the panic stricken staff "up against the wall." Cleaver, Seale, and Hillard then herded James Foreman into a side room. One of the members of the Panther squad reports: "I could hear some one telling Foreman they would end his actions right there. The muffled sound of what appeared to be pleading was followed by the dashing of furniture."[23]

A few weeks after the incident the SNCC central committee voted to terminate their alliance with the Panthers. Carmichael and his faction within

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[22]Robert H. Brisbane, Black Activism (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1974), p. 209.

[23]Ibid., p. 211.

the Panthers were purged from the party in late 1969. Though Stokely resigned from the Party, it came at a time when his faction was purged for being 'cultural nationalists.'

RAM in 1968 criticized the emerging Black Panther Party for left wing adventurism. RAM stated that the open display of guns violated the basic principles of people's secrecy; and that people's forces in order in to be successful, must have the element of surprise. Huey Newton disagreed with RAM's analysis and wrote:

> Early in the development of the Black Panther Party, I wrote an essay titled, "The Correct Handling of a Revolution." This was in response to another contradiction--the criticism raised against the party by the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM). At that time RAM criticizes us for our above ground action--openly displaying weapons and talking about the necessity for the community to arm itself for its own self-defense. RAM said that they were underground and saw this as the correct way to handle a revolution.[24]

The Panthers, led basically by Cleaver, made alliances with white left groups such as SDS and the Peace and Freedom Party. Cleaver was the P & F Party's candidate for President in 1968.

Dissolution of RAM

By the summer of 1968, some RAM organizers were back on the streets. RAM and the Black Guards especially had grown into a mass organization. The issue that arose within the ranks was how to survive the pending repression against the movement. Internal contradictions began to become prevalent as arguments over direction occurred and some secondary cadres began striving for personal leadership. Some made themselves generals or regional commanders of the black nationalist army that emerged. How to maintain discipline within a political force became a preoccupation of the

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[24]Charles V. Hamilton, ed. The Black Experience in American Politics (New York: Capricorn Books, 1973), p. 237.

RAM leadership.

Also, new forces had emerged within the black liberation movement. The Black Panther Party (Oakland) was growing into a national organization. On the other hand, the concept of 'cultural nationalism' was gaining popularity as Ron Karenga, chairman of United Slaves (US) and associates, were emerging as a force representing the radicalized black middle class.

In Detroit, the Malcolm X Society was formed in 1967. It was led by Gaidi Odadele (Milton Henry) and Imari Abuakari Obadele (Richard Henry). Imari wrote a document based on what he called the Malcolm X Doctrine. The manuscript was circulated in 1967 and published by the Malcolm X Society in February, 1968 under the title, "War in America." The Malcolm X Society called a National Black Government Conference in Detroit, on March 30 and 31, 1968. Five hundred black nationalists attended. Discussion centered around black people separating from the United States government and establishing black republics in the states of Mississippi, Georgia, South, Carolina, Alabama and Louisiana. A declaration of independence was signed by a hundred persons and a name chosen for the republic, the Republic of New Africa.

> Robert F. Williams, the expatriate, then residing in Tanzania, was designated as president of the new nation. . . . The conference set up an official governmental structure including a council of ministers. Its military arm was known as the Black Legion. Members of this force scrutinized delegates and visitors attending the session. They wore black uniforms with leopard-skin epaulets, black combat boots with white laces and white pistol belts.[25]

All three organizations, BPP, US and RNA began struggling for dominance over the black liberation struggle.

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[25]Brisbane, Black Activism, p. 183.

But RAM's leadership felt that the forces the FBI wanted to crush consisted of those who had fought the state and had been advocating urban guerrilla warfare. In Cleveland, Ohio, RAM section leader Fred "Ahmed" Evans was being constantly harrassed by police. On July 23, 1968, the racists in Cleveland's police force fired on the apartment house where Ahmed was staying. A gun battle occurred, killing seven Afro-American fighters and wounding fifteen police.

Gun battles were occurring between the police and Black Panthers on the West Coast. With several key RAM members under legal indictments, others incarcerated in different parts of the country, and the U.S. government and FBI planning a major conspiracy against the movement, the RAM leadership decided to convene a conference to re-organize. Because of the mass arrests the previous year, the RAM leadership felt that it would be dangerous for black revolutionaries to assemble in one place, so it was decided to form a broad coalition that would host the Third National Black Power Conference. The Black Power Conference was used as a front for the revolutionaries to assemble and discuss strategy. Eldridge Cleaver during this period was calling for the open display of guns by revolutionaries. RAM felt this tendency represented left-wing adventurism, a tendency that might liquidate the entire armed movement.

However, most left groups were supporting the Panthers because they were capturing the imagination of many black youth. The other tendency which RAM felt was just as dangerous was the right-wing opportunism of cultural nationalism, represented by Ron Karenga, leader of US which refuted armed struggle and advocated electing black politicians as a solution. Karenga saw the black middle class as having the resources to create a revolution and saw them as a leading force. RAM leadership felt that the

most important thing in that period was maintaining unity among the various major groups around the country. Because it would be too dangerous for RAM to call for a united front, Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones) was approached and asked to go around the country to call for a National Black United Front. Several meetings were held by the Front, but the Front soon dissolved as friction among the Panthers, SNCC, and US (Karenga's group) continued.[26]

During the Third National Black Power Conference, political differences between the Black Guards and Karenga's Simbas (US defense section) nearly led to shootouts. During the meetings, RAM decided to go into the Republic of New Africa (RNA) and be the left-wing element inside the RNA. The RNA was to be the broad front of the black movement. The RNA held its second legislature conference on March 31, 1969 in Detroit. Detroit police, observing Black Legionnaires with rifles pointed in the air, came to investigate the situation. In a few minutes, a shootout occurred, killing one policeman and another severely wounded. Hundreds of policemen converged on New Bethel Baptist Church shooting more than 800 rounds into the building.[27]

Excitement occurred in the ranks of revolutionary black nationalists when they received news that Robert F. Williams was returning to the United States after eight years of exile. RNA Black Legionnaires were put on military alert. But Williams was detained in Britian and put in jail. The British held him as a fugitive at the request of the U.S. government. The

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[26]See Appendix for resoultion of the Kansas Delegation which put forth the "National Black United Front Resolution" at the 3rd National Black Power Conference.

[27]Brisbane, Black Activism, p. 183.

United States State Department stated they did not want Williams to return. Supporters of Williams in England also demonstrated. The RNA staged several demonstrations demanding Williams entry to the U.S. After several weeks, the U.S. government faced with a growing international campaign for Williams' release accepted his request of return. Williams was released from jail in England and flew to America on a TWA plane reserved for him and his attorney Gaidi (Milton Henry). Williams landed in Detroit, was arrested and released on bail.

Contradictions over style of work and discipline had emerged in the RNA between Gaidi and Imari. RNA members had high expectations for Williams' return. They felt he would resolve differences and tighten up the organization. But Williams, experiencing an encounter with suspected police agents inside the Black Legionnaires at a press conference in his home, sensed that romantic left-wing adverturism had infested the RNA, resigned as President.

Because of Williams resignation, a constitutional crisis arose in the RNA, with both factions at one another's throats. In the struggle for power that ensued, Imari won and was enventually elected President of the RNA. During 1970, the RNA was reorganized under Imari's leadership, and in 1971 the RNA moved its headquarters to Mississippi.[28]

> The last battle for the RNA, probable its "Gotterdammering," occurred on August 18, 1971 in Jackson, Mississippi. Seeking to serve fugitive warrants on three members of the group, a party of fifteen local police and fourteen FBI agents, using the city's armoured vehicle, raided RNA headquarters. A twenty-minute gun fire erupted which resulted in the wounding of one FBI agent and two of the policemen, one of them fatally. None of the RNA members were injured.[29]

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[28] The Republic of New Africa. (Pamphlet), pp. 10-11.

[29] Brisbane, Black Activism, p. 183.

Eleven members of the RNA including Imari were imprisoned. The RNA eleven remain black political prisoners.

During this period, the RAM leadership decided that a mass revolutionary action movement had been created but that there was ideological confusion within it. It was felt that a revolutionary nationalist party had to be created. A news release was sent out announcing the formation of the African-American Party of National Liberation that would be popularly known as the Black Liberation Party.

Several meetings with cadres were held to explain the program and tactics of the party. The Party's program was the same as the RNA's: self-determination of the black nation in the Black Belt South and the secession of the states of Mississippi, Georgia, South Carolina, Louisiana and Alabama to become an independent black socialist republic.

This was a major ideological shift for the RAM leadership in that they dropped the black dictatorship of the U.S. concept. The nationalist position had gained prominence within the organization.

The Founding of Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement (DRUM)

During the summer of 1968, RAM cadres and others had formed a black caucus of workers in the Dodge Hamtramck plant in Detroit around a newspaper called Inner City Voice. On May 2, 1968, a walkout of 4,000 workers occurred at the Hamtramck Assembly Plant which stemmed from a gradual speed up of the production line.

> We decided we would do somthing about organizing black workers to fight the racial discrimination inside the plants and the overall oppression of black workers. . . . And this was the beginning of DRUM.[30]

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[30]James A. Geschwender, "The League of Revolutionary Black Workers." The Journal of Ethnic Studies. Vol. 2, No. 3, (Fall 1974), p. 4.

Prior to the wildcat strike at Dodge Main General Baker had begun to pull together a group of eight black workers. They would meet in the offices of the Inner City Voice.

> Black workers who were either dismissed or penalized moved to organize the workers at Dodge Main by using a weekly Newsletter (DRUM) as an organizing tool. The contents of the Newsletter dealt with very specific cases of racism and tomism on the job and stressed the necessity of united action on the part of black workers to abolish the racial aspects of exploitation and degradation of the plant.[31]

The first issue of the DRUM newsletter dealt with the May 2nd wildcat strike. The second issue carried an "expose" on several blacks in the plant whom DRUM considered to be "uncle toms." The issued also outlined the DRUM program.

> DRUM is an organization of oppressed and exploited black workers. It realizes that black workers are the victims of inhumane slavery at the expense of white racist plant managers. It also realizes that black workers comprise 60 percent and upwards of the entire work force at Hamtramck Assembly Plant, and therefore hold exclusive power. We members of DRUM had no other alternative but to form an organization and to present a platform. The Union has consistently and systematically failed us time and time again. We have attempted to address our grievances to the UAW's procedures, but to no avail. Its hand are just bloody as the white racist management of this corporation. We black workers feel that if skilled trades can negotiate directly with the company and hold a separate contract, then black workers have more justification for moving independently of the UAW.[32]

The third issue of DRUM dealt with charges and documentations of racist conditions in the plant and also attacked the UAW for endorsing the annual Detroit Police field day. It also listed a number of deaths attributed to the police department. After the third week, black workers in the plant

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[31]Luke Tripp, "DRUM--Vanguard of the Black Revolution." The South End, Wayne State University Newspaper, Vol. 27, No. 62, Thursday, (January 23, 1969), p. 9.

[32]DRUM (Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement) Newsletter, Vol. 1, No. 2, (Detroit, Michigan, DRUM), p. 3.

began to ask how to go about joining DRUM. Members of DRUM, working in in the plant, proselytized and recruited black workers on the job. The strength and influence of DRUM grew tremendously. Around the sixth week more militant workers wanted some concrete action. At this point, DRUM decided to test its strength. DRUM called for a one-week boycott of two bars outside the gate that were patronized by a large number of black workers. The bars did not hire blacks and practiced racism in subtle ways. DRUM received 95 percent support from the black workers.[33] Seeing that the boycott was a success, DRUM decided to test its strength by showing Chrysler and the UAW it could shut down the plant. The ninth issue of the DRUM newsletter carried a list of 14 demands. The newsletter prepared workers for the proposed strike, listing the demands:

1. DRUM demands 50 black foremen.
2. DRUM demands 10 black general foremen immediately.
3. DRUM demands 3 black superintendents.
4. DRUM demands a black plant manager.
5. DRUM demands that the majority of the employment office personnel be black.
6. DRUM demands all black doctors and 50 percent black nurses in the medical centers at this plant.
7. DRUM demands that the medical policy at this point be changed entirely.
8. DRUM demands that 50 percent of all plant protection guards be black, and that every time a black worker is removed from plant premises that he be lead by a black brother.
9. DRUM demands that all black workers immediately stop paying union dues.
10. DRUM demands that the double standard be eliminated and that a committee of the black rank and file be set up to investigate

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[33]Tripp, "DRUM--Vanguard of the Black Revolution," p. 9.

all grievances against the corporation, to find out what types of discipline is to be taken against Chrysler, Corp. employees.

11. DRUM demands that two hours pay that goes into union dues be levied to the black community to aid in self-determination for black people.

12. DRUM demands that all black workers who have been fired on trumped up racist charges be brought back with all lost pay.

13. DRUM demands that our fellow black brothers in South Africa working for Chrysler Corp. and its subsidiaries, be payed at an equal scale as white racists co-workers.

14. DRUM also demands that a black brother be appointed as head of the board of directors of Chrysler Corp.

The power base for these demands will be as follows:

1. Legal demonstration at Local 3 and Solidarity house.

2. Legal demonstration at Highland Park (Chryster Corp. Headquarters).

3. Legal shut down of Hamtramck Assembly.[34]

In the ninth week of its existence, DRUM moved. On Thursday, July 7, 1968, DRUM held a rally in the parking lot across from the factory which drew over 300 workers. After speeches from DRUM leaders, black workers, along with a number of black community groups and a congo band, formed a line and marched to the UAW Local 3 headquarters, two blocks away. DRUM had carefully planned the picketing to coincide with the union executive board meeting. When the workers arrived at the local, they then proceeded into the building.

The panic stricken executive board immediately cancelled their meeting and opened the union auditorium to listen to criticisms aimed at the company and the union. DRUM leaders talked about how the union worked hand-

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[34] DRUM (Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement) Newsletter, Vol. 1, No. 9, p. 1.

in-glove with the corporation, the union's failure to address itself to the workers grievances and DRUM's demands. Unsatified with Ed Liska's, president of Local 3, and UAW Vice President, Charles Brooks', defense of the union's procapitalist line, DRUM stated it would close Dodge Main in defiance of the union contract.

On Friday, July 8, 1968, DRUM and supporting groups arrived at the plant gates at 5:00 a.m., in order to be there when workers began arriving for the 6:00 a.m. shift.

> Picket lines were set up and manned entirely by students, intellectuals, and community people. Workers were excluded. White workers were allowed to enter the factory without interference but all Blacks were stopped. No force was applied but verbal persuasion was sufficient to keep an estimated 70 percent of the Black workers out of the plant.[35]

While the majority of white workers enterd the factory, many honored the picket line and went home. Some 3,000 black workers stood outside the factory gates as production came to an almost complete standstill. About noon, six DRUM members went to Local 3 and met with Liska and other union officials. DRUM presented their grievances again.

Around this time, the police arrived gathering across the street from the workers. They began putting on tear gas masks and got into riot formation. A detective then came forward and ordered the workers to disperse. DRUM dispersed most of the strikers after organizing at least 250 of the workers into car pools. The car pool drove five miles to Chrysler headquarters in Highland Park. DRUM held another demonstration in front of Chrysler headquarters. The Highland Park police arrived with gas warfare gear. Many of the demonstrators had gas masks. A group of DRUM representatives went into the Chrysler building and demanded to see the policy

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[35]Gesehwender, "The League of Revolutionary Black Workers," p. 6.

makers. But they refused to meet with DRUM. The DRUM representative returned to the demonstration and said the company had refused to meet. Satisfied with having achieved its immediate objectives, DRUM transported the demonstrators back to their homes.

> That Sunday a dozen DRUM members were invited to the regular city-wide meetings of black UAW representatives. Tempers flared. Even after guarantees were given that the black UAW officials would support specific DRUM demands, there was clearly a parting rather than a meeting of minds.[36]

On Monday the following day, DRUM again demonstrated at the plant. The Hamtramck police served "John Doe" injunctions on the demonstrators. The police preceded to break up the demonstration. DRUM activists feeling they had been successful, tore up their injunctions and either went to work or went home. In three days of the wildcat strike, Chrysler lost the production of approximately 1,900 cars. The leadership of DRUM considered the strike a success because no one was fired.[37]

In August, a black organization made an attempt to usurp DRUM. The group was made up of black trade union men and a Chrysler professional employee who was pretending he had been fired from the company. The group filed corporation papers in the name of the Detroit Revolutionary Union Movement (DRUM). They called a meeting between the original Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement (DRUM) and themselves. The Detroit DRUM said they thought the original DRUM leadership was incompetent and need direction. The meeting did not lead to positive results because the original DRUM critized them for not having a base and also an incorrect style of work.

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[36]Dan Georgakas/Marvin Surkin, Detroit: I Do Mind Dying (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1975), p. 47.

[37]James A. Gesehwender, "The League of Revolutionary Black Workers." The Journal of Ethnic Studies, Vol. 2, No. 3, (Fall 1974), p. 6.

But DRUM Learned that in order not to be co-opted or misrepresented, it had to move immediately to formalize its structure and tighten up the organization. Starting in May, DRUM consisted of eight Chrysler workers who constituted an editorial board which met every Sunday. By September, DRUM's membership had grown into a fairly large organization. But the form of the organization was fairly amorphous. At a general meeting mid-September, the DRUM leadership presented its constitution and theoretical structure. Both were accepted unanimously.[38]

Early in September a trustee in the UAW Local 3 died and a special election was scheduled for September 3, 1968 to choose his successor.

> DRUM leadership was divided as to whether they should run a candidate. Those opposed believed that participation in union electoral politics would: (1) appear to be compromising with a corrupt UAW; (2) might create the potential for opportunism in some DRUM members; and (3) the election might be lost. Those in favor argued that the election could: (1) demonstrate Black solidarity, (2) demonstrate DRUM's leadership; (3) serve as a vehicle for political education; and (4) aid DRUM's membership drive.[39]

DRUM chose Ron March, a DRUM member to run for the post of union steward. DRUM presented a platform for the upcoming election:

1. The complete accountability to the black majority of the entire membership.
2. All union decisions will coincide directly with the wishes of that majority.
3. Advocating a revolutionary change in the UAW (including a referendum vote and review the grievance procedure).
4. Public denouncement of the racial practices within the UAW Hamtramck Assembly and the entire community.
5. A refusal to be dictated to by the international staff of UAW.

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[38]Luke Tripp, "DRUM--Vanguard of the Black Revolution," p. 9.

[39]Geschwender, "The League of Revolutionary Black Workers," p. 7.

6. Total involvement in policy by the workers as opposed to the dictatorship by the executive board.[40]

The election campaign was organized primarily as a tool for political education while also attempting to elect Ron March. March led the balloting in the election with 563 votes to the 521 votes of his closest competitor.

The Hamtramck police attacked some black workers near some bars the same night the election returns were announced. Chuck Wooten, a member of DRUM, describes forms of harassment:

> . . . the Hamtramck police department began to move in a much more open way. They gave us tickets on our cars and just generally harassed us. One day about fifty of us were in the union hall, which is right across from the police station. The mayor of the city and the chief of police came in with guns in their hands. They told us to stop making trouble, and we said all we wanted was to win the election. We asked them why they weren't harassing others. While we were talking, a squad of police came through the door swinging axe handles and throwing Mace around.[41]

Between the time of the first election and the runoff, the union leadership sent letters to the retired workers appealing to them to participate in the election. While blacks made up 63 percent of the active work force in UAW Local 3, whites (primarily Polish-Americans) made up the overwhelming majority of the retired workers.

On October 3, Ron March was defeated in a runoff by a vote of 2,091 to 1,386. With negative publicity from the established union press and repression from police forces, DRUM felt that March's pulling 40 percent of the vote under those conditions was a good showing. After running in two additional elections and receiving similar results, DRUM decided to terminate its direct participation in union electorial politics. Instead,

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[40] DRUM Newsletter, Vol. 1, No. 13, Detroit, Michigan, p. 1.

[41] Dan Georgakas/Marvin Surkin, Detroit: I Do Mind Dying, p. 47.

it supported black candidates who were not identified as DRUM members but who were considered progressive.

As DRUM expanded its operations, it had to address itself to how it was going to raise finances. A means had to be devised to raise funds to carry out operations. The two main sources of finances were dues from DRUM members and contribution from workers. But these weren't enough to sustain the organization. DRUM decided to engage in fund raising activities that would at the same time raise the consciousness of the workers and also inform the black community of DRUM's existence. DRUM organized parties, demonstrations, and rallies which were attended by workers, students and people from church and neighborhood groups. DRUM also organized a picket line outside of Solidarity House to publicize its demands. With the help of the black clergy DRUM was able to secure a church to hold a mass rally. DRUM sold raffle tickets prior to the rally, which served as both a fund raiser and a publicizer. First prize as a M-1 rifle, second prize a shotgun and third prize a bag of groceries. The rally which was held on November 17th had a large community turnout.

Having developed a mass black workers organization, the RAM leadership began to rethink its organizational strategy. Towards the end of October, internal contradictions polarized inside the RAM and the Black Guards. Some members of the cadres became drug users and internal fights broke out between different factions.

The political section of RAM held soul sessions dealing with internal problems and discussed or dealt with mistakes they had made. They had built a sizeable force, but now were preoccupied with trying to maintain unity, consolidating the ranks, increasing political education, developing a day-to-day work style, and transformation of the lumpen, who maintained a

military adventurist approach, into political cadres. They realized they had been wrong previously when they said that the black youth (black street force) was the vanguard of the revolution. While much of the RAM membership was young, the overwhelming majority were workers.

Having mobilized communities, RAM organizers were trying to address themselves to whose class interests the organization would represent, and how the organization was going to finance itself.

Toward the end of October, a shoot-out occurred in the Black Guards in West Philadelphia. The police used the shoot-out as an excuse to increase repression against the organization. Mass arrests took place, while some RAM members went underground. The RAM national central committee met in Cleveland, Ohio. At that meeting, it was decided that the intelligence apparatus of the U.S. capitalist state was using the word RAM as an excuse to arrest black people who were not even in the organization. Many members were under indictment, others in prison and others underground. The organization had exhausted its contacts for financial support. It was under attack, infiltrated and full of internal contradictions. There were different ideologies and factions in the organization and militarism, the gun in command, was rampant. A report on the breakthrough in mass organization in Detroit was given. Discussion centered around saving as many cadres as possible from the counter-insurgency program being waged by the government. It was decided to dissolve RAM and that the word RAM would no longer be projected.

Efforts would be centered on training second-line leadership for the Black Liberation Party, and all cadres would focus on DRUM as a model for mass work. The leadership would concentrate its efforts on building strong DRUM movements in Detroit.

In the meeting, it was analyzed that the black working class was the vanguard of the revolution. Strategic retreat was the topic on tactics. Protracted struggle (war) was tossed around for some time. Political asylum for those underground and under legal indictments was hammered out. How to regroup a badly shattered movement was discussed late into the night.

CHAPTER SIX

IDEOLOGY

This chapter reviews RAM's ideology by analyzing RAM documents.[1] The RAM documents covered a period of seven years, 1962-1967 and tended to be of four general types: 1) internal documents that were to be used to educate and direct the work of the organization's cadre; 2) messages and position papers on various aspects of the movement which was directed at a broader audience than the first group of documents; 3) press releases which described a specific RAM action or program; and 4) statements to international revolutionary movements and peoples of RAM's solidarity with their struggle and the struggle of black Americans. The documents reviewed for this chapter represent a cross section of these categories and reflect the basic ideology and program of the organization. The ideology of RAM, its analysis of the black movement and of the conditions of black people will be the focus of this discussion. Certain themes reoccur in the RAM documents, the most important of these will be presented. (See Appendix D for a complete list of the RAM documents reviewed).

The Bandung World and the Black Revolution in the U.S.

RAM ideologically was a Revolutionary Black Nationalist organization which was anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist, anti-colonial and anti-racist. It stated that the major contradiction in the world was between western imperialism and the revolutionary people of color, the Bandung World. Class was a secondary contradiction.[2] The U.S. was hopelessly corrupt and

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[1]All documents cited in this chapter, unless otherwise noted, were authored by and published by the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM).

[2]World Black Revolution, December, 1966.

racist. Reform was impossible. Only a revolution led by people could build a world in which racism and exploitation were abolished and self-determination could be achieved.

Black people in the U.S. were part of the Bandung world which is made up of all people of color from Asia, Africa, Latin-America, Central America, the Caribbean, North America, the Indian sub-continent and the Pacific Islands. The Bandung world's historical relationship to the West was based on the exploitation of people for their labor and the raw materials the colony could export to the metropolitan country. Bandung people shared the same enemy. The struggle against their common enemy had to be international. The international nature of the struggle is stressed throughout the RAM documents. In the early papers, 1962-65, the international theme is put forth uncritically. A letter of support for the Vietnamese National Liberation Front declares RAM's solidarity with their struggle and RAM's independence from U.S. foreign policy.[2] In Declaration of the Revolutionary Action Movement, a document written in 1964, RAM states its intention to organize the black liberation movement in the United States as a part of the world-wide revolution. It pointed out that U.S. imperialism was the chief enemy and appealed to the "Supreme Judge of the World" and all freedom loving people for justice.[3] It never made clear who the Supreme Judge was and this reference to a higher mystical power does not reappear in the later documents.

RAM acknowledged its debt to Malcolm X in its conception of the struggle of black America as part of an international struggle in "An Analysis

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[2]"Greetings to Our Militant Vietnamese Brothers," Black America, 1964, p. 1.

[3]Declaration of the Revolutionary Action Movement, 1964, p. 1.

by RAM: Revolutionary Action Movement, Why Malcolm X Died." In this article Malcolm X was seen as the individual who attempted to link the black struggle with the Bandung revolution and most consistently tried to destroy the myth that the black struggle was merely a domestic problem.[4]

In Black America, the Summer/Fall, 1965 issue, an article entitled, "The Relationship of the Revolutionary Afro-American Movement to the Bandung Revolution" clearly put forth the inter-relatedness of the two struggles. China, Zanzibar, Cuba, Vietnam, Indonesia and Algeria provided the most revolutionary examples for oppressed people. These revolutionary forces and others embodied a concept which RAM describes as "Bandung Humanism." This constituted a revolutionary revision of Western or traditional Marxist doctrine which had failed to adequately relate revolutionary ideology to the unprecedented political, socio-economic, technical and psychocultural developments occurring in the post World War II era. The failure of Marxism to revolutionize Western Europe and the U.S., especially in the depression era of the 1930's, had forced committeed Afro-American revolutionaries to formulate Bandung Humanism or Revolutionary Black Internationalism. Bandung Humanism assumed an inevitable confrontation between Western imperialism and Bandung anti-imperialism.[5]

This analysis appeared again in The Present Situation and the Struggle for Black Power, 1966, but takes a more critical stance towards some Bandung world leadership who the authors see as trying to avoid military confrontation with the West without recognizing the ultimate futility of

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[4]"An Analysis by RAM: Revolutionary Action Movement, Why Malcolm X Died," Liberator, 1965, pp. 9-11.

[5]"The Relationship of the Revolutionary Afro--American Movement to the Bandung Revolution," Black America, (Summer/Fall 1965), p. 11.

this position. These cautious Bandung leaders eventually will have to fight U.S. imperialism or will be eliminated in wars of national liberation within their own nations. Mao Tse-Tung's international revolutionary strategy which involves the encirclement of the Western capitalist countries forms the basis of RAM's argument. The struggle for black state power is a necessary part of the encirclement plan. Many Bandung revolutionaries fail to understand the black movement. They perceive its goals as integration and not black power. The authors of the article asserted that conditions within the U.S. were driving black people to a 'fight or die' position and felt that the Bandung world must recognize this important development. The authors go on to say that one of the major problems in developing an international perspective is that African-Americans do not identify with Bandung struggles throughout the world, which, they felt was due in part to skeptism about the interests and concerns that Bandung peoples express about the black movement.[6]

In all of the documents that followed (1966-69), the term Bandung appears less frequently although the international nature of the black struggle was not deemphasized. Black internationalism and revolutionary black internationalism became the more common terms. The emphasis in the documents from the summer of 1966 to 1969 was much more on the domestic struggle, organizing tactics and problems and black nationalism as an ideology.

The theme of the bankruptcy of current revolutionary theory is most fully developed in World Black Revolution, a RAM pamphlet that appeared in 1966. The United states, Europe and the Soviet Union were presented as equally imperialistic and white supremist. All non-white pepole were

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[6]Don Freeman and Muhammad Ahmad, The Present Situation and the Struggle for Black State Power, May, 1966.

called upon to fight against these major forces who, buy up emerging nations through aid, which always has political strings attached. There was a very lengthy discussion of the debate on the national question that went on between M. N. Roy (Indian Communist), Lenin and Stalin which was used to illustrate the ineffectiveness of Marx's analysis of worldwide revolution. Orthodox European Marxism-Leninism is considered a psychological trick and a science-religion. The Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and Cuba were labeled counter revolutionary forces because of their doctrine of peaceful co-existence with the West.

World Black Revolution closed with a call for a Black International which would develop the necessary strategy and tactics for a world-wide revolution, including a world army of liberation and a world black liberation front organized by RAM. The image of Armaggeddon, good and evil fighting to the death or victory, and the burning down of the Western empire was raised here as in earlier documents.[7]

Revolutionary Black Nationalism

RAM stated that there were two major nationalisms in the world. The first liberates and frees individuals, acts as a binding force within a nation and leads the people of that nation to fight off their oppressors. This is revolutionary nationalism. The second type is reactionary, capitalist and justifies the oppression of one nation over others. This is white nationalism. The struggle in the world is between these two ideologies.[8] RAM's description of revolutionary Black nationalism and its centrality to RAM's programs remained consistent throughout the documents.

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[7] Black Revolution, December, 1966, pp. 1-31.

[8] Towards Revolutionary Action Movement Manifesto, April, 1964.

This ideology was placed in a historical perspective in an article, "New Philosophy for a New Age," which appeared in Black America, Summer/Fall, 1965. Revolutionary Black Nationalism was to an extent a response to two ideological trends, bourgeois reformism and bourgeois nationalism, within the black movement. Bourgeois reformism which was rooted in W.E.B. DuBois' philosophy had its greatest influence in the civil rights movement, awakened certain segments of the black community. But it had four outstanding weaknesses: first, with the exception of the black churches and students, it had no mass base because it goals, integration, was rejected by the majority of black people;[9] second, its appeal to the conscience of white people would fail because it ignored the basis of the relationship of black people to the racist state, that is, whites benefited from the exploitation of blacks; third, the leaders of the civil rights movement had failed to recognize the real power relations within American society and attempted to attain their goals with attacks on the structures of petty apartheid, e.g., movie houses, lunch counters, and public drinking fountains; and fourth, by depending on white liberal financial support, they had subjected the black reform movement to the whims of their supporters and had implied that black people could not support their own movement. Additionally, the black reformist organizations had been infiltrated by white radical elements, who generally played a reactionary role by neutralizing or sabotaging the more militant thrusts of black revolutionaries.

Bourgeois nationalism, whose roots were with Marcus Garvey and Booker T. Washington, was split into two groups. The radical wing called for a separate land base for black people; the moderates called for a political

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[9]Black America, Summer/Fall, 1965, pp. 5-7.

party that would function within the existing U.S. system. RAM saw these trends' emphasis on racial pride as very positive, but branded as reactionary, the policy of "inversion," the substitution of white capitalist for black capitalist, because it failed to go to the heart of the problem. Bourgeois nationalism could not bring about the necessary psychological revolution. Also, it had a tendency to become increasingly conservative in its analysis and program. RAM felt that bourgeois nationalism suffered from the following problems: first, the naive assumption that white America, the Western arm of world imperialism, would just 'give' black people land in the South; and second, the failure to identify capitalism as the enemy of black people and its impossibility lead to their liberation.

These two articles asserted that revolutionary black nationalism was the only revolutionary alternative for black people. Its adherents were the vanguard of the black underclass. The dictatorship of the black underclass was the central ideological difference between revolutionary black nationalists and reformists, RAM stated in Black Revolution (1966).[10] The goal of revolutionary black nationalism was given as communalism or socialism which requires the collectivization of the economy. Western civilization would be de-emphasized. "Dialectical humanism, the method of analyzing, planning and developing the sociological and cultural motivations as related to the material factors which affect man's psyche for the raising of his revolutionary humanness towards man,"[11] would be emphasized.

By 1967, in a position paper developed for cadre organizers, RAM felt that revolutionary black nationalists were in a peculiar position, in that

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[10] Ibid., pp. 1-28.

[11] Ibid., pp. 30-31.

they were ahead of the masses politically but behind them in para-military organization.[12] RAM's assumption that it expressed the true aspirations of black people was never questioned within the organizations documents. Throughout the papers, articles and press releases, the belief was expressed that the black American masses were nationalist and, once awakened to their capacity to form a nation, would seize the means to reach that end. As early as 1962, RAM declared that nationalism was the "natural doctrine" of the black working class and through revolutionary black nationalism their anger would be aroused and would lead to the destruction of the ruling class.[13] RAM's key position as the vanguard of this nationalistic and revolutionary spirit was stated throughout the documents.

The qualities of an individual who declared him or herself a revolutionary black nationalist were described in, "What is a Revolutionary Black Nationalist?", distributed in 1966. These were to be: total commitment to the liberation of black people and to the ideology of revolutionary black nationalism; a willingness to die for the cause of liberation; self-discipline and commitment to his/her development as a revolutionary cadre; a willingness to study Garvey, DuBois, Malcolm and others for their revolutionary example; be able to identify with the people and their struggle; be able to subordinate personal interest to the interests of the organization and the movement; and be able to internalize the tenets of revolutionary morality.[14]

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[12] America is the Blackman's Battleground, April, 1967, p. 9.

[13] Orientation to a Black Mass Movement, October, 1962, p. 3.

[14] What is a Revolutionary Black Nationalist?, May, 1966, p. 1-3.

RAM's Analysis of Black America

RAM's analysis of the historical development of African-American people and its vision of their destiny is crucial if one is to understand the organization's program. RAM's major theoreticians felt that black people were a captive and colonized nation within the boundaries of the United States, that is, a nation within a nation. The colonial relationship of African-Americans to the white state was a source of their domestic exploitation and oppression. One of the key aspects of the colonial structure under U.S. imperialism was the ideology of racism which had been used historically to divide black and white workers. This historical process had developed to the point where white workers had abandoned their class allegiance and saw their interests as the same as that of the ruling class.[15]

Although the colonial model is presented in the majority of the documents, the papers from 1964 to 1967 offered the most thorough treatment. In Nation Within a Nation (1965), RAM stated that there had been a consistent line of protest in the black struggle characterized by Northern blacks supporting the struggle of Southern blacks. The oppression in the South had been for land and self-rule. The Reconstruction period, which had the potential to secure land for black peasants, had been defeated. The economic and social position of blacks in the South was the same as agrarian peasantries in other countries. The task for present day revolutionaries was to raise the issue of land and self-determination. The North would continue to play a supporting role in the struggle for nationhood in the South. The interjection of these issues into the black movement would, according to RAM, transform the movement.[16]

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[15]World Black Revolution, December, 1966, p. 5.

[16]Nation Within a Nation, 1965, p. 1.

The captive nation status of black America had bred a colonial mentality which must be wiped away through a cultural or social revolution which RAM called for in Orientation to a Black Mass Movement (1962); The 12 Point Program of RAM (Revolutionary Action Movement, 1964); We Can Win! (1964); Government Must Pay for Racial Crimes Committed Against African-Americans (1967); and America is the Black Man's Battleground! (1967). The specifics of this cultural revolution were never adequately described but generally it would involve the destruction of the slave mentality and those classes and institutions which supported it. The slave culture had, according to RAM, created "a generation of freaks" who identified with a hip life style. The hip society transcended all classes and acted as a release valve for the sense of powerlessness that black people experienced. This hip society destroyed the cultural identity of blacks and distorted the roles of men and women.[17] Linked to this culture were the reactionary roles played by certain forces in the black community. Among the most reactionary were Negro preachers, professionals, politicans, newspaper publishers and specifically beauticians and barbers. However, the entire black middle class was not condemned by RAM. The organization saw this class as powerful and skilled. RAM documents consistently stated the need to carefully analyze this class although this analysis does not appear in any of the documents reviewed.[18]

The class issue was developed further in the RAM papers. Generally, the analysis followed along Marxist lines, that is, the black community was made up of a colonial bourgeoisie, although a very small one, and an

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[17] Black Youth: Vanguard of the New World, Speech given at the Second National Afro-American Student Conference, October 30-November 1, 1964, p. 4.

[18] America is the Black Man's Battleground! April, 1967, p. 2.

enormous working class. The factors, such as income, employment and education, that are used by analysts to differentiate one class from another, are absent from the RAM documents with the exception of professions. Middle class blacks are teachers and preachers. The black working class is presented in the context of the development of Western capitalism. African-American workers, like other workers in the U.S., benefit from imperialism. But they live a dual existence in the sense of being a super-exploited "sub-proletariat" in the U.S. and the beneficiaries of U.S. imperialism's domination internationally of other people of color.[19]

Black workers were presented as potentially very powerful. In We Can Win! (1964), the author stated that the defeatism of the black community must be destroyed. Blacks must recognize the power they have as a people and as workers. They have the potential to strike in three vital areas: first, they can stop the machinery of the government because of their high employment in certain key government agencies; second, they can hurt the economy because of their employment in key industries, such as, steel and auto; and third, they can unleash violence in the cities of the North and South.[20]

This theme was developed further in "Depression, Part III," an article published by RAM cadre in Detroit. In it they stated that black people had to use the power of black labor and the black masses against the system, to resist it and if necessary to break and destroy it.[21] The article stated

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[19]"The African American War of National Liberation," Black America, (Summer/Fall 1965), p. 4.

[20]"We Can Win," Black America, (Fall 1964), p. 1.

[21]"Depression, Part III," Black Vanguard, Volume 1, November 5, (August 1965), p. 23.

that a historical lesson was offered in the plantation system, which was totally dependent on black labor and not on the white masters. Black workers today, it continued, have the same capacity to run the economy if they recognize that a corrupt system is causing their suffering and they have the power to act to destroy it. The state will attempt to repress this movement through the use of "Uncle Toms" who will try to establish an illusion of progress or will use force to crush the people. Black workers can reply with: strikes and demonstrations, occupation, and retaliation, and operation and liquidation.[22]

The Vanguard: Black Youth

Although black workers were considered the most radical class within the black community, and organizations like the League of Revolutionary Black Workers (DRUM) the most positive development in the organizing of wokers, RAM split the class along age lines.[23] RAM saw black youth as the most revolutionary sector of the black community because they had the most sustained resentment against the system and the highest level of frustration. Youth were presented as the key to the revolution in Towards Revolutionary Action Movement Manifesto (April, 1964). There were part of the worldwide revolutionary forces, such as, those in Angola and the Congo, where the youth made up the majority of the troops.

The first point of the The 12 Point Program of RAM (Revolutionary Action Movement), 1964, concerned black students. It stated that the goals of the Afro-American Student Movement (ASM) were to educate Afro-Americans about oppression, to develop unity with Afro-Americans in the U.S. and

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[22]Ibid., p. 29

[23]The Formation of a National Centralized Black Liberation Party, 1969, p. 5.

Africans in the world, and to organize and unite black students.

The alienation of black youth was the key to their militancy according to RAM. This theme appeared in most of the documents but was developed most carefully in Black Youth: Vanguard of the New World, 1964. This document stated that the economic, political and social isolation of African-American youth from monopoly capitalism and white culture guaranteed their alienation. Black youth make up over one-half the population of black America. The system has displaced them and exposed its contradictions to them. They have not yet been brain-washed. They are oepn to attack from all sectors of white society. They are victims of a contradiction between the black reality and the lies of white America. They recognize that the education they received is meaningless and that the system does not have enough jobs for them. Because of an "intuitive" feeling that they cannot and will not be allowed to fit in, black youth realize that they have no alternative "but to go to the streets."[24] One could argue that the causes of alienation of black youth are generally the same causes of alienation of all black workers. It might be possible to make a good case for older black employed and unemployed workers as the vanguard because of their alienation, exploitation at the work place and potential, vis a vis, their skills to run industry. Interestingly RAM did not discuss this possibility when it presented its view of black workers. Instead, it chose to place greater emphasis on the bitterness and disappointment and their freedom from the slave mentality as the chief causes of the greater militancy of black youth.

Black youth were seen as the "potential warriors of black America"

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[24]Black Youth: Vanguard of the New World, pp. 1-2.

and could become a "political Mau Mau." RAM divided youth still further into two sections: ghetto youth and students. Ghetto youth are those black people who are chronically unemployed, seasonally employed or semi-skilled workers. They are members of the street force and the subproletariat. Students are usually from the black working class or bourgeois who attend colleges or high schools. They are potentially the black intelligentsia. The task of black revolutionaries is to give this purposeless army direction and to transform it into a "blood brotherhood" which is committed to liberation by any means necessary.[25] The rebellion in Los Angeles in 1965 demonstrated the revolutionary potential that RAM had ascribed to black youth. Ghetto youth were the leadership of the rebellion.[26]

The benefits of imperialism that other sectors gain and which, in part, explains their lack of political consciousness, is not a factor for black youth. Most black people feel that they will have to give something up if they struggle for independence, whereas, most people in the world believe that they will gain something through revolutionary struggle. Black youth is the only sector to react positively to this paradoz because they have been faced with diminishing access to economic rewards caused by increased technology.[27]

In 1966, black youth continued to be seen as the vanguard by RAM. Their leadership role in relationship to adults is stated in The Struggle

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[25]Ibid., pp. 1-2.

[26]"The Next Step and the Road Ahead, L.A. Proves We Will Win the National Rebellion Against Racist Oppression," Revolutionary Nationalist, (August 1965), p. 3.

[27]"The African-American War of National Liberation," Black America, (Summer/Fall 1965), p. 4.

for Black State Power in the U.S., 1966. Black youth must "dictate" and give direction to adults who "must see themselves in an advisory position and must be able to physically take orders from black youth."[28]

The class differences within the black community were generally minimized in the RAM analysis. RAM clearly recognized the reactionary role of the black bourgeoisie but it did not see these forces as the major enemy. The class, political and social enemy is the white ruling class and its allies. The differences within the black community are not to be over emphasized by black revolutionaries.[29] The other classes, working class and lumpen-proletariat are described by RAM as the subproletariat. Their use of subproletariat for all black people who work or not work creates a very large group. RAM did not attend to other differences among the subproletariat, such as, differences in patterns of employment and/or alientation among black women.

Program and Structure

RAM's program and structure were designed in part, to support one of its basic doctrines, black America was at war with white America. RAM described itself as a political and military organization. In this section, the political program of the organization will be described as it appears in the documents. The concept of urban guerrilla warfare and Robert F. Williams' and other authors' writings, will be presented in the following section. Although these concepts are divided here for convenience of discussion, one must recognize that they were integrally linked in RAM's concept of revolution.

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[28]The Struggle for Black State Power in the U.S., July-August, 1966, pp. 7-8.

[29]Muhammad Ahmad, On Mass Organization, January, 1969, p. 1.

RAM's view of revolution in North America was based on the premise that a true revolution could not take place unless white capitalist structure was defeated by Black America. Black America was the most revolutionary force in the U.S. The tasks of black revolutionaries included the taking over of institutions of power and the annihiliation of the racist, capitalist oligarchy.[30] Nat Turner is a revolutionary model because of his understanding of both the need to annihiliate the enemy and the fear whites have of black. Self-defense was a constant issue raised in the RAM papers. The self-defense concept was discussed because it was a deterrent against racist violence directed at the black community but also because of its psychological value to a people who have been oppressed for 400 years.

The 12 Point Program of RAM (Revolutionary Action Movement), 1964, put forth the major programmatic structures that RAM worked on through 1969. There was some change in emphasis from 1967 to 1969 in that, the work with students became less emphasized and the formation of a black political party was stressed, but essentially the key features presented in 1964 remain important through 1969. The most important were student, community and worker organizing, self-defense, the development of a liberation army, an underground apparatus, government-in-exile/nation within a nation concept, and fund raising.

The 12 Point Program of RAM was the following:

1. The organizing of an African-American Student movement. This was to be a nationwide group which was to educate and organize. A black student strike was a possible goal. The ASM was to support the guerrilla forces through demonstrations and the organizing of mass support.

2. The development of Ideology (or Freedom) Schools which were to aid in cadre development.

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[30]"We Can Win." 1963, p. 1.

3. The development of Rifle Clubs which would be the basis of a black militia capable of protecting the black community and ultimately would form a base for establishing local governments. The Rifle Clubs would work with the Liberation Army.

4. The building of an Army of Liberation the purpose of which was to carry out the political, economic and physical overthrow of the state. The army was to be a guerrilla force which operated within the cities.

5. Propaganda Training Centers were to be responsible for the national organ, Black America, and were to focus on organizing and coordinating the movement.

6. The development of an underground vanguard which would develop the revolutionary machinery capable of carrying on the revolution if the major leadership was killed or captured. It was to create a military/political apparatus that was made up of small tightly knit, highly disciplined and independent fighting units.

7. The organization of Black Workers "liberation" Unions that would be the leading force if a general strike were called. Black women workers who worked in white homes would be organized in Women's Leagues.

8. The Black community would be organized block-by-block by cadre who lived in the community. This organization on a block basis would form the foundation for later political organizing.

9. The development of the ideological concepts of a nation within a nation and of a government-in-exile were an important part of RAM's program. Robert F. Williams was the leader in exile. The colonial nature of black oppression, the goal of liberation instead of integration and the overthrow of capitalism and the white state were to be raised continuously by RAM organizers.

10. The organization of a War Fund so that a war machine could be financed.

11. Farm co-operatives would be developed in the South, particularly in the Mississippi Delta and would be used by community and guerrilla forces.

12. An Army of the Black unemployed would be organized to demonstrate against discrimination industries that receive federal aid; and in the North against union discrimination.[31]

The program was extensive and addressed the development of alternative political and economic institutions and a military apparatus. Black

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[31] The 12 Point Program of RAM (Revolutionary Action Movement), 1964, pp. 1-3.

youth would lead the organizing in most of the areas. They would focus on black college campuses and in anti-draft work but would also be involved in community and workplace organizing.[32]

The tactics described in the RAM papers varied depending on the kind of organizing being done but had certain factors in common. In a document written by cadre in Detroit in 1965, these factors are revealed. The document described strikes, operation and liquidation, and black revolution as responses to repression from the state. Strikes are to be defended with arms. During stage one of the struggle, black workers and demonstrators would stage a general strike and massive demonstrations. The state would not yield to these tactics and would react with force. Strikes were only effective in hurting the state, they could not destroy it. It was to be expected that the state would retaliate with scabs and militia. The workers and the people will do what was necessary, arm and defend themselves, occupy the plants and maintain control of the streets. The second stage would use tactics of operation and liquidation which would mean that black workers would operate the industrial sector. They would destroy those things that could not be used to further black liberation but might be used by the state to crush the movement. The third stage would lead to the black revolution wherein the class struggle would lead to the final confrontation with the white power structure. Black workers have "the plants, the cities, communication centers, transportation centers and labor power while the white man has nothing" but lies and the police.[33]

The tactical themes were: (1) organizing at key places, particularly

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[32] Black Youth: Vanguard of the New World, 1964, p. 3.

[33] "Depression Part III," 1965, pp. 29-30.

industry; (2) an armed and well defended community; and (3) rapid escalation of the struggle. The matter of timing of the struggle was an interesting aspect of the RAM documents. There was a degree of naivete about revolutionary process and a general underestimation of the strength of the enemy. As the close of "Depression Part III" there was a quote from Robert Williams which ended with the statement, "the implementation of the U.S. Constitution" would be laid in ninety days of struggle. In 1964 RAM asserted that by 1970, an organization capable of sustaining revolutionary action must exist.[34] In a document written in 1966, the author stated that by 1970 the crisis of world imperialism would be so acute that the black struggle will intensify and by 1978 African-American people would have exhausted all the legal forms of protest which would lead to the formation of a united front.[35] The majority of Williams' articles presented a vision of a "protracted war" that would last only several months. The image of a swift victory contradicts the histories of wars of liberation in the very countries RAM looked to as model, such as, Vietnam, Angola and China. RAM never explained or even recognized this contradiction. The documents did not go beyond 1969 so it is unclear whether this timetable was ever revised or criticized.

The program in the North was to focus on organizing black workers around workplace issues and the rights of self-help, self-government, self-rule and human rights. Black workers would serve as a coalition for the proposed government in exile. People's congresses would be organized and would declare their independence from the U.S. A black liberation army

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[34] Black Youth: Vanguard of the New World, 1964, p. 6.

[35] The Struggle for Black State Power, 1966, p. 8.

must be organized as well. The movement in the North and South have to be consolidated and transformed into a national struggle for liberation.[36]

In 1966, the RAM document, The Struggle for Black State Power in the U.S., emphasized the need for self-help programs in every area of black life. Black people would have to learn to produce the goods of a self-sufficient nation and build alternative, independent institutions. Black people's congresses, self-defense groups and a black army, an underground network, a black national party of the masses built by 1972 and a black Internationale were the priorities put forth in this paper.[37]

The Black Panther Party and the Mississippi Freedom Labor Union opened up new levels for the development of a national movement, RAM stated in 1966. But they would have to become revolutionary movements if the national struggle was to succeed. The most important issue facing the Black Panther Party was that of armed self-defense. Economic development and an overall program that sopke to the real needs of black people would also be crucial. The Panther Party had to be expanded in the North and the South. RAM felt that revolutionary black nationalists must do this in order to seize the initiative of the struggle. Black America had to be organized by 1968.[38]

RAM's program did not include a point on the role of black women except in point seven where Women's Leagues, made up of women who work as domestics in white homes was suggested. Black women were seldom mentioned

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[36]Nation Within a Nation, 1965, p. 2.

[37]The Struggle for Black State Power in the U.S., July-August, 1966, pp. 8-9.

[38]Steps Towards Organizing a National Movement in the African-American Struggle for National Liberation, Part II, August, 1966, p. 1.

in the documents. This may be because they were considered a part of the sub-proletariat. In the careful analysis of black youth, there was no special mention of black women. In a 1967 document, black women were assigned a special task. In this position paper written for cadre organizers, black women were presented as almost immune from attacks from the black bourgeoise and the white power structure. Black women revolutionaries, as part of RAM's program, would have to consolidate a base and destroy the black bourgeoisie. Black Women Enraged, a RAM organization would have to infiltrate and gain influence in all black civil groups.[39] In 1969, black women and black workers were the key groups to organize, but it is not clear why women are perceived as central at this time.[40] The later analysis of the role of women in the black liberation struggle seems to come from an assessment of the importance of women in the RAM organization in the 1967-68 period. It was not unusual for the role of women to be ignored, given the historical period. But it is somewhat surprising given that RAM included women within the Black Guards and women were key in RAM's formation and development.

Reparations were introduced as a demand in RAM's program in 1967. In an article written by Max Stanford entitled, U.S. Owes Negroes 880 Million Acres of Land, the view was presented that black Americans historically and systematically have been denied basic human rights and the rights of citizenship. RAM did not believe in the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments because the evidence shows clearly that blacks were still

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[39]America is the Blackman's Battleground!, April, 1967, p. 8.

[40]The Formation of a National Centralized Black Liberation Party, 1969, p. 3.

enslaved. The fact that the U.S. government promised every emancipated slave forty acres, but never gave it to black people, does not deny their right to it. RAM's position was that 22 million African-Americans should receive forty acres plus one hundred years of back interest in reparations.[41] The demand for reparations was stated again in an article in which RAM charged the U.S. with a policy of genocide against black people.[42]

In 1968, the emphasis of RAM's program, if one is to judge only from the documents, was on the formation of a political party. A press release from that year stated that the forces opposing Robert F. Williams had controlled the movement from 1962-1968. The Black Guards were formed because of strong conservative forces and the internal struggle within the movement. RAM had spent a year reeducating the Black Guards and was now prepared to transform itself into a political party for the liberation of the colonized African nation in the U.S. The name of this new formation was the African-American Party of National Liberation or the Black Liberation Party, or the RAM Party. It had three objectives: the community organization of black people, the political re-education of the black masses and the creation of a cultural revolution, and survival training.[43]

In December, 1968, the call for a party was developed further. RAM, at this time, called for people's party made up of workers, students, youth and revolutionary intellectuals who could present and carry out a political program; and who would, with a people's army, defend black America.

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[41]Max Stanford. U.S. Owes Negroes 880 Million Acres of Land, 1967, p. 1.

[42]Government Must Pay for Racial Crimes Committed Against African-Americans, July, 1967, p. 1.

[43]RAM Forms a Black Political Party, Press Release, August, 1968, p. 1.

Because the state was moving to destroy the Black Panther Party and ultimately would move against all revolutionary black nationalist organizations, it was essential that certain political structures and programs be initiated. These included the key structures from the twelve point program with the addition of: the recognition of the Republic of New Africa; study groups to analyze the writings of Robert F. Williams; and the creation of a Black United Front. Cadres were to melt back into the community and infiltrate existing black organizations.[44]

The Formation of a National Centralized Black Liberation Party, written in 1969, clearly described the tasks and structure of the BLP. It began with an analysis which states that the majority of black people are defenseless. They also were not involved in the struggle for national liberation. In order to organize them, a program that spoke to their immediate needs had to be developed. The BLP would present such a program. It would be a party that operated legally and illegally. From one-half to one-third of its cadre should be anonymous. It should be a public organization. The BLP would be based in the South which would work to organize black workers and the unemployed. It would have a centralized national leadership which would be responsible for organizational development. The BLP would develop arm self-defense units. The responsibilities of members of the BLP included payment of dues; commitment to doing party work; knowledge and study of the "Science of Black Internationalism, and the thought of Chairman Rob."[45]

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[44]Akbar Muhammad Ahmad, National Black Power: The Present Period and the Road to Black Nationhood, December, 1968, pp. 1-2.

[45]The Formation of a National Centralized Black Liberation Party, 1969, pp. 1-3.

The international program of RAM was reflected in the documents in official statements to revolutionary movements, such as "Greetings to Our Militant Vietnamese Brothers" which appeared in Black America in the Fall of 1964, To All the Freedom-Loving Peoples of the World and Especially Those Living Under White Racist 'Yanky' Oppression, 1966 and Message to African Heads of State from RAM--Revolutionary Action Movement--Black Liberation Front of the U.S.A., 1966. In all of these documents RAM expressed its solidarity with those struggles and declared its independence from the imperialistic policies of the U.S. RAM also included, in a number of the documents which appear after 1965, mention of the Vietnamese struggle. RAM did not mention other people of color within the borders of the U.S. either as potential allies or enemies except in a document written in 1966 entitled, To All Freedom-Loving People of the World and Especially Those Living Under White Racist 'Yanky' Oppression. In this document, RAM appealed to "all oppressed peoples in the U.S." to oppose U.S. military aggression in other countries (p. 1). But RAM did not speak to the historical role or relationship between national groups within the U.S. RAM seemed to see only two key groups--blacks and whites. Perhaps RAM did not consider Native Americans, Latin Americans and Asians as very important or powerful. It is not clear what position, if any, RAM had on these other national groups.

The influence of Malcolm X on RAM's understanding of the international significance of the African-American struggle was extremely important. He was credited with drawing the links between the movement in the U.S. and the revolutionary struggles in the Bandung World. In an article written in 1965, an excellent analysis of the threat Malcolm posed to U.S.'s imperialist world strategy was presented. RAM stated that Malcolm inter-

nationalized the movement when he returned from his second trip to Africa.[46]

The organizational structure of RAM presented in 1964 in Black Youth: Vanguard of the New World did not vary significantly in the documents that followed. The organization was to be highly disciplined, democratic centralist and secret. At least one-third of the members were to be secret. It was to be organized on three levels--professional organizers, active members, and inactive members who were secret but supported the work of the organization. The organization required that members see themselves as professional revolutionaries who were convinced of the "moral imperative of revolution." They should function as a "military staff and a priesthood" (p. 8). Their commitment should be total and unswerving. The organization was opposed to its members being public leaders who could be manipulated by the bourgeois media and exposed to the repression of the state. Almost all of RAM's public documents, particularly after 1965, were anonymous. This commitment to secrecy was an assurance of survival, as was the concept of revolutionary discipline. The movement was political as well as military, and, therefore, required discipline on a limited democratic basis (p. 8).

Urban Guerrilla Warfare

Integrally tied to RAM's political program was its use of the concept of urban guerrilla warfare. Formulated, in part, by Robert F. Williams, this was perhaps the major factor that differentiated RAM's ideology from other movements in the 1960's. Williams played a key role in RAM's position that there was a legitimate government-in-exile that expressed the

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[46]"An Analysis by RAM: Revolutionary Action Movement, Why Malcolm X Died," Liberator, April, 1965, pp. 9-11.

true aspirations for self-determination of African-Americans. Williams' position of the right of self-defense had made him a symbol of revolutionary resistance to RAM cadre. But perhaps his greatest contribution was his vision of liberation through urban guerrilla warfare.

In the RAM documents of 1962-64, urban guerrilla warfare is not mentioned. Rather RAM's role as the leadership in organizing a black liberation movement and its recognition that the movement needed a political/military structure was stressed. The Black Guard was the political/military body which would be the forerunner of the black liberation army, but how the army was to function was not revealed.

In 1964, in the article We Can Win! the reliance on technology by U.S. capitalism was given as a weakness that would be exploited by black revolutionaries. This point is part of the tactical disruption of the U.S. economy. Also presented is the idea that blacks in the U.S. Army would defect if black Americans were in revolutionary motion. It is in this document that the notion that the cities would be ripe for sabotage while the guerrilla army operated in the countryside was developed (p. 2).

Revolutionary Nationalist, the August, 1965 issue, carried six articles on various aspects of urban guerrilla warfare. In this issue the urban rebellion in Los Angeles was presented as a model. It demonstrated that black America was at war with the U.S. government. The National Guard's role was to crush the rebellion, which was similar to the Army's role during the slave revolts. The L.A. rebellion, smaller rebellions and and acts of resistance signified to RAM that black people were learning through guerrilla warfare.[47]

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[47]"The Next Step and the Road Ahead, L.A. Proves We Will Win the National Rebellion Against Racist Oppression," Revolutionary Nationalist, August, 1965, p. 3.

In "Urban Guerrilla Warfare," an article by Robert F. Williams, who wrote the black people should develop a collective, coordinated, massive defense which would strike at the weak underbelly of the U.S. economy. One of the cornerstones of Williams' theory was his assessment that America was basically weak. He felt that America was too "sensitive" to withstand a rebellion of blacks and that U.S. imperialism would collapse because of the creation of economic chaos caused by world-wide revolutionary struggles. The U.S., he stated, would not be able to psychologically or economically withstand these revolutionary forces. The advanced technology of the U.S. was its vulnerability. Black people had to understand what a real revolutionary war would entail and would have to accept responsibility for it.[48]

In "USA: The Potential of a Minority Revolution" also written by Williams, he stated that the struggle he led in Monroe, North Carolina taught that effective armed self-defense requires massive organization with central coordination. He described the weapons of guerrilla warfare, as molotov cocktails, gasoline and acts of sabotage. The achilles heel of the U.S. is race, and a race war would lead the bourgeoisie to panic because it has "little stomach for blood and violence." One important point Williams stressed was that the white supremists do not command the loyality of the entire white American community. This community would be divided and some of its members would openly support the struggle for black liberation. The struggle, as the author presents it, was not anti-white, but a struggle against injustice.[49]

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[48]Robert F. Williams, "Urban Guerrilla Warfare." Revolutionary Nationalist, (August 1965), p. 9.

[49]Ibid., p. 12.

One could make a fairly strong argument that Williams tremendously overestimated the weaknesses of the white ruling class. With the advantage of hindsight, the student of history can easily punch holes in his assessment, but this cannot diminish the impact his analysis had on revolutionaries in the early and mid-sixties. For a black man to declare that self-defense was a right and to act accordingly, as Robert Williams did in Monroe, was, in the early days of the movement, a tremendously heroic position. This, coupled with his analysis that black America could destroy its oppressors through a revolutionary struggle in which he laid out strategic and tactical objectives, put him and his followers in a position to influence the movement and the black community.

The unsigned article "Strategy and Tactics of Black Revolution" which appeared in the same issue, outlined how the revolution in America would develop. It stated that Revolutionary Nationalists must help black people to see themselves as outlaws within an outlaw government. The development of an army of liberation would be the first task. The first major target of the war would be the communication system because of the reliance that whites had on it. Its destruction would create a vacuum which would disrupt and isolate whites. Electrical power plants would be destroyed, radio and television stations would follow, with newspapers seized last. Transportation would be the second major target. Destruction of property would be the primary concern of the revolutionaries. The third major target would be the industrial complexes in urban areas. During the next phase, power in the black communities would be maintained.

The black war of liberation would operate on two fronts--one southern; the other northern. In the South where large areas are rural, the strategy would be for the guerrillas to occupy and liberate certain areas

that could then be used for "establishing peoples governments and waging campaigns against the enemy."[50] The Northern strategy would rely on more "terroristic" actions because the guerrilla would be less mobile and the potential supporters outnumbered by the enemy. The dual fronts strategy would split the oppressor's forces making it necessary for him to fight many small battles across a wide area in which his own citizens were living. The author foresaw that the revolution would spread from Northern cities to Southern cities and then to the rural areas where the emphasis would be on small scale campaigns with the enemy and liberation of the community. The U.S. Army and National Guard would be plagued with desertions. The author stated that during this struggle the querrillas would be "extending the war in a protracted manner." This campaign would lead to total chaos and the enemy would be "unable to sustain his efforts against a protracted guerrilla war whether it's 90 days, 9 years or a year."[51] This statement seems to be the first reference by RAM that the black revolution may be a protracted struggle.

The role of black soldiers in the U.S. Army was seen as very important. It was an issue that appeared in a number of documents that describe the war of liberation, but was put most succinctly in Message from RAM Revolutionary Action Movement) the Black Liberation Front of the U.S.A. to Afro-Americans in the United States Racist Imperialist Army. In this document, written on July 4, 1965, RAM asks black soldiers, "Why are you in Charlie's Army?" RAM recognized that black soldiers were waging a war against racist white soldiers and officers but called on them to come home

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[50]"Strategy and Tactcis of Black Revolution," Revolutionary Nationalist, (August 1965), p. 10.

[51]Ibid., p. 10.

to wage a war of self-defense against the U.S. government. In the imperialist wars of the state, black men were fighting against "our blood-brothers." The U.S. is a hypocrite when it says it was helping to free enslaved people when it enslaves black people. RAM declared, "let your battle assignment be against those who are abusing your children, wives, mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers and loved ones." It asked, "whose side are you on?"[52] The author stated that there were three revolutionary principles: self-defense and vengence; all black independent action; and a fight for integration, "integrated pools of blood." Black soldiers had to throw down their arms, refuse to fight and "let, (their) manhood be born."[53]

These themes were raised again in a letter written in 1966 from RAM to all oppressed peoples in the U.S. and its protectorates and possessions. In this paper RAM calls the attention of black soldiers to the demonstrations of revolutionary solidarity that have been carried out by the Chinese, Vietnamese and others in support of the African-American struggle.

From 1966 to 1969, the doctrine of urban guerrilla warfare was frequently mentioned in the documents. It was often presented in conjunction with the role of the Black Guards as defenders of the black community and as a pre-black liberation army formation. In 1966, RAM stated that the catalyst for the ultimate armed confrontation would occur in one and one-half of two years. This would be the unleashing of the racist and fascist

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[52]"Message to Afro-Americans in the U.S. Racist Imperialist Army," July 4, 1965, p. 1.

[53]Ibid., p. 2

forces of the U.S. against the black struggle.[54]

In summary, the RAM documents reflected on ideological and programmatic consistency over the seven-year period studied. There were no abrupt retreats from initial positions or introductions of major new ideological points. The assessment of the international nature of the black struggle, RAM's analysis of the black American movement and the black community, the revolutionary role of black youth and the working class, its programs and structures, and the position on urban guerrilla warfare, remained essentially the same throughout. The changes that were discussed in this chapter were generally tactical and therefore never altered the strategic aims of the organization and its membership.

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[54] The Struggle for Black State Power in the U.S., July-August, 1966, p. 10.

CHAPTER SEVEN

RESPONSE OF THE STATE

The scope of this chapter is to analyze the response of the State to the RAM organization and the black liberation movement in general in the 1960's and early 1970's.

While chapters four and five described the evolution, growth and demise of the RAM organization, this chapter details the emergence and operation of the State's intelligence/counter-insurgent mechanism which developed as a response to the revolutionary potential of groups such as RAM.

The development of a complete discussion of the State's program for destroying RAM as a revolutionary organization is hampered by the dearth of primary source material. A limited number of FBI documents on the Counter-Intelligence Program, code name COINTELPRO, have been released only recently. The documents on RAM members that have been studied indicate that the RAM cadres were victims of the same tactics that the FBI used against other black organizations and individuals.

It is clear if one examines the histories of other prominent black groups and individuals, in relation to COINTELPRO and local activities, that these programs of harassment and repression were used against a broad spectrum of movement participants. Although the RAM documents are limited at this time, it is safe to assume that RAM cadres were victims of COINTELPRO and local police repression.

Within this chapter a brief overview of the development of the

activities of the police and security agencies of the State against significant individuals and groups will be presented. A description of the FBI and Army Intelligence programs against the black liberation movement will be presented. An examination of significant individuals and organizations, including RAM, will follow with a summary.

In December of 1965, the Montgomery bus boycott started and the civil rights movement was born. Immediately, the black community in Montgomery came under surveillance by the U.S. Army and FBI. Hoover began his search for communist influence on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the FBI began its content analysis of the new stage of the struggle.

Attorney General Herbert Brownell recommended to President Eisenhower's cabinet in March, 1956, that in light of the rise of racial tension throughout the South, caused by school desegration, a civil rights legislative program be designed to protect voting rights and other rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution.[1] Hoover was part of the briefing and contributed a paper on racial tension and civil rights. Much of Hoover's report was centered around how the Communist Party was trying to infiltrate the NAACP.[2]

An important factor in studying repression against the black liberation movement is how the military-police intelligence apparatus became further centralized during this period. The intelligence community, though it has semi-autonomous units designed for specific functions, had been centralized on a national level since 1936, through the FBI under Hoover's control. Through Hoover's memos to the National Security Agency and

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[1]Pat Watters and Stephen Gillers, Investigating the FBI (New York: Ballantine Books, 1973), p. 165.

[2]Ibid., p. 166.

various military intelligence agencies, the general directive, or strategy of what to concentrate on domestically would be given. The FBI had informants in Civil Rights organizations and at local and national demonstrations. An aspect of the military-police intelligence apparatus that has received little attention is the cooperation of local and state police agencies with the FBI.

In the late 50's and early 60's, local and state police agencies placed more emphasis on intelligence and counter-intelligence. Traditionally called 'red squads', the intelligence units of local police agencies began taking pictures of people in demonstrations, at public rallies and meetings, and at all gatherings identified with political protest. Sometimes photographers for newspapers were approached and asked for copies of photographs taken at various events.

Consistent activists, if not all participants, were indexed in local and state "radical" dossiers and information was shared nationally through the Law Enforcement Intelligence Unit (LEIU), which consisted of 150 police departments. The FBI had close communication and liaison with the LEIU. Files from the LEIU often ended up in the radical index of the FBI.[3]

A national intelligence system based on the cooperation and support of national and local security agencies was established by the mid-60's from major urban areas to the national government.

In 1965, the FBI started its secret COINTELPRO program. Much of the COINTELPRO program was concentrated on disrupting the Communist Party. But as the Civil Rights Movement began to intensify, the FBI became more engaged in subversive activities to crush it as well.

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[3]Supplementary Detailed Staff Reports on Intelligence Activities and the Rights of Americans, U.S. Senate, Book III (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1976), p. 791.

For instance, in 1961, the FBI passed information to the Klan through Sgt. Thomas Cook, an officer in the Birmingham Police Department's intelligence branch which included the complete itinerary of two bus loads of Freedom Riders. Cook, a member of the KKK, had been instructed by Klan leader, Robert Shelton, to keep him informed of the Freedom Riders plans. The FBI knew that the KKK planned to attack the Freedom Riders and that the Birmingham Police were not going to attempt to halt the attack.[4]

The FBI's broadest intelligence collecting program was carried out under its Communist Infiltration program, COMINFIL.

> An example of one such investigation was the FBI's COMINFIL case on the NAACP. In 1957, the New York Field Office prepared a 137-page report covering the intelligence gathered during the previous year. Copies were disseminated to the three military intelligence agencies. The report described the national section of the NAACP, its growth and membership, its officers and directors, its national conventions, its stand on communism and the role in its state and local chapters of alleged Communists, members of Communist front groups, and the Socialist Workers Party.[5]

In August, 1967, the FBI initiated its secret COINTELPRO program to disrupt and "neutralize" so called "Black Nationalist Hate Groups."

The FBI memorandum expanding the program described its goals are:

1. Prevent a coalition of militant black nationalist groups.

2. Prevent the rise of a "Messiah" who could unify, and electrify, the militant Black Nationalist Movement.

3. Prevent violence on the part of Black Nationalist groups. . . . Through counterintelligence it should be possible to pinpoint potential troublemakers and neutralize them before they exercise their potential for violence.

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[4]"FBI Harassed Civil Rights Movement," Guardian, Vol. 30, No. 45, (August 30, 1978), p. 3.

[5]Supplementary Detailed Staff Reports On Intelligence Activities and the Rights of Americans, U.S. Senate (Washington, D. C.: GOP, 1976) p. 450.

4. Prevent militant Black Nationalist groups and leaders from gaining respectability, by discrediting them to three separate segments of the community.

5. A final goal should be to prevent the long-range growth of militant Black Nationalist organizations, especially among youth.[6]

The FBI instructed 41 field divisions to implement COINTELPRO against Black organizations in major cities in the United States. From the program's inception to 1971, over 2,300 known proposals for disruptive activities were approved by the FBI.[7]

In the Fall of 1967, the FBI intensified its Black Nationalist Groups TOPLEV Informant Program.

Local police were encouraged by the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders to establish intelligence programs both for their use and to feed into a Federal intelligence gathering process.

The FBI Ghetto Informant Program, begun in 1967, had some 7,402 informants by Spetember, 1972. The ghetto informant originally conceived was to act as a 'listening post', an individual who lives or works in a ghetto area and has access to information regarding the racial situation and racial activities in his area which he furnishes to the Bureau on a confidential basis. The role of the ghetto informant was expanded to attend public meetings held by so-called extremists, to identify so-called extremists passing through or locating them in the ghetto area and to identify who were the distributors of extremist literature.

The FBI targeted "key figures" and "top functionaires" for special attention but the scope of its security intelligence investigations was much wider.

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[6]FBI Letter to Field Offices, August 25, 1967.

[7]Irish L. Washington, "The FBI Plot Against Black Leaders," Essence Magazine 9:6 (October 1978), p. 70.

> Individuals were investigated if they were members in basic revolutionary organizations or were 'espousing the line of revolutionary movements.'[8]

If an individual the FBI considered "subversive" planned to travel abroad, information concerning the person's proposed travel plans and activities would be forwarded by the FBI to the Central Intelligence Agency.

The Army and FBI Responses to the Urban Rebellions

> The urban riots of the summer of 1967 greatly intensified FBI domestic intelligence operations. Equally important, the Detroit and Newark riots brought other agencies of the Federal government into the picture. A Presidential Commission was established to study civil disorders, the Attorney General re-examined the intelligence capabilities of the Justice Department and the use of Federal troops in riot torn cities led to widespread military intelligence surveillance of civilians.[9]

The Army instituted a massive intelligence operation against the movement for social change in the 1960's. Army intelligence agents penetrated major protest demonstrations. All forms of political dissent were routinely investigated in virtually every city within the United States. Army intelligence reports were circulated to law enforcement agencies at all levels of government and other intelligence agencies. Army agents posing as newspaper reporters interviewed Stokely Carmichael and H. Rap Brown in New York in 1967, and the staff of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in 1968.[10]

> In Chicago, during the 1960's military organizations to the Chicago police, were invited to participate in police raids, and routinely exchanged intelligence reports with the police. In Washington, D.C., Army intelligence participated in an FBI raid in a civilian department's intelligence division.[11]

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[8] Supplementary Detailed Staff Reports, p. 448.

[9] Ibid., p. 491.

[10] Ibid., p. 802.

[11] Ibid., p. 791.

Intelligence information was gathered by the Army through liaison with local police and the public media. The Army sent 1,500 investigators into communities to report on different types of political activity.[12] Army agents pentrated the Poor Peoples' March to Washington in April, 1968, as well as "Resurrection City," Army agents infiltrated into groups coming from Seattle, Washington, to the Poor People's campaign. The Army monitored protests of a welfare mothers' organization in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Army agents posed as students to monitor classes in 'Black Studies' at New York University, where James Farmer, former head of CORE, was teaching. About 58 Army agents infiltrated demonstrations in Chicago during the Democratic National Convention in 1968. Army agents attended meetings of a Sanitation Workers' union in Atlanta, Georgia in 1968. An Army agent infiltrated the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in 1968. This is just a small review of Army intelligence activities against the Black Liberation Movement.

During the mid 1960's, urban rebellions that took place in America's major cities alarmed Army intelligence. The Army drew up formal contingency plans. Army intelligence began collecting information on individuals and organizations, without authorization, as part of its overall mission to support military commanders with information regarding possible deployments in Civil disturbance. In 1965, there were four major urban rebellions; in 1966, 21 and in 1967, 83. The National Guard was deployed 36 times during this period and the Army once in Detroit for eight days in 1967. The urban rebellions (riots) in the North, in 1964 led to a substantial change in FBI intelligence dealing with black "extremists" and

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[12]Ibid., p. 795.

civil disorders. President Johnson instructed the FBI to investigate the origins of the rebellions. The FBI surveyed nine cities and published a report in which it referred to Progressive Labor, a Marxist Leninist group with offices based in Harlem, and without mentioning his name, described the activities of Malcolm X as a leader urging blacks to abandon the doctrine of non-violence.

FBI director, J. Edgar Hoover testified before the House Appropriations Committee that the FBI was following the racial situation.

> The Justice Department reported that this intelligence had already made it possible for the Civil Rights Division to keep 'a close and continuing watch on civil rights demonstrations, which totaled 2,422 in almost all states during the year ending April, 1964.'[13]

In 1966, the FBI instituted a program of preparing semi-monthly summaries of possible racial violence in major urban areas. Field offices were instructed to conduct a continuing survey to develop more information concerning racial developments.

The FBI concentrated its investigation on black nationalists organizations described as "hate type organizations," with a propensity for violence and civil disorder.

> Leaders and members of 'black nationalist' groups were investigated under the Emergency Detention Program for placement on the FBI's SEcurity Index.[14]

Dr. King and SCLC were included on the Security Index because the FBI feared Dr. King might abandon non-violence and embrace nationalism.

Activities Against Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

From 1963 until 1968, the FBI targeted Dr. Martin Luther King to

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[13]Ibid., p. 476.

[14]Ibid., p. 477.

"neutralize" him as an effective Civil Rights leader. The FBI's plot to destroy Dr. King, code named Operation Zorro, included the spending of $7.5 million of government funds.[15] The FBI had Dr. King under extensive surveillance since the later 1950's through its program called "Racial Matters." In October of 1962, the FBI opened its investigation of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and Dr. King. By May, 1962, the FBI had put Dr. King in Section A of its "Reserve Index," as a person to be rounded up and detained in the event of a "national emergency."[16]

The FBI tapped Dr. King's home telephone, SCLC telephones and the home and office phones of Dr. King's close advisors. The FBI wired and taped recorded Dr. King hotel and motel rooms on at least sixteen occasions in an attempt to obtain information about him and his advisors' private activities to use to "completely discredit" them.[17]

The FBI mailed Dr. King a tape recording made from its microphone coverage. According to the Chief of the FBI's Domestic Intelligence Division, the tape was intended to precipitate a separation between Dr. King and his wife in the belief that the separation would reduce Dr. King's stature. The tape recording was accompanied by a note which Dr. King and his advisors interpreted as a threat to release the tape recording unless Dr. King committed suicide. The FBI also made preparations to promote someone "to assume the role of leadership of the Negro people when King

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[15]"More Revealed on Plot to Murder Dr. King." Workers World, Vol. 20, No. 32, (August 11, 1978), p. 3.

[16]Supplementary Detailed Staff Reports, p. 87.

[17]Ibid., p. 82.

had been completely discredited."[18]

On March 31, 1968, the Army circulated a classified message to all domestic commands of the Army. The message authorized the Army Security Agency, which intercepts communications for both national and tactical purpose to participate in the Army's Civil Disturbance Collection Plan.[19]

The communique stated the ASA could be used to monitor domestic communications, conduct jamming and deception in support of Army forces committed in civil disorders and disturbances. ASA personnel were to be "disguised" either in civilian clothes or as members of other military units. The authorization of the use of ASA units in civil disturbances was issued four days before Dr. Martin Luther King's assassination on April 4, 1968, in Memphis, Tennessee. On April 5, 1968, ASA units were directed by the Army to begin monitoring civilian radio transmissions as part of riot control operations.[20]

Activities Against Malcolm X

While the present release of public information concerning COINTELPRO, the FBI secret war against the black liberation movement, mentions very little concerning Malcolm X; he was under surveillance since the early 1950's.[21] J. Edgar Hoover sent several letters to the Attorney General requesting legal action be taken against the Nation of Islam. Leaders of the NOI were put on the FBI Security Index.

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[18]Ibid., p. 82.

[19]Ibid., p. 791.

[20]Ibid., p. 798-801.

[21]Eric Norden, "The Assassination of Malcolm X." Hustler, (December 1978), p. 105.

Malcolm X's break from the nation of Islam caused great alarm in the 'invisible government' which was the intelligence community. Malcolm's organizations, the Muslim Mosque, Inc. and the Organization of Afro-American Unity, (OAAU) were infiltrated by various intelligence and police agencies. The infamous highly secretive NY Bureau of Special Services (BOSS), which was responsible for the Statue of Liberty bomb plot (1965), Roy Wilkins/Whitney Young Assassination plot (1967), and the Panther 21 plot (1969), had infiltrated Malcolm's organizations.

Malcolm had also been a victim of poisoning while in the middle east, possibly at the hand of the CIA. The State Department issued a memo on Malcolm in 1965 stating that he was detrimental to U.S. Foreign Policy. Malcolm remembered a tall thin dark, olive skinned man following him in his world travels. This man returned to the United States when Malcolm returned.[22]

Gene Roberts, a body guard for Malcolm, later turned up in the Panther 21 case as a police agent. McKinley Welch, an Afor-Puerto Rican, a BOSS agent in the New York Black Panther Party, stated to Max Stanford in 1967 that he had infiltrated, Mosque (NOI) Number Seven in New York and had become secretary. When Malcolm left the Nation of Islam, Welch was ordered by his superiors to infiltrate the OAAU. Welch confessed to Stanford because of his increased political awareness and becasue the New York Black Panther intelligence had already identified him as a police agent.[23] He said agents from every agency were in the OAAU. From recorded reports of accounts given to the Herald Tribune, February 23 that several members of

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[22] Malcolm X, Autobiography of Malcolm X (New York: Grove Press, 1965).

[23] Confession of McKinley Welch, May 1967, Philadelphia, Penn.

(BOSS) were present in the audience at the time of Malcolm's assassination. Also, the second man caught by the audience at the time of the assassination outside of the Audubon Ballroom and turned over to police, mysteriously disappeared.[24] Malcolm X's home had been firebombed a couple of weeks before his assassination. Since he was under constant surveillance and was on the FBI Security Index, where were the New York police and FBI?

Activities Against RAM

The Revolutionary Action Movement was active in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in the summer of 1967 when the FBI's COINTELPRO campaign against Black Nationalists went into full swing.

> The SA (authors note: reference is unknown) contacting the Intelligence Unit secured spot check coverage of Stanford by Negro officers as a personal favor after explaining RAM and Stanford's position in it to police officials.
>
> When activity started with the appearance of known Negro extremists native to Philadelphia at the Stanford residence, a full-time surveillance by police went into effect. Police disruptive action was also initiated.
>
> Cars stopping at the Stanford residence were checked as to license numbers. When they left the residence area they were subject to car stops by uniformed police. The occupants were identified. They then became targets for harassment . . .
>
> . . . any excuse for arrest was promptly implemented by arrest. Any possibility of neutralizing a RAM activist was exercised . . . . When surveillance reflected the arrival of a new group in town, they were brought in for investigation and their residence searched.
>
> Certain addresses used by (name withheld by FBI) as mail drops in Philadelphia had been determined to by addresses of known extremists. When a young Negro was arrested for passing out RAM printed flyers and was charged with inciting to riot, these addresses appeared in his statements to the police.

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[24]George Breitman, Herman Porter and Baxter Smith, et al. The Assassination of Malcolm X (New York: Pathfinder Press, Inc., 1976), pp. 52-54.

> While the search of the first four only eliminated their use as mail drops, the fifth contained RAM and Communist literature and a duplicating machine with a RAM leaflet on the plate. Three persons were arrested at this last address.
>
> RAM people were arrested and released on bail, but were re-arrested several times until they could no longer make bail.[25]

RAM cadre who were active in different parts of the country recalled police and FBI harassment when interviewed. One RAM member from the West Coast described an incident when a man posing as a reporter tried to interview the RAM member about his own history and the organization's programs. The "reporter" gave the RAM member a telephone number where he could be reached. The RAM cadre called the number and asked for the reporter, he had reached the FBI field office and the agent-reporter.[26]

Brother A., a member of the RAM organization in Cleveland, Ohio, was picked up by Central Intelligence Agency agents in Mexico in 1967 and turned over to the FBI in Texas. He was drugged by the FBI and extradicted to Cleveland to be tried on riot charges. He was acquitted of all charges.[27]

Ibn Ben Yusef Muhammad, a Philadelphia cadre, who was involved in the Holmesburg Prison Rebillion in 1971 was also a victim of repression. Immediately after the prison authorities retook the prison FBI agents interrogated Muhammad about his political affiliations. He was released prior to serving his time and prior to eligibility for parole. Two months after his release, he was mysteriously murdered in Philadelphia. It appears that

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[25]Counter-Intelligence, Volume One, National Lawyers Guild Task Force on Counter Intelligence and the Secret Police, Chicago, Illinois, 1978, pp. 53-54.

[26]Interview with Brother Y., October, 1978, Amherst, Massachusetts.

[27]Interview with Brother A., December, 1978, Cleveland, Ohio.

the FBI wanted him out of the prison and participated in arranging his early release.[28]

Activities Against the Black Panther Party

The FBI extensive war was the counter-insurgency plan waged against the Black Panther Party. In September, 1968, FBI Director, J. Edgar Hoover, described the Black Panther Party as:

> The greatest threat to the internal security of the country. Schooled in the Marxist-Leninist ideology and the teaching of Chinese Communist leader Mao Tse-Tung, its members have perpetrated numerous assaults on police throughout the country. Leaders and representatives of the Black Panther Party travel extensively all over the United States preaching their gospel of hate and violence not only to ghetto residents but to students in colleges, universities and high schools as well.[29]

By July, 1969, the Black Panther Party was under constant attack by police and FBI actions coordinated from Washington, D.C.

The BPP was the target of 223 of the total 295 Black Nationalist COINTELPRO actions.

The conspiracy against the Black Panther Party took on mammouth proportions bordering on outright fascist terror tactics. The FBI fostered rivalries between the Black Panthers and Ron Karenga's U.S. organization sending derogatory cartoons and death threats to both groups. The FBI sent an anonymous letter to the leader of the Black Stone Rangers informing him that the Chicago Panthers had a hit on him. In 1969, there were one hundred and thirteen arrests of BPP members in Chicago with only a handful resulting in convictions.[30] In 1969, 348 BPP members across the

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[28] Interview with Brother W., August, 1971. Youngstown, Ohio.

[29] Supplementary Detailed Staff Reports, pp. 187-188.

[30] Ibid., p. 195.

country were arrested on various charges arranging from murder, armed robbery, rape, bank robbery to burglary.[31]

> A Black former agent-provacteur, admittedly employed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation from 1968 through 1975 to 'inform on and observe the activities of the Black Panther Party,' has stated in a sworn affidavit that the FBI plotted 'to eliminate local and national leadership of the BPP during the month of December, 1969'.[32]

Roy Wilkins and Ramsey Clark in their book Search and Destroy: A Report by the Commission of Inquiry into the Black Panthers and the Police, (Metropolitan Applied Research Center, Inc., 1973), provides a detail account of a police raid that was premeditated murder on December 4, 1969. Police, under the pretense of a weapons search, raided the Panther's apartment in Chicago at 4:45 a.m. pumping over 80 rounds into the bodies of Fred Hampton and Mark Clark, killing them and wounding four others. A detailed inventory of weapons and a floor plan of the apartment had been supplied to the FBI by an informant before the raid. The FBI give this information to the local police conducting the raid.

According to a Black former agent provocateur who was employed for the FBI.

> The chief of the Los Angeles FBI office, Brandon Cleary, told him that a Black agent-provocateur in Chicago put seco-barbital sleeping powder in some kool-aid he knew Fred Hampton was going to drink the night the 21-year old BPP leader was slain on December 4, 1969. The seco-barbital had been given to him by his supervising agent of the FBI.[33]

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[31]Louis Heath, ed., Off the Pigs. Scarecrow Press, Inc., Metuchen, New Jersey, 1976, p. 33.

[32]"FBI Plotted to Eliminate BPP Leadership." The Black Panther, Vol. 18, No. 3, (March 11, 1978), p. 1.

[33]"FBI Plotted to Eliminate BPP Leadership," p. 1.

Party members had tried to wake Hampton repeatedly in the opening rounds of the raid.

> Hampton's personal bodyguard, Tom O'Neal, turned out to be an FBI infiltrator who made more than $10,000 on the deal, having fed information to the FBI on the Panthers from January, 1969 through July, 1970.[34]

The ex-FBI informant who confessed to the Black Panther Party in affidavit asserted he provided the FBI with a layout of the Southern California Chapter BPP's office in Los Angeles, prior to a police raid on December 8, 1969. "It was my work and the work of known informant, Melvin 'Cotton' Smith, which caused the raids to happen, the affidavit asserts."[35] On December 8, 1969, 500 cops from the Los Angeles Police Department led by SWAT, laid seige on the Southern California Black Panther Party Chapter's headquarters for over eight hours while simultaneously 18 Party Members were arrested throughout Los Angeles.

In Los Angeles, murder was committed by both the Los Angeles Police and the FBI. Steve Bartholomew, Tommy Lewis and Robert Lawrence, Black Panthers were sitting in a parked car at a gas station on August 25, 1968, when members of the LAPS's metro squad opened fire, killing them almost instantly.[36] The Los Angeles FBI office was constantly at work to destroy the Panthers by promoting the war between the Panthers and the U.S. organization.

Bobby Seale former Chairman of the BPP recalls the COINTELPRO tactics:

> I remember the times following John Huggins' and Bunchy Carter's deaths. They would post a couple of cars at this corner, a couple of cars at that one, the Black Panther office in the middle of the

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[34]"FBI Plotted to Eliminate BPP Leadership," p 1.

[35]"The FBI Plotted Against Black Leaders," p. 98.

[36]Supplementary Detailed Staff Reports, p. 189.

> block. Us, in a carload, would come by, throw a Molotov cocktail right at the door, hoping to get the Black Panthers to run out of the office, blasting at them while the police were there waiting, ambulances around the corner, everything.[37]

Financial supporters of the party were harassed. The FBI contacted newspapers having negative articles written about the party and supporters. The IRS constantly harassed the party.

Hoover ordered FBI agents to use discreet counter-intelligence action against the BPP Free Breakfast program.

Financial donators to the program were harassed, ministers and churches hounded. The FBI worked day and night to create internal dissension in the party. One tactic was agent baiting.

In New York, in 1969, the "Panther Twenty-one" were arrested on charges of having conspired to bomb department stores, blow-up police stations and murder policemen. The Panthers were held under $100,00 bail each and a number of them had been held in jail for over two years when in May, 1971, they were acquitted.

The FBI in 1970 started a program to create a permanent division between Black Panther Party leader Eldrdige Cleaver who was in Algeria and BPP headquarters in the United States. The FBI sent an anonymous letter to Cleaver stating that BPP leaders in California were undermining his influence. Cleaver thought the letter was from Connie Matthews who was a Panther representative in Scandanavia and expelled three members from BPP international staff. As a result of the success of the tactic Bureau, personnel received incentive awards from J. Edgar Hoover.[38]

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[37]Iris L. Washington, p. 100.

[38]Counter-Intelligence, p. 50.

The FBI sent a barrage of letters to Cleaver, Newton and other leaders of the Black Panther Party to create constant confusion. The FBI learned that Huey P. Newton had disciplined high BPP officials. The FBI believed Huey's reaction was in part the result of its counter-intelligence operations.

> The present chaotic situation within the BPP must be exploited and recipients must maintain the present high level of counter-intelligence activity. You should each give this matter priority, attention and immediately furnish Bureau recommendations . . . designed to further aggravate the dissention within BPP leadership and to fan the apparent distrust by Newton of anyone who questions his wishes.[39]

By February, 1971, the FBI had directed each of its 20 field offices to submit proposals of how to disrupt local BPP chapters and cause dissention between local BPP chapters and BPP national headquarters. As a result of the confusion caused by the FBI, on February 26, 1971, Eldridge Cleaver called Huey Newton from Algiers, while Newton was on a T.V. program being interviewed. Cleaver criticized the expulsion of BPP members and suggested that Chief of Staff David Hilliard be removed from his post. Huey responded by expelling Cleaver and the International section of the party in Algiers.

The FBI also attempted to "neutralize" the Black Panther Party by putting pressure on its financial supporters. Actress Jane Fonda was targeted for character assassination. Various actors and or their wives were victims of the same types of tactics. The FBI considered the BPP's free "Breakfast for Children" program a threat because it was winning support for the party in various communities. The FBI zeroed in on anyone or companies, even supporting the BPP Breakfast program.

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[39]Supplementary Detailed Staff Reports on Intelligence Activities and the Rights of Americans, p. 205.

> Churches that permitted the Panthers to use their facilities in the free breakfast program were also targeted. When the FBI San Diego office discovered that a Catholic Priest, Father Frank Curran, was permitting his church in San Diego to be used as a serving place for the BPP Breakfast Program, it sent an anonymous letter to the Bishop of the San Diego Diocese informing him of the Priest's activities. In August, 1969, the San Diego Field Office requested permission from headquarters to place three telephone calls protesting Father Curran's support of the BPP program to the Auxiliary Bishop of the San Diego Diocese.[40]

The FBI also sent anonymous mailings to public officials and people who might sway public opinion against the BPP. The FBI destroyed community support for individual BPP members by spreading rumors that they were immoral. The San Diego Field Office reported it had been successful in this aspect of COINTELPRO by anonymously informing the parents of a teenage girl that she was pregnant by a local BPP leader. The parents of the girl forced her to resign from the BPP and return home to live. As a result, it became general knowledge throughout the Black community that the BPP leader was responsible for the difficulty experienced by the girl.

> The field office also considered the operation successful because the mother of another girl questioned the activities of her own daughter after talking with the parent the agents had anonymously contacted. She learned that her daughter, a BPP member, was also pregnant, and had her committed to a reformatory as a wayward juvenile.[41]

The FBI also, on several occasions, developed schemes to create friction between the Black Panthers and the Nation of Islam. The FBI war against the Black Liberation Movement was very extensive. In a July 10, 1968, FBI memorandum, it was suggested that consideration be given to conveying the impression that Stokely Carmichael was a CIA agent. The report suggested that the FBI inform a certain percentage of criminal and racial

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[40]Ibid.. p. 210

[41]Ibid., p. 213.

informants that from reliable sources we heard that Carmichael is a CIA agent. It was proposed that the informants would spread the rumor throughout the Black community nationwide.[42]

Activities Against the RNA

An FBI memorandum stated in mid-September 1970 that the FBI upon learning that Brother Imari Obadele of the RNA was going to purchase land in Hinds County, Mississippi, went to the owner of the land harassing him for one and one-half hours. As a result, the memorandum said the owner said he would not sell the RNA the land.[43]

The FBI in Milwaukee infiltrated the RNA consulate there with a paid informer named Thomas Spells. Spells became a close friend of a brother named Sylee who had committed a filling station robbery murder in Michigan. Spells informed the FBI of Sylee's fugitive status in 1971. Instead of arresting Sylee, the FBI waited until Sylee went to an RNA Convention in Jackson, Mississippi, on July 16, 1971 with informer Spells, instructing Spells to contact the Jackson FBI when he got there and to tell him Sylee had arrived. Sylee stayed in Jackson after the conference but was asked to leave the RNA headquarters because of erratic behavior. The FBI raided RNA headquarters in August, 1971.[44]

It becomes increasingly clear in studying U.S. government documents presently being released by the FBI through the Freedom of Information Act, that the FBI, Army and local police agencies saw themselves at war with

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[42]Counter-Intelligence, Volume 1, p. 58.

[43]Ibid., p. 29.

[44]Ibid.. p. 29.

the black liberation movement. RAM's analysis that liberation of black people was impossible under capitalism is supported by the government's counter-insurgency program against all elements of the movement. The federal agencies were as vicious and thorough in their attacks against the moderate elements represented by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., an advocate of non-violence and integration, as they were against those such as RAM who called for the overthrow of the state.[45] The government was willing in the late 1960's and early 1970's to use harassment, intimidation, incarceration, spying, character assassination and murder to crush the black movement. It seems safe to assume that these tactics will be used again as the black liberation movement rebuilds its in the coming years.

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[45]The author used government investigations of its own activities to demonstrate its own admission of its participation in illegal activities and more importantly, its strategy to destroy the movement.

CHAPTER EIGHT

SYNTHESIS: RESURGENCE OF THE BLACK LIBERATION MOVEMENT AND THE FUTURE

In this chapter, the author who was a former leader in RAM will present a personal analysis of the failures of RAM during the 1960's. Also, this chapter will evaluate aspects of the contemporary conditions of black people and develop a black paradigm for the future of the black liberation movement.

Though the Revolutionary Action Movement failed in its objective of achieving a black nationalist social revolution and national independence of the black nation, it was an important movement in the history of the black liberation movement in the United states. It was the first revolutionary nationalist movement to emerge in the 1960's and the first black organization to advocate revolutionary violence against the capitalist system. It was the prototype for later developments such as the Black Panther Party, the Republic of New Africa, the League of Revolutionary Black Workers and African People's Party.

It was the first black organization in the 1960's that attempted to analyze the condition of black people in the U.S. through a dialectical and historical materialist approach. It attempted to apply Marxism-Leninism Mao Tse-Tung thought to the unique conditions of the founders of scientific socialist thought, particularly Marx, Engles and Lenin; it advanced the theory that the black liberation movement in the U.S. was part of the vanguard of the world socialist revolution. Its major weaknesses were its failure to develop a long-range strategy for the overthrow of the capitalist

system and its failure to investigate how its actions would relate to other sectors of the population, i.e., white, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Asian and Native American communities.

The Revolutionary Action Movement's confrontation politics was a singular approach strategy and was not flexible or comprehensive enough to guide the movement to a successful socialist revolution in the United States. In only having a singular approach, that is, violent confrontation politics against the state, RAM was out-maneuvered by the U.S. capitalist state and was isolated from its potential support base, the radical sector of the black middle class.

As an organization advocating urban guerrilla warfare to achieve black liberation, RAM was constantly attacked by moderate Negro leaders as a violent suicidal organization with which the majority of black people identified. RAM also failed to develop a thorough analysis of how the black revolution would succeed, the steps, and stages the revolution would go through and what type of society would be created afterwards.

This weakness became increasingly apparent as the militancy of the black masses escalated. The lack of a cohesive theoretical framework and and revolutionary strategy limited the direction that RAM cadre could offer to the people. RAM cadre's grasp of revolutionary theory and its application in practice was embroynic.

From 1965 to 1969, urban rebellions had become a mass phenomenon. During this period, it was estimated about 250 people were killed, 12,000 injured, and 83,000 arrested. Property damage was estimated to be several hundred millions. But urban rebellions were feared by the traditional civil rights organizations such as NAACP, SCLC and the Urban League.[1]

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[1]"How It Happened." The New York Times, 22 February 1978, p. 1.

> The riots eventually stopped as the police became more sophisticated and learned how to nip them in the bud and as local black leaders, seeing the enormous damage that had ensured, called for an end to that form of social protest.[2]

Another major RAM flaw was its inability to perceive, until 1968, that the nature of the black liberation struggle in the United States would be protracted. Had the leadership of RAM understood protracted warfare, it would never had projected the theory of a "90-day" war of liberation. Its strategy towards confrontation politics would have been much different. RAM also fail to develop a comprehensive ideological analysis and methodical approach to how the Afro-American national democratic revolution would transform itself into a struggle for self-determination and national independence. RAM also did not perceive how the black community participating in a general black strike and supporting urban guerrilla war would survive the continuous assaults by the State in what would be a very long war for independence. In its perception of the potential of a minority revolution, RAM failed to appeal to different classes or strata of the U.S. imperialist state. These groups, because of common class interests, might support an Afro-American war of national liberation if the objective was to establish a socialist state. Dr. Mack Jones, Chairman of the Atlanta University Political Science Department has said:

> The political history of any people can be determined by looking at their political thought. The political thought is the sum of a people's trying to end oppression.[3]

RAM's history reflects its failure to develop a comprehensive political analysis, program, strategy and tactics that would lead to its objectives.

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[2]Ibid.

[3]Dr. Mack Jones, Blacks and the American Political System, Political Science Class, Atlanta University, Spring, 1978.

The Revolutionary Action Movement was an embryonic revolutionary nationalist, scientific socialist movement--the first of its kind in the history of the black liberation movement. While RAM was instrumental in transforming the civil rights movement from a non-violent movement seeking peaceful reform to a black movement seeking radical change or revolution through armed struggle, it never was able to become the hegemonic group in the black liberation struggle. It therefore failed to gain leadership of the movement.

Because of the underground nature of the movement, it failed to utilize most of the avenues of mass communications and thus did not utilize all of the resources in the black community. While RAM had a major impact on northern inner city black communities, as was evident increase in black nationalist activities in northern black communities from 1964 to 1968, it was unable to consolidate this mass movement and to lead it to its historical conclusions. RAM was plagued with the problem of translating theory into practice, that is, developing a day-to-day style of work (mass line) related to the objective materialist reality in the United States. Like most black revolutionary organizations, RAM was not able to deal successfully with protracted struggle. RAM as a social movement is an important study because it was instrumental in the mass urban rebellions of the 1960's. It also set the stage for more advanced types of liberation organizations to emerge in the 1960's.

The 1960's was the most active period in the history of the United States of black people en masse trying to radically transform the American social order. For this reason, the 1960's has become an increasing concern for social researchers. The significance of the 1960's is that is provides a legacy and is a forerunner for the present day black liberation

movement.[4] Racism keeps non-European people at the bottom of the ladder, economically, socially and politically, allowing all people of European ancestry to ascend to higher levels in American society with the wasp-Anglo-Saxon stock being supreme. On the other hand, power at all levels is basically consolidated in the hands of 50 multi-billionaire families and their executive managerial class who economically and politically super-exploit the working class. The capitalist class keeps the working class divided by maintaining racism that keeps white workers from seeing that black and other third world workers in the United States are their allies. This is called a race-class synthesis. But is this analysis an adequate paradigm for black liberation? While this chapter is not intended to answer this, the question should be posed.

Black unemployment nationally is estimated at about 24 percent;[5] a comparison between 1968 and 1979 shows the average jobless rate for blacks has nearly doubled from 6.7 percent to 12.3 percent and 12 percent higher for black teenagers. The average black income is 57 percent of white income, on the same level as ten years ago and five percent less than during the 1975 recession.[6]

Several reverse discrimination cases threaten the concept of Affirmative Action. In the educational sphere, the Bakke case has been upheld in the U.S. Supreme Court. At the point of production and concerning hiring practices and upgrading, the Sears and Weber cases threaten to reverse much

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[4] A Re-Evaluation of the 1960's, pp. 1-2.

[5] Vernon Jarrett, "Black Caucas Loudly Disagrees." Chicago Tribune, 28 January 1969, p. 34.

[6] Lynora Williams, "Blacks First Fired, Scorch Carter." The Guardian, 14 March 1979, p. 7.

of the economic gains black people have achieved through affirmative action programs.

With the 1,500 elected black politicians, black politicians represent less than one percent of elected political representatives in the United States. In the last five years, there have been numerous cases of elected black politicians being indicted for one charge or another. Howard Dodson, executive director of the Institute of the Black World says, "Obviously there is a conspiracy against black elected officials. It is part of the overall genocidal plan of the capitalist state to crush black people's movement for freedom."[7]

The KKK has been reemerging in the South as well as the North. Blacks have organized mass marches against police brutality, and cutbacks in Macon, Georgia, Los Angeles, California, Tupelo, Mississippi, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and New York City. The United League, a statewide armed mass action organization in Mississippi has been in armed struggle against the Ku Klux Klan for two years. Black United Fronts have emerged in New York and Philadelphia to organize the black community against repression there.[8] From the data released on the FBI's COINTELPRO Program and the existing political and economic conditions, the author concludes that the RAM analysis was the most applicable for developing a paradigm for black liberation.

Given that white workers have a low level of class consciousness, have traditionally allied with the State against black people, a paradigm for liberation has to be developed independent of them. The conclusion the

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[7] Interview with Howard Dodson, Atlanta, Georgia, March 20, 1979.

[8] "Black Mass Movement Re-Emerges." Black Star, Volume 4, Number 4, p. 1.

author draws is that in order for black people to achieve liberation, they must have a revolutionary black organization willing to wage struggle and capable of developing a program that speaks to the majority of black people.

APPENDIX A: Selected RAM Documents

The 12 point program of RAM
(Revolutionary Action Movement)
1964

PROJECTS AND PROBLEMS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT

1. DEVELOPMENT OF A NATIONAL BLACK STUDENT ORGANIZATION MOVEMENT

ASM, the Afro-American Student Movement, the student branch of RAM was formed to organize black students into a strong, well-organized student movement that can fight against injustices, against Afro-American students and black people in general.

PURPOSES:

1. To educate the Afro-American to the economic, political, and cultural basis of the racial situation in the United States and the world.

2. To develop unity with Africans in the United States and the world.

3. The unite and organize Afro-American students to become active in the Afro-American Liberation Struggle.

These purposes would develop revolutionary cadres in the high schools, junior high and colleges. The climax of such a program would be the development of a nationwide black student school strike which would repudiate the educational system. This strike would be over what black students are and are not taught. ASM's purpose is to show black students that the only way to succeed in life is to cause a revolution in this country. ASM would develop groups around black history, students rights, and also over conditions under which Afro-American students must operate. This all-black national student organization would build to establish total social dislocation. With students demonstrating the guerrilla force will have a base for mass support. It should be noted that this support is coming from youth. This will eventually rally young black workers and the unemployed. ASM will politicalize the black student community and will serve as the vanguard in the struggle. When the Afro-American student strike is initiated it will be left to RAM to have other segments of the black community to strike in sympathy. If guerrilla warfare is being waged, this strike would be in support of the guerrillas. ASM on campus would develop political parties to take over student government. The objective is to obtain power in black colleges.

2. DEVELOPMENT OF IDEOLOGY (FREEDOM) SCHOOLS

The purpose of the "Freedom" schools would be to develop cadres, with the revolutionary theory and doctrine of RAM. These schools will teach the history of the movement, current events, political theory

methods of social action, methods of self-defense, basic principles of guerrilla warfare, techniques of social dislocation, propaganda techniques and indocrination, black history, etc. Essentially the schools will be polictical.

3. DEVELOPMENT OF RIFLE CLUBS

The rifle clubs will be made up of local veterans and other people from community. The purpose of the rifle club is to develop a black militia capable of protecting the black community. This militia would work with the liberation army and would serve as a base for the establishment of a community government.

4. DEVELOPMENT OF LIBERATION ARMY (GUERRILLA YOUTH FORCE)

The purpose of the Liberation Army is to carry out political, economic, physical overthrow of this system. The Liberation Army's role is to take over cities, cause complete social dislocation of communications, etc. "Our countryside is the cities all over the country". Therefore, the major part of guerrilla warfare in the U.S.A. will take place in the cities. The cities are the pockets of power and heart of the economy.

5. DEVELOPMENT OF PROPAGANDA. TRAINING CENTERS AND NATIONAL ORGAN

The purpose of this center is to train cadre in techniques and methods of propaganda and also to act as a center for the movement. Classes in intelligence, etc., will be taught. The two most important things are a press and a publishing company. Black America is RAM's national organ. It will act as an organizer and coordinator for the movement. It will be a journal of ideas and direction.

6. DEVELOPMENT OF UNDERGROUND VANGUARD

RAM can be classifed as an underground vanguard. All RAM members will be working to spread the vanguard as far as possible. The purpose is to develop a revolutionary machine that is capable of continuing the revolution if the leader or leaders are wiped out.

7. DEVELOPMENT OF BLACK WORKERS "LIBERATION" UNIONS

The purpose of the liberation movements are to fight for better conditions on jobs, to organize Afro-American to spy, etc., for the purpose of a national strike, etc. Women's leagues will also play an important role in the national strike. The purpose of Women's leagues is to organize black women who work in whitie's homes.

8. DEVELOPMENT OF BLOCK ORGANIZATION (CELL)

Our plan is to have black community organized by blocks. A person's job, once becoming a member of RAM, is to organize his or her block.

This can be done by telling friends about RAM, having informal meetings or parties discussing issues, etc., and/or having a RAM field organizer on the scene to make new contacts. Once two or more RAM members are in one block they become a cell which works in the neighborhood to make the cell larger and to make more cells. Once a group of cells are developed they make a section. This will be left to the judgement of local cadre.

9. DEVELOPMENT OF NATION WITHIN NATION CONCEPT, GOVERNMENT IN EXILE, ROBERT WILLIAMS IN EXILE

RAM's position is that the Afro-American is not a citizen of the U. S. A., denied his rights, but rather he is a colonial subject enslaved. This position says that the black people in the U. S. A. are a captive nation suppressed and that their fight is not for integration into the white community but one of national liberation. RAM's program is one of overthrow meaning simply the overthrow of white rule, capitalist rule, in other words, white America by black America. Stated even simplier it means the black man taking over this country. To do this we will have our government already in exile, of which Robert Williams is leader. Also RAM's job is to educate the black community to who Robert Williams is and what he stands for. The program will build up for Robert Williams for President in '68 in the black community, signifying a complete repudiation of the existing political system.

10. DEVELOPMENT OF WAR FUND (POLITICAL ECONOMY)

The political economy and war fund was developed to build our war machine. The political economy works as follows: each person capable makes a weekly pledge. From this pledge comes a weekly sum to keep the war fund going, thus we have a political economy. Also fund raising activities and methods will be used to develop the war fund.

11. DEVELOPMENT OF BLACK FARMER COOPS

In the delta area (black belt) in the South, especially Mississippi, this is necessary. This can keep a community and guerrilla forces going for a while.

12. DEVELOPMENT OF ARMY OF BLACK UNEMPLOYED

The brothers and sisters who are unemployed are an army to be organized. The struggle should put continued pressure on the Federal government by demonstrating North and South against racial discrimination on Federal backed industry. Also in the North, the struggle against union discrimination will bring things to a head.

WHY MALCOLM X DIED

Blackground of Malcolm's Assassination

Brother Malcolm X became a threat to "Charlie" when he broke from the Nation of Islam because of his statements which expressed the sentiment of black America and his attempt to organize a black nationalist movement. He immediately put himself in danger by attempting to organize the black community for self-defense. He knew that our people had to be exposed to the nature of our condition and attempted to mobilize them for liberation. It's significant that the only other black man who attempted to organize black America for self-defense was ran into exile. Malcolm's friendliness to young Afro-American revolutionaries frightened the power structure. It feared that this link-up would lead to a black revolution. Also, Malcolm called upon the help of all sections of the black community to formulate a solution for the Afro-American liberation struggle. Out of this coalition of various elements in the black community came the Organization of Afro-American Unity. The name was designed after the Organization of African Unity and proved to be very significant in Brother Malcolm's attempt to reestablish the true meaning of Pan Africanism.

Malcolm's first trip to Africa was very significant because it took the struggle out of the confines of the continental U.S.A. and linked it with the "Bandung" (non-white) world, making our struggle international--the first time since the Garvey movement. It destroyed the myth that our people are citizens denied their rights, and that the Afro-American liberation struggle was a domestic problem. Through his slogan of "Human Rights", Malcolm raised the concept that we were an African captive nation denied our right to self-determination. His trip exposed the U. S. I. A.'s "Uncle" Carl T. Rowan and other "Tom" leaders who have gone to Africa to whitewash our struggle. During his trip Brother Malcolm exposed the Johnson administration in its attempt to rape Africa, and showed, by example of the Afro-American struggle, how Pan-Africanism could not be a meaningful force for African Liberation unless it again became universal in nature rather than continental. In doing this, Brother Malcolm became a living example of Garvey's original thesis that no black person is free until all black peoples are free. In this way he also showed that DuBois was correct in his original thesis that "the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line".

When Brother Malcolm returned from Africa he destroyed the myth that black America was alone in its struggle against the universal slavemaster (U. S. imperialism). He also destroyed the taboos of the Afro-American uniting with any people that the "beast" said wasn't "cool". He emphasized how he had received whole-hearted support from the Chinese ambassadors in those countries.

Brother Malcolm, through continuous efforts, attempted to relate the OAAU to the southern struggle and attempted to unify the civil

rights leaders with the nationalist leaders. Also, Brother Malcolm's main emphais was to internationalize the Afro-American struggle; therefore he decided that a second trip to Africa was necessary to further consolidate the ties of African-Afro-American unity. When Malcolm returned to Africa, he was recognized at the Cairo Conference which was the second convening of the OAAU. This recognition of Brother Malcolm by the African nations meant, essentially, that he (Malcolm) represented an Afro-American government in exile. In his speech at the Cairo Conference, he exposed the nature of U. S. imperialism and forced the African countries to reconsider their position of nonalignment against U. S. imperialism. His speech brought out the true role of the United States in Africa and, in what he termed "U. S. dollarism", exposed Johnson and the rest of his racist cowboys as white supremacists. This speech and the rest of Malcolm's trip destroyed, in essence, the concept of the "Peace Corps", the image of every "Uncle Tom" leader who ever visited Africa, and forced Afro-Americans living outside Africa to take a position on our struggle, or be left in an isolated atmosphere.

Malcolm created such an atmosphere in Africa that SNCC, when visiting there, had to re-evaluate itself, the struggle, and had to take stands that it had refused to take before, i.e., Cuba, Congo, China, Vietnam, etc.

When Malcolm came back from Africa, our people recognized that a leader was developing in the community who had the potential for linking up the north and the south as well as the international scene. Brother Malcolm posed the same treat to the same power structure, some forty years later, that Marcus Garvey had done before. He, like Garvey, was threatening the power structure by attempting to create a national black nationalist movement that would be linked up with the other oppressed peoples of the world. In this way, our struggle would become part of an international black liberation struggle aimed against U. S. imperialism. Malcolm became more dangerous to the white power structure when he emphasized the role of the ultra-right and constantly exposed the "tricknology" and "the wolf down south", and that the boundaries of of Mississippi extended to Canada.

The CIA became alarmed by Malcolm's constant remarks on the "house nigger"--lackey role that Carl T. Rowan was playing, and explained to our people how "freaks" (white-minded Negroes) were being used to spread lies throughout the world to keep black people enslaved. The Brother constantly explained the U. S. government's role in the Congo and "other places". One of the major events that inflamed the CIA and its lackeys against what it stood for, and how it came about; also how the CIA attempted to destroy it: his invitation to Brother Mohammed Babu, one of the leaders of the Zanzibar Revolution, was the first time an African revolutionary had been invited to the black community (Harlem) by a revolutionary nationalist leader. Brother Mohammed Babu spoke highly of Brother Malcolm, his role and his relationship in the world struggle.

Malcolm made a qualitative change in our struggle when he went to Selma, Alabama. Malcolm made such a tremendous impact through his

exposure of the nature of imperialism, that the French government denied him the right to speak before a Congress of African students in France.

The events which were stated here led to what we call the "set-up". The set-up was the bombing of Malcolm's house, blamed it on the Muslims and set the atmosphere for their old colonial trick--divide and conquer.

MALCOLM'S POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Malcolm was the first black leader to attack the U. S. government as the cause of racism and the enslavement of our African captive nation since Marcus Garvey. Through his existence he formed the bridge between the last generation and the present one. He articulated the views of both generations and was going in the direction of developing a program that would have consolidated both generations towards black liberation. In this context, he was black America's Lumumba. In this way, his spirit should be to black revolutionary nationalists what Lumumba's spirit is to the Congolese National Liberation Front. In the Congo the word is: "Lumumba lives". In black America the word must be: "Malcolm lives! Keep on pushin'! Change is gonna come".

It should be noted that Malcolm was really becoming a threat to the power structure because of his growing influence on African and Asiatic students in this country and throughout the world. In essence, Malcolm was becoming the "Soul bloc to be instrumental in destroying the State Department's program of neo-colonialism in Africa, Asia and Latin America. By Malcolm exposing Carl T. Rowan's role in the U. S. I. A., he destroyed the myth of "sly" Johnson's "Great Society". He also exposed the State Department's "tours" to Africa. Brother Malcolm's trip to Africa had much to do with Brother Nasser's reputation of U. S. "dolarism" when he told the U. S. to "go to hell" with regard to U. S. aid and also concerning its blatant, brutal, racist activities in the Congo. His constant attacks on the U. S. government, particularly the C.I.A., threatened U. S. foreign policy, particularly in Africa, and just about finished the "Peace Corps".

His influence in Africa was so strong that our African brothers were not going to let "Uncle" James Farmer enter Africa unless Malcolm okayed it. Due to the efforts of Malcolm in Africa, coupled with those of Robert F. Williams in Asia and Latin America, the racist U. S. government was truly pictured as the universal slavemaster, i.e., the beast. Another factor that made Malcolm a threat to the U. S. government was that he organized Afro-Americans now living in Africa countries to politically support our struggle--particularly in Ghana and the U.A. R. Another factor that made Malcolm a threat to the FBI, CIA and its lackeys was his preparation of a document to indict the U. S. government for genocide against our African-American captive nation. This alone would give the CIA reason to assassinate Brother Malcolm. Another reason for the CIA's wanting to assassinate him was his growing impact on young black militants. Such an impact caused a polarization in the southern movement which developed a black nationalist wing in the south. Through his telegram, warning, and speeches about the far right, he helped to expose the plan the far right has and is using to take over this country. He interpreted the far right's (fascist's) plan and what

it meant to black people.

His efforts to organize the Organization of Afro-American Unity was very significant, for this is the first organization officially recognized by an African government since the U.N.I.A. of Marcus Garvey. It had the potential of becoming a Black Liberation Front with a government in exile. In this perspective the formation of the organization raised the issue to our people to UNITE or PERISH.

RECENT EVENTS

Malcolm's trip to Selma, Alabama was the first time that a black nationalist leader had gone into the south to organize people and challenge the bourgeois reformist since the days of the lengendary Marcus Garvey. This led to the unification of the struggle both north and south, and made Malcolm a threat to "Charlie's" (U.S.) "house-nigger" program. In Selma, Brother Malcolm destroyed the myth of bourgeois democracy. His theme of "ballots or bullets" led the youth to one conclusion. The police authorities, alone with the CIA, FBI, and others, attempted to close in on potential black revolutionary forces by creating an atmosphere of an internal threat to white America's security, and presenting what appears to us to be a frame-up. This was done by projecting that black youth attempted to sabotage white America's national shrines. This appears to be a "frame-up" because they implied that other black groups were involved and they created a fantastic story which implied that it was part of an international conspiracy involving other heads of state. The second reason is that they claim that Robert Williams was in Canada and had planned the whole conspiracy which is, of course, absurd! A third reason is that there was unnecessary "goldfingering" activity to get the necessary goods to do the job. One ebony James Bond alias "Raymond Wood" who was somehow unable to pass the simple college courses, nevertheless managed to "mastermind" the so-called "international conspiracy" led by some of the world's greatest revolutionary mentors. Need we say more? If these events were believable, then the atmosphere was set for anything to happen.

THE "SET-UP"

The "set-up" was the bombing of Malcolm's house. The white power structure had estimated that if one of the black forces would accuse the other then the "beast" would have created a motive for Malcolm's assassination. In this way the "Beast" prepared for a week on atmosphere for Malcolm's assassination. Also, they set it up so that Muhammed could be assassinated and it would look like Malcolm's forces were pitched against Muhammed's. In this way the "beast" figures he can use age-old colonial strategy of "divide and conquer", "nigger against nigger". With this the "beast" had planned to either annihilate or descredit nationalist leadership in black America, which would leave only "house-niggers", and who knows when their turns will come.

THE ASSASSINATION

The assassination was well planned and by its nature was obviously alien to the black community. From reliable sources there are indicat-

ions that there were Negro agents - hired killers - in the audience. The assassination means that any black man who attacks the power structure directly, or attempts to organize our people around the "truth" is either assassinated, jailed, or forced into exile; but they never receive Nobel Prizes for Peace. The assassination shows that the white American government is anti-black; its nature is worse than that of a beast. If it (the U. S. government) is anti-black, this means it is diametrically opposed to anything we support and supports anything that we oppose. This brutal, unjust, evil assassination shows that the "beast" (U. S. government) will stop at nothing to keep our dehumanized black nation enslaved. This evil act is the beginning of what we call the "domination theory" or the step-by-step destruction of the militant fighting wings of the Afro-American liberation struggle. But, and this should be acknowledged, the racist U. S. government will not stop at the annihilation of black militants but, like the bloody tiger, continue to feed upon the life-blood of our people until we are totally annihilated. In short, this is fascism! This shows that there is no such thing as bourgeois democracy; and if there were, it has meant rape, castration, lynching, murder, and all forms of genocide against our oppressed, captive black nation. This shows that either black people will be destroyed or the white American government will be destroyed. It is a life or death struggle. This further illustrates that we have only one alternative: Unite for self defense warfare now, or perish!

Black Soul Brothers and Soul Sisters: Unite or Perish! Keep on Pushin'!

To be read or given to Afro-Americans in the U. S. Armed Forces.

Message From RAM (Revolutionary Action Movement) the Black Liberation Front of the U. S. A. to Afro-Americans in the United States Racist Imperialist Army.

Brothers:

Greetings on July 4, 1965. Whether you are stationed in Southeast Asia (South Vietnam), Africa (the Congo), Latin America (Santo Domingo) or Europe (West Berlin), we ask you: why are you in Charlie's army?

From reports we are receiving from you, we know you are busy waging a war of self defense against racist white soldiers and police within Charlie's Yankee imperialist army.

We have fought in every war the racist United States has ever waged, only to return home to have war waged against us. For 400 years, we have been loyal to a racist beast only to return to the "land of the tree" and the home of the grave to be beaten in the streets because we demanded justice; yes, we return to have two-legged and four-legged dogs turned loose on our women and children, to have tear gas explode in defenseless mothers' eyes. Yes, brothers, this is what we are facing back "home" in the racist U. S. A.

Brothers, we need you here (in America) to help us wage a war of self defense against an unmerciless beast - the United States Government. Yes, the very government you are fighting our "blood brothers" for, is the same government that is helping to enslave and brutalize our people. The same U. S. government that is using you for cannon fodder is preparing to exterminate our people by arming fascist, anti-black groups like the John Birch Society, Minute Men, K.K.K., Rangers, C.I.A., FBI, etc.

Why should we go "anywhere" to fight for the racist U. S. government, only to return home and be faced with murder, rape, castration, and extermination? How can the racist U. S. government talk about "freeing" anyone when the U. S. government practices racism against Black Americans every day? If the U. S. government says it cannot protect us from local and national racists, then let your battle assignment be against those who are abusing your children, wives, mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers and loved ones.

Brothers, we have no redress before the law; we have taken to the streets in order to survive. We need your help. We need you in Selma, Alabama, Bougaloosa, La., Philadelphia, Miss., Monroe, N.C., Detroit, California, Cleveland, Chicago, Philadelphia, New York - everywhere from Maine to Florida to Washington. Our battle cry is Unite or Perish! We ask you, our brothers, "Whose side are you on?"

Do not fight your brothers and friends in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Afro-America! Unite with your Bandung (non-white) Blood Brothers "by any means necessary" and adopt the following revolutionary

principles:

1. Self defense and vengeance
2. All Black independent action
3. To fight for "integration" - integrated pools of blood

Brothers, there ain't no way in hell that you, super-exploited black men, should be fighting for Charlie. Join revolutionary Afro-America by refusing to fight for Charlie until our people achieve liberation; throw down you arms and refuse to fight anyone except white racists on the homeland of racist America.

Brothers, declare yourselves "independent" of Charlie's racist policies both at home and abroad.

Our message to you on the 4th. of July, Black Brothers, is let your manhood be born! Let our cry be Freedom, Freedom, now or Death!

Keep on Pushin'
Change is Gonna Come.

RAM

(Revolutionary Action Movement)
Black Liberation Front of the U. S. A.

THE CODE OF THE REVOLUTIONARY NATIONALIST

---A Revolutionary nationalist maintains the highest respect for all authority within the party.
---A Revolutionary nationalist does not promote or participate in gossip, rumor, petty arguments either among fellow advocates or the masses.
---A Revolutionary nationalist is a brother or sister who has dedicated his total self and life to the liberation of the black nation.
---A Revolutionary nationalist is one who has submitted his will to the will of the nation.
---A Revolutionary nationalist is one who respects and obeys all rules and directives issued by the party.
---A Revolutionary nationalist is one who will work to destroy the myth of individualism (me in spite of every one) and will work to promote the reality of personality (me in relation to everyone).
---A Revolutionary nationalist is one who will promote the reality of Umoja (unity) through working in the closest forms with his black people,the black nation.
---A Revolutionary nationalist is one who will sieze every opportunity to further his development in the vanguard political party through knowledge constantly repeating this cycle thus rising to a highter level of unity of knowing and doing.
---A Revolutionary nationalist will never separate himself from the current revolutionary struggle but will instead maintain the closest identity with it.
---A Revolutionary nationalist will unhesitatingly subordinate his personal interest to those of the vanguard hesitation, will discuss freely and completely any conflicts, discontentment or disagreements with all parties concerned.
---A Revolutionary nationalist will maintain the highest level of morality and will never take as much as a needle or single piece of thread, from the masses---Brothers and Sisters will maintain the utmost respect for one another and will never misuse or take advantage of one another for personal gain---and will never misinterpret, the doctrine of revolutionary nationalism for any reason.
---A Revolutionary nationalist will always be honest with all of his people-the Black Nation.
---A Revolutionary nationalist will always preserve a cheerful spirit even in the midst of irksome tasks and weighty responsibility. He will maintain and display loyalty and love to all his brothers and sisters and all black people.
---A Revolutionary nationalist is the first to worry and the last to enjoy himself.
---A Revolutionary nationalist cannot be corrupted by money, honors or any other personal gains.

---A Revolutionary nationalist will hold in high regard the teachings of scientific socialism and will never violate the code and principles of revolutionary nationalism as taught and practiced in the party.

---A Revolutionary nationalist is totally dedicated to revolutionary nationalism using <u>any means necessary</u> to liberate the black nation.

Brothers: Stop Fighting Among Yourselves and Turn On Your True Enemy

Unite With Your Own Kind.

Have you ever thought why we fight among ourselves? Why we can't walk more than three or four blocks without wanting to cut one another's throat? Negroes have been fighting among themselves for over four hundred years. That's why we are still enslaved. It's time to wake up and stop fighting among ourselves and fight our TRUE enemy - the white man. The white man (chuck) wants us to fight among ourselves and stay divided. Why? Because if we united we would have BLACK POWER, would see who our common enemy is and would know how to destroy him. We are being tricked! Division, confusion and fighting among our own kind is the white man's trick to keep us from fighting him. It's the master trick by the master tricknologist. Instead of each gangs' thinking about controlling five or six blocks (territory), if we united we could control all of the territory. If all the Black gangs across the country united we would control a lot of territory. That's BLACK POWER. It's time for Black People to control the neighborhoods where they live. This can only come about through BLACK UNITY and BLACK POWER. BLACK POWER can only come about through BLACK UNITY. We witness slum landlords charging us ridiculous rent to live among rats and roaches, jacked up prices on food which, is bad from white storekeepers and outrageous police brutality by white racists and brainwashed uncle cops. We are forced to go to Vietnam to fight against colored peoples fighting for their own freedom, while Black women and children are being beaten, maimed and raped right here in racist U. S. A. Well, none of this could happen if we united with our own kind and stopped fighting among ourselves. The Beast couldn't control us any longer and his white power would be destroyed. It would be the day of BLACK POWER. Unite for BLACK POWER. Stop fighting among yourselves and turn on your true enemy. Unite for the self defense of your women, mothers, sisters and children, the Black Nation. You don't need to go to no other land to fight for freedom, democracy and self determination. Stay right here and protect your own! America is the Blackman's Battleground.

Support the Black Cultural Revolution.

Join the BLACK GUARD!
a call to self defense

THE BLACK GUARD

1. What is the Black Guard?

The BLACK GUARD is a Black youth group dedicated to BLACK UNITY and Self Defense. The BLACK GUARD's philosphy is BLACK POWER and SELF DEFENSE.

2. Why a Black Guard?

Black people are being attacked every day. Our people have no one to protect them from racist attacks. This is why the Black Guard has formed. The Philosophy of the BLACK GUARD is BLACK POWER and Self Defense. The BLACK GUARD is a Black Defense and Liberation Guard for the protection of the Black Nation - Black America. The reason why we have not won freedom and BLACK POWER is because we are not united. The only thing that is keeping us from uniting is uncle toms (the enemy within). Uncle toms keep us from uniting because they want money for themselves and are willing to do anything to get it or to keep the homes, clothes, cars, jewelry, prestige they have gotten from selling us out. These traitors hate being Black and will do anything to be accepted by the enemy rather than unite with their own kind. These same toms pretend to be our leaders but yet they teach us to believe in a white god, to go all around the world to fight for the white man but never to fight for ourselves. In order for BLACK people to be free uncle toms must be destroyed. Uncle Toms must go. Each year there is more bloodshed and more of our people are shot down in the streets unarmed and unprotected. We must realize we are in a war of self defense and survival. We must either UNITE or PERISH! We must force Black Unity. The Black Guards are here to bring Black Unity. Black people must stop fighting among themselves, eliminate all those who sell us out (traitors) and must begin to protect our own kind. Uncle toms are traitors and collaborators (those who make deals with the enemy). They sell us out for "thirty pieces of silver" and help the white man to keep us divided. They help the white man keep us in slavery both physically and mentally by lying to us and telling us that the white man is alright and one day things will change.

These traitors tell us not to protect our women and children but to let our blood flow and to spare our enemy. They are traitors. They are Black People's enemies. They must be destroyed before BLACK UNITY and BLACK POWER can be achieved. The reason why we are in the trick we are in today is because we don't have the knowledge of ourselves and the knowledge of our enemy . . . . . We have been lied to, tricked and wooed to sleep. The enemy has kept the truth away from us. Why? Because if we know the truth, we would know what happened, when it happened, how it happened, and what to do about it. If we know the true history of our people, we would

know that we have been fighting our enemy for years, therefore, we would grow up preparing to fight against him now instead of preparing to fight for him.

3. Why we need a Black Guard

A. To protect our women and children - the Black Nation.
B. To get rid of traitors (uncle toms) and collaborators, "the whiteman's secret weapon".
C. To bring about Black Unity and Black Power.
D. To make us aware of our real enemy.
E. To unite us with our real friends (other colored brothers and sisters of Africa, Asia, South and Central America), the vast majority of the world (90 percent of the world's population).
F. To Teach the Truth and fight against the whitewashing the racist educational system teaches Black Youth.
G. To organize Black America to defeat its enemies - We Will Win.

UNITE OR PERISH
Support the Black Cultural Revolution!

Join THE BLACK GUARD -a call to self defense R.A.M.

APPENDIX C: RAM DOCUMENTS

Chronologically Arranged

1962, October	Orientation to a Black Mass Movement
1964	Declaration of the Revolutionary Action Movement
1964, April	Towards Revolutionary Action Movement Manifesto
1964, Fall	"We Can Win!", Black America
1964, Fall	"Greetings to Our Militant Vietnamese Brothers" Black America
1964	The 12 Point Program of RAM (Revolutionary Action Movement)
1964, October 30,- November 1	Black Youth: Vanguard of the New World, Speech at the Second National Afro-American Student Conference
1965, March 20	Black Vanguard, League of Black Workers, contents: "Depression"; "Scars of the Ghetto", Lorraine Hansberry; "The Man Who Shot Malcolm"; "Who Killed Kennedy?, Sixteen Questions by Bertand Russell"; "Patrice Emmery Lumumba"
1965, April	"An Analysis by RAM: Revolutionary Action Movement, Why Malcolm X Died", Liberator
1965, July 4	Message from RAM (Revolutionary Action Movement) the Black Liberation Front of the U. S. A. to Afro-Americans in the United States Racist Imperialist Army
1965, August	Revolutionary Nationalist, internal bulletin of the May 1, 1964 Conference on Black Nationalism, published by RAM, Black Liberation Front of the United States, contents: "Purpose of the Revolutionary Nationalist"; "The Next Step and the Road Ahead, L. A. Proves We Will Win the National Rebellion Against Racist Oppression"; "Urban Guerrilla Warfare", Robert F. Williams; "U. S. A.: The Potential of a Minority Revolution", Robert F. Williams;

"Strategy and Tactics of Black Revolution";
"Notes on the Philosophy of Self-Defense Warfare";
"We Can Win!"

1965, August — Black Vanguard, Volume 1, Number 5, "Depression Part III"
League of Black Workers

1965, Summer-Fall — Black America, contents:
"The African-American War"
"Unity, Dedication, Discipline, Decisiveness";
"A New Philosophy for a New Age";
"Appeal and Statement on Race Terror in the U. S. A., Robert F. Williams;
"The Relationship of Revolutionary Afro-American Movement to the Bundung Revolution";
"Black Nationalism on the Right";
"Destiny of the Afro-American", El Mahdi

1965 — Nation Within a Nation

1966, May — What is a Revolutionary Nationalist?

1966, May — The Present Situation and the Struggle for Black State Power, Don Freeman and Muhammad Ahmad

1966, July-August — The Struggle for Black State Power in the U. S.

1966, August — Step Towards Organizing a National Movement in the Afro-American Struggle for National Liberation, Part II

1966 — Rules and Regulations for Members, RAM Discipline

1966 — To All the Freedom-Loving Peoples of the World and Especially Those Living Under White Racist "Yanky" Oppression

1966 — Message to African Heads of State from RAM - Revolutionary Action Movement - Black Liberation Front of the U. S. A.

1966, December — Black Revolution

1967, April — America is the Blackman's Battleground!

1967 — U. S. Owes Negroes 880 Million Acres of Land, Max Stanford

1967, July	Government Must Pay for Racial Crimes Committed Against African-Americans
1967, December	What Road for Black Power, the New Direction, Max Stanford
1968, August	RAM Forms a Black Political Party, press release
1968, December	National Black Power, The Present Period and the Road to Black Nationhood Akbar Muhammad Ahmad
1969, January	On Mass Organization, Akbar Muhammad Ahmad
1969	The Formation of a National Centralized Black Liberation Party

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